



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ
ARCHDIOCESE OF THYATEIRA & GREAT BRITAIN

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ARCHBISHOP'S ENCYCLICAL ON THE OCCASION OF ANNIVERSARY OF THE 25th MARCH 1821

"... and behold the multitude of a great army of heavenly spirits, led terrible ranks of the dragon and threw him into the fiery furnace of Tartarus." Agathangelos, Chrismoi 10.

"The French Revolution came in 1789: it opened our eyes: it made us think differently ..." Theodoros Kolokotronis

Beloved in the Lord,

The Revolution of the Hellenes in 1821 is the most important stage of transition between the traditional world and modern society, the clinching point in the formation of the Greek Nation-State, which also demonstrates the context for blending traditional principles and needs, with more modern ideas and concerns. In 1821, "the God ordained, mighty and invincible reign of the Ottomans" was overthrown and people's daily living conditions were overturned.

The richness of today's historiography, especially demonstrates the dual nature of the Greek subjects revolt against Ottoman Despotism, primarily as a rebellion that liberated them from tyrannical bonds and consequently the sociopolitical upheaval that followed. This is because historic action can never just be an overthrowing of order, but must, at the same time, establish a new order in the world, expressed in principles inherited from tradition, that are embedded in the lived experience of this newly constructed world. Thus, with the Revolution of 1821, the old order of the world back then, one of hereditary rights, found itself in the vortex of catastrophe. Traditional values, hierarchies, rules written in stone, centuries long authority and secular affair - all inherited by Divine Providence - are challenged and tested. Motivated to action by self-sacrificing decision making (Church, New Martyrs), supernatural exemplary resistance (klephts and men-of-arms), or by the coupling of the innovative ideas of the European Enlightenment with the independent ideas of the Modern Greek Enlightenment that broke the protective shell of the old world -ideas that were shaped and moved by the Philiki Etaireia - the revolutionaries establish a new vanguard of present and future, and for which they literally take on Death in battle. The momentum of the Greek Renaissance was the "container" that is, the thing which holds within itself, and strongly underlines, the plurality of the revolutionary struggles of the Greek people and reinvested meaning into its existential being.

The Greek Revolution of 1821, a kaleidoscopic revolution of Liberty and social emancipation from any form of tyrant, the bearer and foundation of the Hellenic National Idea, politically fulfills the timeless cultural unity of Hellenism and as such refuses to be confined in closed forms of interpretation. The manifold subjects of the Revolution of 1821 with their incongruous motivations, their various vested aims, and the huge significance of success, clearly underline the instructive importance of the revolutionary venture: namely that, in every Revolution the old is engaged with the new, the past with the present and future, in a tussle that leads to redefinitions and new compositions and obviously, therefore, to new aims. With these thoughts, seeing the Revolution as an Historical Event, the effective catalyst of Modern Greek Society, but also as the referential act of moral continuity, we are called today to remember it with pride and respect, as conscious descendants of those active participants, and to solemnly protect what it has bequeathed, quietly drinking from its flowing springs.

The Greeks abroad in Great Britain and Ireland are invited to take part, with justified pride, solemn remembrance and organized presence, in the multiple events celebrating the Revolution of 1821, and to emphasize, in this way, the vital understanding of its historical relationship and the conviction of its national continuity with that bright Genus of people who were born under the auspices of the Hellenic Light and advanced through History with the fragrance of the Greek Land. The Annunciation to the All-Holy Mother of God by the Archangel Gabriel was the beginning and first-fruits of the salvation of the Human Race. On this fateful and prophetic day, the enslaved Hellenes chose to claim their freedom, and their spiritual, national and social renaissance. "Today is the fountainhead of our salvation and the manifestation of the mystery which was from eternity". Together with the uprising of the Greek people and the Annunciation of the Most-Holy Theotokos we also remember the anniversary of the beginning of the Struggle for Independence in Cyprus, on the 1st April 1955, given that the first uprising leant meaning to the second which led to Cyprus' Independence in 1960.

Celebratory events and festive talks will take place in all Communities of the Archdiocese, and in the Schools and Associations of Greeks Abroad. The official Doxology and thanksgiving for the anniversary of the Revolution of 1821 will take place in the Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom in London, presided over by Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain, where His Excellency the Undersecretary for Greeks Abroad, Mr. Terence Quick, will deliver the traditional celebratory address for the Anniversary, both at the Cathedral and at the afternoon event organized by the National Federation of Cypriots and the Greek Schools of Greater London.

Wishing you health and the protection of our Holy God in your work, and all the best for the remainder of Holy and Great Lent, I remain with warm wishes and honour.

London, 7th of March, 2018


Archbishop of Thyateira
and Great Britain, Gregorios

Note: To be read from the Pulpit instead of a Sermon on Sunday, March 25, 2018