

THE DOXOLOGY FOR MARCH 25, 1821 AT THE PATRIARCHATE

At 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, March 10/23, 2018, a Doxology was held in the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the occasion of the national anniversary of March 25, 1821, as thanks to God for the national rebirth and liberation from the Turkish yoke and as a petition for the repose of the souls of those who heroically fell on the battlefields of the nation.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos presided over the Doxology, with the co-celebration of the High Priests and Hieromonks of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras and members of the Greek Consulate General. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, and Mr Gotsopoulos in the presence of members of the Greek community and pilgrims.

After the Doxology, all congregation went to the Hall of the Patriarchate, where His Beatitude spoke with the following address:

“What have I to do with Napoleon? However, if you want soldiers to liberate our country, I promise you 5 and 10 thousand soldiers; once we were baptized with oil, we are baptized again with blood and another time for the freedom of our country”. From the memoirs of the Elder of Moria, Theodoros Kolokotronis.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved brethren in Christ,

With infinite gratitude to the Holy Triune God, the pious

generation of the Roman Orthodox and our Greek nation honours the anniversary of March 25, 1821, the day of the Annunciation of its liberation from the slavery of the Ottoman yoke.

The global historical event of the Greek Revolution of 1821 demonstrated in practice the greatness of the power of faith in Christ on the one hand and, on the other, of the mindset of the spirit for the God-given good of freedom and an independent homeland. "God... 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) Saint Paul preaches.

The Hellenistic view of man as "the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29) and especially the hagiographic view that we are God's (cf. 1 Cor. 11:7) is the inexhaustible source that fed both sacrificial dispositions through the baptism of blood and the sure hope through the baptism of the freedom of the country.

The lively desire to seize the most precious treasure of freedom fully justified the holy struggle of the subservient Romans against the overthrow of the long-term Ottoman tyranny. «Άργιε νάλθη εκείνη ή 'μέρα / και ήταν όλα σιωπηλά / Γιατί τάσκιαζε ή φοβέρα / και τά πλάκωνε ή σκλαβιά» according to the poet Dionysios Solomos.

Admittedly, the Greek Revolution of 1821 causes admiration but also wonder, because, in the history of mankind, there is no such comparable event. We say this invoking the proclamation of the great national martyr Alexandros Ypsilantis from Iasion on February 24, 1821, in which he declared the following: "It is time to shake off this unbearable yoke, to liberate the Motherland, to descend from the clouds... to rise the sign, by which we always win, I say the Cross, and thus to avenge our Homeland and our Orthodox Faith from the ungodly scorn of the ungodly".

No one can doubt that the motives of the pioneers and fighters

of 1821 were genuine, that is, pure and spontaneous. This, on the other hand, is confirmed by the motto of the Elder of Moria, Theodoros Kolokotronis, "now the fight is for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the country"; as well as the fact that the "oath was taken on the Cross of Christ" according to the will of Riga Feraios.

The rebirth of the Greek race from the ashes of slavery was the result of the principles and inalienable spiritual values of the meeting of the classical cultural heritage and the holy paternal Greek Orthodox Christian tradition, according to which -meeting- the Greek reason granted its place to the divine Word, the one made flesh and dwelling in us (cf. Jn. 1:14).

This means that today's anniversary celebration of the national rebirth of 1821 is not only about its historical memory but also about its moral significance, that is, about the preservation of the legacy of the Gospel word of Christ and in our contemporary era of the so-called "A new order of things", according to which, as the great Paul said, "people corrupted in mind and unfit for faith resist the truth" (cf. 2 Tim. 3:8).

Remarkable is the contribution of the Church through its higher and lower clergy to the "overall struggle" against the now unbearable slavery of the non-religious Ottomans. Leading personalities, such as Patriarch Gregory V and Patriarch Cyril V of Andrianoupolis, but also the Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos water the tree of freedom with their blood. Apart from the Bishop Palaion Patron Germanos, who blessed and raised the holy banner of the Revolution, the Bishop of Salona Isaiah sacrifices himself in Alamana. Ordinary clerics, such as the fiery Athanasios Diakos and the distinguished missionary of the nation, Saint Cosmas of Aitolos, but also Hagiotaphite clerics adorn the martyrology of the 21st Revolution.

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, obeying the words of the 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) and dutifully participating in the celebration of the holy memory of the rebirth of the pious Roman race and nation, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we sent forth thanksgiving, praise and glorification to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and rose from the dead. We pray for the eternal repose in the land of the living of the blessed souls of those who fought heroically for Faith and Country and fell gloriously in the holy fights of the pious race and nation of the Roman Orthodox and martyred.

For all these, allow us to raise our glass and worthily exclaim:

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live the pious and royal family of the Roman Orthodox!

