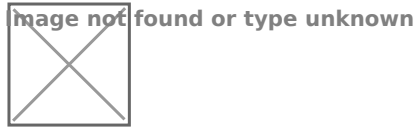


26/09/2024

## **Archbishop Elpidophoros Holds Agiasmos at Hellenic Orthodox Community of Astoria's St. Demetrios Greek-American School**



In Astoria, Queens, New York, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America visited the Hellenic Orthodox Community of Astoria's St. Demetrios Greek-American School today, September 25, 2024, holding the Agiasmos Service (or Blessing of Holy Water) to bless the new academic year.

His Eminence began the day by visiting St. Demetrios Lower Elementary School at Sts. Catherine and George Greek Orthodox Church. Awaiting His Eminence's arrival, students practiced their earnest greetings of "Καλωσορίσατε Σεβασμιώτατε," and once the Archbishop arrived, they welcomed him with introductions, flowers, and warm smiles.

In the church, His Eminence held an Agiasmos Service. The schoolchildren were joyful as they were blessed with the holy water, and thanked His Eminence as he gifted them candies before departing.

Next, His Eminence visited St. Demetrios Upper Elementary/Middle School and High School, located at St. Demetrios Cathedral, where he held another Agiasmos Service. The students once again greeted His Eminence with flowers, a student speech, and performances of children's songs and Greek folk dances.

His Eminence was accompanied by His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Rev. Protopresbyter Gregory Stamkopoulos (Superintendent of St. Demetrios School System), Rev. Protobresbyter Elias Villis (Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan District), and the community's priests Frs. Anargyros Stavropoulos and Gedeon Varytimos. Dr. John Alfieri (Supervising Principal) was also present.

New Consul General of Greece in New York Iphigenia Kanara also accompanied His Eminence on his visit to St. Demetrios High School, where both offered encouragement to the student body and thanks for the school's efforts in preserving Greek language and culture in the U.S. His Eminence emphasized to the students that their educational experience is unique, given that St. Demetrios is

the only Greek American school to include kindergarten through high school, and promised that the Archdiocese is “always by [their] side.”

Photo: GOARCH/Panagos-Tolios.

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