

Doxology on the National Anniversary of October 28, 1940



On Monday, October 15/28, 2024, a doxology was held in the Catholicon Church of the Holy Sepulchre, for God's help in liberating our nation from the German and Italian Occupation of the Second World War and as a tribute towards the fighting heroes of our Nation and a prayer for the repose of souls of all the victims of this ordeal.

The Doxology was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with the Holy Sepulchre High Priests, Hieromonks, and deacons, in the prayerful participation of monks and nuns and members of the Hellenic Parish.

The Doxology was particularly honoured by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos and the staff of the Greek Consulate General.

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

following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today’s anniversary of “No” on October 28, 1940, is a landmark not only in the history of the Greek Nation but of all the nations involved in the Second World War. The people admired the heroism of the Greeks against the strong-armed military forces of Nazism and Fascism.

October 28, 1940, was not a simple war. It was a titanic struggle and a superhuman resistance of the Greeks against the intransigent advocates of their freedom. It was a struggle of self-sacrifice in defence of national territorial integrity, independence, and the moral values of those whose generative cause is faith in the crucified and risen Christ. “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15, 57), Saint Paul preaches.

Because of this, Our Mediocrity, accompanied by the respected and honourable members of our Venerable Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood as well as pious children of our Christian flock, went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and offered thanksgiving praise to our Holy Triune God, “who alone doeth great wonders” (Psalm 136,4) to our nation.

Moreover, we prayed for the eternal memory and blessed repose of the souls of our Fathers and brothers who fought for our faith and country and fell gloriously on the battlefields.

The epic of 1940 remains indelible in the modern history of humanity, because it demonstrated, from one point of view, the excessive size of the power of faith in God of righteousness, according to Saint John the Theologian: “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be” (Rev. 16, 5); on the other hand, the blasphemy of the man who was likened to the foolish beasts, according to the Prophet Isaiah: “For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up” (Is. 2, 12).

We say this because the blasphemy of Nazism and Fascism against the divine indestructible values, as well as the human person, reappears from the principalities and authorities of our era, transformed into so-called progress and liberation: “It is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers

of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11, 15), Saint Paul preaches.

The 28th of October 1940 is the important voice through which the Hellenic Christian and Greek Orthodox (Rum Orthodox) mindset was introduced not only to the Greek territory but also to the corresponding Hellenism. This mindset refers to the confession of faith in the God of righteousness and peace, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ and His Most Blessed Mother, the Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary.

Also noteworthy is the acknowledged contribution of the Church to the holy struggle for our faith and country against the invaders of the barbarian axis due to the active participation of its superior and inferior clergy and military priests, whose fiery and patriotic preaching in Christ inspired and strengthened the fighting spirit of the Greek warriors. Needless to say, among the heroically fallen fighters are the innumerable priests executed by martyrdom.

Today’s event of the anniversary of the glorious epic of 1940 is celebrated at a time when our Middle East region is being severely tested by war and violent conflicts. And this, at the expense of the “Gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15) of Christ who made peace through the blood of His cross, “having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven” (Col. 1:20), according to the wise Paul.

We, guardians and ministers of the holy shrines of the testimonies of the “Gospel of peace”, pray that, “This Lord of peace may give us peace through all things and in all ways” (Cf. 2 Thess. 3:16).

The souls of our martyred brothers and fathers who fell in the war of 1940, call us to vigilance and the preservation of the sacred legacy of our Greek Orthodox faith and tradition, “knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing.” (Cf. 1 Peter 3:9) according to the Apostle Peter.

Concluding, let us exclaim:

Long live the “No” of October 28, 1940!

Long live the pious race of the Rum Orthodox!

Long live Greece!

Long live our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood!

And the Consul General through his address below:

“Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Respected fathers and members of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood,

Dear compatriots and friends,

It is a precious privilege to participate in today’s Doxology in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in honour of the October 28, 1940 anniversary. In honour of those who dedicated themselves to the most noble struggle and sacrificed themselves for the freedom and ideals of the Greeks, but also for the universal values that throughout time have been linked to the brilliance of the name of Greece.

On this day, 84 years ago, the flames of the terrible World War II, which were already burning Europe, North Africa, and the Far East, now reached Greece’s doorstep. In the first, dark hours of that day, which was to be written in golden letters in History, Greece received an inexorable ultimatum from one of the mighty powers of the Axis, who had already subdued much of continental Europe.

