

Greece, worldwide Hellenism celebrates ‘OXI Day’, marking country’s entry into WWII in titanic struggle against the Axis



Today marks the 80th anniversary of Greece’s entry into WWII on the side of the Allies, with the national holiday in the country and by Hellenism worldwide known as OXI day — Oxi, pronounced “O-hee”, in Greek means “No”.

The curt “no” in this case commemorates the answer given by Greek leader Ioannis Metaxas to an ultimatum by fascist Italy’s Benito Mussolini to bow to Axis demands.

The Second War World in Greece commenced with an Italian invasion through the country’s northwest Epirus province from southern Albania, which was then an Italian protectorate, in the early morning hours of Oct. 28.

After initially deflecting the invasion along the border’s mountain slopes and narrow valleys, Greek forces went on a counter-offensive the next month,

ultimately routing the invading forces and sending them back into Albania, where warfare continued for the next six months, until a massive German invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia came to Mussolini's rescue in 1941.

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Doxology service by Archbishop of Athens & All Greece Ieronymos

In Athens on Wednesday morning, the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His

Beatitude Ieronymos, officiated at a Doxology service at the Athens Metropolitan Cathedral, attended by office-holders and the armed forces' chiefs.

The Metropolitan of Guinea, His Eminence Georgios, the representative in Athens of the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, His Most Divine Beatitude Theodoros II, along with the new Exarch of the Holy Sepulcher in the Greek capital, Archimandrite Rafael Grivas, also attended the te deum service.

In a brief statement, His Beatitude Ieronymos noted that "...today we stop our daily activities ... in order to see where we are at, what we lack, and what we want. Today's celebration comes under difficult conditions, but our obligation is to perform our duties, no matter the conditions."

The customary laying of wreaths before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in front of the Parliament building in central Athens' Syntagma Square, followed the service.

Although the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and corresponding public health guidelines to prevent its exposure cancelled the annual military and pupils' parades



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Archbishop of Australia Makarios' message

Halfway around the world, the Archbishop of Australia, His Eminence Makarios, issued a message on the occasion of OXI Day, stressing that the heroic “no” is punctuated with pride, gratitude and responsibility.

He adds “...These three words, which echo in our ears, only to travel to our thoughts, but overwhelm our very existence today. We stand with pride, because 80 years ago the small and poor nation of Greece stood up to the mighty war weapons of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany — only to become an example of heroism and self-sacrifice for all the peoples of the world.”



Elpidophoros' message for 'OXI Day'

In another corner of the world, the Archbishop of America, His Eminence Elpidophoros, issued an encyclical on the occasion of the OXI day national holiday.

In part, His Eminence stressed that "...today, we celebrate the 80th anniversary of our magnificent Feast of Victory – the victory of Theotokos, who on October 28, 1940, came to the aid of Greece and her noble people. We honor those Greeks who, as the Lord enjoined in His commandment, 'let their "yes" be "yes," and their "no" be "no"'. On this day, the Greek People said a resounding "Yes" to freedom, to conscience, and to justice; even as they roared NO to the forces of fascism,

tyranny, and hatred.”

