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Chicago Greek Heritage Parade Celebrates Greek Independence



CHICAGO, IL—Greektown in Chicago was a wave of blue and white as Greek-Americans, Chicagoans, and spectators from near and far attended the Greek Heritage Parade to commemorate Greek Independence. Presented by The Federation of Hellenic-American Organizations (ENOSIS) and sponsored by Greektown Special Service Area #16, the Greek Heritage Parade has been established as one of the biggest annual events in the Chicago Greek community since its founding in the 1960s.

The day began at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral to celebrate a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, joining His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago. This service commemorated the Veneration of the Holy Cross, marked the beginning of the Greek Independence day festivities, and the Forty Day Memorial for the late Father Nicholas Nikokavouras, Proistamenos of the Annunciation Cathedral of the Metropolis of Chicago for decades.

Archbishop Elpidophoros honored the admirable and generous leadership of Fr. Nicholas in his Homily and reminded parishioners to follow his example of love as commanded by our Lord, "'This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, to sacrifice your life for your friends.' As Christians, as Orthodox Christians, we are bound to this commandment – an ἐντολή that rises above every canon, every dogma, every tradition that we hold so dear. For if we do not hold this commandment first and foremost, everything else in the Church is devoid of meaning."

After Divine Liturgy, Archbishop Elpidophoros with Metropolitan Nathanael, Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas, Ambassador Evangelos Savva of Cyprus, Consul General of Greece in Chicago Emmanuel Koumbarakis, Leadership 100 President Jim Logothetis and L100 member Dimitris Bousis, President Costa Chaniotakis of Enosis, Illinois, President of the Hellenic American Leadership Council (HALC) Endy Zemenides, Members of The

Federation of Hellenic American Organizations of Illinois, Hellenes and Philhellenes gathered at the National Hellenic Museum before the parade officially began. Archbishop Elpidophoros praised the Chicago Greek community for their love and pride for their Hellenic heritage. President of HALC Endy Zemenides thanked His Eminence for continuing to remind us about the unjust and illegal Turkish invasion of Cyprus and the importance of supporting Cyprus in the nation’s struggle for freedom.

Though it was a rainy day, this did not deter anyone from marching. Umbrellas in one hand and Greek flags in the other, participants proudly marched to celebrate the resilience of the heroes of 1821 and the fight for Greek Independence. Children and adults donned traditional Greek costumes, performed dances to the songs of our homeland, and waved Greek flags and Church banners with smiles emanating great joy. Clergy and faithful from many local Greek Orthodox Churches participated in the parade procession, proudly highlighting their Greek Orthodox faith.

Photos: GOARCH/Brittainy Newman

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