



Friends

NEWSLETTER

St. Augustine, FL ~ 2020

2020 Progress Report by Pollexeni Maouris Hillier

This has been a most exciting year during a most challenging time. His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, on June 29, said in his opening remarks at the Archdiocesan Council meeting "...during this time of anxiety, fear, unrest, and confusion, the Church must shine brighter than ever before." Truer words could not be chosen to describe my experience here at St. Photios. We have all been shaken by the fallout of the nouvelle coronavirus, and yet, with the completion of many goals set these past five years, for example the completion of the office renovations, we are at the threshold of a new day here at the Shrine. There is a vibrancy to change when it is embraced and allowed to manifest itself.

In 2019, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos was assigned by the Archbishop to the newly created position, Hierarchal Proistamenos of the St. Photios National Shrine. This role became clearer in January 2020 when His Eminence also appointed His Grace to the St. Photios Foundation as Archdiocesan Coordinator, a role once held by Ernie Villas thirty-five years ago. On October 1, as an extension of the Office of the Archbishop, His Grace attended the funeral of the former Catholic Bishop of St. Augustine, John Snyder. Bishop Snyder was present at the Dedication of the Shrine in 1982, and a friend to Archbishop Iakovos and Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos. On January 22, Bishop Demetrios represented the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese at the Seventh Annual Ecumenical Vespers at the St. Paul AME Church in Jacksonville, FL. His Grace has networked also with chairs of departments at Flagler College and with political leaders of St. Augustine and St. Johns County.

Many attended the Christmas Open House hosted by Bishop Demetrios on December 9th. The public was invited to bring a nonperishable food item for the St. Johns Food Pantry. As with the Vasilopita, hosted in January, this was an inaugural event which sets a format for future events. Hundreds attended, witnessing the ecclesiastical services, with chanters brought in from near and far, and Hellenic cultural traditions showcased with exemplary hospitality.

On February 8, St. Photios Foundation Chairman, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, arrived in St. Augustine for his first St. Photios Foundation Annual Meeting. Earlier that day, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Louh and the faithful met His Eminence and Archdeacon Eleftherios Constantine at the Jacksonville Airport.



Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos



Seventh Annual Ecumenical Vespers at St. Paul A.M.E. Church, Jacksonville, FL



Archbishop Elpidophoros of America in the Chapel of St. Photios

After a presentation and tour at the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, the entourage was met at the Casa Monica Hotel by the faithful who converged upon America's Oldest City for the St. Photios Feast Day Pilgrimage Weekend.

Bishop Demetrios worked with the Marketing Committee while initiating the redesign of the Shrine website and increasing its presence on social media. On behalf of the Foundation, I thank Trustee Nick Furriss and his team at Spectrum Films for all they have done in providing production and editing resources to His Grace in promoting the Shrine. His Grace aired two messages during Holy and Great Week and then a third one, a Paschal message. His Grace also raised the funds needed to produce two significant videos; one featuring Hagia Sophia, which was aired May 29, in commemoration of the Fall of Constantinople, and the second that aired on June 26, called [Greek Landing Day](#).

(continues on page 3)

Greek Landing Day Celebration

On Friday, June 26, the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine with Holy Trinity Church, St. Augustine, celebrated Greek Landing Day 2020 with the traditional Mayoral Proclamation, followed by the Colonists' Memorial and two special online events created to meet the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

The Greek Landing Day video presentation premiered at 6:30 p.m. through Facebook and YouTube, commemorating the struggle of the first documented colony of Greek immigrants to the New World. They arrived in St. Augustine on June 26, 1768, as indentured servants, and then travelled on to establish the New Smyrna Colony, which today is known as New Smyrna Beach.

The video is narrated by Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, the Hierarchal Proistamenos of the Shrine, who notes, "This annual celebration is not only a remembrance of those immigrants who sailed here on these waters, but a celebration of the spirit, endurance, and commitment that has been a hallmark of Hellenic culture from ancient times to the present."

At 7:00 p.m., the program began with greetings offered by Shrine Executive Director, Poxeni Maouris Hillier. Mayor Tracy Upchurch then read the City of St. Augustine Greek Landing Day proclamation and His Grace, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos served the memorial commemoration.

A Reverse Raffle drawing was live streamed with Trustee 2nd Vice President Anthony Megas as the emcee. With assistance provided by local parishioners Gary and Faye Peterson, 200 chances were pulled and, in the end, \$13,450 was raised to benefit the ministries of the National Shrine.

Special recognition to everyone who contributed to this endeavor. All expectations were surpassed with an annual fundraising event that will continue in the years to come.



Poxeni Maouris Hillier, Faye and Gary Peterson, Hon. Mayor Tracy Upchurch, and Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos



Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos with Archon Nicholas Farris and the Spectrum Film crew shooting the Greek Landing Day video.



Protective Cloth masks sent to active and retired clergy.

(continued from page 1)

Completely underwritten by donations secured by Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, His Grace, with Shrine staff and volunteers, sent out over 850 protective cloth masks to active and retired clergy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The feedback from this project continues to be heartwarming and positive.

