Metropolitan Alexios convened the St. Photios Foundation Annual meeting on Saturday, February 3rd at the Casa Monica Hotel in St. Augustine, FL. After the invocation, 1st Vice President Archon Dr. Manuel N. Tissura welcomed newly appointed trustee Olga Plomarity. Olga represents the Metropolis of Denver. Introductions were made and a special welcome was extended to AHEPA Supreme President Archon Carl Hollister and his wife Cynthia.

Shrine Treasurer Maria Carantzas and Endowment Chair Nick Stamatogiannakis presented the financials. The trustees passed the 2018 budget. Committee reports were presented. Director, Polly Hillier gave her 2017 report. Highlights included facility upgrades planned in the coming year and 2017 marketing initiatives. There was much discussion about the 250th Anniversary of Greek Landing Day and Greek Week which will be celebrated, May 15 – 19, 2018. At the close of the meeting, a motion was made for Archon Harry G. Plomarity to be recognized for his 35 years of service to the St. Photios Foundation. Dr. Tissura recommended Archon Plomarity be granted Emeritus status. The motion passed unanimously. Olga Plomarity was called forward to accept the St. Photios Service Award on behalf of her father.


His Eminence welcomed Shrine friends and trustees. He thanked the 80 guests from the Tampa Bay area who came for the ordination of Deacon Theofanis. His Eminence gave an inspiring talk about the relevancy of the Shrine and the ministry of St. Photios the Great. He reflected on his recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The Trustees Dinner began at 7:30 at the Casa Monica Hotel. Archon Nick Furris emceed the weekend events. After the invocation by Metropolitan Alexios, greetings by Archon Dr. Manuel N. Tissura and introductions by Director Polly Hillier, Consul General Dimitrios Sparos spoke on behalf of the Hellenic Republic. He is committed to all Greeks learning about the first colony of Greeks in America. AHEPA Supreme
The Foundation remembers with deep respect the ministries of Metropolitan Iakovos of Chicago and Metropolitan Philotheos of Meloa. These Hierarchs fell asleep in the Lord in 2017. May God give rest to their Souls. May their Memory be Eternal.

Ms. Ethel “Efty” Fessopulos fell asleep in the Lord on April 08, 2017 in Jacksonville, Florida where she attended St. John the Divine Church. She was born July 21, 1926 in Savannah, GA.

Mr. Nicholas G. Greles attended St. Nicholas Church in St. Louis, Missouri. He fell asleep in the Lord September 16, 2016.

The Foundation is thankful to Ms. Ethel Fessopulos and Mr. Nicholas G. Greles for remembering the Shrine in their wills.

The Shrine family came together to celebrate the life of Archon Charles ‘Charlie’ Masterpolis of Savannah, GA, who passed away on July 17, 2017. Archon C. Masterpolis was born on June 9, 1921. He was an Emeritus Trustee on the St. Photios Foundation one of the Foundation’s early members and was a Benefactor of the Shrine.

The Shrine family came together to celebrate the life of Archon George Parandes of Jacksonville, FL who fell asleep in the Lord on November 11, 2017. Archon G. Parandes devotedly served on the Administrative Committee of the St. Photios Foundation for many years, actively representing the Metropolis of Atlanta.

May God give rest to their Souls and may their Memory be Eternal.

**Light-A-Candle Program**

The Light a Candle program is a way for you to offer up a prayer for yourself or a loved one. Prayers can be made for the health and wellbeing of or in memory of an individual. We invite you to have St. Photios light a candle for you or a loved one simply by calling the Shrine. We will light a 7-day votive candle and send an acknowledgment letter to the person or family for whom the candle is lit. Your prayers will also be added to the Shrine Prayer List.

**2017 Essay Contest**

Mrs. Katherine Bacalis, chair of the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine Essay Program, with committee members Dr. Constantine Santas, Dr. Tony Tsitos, and Mrs. Renee Gahagan shared the committee members’ admiration for the high caliber of writing found in the essays submitted this year.

