

The Story of Saint Demetrios, the Myrrh Streamer

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Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki, an early Christian martyr put to death for his Christian faith around the year 305 AD, is one of the most beloved and well-known saints of the Orthodox Church. For the people of Thessaloniki, Greece, where the saint preached the gospel of Jesus Christ, was arrested for his Christian faith, and encouraged his fellow Christians from prison, Saint Demetrios holds a special place of reverence and honor. From the fourth century onwards, the Christian faithful of Thessaloniki remembered the place of his martyrdom and burial, first by erecting a small oratory on the spot, and later by building a magnificent five-aisle basilica in his honor over the place of his burial, which, unusual for the time, was located in the center of the bustling city of Thessaloniki. For nearly a thousand years, this basilica was the nucleus of a vibrant veneration of the saint that spread to the imperial capital of Constantinople and to other cities throughout the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. Although the Basilica of Saint Demetrios was turned into a mosque in 1490 by the Ottoman Turks, it was returned to its original function as a Christian church after 1912 and has since continued to be the focal point of the Orthodox Church's commemoration of the saint. The saint's fame is not limited to the Greek-speaking Orthodox world: Bulgarians, Serbians and Russians adopted the commemoration of the saint in the medieval period and have developed a strong affinity and affection for this early Christian martyr.

We know few specifics about the life of Saint Demetrios. The earliest recorded stories about him provide a general outline of his final days as a Christian in Thessaloniki but disagree on the details of his upbringing. Some stories depict the saint as a young Christian man who, in a section of the agora of Thessaloniki, that is, the main Roman market place of the city, would gather Christians and others to share the message of Jesus. Other stories depict the saint as a Roman military figure, who had risen to the rank of proconsul. What the stories do agree on is at some point around the year 305, the saint was arrested in Thessaloniki for preaching the Christian faith. A couple of years earlier, the Roman emperor Diocletian, with the strong support of his Caesar, Galerius, who lived in Thessaloniki in his imperial palace and headquarters (much of the remains of which still survives today) had instituted an empire-wide persecution of Christians. Demetrios' arrest was undertaken in the context of this persecution.

While in prison, the saint was visited by a young, enthusiastic Christian named Nestor. Oddly, the personality and martyrdom of Nestor is presented in the accounts of Saint Demetrios with more detail than that of Saint Demetrios himself. Prior to Nestor's arrest, Galerius had called for gladiatorial games to be held in the city. The emperor encouraged anyone who so desired to try to defeat his favorite gladiator, Lyaeus. The young Christian, Nestor, who had only recently begun to develop facial hair, came forward. On the evening before the contest, Nestor visited the imprisoned Demetrios seeking his counsel and blessing. The next day, Nestor defeated Lyaeus. Learning that Nestor had realized this unexpected victory through the prayers of "the God of Saint Demetrios," Galerius became enraged and ordered the execution of both Nestor, who was taken outside the city walls and beheaded, and Saint Demetrios, who was housed inside the city near the Roman baths. Galerius' guards immediately went to where St. Demetrios was imprisoned and with their spears

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carried out the emperor's orders. The body of the saint was discarded in what amounted to a rubbish heap adjacent to the cell where he had been held and martyred. Christians that same evening clandestinely buried his body at that spot.

In the decades and centuries that followed, the citizens of Thessaloniki remembered the early Christian martyr Demetrios by erecting a large basilica which housed his tomb. They also collected and recorded the numerous miraculous interventions provided by the saint to the people of the city and to the city itself. Many of these miracle stories circulated throughout the Byzantine empire, thus raising the saint's profile. Various pious practices associated with the veneration of the saint developed over the centuries. A water fountain (ἀγίασμα) located near the saint's tomb was believed to contain sanctified water due to its close proximity to the saint's place of burial. Those who suffered from illnesses often slept on the main floor of the church in hope that the saint would visit them in their dreams, which he often did, and provide them with a cure. Most famously, the bones of the saint exuded a sweet-smelling ointment, known as *myron* (μύρον), which had miraculous powers of healing. Several times, the saint has been called upon to offer protection to the city and citizens of Thessaloniki in times of famine, war and invasion. Quite remarkably, Saint Demetrios is one of a very small number of saints who has had a continuous, uninterrupted veneration in the same location since the early days of Christianity, that is, an unbroken local veneration in Thessaloniki for 1,700 years.

The early depictions of Saint Demetrios in iconography portray the saint dressed in senatorial clothing. The 6th and 7th century mosaics from the Church of Saint Demetrios in Thessaloniki present the saint in such clothing with his hands raised and outspread in the common orans position of prayer. In many of these mosaics, he is depicted next to individuals (bishops, deacons, local government leaders, and others) in a position of intercessory prayer and protection (his arms hovering over the shoulders of those he protects). The well-known representation of the saint dressed in military attire and riding a horse is a later development in the saint's iconography. Byzantine art historians usually place the transition of the iconography of Saint Demetrios from an upper-class member of society to a military saint in the 9th century. The icon of the saint riding a horse and stabbing a fallen man, ubiquitous in 19th and 20th century iconography, reflects the story of the intervention of the saint in defense of the city against attacks of the Bulgarians. The slain man at the end of the saint's sword is often understood to be the Bulgarian King Kalojan (d. 1207 AD).

The power of, and love for, the saint is not limited to a particular time or location. The honor and respect shown to the saint throughout the Orthodox world has been present in the community of Saint Demetrios of Warren, Ohio, for a century where the saint continues to intercede on behalf of the faithful and to serve as a reminder of Christ's glory and the sacrifices we are all called to make for Him and for others.



A splash of color irradiates from Oliver Mannella's brilliant stained glass rendering of Saint Demetrios in the choir loft of the "Jewel on High Street," Warren's Saint Demetrios. A gift of the Hellenic Youth Club of Saint Demetrios in 1948, the circular window is a centerpiece of both the loft and of the church exterior and is seen clearly from a distance in the church proper below

The Parish Council of Saint Demetrios in Warren, Ohio, 2022

Steve Lervas, President
Ely Louie Vardavas, Vice-President
Michael Pontikos, Treasurer
Matthew Kassos, Secretary
Anna Nikolaides, Assistant Treasurer
William Angelis, Assistant Secretary
George Bournias
George Funtulis
Michael Keriotis
Michael Kontos
Jeff Michelakis
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Centenary Committee Members:

Father Constantine and Presbytera Karen Valantasis
Father Demetri and Presbytera Maria Constantine
Irene (Mrs. George) Luletsu
George and Sophia Funtulis
Pavas and Maria Magiassos
Dean and Anna Nikolaides
George and Maria Pahoulis
Anthony and Tina Paryiavlak
Mary Ann Raptis
Ely Louie Vardavas
Steve Lervas
Mary McCabe, parish business manager



Concise History of the Parish of Warren Saint Demetrios

by

Larry James Gianakos

[author of “The Strength They Left Behind: Seventy Years of the Community of Warren Saint Demetrios,” as presented to the United States Library of Congress Bicentennial Local Legacies Project, March 20, 2000; revised on April 14, 2008, and again on August 20, 2022]

The parish of Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios was inaugurated by way of a series of provisional meetings beginning in 1917, not three years after the Guns of August inaugurated the First World War. Throughout the teens robust and hearty young Hellenes, largely bachelors, were arriving at a speedy pace in Trumbull County to establish themselves, if not as employees of the Republic Steel plant, then as proprietors of local businesses not far from it, along South Pine Street. On July 15, 1918, a meeting concluded that the parish would be called Saint Demetrios, to correspond with a name common to churches throughout northern Greece and coincidentally the name of the church ἀνάδοχος, or “name-giver,” the early benefactor and church caretaker Demetrios Mitrolios. There appears, however, among the parish minutes some two years later, on September 15, 1920, that Eustace Tsaltas, the parish president of 1921, in a meeting at the Roumanian Hall, offered the sum of six hundred dollars to become “Anadohos,” the person who officially named Saint Demetrios in Warren, Ohio. Both the old (no longer standing) Roumanian Hall (127 Walnut Street), and Park Avenue Schoolhouse (305 South Park) served as meeting places and halls in which to conduct Sunday services, or Divine Liturgies.

On May 5, 1920, the parish was chartered. That same spring, the location of the former Finnish Lutheran Church, then at 242 Clinton Street, was purchased and became the Church of Warren Saint Demetrios, parishioners attending there as of November 9 of that year. Even prior to the purchase of that edifice the first Hellenic Orthodox marriage connected to the newly organized parish was performed in a house on nearby Dawson Street, where one of the parish founders, Demetrios (James) Tambures, would be betrothed to Angeliki (Angeline) Asimakopoulos, on April 18, 1920. A horse-drawn carriage awaited to take them to the Roumanian Hall for their wedding reception. This has long been presumed to be the first Greek Orthodox marriage performed in Trumbull County.

Internal conflicts within the Greek motherland arising out of positions advanced on involvement in the First World War filtered across the seas into parishes worldwide. The then-Royal Family of Greece, with its part German heritage, felt uneasy about the Allied effort, whereas the brilliant but incendiary Cretan-born Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, also reflecting the newly liberated islander mistrust of mainland control, had no qualms about committing his country to a war against the Kaiser and his European coterie. Adherents of the Royal Family’s position were known

as Royalists, whereas those who embraced Venizelos were called Venizelots. Long after the Armistice of 1919, Greek passions on this topic were further inflamed, particularly when Archbishop Theoklitos of Athens, who strongly opposed the positions of Venizelos, became the Greek ecclesiastical authority after the Venizelot Archbishop Meletios Metaxakis was deposed by Royalist forces. Greek Orthodox communities world-wide followed suit in pledging allegiance to either side. Archbishop Meletios was deeply committed to Greek Orthodox parishes in the United States and it was by his efforts that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America was founded in 1921. Meletios had found a kindred spirit in the person of Archbishop Alexander of Rodostolon, under whose aegis the first priest at Saint Demetrios, Gabriel Tsamparlis, was installed on July 15, 1920. When in January 1921 Alexander had ceased to follow the directives of the Holy Synod, the political weight upon any semblance of Greek Orthodox Christian unity in the United States became overwhelming.

Accordingly, a year later, on January 22, 1922, Warren's Greek Orthodox community found itself enmeshed in the political and ecclesiastical debate to the point where the differences were seemingly irreconcilable, and the community itself was torn asunder. The Venizelots established a second parish, Saint Paraskevi, in a meeting-hall at 524½ South Pine. Ultimately passions cooled, and the Warren Greeks, like their compatriots internationally, reaffirmed the strength in their unity of devotion to faith and heritage, whatever their political side. The parishes were reunited on April 1, 1927, to be known once again and to this day as the church of Warren Saint Demetrios. Henceforth there has never been another Greek Orthodox parish in Trumbull County. The first elected president of the reunited community was Christ Charnas, whose children include Aristithis, better known as Arch, a longtime-Warren area civil engineer who would later plan the design for the Greek Community Center on Atlantic Street.

