

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



March 2021 ✦ Volume 45, Issue 2

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Have a Blessed Lent!

Καλη Σαρακοστη

The Lenten Prayer

OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN



O Lord and Master of my life,
take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness,
lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity,
humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.

Yea, Lord and King, grant me to see my own errors
and not to judge my brother,
for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages.

Amen.

Lenten Service



Great Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The parish offers several weekly services for our spiritual edification. Please join in-person or online to pray together as we offer our prayers to God asking for His forgiveness.

Sundays	Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Tuesdays	Lenten Vespers at 5:00 PM followed by Theosis program at 6:30 PM
Wednesdays	Presanctified Liturgy at 6:00 PM
Fridays	Akathist Hymn at 6:00 PM

Wait for the promise of the Father

COVID-19 and ■ BY REV. FR. PETER DELVIZIS

ΝΙΨΟΝΑΝΟΜΗΜΑΤΑΜΗΜΟΝΑΝΟΨΙΝ

The COVID Era has reminded us about the importance of hand washing. Not only is this preventive measure an important step in controlling the coronavirus, it also puts the mind at ease knowing the hands are free of contagions and grime. Once COVID is long gone and becomes part

of human history, hopefully frequent hand washing will always remain part of our daily lives.

While clean hands help keep us healthy, a clean soul is more beneficial to us. In a different way, the COVID Era can offer us insight into how to live a healthy spiritual life.

In the Queen City of Constantinople outside the Great Church of Agia Sophia, a long palindrome was inscribed



Agia Sophia

on a fountain used by the faithful before entering the cathedral. It read:

ΝΙΨΟΝΑΝΟΜΗΜΑΤΑΜΗΜΟΝΑΝΟΨΙΝ

Continued on page 3 ⇨



Dates in the Life of Our Church

March–April 2021

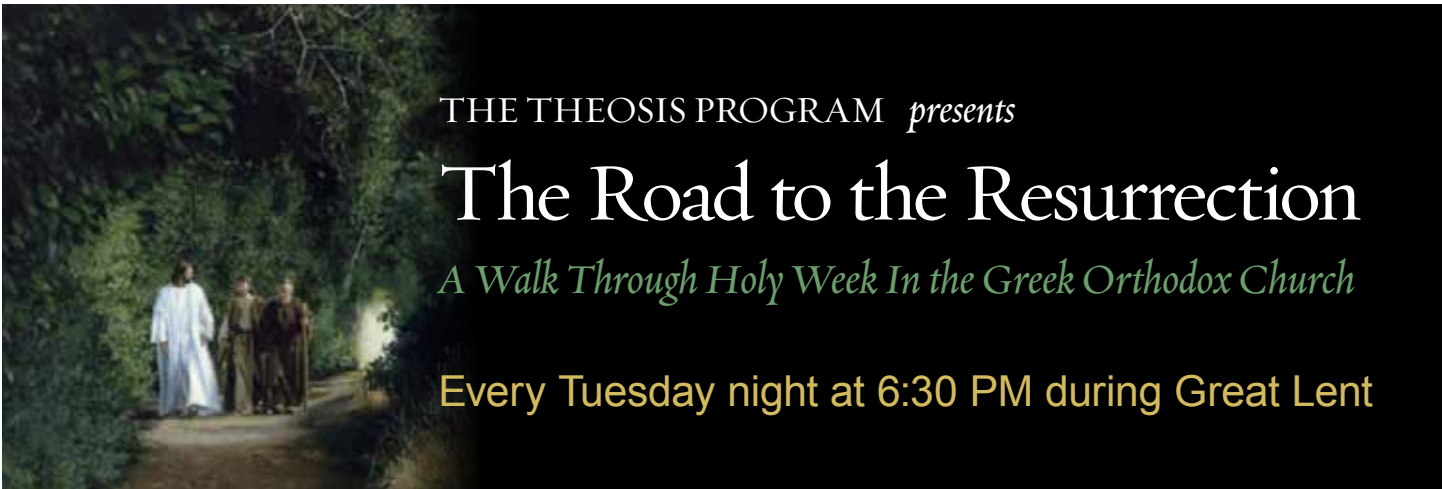
✠ MARCH

- 4 Morning Coffee with Fr. Peter
- 6 1st Saturday of Souls, 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
- 7 8:30 AM Orthros; 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 9 Forty Martyrs of Sebastia, 8:30 AM Orthros; 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 9 7:30 PM Parish Council
- 13 2nd Saturday of Souls, 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
- 14 8:30 AM Orthros; 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 15 Great Lent Begins
5:00 PM Great Compline
- 16 5:00 PM Lenten Vespers
6:30 PM Theosis
- 17 9:00 AM Presanctified Gifts

