18/07/2022

Homily on the Sunday of the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and the 48th Commemoration of the Invasion of Cyprus



My Beloved Christians,

We come together this morning – in this Church of the Holy Cross – to remind ourselves of the sacrifice of others, of the lives that were lost, and the struggle that continues. I speak, of course, of our memorial and commemoration of the illegal invasion of Cyprus by Turkey that happened forty-eight years ago this coming week.

To observe this solemn remembrance in a Church dedicated to the Holy and Precious Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is a profoundly moving symbol. For the crucifixion and division of this noble Island Nation has been one in which we must look deeply for meaning, and indeed, salvation.

The Cross of our Lord is a heavy one to bear, especially for the families of those who perished, and for those whose way of life was destroyed. But it is a Cross that

God carried first for the sake of all. It is a Cross that leads to redemption, to healing, to forgiveness, and to love. That is why we must never lose faith in justice for Cyprus, and to the return of righteousness and unity to this divided land.

We pray for the souls of our lost brothers and sisters who perished in the invasion of Cyprus forty-eight years ago. We will never forget them, and we will never allow the world to forget. Our prayers for their souls are also cries unto heaven for justice.

We remember the wrecked churches and icons of Cyprus, the sacred objects and the sacred stones that disappeared as a result of the unjust division of this island bedrock of civilization that reaches back more than nine thousand years.

And in this same week, we remember how our precious Hagia Sophia was seized and converted to an alien purpose. It is as if the same forces that seek to dominate others by force seek the erasure of our very souls. But we will not give up and we will not give in. We will remember!

Therefore, my beloved Christians, let us stand before the Holy Cross of the Lord today, united by our pain, but also united in hope for a better tomorrow.

Our hope is in what happens after Holy Friday. Our hope is always rooted in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will raise up our fallen brothers and sisters. That is why we pray: Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη αὐτῶν.

And our hope is in justice for Cyprus. For the restoration of our Churches and Shrines. For the return of our people to their homes.

Furthermore, we hold dear the hope of those who fought for justice, but passed on without seeing the fulfillment of that hope. Their faith is the essence of what Saint Paul speaks of in his Letter to Hebrews:

Ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 1

We must persevere for a righteous solution for Cyprus with their same faith. We must continue to put forth substance into all our efforts for Cyprus. Turkey must end this unjust occupation and we must have reparations going forward. Thus, slowly but surely, we will see the evidence that we long for, a just and peaceful solution for all our brothers and sisters.

In today’s Gospel, the Lord told us that we are the light of the world. Therefore, let us commit to never allowing the cause of Cyprus to retreat into the shadows. Let us

always shine the light of truth and justice upon this precious Island Nation, until every dark and gloomy sadness vanishes from sight, and the Sun of Righteousness is manifest to all.

Amen!

goarch.org