Particularly from the time of its reunification, the parish has been fervently devoted to causes ranging from Greek War Relief during the Second World War to local community benefits beyond the parameters of the parish community itself. For example, the Philoptochos, or Ladies' Aid Society, whose Warren chapter was founded in April, 1935, has given its utmost to service a multitude of philanthropic efforts. And to perpetuate the parish's strong faith, culture and language, there has been both a religious and Greek School program since 1921. That now four generations of Greek-Americans have had easy access to a bilingual education is an enduring testament to the force of tradition carried over to these shores by the hale and hearty pioneers. Then in the spring of their youth, nonetheless they were infused by centuries of a Greek desire for excellence; to wit, *εἰς ἄνώτερα!*, or “to the higher” has long been, and remains, a popular phrase.

After extensive fundraising drives through much of the early 1940s the Warren parish purchased what was then lot number fifty-one, measuring 88 by 308 feet, on High Street, on May 16, 1943. After the sale of the Clinton Street property, the Saint Demetrios governing board contracted with the B&B Construction Company of Youngstown, Ohio in July of 1946 to begin a new church edifice. Designed on the order of a fifth century Basilica by Peter E. Camburas of Keich, O'Brien and Associates, the structure's first cornerstone was laid on June 8, 1947. Officiating at the ceremony, the Reverend Nikiforos Maximos would comment that this new church “would be the pride of our generation.” And that, the new church certainly was, for after leading his flock out of the Clinton Street edifice in a procession wending its way down Pine around the Court House and onto High, on May 22, 1948, the parish had moved into a house of worship uniquely its own. The first wedding ceremony held there was on June 6, 1948, when then regular (and yet current!) church organist Liberty Foundoulis was betrothed to Peter Mitchell.

“A Jewel on High Street,” the church edifice came to be called, reflecting not merely upon its exterior design but rather upon its exceptional interior decoration, with sacred pictures and icons bearing the brushstrokes of Victor Maris, the mosaic artistry of Constantine Triantafillou, sculptures by Vincent Bartolini, and stained glass windows from the studio of Oliver Mannella. With another decade devoted to its interior plan, the church was finally dedicated with the pageantry of an encircling procession led by Archbishop Iakovos, Bishop Polyefktos, and the Reverend Dennis Michelis, the current parish priest, on the afternoon of November 13, 1960.

Father Dennis' arrival here, on September 23, 1955, in fact opened the most recent era in the church history, for his long tenure (succeeding twenty-six appointed priests between 1920 and 1955) inevitably spanning nearly forty-nine years has coincided with a period of unprecedented church growth and proliferating properties. All of twenty-seven when he first stepped down off the train which had brought him and his young Presbyteria, the former Mary Grammatikos and year-old daughter Lee to Warren from their former parish in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, he and his family (a son Peter was born here in 1958) were to become an integral part of the community itself. Father Dennis (a highly literate scholar on a multitude of aspects of Greek and Orthodox history, and the subsequent author of some six published studies), alongside a steady succession of parish presidents, largely now themselves the sons (if not grandsons) of the pioneers of Warren Saint Demetrios, would also preside over the purchase and annexation of a Religious School building (formerly the Saint Paul Lutheran Church) in 1968, and of groundbreaking ceremonies on December 14, 1975 for the twenty acres of prime Atlantic Street property on which would stand the Saint Demetrios Community Center, itself completed the following year. Indeed, the dedication of the Community Center as presided over by then-Archbishop Iakovos, Bishop Gerasimos and Father Dennis signaled, since the completion of the church edifice on High Street, the most singular advance of the area Greek-American community. In testament to that advance, and in return for a potential meeting with His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos, area industrialist R. J. Wean would donate an additional thirty-three acres of property adjoining the parish's own twenty acres. This auspicious gift was celebrated by way of a Trumbull Country Club gala on November 27, 1977, where indeed His Eminence would personally congratulate Mr. Wean for his generosity.

The Saint Demetrios Community Center now became the locus for a whole galaxy of area Greek-American functions. Younger generations of parishioners, whose own formal organizations had existed from the latter 1940s, now found a permanent social and recreational center, whether for basketball tournaments or G.O.Y.A. (Greek Orthodox Youth of America) activities. Parish wedding receptions would become a staple feature of the Community Center; the first such reception for members being that held in honor of bride Georgette Graham, a parishioner from birth (and currently one of three Greek School teachers), and groom Demetrios (James) P. Kondolios, on April 24, 1977.

The surviving parish pioneers, now well advanced in years, found representation in an organization all their own when the Saint Demetrios Senior Citizens Organization was established in 1979. Its success would inspire the "Yiasou Over Fifty Club," organized to accommodate the ceaseless energy of ever younger groups of retirees. However it was the establishment of the annual summer festivals, whose antecedents could be traced to a carnival on Saint Demetrios Church grounds in August, 1962, to the first formal festival on Elm Road School grounds in September, 1969 and to a string of annual July festivals again on Saint Demetrios grounds subsequently, which became the bonanza of Greek-American affairs—particularly after the first Atlantic Street festival was held on July 28-31, 1977. That affair garnered some \$17,000 in clear profit, a considerable advance over the \$800 festival profit garnered in 1969—and all of whose sums (which in more

current years enters into six figures in clear revenue) have been returned to the Saint Demetrios parish for all manner of philanthropic efforts. All of these fundraisers were brainchildren of the now-deceased Warren City Police Captain William Andrew Poulos, who served as general chairman almost to the time of his passing in 1998. He was assisted by his longtime co-chairmen Gus Michelakis, Tom Raptis and William Ahladis, all themselves with long family traditions of devotion to their parish. The three succeeded Mr. Poulos for the 1998 festival and currently Mr. Ahladis, himself a former church president, serves as general chairperson. Aided by an exemplary group of passionately dedicated fellow parishioners who annually volunteer to work the multitude of festival functions even as they seek to nurture festival goals, the late Mr. Poulos and now Mr. Ahladis and their teams have transformed the very definition of church summer festival, so that these heady Saint Demetrios affairs are as eagerly anticipated by non-parishioners as they are by those who frequent the activities of the Saint Demetrios social calendar. The result has been one of the most extraordinary of yearly festivals to be found anywhere in the United States.

If the ancient Greeks were “blessed by the gods” in establishing the foundations of Western democracy, philosophy, architecture, theatre, medicine, astronomy, geometry and other natural sciences, as well as athletic competition by way of the Olympic Games, then the Greek-Americans of Warren, Ohio were singularly blessed by their One True God to yield from their Saint Demetrios parish the first American-born Archbishop of America, His Eminence Spyridon, born George Papageorgiou in Warren on September 24, 1944.

The son of the Rhodian born physician Constantine Papageorgiou (“Dr. George” for short) and the American-born (her parents hailing from the island of Fourni) former Kalliope (“Kalli”) Tsourakis, the future Archbishop was the third born of their eventual six children. After some six years the family would leave Warren for Steubenville and after a few years there the family would live in Greece, among Dr. George's relations in the area of Rhodes, the capital city of the island. Young George would return to the states to live among relatives and attend high school in Tarpon Springs, Florida. But soon he found himself adhering to a higher calling and returned to Greece to obtain a thorough European ecclesiastical and cultural education before making his mark in the vanguard of promoting Orthodoxy within heavily Roman Catholic Italy. After the retirement of Archbishop Iakovos, who for thirty-one years was a staple figure among Greek Orthodox parishes in the Western hemisphere, the former George Papageorgiou, now called Spyridon, was advanced to the highest of Greek Orthodox hierarchy within the United States. Appointed on July 30, 1996 by His All Holiness Bartholomew and the Holy See in the former Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey), his advancement was greeted by much fanfare throughout the United States, in Tarpon Springs, Florida and Steubenville, Ohio in particular, but no where more so than among the parishioners of Warren, Ohio's Saint Demetrios.

Spyridon was formally enthroned at the Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral in New York City on September 21, 1996. Less than five weeks later, to help commemorate the annual feast day of Saint Demetrios, His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon returned to his Warren birthplace, and was properly feted in a splendid ceremony attended by then-Ohio Governor George Voinovich and several other federal, state and local officials, held at the Saint Demetrios Community Center on October 26. Three years later, however, internal ecclesiastical conflicts resulted in his resignation and replacement by the septuagenarian Demetrios, who assumed the office of Archbishop on September 18, 1999.

Still, the fanfare which greeted His Eminence's “August Journey Home”—the title of the video

tribute to His Eminence commissioned on his behalf--was merely axiomatic for a community which has always saluted the achievements of its own and their fellow Greek Orthodox peers world-wide. Among the former Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios parishioners establishing an international renown have been Demetrios "Jimmy" Elias (a son of longtime local bridal store proprietor Matina Triantafillou), now one of the most celebrated of bridal couturiers with boutiques worldwide and with his own attending internationally-circulated magazine *For the Bride*; Angelo Graham, one of the most accomplished of Hollywood art directors, long associated with the films of Francis Ford Coppola—Graham winning an Academy Award "Oscar" for his work on *The Godfather, Part II*, in 1975; and Manuel "Manny" Kladitis, a protégé and associate of Warren's John Kenley of the celebrated *Kenley Players*, who since leaving the area has established himself as a major producer in his own right—of preeminent Broadway theatre.

The area based entrepreneur John Anthony Payiavlas, whose family-administered AVI Foodsystems boasts several thousand employees both locally and in several other states, is a model example of Warren native Greek-American ingenuity. A hallmark of the entrepreneurial spirit is further fostered by George Kontos and his progeny, of the highly productive Wetzell (Plating) Incorporated and Warren Screw Machine, now at points far beyond their origins on Woodland Street. Local Greek-American owned businesses continue to be legion. Among thriving restaurants under their aegis are the downtown Saratoga (under the purview of the Harry Economos family since 1935) and the more current Mocha House (the George Liakaris family), and the Mahoning Avenue-based Mr. G's Golden Gate (the Michael Gianoutsos family), being just three of the more luminous examples. One of the most auspicious of painting contractors, Elias "Louis" G. Liakaris, early on followed the guiding light of an American success star and made his Warren-based *Masterpiece Painting* a model of efficiency and innovation. And one of the most frequently solicited nationally of Greek-American bands, *The Fabulous Grecian Keys*, is yet locally administered by its family of performers, Panagiotis "Tykie" and his sons Constantinos "Dino" and Georgios Theofilos.