Two theme choices were available. The first was: “There are many historic and sacred sites throughout the world. What makes St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine a historic and significant site for Greek Orthodox Christians.” The second was: “Every American (other than those of Native American ancestry) born in the United States can trace their family’s history to an ancestor who came to America from a foreign country. Compare and contrast your family’s immigrant history with the immigrant history of the New Smyrna Colonists of 1768”.


His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, signed certificates of participation for all essayists, including: Helen Sofia Cadotte, Annunciation Cathedral, Detroit, MI; Reema Choueiri of St. Nektarios, Charlotte, NC; George Chudley of Kimisis Tis Theotokou of The Hamptons, NY; Panagiots Kurtis of St. Andrew, South Bend, IN; Domenica Pusic of Holy Trinity, Raleigh, NC; Angeli Poulopoulos of St Demetrios in Rocky River, OH; Cindy Samaan of St Demetrios, Daytona, FL; and Ellie Stamatogiannakis of St. John, Jacksonville, FL, for their efforts.

St. Photios Foundation First VP Archon Dr. Manuel N. Tissura offered special thanks to the estate of Mrs. Kathie D’Anna and the AHEPA Chapter #6 Socrates Chapter in Jacksonville, FL, for their generous support of this program. “We thank the benefactors of this program and the dedication for all those involved in this special effort to help our young people learn about the Greek immigration story and its living memorial, St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

Mrs. Bacalis extended thanks to Dr. Constantine Santas, Dr. Tony Tsitos, Mrs. Donna Bacon and Mrs. Renee Gahagan for their assistance in evaluating the essays submitted and to the parents and communities who inspire and encourage the students to participate in this unique opportunity.
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Youth Pilgrimage Visits

Mommy and Me
The under-fives attend their first retreat at St. Photios

St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church, Charlotte, NC
Sunday School Retreat led by Gerry Clonaris

St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church, Charlotte, NC
Sunday School Retreat led by Gerry Clonaris

Sharing the Shrine at St. Stephen’s Day Camp at the Diakonia Center, Salem, SC

Celebrating Feast Days

Father James Rousakis, spiritual advisor for the weekend activities held by the Hellenic American Teachers Federation

Father Joseph Samaan leads the Shrine retreat held on the Feast of St. Mokios

OCMC missionary priest, Father Paul Patitsas visiting from Auckland, NZ
We invite you to share in the future of the St. Photios National Shrine by joining hands with us and making a financial commitment to the future of the Shrine.

We can be proud of the tremendous achievement the St. Photios Shrine represents, but even as the Shrine is dedicated to those first Greek people who came to America in search of freedom and a better life for their children, we must not only remember them, but we must continually look to the future so that we may preserve their rich heritage and perpetuate their high ideals. To honor the Shrine’s substantial contributions, the St. Photios Foundation set aside a special recognition wall fittingly called “The Wall of Tribute.”

We invite you to share in that future by joining hands with us and making a financial commitment to the future of the Shrine. We invite you to add your name or the names of your loved ones to the list of people already committed by making a donation of $2,000 or more.

For your generosity, we would like to inscribe the names of those you wish to honor in perpetuity, either living or in memory, on The Wall of Tribute. Fittingly, this tribute is located just outside the sacred St. Photios Chapel. If interested, please contact the St. Photios Shrine at (904)829-8205.
Presvytera Vasso, Sophia and Father James Rousakis visit St Augustine Lighthouse where St. Augustine’s Greek shrimp boat builders are commemorated.

Polly Hillier, Father Frank Kirlangitis and his daughter Maria visiting from Sarasota.

Meg and Laura Skubik visit the family’s Byzantine icons on loan to the Shrine by Meg’s grandfather of blessed memory, Stephen J. Skubik.

Helen and Steve Doulavaris of Florence, SC.

Parishioners Visit from St Mark, Belleview, FL.