Fundraising was so successful this year, my friends, because of your positive and generous response. We thank Leadership 100 for providing all that was needed to bring the Balafas Exhibit here from the Benaki Museum in Athens; the

private donor who offered \$5,000 for program ministries in January, and to the Kathie D'Anna Charitable Trust, which provided the funding needed for numerous projects.

We thank the supportive AHEPA family organizations, HCHC ambassadors and Helen Carlos, the St. Johns Council for the Arts, and the members of the National Ladies Philoptochos Society for contributing to the fiscal viability and cross-institutional visibility of this National Shrine.

At best the uncertainty and unpredictability of the health of the globe will continue throughout 2020. However, with the Grace of God, the guidance of the St. Photios Foundation, your prayers and support, we can say that this amazing Archdiocesan institution will continue to not only survive but also continue to thrive. Thank you dear colleagues, Gina Bingman, Gina, Jenny, Constandina, Donna R, Robby and Donna B. God willing we will continue to offer our best, together, for the Church and her ministries.

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Wall of Tribute

Dr. Theodora Sergiou represents Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey on the St. Photios Foundation. She serves as the chairperson of the Wall of Tribute Committee whose responsibility it is to register 10 new names on the Shrine donor wall each year.

In February, she reminded trustees at the annual meeting that the cost of \$2,000 can be paid over a period of five years—a small price for individuals and organizations to contribute to insure the continuation of this legacy of remembrance.

This bequest contributes significantly to the viability and sustainability of St. Photios National Shrine. In 2005, then Wall of Tribute chairperson, Cina Daskalakis of blessed memory, sent hundreds of letters to the faithful, imploring her brothers and sisters in Christ to follow her lead and subscribe to this witness of support. Following that example, Dora asks that in Cina's memory you consider following the Daskalakis and Sergiou family example and commit to being included on the Wall of Tribute.



2019 Wall of Tribute Inscriptions

ELPIDOPHOROS, ARCHBISHOP OF AMERICA
New York City, NY

FRAGAKIS, ALEX & ANDRA
*Kiafsi-Evritania, Greece/Manchester, NH
Winston-Salem, NC*

HARALAMBOUS, JOHN & BARBARA
(ANTONOPOULOS)
Port St. Lucie, FL/Nestani, Greece

HOLLISTER, CARL & CYNTHIA
Mason, OH

IN LOVING MEMORY OF KLEOMENIS &
GEORGIA KLISSIS, FROM THEIR CHILDREN:
ANGELO & SHERRY KLISSIS, VICTOR KLISSIS,
VICTOR & CHRISTINA KLISSIS POLIZOS
Atlanta, GA

MICHELL, DR. CONTANTINE W. & ELAINE C.
Wilmington, DE

MITSOPOULOS, JOHANNA & KING THOMAS
Washington, D.C.

PAOURIS, GEORGE & FANYA COUCHELL
DEMETRA & ANDERSON GARCIA & FAMILY
EMMANUEL & KELLEY PAOURIS & FAMILY
Greenville, SC

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ARCHON DR. GEORGE A.
ZAZANIS FROM MARINA ZAZANIS, ELENA ZAZA-
NIS & PAUL FISH
New Version, NJ/Vero Beach, FL



The St. Photios Foundation convened at 2:00 p.m. for its annual meeting where Archbishop Elpidophoros blessed the trustees, and inducted the new and current members unto the 2020-2022 St Photios Board of Trustees with the installation prayer.

ARCHDIOCESE DISTRICT

Rev. Fr. Christopher Constantinides
Archon Nicholas Furriss
Demetri Kokotas
Very Rev. Archimandrite Eugene Pappas

METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

Rev. Fr. Dimitrios Moraitis
Elaine Zetes

METROPOLIS OF DENVER

Rev. Fr. Demetri Tagaropoulos
Olga Plomarity

METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Helen A. Carlos
Archon George Donkar
Archon James A. Frangis
Dr. Angelo K. Kliosis
Evangeline M. Scurtis
Nick Stamatogiannakis

METROPOLIS OF DETRIOT

Archon Carl Hollister
Rev. Fr. Soterios Rousakis



2020 - 2022 St. Photios Foundation Board Members

PERMANENT BOARD

Archbishop Elpidophoros of America - **Chairman**
Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta - **President**
Rev. Dr. Nicholas G. Louh - **Proistamenos, St. John the Divine**

HIERARCHAL PROISTAMENOS

Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos - **Archdiocesan Coordinator**

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Archon Dr. Manuel N. Tissura - **First Vice President**
Anthony Megas - **Second Vice President**
Maria Carantzas - **Treasurer**
Leslye Alex Phillips - **Secretary**

METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

Rev. Dn. Photios (Frank) Dickos
Charles A. Koukoulis
Susan Loutsion
Archon Philip G. Yamalis

METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Rev. Fr. Milutin Janjic, Ph. D.
Archon Paul Sogotis

METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

Rev. Fr. Peter Balkas
Dr. Theodora Sergiou

METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

Rev. Fr. Michael Constantinides
Joanne Stavrakas

EMERITUS BOARD

Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos
Archon Ted Johnson
Archon Harry Thomas Cavalaris
Archon Ted Pappas
Archon Harry Plomarity

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Rev. Dr. Nicholas G. Louh - St. John the Divine, Jacksonville, FL
George Stavros - St. John the Divine, Jacksonville, FL
Rev. Fr. John Hays - Holy Trinity Church, St. Augustine, FL
Nick Lekas - Holy Trinity Church, St. Augustine, FL
Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Samaan - St. Demetrios Church, Daytona Beach, FL
Kyriakos Drymonis - St. Demetrios Church, Daytona Beach, FL

Archon Dr. Anthony Limberakis, National Commander - Order of St. Andrew
Basil Mossaides, Executive Director - Order of AHEPA
George G. Horiates, Supreme President - Order of AHEPA
Maria Logus, Esq., President - Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society
Paulette Poulos, Executive Director - Leadership 100
Argyris Vassiliou, Chairman - Leadership 100

Ecclesiastical Services and Reception for Feast of St. Photios - February 5 and 6, 2020

The Shrine Hierarchal Proistamenos celebrated ecclesiastical services commemorating the Feast of St. Photios, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, in the Chapel of St. Photios. Assisted by the V. Rev. Father Joseph Samaan and the Rev. Dn. Photios Dickos at the February 6th services, His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, presided over the two-day commemoration of the Patron Saint of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

Memorial prayers were also offered up for those members of the Shrine Committee who have fallen asleep in the Lord; Shrine benefactors Andrew and Eula Carlos; Shrine godparents, George and Georgia Croffead as well as Shrine Founders: George and Olga Fotiou, James and Stella Kalivas, Steve Sarris, Athanasios and Despina Xynidis and Speros and Martha Zepatos.

Special thanks to the OCMC staff who chanted the services, Evgenia Mercado for providing the prosphora and parishioners from Holy Trinity, St. Augustine and St. Demetrios, Daytona Beach who hosted the receptions.



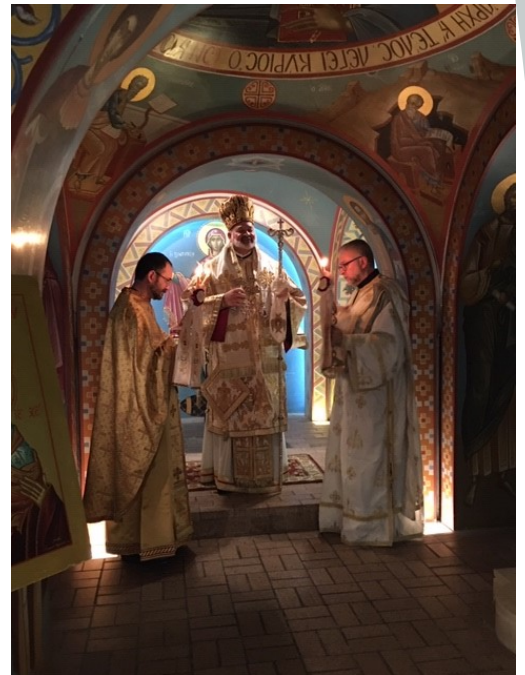
The five loaves were offered by the sisters of
Annunciation Greek Orthodox Monastery in
Reddick, FL.



St. Photios Foundation Trustee (Pittsburgh) Rev. Dn.
Photios Dickos



Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos
and Acolyte Nick Kelley



V. Rev. Fr. Joseph Samaan, Bishop Demetrios of
Mokissos and Rev. Dn. Photios Dickos



LEFT:
Feast of St. Photios Reception
following Divine Liturgy with Nick
and Jennifer Trastelis



RIGHT:
Carmela Tardo and Gary Peterson
Holy Trinity, St. Augustine, FL
serving the faithful

Costas Balafas: “A Photographic Itinerary on Mount Athos, 1969-2001”

On February 5, Aliko Tsiargloulou, curator of Photographic Archives at the Benaki Museum in Athens, Greece, arrived in St. Augustine, Florida, to install 49 images of the museum’s collection of Costas Balafas: “A Photographic Itinerary on Mount Athos, 1969-2001” with Shrine Manager, Gina Bingman in the St. Photios National Shrine museum special exhibit area. This was supported by numerous grants and underwritten by Leadership 100.

Two years earlier, a collaboration began with the Benaki Museum and the St. Photios Foundation. It started with an introduction made by the Hon. Consul General Dimitrios Sparos of the Hellenic Republic, Tampa office, between Dr. George Manginis, director at the Benaki Museum and Pollexeni Hillier, Executive Director of St. Photios National Shrine. Mr. Sparos wanted the two to explore the appropriateness and feasibility of bringing “a Mt. Athos exhibit” to the Shrine. It seemed entirely appropriate but utterly impossible. The images were just so large.

