



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

45th Anniversary Cyprus Invasion Remembrance 2019

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy

Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philoptochos 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 Greek Orthodox Communities of our Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

As we reflect on the events of the Turkish Invasion of Cyprus forty-five years ago, we are once again reminded of the severe injustices perpetrated by the ruling powers of Turkey against our Cypriot brothers and sisters who endured immense hardships in the midst of a world that turned a blind eye to Turkey's cruelty.

Families were torn apart, neighbors were pinned against one another, churches were destroyed, hundreds of thousands of people were forced out of their homes under the guise and false pretense of a peacekeeping mission, and thousands died as they tried to protect themselves against the unjust hands of tyranny. Turkey had once again engaged in "ethnic cleansing" by forcibly removing one-third of the ethnically Greek-Cypriot population and illegally dividing a nation. These grave injustices are just a few in a litany of others which have been committed by Turkey. Sadly, these injustices have not been rectified and, lamentably, even more injustices have followed.

Such hostile actions have become all too common in that region as Turkey has since engaged in further acts of violence and oppression, not only against Cyprus, but against Greece and even her own citizens as well. Turkey has engaged in heinous activities since it was known as the Ottoman Empire. Its desire to exterminate the Orthodox faith, Hellenic history, Hellenic culture, and the Greek language has shown no bounds and has continued even to the modern era in ways that are less visibly obvious, but equally as destructive. The enslavement of the Greek people during the Ottoman occupation, the genocides committed in the 20th century, the forced closing of the Halki Theological School, and the continued oppression of Turkey against our Mother Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, are just some examples of Turkey's persistence to annihilate our faith, our culture, and our people.

But in the face of these continued tragedies, we must continue to stand strong against the forces of evil, against oppression, and against injustice. We must never fail to be a voice for our Orthodox faith, religious freedom, political freedom, and righteousness. As Greek Orthodox Christians we must reflect on these events not with hopelessness in our hearts, but with a determination in our souls to ensure that righteousness will prevail. Let us not speak of these events as a part of history past, but let us continue to actively advocate for the victims of these atrocities, realizing that this chapter of history may have started decades ago, but it is far from being completed.

Finally, I ask as we remember this solemn anniversary of our fallen mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, friends and neighbors, that we pray for the repose of their souls and for their entrance into God's Eternal Kingdom. May we continually reflect on the events of July 1974, prayerfully remembering those who lost their lives in the struggle for liberty and their struggle for justice in Cyprus. Praying that our most merciful and just God continues to guard and guide each of us and to preserve His people, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A 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.

† E V A N G E L O S
Metropolitan of New Jersey