Within the generation of the first American-born Greeks in Trumbull County the community would realize major advances in education among its ranks. To wit, perhaps unique among distinctive area ethnic groups, at one and the same time three area school systems were under the purview of native Greek-Americans: the Warren City Schools, represented by longtime personnel director and interim superintendent Nick Pitinii; the LaBrae School System, represented by superintendent George Geordan; and Howland Schools, represented by superintendent Nick Macris. And local Greek-Americans count several regional officials among their ranks: the late Judge Peter J. Panagis; the current Honorable Judge Peter J. Kontos; Trumbull County Commissioner James Tsagaris; and the late Trumbull County Commissioner and former Navy Captain Christopher Lardis, Trumbull County Treasurer Chris Michelakis, and Chris' brother Manuel, former Director of the Warren Water Utility, as well as this locality's General Motors United Auto Workers president James Graham. Since the pioneering efforts of the late Attorney George H. Gentithes, several among the regional Greek community have followed suit as successful attorneys; still others have pursued and achieved prominence within the professions of medicine, engineering, psychology, pharmacology and social work.

So that ensuing generations might be fully apprised of the epochal breadth of luminous Hellenic achievement, both ancient and modern, the Warren Saint Demetrios parish became one of the first to establish a Cultural Affairs program, worked in conjunction with its well-established Greek School. Conceived in the summer of 1999, it was implemented that autumn and its first committee of supervisors included the aforementioned civil engineer Mr. Charnas; long established

school administrators Msrs. Pitinii and Geordan and the latter's wife Ethel, herself a longtime professional educator; Patrice "Patsy" Kouvas, now president of AVI Foodsystems; Franklin Manolakakis Manios, long proprietor of the area's exceptionally well-stocked Franklin Health Care; and the professional education advocate and Ohio State University Extension office chairperson Marie Economos. Within its first three years, a widely diverse group of instructors brought together their individual and collective energies to make manifest the potent legacy of their forebears.

An entire parish era concluded with the departure of Father Dennis Michelis and his Presbyteria, the former Mary Michelis, with his retirement at the close of 2003, capstoning a hitherto unrivaled legacy of nearly forty-nine years with Warren Saint Demetrios. Properly feted by the entire parish at the Saint Demetrios Hellenic Center on November 23, 2003, which was formally titled "The Memory of an Era, Father Dennis Michelis and Presbyteria Mary: A Celebration of Their Forty-Eight Years at Saint Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Church," the ceremony was accompanied with an attending original video presentation in which dozens of parishioners were also interviewed, and by an accompanying original retrospective, likewise titled "The Memory of an Era."

That retrospective booklet began:

"One now remembers the tall, stately frame; the dark good looks flecked with gray, the brilliant, resonant voice reverberating in sing-song through the rafters of Warren, Ohio's Saint Demetrios edifice, which Presbyteria Mary early on called, "a jewel on High Street." But his has been the story of startling coincidence, of triumph, of exemplary self-reliance, of determined and sustained scholarship, and above all else, of destiny. So remarkable was his course that his early calling to the priesthood would inevitably result in a marathon reign with the Warren parish, affording it the stability it had earlier lacked and at the same time transforming, edifying, and reanimating hundreds of families, representing some four generations of parishioners.

"The man destined to be called Father Dennis was born Dyonisios Michelis in Patras, Greece, on August 4, 1927. He had never known his own father, Panayiotis or Peter, who had died when Dyonisios was all of eleven months old. Panayiotis had been stricken with Dangué, a thirty-six hour fatal illness then carried by ships from Southeast Asia, in which a high fever results in literally sapping the strength out of the victim. About a month later, Dyonisios' mother, the former Maria Spourghiti, born in Greece's Messinia, Koroni—she that was ever devout and even in deprivation, polished and dignified—relocated herself and her only child to Athens, to reside ultimately also with her bachelor cousins, the brothers Constandinos or Constantine and George Vergogiannopoulos."

And many pages later, the booklet concluded:

"But for the community of Warren Saint Demetrios the departure of Father Dennis Michelis and Presbyteria Mary signals the end of an era. It was a time in which the parish entered the modern age; in which development and innovation took to new levels the brilliant legacy and tradition of the early Greek-American pioneers. The singular achievements by the descendants of largely poor but proud and persevering immigrants could not fail to ennoble future generations of Warren Saint Demetrios parishioners. The poet William Wordsworth distilled the essence of persons of advancing age in reflection with his 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood:'

*'Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;*

*We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.'*

"For all future generations in the community of Warren Saint Demetrios, the immigrant pioneers had left their strength behind. In parting, Father Dennis Michelis and Presbytera Mary close an era, in which stability strengthened the Warren parish, and in which the strength of their characters will endure."

Truly astonishing to this day has been Father Dennis' statistical record: he had presided over 1,429 baptisms, 656 weddings and 603 funerals—every one of which he has penned an original eulogy. More incredible still, in his forty eight-years of steadfast service, he had never once missed any liturgy or church service for medical reasons; in other words, in some 17,600 days with the Warren parish he had never once even asked for a sick leave! With the sweep of four generations under his aegis, he has been truly at the center of a vortex embracing a whole era.

After his retirement, Father Dennis continued to serve as an assistant priest at the Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in the Cleveland area of Rocky River, nearly to the time of his passing on August 9, 2017. A memorial service was held at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Akron, Ohio on August 14, 2017, and he was interred at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cemetery in his once indigenous Dover, New Hampshire. A drive to cement the legacy of his unprecedented reign with the Warren parish was spearheaded by the accomplished veteran educator Cynthia (Cindy) Savakis, with a plaque having his likeness etching now prominently hanging in the entrance area to the Saint Demetrios Hellenic Center on Atlantic Street. Cindy herself accounts for the antecedents to the commemorative plaque, thus:

"This was initiated by the Parish Council while I was a member and completed in 2018. The project was funded entirely through generous donations from the Saint Demetrios church community. I chaired this project, secured the necessary three quotes, created the design, and started the fundraiser. George T. Bournias was greatly instrumental in ensuring that the plaque was properly installed in its current location at the Community Center."

And while the edifice which Father Dennis properly labeled "A Jewel on High Street" underwent major renovations in later years to both secure and augment its rarefied status as a Warren city landmark (in the 1989 and 1990 administrations of the always conscientious Gust T. Papadakis and Manuel Michelakis, the interior was painted anew, white marble flooring replaced the maroon carpeting before the church altar and main aisle, the Platytera, or dome of the Virgin Mary and Christ above the altar and attending icons and murals underwent extensive cleaning, and gilt was applied to the cornices of the attending columns and front wall of the church itself), as the Community Center underwent construction on the church acquired grounds on Atlantic Street, a flurry of activity anticipated its groundbreaking ceremonies on December 14, 1975, and the consecration ceremony by Archbishop Iakovos, Bishop Gerasimos and Father Dennis Michelis honoring the Center's completion on November 20, 1976.

Cindy's husband, Attorney Alexander Jerry Savakis, now a Juvenile Magistrate with the Trumbull County Family Court since January of 1999 (and thus the longest serving full time magistrate in this region), who had edited the church Sunday *Bulletins* from November of 2001 and continued for a period of more than nine years) recalls that, alongside of forty-five year veteran Julie Gianakos, that he was the only other religious education teacher to be certified from the

Warren parish itself, noting that then Warren Saint Demetrios then Sunday School supervisor Marina Payiavlas “*set us up to do the projects, and we received certificates signed by Archbishop Spiridon. When I was more active in the Boy Scouts, I wanted service projects to receive the adult Woodbadge Award. So I used the work to earn the certification as my duty to God, and also was nominated by Father Dennis to receive the Prophet Elias scout award. It is only given to Orthodox Christians. At the time, only a dozen or so scout leaders had earned it.*”

Alex then proceeded to offer his account of how the original Saint Demetrios church bell, a fixture from its Russian origins unto the bell tower in the edifice at 242 Clinton Street, since demolished, was rescued by the persistent efforts of persons who had been raised within the aegis of the Clinton Street parish, including Alex’s father Jerry, his uncle Gust, Mike Kontos and his brother George (all four of whom were parish presidents), with assistance from also conscientious veteran parishioners Jenny Zervas Hazapis and Steve Kalogerou. Alex considers this tale “my favorite Saint Demetrios event,” and his personal narrative appears verbatim below, as reprinted from the article with space underwritten for this commemorative album by The Hellenic Society Byzantium of Trumbull County:

“In front of the Community Center on Atlantic Street, by the entranceway, is a large bell. Look at it closely. It has Russian markings on it! How did the bell get there? Why are the markings in Russian, and not in Greek?”

When Saint Demetrios Church of Warren was very young in 1920, it purchased the building of the Finnish Lutheran Church on Clinton Street, just off South and Pine Streets, in an area known as “The Flats” because of flooding problems. In fact the area was so low, that in the 1840’s canal boats were parked there! In any event, the Finnish Church was a small structure and did not have Orthodox architecture or functions. A Sunday School/ Greek School area was added. An iconostasis was added to the interior. The bell tower was empty, and the community purchased a bell from ‘the Russians’ to add to the structure.

The bell came from the old world, from a church destroyed in the Russian Revolution. It was added to the tower, and used for many years to call the parishioners to Sunday liturgy. In 1948, where the present Saint Demetrios Church on High Street was occupied, the old Lutheran Church was sold, and with it the bell. The bell remained in the church tower until 1974, when the City of Warren purchased the building for urban renewal and knocked it down. The City was celebrating its 175th Anniversary. People in the downtown were busy. During the celebration, the Greeks would hold their annual festival.

In the spring of 1974, Mike Kontos was watching carefully the demolition of the old Lutheran Church building. He remembered the church bell very well, because when he was an altar boy, he used to ring it! He wanted the bell for the Saint Demetrios Community. He went to City Hall, and asked for the bell. There were problems, but he was promised that he would have an opportunity to get it for the Saint Demetrios Community. His brother George was president of the Church that year, and had promised a flatbed truck from Wetzel Plating to move it.

But the community had other things on its mind. July was coming, and the annual church festival needed planning. Jerry A. Savakis was in charge of the taverna. His brother Gust was festival treasurer. People were coming and going from the Datsun automobile store owned by Jerry A. Savakis at 554 East Market, discussing the festival. Mike Kontos would also come. But he was

worried about the bell. When would he get it for the church? Every day he would drive down South Street and see the Finnish Church tower. It was still up, and the bell was safe inside.

It was the Friday before the festival opened. Mike Kontos came to the car dealership. The old Lutheran Church had been demolished, and the tower was down. The bell was gone! From the car dealership, a call was made by Jerry A. Savakis to the City Hall. The rights to the bell were sold as salvage to the demolition company. They had the bell!

The next day, Saturday, July 6, a hardy group of Saint Demetrios parishioners went to the demolition company in a large car pool, plus a flat bed truck loaned by George Kontos, owner of Wetzel Plating. They were determined to get the bell back! Jerry A. Savakis led the negotiations. Mike Kontos, his second, insisted that City Hall had promised the community the bell. The owner of the demolition company insisted the bell was very valuable, and was company property because of their demolition contract with the City.

