

## **Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Welcomes the Presidential Guard of the Hellenic Republic to New York City**



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America welcomed the Presidential Guard of the Hellenic Republic to a Doxology Service celebrating Greek Independence Day. The service, held on April 12, 2024 at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine, is the first event of a weekend honoring the 203rd anniversary of freedom and independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire. Following the Doxology, at Bowling Green, New York City Mayor Eric Adams offered his greeting to those who had braved the sudden torrential downpour to honor the raising of the flags of the United States and Greece. This year's celebration also recognized the 50th Anniversary of the illegal Turkish occupation of Cyprus.

In his remarks at the Doxology, Archbishop Elpidophoros reflected on the heroes of both 1821 and September 11, 2001, "Today, we chant the Doxology of Thanksgiving and praise for the Heroes of 1821. We sing of their valor, and we

remember their courage, for in this phalanx of the Τάγμα Εὐζώνων, we behold their living memory. We pray for the eternal memory of those who, for the sake of our Faith and our Homeland, fought bravely and fell in battle heroically. To do so in this place, the Saint Nicholas National Shrine, has a special resonance for all of us. For the site of the World Trade Center, rebuilt after the horrific and villainous attack of September Eleventh – a day that we will never forget – was replete with heroes of its own. Those brave fireman, police, and first responders who rushed in where even Angels might fear to tread – they are remembered on the walls of this Church, much as their sacrifices are engraved on our hearts.”

Among the Greek and American hierarchs, Greek and Cypriot Officials, clergy, and community members in attendance were Metropolitans Panteleimon of Veria and Pavlos of Kozani, Chancellor of the Kozani Metropolis Bishop Christoforos of Amphipolis, Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Bishop-Elect Nektarios of Diokleia, Proistamenos of St. Nicholas Church Fr. Andreas Vithoulkas, Consul General of Greece to the US Konstantinos Konstantinou, Consul General of Cyprus to the US Mihalis Firillas, 1st Vice President of the Hellenic Parliament Ioannis Plakiotakis, Chair of the Committee for Greeks Abroad (New Democracy) Filippos Fortomas, Theofilos Xanthopoulos(SYRIZA), Milena Apostolaki (PASOK), Nina Kassimati(SYRIZA), Evangelos Meimarakis (Vice President of the European People’s Party and Member of the European Parliament – New Democracy), Parade Grand Marshal and Minister of Transport, Communications and Works of Cyprus Alex Vafeades, Mayor of Chios and Honorary Grand Marshal Dr. Ioannis M. Malafis, and Director General of the Hellenic Parliament Margarita Flouda.

Also in attendance were St. Nicholas Church Board of Trustees Michael Psaros and Demetri Papacostas, Co-Chairs of the Greek Independence Day Parade Philip Christopher and NomikiKastanas, Executive Director of Leadership 100 Paulette Poulos, Supreme President of AHEPA Savas Tsivicos, and Miss Greek Independence Katerina Karandrikos. Procuring the Evzones participation in the New York City parade, was under the leadership of Archbishop Elpidophoros, the dedicated management of Archon Peter Vlitas, and assistance from faithful in the area. Those in attendance enjoyed beautiful chanting by a Byzantine Choir led by Master Chanter Dimitri Katsiklis.

Immediately following the Doxology, His Eminence led the procession to Bowling Green for the annual flag-raising ceremony which is organized annually by the Federation of Hellenic Societies of New York. Participating youth groups and dancers were from A. Fantis School of Ss. Constantine & Helen Cathedral in Brooklyn, Holy Resurrection Church in Brookville of Long Island, Dimitrios & Georgia

Kaloidis Parochial School of Holy Cross in Brooklyn, and the Greek School of Plato in Brooklyn.

Photos: GOARCH/Dimitrios Panagos

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