With great planning and flexibility and technology being what it is, the exhibit was realized with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta. It opened on Friday, February 7th in conjunction with St. Johns Council for the Arts First Friday Art Walk. Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta opened the exhibit with Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos. The Sts. Anargyroi Philoptochos of St. John the Divine, Jacksonville provided hospitality.

A celebration of the collaboration between the Benaki Museum and St. Photios National Shrine culminated at the St. Photios Foundation Trustees Dinner on Saturday evening, February 8 at the Casa Monica Hotel in St. Augustine, FL, when Ms. Tsiargloulou presented Balafas’ s study of post-war Greece in black and white images. “(They) are not just documentation of life within a setting but like the images of Mt. Athos, they probe our existential questions and reveal a raw, almost spiritual, simplicity of life.” Mrs. Hillier recognized Shrine Volunteer, Dr. Tony Tsitos, for the countless hours he spent in working on this project and Ms. Tsiargloulou for the phenomenal skills she had in making possible that which seemed impossible in bringing the work of Costas Balafas to America.



Presentation of the St. Augustine Lions



Aliko Tsiargloulou presents “Balafas, the Photographer”



Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta with Elaine Tissura



The Special Benaki Museum Exhibit 2020

38th Annual St. Photios Foundation Meeting

Archbishop Elpidophoros of America convened the 38th Annual St. Photios Foundation meeting on February 8th at the Casa Monica Hotel in St. Augustine, FL. His Eminence serves as the chairman, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta as the president and Archon Dr. Manuel N. Tissura as the first vice president.

In August, 2019, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros appointed His Grace, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, in the role of the newly established position of Hierarchal Proistamenos at St. Photios National Shrine.



2020-2022 St. Photios Foundation Board of Trustees & visitors at the February 8th Annual Meeting

Active and Emeritus trustees attended from every Metropolis and the Direct Archdiocesan District. In addition to the review of the regular business of the first National Shrine of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos presented initiatives planned to fulfill the vision of Archbishop Elpidophoros to bring a higher visibility of the Shrine on a national level and to develop a Spanish-speaking ministry for the Archdiocese.

Medal of St. Paul Awarded to Mrs. Elaine Tissura



Anthia Nichols, Manuel and Nina Frangis, Eleni Nichols, Elaine Tissura, Archbishop Elpidophoros, Metropolitan Alexios and Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos

Upon the recommendation of Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America bestowed the Medal of St. Paul, the highest honor given by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, upon Elaine Tissura, who has dedicated a lifetime of service and philanthropy to the Greek Orthodox Church. For two decades Elaine has served as co-chair of the St. Photios Feast Day Banquet, at the side of her husband, Shrine Foundation First Vice President, Archon Dr. Manuel N. Tissura.

Joining in conferring the medal were Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta and Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos. Metropolitan Alexios said that Elaine has served the Metropolis and the Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta with dedication and inspiring commitment. Elaine's daughters and grandchildren were present to witness this well-deserved honor.

St. Photios Medal Awarded to Archon Dr. and Mrs. Steve Poulos



Mrs. Vasso Poulos receives the St. Photios Award from His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros

The Foundation distinguishes individuals and organizations for exceptional service to the St. Photios National Shrine and our Holy Archdiocese with the St. Photios medal. This is not an annual award. At the recommendation of the Permanent Committee of the St. Photios Foundation, Archon Dr. Steve and Vasso Poulos were noted for fifty years of constant and steadfast service to the Greek Orthodox Church in America. Among their many achievements, this dynamic couple influenced greatly the establishment of the local parish of Holy Trinity, the inception of the Hellenic Society and contributed greatly to the ongoing success of the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. Steve chaired the Friends Membership program for decades. Mrs. Poulos, a graduate of St. Basil's Academy, not only volunteered at the Shrine but was the official hostess of visiting clergy and dignitaries. They are truly worthy. AXIOI! **** Four months after this recognition, Dr. Steve fell asleep in the Lord on June 4.**



Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople



Archbishop Elpidophoros, Ted Pappas, and Metropolitan Alexios



St. Photios Shrine Volunteers of the Year—Denise, Rick, and Jason Brown with Christy Xynidis and Thanos Nikolopoulos



Dean & Joanne Stavrakas with Archon John Balourdos



Christina & Victor Polizos with Victor Kliosis



Nick & Alixe Stamatogiannakis & Tassos Kiriakes



Maria & Dean Karris



Michael & Pamela Toundas

07 · 24 · 2020

A DAY OF MOURNING FOR HAGIA SOPHIA



GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA



On Friday, July 24, 2020 the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine, as an institution of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, closed its doors to all visitors in observance of a "Day of Mourning and Manifest Grief." This day of mourning was proclaimed by the Archdiocese due to the shocking seizure of the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) in Istanbul, Turkey by the civil authorities for its conversion from a museum into a mosque.

