

October 25, 2016

Protocol Number 210/16

October 28, 2016

OXI Day

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On October 28 we commemorate the courage of the people of Greece in 1940 when they stood firmly against the forces of Fascism, facing threats of occupation, loss of freedom, and even life itself. Boldly, the cry of “OXI,” of “NO!” was exclaimed, as they refused to concede their sovereignty and submit themselves to the tyrannical leaders of the Axis forces. Instead our forbearers rallied to defend their ideals and to protect their liberty. In confronting a power that was destructive of freedom and driven by evil machinations, the people of Greece chose to serve freely what is just and true.

In the Holy Scriptures we find a comparably similar choice that was made when Joshua called the leaders of the tribes of Israel together to warn them of the dangers of following the gods of other peoples and forsaking the Lord. He reminded

them of their blessed heritage, of their calling as the chosen people of God, and of how they had been led from captivity to the land of promise. Joshua asked them to make a choice between the true God of their fathers or the idols of the idolatrous Amorites (Joshua 24:15). On that day and in answer to that call, the people proclaimed, *We will serve the Lord!* (24:21)

On October 28, 1940, and in the hard days, months, and years that followed, the cry of “OXI” resonated in the hearts and minds of the people of Greece. They made a choice. They remembered their blessed heritage of freedom and the centuries of hardship when liberty was lost. They chose timeless ideals over temporal threats. They chose courage over fear, faith when the immediate future was unknown, and resolve when asked to willingly acquiesce to a stronger, ruthless power. When many others were submitting to false ideologies and regimes of tyranny, the leaders and people of Greece chose to stand and show to the world the true nature of heroism.

As we commemorate OXI Day in our parishes and communities, may we affirm the value of this witness in our contemporary world. May our honoring of this mighty stand engender inspiration from our heritage and a love of the ideals of liberty, courage, valor, and all that is noble and true. In the face of false ideologies and forces that profane and destroy life, may we guide others to see the precedent of OXI Day, and may we choose this and every day to serve the Lord of freedom, justice and love.

With paternal love in Christ,

†DEMETRIOS

Archbishop of America