- 19 1st Salutations, 6:00 PM
- 20 3rd Saturday of Souls, 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
- 21 Sunday of Orthodoxy, 8:15 AM Orthros; 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 23 5:00 PM Lenten Vespers
6:30 PM Theosis
- 24 6:00 PM Great Vespers
- 25 The Annunciation, 8:30 AM Orthros; 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 26 6:00 PM 2nd Salutations
- 28 8:15 AM Orthros; 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 29 5:00 PM Lenten Vespers
- 30 6:30 PM Theosis
- 31 9:00 AM Presanctified Liturgy

✠ APRIL

- 2 6:00 PM 3rd Salutations
- 4 8:15 AM Orthros; 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 6 5:00 PM Great Compline
6:30 PM Theosis
- 7 6:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy
- 9 6:00 PM 4th Salutations
- 10 11:00 AM Baptism
- 11 8:15 AM Orthros; 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 13 5:00 PM Lenten Vespers
6:30 PM Theosis
- 7:30 PM Parish Council
- 14 6:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy
- 16 6:00 PM Salutations



THE THEOSIS PROGRAM *presents*

The Road to the Resurrection

A Walk Through Holy Week In the Greek Orthodox Church

Every Tuesday night at 6:30 PM during Great Lent

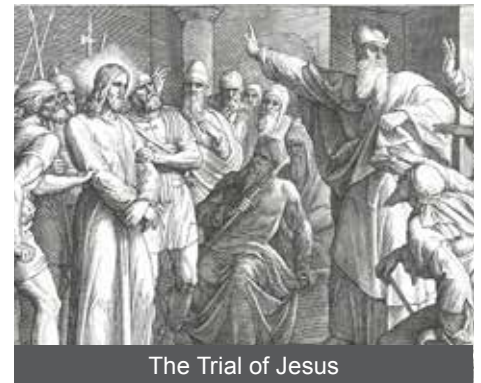
Just as the disciples accompanied Jesus on His journey to Jerusalem during Holy Week, the Church invites us also to walk with Him during the last days of His earthly ministry. Let us go with Him to witness His life-giving Passion, to cast our eyes upon the terrible Crucifixion, and celebrate His rising from the dead on the third day.

Holy Week in the Greek Orthodox Church is an important spiritual journey. It bridges together the Great Fast of Forty Days with Pascha. God's inef-fable love for mankind is made visible through His endurance of humiliation

and vicious treatment. We will learn that God's desire to save us is so great that He will encounter anything, even death, for our sake.

This year, The Theosis Program will conduct virtual sessions meeting every Tuesday evening at 6:30 PM. These sessions are written to provide context to the various themes introduced each night during Holy Week. A better understanding of Holy Week will lead to deeper appreciation and fuller experience of the Divine Services.

Tuesday Sessions are at 6:30 PM, March 16, Saturday of Lazarus and



The Trial of Jesus

Palm Sunday; March 23, Bridegroom Services; March 30, The Eucharist, Passion and Crucifixion; April 6, Holy Friday & April 13, Pascha ❖

↩ *Continued from page 2*

Translated: "Νίψον ἀνομήματα, μὴ μόναν ὄψιν" or "Wash (my) transgressions, not only the face." This palindrome, attributed to St. Gregory the Theologian who served the City as Archbishop in the late Fourth Century, conveyed a powerful spiritual message.

As the believer rinsed his face with the flowing water, he was asked to consider the greater significance of this action. Here a deeply profound and nuanced message conveyed the priority of taking care of his personal transgression over a simple ritualistic washing. The cleansing of the soul is by far more important than the mere physical washing of the face or hands.

COVID has made hand washing such

a part of our daily routine that it has now taken on a ritualistic dimension as well. But still, the Church reminds us, as did this palindrome of old, that a clean and healthy soul needs a good washing too. Each of us takes precautionary measures when it relates to our health. So too must we take preventative steps to preserve our souls.

