



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

46th Anniversary

Commemoration of the Invasion of Cyprus

To 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 Communities of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

As we remember the tragic and unjust invasion of Cyprus by the Turkish government on July 20, 1974, we are once again reminded of the brutality that was displayed, the savagery that was exhibited, and the barbarity which was shown towards the people of Cyprus. These terrible injustices which were directed towards our Cypriot brothers and sisters has left a deep wound which has never healed and never could be healed until justice is delivered and Cyprus is once again united.

The events that took place forty-six years ago witnessed families being torn apart, Greek Cypriots being forced from their homes, civilians being murdered, churches being destroyed, and the Hellenic heritage being eviscerated by a government which does not care for peace and harmony, but which seeks to advance its own agenda at whatever cost to human life. It is lamentable that these actions have become commonplace for the Turkish government as their policy of hatred, antagonization, violence, and radicalization has become more prevalent especially recently with their decision to convert the Great Church of Agia Sophia to a mosque.

The “ethnic cleansing” perpetrated by the Turkish authorities against the Greek Cypriots is one of the many despicable actions committed by Turkey in its history of violence and subjugation. This history of suppression and viciousness extends back hundreds of years to the Ottoman occupation and has been unrelenting even to the present day. Turkey’s desire to exterminate the Orthodox faith, the Hellenic culture, the

Greek language, and Hellenic history has been ceaseless. In the last 100 years alone, the Turkish government has committed genocide, forcibly closed the Halki Theological School, and continued the religious persecution of our Mother Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Nevertheless, in the face of these adversities, we must continue to stand strong against all forces of evil, division, and injustice. We must always be an unwavering voice for our Orthodox faith, our Hellenic identity, religious freedom, and justice for all. We must also speak out against the terrible atrocities committed against the Cypriot people whose homeland was taken from them and who suffered losses of life and property through the illegal actions of Turkey. Let us not speak of these events as a part of past history, but let us continue to actively advocate for the victims, realizing that this chapter of history is still not complete.

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 loving Lord grants eternal rest to those who lost their lives as a result of the Cypriot Invasion and praying that He guards and protects all of 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 with a large initial 'M'.

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