



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 189/2023

**Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Day of  
Commemoration of the Turkish Invasion of Cyprus**

July 23, 2023

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

*“Upon the rivers of Babylon there we sat down and marched in the memorial of Zion.”  
(Psalm 136, v. 1)*

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

Forty-nine years have passed since the sad summer of 1974, when on July 20, armed Turkish soldiers — with the tolerance of the great powers and Greece’s weakness, due to military dictatorship — invaded the most beautiful island of Hellenism, our beloved Cyprus. Memories of persecution and uprooting from ancestral homes remain alive today. Many Cypriots of Kyrenia, Ammochostos and other bloodied areas recount with great sorrow the uprooting, rapes, pillaging and destruction that took place, and they rightly demand justice and liberation of their homeland, so that the island may be reunited under the flag of the Republic of Cyprus and the European Union.

We are like the Jews of the aforementioned psalm, because we weep and ache when remembering this gross injustice and invasion; when recalling the beautiful beaches of Ammochostos and Kyrenia; when worshipping the monasteries of Saint George and Saint Andrew the Apostle in Karpasia, of Saint Barnabas in Salamis and Saint Spyridon in Tremetousia; when awakening the vivid memories of celebrations and festivals, of weddings and songs, in the long-suffering villages of the occupied regions, and of the peaceful coexistence of Turkish and Greek Cypriots.



However, despite the fact that almost half a century has passed, and despite the fact that the Turkish government seems to be unyielding to the appeals and resolutions of the United Nations, we continue to believe that the pressure exerted by the Greek and Cypriot governments, the philhellenic senators and representatives in Congress and the Senate, the Greek Cypriot organizations everywhere, and all of you Orthodox Christians — together with the earnest prayers that we offer today, Sunday, July 23, in a memorial service for the fallen heroes of the Cypriot struggle in all the parishes of our Sacred Archdiocese — I am confident can bring about the desired result of a strong, united and free Cyprus!

Your fervent supplicant before the God of righteousness,

† ELPIDOPHOROS  
Archbishop of America