

# THE NATIONAL FEAST OF 25TH MARCH 1821 AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, March 12/25, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the national feast of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1821 at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The feast was celebrated with a Doxology as a thanksgiving to God for His help for the liberation of our nation from the Ottoman yoke of slavery and as a prayer for the repose of the souls of our Forefathers, national martyrs, clergy and laity who fought gloriously and fell for their country and faith.

The Doxology was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks, the participation of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and members of the Greek community.

At the Patriarchate Reception Hall, after the Doxology the Consul General and His Beatitude addressed those present. His Beatitude's address follows below;

“Rigas Feraios writes in “Thurios” one of his poems; it is better to live for one hour a free life, rather than live for forty years under slavery and imprisonment...come at this time with just one word to place our vow on the cross...

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Today the Rum Orthodox nation, celebrates the anniversary of

21<sup>st</sup> March 1821, the day of the Annunciation of the rebirth from the Ottoman yoke of slavery.

The historic event of the Greek revelation of 1821 does not only refer to the freedom from the Ottoman yoke, but it primarily refers to the irreversible and God-given right of the national liberty, as St. Paul preaches; "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26).

The faith in the living God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who liberated us from the bondage of the enemy and the strong desire for the freedom of the country were the inexhaustible source of power of the leaders of the revolution as well as of the enslaved Greeks.

The zeal for the divine gift of freedom and of the country justified fully the sacrificial and martyr's fight of the enslaved Greeks, whose vow "was made on the Cross of Christ" as Rigas Feraios said. And according to St. Peter, "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (1 Peter 3:13).

And we say this, because the motives of the 1821 fighters were primary, namely, pure and impulsive, with no external influences. This is also testified by the revolutionary slogan of the Elder of Moria, Theodoros Kolokotronis "now the fight is for the faith of Christ and for the freedom of the country".

The collective national consciousness of the Greeks, forged by the high values of classical cultural heritage and the indefinable lifelong principles of the Patriarchal Orthodox tradition, opposed "the fashion of this world (which) passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:31) to the spiritual freedom of the soul and to the "continuing city" (Hebrews 13:14) or rather, country, of the resurrected Christ.

In other words, the annual celebration of the anniversary of the 1821 national rebirth is not only a fact of historical commemoration, but also of a moral message, for the present and the future of the contemporary so called developed world, which being trapped in its material and financial bliss, whether conscious or unaware, promotes the intellectual and psychosomatic suicide of its citizens.

And the contribution of the Church, through its holy clergy, including members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, was decisive. Countless Hierarchs, among whom Palaion Patron Germanos who raised the banner of the revolution, Priests, like Cosmas Aitolos and simple Monks, all shed their blood and became martyrs of the national-religious freedom, which "is born from the sacred bones of the Greeks" according to our national poet Dionysios Solomos.

Our venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in accordance to St. Paul's words; "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1), and rendering as it should "honour to whom honour [is due]" (Romans 13:7), and also participating at the sacred commemoration of the rebirth of the noble nation of the Greeks, went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where we prayed in Doxology and praise for "the blood of His Cross" (Col. 1:20) and the resurrected from the dead, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We also prayed for the repose of the souls of those who fought heroically for the faith and the country and martyred for the nation of the Rum Orthodox.

On this occasion therefore, let Us make a toast and exclaim as we should;

Long live 25<sup>th</sup> March 1821!

Long live the noble and royal nation of the Rum Orthodox!

Long live Hellas!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!”

**From Secretariat-General**