

DOXOLOGY OF THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF OCTOBER 28, 1940

On Saturday, October 15/28, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. a doxology was held in the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the national holiday of October 28, 1940.

This Doxology was offered as thanks to God for His help in our nation to defend against the Italian military invasion of 1940 and to shake off the barbaric German Nazi occupation of World War II during the years 1941-1944 and as a prayer for the repose of the souls of those who fought heroically and fell in battle or were fraudulently and unjustly executed collectively or individually.

The doxology was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theofilos, along with the Bishops and Priests of the Patriarchate, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos, members of the Church of Jerusalem and our Greek Orthodox Arabic-speaking flock.

After the Doxology in the hall of the Patriarchate, His Beatitude spoke with the following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece

Mr Dimitrios Angelesopoulos,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Filled with national pride, we celebrate today the anniversary of October 28, 1940, which belongs to the leading milestones in the history of the Greek nation. We celebrate the shining

of the light of righteousness over the darkness of injustice. We celebrate the dominance of common universal moral values, which Greece overcame, over the forces of greed and brutality.

October 28, 1940, is an important example of self-sacrifice in defence of the honour, freedom, independence and national territorial integrity of our heroically fallen fathers and brothers. This fight was a holy fight against the arrogance and oppressive power of the invaders of the Nazi and Fascist atrocities, which were imprinted in the hideous concentration camps of our innocent fellow human beings.

For this Our Mediocrity, accompanied by the honourable members of our Venerable Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood as well as pious people, went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we sent thanksgiving praise to the Holy Triune God " giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:57); " and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4) according to Saint John the Theologian.

Moreover, we prayed for eternal memory and blessed repose of the souls of those who heroically fought and gloriously martyred for the name of Christ, our nation and its blessed motherland.

The epic of 1940 demonstrated that justice and peace are not simply metaphysical or theoretical values, but have a divine existence. Because, as the wise Paul says, "God is not for disorder, but for peace" (1 Cor. 14:33), and "his righteousness endures forever" (2 Cor. 9:9). We say this because the threat of Nazism and Fascism against humanity has now returned and acts under the guise of modernist principles and progress, but also of illegal and perverted ideas about the purpose of human existence and life. " This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15) Saint James the Brother of God preaches.

October 28, 1940, is the day on which, admittedly, the eternal

slogan "now above all the struggle" resounded throughout Greece. This struggle, which was a struggle for faith and country, as well as for the spiritual ideals of the Greek Nation, was recognized internationally as a miracle of the faith of the Greeks in the God of Justice, our Lord Jesus Christ and the most blessed Theotokos, His Mother.

Also noteworthy is the contribution of the Greek Orthodox Church through the active participation of its senior and junior clergy and also the military priests, who, through the spiritual word of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ, strengthened the moral and patriotic sentiment of the Greek warriors. Needless to say, among the heroically fallen fighters, the hundreds of killed priests can be distinguished.

Today's solemn anniversary of the unrepeatable epic of 1940 is particularly important for humanity in general and our region, the Middle East in particular, tested by war and violent conflicts. "Ask for peace and pursue it" (Ps. 33:15) the psalmist exclaims. "Recompense to no man evil for evil...If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12,17-18) the Apostle Paul orders.

We, ministers of the divine commandments and "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2), we pray, as "This Lord of peace has given us peace in all things and in all ways" (cf. B Thess. 3:16). The significant landmark of the epic of 1940 calls us, on the one hand, to be vigilant, on the other hand to preserve the sacred legacy of the moral and spiritual values of the Greek-Christian heritage and the Roman Orthodox faith and holy tradition, for which our Fathers and brothers sacrificed themselves with their honourable blood.

Concluding, let us exclaim:

Long live the "No" of October 28, 1940!

Long live the pious race of the Roman Orthodox!

Long live Greece!

Long live our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood!"

The Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem also delivered the following address:

"Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences

Respected fathers and members of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood,

Dear compatriots and friends,

The celebration of the anniversary of October 28, 1940, always inspires a special emotion. It is still, for our generations, a living memory, if only indirectly, as our parents and grandparents experienced and participated in the great historical events associated with this anniversary. We had the privilege of being direct recipients of their experiences and memories, but also of their feelings, which colour the personal narrative more vividly, making it our own experience.

The memory of this day rightly inspires emotion because it constitutes one of the most brilliant chapters of the long Greek history. When, once again, before a terrible dilemma, Greece and the Greeks chose, without hesitation, without fear and suspicion, the path of Honour and Dignity of our country and nation.

They did it with a source of enthusiasm, which shocks even today. But also fully aware that this road was uphill. The leadership of Greece, with the strategic and diplomatic acumen that distinguished it, as well as the entire Greek people, understood well: that the conflict with one of the founding powers of the Axis would ultimately bring Greece face to face with the whole aluminum machine of totalitarianism. Which had already, in October 1940, spread its dark dominion over

continental Europe.

They knew it, they understood it. But at the dawn of October 28, 1940, the whole country with one mind opposed the absolute refusal to submit and the renunciation of its right and honour. Thus Greece shone, worthy of her eternal example in favour of the struggle for freedom, in a world where hope was flickering.

And our ancestors were not limited to a desperate struggle for the honour of the Nation. But they threw themselves into it with faith for victory, with the belief that Justice and Liberty would prevail, no matter what sacrifices were required. And they achieved, in the mountains of Pindos and the Albanian Front, what friends and enemies considered impossible. They shattered the invincibility of the Axis and humiliated the arrogance of totalitarianism. They became an unsurpassed example of bravery and devotion to the noble ideals of Humanity.

And when indeed the steel military machine of the Axis gathered invincible forces against Greece, leading to the horrible and bloody occupation of our country, the struggle did not cease. It continued in its cities and mountains. From our Navy to the Mediterranean and to distant seas. From organized Greek tactical forces to fierce battles in North Africa, Italy, and the Aegean. Until the final rule of law and the liberation of our country. These games ranked Greece among the winners of the terrible World War II. And to the few founding members of the United Nations, in the hope of a better post-war world.

Unlike most Greeks, those of us here today are celebrating today's glorious anniversary in warlike conditions. We feel, perhaps more than ever, that the peace, the freedom, and the preeminence that our country has enjoyed for decades are never taken for granted. They require our care, the care of every generation called to preserve and develop what the sacrifices

of our ancestors secured. A great inheritance comes with a great moral debt.

Celebrating here, in the arms of the Church, I would like to ask you to turn our thoughts and prayers today to our fellow Greeks and their families who are trapped in the Gaza Strip, at risk of terrible hardship, and to the Monastery of St. Porphyrios where the Christians of Gaza have taken refuge.

And let us wish for the speedy return of Peace to the Holy Land.

Many happy returns.”

From Secretariat-General