Long live Greece!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

Afterwards, in the hall of the Patriarchate, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras, spoke on behalf of the Greek State as follows:

"Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend High Priests,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In every historical period, there is a key event that marks it and becomes a point of reference for all of us later. March 25, 1821, is this milestone, in the History of Hellenism, the Balkans and Europe, when the Greeks took the heroic decision to rise up, regardless of the adversities, against the Ottoman tyranny and to claim Freedom, paying, without grumbling, the price of blood.

It is therefore a special honour for the Consul General of the Motherland to address the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Hellenism of the Holy Land, on the occasion of the celebration of the National Rebellion of 1821, a struggle, in favour of altars and hearths, a symbol for the Greek Nation that marked the rebirth of the Republic in its cradle and the establishment of the modern Greek state.

The 25th of March 1821, a peak moment of our long national life, was the beginning of an epic uprising against the Ottoman yoke, based on the strength, determination and patriotism of the Greeks. Drawing strength from the heritage and long Tradition of the Nation, the Revolution of 1821 transcended the narrow limits of space and time and emerged as a universal and timeless symbol of virtue and the struggle for the Motherland and Freedom.

So in those times, as in any difficult time, there were many who surpassed themselves and demonstrated heroism, above what we call well-meaning duty. Simple, everyday people, who found themselves suddenly, in the foreground of History, without asking to be heroes and yet they responded to the call, without flinching, without hesitating, leaving an indelible mark on the course, History and life of Hellenism.

With meagre or even non-existent means, with the courage to make up for the lack of armament, they pushed for good the flow of our historical march towards justice and freedom. In this struggle, all served the idea of freedom, with unique patriotism, self-sacrifice and self-denial.

Theodoros Kolokotronis writes in his Memoirs: "when we decided to start the Revolution, we didn't think about how many we were, nor that we didn't have weapons, nor that the Turks were besieging the castles and cities... but like the rain, the desire of our freedom fell upon us". "The nation owes its resurrection to a miracle and not to logic," adds General Makrygiannis.

There are countless examples of heroism and sacrifice during our National Rebellion. But let us dwell for a moment on the example of the woman, who became known in our history as "Psorokostaina", Mrs Panoraia Hadjikosta from the Kydonies of Asia Minor. When her city was destroyed by the Ottomans and her husband was killed, she fled to Nafplio.

At that time, the Revolution was being tested by the rampage of Ibrahim, who, in addition to the other disasters, left in his wake hundreds of orphans who gathered in Nafplio. Despite her problems, Panoraia asked for and took under her protection orphan children. To feed them, she went from house to house begging. She had neglected herself to such an extent that the children teased her and called her "Psorokostaina".

In 1826 a fundraiser was held for the Martyred Messolongi in Nafplio. Panoraia was the first to deposit what she had left, her silver wedding ring and a penny, for the Fight. After the establishment of the Orphanage in Aegina by Ioannis Kapodistrias, she offered to wash the clothes of the orphans without any remuneration. At the funeral of Panoraia Hatzikosta, it was the children of the orphanage who accompanied her, as an honorary pallbearer, to her last residence.

The Revolution of 1821 and its happy outcome is the great historical achievement of our country which, according to Odysseus Elytis, "is small in space but infinite in time". "A stone cape in the Mediterranean", according to Giorgos Seferis, who in the spring of 1821 defied the facts that did

not favour the fight and threw himself wholeheartedly into the fire.

National anniversaries are useful for all of us, and especially for the young when we realize the need to renew with boldness and determination our adherence to the ideals for which the fathers of our freedom fought and the realization that justice, progress and our well-being can only be obtained by our own efforts.

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The revolution of March 25, 1821, is a milestone in the modern history of the Nation and the cornerstone of our national identity. The heroism, self-sacrifice and determination of the Fighters of the Revolution, define the context of our struggle to preserve the moral and spiritual values that constitute a free, just and democratic Motherland.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as a constituent part of our Orthodox faith and our Greek legacy, has been and still remains, the guardian of the moral and spiritual values of the Greek and Orthodox witness in the Holy Land and is a valuable source of inspiration and a great example of determination and commitment to preservation, for two millennia, of the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Shrines of our Faith.

His high spirit and his struggles, under adverse conditions, to this day, are for all of us an invaluable national asset and a source of inspiration and encouragement.

For all of us, this special anniversary is an excellent occasion to reflect on our responsibilities and to renew our

commitment to the ideals, for which the defenders of our freedom fought, “...unmoved by debt”, ideals for which we must always strive for and never take them for granted, not forgetting that the price of freedom is always very high and that our Country can be proud because there are always those who pay for this price.

With these thoughts in mind, I invite everyone to exclaim:

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live Greece!”.

From Secretariat-General