The parishioners, who by now occupied the front of the demolition company, explained the sentimental value of the bell. A compromise price was reached, and the sum of five hundred dollars for the purchase was advanced by Jerry A. Savakis. The Hellenic Society "Byzantium" of Trumbull County reimbursed him, and the Society committed itself to the erection of the bell at a suitable location.

The next day was Sunday, July 7. the City of Warren was celebrating its 175th anniversary all through July. The community was busy with plans for a festival in the parking lot behind the church. Few people in the Saint Demetrios Community knew of the bell or of its purchase the day before. A surprise was in store for them. The church bell, still on the Wetzel truck, was taken to the front of the church and rung just as church was being let out! The people were so surprised!

The bell was then taken to Wetzel Plating for storage. Later it was moved to 554 East Market Street and stored behind the Datsun repair shop. By then, the grounds on Atlantic Street were purchased, and it was decided by the Hellenic Society Byzantium and the Church Board to locate the bell there.

The expenses for the bell's new home were paid by the Byzantium Society Byzantium. So, the next time you go by the Church Bell, remember its story. It came from a far off place, and had two homes in the New World. It you gently tap it with your hand with your ear against the bell, you can hear its sound. It is the oldest relic of the Saint Demetrios."

The magnitude of the parish's church edifice and parish and Community Center grounds and new constructions continues unabated to this day. Not long after the Community Center was erected in 1976, an annex unto it, constructed in 1984, with mirrored panels and bar, with its own restroom facilities, became utilized when not expanding the area adjoining the larger Center's banquet room. Because of the nature of mirrored panels, this was popularly labeled "The Crystal Room," and has itself since undergone renovation. A storage room was inevitably constructed to the rear of this area. In an imposing area behind the Community Center itself was designed a stunning Pavilion, to both function in the open air with doors to make it accommodating regardless of weather. Designed by regional architect Pavlos P. Pavlidis, it was formally inaugurated on October 17, 1993, with Arch C. Charnas (as he did for the Hellenic Community Center) serving as Civil Engineer; with Rick Warzala serving as general contractor; Elias Liakaris serving as painting contractor; and James

Payiavlas having installed its alarm system—all of whom (excepting the not Saint Demetrios parishioner Mr. Warzala) having provided their services gratis. The Pavilion has played a central role in the annual summer festivals, very much in keeping conceptually with the *tavernas* that dot the landscape of Greece itself.

Imposingly situated before the Community Center main entrance alongside of the monument of the first church bell of the former Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios parish when on the no longer extant Clinton Street (that region having been razed in 1974 to render something of an industrial park), is a breathtakingly compelling steel cross. This was the gift of Gus Polychronis, proprietor of Thermolance Company and Poly-Mini-Storage, as a benefaction to the Saint Demetrios parish, which he himself constructed and erected before the Saint Demetrios Community Center and which was blessed and dedicated in a ceremony presided over by then Archbishop His Eminence Spyridon and other ecclesiastical as well as state and local officials, on October 26, 1996.

Further augmenting the Community Center grounds was the construction of a gas well that would help buttress the parish coffers. The idea of the highly innovative entrepreneurial genius of the late Louis Kondoleon, it was embraced by Parish Council and formally dedicated in a ceremony presided over by then parish priest Stelios Menis before the summer festival of 2004.

That the now increasingly aging group of Saint Demetrios parishioners might have easier access to the church edifice, particularly for those wheelchair-bound, an elevator was erected (completed in 2007), placed to the left of the normal parking lot side entrance, that would lift entrants both up into the church vestibule and down into the basement, where an innumerable number of church functions have taken place from the very outset of the edifice's completion in 1948, and where in fact the kitchen to the right of the basement stage was itself redesigned with more modern appliances. At the same time, the restroom facility for the men was relocated to the area of the former basement choir cloakroom, made to code for the physically challenged, as was in fact the women's restroom to the right of the basement vestibule. Among the many dedicated parishioners committed to raising what was exigent to the elevator was the always eleemosynary Michael Keriotis, who is himself the son of the 1973 parish president George Keriotis.

And with the demotion in 2011 of the former Religious (Sunday School) building to the left of the church edifice, that had been previously tunnel linked to the church's rear entrance accessing both basement and upper school rooms (and later priest offices, after the construction of the elevator necessitated the removal of the priest's office that had been formerly to the immediate left of the church vestibule), a reconstructed parking lot was further enhanced by a corner floral garden, among whose designers was parish council officer Anna Nikolaides, an accomplished vocal talent veteran choir director, and the always conscientious Michael and Kitsa Aivazis and Michael Kontos.

An extraordinary new era was inaugurated by the installation of Father Stylianos Menis on February 15, 2004, in the presence of His Eminence the Metropolitan Meximos of Pittsburgh. Having been asked to comment on this singular ceremony, parish historian Larry James Gianakos called Father Stelios a "portrait of an intellectual with humor, wit, and soul," and proceeded to remark accordingly:

"In the eighty-four years since our parish was chartered, we have had twenty-six priests. So turbulent was our early history, that in the first thirty-five years, we had no fewer than twenty-five, each, as is true of all that is human, with their particular brands of qualities and deficiencies,

but every one of whom invariably could not survive the political cross-currents of the Warren parish landscape. On September 23, 1955, our twenty-sixth priest arrived, Father Dyonisios or Dennis Michelis, and he brought to our parish a stability heretofore lacking. He left us, at least as our official priest, only yesterday, with a veritable Guinness Book of Records, in some 17,660 days among us, presiding over four generations of parishioners and never once requesting a sick leave, certainly a Warren institution, as much a church fixture as the very pews themselves.

Now we begin a new era, blessed to be once more in the presence of our own Metropolitan, His Eminence Maximos, universally regarded as one of the most eminent and literate of Orthodox theologians, with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, comprehension, and discernment. That he shares the Chian roots of a large share of our own parish population, with all that celebrated island's attending passions, is that much more propitious for this community. How much more blessed are we on this landmark day that he brings to us a compatriot of his own island's soil, Father Stylianos—he ever prefers the name Stelios—Menis, the quintessential Chian who is also very much a citizen of the world.

Father Stelios' exemplary theological training resulted in his being designated a protopresbyter fairly early on. He had mastered his academic proficiency with summit marks. But his intellectual pursuits were ever, and remain, inexhaustible. He will proudly note to one and all that, aside from his priestly human embrace in his service to our faith, he counts his acquisition and perusal of thousands of books as his most invigorating of earthly attributes.

He comes to us, aside from his other varied parishes in and out of the United States, by way of that most rambunctious, unspoiled, and unprepossessing of countries, Australia. You will note in his fine humor the definite traces, not only of his native Vrontathos, Chios, and its colorful vernacular, but most certainly of his twenty-one years in the Land Down Under, where even a hint of snobbery is quickly chastised, and in which a ready wit and charm is richly celebrated.

Father Stelios has brilliantly parented two daughters, Anna and Maria, both of whom are abroad, advancing well their own post-graduate studies. He is endowed with a compelling baritone hymnal voice that will give most pleasing sonorous accent to our choir's professionalism, and thus follow well Father Dennis' supreme decibel. But his tales, whether rendered as homilies, sermons, or simply engaging parodies, are at once infectious. He is an endearing man, and that rare breed of intellectual, he conveys his message well to all manner of person, from the street-wise to the lofty academic. Yes, he is an intellectual of humor, wit, and soul.

Today he becomes our twenty-seventh parish priest, and one can almost feel in his presence the traditions of Vrontathos, Chios by way of the Land Down Under accentuated in his walk. This, even as he blazes anew a path for the seven hundred and fifty families comprising our beloved Warren Saint Demetrios, itself the synthesis of our great ancestry, matchless tradition, and in which 'the strength of our characters' endures."

The Warren Saint Demetrios community was all the more blessed recently when on November 5, 2006, in a solemn and regal ceremony just before the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, our very own Proistamenos Father Stylianos was singularly honored by His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos, conferring upon him the title of Archimandrite, by tonsuring him as such. This supremely high distinction for a parish priest is seldom bestowed, inasmuch as it represents the pinnacle of achievements in service and scholarship on behalf of the Faith. It also represented the second time

that His Eminence honored Father Stylianos with an officium—the first being when His Eminence conferred upon him the title of Protopresbyter at the Annunciation Church in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, on January 29, 2003. With this singular honor, Father Stylianos becomes only the third Archimandrite that has served at our own Warren Saint Demetrios. The previous parish priests so honored were Father Chrysanthos Kaplanis (1922-23) and Father Michael Kondoleon (1941-1942). Father Stylianos is, however, the first such parish priest to have been so distinguished when yet serving within his parish tenure.

The would-be Archimandrite, Father Stylianos Menis, has further distinguished Warren Saint Demetrios by offering what is believed to be in this parish an unprecedented Divine Liturgy. On Monday, October 23, 2006, the Feast Day of St. Iakovos, Father Stylianos performed the Divine Liturgy that St. Iakovos (James), the brother of Our Lord and first Bishop of Jerusalem, himself authored. This extraordinary rendering differs from both the Liturgies of Basil the Great and St. John the Chrysostom. In the ensuing years with the parish, Father Stelios brought far more than his singular status as Archimandrite and a widely recognized scholarly ecclesiastical authority. He has maintained a most rigorous schedule, not merely with Faith classes and Bible studies, but with a strong and steadfast commitment to the needs of individual parishioners and their families. He is particularly motivated and moved by the spiritual exigencies of the very young. And it was through his infectious enthusiasm for a parish library, that this long-ago merely dreamed about institution became a reality, with the refurbishing of one of the former Greek School rooms for that purpose, and with the establishment of a Library and Cultural Affairs Committee to administer its application and outreach. More recently, with equal enthusiasm, and with a committee of deftly motivated and highly computer literate parishioners, young and much older, from past Parish Council President Peter “Takis” Larentzos, his daughter Maria Magiassos, current Parish Council Vice President Sotiria (Cindy) Lambis, veteran Parish Council member Nicholas L. Kondoleon, Esquire, designer John Slack, all under the aegis of current Parish Council President and long computer authority Anthony Capranica, he sanctioned the inauguration of Warren Saint Demetrios’ first website, at www.stdemetrioswarren.org, of which this history, and much related parish documentation and events calendars, have become an integral part.

The next phase of parish history commences with the arrival of the vibrantly ebullient, dynamically charismatic, deeply spiritual, highly sentient and keenly literary Protopresbyter Father Constantine Valantasis on July 1, 2010. Such has been the profundity of his impact, in whichever spiritual and secular community he has traveled, that when this writer in 2015, in encountering any number of Greek Orthodox celebrities of the Hollywood community and a panoply of others in wider swatches of California, unto whose faithful ministrations—ultimately as a Father Confessor—he was assigned to while in service to the Los Angeles parish of Saint Nicholas from the summer of 1989 and on into 2005, that the common sentiment there was “Why have parishes like yours taken him from us? A kinder soul has not existed. You are truly fortunate indeed!”

