28/04/2026

Greek Americans raise flags at Bowling Green ahead of Independence Day parade



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America welcomed the Presidential Guard of Greece (Evzones) to St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine for a Doxology commemorating 205 years since Greece's Declaration of Independence. The Evzones will lead the Greek Independence Day parade on 5th Avenue, New York City this Sunday, April 26.

Also present at the Doxology were His Eminence Metropolitan Ieronymos of Kalavryta and Aigialeia and Metropolitan Pavlos of Servia and Kozani, and clergy and faithful of all ages.

The presence of the Presidential Guard for the Annual Greek Independence Day Parade is a significant tradition, linking the Omogeneia of America with the heart and soul of Greece.

Following the Doxology, the large group of clergy, dignitaries and faithful processed to Bowling Green for the flag raising ceremony. Ilias Katsos, Chairman of the Greek Independence Day Committee, greeted Archbishop Elpidophoros, members of the Federation of Hellenic Societies and all in attendance remarking that this is the

30th time that this event has been held and then unveiled a plaque commemorating the Greek origins of the 2nd flagpole at Bowling Green.



Earlier, Evzones attended a doxology at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine, celebrated by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America. (Photo by Orthodox Observer/Brittainy Newman).

The flag raising celebration at Bowling Green included the raising of the 1792 Betsy Ross flag, signaling the timeless connection between Greece and the United States as countries born out of revolution.

“When the Greek Revolution took place, it was an international event. Many countries were involved. This parade is not about a small country that had a revolution in 1821. This was a major event of the 19th century, and we have to put that in our minds,” Illias Katsos said. “Nowhere, nowhere in the world was there more enthusiasm for the revolution of 1821 but in America.”

Katsos was among several speakers at the flag raising ceremony to reference the importance of America’s 250th anniversary coinciding with Greece’s celebration of 205 years of Greek liberation from centuries of Ottoman occupation.

“This year carries real weight: 250 years of American independence, 205 years of Greek independence, two extraordinary milestones,” said Aris Kourkoumelis, who serves as the Assistant Secretary for Trade and Economic Security at the Department of Homeland Security. “Standing here today with the proud Evzones

among us, we are reminded that these revolutions are not distant history. They are a living tradition."

Kourkoumelis said that the crowd stood at the historical hearth of the American Revolution, recalling the history of Bowling Green, where a statue of King George stood before it was torn down by revolutionaries.



The ceremony included an unveiling of a plaque, commemorating how the second flag pole at Bowling Green is uniquely connected to the Greek-American community in New York City. (Photo by Orthodox Observer/Brittainy Newman).

"In 1776 Americans pulled down the statue of King George in this very place, in Bowling Green and made it clear to the world that they would not be ruled by others," Kourkoumelis said. "And today, on the same ground, we raise the flag of the Hellenic Republic. That is not symbolic, this is historic continuity."

The 87th annual Greek Independence Day Parade is scheduled for Sunday, April 26, at 1:30 p.m. on Fifth Avenue.

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