Perhaps COVID can allow us to better understand the word's echoed by Jesus, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful out-

wardly, but inside are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Matthew 23:25-27

During the period of Great Lent, the Church asks us to cleanse ourselves inwardly. Let us do so with the same care and concern given to COVID. Let us learn a spiritual lesson about how equally important it is for our inner self to be made clean. For what is better in eternal terms, hands that are microbial free and appear antiseptically clean or a soul that has been cleansed by the grace and mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So the next time you find your hands under running water washing the filth of coronavirus away, think about your inner self and pray that the Lord of Heaven and earth may come to wash away the many personal sins and offenses. ❖



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Ζήτω η Ελλάς!

The cradle of Western civilization celebrates the Bicentennial of the 1821 Greek War of Independence

■ BY PETER TARHANIDIS, CELIA KAPSOMERA AND HELEN BRUNO

Greece is the cradle for Western civilization

In 2021, Hellenes of Greece and the Greek diaspora along with Philhellenes from around the world will devotedly celebrate the bicentennial of the 1821 Greek War of Independence. Greece will forever be considered the cradle of Western civilization harking back to the 6th century B.C. During the antiquity Greeks formed the early foundations of science and mathematics, philosophy, theater and, artistic wonders, while also instituting democratic government providing a framework for the modern world. Their contributions were expanded when the Greek language was selected as the means to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ



to a darkened world. Never resting, Greeks extended its early foundations into the longest running monarchy and Christian republic, the Byzantine Empire. Constantinople, a center of increasing diverse trade and culture connecting Europe and Asia becoming the wealthiest city uniquely referred to as the Queen of Cities.

The legendary goal for the Ottomans was to conquer the Queen City or as they referred to it metaphorically the Red Apple. As legend has it the Red Apple is believed to be the globe held in the right hand of a giant statue of the Emperor Justinian in front of Agia Sophia. After the Byzantine Empire had endured many sieges over its 1100-year history, the city fell to Mehmet II of the Ottoman Empire in May 1453. This Hellenistic empire left the cultural

legacy of the Orthodox Church and Greek and Roman studies that helped usher in the enlightenment of the Renaissance. Its influence lives today for many Western nations in the areas of religion, art, architecture, and the law.

For the next almost 400 years Hellenes fell under the yolk of Ottoman rule and were plunged into the darkest of times. Under the Ottomans, Hellenes were enslaved, cast into a brutal repression, remanded into conscription and left deprived with little hope. They were contained to the “ghetto” or the Rum Millet area of Constantinople while the rest of Greece was held under the “Tourkokratia” (Turkish Occupation) ruled by local Ottoman governors, “pashas”. Others took to the mountains living in caves to avoid the oppression of these city rulers.



Greek War of Independence

The 19th-century Greek War of Independence against Ottoman Turkey led to the creation of the modern Greek state, the First Hellenic Republic in 1822. Known as the Greek Revolution, “Επανάσταση” or “Αγώνας”, and contrarily referred by the Ottomans as the “Greek Uprising”. The cry for “Freedom or Death” rang as the revolution’s motto. The 19th century ushered in the rise of European nationalism, Enlightenment and the French Revolution’s influence extended to the Ottoman Empire and the Rum Millet. The Greek Orthodox Church was crucial in her role to preserving the Greek identity, society and reviving nationalism. Greeks held hope for spiritual and prophetic divine intervention to overthrow the Ottoman yolk. While educated members of the Greek diaspora took advantage to drive ideas through various academic and cultural efforts to strengthen the Greek national identity to drive human intervention in the emergence of the modern Greek Enlightenment. These circumstances sparked the Greek War

of Independence in 1821, put the uprising on its course and selected leaders to steer it along the way. The Greek countryside was home to groups of bandits called “klephts” who rebelled against the Ottoman rule and were revered by the Greeks still holding a noteworthy place in folklore. While the Ottoman Empire’s power was declining, Greek nationalism was rising and drawing in the involvement of Britain, Russia and France in the Greek War of Independence. During this same time Romanticism swept through Europe which benefited Greece as a growing sympathy that spread philhellenism further fostered the struggle for independence. This was an 11-year effort to form a free Greek state ending in 1832 after several international accords between the great powers and the Ottoman Empire.