This was and remains a stunning violation of all standards of religious harmony and mutual respect, and an unprovoked wound to the Christian minority of Turkey as well as the international community, both secular and religious.

As directed, and in concert with all Greek Orthodox Churches, The Akathist Hymn was chanted and lived streamed from the Shrine's Chapel, with Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos presiding, along with Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Samaan participating.

St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine

St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is located in the Colonial Quarter of St. Augustine, FL. It is a sacred and historical site built in memory of the 500 Greeks who came to America with the Turnbull expedition in 1768. The chapel has a reliquary with the bone fragments of 18 saints of the early Church in the narthex and the relics of 3 female saints in the altar. The chapel and museum occupy the historic Averro House – a 2-story structure that was built in the 1740's, razed and then reconstructed. In 1982, the Shrine opened with a clear mission to actively witness Orthodox Christianity, share the Hellenic culture and honor the memory of all immigrants who came to America in quest of a new life.

Contact Us

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2020 Shrine Wedding Celebrations

**RIGHT: Congratulations to
Maria and Nick Tsengas!**

**LEFT: Congratulations
Anastasia and Giannis
Koutsoupas!**



Sister City Designation Between New Smyrna Beach, FL & Nea Smyrni, Athens, Greece

Mayor Russ Owen proclaimed Nea Smyrni, Greece, to be New Smyrna Beach's *sister city* at the February 11, 2020 NSB City Commission meeting. "The point of municipal relationships is to foster educational, economic, and professional exchange," said Owen.

On hand to receive the proclamation were Commissioner Jake Sachs, Order of AHEPA representative Dr. Athas N. Kometas, New Smyrna Museum of History Director Greg Holbrook, and Historic New Smyrna Beach Preservation Commission Chair Lianne Bennett.

Executive Director of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine, Polexeni Maouris Hillier, conveyed these remarks on behalf of Dimitrios Sparos, Consul General of the Hellenic Republic, Tampa office: "The history of the Greeks of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, until recently, was completely unknown in Greece. It is, however, very important for the Greek Americans, for whom this historical place is as important as Plymouth Rock for the Americans of Anglo-Saxon origin. This city of New Smyrna in Greece, has a different beginning but similarities as well.

Smyrna was an ancient city on the Aegean Coast of Asia Minor, currently Turkey. It was founded during the 11th century BC by Aeolian Greeks and has been continuously inhabited since then. It reached several peaks during its history: during the Hellenistic period, the Byzantine era, but also the late Ottoman period.

In 1922, following a Greco-Turkish war, its entire Greek population, which had been there for around three thousand years, was expelled and most of their houses and businesses were burned down. The refugees dispersed around the world. A large number of them settled close to Athens, Greece, which was much smaller then, and founded the suburb of Nea Smyrni, Athens, Greece, in memory of their lost home city.

So, both places call to mind the mother city of Smyrna. One built by indentured servants here in Florida, and the other by refugees in Greece. Both places have unique histories and will continue to inform the present of the past.

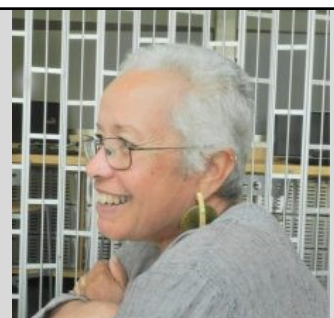
The connecting glue in this new Sister City relationship is the Greek-American community, ever mindful of the culture of their ancestors. I am certain that both cities will benefit from the upcoming relationship. May this be the beginning of many new friendships and may it contribute to the cultural enrichment of both."



Jake Sachs, Polexeni Maouris Hillier, Athas Kometas, Greg Holbrook, Sheila Preservation Commissioner Lianne Bennett and Mayor Russ Owen

On Sunday, August 25th, guests and volunteers came together in solidarity with all Americans who commemorated the memory of the first enslaved Africans who landed at Point Comfort in August, 1619. At 3:00 p.m. the bells pealed from Trinity Episcopal Church on King Street down St. George Street to the Constantine Sisters Courtyard of St. Photios National Shrine.

Ann Chinn, founder of the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project said, "Until this time, slavery did not exist in the English Colonies. **August 25th is a day of remembrance of not only the first enslaved Africans in this country but an opportunity to contribute to the healing of this nation.**"



St. Photios Gift Shop and Book Store

Find unique gift items, icons, and books on Orthodox Christianity and Greek American history at the St. Photios Gift Shop and Book Store. The Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is a living memorial to the first Greek settlers on the American continent and to all the Greek Orthodox pioneers whose love of freedom and desire for a better life for themselves and their children brought them to this New World.

Called "*The Jewel of St. George Street*," the St. Photios Chapel should not be missed by any visitor. The St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is located in historic downtown St. Augustine, Florida.



