

Archbishop of Mexico, His Eminence Athenagoras: This mission the greatest gift God has given me'



The Archbishop of Mexico, His Eminence Athenagoras, this month underlined that he gives thanks to God for blessing him with the election as the ruling hierarch of the Greek Orthodox Metropolises of Mexico, Central America, Columbia, Venezuela and the Caribbean, areas where Orthodoxy's presence over the years has been marginal.

"I assumed the Metropolis of Mexico in order to begin my mission from nothing," His Eminence told journalist Maria Giachnaki in Athens.

Athenagoras said peoples' humanitarian needs in the specific countries are great, as is their spiritual "thirst".

"...The people have needs, and they express this in every contact I have with them, he said.

Turning to an utterly timely issue that dominated much of the international limelight earlier this month, his Eminence spoke with the utmost of reverence for the indigenous tribes in the Amazon, citing the heart-warming welcome he receives during his visits to their ancestral lands.

According to the Archbishop of Mexico, thousands of people in Latin America leave the Catholic Church every day, with many experiencing a spiritual void in the process.

"People knock on our door, and say, 'I want Orthodoxy'," as he stressed, adding:

"I pray to live another five years so I can lay the financial and pastoral foundations (for these Metropolises), because this mission was the greatest gift that God has given me."

Athenagoras also spoke about the late leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro, saying the latter had thanked him personally for bringing Orthodoxy to Cuba.