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# Archepiscopal Encyclical on Greek Independence Day




GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

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Archepiscopal Encyclical on Greek Independence Day

March 25, 2024

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Onward, children of Greece … now is the fight for everything! (The Persians, Aeschylus)

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

The battle cry of the ancient Greeks as they charged the forces of Xerxes at Salamis, more than four hundred years before the gentle reply of the Virgin to the Archangel, is an inspiring testament to the resilience and courage of our People, our Genos. Although they were severely outnumbered, they never gave up their hope for their freedom and fought their way to victory. The same is true of the Immortal Heroes of 1821, whose memory we invoke on the Great Feast of the Annunciation, which is the most perfect story of humanity’s aspiration for true and compete liberty.

Although tender was the answer to the mighty Gabriel, “Be it unto me according to you word,” the response of the Virgin actually carries the same force and intensity of the Greeks who repelled the Persians, as well as their descendants who freed Greece from over four hundred years of Ottoman occupation. For truly, the

salvation of the human race – initialized and empowered by the assent of the Theotokos to the Incarnation of God – is and has always been “the fight for everything.”

Human liberty – the ability to live our lives in a climate of opportunity and with freedom of choice – is always a struggle. The miracle of the Annunciation is that through a young girl, chosen by God, our ultimate freedom has been guaranteed in Christ. Whether repelling invaders, or expelling occupiers, the Greek People have always risen to the challenge. And with the faith of the Gospel, we behold our decisions to “fight for everything” under the aspect of eternity, sub specie aeternitatis. For the contest of the human spirit is not only against the oppressors of this world, but also, as the Apostle says: “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Therefore, beloved brethren in the Lord, let us magnify the Virgin Theotokos, who embodies with her mildness a strength worthy of her title as our “Champion Leader” (Ὑπέρμαχος Στρατηγός). And let us give thanks to God for the courage of our ancestors – both those of the ancient world and those of 1821 – who gave of their lives in the fight for everything. Because of their sacrifices, we possess as a precious treasure the glory of Greece and the glory of our Holy Greek Orthodox Faith.

Long live Greece!

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

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