



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

The 1974 Invasion of Cyprus

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy,
Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,
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 of the Youth Organizations, and all devout
Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Communities of our
Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved,

As we reflect on the events of the Turkish Invasion of Cyprus 43 years ago, we are once again reminded of the severe injustices suffered by our Cypriot brothers and sisters who endured these immense hardships in the midst of a world that turned a blind eye to the cruelty of Turkey.

Forty-three years have passed since families were torn apart, neighbors were pinned against one another, and hundreds of thousands of people were forced out of their homes under the guise and false pretense of a peacekeeping mission. Forty-three years have passed since thousands of Cypriots were unjustly killed for trying to defend themselves and their families even in the midst of the heinous acts being committed against them. Forty-three years have passed since 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 atrocities are commonplace for Turkey as they seek to exterminate Greeks, Hellenic culture, and most important of all, our Church. From the enslavement of the Greek people during the Ottoman occupation to the genocides committed in the 20th century and the closing of the Halki Theological School, there has been a centuries-long effort to eradicate our Orthodox heritage and Hellenic identity.

These nefarious attempts of this greater evil, however, will not come to pass. For although Greek-Cypriots and all Greeks in general have been the victims of horrendous atrocities for centuries, our Lord and God continues to protect us and preserve us.

Though Turkey has tried to extinguish the Light carried by the Orthodox Church, they can never extinguish the unwaning Light of Christ.

Thus, we as Greek Orthodox Christians must reflect on these injustices not as a way of dwelling on adverse events in history, but as a way to remind ourselves that we must always combat the negative forces of injustice in the world and to constantly proclaim that which is right and just in every situation. It is my most fervent prayer that as we reflect on the events of July 1974, we prayerfully remember those who lost their lives in the struggle for liberty and we continue to advocate for justice in Cyprus. Praying that our most merciful and just God continues to guard and guide each of you to His Truth and to His Heavenly rewards, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Metropolitan Evagelos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'. The signature is centered on a background of a grid of small, faint text that reads "Signature.doc" repeated in a pattern.

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

This Encyclical is to be read on Sunday, July 16, 2017. Following the reading of the Encyclical a Memorial Service is to be held for those who tragically lost their lives during the Invasion of Cyprus.