

The Cross: The imperishable element of the Greek people's identity



The third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent on the Orthodox calendar, which fell on April 4 this year, marks the commemoration of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Holy Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week. The commemoration and ceremonies of the Third Sunday of Lent are closely affiliated to the feasts of the Veneration of the Cross (Sept. 14) and the Procession of the Cross (Aug. 1). Not only does the Sunday of the Holy Cross prepare us for commemoration of the Crucifixion, but it also reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ.

The Sunday of the Holy Cross is commemorated with the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, which is preceded by the Matins service. A Great Vespers is conducted

on the fore-feast, Saturday evening.

Speaking on the occasion of the feast day, professor emeritus Ilias Economou, the former dean of the Athens University's school of theology, spoke to the Orthodoxy news agency on the significance of the feast day for the Greek nation.

Speaking amid a year that also commemorates the bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence, Prof. Economou focused on the symbolism of the Cross during the struggle of liberation from our Ottoman Muslim rule – a titanic struggle from 1821 to 1829.

Among others, the distinguished theologian said some quarters today continue to struggle, in vain, to separate the Greek nation and individuals from the Cross.

“I don't believe that God and Greeks will allow this, however...Even the few; if they are few. Some are simply stunned because they've passed certain waves of modernity and revisionism”.