In his own words, Father Constantine, or “Costa,” describes his evolutionary journey to the Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios parish, thus:

“Father Constantine Valantasis is currently the pastor of the Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Warren, Ohio. He was born on June 18, 1964 to his parents Steve and Tina Valantasis in Youngstown, Ohio. He was raised in the city of Campbell, Ohio and is the oldest of

three children, having two sisters Caliope (Emmanuel) Kamenos and Presvytera Maria (Father Nicholas) Verdaris. He attended local schools and was a very active member of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Archangel Michael.

From the early age of eight, Father Constantine was an altar boy and a permanent fixture in God's sanctuary serving under the guidance of his Godfather, the Reverend George T. Pappas. His faithful grandmothers Calope and Maria had a very positive influence on their grandson and patiently taught him the importance of prayer and memorizing and reciting the Lord's Prayer (Pater Imon) and the Creed (Pistevo) as a young child. Father Constantine graduated high school in June of 1982.

In September of that same year he was accepted into the Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. In September of 1983 he was accepted by the Franciscan Order to assist in their newly founded Saint Francis House. This was a ministry devoted to addressing issues of poverty and substance abuse located in the 'Combat Zone' section of Boston. Every Saturday for the next six years he would be working in the 'Combat Zone' exposing fellow Seminarians to the desperate realities that people in poverty face daily. In 1986 he graduated from Hellenic College with the honor of Highest Distinction. In 1989 he graduated from the School of Theology earning a Masters of Divinity and again, with the honor of Highest Distinction.

In 1988 he married his childhood sweetheart, Karen (Kyrana) Pantelis. In April of 1989 he was ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Maximos of Pittsburgh of blessed memory. In June of 1989 he would be assigned to the Church of Saint Nicholas in Northridge, California as an assistant to the Reverend now Bishop Spyridon Kezios. In October of that same year he was ordained as a Presbyter of the Church by Bishop Anthology of San Francisco also of blessed memory.

His time while serving the Church of Saint Nicholas was filled with many ministerial duties and challenges. In addition to his full liturgical schedule, he was charged with the responsibility of overseeing all aspects of youth ministry, hospital and shut-in visitations. He taught seventh and eighth grade religion classes at the Parochial School of Saint Nicholas which at that time had a student body of close to four hundred children. In October of 1990, he was granted the Offkion of Confessor, and from that point he would pastorally guide the faithful as a Father Confessor.

The early 1990s would have him engaged in the work of editing liturgical translations for the newly formed Narthex Press. It was also during this time that he devoted a large part of his ministry to serving the needy of Los Angeles's Skid Row district. That experience further contributed to his spiritual and priestly formation as he has always maintained a strong concern and desire to assist and minister to the poor.

In 2005, Father Constantine decided that it was time to return to his childhood Metropolis of Pittsburgh. Metropolitan Maximos enthusiastically accepted his request and was assigned to the Parish of Saint George at Massillon, Ohio. He would find a beautiful parish led by the former Pastor, the Reverend Father Constantine Shiepis. Father Constantine immediately saw the potential for that parish to attract those seeking to embrace the Christian Orthodox faith. And after five years of service, the parish of Saint George was indeed becoming a spiritual home for those who wanted to embrace the process of conversion.

In July of 2010 however, Metropolitan Maximos would assign him to the Parish of Saint

Demetrios at Warren, Ohio, a much larger parish with a new set of challenges and potential. Father Constantine eagerly embraced that assignment and was met by a loving and welcoming community. Again his service to the Church was enhanced by the many members of that community who have carried on the Orthodox Tradition with a great deal of piety and perseverance.

In September of 2021, Father Constantine received much needed assistance. Demetrios Constantine and his wife Maria were assigned to the Parish of Saint Demetrios where he would subsequently be ordained to the Diaconate and the Presbyterate. It has been an honor and joy to serve with his young colleague, Father Demetrios. In February of 2022, Father Constantine was elevated to the rank of Protosphyter.

Father Constantine and Presvytera Karen have one daughter Athena (Ronald) Tabus and two sons, Stephanos and Nikitas. Athena and Ronald have three beautiful children, Ronald Michael, Constantine of blessed memory (+2019) and Keira. His grandchildren are his pride and joy. In his spare time, Father Constantine continues to be an avid martial artist; enjoys caring for his menagerie of animals while tending to his roses and listening to classical music."

In their great modesty, neither Father Constantine nor Presvytera Karen would admit to the strains of their own scholarly intellectuality (Father, in his eclectic taste between his exegetical and liturgical knowledge and classical music appreciation is himself also a devotee of, and raconteur upon, the Gothic novels of the great American southern novelist and short story writer Flannery O'Connor), but it has indeed followed into their progeny, with their son Stephen particularly distinguishing himself as a brilliantly polished iconographer.

Like Father Constantine, one witnesses in Presvytera Karen a fine liturgical sing-song, rendering her a chantress worthy of her husband, and both are in sacred song dynamically buttressed by the incomparable melodious flow of the parish's current lead cantor, Theodore "Ted" Nerris. Protosphyter Ted follows in the tradition of two very long serving psalters of the Warren Saint Demetrios parish, John Condoleon, who exquisite intonation augmented every liturgical service from 1957 until the time of his retirement at the close of 2001, when he was honored by the members of the parish council and the regional chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society at a special farewell luncheon on December 9, 2001; and the also beloved figure John Binikos, as stalwart and steadfast a functionary of the parish as its very bedrock, whose reign as cantor extended from 1985 to the time when only extended illness could silence his noble desire to perform, passing at the age of eighty-eight on January 16, 2022.

The exquisitely heavenly sounds that emanate from the parish's current Protosphyter Ted Nerris reflect the exactitude of his liturgical training. He has synthesized his own history as follows:

"Theodore Nerris-Kakoulides was born in the Bronx, New York City, in 1966 to Greek Orthodox parents who migrated from Greece; his dad from Andros, and his mom from Kalymnos. Ted is the son of the Great Nikolaos Kakoulides, one of the great psaltai deriving from Asia Minor who served as the Archon Protosphyter of North and South America (when the region was still one large Archdiocese) from the mid 60's up to his untimely passing in 1981. Ted was instructed by him from the young age of seven through fourteen, and excelled through the years having the blessing and opportunity of chanting by his side.

He took on the position of Choir Director of the Zoodohos Peghe choir in 1985 at the age

of seventeen and served there a few years. Many memorable moments during Holy Week and Christmas were recorded and even a cassette was produced of his father's composition of the famous masterpiece Hymn (Δοχαστικον) of Saint Kassiani (Byzantine abbess, poet, composer and hymnographer) chanted Holy Tuesday evening. Through the years Ted continued serving as Protopsaltis in several other local New York parishes: the beautiful Church of Our Savior in Rye, New York (Archbishop Iakovos' home church) and lastly, at the Transfiguration of Christ in Corona, Queens, where he chanted there in the '90s with his best friend and the now presiding Presbyter of the Church, Father George Anastasiou.

In 1994, Ted made the trip to Greece to give and write his final examinations at the Conservatory of Music in Piraeus, Romanos o Melodos. He passed with the grade of Arista in all subjects and graduated with honors. Ted then continued teaching students Byzantine music privately before he, his wife and four children decided to move to Warren, Ohio in 2004. Ted has been the Protopsalti at Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Warren, Ohio for twelve years now."

Regarding Father Constantine and Presbytera Karen, they have rendered an infectiously enveloping charm, in whichever ministry they have been called to perform. Punctuating their Christian hospitality, eleemosynary and beyond, they have been benefactors to would-be celebrities. Alongside some of Hollywood's leading Greek-Orthodox cinema figures such as John Aniston (of Cretan birth and although a veteran actor in his own right, notably in the role of Greek business magnate Victor Kiriakis in NBC television's longest running soap opera *Days of Our Lives*, now better known as the real-life father of Hollywood A-lister Jennifer Aniston), the highly influential power couple, the multiple Oscar-winner Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson, the latter having an affiliated lineage to Warren Saint Demetrios's own conscientious parishioners George and Ethel Geordan), with whom Father Constantine and Presbytera Karen were in the coterie of while with the Los Angeles based parish of Saint Nicholas, they also opened up their own home while in Los Angeles to the then yet nascent entrepreneur Kary Antholis, who would become an Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker, later executive with HBO Films, and currently the editor of CrimeStory.com, and an instrument of the Board of Visitors at the Georgetown University Law Center.

The arrival to the parish in September of 2021 of Father Demetrios Constantine, to whom Father Constantine has ever conveyed his appreciation for incalculable assistance, and the summit honor to serve at his side, opens yet another era in the parish history, as both priests now needed to navigate through the depredations of a global pandemic (the Coronavirus, known as COVID-19, designating the year of its widespread discovery) and social and political turbulence, beyond the scope of normal ecclesiastical matters. The consummately dedicated, highly literate, and intellectually probing Father Demetri, whose calming yet joyously alluring demeanor, and his no less sentient but much engaging Presbytera Maria, have become endearing fixtures into a parish that continues to thrust itself in the vanguard of progressive outreach unto new generations of parishioners, representing the multitudinous diversity of the new millennium.

Father Demetri describes his personal evolution thus:

"Father Demetri Constantine, the son of Father Tom and Presbytera Vasiliki Constantine, grew up in Tennessee, Indiana, and Ohio with his eight siblings. His father is former priest at Saint John the Forerunner Greek Orthodox Church in Youngstown, Ohio, where Father Demetri was an

active member of the GOYA, altar servers, choir, and dance troupe. He graduated from Poland Seminary High School in 2011 and went on to study Religious Studies at Hellenic College.

Father Demetri spent his college summers working at Camp Nazareth as a counselor and program coordinator, during which time he began dating Presbyteria Maria (Touloumes) whom he married in August of 2015. Upon graduating from Hellenic College, he attended seminary at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and graduated with a Masters of Divinity in 2018. He then began working as the Administrator at Saint Herman of Alaska Christian School, an Orthodox K-8 school at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Boston, where he spent three wonderful years while simultaneously serving the community of Saint Demetrios in Weston, Massachusetts as the protopsaltis for five years. Just prior to leaving Boston in May of 2021, he completed the Certificate of Byzantine Music from Hellenic College Holy Cross.

In the summer of 2021, Father Demetri was assigned to Saint Demetrios, Warren, by His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, where he officially began serving as Pastoral Assistant on September 1st. On December 11th, the Feast Day of Saint Philothea, Father Demetri was ordained to the Holy Diaconate, which was followed by his ordination to the Holy Priesthood on February 19, 2022.