Father and Presvytera Bookis with daughter Vasilia visited the Shrine while attending schoolmate Andrew Bersu’s wedding in St Augustine. Father Bookis serves the Assumption Parish in Louisville, Kentucky.

Every year Shrine staff and volunteers afford an opportunity for staff and campers to experience a morning of Greek culture. Language, music and food round out the program at the St. Augustine Lighthouse Day Camp.

Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon.

Presvytera Vasso, Sophia and Father James Rousakis visit St Augustine Lighthouse where St. Augustine’s Greek shrimp boat builders are commemorated.
President Archon Carl Hollister spoke of the importance of identity, the call to commitment. He invited Polly Hillier to make a Shrine presentation at the 2018 AHEPA Convention in July. Archon Mike Emanuel shared the leaps of faith it took to fulfill his dream to one day be a television reporter. Today he is the Chief Congressional Correspondent and senior political correspondent for FOX News Channel.

On Sunday, Trustees and 80 people from the Tampa Bay area worshipped with the parishioners at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in St. Augustine, to witness the ordination of Deacon Theofanis Katsiklis. The candidate for priesthood moved the congregation to tears as he was presented for ordination by Rev. Dr. Nicholas G. Louh and his spiritual father, Rev. Vasileios Tsourlis, to His Eminence, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta. There was a resounding AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS! Koinisis Tis Theotokou Philoptochos hosted a reception in honor of Rev. Father Theofanis and Presvytera Stella. Father Theofanis, his family and friends then attended the St. Photios Feast Day Banquet.

Event chairpersons, Archon Dr. Manuel N. and Elaine Tissura thanked Archon Nicholas J. Furriss for his 22 years of being the emcee of the annual Pilgrimage Banquet. Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, assisted by Rev. Dr. Nicholas Louh, gave the invocation. Archon Furriss introduced the people on the dais - Metropolitan of Boston Philoptochos President, Elaine Zetes, Consul General of the Hellenic Republic, Dimitrios Sparos, Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou, 1st Vice President of the St. Photios Foundation, Archon Dr. Manuel N. Tissura, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, Archon Mike Emanuel, Director Polly Hillier and Father Theofanis Katsiklis.

Emcee Furriss then asked the Shrine Founders, Foundation Trustees, Archons and all those of the AHEPA family to please stand to be recognized. Archon Furriss called to memory trustee, Archon George Parandes, who fell asleep in the Lord in 2017. He thanked Helen Carlos for her generous contribution to the Feast Day weekend in memory of her parents, Andrew and Eula Carlos. Special thanks was also given to Helen, who has sponsored four HCHC ambassadors’ participation in the Feast Day weekend for the past years.

Consul General Dimitrios Sparos offered greetings on behalf of the Hellenic Republic, Elaine Zetes read a letter of congratulations from Maria Logus, Esq., President of the National Ladies Philoptochos Society, and HCHC student Sophia Petrou expressed that the Church and its programs provide the life giving waters fueling a love for working in the Church. On behalf of all the students, she offered thanks to Helen Carlos, the St. Photios Foundation and the community for welcoming her and her fellow schoolmates. Archon Mike Emanuel, Senior Congressional Correspondent at Fox Television News, concluded the greetings portion of the program with great appreciation for the weekend experience and for the renewal it gave for him to continue his commitment as a news correspondent.

Metropolitan Alexios, assisted by Mrs. Hillier, presented Mrs. Constance Gaitanis, Volunteer of the Year and Miss Evgenia Mercado, Employee Recognition awards. He called forth two of the Wall of Tribute subscribers, Archon George and Alexis Donkar and Archon Manuel and Elaine Tissura to receive their certificates. The Tissuras were surprised and grateful for this honor bestowed upon them by their daughters, Anthea, Michelle and Alexis. Cindy Samaan was called to receive from His Eminence her certificate of participation in the 2017 Essay Contest.

Lunch was served. Special thanks to the Wilkes family for chairing the auction and to all those who contributed so generously to its success.

