

DOXOLOGY ON THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF MARCH 25, 1821

On Monday, March 12/25, 2024, at 10.30 a.m. a Doxology was held in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the national anniversary of March 25, 1821.

This Doxology was held as a prayer to God for the repose of the souls of the heroes and all the fighters of the holy war of 1821 and as a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His help to our nation, to shake off the unbearable yoke of Ottoman slavery and conquer not only freedom in Christ but also human freedom.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos presided over this Doxology, with the co-celebration of High Priests of the Patriarchate, at the honorary presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos and members of the Hellenic Parish.

His Beatitude addressed those present in the Patriarchate Hall with the following address:

“It is time to shake off this unbearable yoke, to liberate the Motherland... to raise the mark by which we always win! I say the Cross, so that we may avenge our Homeland and our Orthodox Faith from the impious contempt of the impious.” From the proclamation of Alexandros Ypsilantis in Iasion, February 24, 1821.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved brethren in the Lord.

The uprising of March 25, 1821, the anniversary of which we

are celebrating, holds a prominent timeless position in world history. And this is because the Greek Revolution marked the ethno-religious rebirth of the Roman race from the ashes of the tyrannical slavery of the Ottomans on the one hand, and awakened the consciousness of peoples and nations deprived of their national freedom and independence on the other.

The enslaved Greeks, inspired by the order of the Apostle 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), rebelled against the unbearable Turkish yoke "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine" (Ps. 78,65), as the psalmist says, exclaiming with a loud voice, "Freedom or Death". Bishop Palaion Patron Germanos declared the beginning of the liberating struggle blessed and exalted the Banner of the Revolution, whose slogan according to the "Elder of Moria" Theodoros Kolokotronis was "now the struggle for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the country".

This irrefutable fact is also proven by the proclamation of Alexandros Ypsilantis in Iasion on February 24, 1821, in which he declares: "It is time to shake off this unbearable yoke, to liberate the Motherland... to raise the mark by which we always win! I say the Cross, so that we may avenge our Homeland and our Orthodox Faith from the impious contempt of the impious".

The special feature of the Revolution of 1821 is the fact that heroes of Patriotism and martyrs of the Faith emerged, so the Greek Romans are recognized as genuine imitators and indisputable continuations of their ancestors, but also guardians of the moral values and truths of the Greek-Christian tradition.

All the enslaved Greek land and space turns into a field of rebellion and hostilities. The now invincible desire for redemption from the sufferings of slavery overcame the fear of a foreign and non-religious conqueror.

It is worth noting that today's anniversary of the national rebirth of 1821 is not only about the celebration of this historical memory but mainly and primarily about the "beginning of knowledge" of this moral and even to the point of blood sacrificial, ethno-religious achievement. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge... and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge" (Prov. 1,7,22), the wise Solomon says.

We say this because the Revolution of 1821 remains an eternal bright light, in our modern world of confusion, ignorance and the desires of hubris, of common universal moral values, especially of national freedom "from the bones of the sacred Greeks" according to the great poet Dionysios Solomos.

The contribution of the Church to the above-all national struggle was universal and decisive through the active participation of its clergy, including members of our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood. Countless Hierarchs, such as Palaion Patron Germanos, the Bishops Isaiah of Salona and Joseph of Roga, the Archbishop Kyprianos in Cyprus and priests such as the Holy Martyr Cosmas Aetolos and simple monks, watered the tree of freedom with the blood of their martyrdom.

Our Venerable Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, gratefully honouring and dutifully participating in the sacred memory of the rebirth of our pious Roman race and nation, came to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre of our Saviour Christ, where we rendered thanksgiving praise to the Holy Triune God. Moreover, we prayed fervently for eternal rest in the land of the living for the blessed souls of those who fought heroically for Faith and Country and fell gloriously, in the holy struggle of our nation.

Therefore, allow Us to raise our glass and exclaim as we should:

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live the pious and royal race of the Rum Orthodox!

Long live Greece!

Long live our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood!

This was followed by the address of the Consul General of Greece as follows:

“Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Your Excellency Representative of Cyprus in Palestine,

Your Excellency Representative of Ireland to the Palestinian Authority,

Respected fathers and members of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood,

Dear compatriots and friends,

It is easy today, 200 and 3 years after the National Uprising of 1821, to often consider the Revolution and its happy outcome as an inevitable development, which was bound to come, to achieve the liberation of the Greeks and the fulfilment of their desire for independence. This certainty is, in one sense, a measure of the success of our country, which has managed, through the intervening two centuries, to ensure the stability that allows us to look towards the future, stepping on solid foundations.

