



# 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ochos 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 28<sup>th</sup>, 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 28<sup>th</sup>, 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, flowing style. The word "Metropolitan" is written in a smaller, more compact script, while "Evangelos" is written in a larger, more prominent script. The signature is centered on the page.

† EVANGELOS  
Metropolitan of New Jersey



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Πρός τόν εὐλαβέστατον Ἱερόν Κληρόν,  
Τούς Προέδρους καί τά Μέλη τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συμβουλίων,  
Τάς Προέδρους καί τά Μέλη τῶν Φιλοπτώχων Ἀδελφοτήτων,  
Τούς διδάσκοντας καί διδασκομένους τῶν Κατηχητικῶν καί Ἑλληνικῶν Σχολείων,  
Τάς Ὄργανώσεις τῆς Νεολαίας καί ἅπαν τό Χριστεπώνυμον πλήρωμα τῶν εὐσεβῶν Ὁρθοδόξων  
Χριστιανῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Νέας Ἱερσέης.

*Χαῖρε σκέπη καί ἀντίληψις τοῦ λαοῦ σου τοῦ πιστοῦ»*

(ἐκ τοῦ Οἴκου τῆς ἐορτῆς)

Ἀγαπητοί ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφοί,

Ἡ σημερινή ἡμέρα τῆς 28<sup>ης</sup> Ὀκτωβρίου, ἀποτελεῖ γιά τοὺς ἅπανταχοῦ Ἕλληνες φωτεινό ὄροσημο ἱστορικῆς μνήμης, καθὼς, παράλληλα μέ τήν ἐορτή τῆς Παναγίας μας, θυμόμαστε μέ ἰδιαίτερη συγκίνηση καί δέος, τά κατορθώματα τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἡρώων, πού ἔβαλαν πάνω ἀπό ὅλα τήν ἐλευθερία τῆς πατρίδας μας. Ἡ καρδιά καί ἡ σκέψη ὄλων μας, στέκεται με σεβασμό καί συγκίνηση μπροστά σέ ὄλους ἐκείνους τοὺς ἀγωνιστές καί πατριῶτες, πού θυσιάσαν τή ζωή, τίς οικογένειές, τά σπίτια καί τίς περιουσίες τους, γιά νά ἀπολαμβάνουμε οἱ σύγχρονοι Ἕλληνες ἐλεύθερη τήν Πατρίδα μας.

Σάν σήμερα, τό ἔτος 1940, γράφτηκε ἄλλη μιά ἔνδοξη σελίδα τῆς ἑλληνικῆς ἱστορίας, ὅταν σύσσωμο τό ἑλληνικό ἔθνος βροντοφώνησε τό «ΟΧΙ» στίς Ἰταλικές ἀξιώσεις, μέ ἀποτέλεσμα τήν εἴσοδο τῆς Ἑλλάδας στόν Β' Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο καί τήν ἔναρξη τοῦ ἑλληνοϊταλικοῦ πολέμου. Μάταια ὁ Μουσολίνι πίστευε πώς μέ τοὺς 100.000 στρατιῶτες πού εἶχε συγκεντρώσει στήν Ἀλβανία, θά μπορούσε μέ εὐκολία νά κατακτήσει τήν Ἑλλάδα. Ἀπό τίς πρῶτες κιόλας ἡμέρες τά ἑλληνικά στρατεύματα γνωρίζουν μεγάλες νίκες καί οἱ Ἰταλοί ἀποχωροῦν ἠττημένοι καί ντροπιασμένοι. Παρά τήν ὑπεροχή τοῦ ἐχθροῦ σέ ἀνθρώπινο δυναμικό καί ἐξοπλισμό, ἡ ἀγέρωχη ἑλληνική ψυχή, διατηρῶντας ἄσβεστη τήν ἀγάπη γιά τήν Πατρίδα, μάχεται καί βγαίνει νικήτρια, γράφοντας ἕνα ἡρωικό ἔπος στά χιονισμένα βουνά τῆς Πίνδου καί τῆς Βορείου Ἡπείρου, πού ἐμπνέει καί σήμερα. Μέ τό γενναῖο ΟΧΙ τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ λαοῦ στήν ὑποταγή, ἀποδείχθηκε ὅτι ὅποιος μάχεται μέ τήν ψυχή του γιά τήν ἐλευθερία τῆς πατρίδος, ὅσα ἐμπόδια κι ἂν συναντήσει, τά ξεπερνᾷ καί βγαίνει νικητής.

