23/04/2026

# Archbishop Elpidophoros welcomes Ionian Islands Governor and Mayor of Messolonghi ahead of Greek Independence Parade



NEW YORK — Archbishop Elpidophoros of America welcomed earlier today in separate meetings the Governor of the Ionian Islands Region, Ioannis Trepeklis, and the Mayor of the Sacred City of Messolonghi, Spyros Diamantopoulos. Both officials are in New York for the 2026 Greek Independence Day celebrations, which will culminate in the annual parade up Fifth Avenue on Sunday, April 26.

Governor Trepeklis, the Archbishop's first visitor, expressed his gratitude and admiration for the enduring and emblematic presence of the Archdiocese and the Greek-American community in American political life. Archbishop Elpidophoros responded by reflecting on the standing the Greek American community has earned through hard work and persistence, across the American political system, whether at the White House, at the State Department, or in state and local offices, and regardless of which party holds the majority. Today, the Archdiocese, he said, together with the Greek American community, is working to prove itself a worthy heir to that legacy.

His Eminence announced that the Archdiocese is preparing a pilgrimage to Corfu in

honor of Archbishop Alexander of blessed memory, the first Archbishop of America.

Accompanying the Governor were Christos Manessis, President of the Pan-Corfiot Society of America; Theodoros Doukakis, the Society's former president and current adviser to the President; Alexandra Savvani and Konstantina Spingou, members of the Board of Directors of the Philharmonic of Korakiana; and Vassilis Kokkosis, a businessman from Kefalonia.

The Philharmonic of Korakiana "Spyros Samaras" will march on Fifth Avenue with eighty of its musicians. The ensemble was founded in 1958 in the Corfu village of Ano Korakiana and takes its name from the composer of the Olympic Hymn.



Later in the morning, the Archbishop welcomed Mayor Diamantopoulos. Messolonghi this year is commemorating the 200th anniversary of the heroic Exodus of April 1826 that stirred European opinion and became one of the defining episodes of the Greek War of Independence. The Mayor told the Archbishop that his visit is part of a wider effort by the municipality to introduce the Sacred City to new audiences abroad, and that Messolonghi is ready to welcome visitors drawn to its history and its natural setting.

Archbishop Elpidophoros spoke with affection about his own first visit to Messolonghi, made while he was still a layman and a student at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in the company of his late father. His schedule this year did not permit a return for the bicentennial, but he promised to make the trip next

year.



Photo by Orthodox Observer/Dimitrios Panagos

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