Stella Kokolis, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos with dignitaries celebrating the memory of Ioannis Ioannopolis



Memorial Presentation at the Tolomato Cemetery



Stella Kokolis, with Rhode Island State Senator Leonidas Raptakis and Elaine Fraser



The Memorial at the Tolomato Cemetery

Third Annual Convention for Greek Educators in St. Augustine

On Saturday, March 7, the Federation of Hellenic-American Educators and the Pan Arcadian Association, in collaboration with the *Association O Geros Tou Morea of New York* and other organizations, hosted its third historic event in memory of Juan Genopoly, *Ioannis Giannopoulos*, the founder of what is known today as the Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse in St. Augustine, Florida. This year, a bust of Genopoly, created by acclaimed Greek sculptor, Dimitris Talaganis, was unveiled in its Garden of Educators.

On January 22, 2020 the municipality of Tripoli in collaboration with Dimitris Talaganis, organized an audiovisual event in memory of the beloved teacher at the Apostolopoulou Cultural Center titled: *Ioannis Giannopoulos Travels After 250 years For a Second Time to America for a Conversation with History*.

Konstantinos Tzioumis, mayor of Tripoli, noted that "in the person of Ioannis Giannopoulos we honor all the Arcadians, the Greeks of the diaspora, who each contributed a stone to the effort to spread Greek education throughout the world, and thus contributing to the rebirth of the Nation and to the Greek Revolution of 1821. Good luck Ioannis Giannopoulos on your second trip to America."

Many Americans attended both events including Rhode Island State Senator Leonidas P. Raptakis who noted that "Greeks everywhere work hard every day for the good of Greece, because they do not forget their homeland, wherever they are." Also present were Merope Kyriakou, president of the Prometheus Association and Mrs. Stella Kokolis, Federation of Hellenic American Educators President and chair of the Third Annual Ioannis Giannopoulos commemoration.

In 1768, Giannopoulos arrived in St. Augustine with 1200 others contracted under the British Indentured Servitude Act. Their dream was to receive land in exchange of 7-years hard labor on the Florida plantation located in what we know today as New Smyrna Beach. In 1777, he and less than 500 survivors of the failed colony were received as refugees in St. Augustine. Governor Patrick Tonyn gave them their freedom and a few shillings, as well as sanctuary at the Avero House, located at 41 St. George Street, the site of the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

Early on, Genopoly occupied the one-story structure known as the Kipp House. In 1788, Genopoly recognized the importance of learning English. He added the second floor to the home to accommodate a private living space for himself and his family and invited the children from the Minorcan Quarter in to teach them reading, writing and arithmetic. Two of the four children born in St. Augustine to Juan Genopoly and his wife also taught at the Old School.

Mrs. Kokolis said of the Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse, "it is still preserved and makes us Hellenes proud of a compatriot from either Arcadia or Messenia who bequeathed us such a legacy."

Elaine Fraser, CEO, and owner of the Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse, worked tirelessly to receive the sculpture. She said, "this is a labor of love and in memory of my grandfather, former mayor of St. Augustine and Florida State Senator Walter B. Fraser. He would have been so pleased to receive the bust of Juan Genopoly in his Garden of Educators. That is what has made this undertaking even more worthwhile."

Senator Fraser of blessed memory was the prior owner of the Avero House. He sold the property at 41 St. George Street to commemorate St. Augustine History through the Greek immigration story because of his deep friendship with Tom Xynidis.

Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine Vasilopita Celebration

Fifty people met at the St. Augustine Visitors' Center on January 12th for a ride on the Old Town Trolley Holly Jolly Tour – taking in the three million festive lights that adorn the city shops and streets while listening to contemporary carols.

The group then joined another fifty people for the traditional cutting of the Vasilopita at St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

This inaugural event, hosted by Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Hierarchal Proistamenos of the Shrine, assisted by Father Joseph Samaan and acolyte Nicholas Kelley, drew faithful from throughout the nation including Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, Rev. Father Milton Magos and Archon Nick Furris, who served as the emcee of the event.



Giovanna Andriotis and Olivia Austin receive the blessed Vasilopita from Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos

“Events like these are important to share the mission of the Shrine, as well as to keep our ancient faith and traditions alive in this country and keep Greek Orthodox traditions as a living experience,” Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos said. Harpist Mary Jane Ballou and the St. Augustine Cantorae offered a musical selection culminating with the singing of the traditional New Year carol, Agios Vasilis.

Eight loaves of Vasilopita were provided by Agustina’s Love Tree Bakery. They were cut, first for all of the area Greek Orthodox ministries and parishes, then for each guest in attendance. The lucky winners received an authentic St. Basil coin blessed by Bishop Demetrios.

Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta sent a greeting which was read to the guests in attendance, thanking Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos for, “carrying on the beautiful Hellenic Orthodox tradition of the Vasilopita and keeping the light of the recent holiday season in our hearts.”



St. Augustine Cantorae



Jennifer Harris Trastelis and family of St. Demetrios Church, Daytona Beach, FL

Αγιος Βασίλης έρχεται
και δεν μας καταδέχεται
από - από την Καισαρεία
είσαι αρχό - είσαι
αρχόντισσα, κυρία.