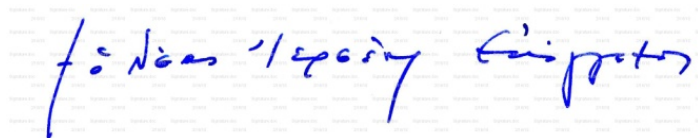
Βεβαίως, ὅπως καί πολλές ἄλλες φορές στό παρελθόν, ἔτσι καί στὰ κρίσιμα ἐκεῖνα χρόνια τοῦ πολέμου τοῦ 1940, οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐμπιστεύθηκαν τόν ἀγῶνα τους στὰ χέρια τῆς Παναγίας. Δέν χωράει καμιᾶ ἀμφιβολία ὅτι ἡ ἔνδοξος νίκη τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀποτελεῖ ἕνα θαῦμα τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου. Τήν ἔβλεπαν νά τοὺς ἐμψυχώνει καί νά τοὺς σκεπάζει,

ὅταν πολεμοῦσαν στὸ χιονισμένο μέτωπο. Ἀπὸ τὴ Σκέπη τῆς οἱ στρατιῶτες ἔπαιωναν θάρρος καί, περιφρονῶντας τὴ λογικὴ τῶν ἀριθμῶν, ἀντιστέκονταν μὲ ἀπαράμιλλο ἥρωισμό στὶς σιδηρόφρακτες ὀρδές τοῦ ἐχθροῦ, ὑπερασπιζόμενοι τὴν τιμὴ καὶ τὴν ἀκεραιότητα τῆς πατρίδος μας καὶ προκαλῶντας τὸν παγκόσμιο θαυμασμό. Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας καθιέρωσε σήμερα νὰ ἐορτάζεται ἡ Ἁγία Σκέπη τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, ὑπενθυμίζοντάς μας ὅτι ἡ Παναγία, ὡς «φωτοφόρος νεφέλη», ἀγλαῶς σκέπει, περιφρουρεῖ, προστατεύει καὶ σώζει τὸν λαὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπὸ κάθε ἐχθρική ἀπειλή, καθὼς ἔχει «ἄπειρον πρὸς Αὐτὸν παρρησία».

Ἡ σημερινὴ ἐορτὴ, ἂς ἀποτελέσει γιὰ ὅλους μας εὐκαιρία νὰ στραφοῦμε πρὸς τὸ πανάγιο πρόσωπο τῆς Θεοτόκου, τὴ νοητὴ νεφέλη πού μας ὀδηγεῖ στὴν ἐπουράνιο Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἡ «Ὑπέρμαχος Στρατηγός», Κυρία Θεοτόκος, νὰ ἐπισκιάζει πάντα μὲ τὴν ἀγάπη τῆς τὸ ἔθνος καὶ τὴν Ὁμογένειά μας καὶ νὰ εἶναι βοηθός καὶ συμπαραστάτης σὲ κάθε βῆμα τῆς ζωῆς μας. Μαζί ὅμως μὲ τὴν ἐνθερμη προσευχὴ καὶ τίς ἐγκάρδιες εὐχαριστίες μας πρὸς τὴν «Ὑπέρμαχο Στρατηγό» τοῦ ἔθνους μας, ἂς ἀναφωνήσουμε μὲ ὅλη τὴ δύναμη τῆς ψυχῆς μας καὶ ἓνα μεγάλο εὐχαριστῶ, σὲ ὅλους ἐκείνους τοὺς γνωστούς καὶ ἄγνωστους ἥρωες, πού δίδαξαν σὲ ὅλους ἐμᾶς τοὺς νεότερους, τί θά πεῖ πίστη, ἀγῶνας καὶ θυσία, χαρίζοντάς μας μὲ το αἷμα τους τὸ ἀνεκτίμητο δῶρο, πού λέγεται Ἐλευθερία τῆς πατρίδος.

Μετά πατρικῶν εὐχῶν καὶ τῆς ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγάπης

**Ο ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ**



† Ὁ Νέας Ἱερσέης ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