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Archbishop Elpidophoros welcomes Lemnos mayor, University of Athens delegation following parade



NEW YORK — His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America welcomed additional guests to the headquarters of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in New York this week, continuing a series of meetings with Church, civic, academic and community leaders who traveled to the city for the annual Greek Independence Day Parade and related celebrations.

His Eminence first received Eleonora Georga, Mayor of Lemnos, who participated for the first time in New York's Greek Independence Day Parade and took part in the major events surrounding the weekend's celebration. Mayor Georga told His Eminence that she was deeply moved by the visible commitment of Greek Americans across generations — those born in Greece, those whose parents came from Greece, and those descended from earlier waves of immigration who continue to preserve a living relationship with Hellenism, the Church and the homeland.



Eleonora Georga, Mayor of Lemnos, visited the Archdiocese headquarters and was received by His Eminence on April 28, 2026. (Photo by Orthodox Observer).

Mayor Georga congratulated Archbishop Elpidophoros on his leadership and expressed her appreciation for the vital role of the Church not only in the spiritual life but also in the communal life of the Greek American community, noting that the parade and its surrounding events offered a powerful expression of continuity between Greece and the diaspora. She also extended an invitation to His Eminence to visit Lemnos, an island with deep historical, ecclesiastical and cultural significance in the North Aegean.

Archbishop Elpidophoros thanked Mayor Georga for the invitation and recalled with warmth his memories of visiting Lemnos many years ago. His Eminence said he looks forward to planning a future visit to the island and expressed appreciation for

the mayor’s presence in New York.

The Archbishop’s meetings continued with a delegation from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, led by Rector Professor Gerasimos Siasos and Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, International Relations and Extroversion Professor Sophia Papaioannou. The delegation briefed His Eminence on the university’s recent activities in New York, including presentations and outreach connected to its English-language academic programs, its Medical Degree English Program in Athens, and the newly established Cyprus Branch of the university.

Professor Siasos outlined the university’s strategic expansion and its effort to strengthen educational ties between Greece and the United States and the university’s broader effort to serve as a global academic hub in Greece and Cyprus.

The university’s Medical Degree English Program in Athens is offered by the School of Medicine of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and is designed for international students seeking medical education in English. The program combines the long academic tradition of the School of Medicine in Athens with modern teaching methods, biomedical research exposure, laboratory access and extensive clinical training.

Full time and structured as a six-year course of study across 12 semesters, it is taught entirely in English and integrates theoretical education with progressive clinical training. Students receive clinical experience through rotations in university-affiliated hospitals across the Athens metropolitan area, gaining exposure to a wide range of specialties in real-world hospital settings.



The delegation from the University of Athens visits the Archdiocese following the 87th Greek Independence Day parade. (Photo by Orthodox Observer).

The delegation also briefed Archbishop Elpidophoros on the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens – Cyprus Branch in Nicosia, which opened in 2025 and marks a major step in the university's international expansion. The Cyprus medical program follows the certified curriculum of the university's medical school in Athens and is presented as part of a broader effort to deepen academic and health-related ties between Greece and Cyprus.

The Cyprus Branch is part of a wider university initiative that includes facilities in Nicosia and Larnaca and programs in medicine, nursing, economics, business administration, ports management and shipping, psychology, pedagogy and primary education, and the archaeology, history and literature of Ancient Greece. Its establishment was presented as a historic step in higher education, linking Greece and Cyprus through research, professional formation and academic cooperation.

Archbishop Elpidophoros told Professor Siasos and the delegation that the Archdiocese would be glad to help make the university's work better known to the

Greek American community, particularly as more students in the United States look for meaningful academic pathways that connect them with Greece, Hellenic culture and internationally recognized institutions of higher education.

The Archbishop and Professor Siasos also agreed to explore possible areas of cooperation with Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts. The discussion included opportunities within HCHC's current academic structure as well as the broader vision, already introduced by His Eminence, of studying the future evolution of Hellenic College into university.

At the Archdiocesan Council Fall Meeting in October 2025, Archbishop Elpidophoros had introduced an initiative to explore elevating Hellenic College to Holy Cross University, saying that the process would require a realistic and viable business plan. "I see that we have two choices: number one, we shrink, or number two, we have vision and grow. I prefer the second," His Eminence said at the time.

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