

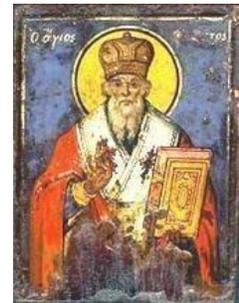
NEWS RELEASE – November 25, 2015

St Augustine, FL – The 3rd annual Blessing of the Animals will begin with the Blessing of the Waters at 12 noon in the Chapel of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine in St Augustine, FL on Saturday, December 5th.

It is the conviction of the Orthodox Christian Church that all creation is holy. His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, proclaimed, “Everything that lives and breathes is sacred and beautiful in the eyes of God.” The Church teaches it is our responsibility as human beings to love, honor and care for God’s earth, that He created and blessed every creature that swims in its oceans, walks or crawls on its soil or flies in its skies. And it is for this reason that we set aside time to honor God by blessing His animals, who have brought us so much joy and happiness and who have adorned our lives and our earth.

How will the blessing proceed? Father George Ioannou, pastor of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in St. Augustine and Shrine Chaplain will pray the ancient Christian blessing prayer over the animals brought to the Shrine Courtyard.

Mrs. GeeGee Angelopoulos will have available red memorial candles which will be lit December 16th in honor of St. Modestos, a 3rd century Eastern Orthodox Christian saint. St. Modestos viewed animals as sublime and mysterious gifts from God, and would often bless the livestock of the faithful - praying for their health and survival and glorifying in the vastness and beauty of all that God made. The Eastern Orthodox Church recognizes St. Modestos on Dec. 16 each year. These luminaries will be lit for the health and well-being and in memory of those creatures that give and gave so much beauty, love and support to our lives.



The parish of Holy Trinity also invites the public to a Holiday Bake Sale supporting the outreach obligations of its philanthropic arm, the Kimisis Tis Theotokou Philoptochos Society. Purchase of holiday pastries support national and regional programs as well as local initiatives. The sale will be held from 11-2:00 p.m. inside the Shrine on Saturday, December 5th. Pre-orders may be placed with the parish at 904 829-0504.

What is St Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine? The Shrine is an institution of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in America located on 41 St. George Street, St. Augustine. It commemorates the hundreds of Greeks who came to America in 1768 with the Turnbull New Smyrna colony. Today we know the survivors of that colony as Minorcans.

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