Our 2021 Celebrations

The Republic of Greece under a presidential decree has established the Committee “Greece 2021” to organize the official celebrations of this momentous time based on four pillars: the impact of

1821 in Greece and around the world; Greece today 200 years after independence; Greeks who left their mark on the world; and 2021 as a window of opportunity for the future of Greece. For those interested, the Holy Trinity Cultural Committee has set up a website with the following link:

<https://www.greece2021.gr/en/>

Our Holy Trinity Cultural committee led by our co-chairs Celia Kapsomera and Helen Bruno will curate an independent newsletter titled Politismos. Up to four newsletters will be circulated starting in March/April. These newsletters will highlight the bicentennial with a special focus on the: Historical Hellenes and Philhellenes; significant cultural movements; art and symbols; and provide information about organizations and websites related to the celebrations of the 11-year war. This war of independence embodied not only Greece’s thirst for freedom but also her restoration to her rightful seat as the cradle of the Western civilization. ❖





GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

The Greek War of Independence

Honoring Two Sons of Dimitsana, Greece
Patriarch Martyred and A Metropolitan Determined

St. Gregory V, Patriarch of Constantinople and Hieromartyr

Born Georgios Aggelopoulos in Dimitsana, Arcadia, prefecture in 1746 to poor parents, our father among the saints became Patriarch of Constantinople. He was given the name Gregory at his ordination. St. Gregory V of Constantinople was the 234th Patriarch of Constantinople and was martyred by the Ottomans as punishment for the war of independence. He was glorified as a saint of the Church in 1921 and is commemorate as an Ethnomartyr (Greek: Εθνομάρτυρας) on April 10.

In 1818, Gregory became a member

of the Filiki Eteria (*Society of Friends*) that was preparing for a revolt against Turkish rule. As the Greeks began to revolt against the Ottomans in the Peloponnesus, reprisals came quickly to those living in Constantinople. At the celebration of the Paschal Divine Liturgy on April 10, 1821 the holiest day of the church calendar, Gregory, along with eight other hierarchs, was arrested by order of Sultan Mahmud II. A rope was tied around the neck of the Patriarch and he was immediately hanged on the front gate of the Patriarchal Compound still being fully vested from the Divine Liturgy.

The Greek section of the City also suffered from brutal attacks of Turkish citizens retaliating against the Greeks



for their uprising. Stores were burned, women assaulted and violated, men viciously attacked and killed.



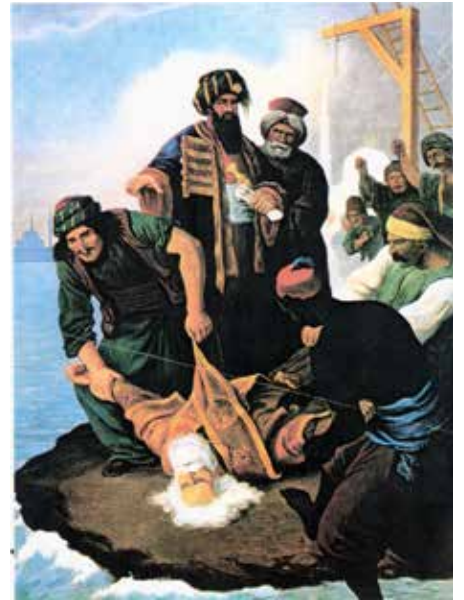
The first reports in America of this horrific calamity comes to us from the Connecticut Gazette (7/11/1821): “Constantinople is a scene of disturbance and massacre. The grand Seignor, to revenge the insurrection in his northern provinces, has had recourse to the most dreadful reprisals. The Greek Patriarch has been strangled, and four Archbishops have been massacred.”



After hanging on the gate for three days and being mocked

by the passing crowds, the body of St. Gregory was taken down and barbarically dragged through the streets of Constantinople before it was thrown into the Bosphorus. As a memorial, this gate has remained closed and locked. It has not reopened since the day of Patriarch Gregory’s hanging.

One night, a captain by the name of Nicholas Sklavos was sailing in the darkness of night. In front of his boat, he saw a light from beneath the water. As he approached the sight, the body of Patriarch Gregory, by the grace of God, was shining from the depths below. The body was taken out of the sea and brought secretly to Odessa, then in Southern



Russia, where it was buried in the Greek Church of the Holy Trinity. In 1871, Gregory’s relics were translated to the Metropolitan Cathedral in Athens where it is enshrined to this day. His statue, along with that of Rigas Feraios, stands outside the University of Athens as great martyrs of the Greek Revolution. ❖



Palaion Patron Germanos

One of the most characteristic paintings of the Greek War of Independence is undoubtedly the one painted by Theodoros Vryzakis in 1865 depicting Metropolitan Palaion Patron Germanos (Germanos of Old Patras) raising the flag of the revolution



in the Agia Lavra Monastery and blessing the beginning of the Greek uprising on March 25, 1821.

