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His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden issues his Encyclical for the Greek Independence Day



His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden has issued his Encyclical for the Greek Independence Day. Read the full text below:

Encyclical for the National Holiday of March 25, 1821
by His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden
Sunday, March 29, 2020

Your Excellencies and Most Honorable State Representatives and Civic Leaders,
Reverend Fathers,
Beloved Brethren in Christ,
Friends and benefactors of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden and All Scandinavia,

Greeks in the homeland and throughout the Diaspora celebrate the anniversary of our National Rebirth after 400 years of slavery under the yoke of Ottoman rule. The revolutionary Greeks, who rose up “for the sacred faith of Christ and the liberty of the homeland” celebrate on this day, for although the revolution had been thought doomed at its inception, ultimately, fueled by the self-sacrifice of the freedom-fighters and their resolve, it generated the long-awaited result.

Within the framework of this celebration, we frequently hear the familiar names of the leading figures who captivated our imagination during our school years, helping us recreate their struggle in our minds and stoking the national pride we feel over all their achievements.

Clergy and laity, rich and poor, men and women, educated and semi-literate all united under the standard of the revolution bearing the cross, and gave themselves over to the struggle with all their might, so that we might today enjoy our many freedoms.

Kolokotronis and Rigas Feraios, Papaflessas and Athanasios Diakos, Bouboulina and Mando Mavrogenous are just a few of the names that manifest the universal participation in the struggle and do not merely represent a historic legacy relevant to just museums, but rather a living tradition, a continuous reminder about our own enduring debt to our forefathers, as well as to posterity.

Greece’s national poet Kostis Palamas characteristically states “don’t forget that everything you are, you owe not only to your hands exclusively. You also owe it to all those who came and went before you, and will come and go after you. The unborn and the dead will judge us.”

Throughout our history, we are reminded of our debt to all that our people hold sacred and holy by all those persons who defended these values with their lives. For us Hellenes of Scandinavia, the northernmost part of Europe, let us look to the legendary Lady of Ro. A woman from a small and uninhabited island, who raised the Greek flag each day for 40 years, as a contemporary example. This heroic figure, Despina Achladioti, lived for the sake of the homeland, offering herself, not by sacrificing her life, but rather, by dedicating its entire duration to keeping the national symbol of our flag flying high.

It is this very flag, which flies high on the mast of our hearts, that we too are obliged to fly high here in Scandinavia, learning, preserving, and teaching our people’s language, traditions, customs, and values, as well as our religion and culture, worthily living out our history. Only in this manner will the struggle of the heroes of 1821 prove not to have been in vain, but rather, to have been a true sacrifice, bearing living fruit for all of us who make up Greece both inside and out of its borders!

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live the Greek Nation!

Long live our Hellenic Community in Scandinavia!

Happy Greek Independence Day!