Nick Furriss then called the keynote speaker to the podium. Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou, who holds the position of Visiting Associate Professor in International Negotiation and Conflict Resolution at The Fletcher School of Tufts University was invited to share her experience as a representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople at the Holy and Great Council. The title of her talk was “Knowledge and Action from Global to Local: the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church.”

In conclusion, Metropolitan Alexios congratulated the speakers and thanked Dr. Prodromou for the insight she shared. His Eminence thanked all those who traveled to be at Father Theofanis’ ordination and encouraged all those who came to return to St. Photios Shrine, with the children of their parishes to learn about the Greek colonists, St. Photios Shrine and St. Augustine.

Metropolitan Alexios, as President of the St. Photios Foundation and on recommendation by the Permanent and Executive Board, received a vote of confidence to promote Director Polexeni Maouris Hillier to Executive Director. The benediction was given by His Grace Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, assisted by Father Theofanis. The 36th Annual National Shrine Pilgrimage Banquet closed with the singing of God Bless America and the Greek National Anthem.

The 37th Anniversary of National Shrine Pilgrimage weekend will be celebrated on February 9-10, 2019.
February 6, 2018
Feast of Saint Photios
Saint Photios National Shrine Day

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.* (Hebrews 12:1)

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we commemorate the Feast of Saint Photios the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople, we offer our prayers and support for our beloved St. Photios National Shrine in the year that marks the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the largest Greek colony to America. In 1768 hundreds of Greek immigrants arrived in New Smyrna and St. Augustine, Florida, after an arduous journey by ship from their distant homelands. Their hopes for a better life were challenged by the conditions and demands they met.

They were subjected to a harsh environment and poor accommodations. Disease and sickness added to their misery, as many died within the first five months after their arrival. The brave survivors continued in the inhumane conditions of their servitude for nine years until those remaining revolted, left New Smyrna and returned to St. Augustine. It was this group of our valiant forbearers who met for worship and fellowship at the Avero House, where our National Shrine is located today. It was here that they were finally free to live, flourish, and pursue the opportunities and potential offered in their new home.

This story of struggle and tremendous challenges, of hope and faith, is remembered and cherished on this day when we also reflect on the life and witness of Saint Photios. As a champion of our faith, as an inspired theologian, and as a spiritual leader, he faced threats, imprisonment, and persecution. However, in the face of great trials and adversity, Saint Photios did not waiver in his faith in God, his love of Christ, and his hope in the grace and truth of our Lord.

This is our inheritance as Greek Orthodox Christians in this country as we look to both the witness of Saint Photios and of the early Greek immigrants and settlers who persevered. They are among the cloud of witnesses, together with generations of our fathers and mothers who followed them and who endured the challenges and sorrow of leaving their homeland to find opportunity here in America. We are strengthened by their courage. We are inspired by their faith. Through our remembrance of their plight and their sacrifice, we are renewed by the grace of our Lord to face the challenges and trials of our contemporary world. As we commemorate the feast of Saint Photios, as we honor the blessed memory of our Greek ancestors who came to this land so long ago, and as we show our support for our Saint Photios National Shrine, may our minds reflect on their witness and our hearts be filled with the love of God, a true love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. (I Corinthians 13:7)

With paternal love in Him,

†DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America
Deacon Theofanis Katsiklis serving in the Chapel of St. Photios on the eve of his priestly ordination.

Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta with Deacon Athanasios Kartsonis.

Alan Phillips, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and Archon George Donkar.

Ron Hilliard and Helen A. Carlos.

Archon Dr. Angelo and Sherry Kliossis.

Seated: Foundation Treasurer Maria Carantzas, Foundation Secretary Leslye Alex Phillips. Standing: Foundation Treasurer Anthony Megas, Foundation Endowment Chair Nick Stamatogiannakis and Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos.

Archon Harry T. Cavalaris with Charles Koukoulis and Monica Tenant.


