

DOXOLOGY ON THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF MARCH 25 1821

On Monday, March 12/25, 2019, a Doxology was held on the occasion of the National anniversary of March 25 1821 at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where there was a special prayer for the repose of the souls of the Fathers of our Nation who fell heroically during the years of the Ottoman Tyranny and finally a thanksgiving prayer for the liberation of the Nation.

The Doxology was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Archbishops of the Throne, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Ecclesiastical Byzantine Choir "St. John Koukouzelis" under the lead of Mr. Emanuel Daskalakis, while the service was attended by many Orthodox Faithful and members of the Greek Community of Jerusalem. At the end of the Service the Patriarchal entourage and all people returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters in the Reception Hall.

There, His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

"Do not be afraid of the darkness! The freedom like the foggy star, will bring the night to dawn" says poet John Polemis.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Full of national boasting in Christ today we celebrate the historic anniversary of the liberation of our pious nation from the long-term slavery of the Ottoman sovereignty. Today we celebrate the anniversary of our National Rebirth.

The truly heroic Revolution of 1821 is a milestone in world history. And that's because a small group of determined fighters, with the blessings of the Bishop Palaion Patron Germanos, raised the honest banner of the Revolution and gave the sacred oath "Freedom or Death", "now is the struggle for all".

This nationalistic motto echoed as an ecumenical commandment in all the centres of the enslaved Romiosyne, which hearkening to the words of the psalmist: "The Lord being mindful of us, hath helped us" (Psalm 113: 20) rushed in the sacred fight with all the forces of its rebellious children, "for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the homeland", "there is no sweeter thing than homeland and religion," General Makrygiannis will write in his memoirs.

The participation of the Church in the struggle for the regeneration of the nation was decisive. Leading ecclesiastical figures such as the Metropolitan Palaion Patron Germanos, Gregory Papaflessas, Athanasius Diakos, Bishop Isaiah Salonon, members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and many Priests named and anonymous, became not only the animators of the Ottoman barbaric yoke of slavery, but also examples of self-sacrifice, namely martyrs of blood, in favor of freedom, which God gave to man, as St. Paul preaches by saying, "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor 3:17) and elsewhere: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage "(Galatians 5: 1).

In other words, the great and distinguished fighters of 1821 understood the notion of freedom and of the Homeland biblically and not in a worldly manner. "Faith to the

crucified and resurrected Christ" and "freedom of the homeland" constitute the cohesive force of preserving the Greek-Orthodox tradition and the identity of the pious nation of the Romans and the Christian nation of the Greeks. This, moreover, is borne out by the lyrics of our National Poet Dionysios Solomos in the "Hymn to Freedom", which he considers "to be drawn out of the sacred bones of the Greeks".

The Revolution of 1821 has clearly demonstrated that determination to self-sacrifice for the defense of sacred and moral values, such as freedom and homeland, is fully enforced. This is because the one who sacrifices his life wins it forever, and tyrannical sovereignty subsides in front of the moral splendor that manifests decisively and sacrificing.

The unparalleled heroism and admirable sacrificial to the point of blood attitude of the fighters of 1821 would be good to be a source of inspiration for all of us in the face of the impending challenges of the so-called "New Age" or "New Order" in order to preserve natural laws and moral biblical values. "When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do not have the law, they have a law to themselves" St. Paul says (Romans 2:14).

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, willingly and as owed, participates in this annual anniversary of the sacred commemoration of the rebirth of our Nation, and came down to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with all its members in order to offer thanksgiving praise and doxology to our God Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected for us, for the benefit He granted to our Nation. We also offered interceding prayers for the eternal repose of the souls of those who fell heroically and gloriously in the sacred struggle of our noble nation for the nation of the Roman Orthodox people.

For all these, allow Us to raise our glass and exclaim in honour:

Long live March 25 1281!

Long live the noble and royal nation of the Roman Orthodox people!

Long live Hellas!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!

And the Greek Consul General as follows;

“Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are glad that today we celebrate at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem the Nation’s Revolution of 1821, and remember the nation’s most glorious page of the modern history with national pride. We honor those who fought with courage, heroism and self-denial and managed, through an unequal and long struggle that demanded unspeakable sacrifices to end the four dark ages of a foreign tyrannical yoke.

On this day, we must remember the elements that made the 1821 liberation struggle distinct for both Greek and world history and which are of utmost relevance to us today. Those elements that are a lesson for all modern Greeks. Three of these elements are: The common vision of Freedom, the unity of the nation, and the courage in the face of far superior enemies and enormous objective difficulties.

The common vision was that of the free Homeland, in particular the creation of a model state, based on the principles of

democracy and justice, which takes care of all its citizens, with no discriminations. This vision, especially promoted for its time, made the struggle righteous and morally imperious, enhancing the determination and vigor of the fighters and winning the sympathy of thousands of Friends of Greece who strengthened it in a variety of ways.

National unity and unity of soul were indispensable to the outcome of the Revolution, as in every common struggle. The adversary tried to divide the fighters, instigating internal quarrels, aiming to hurt faith in the just struggle, neutralize the vigor and bend the resistance of the fighters. The unity was conquered by difficulties and after civil breaks that delayed the successful outcome of the Revolution. The lesson for all, then and now, is that without unity and unity of soul, the common purpose and national laws are in danger of losing their meaning and value.

The boldness of the fighters who defied the mighty power of the oppressor and the negative international circumstances and declared the liberation struggle, carrying it for more than eight years on land and sea, is the characteristic of the Greeks that has repeatedly pushed them to the forefront history. A prudent, computational assessment of circumstances would entail continuing national subordination and abandoning the national vision of freedom and national pride. As General Makrigiannis put it, "when the few decide to die, and when they make that decision, they lose a few times and many win."

Today we do not forget the crucial role played by the Church in achieving the national goal, while maintaining the identity of the Greeks in the long and gloomy years of the Ottoman domination. The Church was the ark of the salvation of the Nation and the guardian of our values, preserving the language, the Christian Faith and the hope of the Resurrection of the Nation. Thus, as the fighters themselves proclaimed, the struggle of the national rebirth became "for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the Homeland."

Greece does not forget the great offer of expatriate Greeks in the struggle of national rebirth and always feels grateful for it. The Friends, beginning with large urban centers in Europe, enthralled with enthusiasm and self-denial with their rebellious brothers, played a significant role in shaping the common vision of freedom and in the initial plans of the Revolution and contributed to the creation of the Philhellenic current.

March 25, 1821 remains for us all the foundation stone of our national entity and the leading station of the modern history of the Nation. The heroism, self-denial and determination of the Revolutionist fighters, and those inspired by them, to seek a free, fair and democratic Homeland, inspire us, but at the same time make us commit ourselves to being worthy of them and, like them, to rise to the height of the circumstances and to get everyone involved to overcome obstacles, however insurmountable they may seem to be.

Long live 25 March 1821!

Long live Greece!"