Looking back on those moments, as recounted by those who lived through them, one is shocked by their dramatic dimension. At three past ten in the morning on October 28, 1940, a car with diplomatic plates stopped in front of a rather Doric residence, in Kifissia. One can visit it even today. The car belonged to the Ambassador of Italy and the residence to the Prime Minister of Greece. Startled, the sentry rang the electric bell from his lookout to give notice. Everyone in the house was sleeping. Finally waking up, the Prime Minister, puzzled by the unusualness of the hour, went down to the garden. Recognizing his visitor, he understood. History, once again, called Greece to be counted.

The Prime Minister invited the Ambassador to come inside. They sat in a very simple living room. The brief conversation that followed is recorded in a detailed and dramatic fashion in the memoirs of the Italian Ambassador. The ultimatum he gave demanded that Italian military forces be allowed to enter Greece and occupy various unspecified points of strategic importance. It was equivalent to a demand for Greece to renounce its independence and sovereignty. In silence, the Greek

Prime Minister carefully read the communication. And with absolute firmness he observed that it meant war, refusing to consider any other option, despite his interlocutor's insistence. Finally, the Prime Minister escorted the Ambassador to the exit and bid him farewell, telling him only "You are the strongest" as if he was simply assessing the struggle that was about to begin. In his memoirs, the Ambassador concludes that, at the time, he hated his profession. And he bowed respectfully to the old man who stood before him, who, in the supreme hour of judgment, had with sobriety and dignity expressed the will of his nation to choose the path of sacrifice over the path of dishonour.

To the political and military leadership of our country, there was no doubt that, if Greece were at war with an Axis member, sooner or later it would have to face the combined overwhelming power of all of them. The Greek people understood it too. And yet, despite the vast difference in power, it was never seriously considered to give up its independence and rights. The news of the start of the war was received with pride, self-confidence, with determination to defend the Motherland. The atmosphere is eloquently described by Angelos Terzakis, in his "Hellenic Chronicles": "The nation had fallen asleep differently last night, it was waking up differently now...And everyone, the humblest, felt an awareness awakening within him that three thousand years have been calling him by his name to justify them, to defend them. History ceased to be the words of textbooks and ceremonial speeches, it became an act of life... Fate's choice was heavy, but for this, the honour was very great." Unbridled enthusiasm in the Greek villages as well. In Constantinople, in Cyprus, in Egypt, and here in Jerusalem, Greek conscripts and volunteers presented themselves to the consular authorities, asking to go to Greece to fight. The bravery with which the absolute refusal to the brutal demand for submission was expressed became a world example and changed the ethos of the War.

At a difficult time, at a time of historical crisis and the bare truth, which cannot be covered with excuses and rhetorical schemes, Greece and its citizens, faced with the most adverse and ominous reality, chose without hesitation the difficult path of dignity and honour. This is the ultimate meaning of today's celebration. That is why in Greece, perhaps alone among all the countries of the world, we celebrate the anniversary of the day it entered World War II defending itself, despite the painful trials it suffered afterwards.

There is, however, one more important lesson from today's anniversary. It was not only the high opinion and adherence to its principles that allowed Greece to write new brilliant pages in its history and to show itself worthy of its eternal example in

the struggle for freedom. It was also the cool and systematic preparation that had preceded it, given the uproar that was approaching. Entering the war, Greece was smaller, poorer, and weaker than the opponent, wounded by the Asia Minor Catastrophe and by internal political turmoil. But it was not unprepared. In the previous period, the country, with all the forces at its disposal, was preparing in the face of danger, rebuilding its armed forces and preparing an exemplary plan for rapid mobilization. In the months preceding the start of the war, it dealt with the escalating provocations of her opponents with delicate diplomatic manipulations, which reached their climax with the torpedoing of the Greek warship “Elli” in the port of Tinos, on August 15, 1940. So that it would be in the best possible position when it came time to fight.

This lesson is also important as we continue to move through a new period of international turmoil and challenge. As we celebrated this same day last year, the deadly conflict in Gaza was in its third week. A year later, it not only continues but has spread to the wider area. In this difficult time, we have been tested with dangers, insecurity, and losses. In Gaza, the Monastery of Saint Porphyrios is still blocked but provides shelter, housing and food to hundreds of civilians. We will continue to go through this ordeal together, and Greece’s support will remain unwavering.

Faced with these difficult circumstances and until Peace returns, let us continue to follow the lessons of today, unity, like-mindedness, organized cooperation and preparation and above all adherence to our principles and values, which remain equally secure guides today, just like that morning of October 28, 1940.

Many happy returns. Long live Greece”.

From the General Secretariat



























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