

Message from His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia on the Anniversary of the 28th October 1940



Exactly eighty-five years ago, the pen of history wrote in indelible letters, the word “NO.” A small word, yet so powerful that it echoed far beyond the borders of Greece and transcended the moment in which it was spoken.

The historic “NO” of the 28th of October 1940 signified the clash of two contrasting worlds: arrogance and tyranny on one side; freedom and human dignity on the other. The Greek people small, poor, and long-suffering, yet proud and devoted to noble ideals, did not hesitate for a moment in choosing where they stood. Our ancestors joined wholeheartedly with the ranks of the free nations, forming a barrier against the darkness of fascism and Nazism that threatened to engulf Europe and the rest of the world.

Soon, that proud “NO” moved from people’s lips into their hearts and became what is now remembered as “the Epic of 1940”. One of the most powerful military forces of the time, despite its overwhelming numerical and technological superiority, suffered a humiliating defeat in the mountains of Pindus and Albania. “Little” Greece, by winning the first Allied victory against the Axis powers, gained the

world's admiration and lifted the spirits of all who continued to resist the advance of darkness.

In fact, it was nothing less than a miracle wrought by the help of the Most Holy Theotokos, the "Champion General," who throughout the ages strengthens, shelters, and protects our nation, but also due to the unity with which the Greek people resisted the invaders, putting aside hesitation, differences, and rivalries.

This spirit of national unity shown by our heroic forebears from the very first hours after that magnificent "NO" constitutes an invaluable inheritance for all Greeks today as we face the challenges and difficulties of our own times; especially for the Hellenism of the Diaspora, which must resist becoming alienated from its roots, its faith, and its cultural identity. Certainly, today we do not experience the nightmare of war and barbarity. We do not live in a hostile land but, rather, in a blessed country; one that shares the same values as our motherland just as it did then when it stood with Greece against the Italo-German Axis. Yet the challenge remains ever present: to safeguard all that our ancestors, through struggle and sacrifice, have handed down to us.

Therefore, let us draw strength and inspiration from the example of the heroes of 1940 and may we move forward united and with faith in God, so that we may pass on to the generations to come a Hellenism worthy of its history. May the "NO" of those days remain alive within us as a lasting call to virtue, unity, and solidarity!

Many years to all Greek women and men; years blessed and protected by the Most Holy Theotokos!