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Archbishop Makarios visibly moved in heartfelt address for Battle of Crete



On Monday night, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios could not contain his emotions at events held to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Crete at the Holy Monastery of Axion Esti, Northcote.

Speaking about the role of the church during the Battle of Crete, Archbishop Makarios told the tale of Erhardt Kestner, a German, who visited German cemetery of Crete in 1952 to pay his respects to his countrymen had lost their lives during the Nazi Occupation of Greece. There, he found a black-clad woman lighting candles at the graves of German soldiers.



“I approached her,” Kestner said. “And I asked her, ‘Are you from here?’.

“‘Yes,’ she responded. ‘Then why are you doing this? These people killed Cretans’, I said.

“My child, from your accent you seem to be a stranger and you do not know what happened here from ’41-’44. My husband was killed in the Battle of Crete, and I lived with my precious only son. The Germans took him hostage in 1943 and he died at a concentration camp at Sachsenhausen. I don’t know where my child is buried. But i do know that all these children are some mothers, like myself. And I light candles because their mothers can’t come down here. Surely, some other mother is lighting the kantili in memory of my son.”



Following this story, the Archbishop, deeply moved, broke down.

“Axios!” yelled out everyone, clapping in support of the church hierarch.

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Saint Joseph the Hesychast
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