Metropolitan Alexios presides over the Ecclesiastical Services with his priests at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church on February 4, 2018 at the ordination of Theofanis Katsiklis.
Archon Harry G. Plomarity Awarded Emeritus Status

Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver recently accepted St. Photios Trustee Archon Harry G. Plomarity’s request to retire from the St. Photios Foundation. Archon Plomarity had served the Shrine for over three decades. His Eminence appointed Miss Olga Plomarity to represent the Denver Metropolis on the Foundation. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to award emeritus status to Harry.
In 1904, Father Nathaniel Sederis established the Church of the Holy Wisdom with Greek immigrants in the D.C. area. The Church of Greece then appointed Father Joachim Alexopoulos to the parish in 1906, where he served until 1918. He served some 12 years, bringing with him members of his family from Greece. His grandniece, Mary Hatziyannis and her family, are members of Saint Sophia today.

Elevated to Bishop of Boston, Bishop Joachim published a visionary document, “The Dangers to the Hellenes in America and the Means of Saving Them,” noting the increasing acculturation of immigrants from Greece and the need for both the pastoral and liturgical use of English.

In 1930, Bishop Alexopoulos returned to Volos, Greece, where he served as Metropolitan of Demetrias. His courage and faith during World War II were little known until his posthumous recognition in 1998 by the State of Israel, for saving the lives of 700 people who were hidden by the residents of the villages of Mount Pelion. When asked by the Nazis to hand over the list of Jewish residents, he refused, answering, “I am a Jew.” Identified as “Righteous among the Nations,” Metropolitan Alexopoulos’ name is inscribed today in the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., as well as entered on the Righteous Honor Wall at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

The community of Saint Sophia completed and dedicated its church in 1924, where they continued to worship for almost 30 years. The current site of the church was purchased in 1943. Architect Archie Protopapas of NYC designed the building. The groundbreaking occurred September 25, 1951, and in 1955, Saint Sophia was awarded the status of Cathedral, the seat of the Archbishop of America when in our Nation’s Capital. Archbishop Michael with President Eisenhower laid the cornerstone on September 25, 1951. The Cathedral was ready for occupancy on February 19, 1955.

Helen Elias Tsiptolas was born in Washington D.C. Her parents Christofilos Elias Kalavritinos came to America in the early 1900’s from Perivolia, Sparta, and her mother Cassandra Calomeris Kalavritinos, came from Vorvonia, Peloponese. Her father of blessed memory was a founding member of Sts. Constantine & Helen Church in Washington, D.C., where his seven children were baptized. Helen married Demetrios Efstratios Tsiptolas, at Sts. Constantine and Helen. It is the parish where her roots are.

Saint Sophia is where she raised her family. She and her husband Mimis had four children: Fotini, Cassandra, Efstratios and Christofilos Elias. They were all baptized at Saint Sophia. On September 23, 2005, a void was left in Helen’s life when her beloved ‘Mimis’ fell asleep in the Lord.

Helen poured her energies into the archives of Saint Sophia Cathedral. With other interested parishioners, this history buff had a goal: organize and publish the history of the Cathedral for the Consecration Commemorative Album, which was scheduled for May 10, 2015.

As Helen looked through the information Father John Tavlaries had given to Mimis, she found a letter he had set aside. It was from the granddaughter of the third priest of the parish, looking for information about her ancestor. The granddaughter was living in Georgetown, and Father John said he could not find any information about the first three priests who served the parish. On reading this, Helen began to search, and in that treasure of information she found the historical work of Metropolitan Alexopoulos, documented in Israel.

The St. Photos National Shrine recognizes Helen’s commitment to unearthing ecclesiastical history in America. As she says, “we are here today and gone tomorrow.” On Monday, November 21st, Polexeni Maouris Hillier bestowed the Medal of St. Photos to Helen at the Philoptochos Meeting. The trustees of the St. Photos Foundation are honored to join the congregation of the Adas Israel Synagogue in Washington, D.C., in recognizing Helen’s fruitful efforts.

