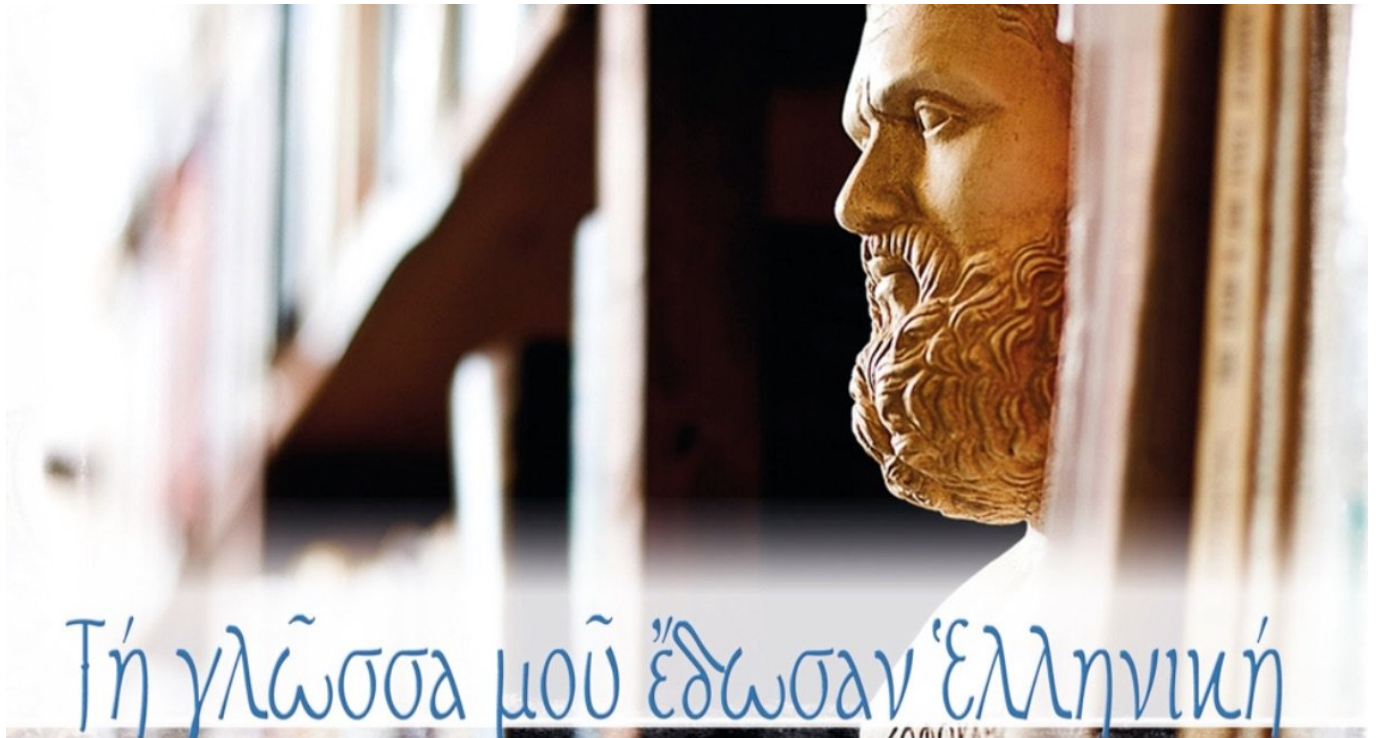


## February 9th: International Greek Language Day



“Do you think that I have anything else on my mind except freedom and language?” These were the words of the national poet Dionysios Solomos, who passed away on February 9, over a century and a half ago. To honor his memory on this day the entire world commemorates the Greek language, which is the richest and most impeccable language of all time!

It is our language, the same language that our ancestors created and “sculpted” to express their high intellect, the language that has been spoken continuously for forty centuries now, the language of Homer, Aristotle and the Gospels, the language of our parents – our language, praised by scholars and intellectuals throughout the entire world!

The late Sarantos Kargakos had said, “Our language is our first concern. From it, we are connected for four thousand years.... We Greeks extract the culture as a baby draws out breast milk. Greek words that constitute the world culture in us are planted in our soul from infancy”.

This Greek language is a point of reference, unification, and unity of Hellenism everywhere. It is the breakwater of every foreign influence. “Our language is our homeland, it is our culture, it is our history,” Kazantzakis had said. “We should be proud of our language. We are the only ones who have the privilege of calling

heaven “heaven” and the sea “sea”, as Homer and Plato called it. This is not something we should ignore “, Elytis had said.

We have been given the responsibility of passing on to our children this melodic language, the language of joy and sorrow, the language of folk song, rhetoric and philosophy, the language of science and the Gospel, poetry and fairy tales. We must make our youth active participants in learning and promoting our ancestral values and our Greek Orthodox faith. It is our honor and our obligation! And the struggle is revered.

In this country, we have taken root. Here where all different ethnicities unite, it is our responsibility to retain our own identity, language, culture, and faith. Our parishes serve as vessels for our heritage. At the forefront of this great battle stands teachers, parents, and clergy for “the Beautiful, the Great, and the True” so that we may instill in our children a strong foundation to begin their own journey and become ambassadors of our Greek spirit.

Let us continue to support our parishes and schools. Let us be sure to give to our children the gift of the Greek language. Teachers, parents, clergy, and community leaders, under the prudent guidance of His Eminence Archbishop oElphidophoros of America, let us all try to retain and promote our Greek language! Let us give our children the opportunity to understand the value of the Greek language. Let us always be reminded of the verse of the poet Palamas in all places where we encounter, the weary and the tired “we will sow a Greece and a youth”.

Anastasios Koularmanis  
Director of Greek Education

Athena Kromidas, President,  
High Council for Greek Education

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