



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

OXI Day Commemoration 2019

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy
Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils,
Philo托chos Sisterhood, Faculty and Students of the Catechetical and Greek Afternoon Schools,
Directors and Participants of all Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the
Communities of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

Seventy-nine years have passed since our forefathers, sensing the dangers of an uncharted course history was navigating, stood up in opposition to the powers of fascism in Europe and defended with their lives the very freedom and liberty their forefathers had secured for them. Their struggle, however, was not merely for self-preservation, but for the defense of ageless ideals, the safeguarding of timeless principles, and for the protection of family and neighbor. October 28th, 1940 marked a day wherein Greeks stood up to Hitler and Mussolini and, with one voice and with one word, proclaimed that they would not give in to the inner demons of our world who were trying to shout down the better angels of our nature. We celebrate these heroes for their brave actions by commemorating this day as “OXI” day. It is a day when we say no to tyranny, no to violence, and no to injustice.

Far be it from being just a day in which we say “no”, we must also recognize the resolute fact that this exclamation served also as an affirmation. It affirmed principles that our people and countless people throughout the world have long held dear — liberty, peace, justice, and religious freedom. The heinous events of World War II still endure in some people’s memories and the effects of its devastation are still felt to this very day. Yet in the midst of the death and destruction that marked those dark years of our history, a light shined forth from the heroes who preserved those principles. It is with these thoughts that we commemorate these heroes today as we seek not only to honor their sacrifice, but to also carry on these principles which we hold so dear.

The singular day in which our forefathers said “Oxi” to the fascist leaders of Europe may have occurred seventy-nine years ago, but its spirit is no less needed today. Nearly eight decades later, violence still seeks to deprive people of their liberties. The Middle East is in a tumultuous state of war wherein unjust powers slaughter innocent people for regional influence. The division of Cyprus and threats of aggression from Turkey loom. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, our Mother Church and Orthodoxy’s Spiritual Center, still suffers from a lack of religious freedom. These and countless other tragedies continue to challenge the world and test us in our commitment to the values we preach.

As descendants of those very Greeks who inspired hope in a war-weary Europe and as inheritors of their honor, we have an obligation to be at the forefront of these struggles today so that we may

continue to count ourselves worthy of their integrity. Now more than ever are we in need to rise to the same valor as our ancestors not in a vain attempt for self-glory, but out of an obligation to our neighbors and each other. We must stand up against evil in the world in all its forms. We must endeavor to combat injustice by boldly denouncing it and aiding the victims. No less can be expected of us because God has given us the means to do so and because we have the example of our forefathers.

My beloved, as we celebrate this most festive occasion, let us always remember the courageous sacrifices our ancestors made on October 28th, 1940 and in the following years of war. Let their example be for us an image of how we should respond to the actions and threats of tyranny. Let us never fear to confront the tyranny and injustices of our era while always remembering the words of the Psalmist, *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, and the mountains quake with their surging”* (Ps. 46: 1-3). Praying that God blesses you with every good and perfect gift from above and that he enlightens you to walk the path of righteousness and justice, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive, calligraphic style. The word "Metropolitan" is written in a smaller, more compact script, while "Evangelos" is written in a larger, more flowing script. The signature is centered on the page.

† EVANGELOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey