18/07/2024

Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Invasion of Cyprus



To 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:

But let judgment roll down as water, and righteousness as an impassable torrent. (Amos 5:24)

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the unjust and unnecessary invasion of the Island Nation of Cyprus by Türkiye is a sad and heartbreaking milestone in what has been too long a journey of injustice and diplomatic neglect by the World Powers. The mistakes and grim miscalculations of the past are long overdue for forgiveness, so that credible solutions can emerge with an air of possibility.

For half a century, we have been praying and working for the reunification of Cyprus, and for all its citizens to receive the just judgment of a peaceful and equitable settlement. In the intervening decades, global leadership has chosen to turn a blind eye to the suffering on both sides of the Green Line. Families have passed through generations without closure for their lost loved ones, whose earthly remains are still missing. Magnificent cultural heritage has been razed and looted, finding its way into global black art markets. And the utter lack of respect for sacred Churches is a reminder of medieval views of conquest that should no longer be applicable in a civilized world.

We, who are Greek Orthodox Christians, and who share spiritual, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and all manner of civilizational ties with Cyprus, cannot simply stand by and wait passively for a resolution to be found — especially when the world seems to be no longer looking for one. We shall continue to raise the issue “in season and out of season.” But this cannot be all that we do. We must implore the Lord of all to enlighten and rain down righteousness on the hearts of world leaders and bring Cyprus back to the forefront of international affairs without further delay.

In this spirit, on Sunday, July 21, all parish priests of the Sacred Archdiocese of America are encouraged to hold a special Memorial Service for the blessed repose of our Cypriot brethren who were lost so unjustly. They certainly merit our prayers as much as Cyprus deserves a peaceful and just settlement now! Fifty years is far too long, and anything more is unworthy of what has been forever lost!

With hope and faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS Archbishop of America

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