**St. Augustine, FL --** St. Photos 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 Avero 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 search of a new life.

**Contact Us**

St. Photos Greek Orthodox National Shrine
PO BOX 1960, St. Augustine, FL 32085-1960
Tel - 904.829.8205 ~ Fax - 904.829.8707
info@stphotios.org ~ www.stphotios.org
Opening of the Doors at the
Diakonia Retreat Center Panaghia Chapel

On Thursday, October 12, 2017, hundreds of parishioners from throughout the Metropolis of Atlanta joined Metropolitan Alexios as he celebrated the first Orthros and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Panaghia Chapel. Located at the Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, SC, this blessing within the pastoral setting of the Blue Ridge Mountains offers a place of tranquility for spiritual retreats. Bishop Gregory of Nyssa, clergy and chanters then began the Blessing of the Water (Agiasmos), and Opening of the Doors (Thyranoixia) services for the new conference center. This chapel and conference center provide a beautiful house of worship and meeting place that will serve all those attending the Diakonia Center programs or hosting a spiritual retreat.

The Greek-American Teachers Federation and Cultural Associations and the Pan Arcadian Federation of America meet in St. Augustine

The Greek-American Teachers Federation and Cultural Associations and the Pan Arcadian Federation of America, in cooperation with the Teachers Association “Athena” of Florida, and other Greek-American organizations, organized a visit to St. Augustine, Florida, on December 9th 2017. This pilgrimage was to present the “I. Giannopoulos” award to a person advancing the knowledge of the Greek language and Hellenic culture in America. Rev. James Rousakis, vicar of the Tampa Bay area celebrated the services. Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and former St. Augustine Mayor George Gardiner, were just two of the many dignitaries who attended this event.

The faithful proceeded from the St. Photios Shrine to the Tolomato Cemetery where they were received by a US Honor Guard. Anthems were sung and the colors presented as Stella Kokolis, president of the Greek America Educators Federation and Cultural Association, laid a wreath on the grave of Mary Giannopoulos Darling. A special memorial service was held in honor of her father, Ioannis Giannopoulos who came to America as an indentured servant contracted to work at the New Smyrna Colony. He was a carpenter from Arcadia who upon receiving his freedom and residency in St. Augustine, made the education of children his priority. He built the first school in the Colonial Quarter where today it is known as “The Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse.” Thanks to his values, hundreds of children were educated through the century. A true witness that Greeks give priority to education.

The Prize (I. Giannopoulos Award) is now instituted and part of the US Congressional Record. Professor Nicos Nicolaidakis gave a detailed biographical presentation about Giannopoulos. At the close, Mrs. Kokolis presented him with the first annual Giannopoulos Award. The Shrine Foundation thanks Mrs. Kokolis and Andreas Papantoniou, president of the Pan Arcadian Federation, for choosing St. Augustine to mark this historic event undertaken for the first time by the Omogeneia. The Second Annual event will take place November 17, 2018.
The Metropolis of Chicago traces its beginning to 1923, when Rt. Rev. Philaretos Johannides became the city’s first Greek Orthodox bishop. Just after 1940, Chicago was designated the ‘2nd Diocesan District’ of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North & South America. It became the Metropolis of Chicago in 2002.

Metropolitan Iakovos fell asleep in the Lord on June 2, 2017. He tirelessly ministered for twenty-four years. A studied and accomplished liturgist, Athens-born Metropolitan Iakovos made a profound imprint upon the character of the Midwest’s Greek Orthodox communities. I first met His Eminence as His Grace, Bishop Iakovos of Apameia. I was a freshman at Hellenic College. His Eminence inspired all the women students who were so new to the campus, to answer God’s call to serve the Church. I am ever grateful for his spiritual guidance and kind heart. God give rest to his soul.