However, two centuries ago, none of this was a given. Neither the Revolution nor much more its outcome was a necessity imposed by the flow of History. Our Nation’s noble Struggle for freedom was undertaken in an international environment of adversity. The agreement between the Great Powers of the time,

at the base of the Congress of Vienna, the Holy Alliance, aimed at maintaining the status quo, the absolutist order of things, after the experience of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Every revolutionary movement, whatever its motives, was a threat and had to be suppressed.

Unfavourable were also the circumstances of our Nation, which, for four centuries of cruel tyranny, struggled to preserve its identity, its faith and its values, its very language and its historical consciousness. The work of the Church in this regard was of decisive importance and the gratitude of Hellenism is due to it. As well as the work of numerous learned personalities, inside and outside the Greek territory, and of all those who with patience and self-sacrifice dedicated themselves to the rebirth of Greek education and intellect and to the Greek Enlightenment movement.

The available resources were also weak at the beginning of the Revolution. Little money, equipment and supplies, against the forces of an empire. The compensation for these shortcomings was the patient preparation of the Revolution, the military experience of a few but capable men, the careful utilization of every opportunity offered by the international situation and above all the mobilization of all the forces of the Nation, in the revolted country and abroad, for the realization of the vision of freedom. And boldness, with unwavering faith in the justice of this vision.

Under these conditions, the Struggle began, in 1821. Its unexpected military successes shook the certainty that it would be crushed. With the mobilization of the forces of the Greek diaspora and people favouring Greece, who believed in the principles of freedom, the developments on the battlefield gradually established the prospect of its success. The Church contributed the most to the support of the Struggle, on a material and spiritual level, as well as personalities who played a leading role in its success. Its sacrifices were similar, from the martyrdom of Patriarch Gregory V to the

battlefields.

This is the most brilliant epic of our modern history, which founded modern Greece. Simultaneously with the war on land and sea, modern political institutions were being born, in an era dominated by autocracy. From the very first year of the Revolution, the insurgent Greeks drew up Constitutions, which established a democratic state, with provisions for the separation of powers, individual and political rights, absolute abolition of slavery in Greek territory, and for foreigners who would resort to it. The struggle of the Greeks for their freedom was associated from the beginning with universal values, which throughout time defined the identity of Hellenism.

But let us not forget that it was an inconclusive fight to the end, long, hard and covered in blood. Greek populations in the Greek area, the coasts of Asia Minor, Cyprus and elsewhere suffered massacres in retaliation for the Revolution. And here, in the Holy Land, Greeks, Christians and the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood paid their own price of persecution.

We must also not overlook that the revolutionary struggle has not only bright pages but also painful, dark chapters. The discord sowed its pernicious seed also during the Revolution, which also experienced civil conflicts, while its survival hung by a thread. Let us also look at these mistakes face to face, soberly drawing their lessons.

The long struggle of Hellenism succeeded. The vision of freedom was fulfilled and in 1830 Greece officially took its place among the sovereign states. After nine years of war, the country was devastated, with widows, orphans, the homeless and the disabled in need of immediate care. Within suffocating borders, with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Greeks left outside them. The new Greek state began its course in history, small, poor and bruised.

However, it had been born. In the two centuries that followed,

a time of intense developments for all of humanity, Greece, with the same devotion of its citizens that characterized the fighters of the rebirth, managed to overcome, grow and develop, cope with many other challenges and emerge stronger.

Today, it enjoys international respect for its place in the world, with strong friendships and alliances. It progresses by preserving its traditions and its values. Its course is the best justification for the labour and blood of our ancestors, who in 1821, against all odds, attempted what was considered impossible.

Greece can look to the future with confidence equal to the pride with which it reflects on its past. With the same sober confidence, it can work for the promotion of the values of Hellenism in the world and the defence of its timeless priorities and interests. Among them, Your Beatitude remains the preservation of the Christian presence and heritage in the Holy Land and the rights of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

As we celebrate our national anniversary today, let us wish for peace to come to the Holy Land. The war conditions in our region and the respect for human suffering, especially the weak, do not allow solemn celebrations. But they urge us to reflect on the historical experiences of our own country. From this stems its steadfast support for peace and justice among nations.

Many happy returns. Long live Greece.”

From Secretariat-General