

The Metropolitan Chrysostomos Award



The *Metropolitan Chrysostomos Award* is given each year to a man or woman who took courageous action against anti-Semitism or discrimination. The award is named in memory of Metropolitan Chrysostomos, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan on the island of Zakynthos during the German occupation of Greece in WWII. Metropolitan Chrysostomos has been honored for the extraordinary courage he showed to protect the Jewish community of Zakynthos.

In 1943, the German military commander ordered Metropolitan Chrysostomos and the mayor of Zakynthos to prepare a list of the Jewish community on the island. His goal was to deport them to concentration camps in Poland. Instead of preparing such a list the Metropolitan and the mayor went to the Jewish community on the island and sent them into hiding in the mountains or with Christian friends in the countryside. Metropolitan Chrysostomos and the mayor returned to the German military commander and with a piece of paper that contained their two names and said it was the list of the Jewish community of Zakynthos.¹ The percentage of the Jewish community of Zakynthos who survived the Holocaust is ranked among the highest of any Nazi occupied area.

Metropolitan Chrysostomos was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1978, in recognition of his efforts to protect the Jewish community on his island. Metropolitan Chrysostomos' actions are consistent with those of other Greek Orthodox religious leaders, including Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens. The Raul Wallenberg Foundation reports that the Archbishop was the only national religious leader who publically challenged the Holocaust as it was happening. As well, he oversaw actions such as the creation of false baptismal certificates to protect members of the Jewish community and the sheltering of Jews in Greek monasteries and other Church properties.² Collectively their actions saved thousands of Jewish lives.

Metropolitan Chrysostomos is a true exemplar of the Oxi Day spirit and his courage a worthy role model for contemporary leaders.

¹ Source: "Metropolitan Chrysostomos. Mayor Lucas Karreri." *Yad Vashem*. Yad Vashem The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority. Web. 10 Apr. 2012. <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/chrysostomos_karreri.asp>.

² Source: Burns, Margie. "Archbishop Damaskinos -- Biography." *The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation*. IRWF. Web. 11 Aug. 2011. <<http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/es/generales/archbishop-damaskinos/>>.