The Archdiocesan Council convened in Chicago, May 2017. With the superb assistance of Shrine Trustee, Joanne Stavrakas, a Shrine outreach to Chicago area parishes was planned with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos through the office of his chancellor, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos. Mrs. Stavrakas, who also serves on the board of the National Ladies’ Philoptochos Society, provided me with transportation from the airport to the hotel, lunch and a ride to St. Demetrios in Elmhurst, just outside of Chicago. Their parish education programs reflect this Metropolis historical focus on education within the parishes. The community’s Pythagoras Children’s Academy consists of the parochial day school, afternoon school and an offering of independent Saturday classes with a combined student enrollment of 350.

The next day I toured St. Basil’s Church with Father Dalianis, followed by an appointment with Dimitra Georgouses at the National Hellenic Museum. She explained the vision of the museum and its most recent acquisitions to Archdiocesan Council member, Archon Nicholas Loutsion and me. Once we finished, we crossed the street to meet the Paspalas family at Athenian Candles.

The Athenian Candle Co., is a three generation, family-owned business established over 90 years ago, in 1922. Founded by Themistocles and Efthimia Godelas, the family tradition has stayed alive as the only original Chicago Greek Town proprietorship existing on Halsted Street today. The company continues under the leadership of Thomas and Jean (Godelas) Paspalas and their three children.

I thank Thomas, Sr. and Jean for their generous hospitality and the time they took to share 3 generations of family history as well as teaching me about the evolution of Chicago’s Greek-town. God bless Thomas Jr. for creating a hand-dipped 8-inch taper for the Shrine upon request!

After a day and a half of Council and committee meetings, Harold and Fay Peponis treated the Education Committee to dinner at Spiaggia, with the recently ordained Rev. Dr. Anton Vrame.

On Saturday, I witnessed an ecumenical initiative integrating places of worship with neighbors at the Assumption Church. Working with another neighborhood parish, the community opened the doors with lunch, dinner to go and health services information available free of charge to people living in the surrounding area.

Sunday School students were serving, board members were cooking, Philoptochos members were manning the ‘booths.’ This was an opportunity for me to see the church engage in outreach.

Special thanks to Alex Magdalinos who took time to orient me further to the Chicago churches’ impact on their community. In 2016, Alex coordinated the St. Demetrios, Elmhurst, mission trip to St. Photios Shrine. Special thanks to the Chronis/Stavrakas family for inviting me at their table for the Godparent Sunday Luncheon at St. Demetrios in Chicago. Metropolitan Iakovos had invited me many times to visit parishes in Chicago. I am grateful that upon my arrival to Chicago, I received the Blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos. May God give rest to his soul.

The Metropolis of Chicago consists of thirty-four parishes in Illinois, with another twenty-four parishes in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, northern Indiana, and eastern and central Missouri. The offices of the Metropolis are located in Chicago, Illinois.
Colonists’ Memorial at the New Smyrna Odyssey

Clear skies and warm temperatures with inspiring talks from Consul General Dimitrios Sparos, AHEPA district 2 governor Gus Pantelides, and AHEPA Daytona Speedway Chapter #410 Judge John Alexander added to the solemn memorial celebrated by the Rev. Father Joseph Samaan.

Also in attendance were officers from the Citrus District 2 AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope – Grand Governor Stella Sirks and husband Jim, who serves as Treasurer; Dr. Marios and Governor Ourania Stephanides, Lieutenant Gov. Michael Tremis as well as many other AHEPA family members.
The parish council of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in St. Augustine, FL, hosted the 249th anniversary of Greek Landing Day celebration. On Sunday June 25, 2017, participants gathered at the St. Augustine Municipal Marina to board the Victory III for a Sunset Harbor Cruise. Eighty people of all ages enjoyed the shoreline view of St. Augustine while Andrew Anthony provided background music.

On Monday, June 26th, Father John Hays celebrated matins and the Divine Liturgy. Mrs. Angela Lekos provided the kolyva for the colonists’ memorial and a reception was hosted by Kimisis Tis Theotokou Philoptochos Chapter of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, St. Augustine, Florida. Mayor Nancy Shaver read the St. Augustine City Proclamation recognizing Greek Landing Day and proclaiming all of St. Augustine Greek for the day.