Βαστάει εικόνα και χαρτί
με το Χριστό το λυτρωτή,
χαρτί - χαρτί και
καλαμάρι,
δες και με - δες και με το
παλικάρι.

Agios Vasilis erhetai
kai den mas katadehetai
apo - apo tin Kaisareia
eisai arho - eisai
arhontissa, kiria.

Vastaei eikona kai harti
me to Hristo to litroti,
harti - harti kai kalamari,
des kai me - des kai me to
palikari.

Saint Basil comes,
And does not
acknowledge us
From Caesarea.
You are, you are the
mistress of the house!

He holds a pen and paper
And leavened sweets
Paper, paper and ink.
Look at me, look at me,
the brave one!

Celebration of the Feast Day of St. Augustine of Hippo

Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, the Hierarchal Proistamenos of the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine, presided over the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy honoring the Feast of St. Augustine of Hippo on June 15 (as celebrated on the Eastern Orthodox calendar) with Rev. Fr. Martin Ritsi and Rev. Dn. Athanasios Kartsonis assisting. Mr. Rob Shand served as chanter. Artoklasia was offered by Missy Theodore in honor of her family.

In the evening, Bishop Demetrios introduced Dr. George Demacopoulos at the Shrine's inaugural webinar (<https://youtu.be/mEm6EynJekg>). Over 200 people registered for Dr.

Demacopoulos' presentation entitled "Augustine and the Orthodox: The 'West' in the East" through Fordham University.

Dr. Demacopoulos, an expert in Augustinian theology and a riveting speaker, co-authored with Dr. Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008).

Following the presentation, Bishop Demetrios moderated dozens of questions and then invited Bishop Felipe de Jesús Estévez of the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine to offer his remarks and blessings. His Excellency thanked His Grace, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos for providing this bridge between the two faiths. The events are part of a dual observance shared between the Saint Photios Shrine (June 15) and Roman Catholic Diocese of Saint Augustine (August 28).



June 15, 2020—Chapel of St. Photios



Dr. George Demacopoulos, co-author of the book, *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*.

Winners of the 2019 St. Photios National Shrine Essay Contest

Judges Rev. Milton Magos, Michelle Farah, and Tom Gibson had 12 essays to rank. "It's been an honor to read the thoughts of these writers", said Farah, a teacher in the Duval County school system. A thought often echoed by all those who serve on the Essay Contest Committee: Mrs. Katherine Bacalis, chairperson, Dr. Constantine Santas, Dr. Tony Tsitos and Renee Gahagan.

Participants were asked to articulate the impact, significance, and relevance of sacred and historic items in their lives. Bacalis congratulated Justin Tatooles from St. Luke, Palos Hills, IL, in placing first; Andreas Lolis from St. Barbara, Westport, CT, in placing second; and Alexis Francis from The Church of Our Savior in Rye, NY, in placing third.

Congratulations were also extended to participants: Andreas Thompson from Holy Trinity, Clearwater, FL; Dayle Sokratis Frisk from St. Nicholas, Tacoma, WA; Edward Michael Dehelean from Holy Cross-Sts. Constantine and Helen, Huntsville, AL; Heidi Angelopoulos and Marianna Angelopoulos from Sts. Constantine and Helen, Palos Hills, IL; Arianna and Nicholas Drechsler from Holy Apostles, Westchester, IL; Noah Hays from Holy Trinity, St. Augustine, FL; and Nicholas Lines from St. Barbara, Toms River, NJ.

Each participant received a certificate signed by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Hierarchal Proistamenos of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

"Let us not forget the sponsors of this meaningful program", said Mrs. Bacalis. "The importance of education and information as power was the vision of the V. Rev. Nicholas Graff. It was and is the support of his aunt, Kathie Dakis D'Anna, of blessed memory, that funds the promotion and monetary prizes of this program 15 years later. We thank the members of AHEPA chapter #6, in Jacksonville, FL, who directly reward the writers for their achievement".





Of Blessed Memory, Archbishop Iakovos of America and Metropolitan Iakovos of Chicago

Memorial Services in the Chapel of St. Photios

His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos presided over memorials for these two hierarchs of blessed memory in the Chapel of St. Photios.

On Friday, April 10, the fifteenth anniversary of the falling asleep in the Lord of Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America was observed, as it is every year, with a private service. This year, the few who were allowed to be present due to the pandemic, were joined by thousands who had the opportunity through livestreaming on social media to offer a prayer for this beloved and dynamic hierarch responsible for opening ST. Photios National Shrine, the first national shrine of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

On June 2, the third-year memorial for Metropolitan Iakovos of Blessed Memory of Chicago was held in the Chapel of St. Photios in St. Augustine, Florida.

Memory Eternal

We remember these individuals with gratitude and love as we pray for the rest and repose of their souls. They were not only steadfast Friends of St. Photios but an integral part of the Shrine's history. God give rest to their souls and comfort to their family and friends.

