

Metropolitan Iakovos of Mexico made inaugural pastoral visit to Panama



His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Mexico and Exarch of Central America and the Caribbean Islands embarked on his first pastoral journey to the Republic of Panama since assuming his ecclesiastical duties. The visit, filled with meaningful encounters and solemn ceremonies, aimed at fostering spiritual connections.

Upon his arrival in Panama City on the afternoon of Thursday, 21 March 2024, the Metropolitan commenced his visit with a prayerful reflection at the historic Panama Canal. There, he expressed his hope to officiate the Blessing of the Waters ceremony during the Epiphany feast on 6 January 2025.

On Saturday, 23 March, Metropolitan Iakovos paid homage to Alicia de Konstantinou, the founder of the Panama Clinic, by performing a Trisagion service at the clinic's Greek Orthodox Chapel. Later, he presided over the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Annunciation, honouring the memory of the late Athanasios Mavrokordatos, a businessman.

Following the liturgy, the Metropolitan engaged with the community, meeting with students and faculty of the Community Greek School, members of the Philoptochos Association, and staff of the Greek Community offices. Subsequently, he visited the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Panama, The Right Reverend Ulloa Mendieta to mark the commencement of Holy Week, before venerating the icon of Santa Maria La Antigua at five historic churches in Panama City.

In a heartfelt dialogue with local residents, Metropolitan Iakovos pledged to visit the Darién jungle in July to explore avenues for assisting migrants and refugees. The following day, Sunday, 24 March 2024, His Eminence celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Annunciation alongside Father Nikolaos Agoris, marking the feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

The festivities continued with the Doxology for Greece's National Independence Day, attended by Panama's government officials, Greek Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Efthymios Efthymiadis, and Honorary Consul Mr. Spyros Skleros. In

his address, Metropolitan Iakovos encouraged young attendees to cherish both Greece and Panama's blessings.

On Monday, 25 March 2024, the Metropolitan led the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Annunciation before paying respects at the local cemetery, praying a trisagion for departed community members, including former President Dimitrios V. Lakas.

As he concluded his visit on Tuesday, 26 March 2024, Metropolitan Iakovos expressed gratitude for the warm reception and sought the prayers of the Panamanian faithful as he continued his pastoral journey to Colombia and Venezuela, further strengthening bonds across his ecclesiastical province.

vema.com.au