29/10/2021

Message from the Australian Prime Minister on Oxi (No) Day 2021



On this day, the story of Greek pride, independence and courage echoes throughout the world. It is a story that should — must — be repeated and never be forgotten.

For us, and future generations, it tells of the rich rewards — of freedom and democracy — that flow from risking all for what is right.

On 28 October 1940, Greece stood in resolute defiance of the aggression of fascist Italy. As a nation, Greek strength lay not in numbers, but in conviction. The power of Greek opposition, rising from an ancient wellspring of honour, paved the eventual Allied path to victory.

Today, we reflect on the magnificent Greek expression, philotimo — love of honour. A word of profound and complex meaning, it embraces the virtues of decency, dignity, respect and honesty that shape a life lived well.

In it we find the inspiration for General Ioannis Metaxas' answer 'όχι!' (no) to Benito Mussolini's ultimatum in the dark early days of the Second World War.

And through philotimo, too, we are assured of the enduring strength of the friendship between Australia and Greece.

In 1941, Greek philotimo was joined by the determination of Australian, New Zealand and British forces to stand with them on the side of right.

Then, and today, Greece and Australia share a commitment to democracy, human dignity and the rule of law. This is the motivating power to withstand the forces of destruction and division. To live, in the spirit of philotimo, for something larger than oneself.

In memory of the tragedy of war, and in honour of the courage of personal sacrifice and the ideals of a common humanity, we reflect with gratitude on the hope ignited in Greece 81 years ago. Lest we forget.

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia

PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

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October 2021