

**St Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine at the Avero House
Located in the Colonial Quarter at 41 St George Street
Saint Augustine, Florida 32084**

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St Photios Foundation celebrates 247th Anniversary of Greek Landing Day in Conjunction with City of St. Augustine 450th Commemoration

St. Augustine, FL – On June 26 for the past three decades, mayors have distinguished that the first Greek colony to arrive to America with a City Proclamation was in St Augustine. June 26 is celebrated because on this day, 1200 people from Mediterranean countries arrived to St. Augustine with the 1768 Turnbull Fleet.

The colonists were brought to turn an agricultural profit on the land known today as New Smyrna Beach. Vestiges of their efforts remain, but those indentured servants never saw freedom until they were granted refugee status in St Augustine where a compassionate governor, Patrick Tonyn, offered them sanctuary in Avero House, the site of St Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

2015 is a special year. 450 years ago, the Spanish Crown, represented by Pedro Menendez, established the City of St Augustine. 50 years ago, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America purchased the Avero House property in St Augustine. This year, Mayor Nancy Shaver will read the Proclamation on Saturday, September 5th at 9:45 a.m. in the Tolomato Cemetery where she and Father Tom Willis and the Catholic faithful will receive the Orthodox Christians led by Rev Dr Nicholas G Louh, V Rev Fr Joseph Samaan and Fr George Ioannou.

The public is invited to join the faithful for the Memorial Procession which will commence at 9:30 a.m. at St Photios Shrine, following the memorial for the colonists of the Greek Orthodox faith and Shrine Founders who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

The Trisagion procession will continue to the Tolomato Cemetery where greetings will be read and attending dignitaries will offer their greetings. A reception will follow with a special icon presentation from St Photios Shrine to St Augustine Basilica.

The Foundation will also honor the memory of Father Crisanthos who against all odds was able to leave Greece on the Betsy with his flock. He arrived in Menorca with his fellow Greek Orthodox priest, Father Serafi. Father Serafi opted not to leave Mahon for the new world, leaving Father Crisanthos to travel alone. Despite the hardship of the journey and the lack of provisions afforded, Father Crisanthos persevered, only to be martyred during the first rebellion in the New Smyrna Colony. May his, and the memory of all the colonists, be eternal.

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