St. Photios Founder **Despina Xynidis** (November 20, 2019) and her husband of blessed memory Tom, spearheaded the initiative for recognition of the early Greeks who lived in St. Augustine.

Two members of the initial National Shrine Committee and Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, **Steve Poulos** (June 4) and **James Scofield** (May 23) remained steadfast friends and stewards to the Shrine often combining efforts to promote and support St. Photios National Shrine. Steve was a lifetime Trustee to the St. Photios Foundation and was granted Trustee emeritus status in 2012. In 1982 Dr. Poulos launched the Friends Membership program. He was a founder of the Hellenic Society of St. Augustine and petitioned Archbishop Iakovos of America to establish a parish in St. Augustine.



Archon Dr. Steve Poulos

Friends of the Shrine, **Father Stanley Harakas** (June 23) and **Dorothy Zikos** (March 5) sustained their Shrine membership for years, offering their prayers and resources. Father Stanley provided oversight for the bookstore and Dorothy's husband Peter, of blessed memory, served the Shrine Foundation, representing the then diocese of Pittsburgh for 20 years.

Lighting a Candle for You on Behalf of Your Loved Ones



Paraklesis Services are held in the St. Photios Chapel on the 3rd Monday of the month at 12:30 p.m.

There are many sacred sites in our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. A visit to the cathedrals and churches, shrines and monasteries is an edifying experience for the worshipping pilgrim. Upon arriving at one of these sites, an Orthodox Christian enters the narthex, offers gratitude to God with the sign of the Cross, makes an offering, and lights a candle. At that moment, as the candle pierces the darkness of the world outside, supplicants often focus their prayers to God on behalf of their loved ones.

One of the most difficult aspects of 'sheltering in place' during the current pandemic is being absent from our home parish. Safety protocols necessitated attending services virtually. The opportunity to light a candle virtually began with many parishes calling this their "Light A Candle" program.

The Light A Candle program at the St. Photios National Shrine began on February 27, 1982, when at the Dedication of the Shrine hundreds of candles were lit, illuminating the entrance to the Shrine Chapel on behalf of those in whose memory the Shrine was dedicated. Hundreds of people continue to

participate in this program annually and thousands of prayers have been offered up for our ancestors and our families.

The St. Photios Shrine has been called the "*kandili*" (vigil light) of our Church in America. As the *kandili* stands vigil before the icons of the Saints, so the National Shrine stands in testimony and honor of all immigrants who came to the New World seeking a better life for themselves and their children.

Submit the names of those you wish to honor or be remembered and let us light a candle for you.

Shrine Visitors



Three generations of Regas family



Shrine Volunteer Dr. Tony Tsitos



Angelo & Katherine Tompras



Dr. Angelo and Sherry Kliossis



John and Barbara (Antonopoulos) Haralambous



Steve and Helen Doulavaris



Elaine Zetes, Elaine Tissura, Alik Tsiarglou, and Christina Polizos



St. Photios National Shrine Church Supplies



(NSCS) is an important funding source of the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. NSCS offers parishes a large selection of candle sizes and types at low prices from a number of vendors located throughout the country. Inventory includes high quality incense, self-lighting charcoal, candle safety cups and the Shrine distinctive Epiphany Icon Holy Water Bottles!

The bottles were designed by His Grace, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and are still manufactured here in America! National Shrine Church Supplies offers competitive prices along with the opportunity to support our sacred and historic institution. All proceeds aid in preserving the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. Provide for your parish and support our First National Shrine!

Call today to place your order ~ 904.829.8205.



The St. Photios National Shrine is proud to unveil its new and improved website!

Visit us at: <https://stphotios.org/>

The Hierarchal Proistamenos of the Shrine Bishop Demetrios stated, "I am grateful for the contributors to this project. Our website is more navigable, with more access to information and will be continually updated. Users will also find it more consistent with the websites of our Holy Archdiocese and its many National Ministries. It is an excellent way to get to know us short of actually visiting."

Become a Friend of the St. Photios National Shrine

Friends of Saint Photios honor the memory of the first Greeks who came to the New World each and every day by supporting the witness of the Orthodox Faith and Hellenic Culture that takes place at Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

The Saint Photios Shrine Friends program is a component of this nonprofit organization. All Friends activities serve the broader goal of helping raise awareness about the Saint Photios Shrine. Are you counted among the Steadfast Stewards of Saint Photios Shrine?

Your support enables the St. Photios Foundation, Inc., the governing body of the first national shrine of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, to maintain the Saint Photios National Shrine and fulfill its mission to witness our Orthodox Christian faith, to share the Hellenic Culture and to honor the memory of the 500 Greek colonists who came to America in 1768.

When you join the Friends of Saint Photios, you will enjoy a wide array of benefits, including: a copy of the Friends Annual Newsletter; 10% discount on most merchandise purchased at the Shrine Gift Shop / Bookstore; an invitation to Greek Landing Day; and an invitation to the Feast Day Banquet.

Your annual gift encourages and enables our efforts while you become an important part in the work of our beloved Shrine.