Father Demetri, along with his wife Presbyteria Maria, have greatly enjoyed being part of the beautiful Saint Demetrios Warren community, are honored to be a part of this historic centennial year and celebration. Together, they look forward to many more wonderful years to come.”

In recent years, in which the younger generations have moved beyond any conventional propinquity and now peregrinate the greater globe, and are early adept at mastering even the most sophisticated of telecommunications technology, it is a joy for the older generations to bask in the pride of witnessing the accomplishments of highly educated youth, becoming all manner of medical and legal professionals, to celebrated artists, actors architects, future couturiers, psychologists, physicists, athletes, composers and lyricists. On occasion, the youth of future generations are front and center of national headlines, which has been the case with Angelo Kafantaris—one of four professionally accomplished sons of George and Maria Kafantaris--whose breathtaking plans in February of 2022 for his environmentally conscientious supercar through his own Hyperion Companies, involving a mega-million dollar plan for producing plants in Ohio alone has propelled human spirits to soar unencumbered once more. His vision has resonated to such an extent that Angelo may be as much an antidote for what ails our shared humanity as are the exigent vaccinations currently treating all variant mutations of the too often lethal Coronavirus.

In the increasing diversity for individuals seemingly too long proscribed from the recondite rooms of effecting modes of influence, Greek Orthodox parishes began to follow the embrace of a greater ecumenicalism, which meant also finding increasing numbers of women parishioners as parish council presidents. At the Warren Saint Demetrios parish, this first occurred when professional educator Irene Magiassos Culetsu was elected to the council presidency for the terms of 2017 and 2008. Irene, who would later witness the death of her beloved husband George to the Coronavirus pandemic—the first such victim at the Saint Demetrios parish, succumbing on April 1, 2020 (his funerary flowers would be among those included upon the decorated *επιταφίωον*, or symbolically representative tomb of Christ for the following Holy Friday)—George and Irene having already endured the tragedy of small son lost to drowning in 1997—has noted the path which has spiritually sustained her. Of her having become the first woman parish council president, she

remarks:

“My Orthodox faith and Saint Demetrios church has guided me throughout my life. As a life-long member of Saint Demetrios, I was honored to be chosen by my fellow church board members to become the first woman president of the Saint Demetrios church board which I personally served on for two years. My immigrant parents were married at Saint Demetrios. My mother and her sister and their spouses were the first couple to have a double wedding performed by Father Dennis Michelis in 1956. My father and uncle also proudly served on the church board. The Saint Demetrios church and my orthodox faith have been my spiritual sanctuary throughout my life. I was baptized and married there and there buried both a son and my husband George, my father, grandparents and other members of my family. Saint Demetrios has guided me through my pain and kisses. I am proud and blessed to be a member and to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary. God bless Fathers Costa and Demetri, the late Father Dennis, their families, and all the parishioners of Saint Demetrios. Sending my love to you all. May Saint Demetrios have many more years.”

In the current Parish Council president, Steve Zervas, one witnesses with great pride his sure and steady hand, meticulously and methodically moving the parish forward, keeping it fiscally sound and innovatively thriving, much as did his father Christ before him in his tenure as parish president in 1977, when the community was beset with the accumulated debt incurred by the Hellenic Center construction. And yet no financial climb was ever too daunting for this parish, even as it has only recently professionally restored its monumentally appointed downtown church edifice, and as it now seeks to further enhance the Center grounds with state-of-the-art buildings embracing school rooms and research facilities.

Perhaps no more colorful figure existed in parish history than Steve’s paternal grandfather, Demetrios (James) Zervas, whose infectiously compelling approbation, “*Βραβο σου, παιδη μου!*,” or “Well done, my child,” greeted the performances of countless Greek School children upon the church basement stage. His spirit lives well in his Saint Demetrios third generation grandson Steve, as it does in Steve’s wife, the former Gela (Angela) Condoleon, who is herself a third-generation Saint Demetrios parishioner, as are their children after them—that cherished fourth generation now harvesting their loftiest dreams.

This author's late mother, Julie Mougianis Gianakos, had long served her parish as a fellow philanthropist by way of the parish’s chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society and as a Religious (Sunday) School teacher for some forty-five years. She would often recollect that her parents had taught her that “*family, church, and education were most important. One should never bring disgrace or dishonor to one's family. And one should care for others in need.*” The words of the Greek sages were often repeated by her parents:

*Ἡ τιμή, τιμή δέν ἔχει
Καί χαράς τον ποῦ τήν ἔχει*

*(Tragic indeed) is the person without honor;
And exalted is the person who has it.”*

That advice served her own generation well--they who also survived the Great Depression and helped achieved victory in the Second World War. But it was advice driven relentlessly into the

hearts and minds of the parishioners of Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios, as they have witnessed repeatedly achievements which have given them prominence far beyond what the casual observer might have expected from either their number or location. These singular achievements by the descendants of largely poor but proud and persevering immigrants of more than a century earlier cannot fail to be ennobling to future generations of Saint Demetrios parishioners. The poet William Wordsworth distilled the essence of persons of advancing age in reflection with his *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*:

*Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.*

For all generations in the community of Warren Saint Demetrios, the immigrant pioneers had left their strength behind.

Priests of the Parish of Warren, Ohio
Saint Demetrios and of Saint Paraskevi

[The parish of Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios was established in 1918 and chartered on May 5, 1920; the community would move into the former Finnish Lutheran Church at 242 Clinton Street on July 4, 1920; only regular priests are listed below; note that priests may have returned for services before or beyond their regular tenure.]

1. Gabriel Tsamparlis	7/15/1920 through 12/25/1920
2. Demetrios (James) Rangos	2/18/1921 through 9/4/1921
3. Ioannis (John) Magoulias	11/14/1921 through 2/21/1922
4. Chrisanthos Kaplanis	2/22/1922 through 3/22/1923
5. George Nikolaides	3/23/1923 through 11/10/1923
6. George Fazetas	11/26/1923 through 12/14/1924
7. Ioannis (John) Antarakis	12/18/1924 through 1/12/1925
8. Constantine Kapogiannis	2/12/1925 through 3/16/1927
9. Neilos Foutrides	4/1/1927 through 5/12/1929
10. George Thalassinos	6/2/1929 through 10/4/1931
11. Demetrios (James) Kassis	10/5/1931 through 6/23/1933
12. Demetrios (James) Lolakas	6/24/1933 through 12/30/1934
13. Christoforos (Christopher) Danos (Sakellaridis)	1/20/1935 through 7/11/1937
14. George Sikas	7/18/1937 through 12/31/1939
15. Spiridon Spiropoulos	3/10/1940 through 8/31/1940
16. Petros (Peter) Spathis	9/1/1940 through 4/27/1941
17. Michael Kondoleon	9/14/1941 through 9/30/1942
18. Spiridon Zoïs	11/22/1942 through 7/22/1944
19. Vasilios (William) Vryniotis	9/3/1944 through 11/30/1946
20. Nikiforos Maximos	12/1/1946 through 5/31/1951
21. George Vlahopoulos (Vlahos)	6/3/1951 through 10/17/1954
22. Achilles Siangris (Siagris)	10/23/1954 through 6/29/1955
23. Sophocles Sophokleos	7/9/1955 through 9/22/1955
24. Dyonisios (Dennis) Michelis	9/23/1955 through 2/14/2004
25. Stylanios (Stelios) Menis	2/15/2004 through 6/30/2010
26. Constantine (Costa) Valantasis	7/1/2010 through the current day
27. Demetrios (Demetri) Constantine (Assistant Priest)	9/1/2021 through the current day

[The parish of Warren, Ohio Saint Paraskevi was established on January 22, 1922; situated in a former meeting hall at 524½ South Pine Street. The parish was dissolved on April 1, 1927, "The Day of the Reunification of the Colony," when it again merged with the parish of Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios; only regular priests are listed below.]

1. Nicholas Patoulis	2/22/1922 through 9/15/1923
2. Joachim Doulgerakis	9/16/1923 through 1/10/1927
3. Neilos Foutrides	1/17/1927 through 4/1/1927 (continuing with the Saint Demetrios parish)

*Presidents of the Parish of Warren, Ohio
Saint Demetrios and of Saint Paraskevi*

Saint Demetrios:

1. 1920: Vasilios Kominos (Comminos)
2. 1921: Eustace Tsaltas [*on September 15, 1920, Eustace Tsaltas, in a meeting at the Roumanian Hall, offered the sum of six hundred dollars to become "Anadohos," the person who officially named Saint Demetrios in Warren, Ohio.*]
3. 1922: Nicholas Papalas
4. Demetrios Economou (elected 1/28/22)
5. Achilles Geordan (elected 8/20/22)
6. 1923: Nicholas Sarvanos
7. Nicholas Theoharis (elected 2/5/23)
8. Theodore Sarlis (elected 11/10/23)
9. 1924: Theodore Sarlis
10. 1925: Theodore Sarlis
11. Demetrios Sarlanis (elected 5/17/25)
12. 1926: Demetrios Sarlanis
13. Theodore Sarlis (elected 9/26/26)
14. Theofanis Asimakopoulos (elected 11/21/26)
15. 1927: Theodore Sarlis
[The church of Saint Paraskevi is reunited with the church of Saint Demetrios on April 1, 1927, when Mr. Sarlis serves as president of the reunited colony.]
16. Christ Charnas (elected 9/17/27)
17. 1928: Nicholas Maniatis
18. 1929: John Tsagaris
19. 1930: George Macrinos
20. 1931: John Christopoulos
21. 1932: George Macrinos
22. 1933: Michael Fotinos
23. 1934: Nicholas Kayafas
24. 1935: Constantine Xanthos
25. 1936: John Kossivas
26. 1937: Constantine Demetropoulos
27. 1938: Nicholas Theoharis
28. 1939: Nicholas Theoharis
29. 1940: Angelo Toskas
30. 1941: John Tsagaris
31. 1942: John Tsagaris
32. 1943: George Nikolaou
33. 1944: Harry Gentithes
34. 1945: Harry Gentithes
35. 1946: Harry Gentithes
36. 1947: Nicholas Theoharis
37. 1948: Nicholas Theoharis
38. 1949: William Harris
39. 1950: Theodore Sarlis

Saint Demetrios Parish Presidents, continued:

