

## Archbishop Elpidophoros Celebrates Feast of the Annunciation at Manhattan Parish



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His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America presided at the Annunciation Service at Annunciation Church in New York City on March 25, 2025. Fr. Soterios Michalatos and members of the community welcomed the Archbishop for a beautiful service which commemorating the announcement by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would become incarnate and enter into this world through her womb.

Also celebrated on this day is the anniversary of Greek Independence, and also participating in the service were Archdiocesan District Chancellor Fr. Elias Villis, Archdeacon Dionysios Papiris, Deacon Jeremiah Mandoros, and Fr. Michael Giavis, who read the Encyclical of Archbishop Elpidophoros for the day, saying, “The ‘New Creation’ that we celebrate every March 25th is both a spiritual and a political reality for Orthodox Christians of Greek descent, for Philhellenes around the world, and indeed for every human being. What occurred within the Ever-Virgin’s womb is nothing less than the re-creation of the human race and, through us as God’s chosen stewards, the entirety of the created cosmos. And what occurred in 1821 within the hearts and minds of Greek patriots, is nothing less than the re-creation of a Nation, to which we – as stewards – owe a debt of responsibility and fidelity. The Annunciation of the Theotokos was perfected by the exercise of her freedom on behalf of every man, woman, and child who would ever live. And the Revolution of 1821, an astonishing exercise of liberty, led to the independence and ultimate rebirth of Hellas. The former was a Divine Act enabled by a human being; the latter, a human endeavor empowered by a Divine Hand. In both, there was the grace of a Virgin Full-of-Grace, a young girl who incarnated the best of our aspirations to freedom, and was the Vessel of the Incarnation of God.”

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, Fr. Michalatos addressed His Eminence saying, “As we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, we are doubly blessed by the presence of Your Eminence—a true servant of our Lord, who has guided this Archdiocese with vision, compassion, and steadfast faith. It is with deep appreciation that we thank you for your tireless

leadership, your pastoral care, and your unwavering love for the people of this parish. Your Eminence, you have served Christ and His Church with wisdom, humility, and strength. Your leadership has been a shining light for us—a reminder that the Church is not merely a building, but a living, breathing community called to shine the light of Christ in every corner of the world. On this sacred feast, we recall how the Panagia, through her humble and courageous “yes,” became the vessel of salvation for all. In your own ministry, you, too, have said “yes” to God’s call—embracing the sacred responsibility of guiding us in truth and love.”

Photos: Orthodox Observer/Dimitrios Panagos.

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