March 25 stands as the date which begins the Greek revolutionary struggle. The Greeks linked their liberation from the Ottomans with the feast of the Annunciation. This feast day commemorates the beginning of humanity’s liberation from the oppression of sin. Thus, Greeks and Orthodoxy would remain inextricably connected.

The Metropolitan Palaion Patron Germanos was born in Dimitsana, Arcadia, on March 25, 1771. He became a member of the Filiki Ete-



ria (Society of Friends) a secret group of prominent people who were seeking independence for the Greek nation from the Ottoman rule. He was introduced to Filiki Etairia by Ioannis Vlassopoulos, Consul of the Russian Empire at Patras.

Continued on page 8 ⇨

↳ Continued from page 7

Palaion Patron Germanos started a secret campaign to raise money for the revolution. On Sunday, March 13, 1821, Germanos blessed the standard during the Divine Liturgy at Agia Lavra Monastery in Achaea, and on March

25, 1821, he blessed the fighters at Agia Lavra and hoisted the flag of the Greek War of Independence in Agios Georgios Square at Patras.

In December 1822, after the Greek rebels achieved some victories against the Ottomans, the political leaders sent Germanos to Italy on a mission to obtain aid and support for the war

effort from the Pope and the European Congress at Verona. However, the Metropolitan's stay in Italy was fruitless because the papal representatives asked Germanos for the Greek Church to unite with the Catholic Church under the Pope. He returned to Greece unwilling to begin such conversations. ❖



GOYA

Update

■ BY THOMAS SAVORGIANNAKIS, GOYA PRESIDENT

GOYA has had a very unusual start to our 2020-2021 year. Although this year may be different, it will definitely be an unforgettable one for all of us. GOYA is striving to make this time as uplifting as possible and invite new members to get involved. We understand a lot of events have already been cancelled, however we are working hard on alternative events that follow COVID guidelines.

That being said, below are some of the highlights of what we have been able to do during these unprecedented times. Our outreach initiatives have increased since we all felt that it was important to think of others more during these times. We also have managed to have Zoom Goya meetings to try and keep connected with one another. It has been a great way to talk about issues and share thoughts and ideas.



KICKOFF EVENT

We held our annual GOYA kickoff event in the church parking lot on September 11. Father Peter led us in prayer in church before we moved outside to have our first GOYA meeting of the year, which included some icebreakers. After the meeting we put together 30 First Night Kits which were donated to Jersey Cares, an organization that manages projects in which volunteers assemble kits for domestic violence shelters, transitional housing facilities, runaway safe havens, foster homes and other agencies with transitional populations in need of hygiene items on the "first night" of their stay. We all made our way to the Carayannopoulos home where we had a movie night in their backyard.



CLOTHING DRIVE

Due to the overwhelming response from our first clothes drive, we had another one on October 17. This took place in the church parking lot where we collected a variety of necessities, ranging from clothing, bedding, curtains, towels and even some toys. We are happy to report that we collected over 3000 pounds of items and received \$682.00 to use towards helping the homeless, local food banks and other GOYA outreach projects this year. Please mark your calendar for our next clothing drive on May 15, 2021.

CHRIST ENCOUNTER RETREAT

The Christ Encounter Retreat was like no other as it took place locally from October 23 to the 25. Friday night was at church with activities and an introduction to our weekend. We put together 70 bags of sustainable food for the homeless and delivered them to a shelter. Saturday, we spent the day at the Watchung Reservation where we conducted our sessions outside. We enjoyed the beautiful day and had some free time to get to know everyone a bit better. Afterwards, we met at the Colonias backyard for dinner and s'mores by the fire where everyone relaxed and had fun. We concluded our weekend by attending the Divine Liturgy on Sunday together and had a weekend wrap up with Fr. Peter. As always, thanks to Father Peter and the advisors for putting the time into planning this different, yet fun, spiritual weekend.

HARVEST BREAD AND WREATH SALE FUNDRAISERS

Our annual November harvest bread sale was a huge success. The bread was delicious as always, and we raised \$486. Our December fundraiser was the Christmas wreath sale. We sold many wreaths and made \$370. The money we raised is being used to help support our Outreach initiatives.

BRIDGES

On November 21st, the GOYANs made 220 sandwiches and bags of sustainable food items for Bridges - a program in Summit whose mission is to help end homelessness. This program distributes the food to New York City, Newark and Irvington, NJ. We partnered with the GOYA from St. Demetrios Union to make the sandwiches and bags. It was great to see everyone work so well together.