40. 1951: Theodore Sarlis
41. 1952: Terry Tsantes
42. 1953: Alexis Geordan
43. Nicholas Kalogeras (elevated to president on June 11, 1953)
44. 1954: Emmanuel Sferios
45. 1955: Thomas Vouvounas
46. 1956: Terry Tsantes
47. 1957: Nicholas Binikos
48. 1958: John Condoleon
49. 1959: Lazarus George Bakeris [*at twenty-eight, the then youngest of the church presidents, and the first to be born in the United States.*]
50. 1960: Kyriakos Nikolaides
51. 1961: Kyriakos Nikolaides
52. 1962: Themistocles Lizardy
53. 1963: John Kefalas
54. 1964: Basil Orogas
55. 1965: William Harris
56. 1966: Themistocles Lizardy
57. 1967: Themistocles Lizardy
58. 1968: Gus Glyptis
59. 1969: James Economos [*at thirty-one, the then second youngest of the church presidents*]
60. 1970: James Economos
61. 1971: Gust Savakis
62. 1972: William Ahladis
63. 1973: George Keriotis
64. 1974: George Nicholas Kontos
65. 1975: George Nicholas Kontos
66. 1976: Lewis Peter Sarkos, M.D.
67. 1977: Christ James Zervas
68. 1978: John Anthony Payiavlas
69. 1979: Lewis Peter Sarkos, M.D.
70. 1980: Jerry Alexander Savakis [*the first president to be the brother of a former president, Gust Savakis*]
71. 1981: Thomas Nicholas Kalogeras [*the first president to be the son of a former president, Nicholas Kalogeras*]
72. 1982: Michael Kontos
73. 1983: Lazarus George Bakeris
74. 1984: Lazarus George Bakeris
75. 1985: Lazarus George Bakeris
76. 1986: Thomas Limperos [*at thirty-one, the then third youngest president; the first to be born of an American-born father, and the first to have been baptized by Father Dennis Michelis in 1955*]
77. 1987: Lazarus George Bakeris
78. 1988: William Ahladis
79. 1989: Gust T. Papadakis
80. 1990: Manuel Michelakis
81. 1991: Lazarus George Bakeris [*This being his sixth presidency, a record that remains unsurpassed, with George E. Halkias and Dr. George Ploumbis having achieved the second highest reigns, each with five presidencies as of the close of 2022*]

Saint Demetrios Parish Presidents, continued:

82. 1992: Jerry Alexander Savakis
83. 1993: Jerry Alexander Savakis
84. 1994: James Economos
85. 1995: Takis D. Larentzos
86. 1996: Christ E. Zoumas
87. 1997: George E. Halkias [*George shares with his brother-in-law, Dr. George C. Ploumbis, the distinction of each having had ultimately five presidencies to the close of 2022; records that remains unsurpassed only by Lazarus George Bakeris, who had six. Moreover, their wives, Angela Halkias, and Angel Ploumbis, are the maternal grand-daughters of John Condoleon, who was president of the parish in 1958.*]
88. 1998: George E. Halkias
89. 1999: Alexander L. Bournias, D.D.S.
90. 2000: George E. Halkias
91. 2001: George C. Ploumbis, D.D.S. [*George shares with his brother-in-law, George E. Halkias, the distinction of each having had ultimately five presidencies to the close of 2022.*]
92. 2002: C. Dino Theofilos
93. 2003: C. Dino Theofilos
94. 2004: Takis D. Larentzos
95. 2005: Christ E. Zoumas
96. 2006: William Angelis
97. 2007: William Angelis
98. 2008: Anthony Capranica
99. 2009: Manuel Michelakis
100. 2010: Louie Ely Vardavas
101. 2011: George C. Ploumbis, D.D.S.
102. 2012: George C. Ploumbis, D.D.S.
103. 2013: Savas Magiassos
104. 2014: George E. Halkias
105. 2015: George E. Halkias
106. 2016: Steven McGarrity
107. 2017: Irene Culetsu [*Irene is the first woman president in parish history.*]
108. 2018: Irene Cultesu
109. 2019: George C. Ploumbis, D.D.S.
110. 2020: George C. Ploumbis, D.D.S.
111. 2021: Steve Zervas [*Steve has the distinction of having been only the second parish president (along with Thomas Nicholas Kalogeras) to have been the son of a former parish president (Christ James Zervas), with the further distinction that his wife, the former Gela (Angela) Sue Condoleon, is the paternal grand-daughter of John Condoleon, who was parish president in 1958.*]
112. 2022: Steve Zervas

Saint Paraskevi:

1. 1/22/22: Constantine Demetropoulos
2. 5/14/22; Constantine Demetropoulos (elected again)
3. 6/23/22; Elias Georgalas
4. 10/10/23: Vasilios Marulakis
5. 12/7/24: Elias Georgalas (he remained as president through April 1, 1927, when the parishes were re-united as the Saint Demetrios Parish of Warren, Ohio).

Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios Parish Vital Statistics

<u>Marriages</u>		<u>Baptisms</u>	<u>Marriages</u>		<u>Baptisms</u>	<u>Marriages</u>		<u>Baptisms</u>
			1963	9	51	2010	3	14
1917	0	0	1964	13	52	2011	6	15
1918	0	1	1965	9	30	2012	9	20
1919	0	2	1966	7	40	2013	14	17
1920	1	5	1967	15	51	2014	12	11
1921	5	3	1968	10	30	2015	3	11
1922	5	16	1969	8	35	2016	10	19
1923	6	26	1970	8	22	2017	6	13
1924	1	24	1971	12	29	2018	10	8
1925	1	28	1972	18	25	2019	5	10
1926	2	36	1973	13	27	2020	5	15
1927	1	39	1974	14	17	2021	3	14
1928	1	36	1975	12	19	2022	7	5
1929	5	44	1976	19	20	(through 8/15/22)		
1930	5	40	1977	16	24			
1931	4	27	1978	16	25			
1932	1	16	1979	16	19			
1933	2	17	1980	10	25			
1934	1	23	1981	12	25			
1935	5	33	1982	18	19			
1936	4	22	1983	19	27			
1937	3	20	1984	18	26			
1938	5	10	1985	14	17			
1939	4	18	1986	24	23			
1940	3	15	1987	15	31			
1941	3	17	1988	14	42			
1942	6	29	1989	11	22			
1943	1	26	1990	19	19			
1944	5	15	1991	22	28			
1945	4	17	1992	17	28			
1946	22	14	1993	10	31			
1947	10	27	1994	12	26			
1948	18	21	1995	15	33			
1949	9	21	1996	11	21			
1950	13	23	1997	10	19			
1951	5	14	1998	12	21			
1952	15	27	1999	15	25			
1953	18	42	2000	12	24			
1954	24	35	2001	10	16			
1955	19	33	2002	8	15			
1956	17	51	2003	8	28			
1957	16	49	2004	3	18			
1958	14	45	2005	9	18			
1959	15	40	2006	9	15			
1960	11	35	2007	9	14			
1961	9	37	2008	12	19			
1962	7	55	2009	6	12			

Greek Orthodox Hierarchy

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

His All Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch
(born Dimitrios Arthodontis on February 29, 1940, on the island of Imbros (now Gökçeada, Turkey);
elected on October 22, 1991 as the 270th Archbishop of Istanbul, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch
and enthroned on November 2, 1991 in the Patriarchal Cathedral in the Phanar)

Rum Patrikliği, Dr. Sadık Ahmet Cad

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Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

**His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros (Lambriniadis) of America, Most Honorable Exarch of the
Atlantic and Pacific Oceans**

(elected by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on May 11, 2019; enthroned on June 22, 2019)

10 East 79th Street

New York City, New York 10075-0106

(212) 570-3511.12

fax: **(212) 570-3592**

E-mail: archdiocese@goarch.org, or, www.goarch.org/goa/archbishop/

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Office of Registry

(providing parishioner documentation, such as baptismal records before September 1, 1979,
after which consult with local diocese)

8 East 79th Street

New York City, New York 10075-0106

(212) 570-3558

fax: **(212) 774-0477**

E-mail: registry@goarch.org

Web: registry.goarch.org

(Regarding iconograms, for sending messages in commemoration of feast days,
name days, and/or sacraments through the Archdiocese, proceed to: E-mail: www.iconograms.org)

The Orthodox Observer

8 East 79th Street

New York City, New York 10075-0106

(212) 570-3555

fax: **(212) 774-0237**

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Web: observer.goarch.org

Praxis

(quarterly magazine; submissions should be sent to:

His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos

Director, Department of Religious Education & Chief Secretary, Holy Eparchial Synod

Department of Religious Education

50 Goddard Avenue

Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

(646) 519-6300, or toll-free, **(800) 566-1088**

E-mail: religioused@goarch.org

Web: religioused.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh

**His Eminence Metropolitan Savas (Zembillas),
Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Pittsburgh**

(enthroned on December 8, 2011 at the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Pittsburgh)

5201 Ellsworth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15232
(412) 621-5529

fax: (412) 621-1522

E-mail: metropolis@pittsburgh.goarch.org

<http://pittsburgh.goarch.org>

info@pittsburgh.goarch.org

A Good Word (Λογον Αγαθον)

(Newsletter of The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh)

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Saint Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Church, Warren, Ohio

The Reverend Father Constantine Valantasis, Proistamenos

Father Demetri Constantine, Assistant Priest

Saint Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Church
429 High Street Northeast
(Post Office Box 4214)
Warren, Ohio 44481

(330) 394-9021

fax: (330) 394-9077

E-mail: church@stdemetrioswarren.org

Website: www.stdemetrioswarren.org

Church Secretary:

Arlene DiCesare

E-mail: arlene@stdemetrioswarren.org

home of Father Constantine and Presbytera Karen Valantasis:

6882 Chestnut Ridge Road
Hubbard, Ohio 44425-2909

Father Constantine's mobile: (330) 469-4386

Father Constantine's E-mail: cvalantasis@aol.com

home of Father Demetri and Presbytera Maria:

Parish Home:

1389 Stafford Drive Northeast
Warren, Ohio 44483-4357

(330) 372-2428

Father Demetri's mobile: (330) 519-2825

Saint Demetrios Hellenic Community Center and Banquet Hall

3223 Atlantic Street N.E.
Warren, OH 44483

(330) 372-5460

For Further Reading and Viewing:

Across the many decades, the Warren Saint Demetrios parish has presented several publications and videos pertaining to its in many ways uniquely celebrated history. These include:

The Strength They Left Behind : The Seventieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Parish in Warren, Ohio, 1917-1987, and of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Building of its Church on High Street, 1947-1987 ... being a history of the priests, officers and their boards, the Ladies Philoptochos Society, cantors and choir, religion and Greek schools, youth groups and senior citizens, the founding fathers and mothers, and others who have made the community of Warren Saint Demetrios, 1917-1987, by Larry James Gianakos; with a description of the Church of Warren Saint Demetrios by The Reverend Dennis Michelis. Astoria, New York, 1989; 772 pages.