The annual Greek Landing Day Celebration honors the memory of the first Greek colonists to America and celebrates the pioneering spirit of all immigrants. It is an opportunity for the public to visit this ‘jewel of St. George Street’ and ‘Beacon of Orthodoxy in America. The Foundation thanks the National Ladies Philoptochos Society, National AHEPA, Leadership 100 and the many individuals and parishes that provided financial support for Greek Landing Day 2017.
Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Arrival of the First Colony of Greeks in North America.

Over 1400 colonists from Asia Minor, Corsica, Italy and Minorca with
500 Greeks from Arcadia, Crete, Laconia, and Messinia whose love of freedom
and a better life for themselves and their families brought them to the New World in 1768.
They settled and worked the largest European Colony in the New World, the New Smyrna Colony.
They found sanctuary at the Avero House which houses our
“Plymouth Rock”, St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine in St. Augustine.

Greek Week Honors the 250th Anniversary
of Our Greek Immigration History

All activities will be held 6:00 p.m. Tuesday May 15 - Saturday, May 19
St. John the Divine of Jacksonville, FL is the host parish.

6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 15th - Greek Music in America lecture presented by Dr. Tina Bucavales in the Flagler Room at Flagler College *Reservations are encouraged.

6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 16th - GLENDI AT THE COLONIAL OAK MUSIC PARK, 33 St. George Street with the Elladha Band & Anthea Sidiropoulos. Cover Charge is $10.00. Food and Drink are available for purchase.
*Reservations are required.

6:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 17th - The Turnbull-Duncan Papers and the New Smyrna Colony Lecture presented by Dr. Dan Schaffer at The Llambias House, 31 St. Francis Street, *Reservations must be made in advance.

6:00 p.m. on Friday, May 18th - Sharing Memories of Our Heritage presented by Dr. Ann Browning Masters at St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. *Reservations are encouraged.

6:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 19th - Walk with the St. Augustine Garrison Historical Re-enactors from the Shrine to La Plaza de la Constitucion.

*Contact Shrine Manager, Gina Bingman for reservations at 904-829-8205 or info@stphotios.com

The St. Photios Shrine is a self-sustaining institution of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.
The Friends Membership Program of St. Photios National Shrine

Yes, I would like to contribute to the Friends Membership Program
Please continue my membership or enroll me in the Friends Program

Please make checks payable to the St. Photios National Shrine and mail to P.O. Box 1960, St. Augustine, FL 32085. All donations are tax-deductible.

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Your donation supports the outreach and ministry of the St. Photios National Shrine.

New to the St. Photios Bookstore

Among the many new books that are available in the St. Photios Bookstore is The Departure of the Soul According to the Teaching of the Orthodox Church, from the Monastery of St. Anthony. Printed in 2017, “this volume is dedicated to our Spiritual Father in Christ, Geronda, Ephraim who dedicated his life to forming Christ in his spiritual children.” This is of great interest not only to scholars for the primary sources cited but also to the faithful who pray, as Father Ephraim said, “so that death finds us ready”. The book costs $72 with prepaid shipping.

Hellenic Tour USA, Capturing History, by Cleo Adeline Rumpakis became available to us through Cleo’s donation of a few copies to the bookstore. Upon reading it, I was so impressed with the magnitude of research required to write this travel book. I called Mrs. Rumpakis to thank her for this donation and asked her how long it took to compile historical highlights, persons of interest and ongoing events in all 50 states! I then put in an order with a request for autographed copies for the dignitaries attending the 36th Annual St. Photios Feastday banquet. On the front cover are featured three pictures: one of the Statue of Liberty, another of her parents, and the third of the AHEPA New Smyrna Odyssey Memorial! The book is available in our giftshop for $20.00 with prepaid shipping.

St. Photios Foundation Inc.
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