

27/03/2024

Archbishop Elpidophoros Invocation, Remarks & Benediction at March 25 Celebration March 26, 2024



Let us bow our heads in prayer:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Lord of the Powers – be with us this day and every day, as we strive to fulfill Your will in our lives.

Grant unto those who serve the Good People of the Great State of New York, special grace and wisdom, to do and to enact that which is righteous and good in Your sight.

We give You thanks and praise, O God, for gathering us together today – to celebrate once again the Rebirth of the Hellenic Γένος.

Grant us the resolve to be followers of the Heroes of 1821, that we may always be worthy of their legacy, and bring honor to their names, and offer up all glory and worship to Your Most Holy Name – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

Esteemed Representatives of the State of New York,

Honorable Representatives of Greece and Cyprus,

Dear Friends,

I want to express my gratitude to the Greek-American members of the New York Legislature who have made today's celebration possible:

Senator Gianaris, Senator Gounardes, Senator Skoufis, Assemblyman Tannousis,

and Assemblyman Lemondes.

We are here to celebrate the resurgence of the Hellenic People through the struggles of the Immortal Heroes of 1821. But these struggles are by no means over.

This year marks half a century since the illegal invasion of Cyprus, and the division of this precious Island Nation against its will. We have come here to the Capitol of the Great State of New York to bear witness to this shameful injustice and to cry out for a righteous and lasting peace. As lawmakers and upholders of the Law, I express to each and every one of you the gratitude of the Omogeneia for your stalwart and unwavering support for the noble People of Cyprus and for pressing, as you are able, their just and lawful cause.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America has a unique relationship with the State of New York and with all New Yorkers. We have been a legal New York State Corporation since our inception, with our National Headquarters in New York City.

And in the City, we hold our National Parade every year with great pomp and circumstance! We look forward to sharing the day, Sunday, April 14th, with all of you. The parade commemorates the date of March 25, 1821 – the Fourth of July for Greeks around the world. And as this day coincides with the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, their synchronicity reminds us all that the true nature of liberty is the ability to choose, free from coercion or compulsion.

The Heroes of 1821 chose liberty, and acted in part inspired by the American Revolution. We honor them today here in the magnificent Legislative House of the People of the Empire State. Our presence is a reminder that all of us – clergy and laity, women and men, public servants and private individuals – bear the responsibility to ensure that future generations will have the same privileges, rights, and opportunities that we have. Democracy may have been invented by the Greeks, but it has always been up to every generation to seek ways to form the “more perfect Union” to which our Constitution aspires.

We may not always see the results of our labors, but neither did those who gave their lives in 1776, nor did the Heroes of 1821. The price of freedom always includes the sacrifice of those who water the Tree of Liberty with their own blood, and do not live to partake of its fruits.

Today, we honored creative and innovative individuals, whose energy and willingness have improved the life our communities across the State. I offer my warmest congratulations to all:

Dr. Florentia Christodoulidou,

Maria Pappas,

Michael Labatos,

The Reverend Presbyter Christopher Talleos, and

Christina Tettonis.

You truly merit the praise heaped upon you and the honor by which you are distinguished.

Therefore, with gratitude for the sacrifices of the Immortal Heroes of 1821, and with a firm intention to always be worthy of the blessings of liberty, I thank all of you for coming together to honor our Heritage. We are a proud community that rejoices in the gifts we have been given – the inestimable legacy of Greece.

May God bless us all, and ever keep free the Peoples of Greece, Cyprus, the Great State of New York, and the American Nation.

Ζήτω τὸ Εἰκοσιένα!

Ζήτω τὸ Ἑλληνικὸ Ἔθνος!

May we bow our heads:

Almighty and Ever-Living God, You have shown forth the Greek People as being endowed with every manner of gifts, to the attainment of a culture and civilization that has been shared with the world.

Now, O Most Merciful Savior and Lord, bestow Your every spiritual and material benefit upon those gathered here, their families and loved ones.

Grace us all to always hold our freedom as a precious jewel in our hearts, and give us hands that are eager to magnify and defend that liberty.

Bless all our public servants, here present and those afar, so that they may obtain the reward of good and faithful servants who have placed the interest of their constituents above their own, manifesting what is best and brightest in the

ministration of governments.

And may we all attain the fulness of our shared human nature, glorifying and praising Your Most Holy Name – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Photo: GOARCH/Brittainy Newman

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