

Archepiscopal Encyclical for the Commemoration of OXI Day



October 28, 2023

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

But we shall arise and be restored. Alleluia.

(Doxology for October 28, the Feast of Victory)

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

OXI Day is a day when we remember the resilience, bravery, and determination of the Greek People during the dark days of the Second World War. We extol the heroes of 1940 who stood firmly against the tidal wave of fascism that threatened

to overwhelm our world, and we take inspiration and courage that those who sacrificed themselves and were laid low, 'arose and were restored.' Whether in this life or the next, these brave souls are symbols of the resurrection, for Greece survived the brutal occupation that is known as the Κατοχή, and was eventually restored to freedom.

When we remember these heroes — some of whom may have been members of our own families — we recognize in them the spirit of liberty that we so highly prize in today. They took up the awesome responsibility to defend their Nation against invaders, at the risk of losing everything. This kind of daring comes from deep wellsprings of hope when there is no reason to hope. It comes from faith in God Who is victorious over sin and death. And it comes from a love of one's Country that carries one away from hearth and home to lonely outposts high in the mountains.

My fellow Christians: let us honor their memory with Doxologies of gratitude and Memorials of love. Tell your children and your grandchildren the stories of struggle and heroism that inspired the world to hold the Heroes of 1940, as Winston Churchill immortalized them:

"Hence, we will not say that Greeks fight like heroes, but that heroes fight like Greeks."

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

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