On that day, we also made 55 ornaments to give something special to our Trinity Circle seniors who greatly appreciated not only the ornament but seeing the GOYANs who personally delivered them.

ST. BASIL'S ACADEMY GIFTS

This year for the first time GOYA was happy to partner with Saint Basil's Academy to provide Christmas gifts for all the kids residing at the orphanage. We were given a list of 29 individuals ranging from ages 1 to 21. I am happy to report that all the requests were fulfilled, and additional clothes, coats and shoes were donated thanks to our Holy Trinity community. In addition to donating gifts, we collected \$500 worth of gift cards that the orphanage will use for food, clothing, and much more.

ONGOING

Greek dance began in September and we have been practicing weekly (with abiding by Covid safety rules). While the weather was nice, we were practicing outside and then moved inside -we split the group into smaller sizes and each group practiced at different times. It's never too late to sign up!

We will continue collecting dry goods for families in need (i.e., all canned goods - soups, tuna and chicken, beans, rice, pasta and other meals on the go that can be easily heated). Please leave these dry goods in our bins that will be outside the church office.

Lastly, we thank all of you for your continued support and encouragement. As President, I look forward to making this a memorable year, and hopefully things will only get better. I encourage you all to stay optimistic so we can thrive as a community. Stay safe and healthy!





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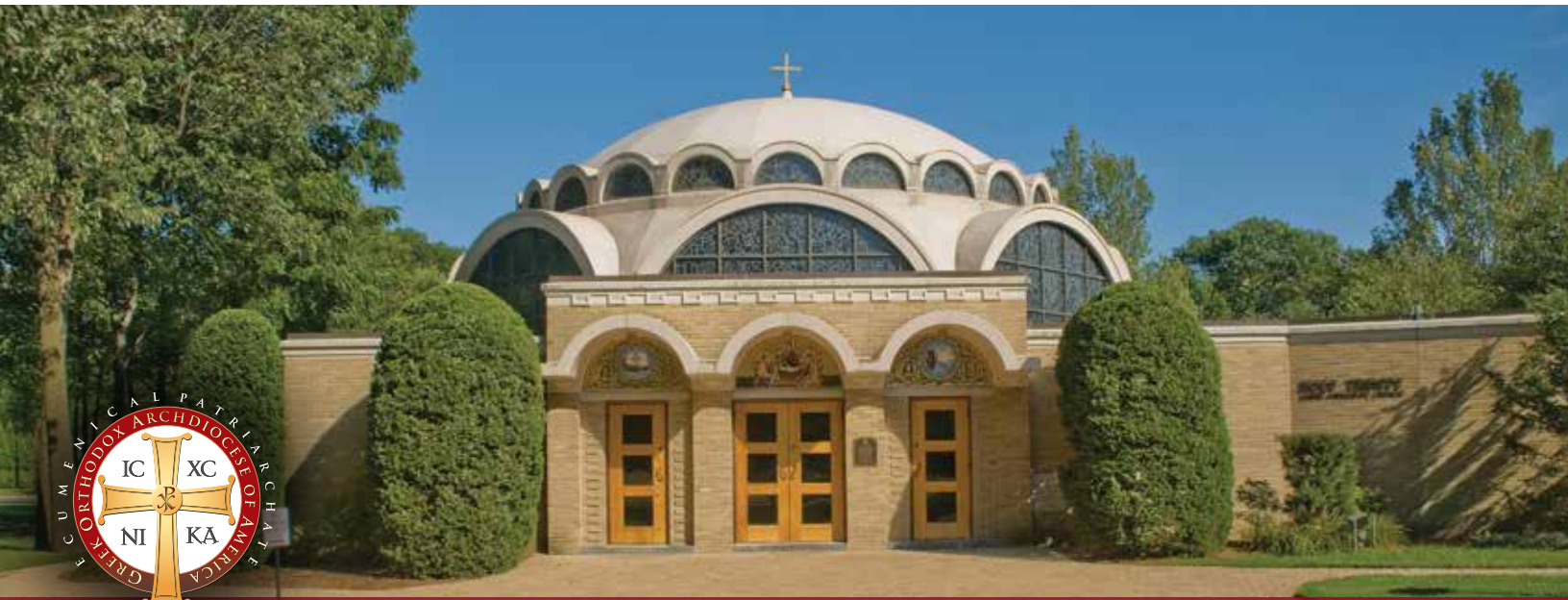
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