

DOXOLOGY ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL FEAST OF 25TH MARCH 1821

On Thursday 11/24 March 2022 a Doxology was observed at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the anniversary of the National feast of 25 March 1821.

The Doxology was observed primarily as an entreaty to God for the repose of the souls of the fighters of 1821, who fell fighting for the faith and country, and as thanks to God for His help to our nation, to be free from the Ottoman yoke and the establishment of the freedom in Christ.

The Doxology was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with the Hagiotaphite High Priests, Hieromonks and Deacons. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon on the right and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left, with the help of the Patriarchate School Students. The service was attended by the members of the Greek Community, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and Consulate members.

After the Doxology all congregation returned to the Patriarchate Reception Hall where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Come in zeal at this time, to make an oath on the Cross...lift up the Cross on the banners and strike the enemy like thunder and lightning”, Rigas Feraios exclaims at his revolutionary poem “Thurium”.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today's anniversary of the Greek Revolution of 25th March 1821 is a unique and unprecedented event in world history, and this is because the divine good of freedom is inextricably linked after Christ's conscious awareness of the self-sacrifice of the pious race of the Roman Orthodox Christians and our Blessed Greek Nation.

The Metropolitan of Palaion Patron Germanos raised the Holy Banner of the Resurrection on March 25, 1821, the day of the feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin, listening to your liberating sermon of wise Paul, "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).

The view of the idea of freedom that took shape in Christianity was the one that distinguished the Greek Revolution of '21 from contemporary revolutions of other peoples. This is also denounced by the nationalist slogan of the Elder of Moria Theodoros Kolokotronis: "now our fight is for the faith of Christ and the holy freedom of the country". This is also testified by the call of Rigas Feraios to his revolutionary play "Thurium": "Let us take the oath on the Cross".

The Greeks, whose patriotism and freedom are the special features of their long and varied history, were not possible to be reconciled with the kind of slavery of the Ottoman yoke, who insulted their cultural, spiritual and ethno-religious heritage, which contributed decisively to the elevation and decoration of the moral standards and also to the enlightenment of the minds of those people "that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79)

The greatness of the sacrifice of the revolutionary Greeks for freedom and the name of Christ is reflected so much in the slogan "freedom or death" as in the confession of the

established new martyrs of the Church, "I was born a Christians and as a Christian shall I die!"

The heroes and new martyrs of the revolution of '21 undoubtedly paid heed to the Gospel words: "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

And we say this because the contribution of the Church and the clergy to the national uprising of 1821 was indeed unparalleled and great. The Church as a spiritual institution became the primary leading force of the Roman people under the yoke. The Church is the one that represented the national and religious identity of the Greeks.

The feast of the national uprising of 1821 is not merely an even to historical memory but rather of a sacred consignment sealed with the heroic and martyr's blood "of the freedom which stems from the sacred bones of the Greeks". This sacred consignment we are called to preserve and hand over to the next generations.

The Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood of ours participates in the anniversary festivities of the sacred memory of the National Rebirth of the noble and royal nation of the Rum Orthodox and our Nation, and as it should it renders "tribute to whom tribute is due" (Romans 13:7), so we came down to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to offer thanksgiving praise and Doxology to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was Crucified and Resurrected from the dead for us. We also prayed for the eternal repose in the land of the living of the blessed souls of those who fell like martyrs while fighting for the faith and the country in the sacred battles of our nation.

For all these, let Us raise Our glass on a toast and as we should, cry out loud:

Long live 25th March 1821!

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

Long live Hellas!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

After His Beatitude's address, Mr Vlioras also said the following:

"Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences, High Priests,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, Ecumenical Hellenism proudly celebrates and honours the anniversary of the Revolution of 1821, the most glorious page in modern Greek history, a struggle for altars and hearths, a point of reference and a symbol for the Greek nation, which had as its happy ending the establishment of the modern Greek state and the rebirth of the Democracy in its cradle.

In every historical period, there is a pole, a historical event that marks it, and becomes a point of reference for all of us later. March 25, 1821, is this milestone in the modern history of Hellenism, marking the turning point when the Greeks made the heroic decision to rise, alone against many, against the Ottoman tyranny and to claim freedom with their blood. It was spring even then, almost two centuries ago, when Hellenism took up arms against the sanctuary to claim its freedom. This ideal that our people adored in the insurmountable greatness of the sacrifice of illiterate, ragged and hungry men, armed men and thieves, priests, women and children.

Our National Uprising is the greatest proof that, above any interests, difficulties and obstacles, the soul and spirit of a people with a high mindset, worthy of its historical mission, excels.

So, in those times, as in any difficult time, there were many who surpassed themselves and showed heroism, beyond what we call a well-meaning duty. Prominent personalities but also ordinary, everyday people, who suddenly found themselves in the forefront of history, responded to one, to the call of the struggle, without hesitating, without bowing, indelibly marking the history and life of Hellenism.

In cruciform temples and poor chapels, the desire for freedom ignited in the souls of enslaved Greeks. With meagre or non-existent means, with the courage to make up for the lack of armaments, they pushed for good the course of our historical course towards justice and freedom. In this struggle, everyone served the idea of freedom, with unique patriotism, self-sacrifice and self-denial. "And if we are few in the crowd of Braimisi", observes General Makrygiannis, "we are comforted in a way, that our luck always has the Greeks few. That beginning and end, past and present, all the beasts fight to eat us and cannot. They eat from us and yeast remains. And when the few decide to die, a few times they lose and many win."

National anniversaries are useful for all of us when they are an opportunity to renew, with openness and determination, our commitment to the ideals for which the founders of our freedom fought and the realization that our justice, progress and prosperity are the result of our own effort and our own struggle, individual and collective. Let us listen to the words of General Makrygiannis, that "we all have this homeland together, and the wise and the ignorant, and the rich and the poor, and the politicians and the military, and the smallest people."

The completion of 201 years of our National Rebirth, invites

us to reflect on the successes and challenges of our National Life, but also the continuation of our collective course, since it is characteristic of our national identity to celebrate not the destination but the journey, full of discoveries, full of adventure, as Constantine Cavafy wrote, to try, to seek, to discover and not to give up as Tennyson wrote about Odysseus.

So let us stand with respect before the sacrifice of our ancestors, the heroes of '21, and let us be exemplified by their patriotism and self-denial so that we can vigorously respond to the challenges of our troubled times.

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences, High Priests,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the Holy Land and our presence in it, the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, with its long and multifaceted offer and the highest pastoral work, is the guardian of the moral and spiritual values of our Orthodox faith.

Our patriarchate of Jerusalem testifies to the time of the dynamic presence of the Greek and Orthodox tradition in the Middle East. Its high mindset and struggles, under adverse conditions, until today, are for all of us an invaluable national capital and a source of inspiration and empowerment.

For all of us, March 25, 1821, is an exceptional occasion to reflect on our responsibilities and to renew our commitment to the ideals that constitute the quintessence of our Greek and Orthodox tradition and for which the protagonists of our freedom fought, "...never out of debt do not move". Ideals that nowadays we cannot take for granted and that we must preserve

with our own struggle.

With these thoughts, I call on all of us to exclaim

Long live the 25th of March 1821!

Long live Greece!”

From Secretariat-General