This massive, thoroughly comprehensive history, bound exclusively in a limited edition by Frank Gebbia Quality Bookbinding in New Castle, Pennsylvania, in burgundy leatherette, Smyth-sewn, with burgundy watered silk endpapers, and with matching sewn-in silk ribbon marker, with hundreds of vintage photographs and a pull-out map of the Greek community in Warren, Ohio, 1917-1947, a tour of the Saint Demetrios edifice by its then veteran priest, Father Dennis Michelis, and original etchings by regional artist Patricia Molendyke, and with a parish social and event calendar, 1917-1987, was published through Hellenic Printing in Astoria, New York City, under the auspices of the parish with professional musician, entrepreneur and steadfast parishioner Dean Nikolaides conscientiously spearheading the two-year effort to arrive at its prohibitive cost, which at that time was perhaps the most elaborate history volume ever attempted by any Greek Orthodox community within the United States. The limited issue of volumes, each weighing well over six pounds, were acquired both by individuals and church organizations, with their respective names and titles stamped upon the front covers. One such copy remains within the Warren Saint Demetrios church office.

Commemorating further this joint anniversary was an attending brochure, and in the course of its two-year production, there were collected videotaped interviews conducted by Mr. Gianakos and each individually filmed by Mr. Nikolaides of most all of the surviving past parish presidents, current and past officers of the Ladies Philoptochos Society, the surviving church elders, present with the parish in its formative period of 1917 through 1920, and others pivotal to the further development of the parish across the decades.

The Hellenic Community Wedding Album, Warren, Ohio, 1920-1990 as edited by Larry James Gianakos; Lazarus George Bakeris, publication chairman. Warren, Ohio: bound in hard cover by Hal Mar Printing, 1991; 280 pages, with nine pages of preliminary material and a three-page formal Introduction.

This is perhaps the first effort by a Greek Orthodox parish community to meticulously document its marriage history. Opening with "The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony in the Greek Orthodox," the book then details in chronological order all marriages pertaining to the Saint Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Church in Warren, Ohio, including what are known of the post-ceremony reception halls. It also incorporates a like listing of Saint Demetrios parishioners having had weddings "Out-of-Town," "Marriages in Greece," and "Area Greek-American Marriages Not Performed at Warren Saint Demetrios." The following major section includes wedding photographs

For Further Reading and Viewing, continued:

from most of the parishioners so solicited, indicating each member of their bridal parties. A twenty-three page index of names concludes the volume.

The Warren Saint Demetrios Baptismal Record, 1917-1997; being a comprehensive guide to the baptismal records of some twenty-three hundred parishioners at the Saint Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Church in Warren, Ohio, as edited by Larry James Gianakos; with a three-page introductory and dedication and postscript, dated August 1, 1997. Privately printed by Paragon Printing (jointly owned and operated by parishioners George Culetsu and Savas Magiassos) in Warren, Ohio; 1997; 52 ledger-size (fourteen inches across) pages; later updated to include baptismal records through 2002.

Again, possibly the first effort of a Greek Orthodox parish community to meticulously document its baptismal records, which collectively forms a genealogical guide to the twenty-three hundred parishioners represented. Opening with an Introduction regarding the history of the Greek Orthodox marriages and baptisms performed in Warren, Ohio from 1917 through the summer of 1997, there follows "A Brief Explanation of the Rite of Baptism in the Greek Orthodox Church," a listing of the "Priests of the Parish of Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios and of Saint Paraskevi," with the bulk of the work consisting of parishioner names listed alphabetically and within those family names chronologically across generations, birthdays and baptismal dates, the officiating priests, their parents (including mother maiden surnames), and godparents for each of the twenty-three hundred parishioners so documented. The book was twice dedicated, first to Lazarus George Bakeris, passing at the age of sixty-seven on June 27, 1997, whose dream, like so many previous historical publications by way of the Warren Saint Demetrios parish, this was, the finances for it emanating from his surviving sons George and Spiros Bakeris; and then again, in the memory of young Panayioti Chrisovalantis (Peter Valentino) Culetsu, born to George Culetsu and the former Irene Magiassos on September 3, 1994, was found a victim of drowning on July 28, 1997. The dedications to their passings utilized the celebrated line of the vagabond poet Vachel Lindsay, noting that "*To live in mankind is far better than to live in a name.*"

The Saint Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Church Warren, Ohio Greek-American Community Directory, Trumbull County and Beyond; Seventh Edition, 2002-2003, being a compendium of some 3,800 past, current, and potentially future parishioners, their addresses and telephones, their professions and businesses; inclusive of baptismal and maiden names, with annotations for several entrepreneurial, celebrated, and generally historically significant figures, accumulated statistics on, and a concise history of, the parish they have shared, with a portfolio of photographs. Edited and with an Introduction by Larry James Gianakos. Spiral bound under the aegis of the Saint Demetrios Parish, Warren, Ohio by arrangement of Kinko's, 5414 Youngstown-Warren Road, Niles, Ohio; 2003; 180 pages. Dedicated to the "*loving memory of Katie Bournias, Warren Saint Demetrios Church Secretary, 1976, 2000, ever a vitalizing force, who was 'present at the creation' of the first of these directories.*" Earlier (the very first appeared as a cursory accounting of parishioners in 1959) and subsequent *Directories* were created under the aegis of Saint Demetrios church secretaries initiating under Anna Atsalis. From the *Introduction*:

"This *Trumbull County Greek-American Community Directory*, now embracing Greek-American denizens having little if any affiliation to the Warren, Ohio-based Saint Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Church parish, nevertheless carries on in the tradition of its parish sponsored *Community*

For Further Reading and Viewing, continued:

Directories. The first such *Directory* was issued in 1987, with others following in 1989, 1991, 1992, 1996, and 2000. The current edition supersedes not merely its predecessors in its comprehensiveness, but also in its legibility of design. It accounts for some 3,800 adult past, current, and potentially future parishioners, who have dispersed into all but two of the nation's fifty states, as well as Canada, Great Britain (including Ireland), Australia, Germany, and of course Greece. Included within this population are those who are turning eighteen years within the calendar year.

It is important to emphasize the fact that this being fully a *Trumbull County Greek-American Community Directory* and not merely a directory of Saint Demetrios parishioners and their families, there are significantly large numbers of persons whose connection to the parish is merely slight, or have not been Warren Saint Demetrios Church members for decades, or, as is obvious from the out-of-town directory, have not resided in Trumbull County for several decades. Still, included are those persons whose connection with the Warren parish has, in the opinion of the editor, some historical significance. This is certainly the case with surviving members of the family of Vasilios Comminos, the first president of Saint Demetrios in the time of its being chartered in 1920. Comminos was also the proprietor of the most exclusive restaurant here of its day, *The Liberty*, before a multitude of restaurateurs of Greek extraction were to compete for that distinction. To the already large pool of longtime relocated former parishioners there are, with the present edition, hundreds more besides."

The First Reunion of Members, Past and Present, of the Community of Warren Saint Demetrios, for the Benefit of The Saint Demetrios Memorial Library. Held at the parish's Community Center on July 5th through the 7th, 1991. With an attending photographic brochure, "A President's Message" from then parish president Lazarus George Bakeris and an Introduction from parish historian Larry James Gianakos. Softbound in Warren, Ohio, 1991; 112 pages, with a four-page sponsorship index. All of the events surrounding this first church reunion were videotaped under the auspices of Thamis Gianakos Video.

A Journey Home: The Life and Times of Archbishop Spyridon: A Narrative Concerning Those Affiliated with His Birth in Warren Ohio, and of His Early Youth in Martins Ferry and Steubenville, Ohio and in Tarpon Spring, Florida. An original film production, meant to coincide with the fanfare greeting His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon's return journey to Warren, Ohio, complete with comments from visiting state and federal officials, in a gala held at the Community Center of Warren Saint Demetrios, on the feast day of Saint Demetrios himself, October 26, 1996. The ensuing video had a script and narration by Larry James Gianakos, who interviewed all relevant parties, as filmed in the Warren, Ohio studios of professional videographer Michael Sparacino between 1996 and 1997. Together with former parish president Manuel Michelakis, at the request of His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon, this was later presented to him and screened with him in person at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese at 10 East 79th Street in New York City, where it was discussed that its wider distribution might serve as a future fund-raiser for various Greek Orthodox ministries.

Further augmenting this indeed "journey home" for His Eminence Spyridon was a parish-sponsored videotape of all the proceedings of his history-making visit to the Warren Saint Demetrios parish.

In the 2003 edition of the *Warren Saint Demetrios Parish* directory, there was rendered this account of then His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon, who was then, and yet remains, the only

For Further Reading and Viewing, continued:

American-born Archbishop of this hemisphere—all the more remarkable that his birth would have been in Warren, Ohio:

“If the ancient Greeks were “blessed by the gods” in establishing the foundations of Western democracy, philosophy, architecture, theatre, medicine, astronomy, geometry and other natural sciences, as well as athletic competition by way of the Olympic Games, then the Greek-Americans of Warren, Ohio were singularly blessed by their One True God to yield from their Saint Demetrios parish the first American-born Archbishop of America, His Eminence Spyridon, born George Papageorgiou in Warren on September 24, 1944.

The son of the Rhodian born physician Constantine Papageorgiou (“Dr. George” for short) and the American-born (her parents hailing from the island of Fourni) former Kalliope (“Kalli”) Tsourakis, the future Archbishop was the third born of their eventual six children. After some six years the family would leave Warren for Steubenville and after a few years there the family would live in Greece, among Dr. George’s relations in the area of Rhodes, the capital city of the island. Young George would return to the states to live among relatives and attend high school in Tarpon Springs, Florida. But soon he found himself adhering to a higher calling and returned to Greece to obtain a thorough European ecclesiastical and cultural education before making his mark in the vanguard of promoting Orthodoxy within heavily Roman Catholic Italy. After the retirement of Archbishop Iakovos, who for thirty-one years was a staple figure among Greek Orthodox parishes in the Western hemisphere, the former George Papageorgiou, now called Spyridon, was advanced to the highest of Greek Orthodox hierarchy within the United States. Appointed on July 30, 1996 by His All Holiness Bartholomew and the Holy See in the former Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey), his advancement was greeted by much fanfare throughout the United States, in Tarpon Springs, Florida and Steubenville, Ohio in particular, but no where more so than among the parishioners of Warren, Ohio’s Saint Demetrios.

Spyridon was formally enthroned at the Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral in New York City on September 21, 1996. Less than five weeks later, to help commemorate the annual feast day of Saint Demetrios, His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon returned to his Warren birthplace, and was properly feted in a splendid ceremony attended by then-Ohio Governor George Voinovich and several other federal, state and local officials, held at the Saint Demetrios Community Center on October 26. Three years later, however, internal ecclesiastical conflicts resulted in his resignation and replacement by the septuagenarian His Eminence Demetrios, who assumed the office of Archbishop on September 18, 1999.”

*The Memory of an Era: The Force of Destiny in the Life of Father Dennis Michelis, Presbyter Mary and the parish of Saint Demetrios in Warren, Ohio, 1955-2003, by Larry James Gianakos. An eleven-page brochure accompanying the commemorative video *The Memory of an Era: Father Dennis Michelis and Presbyter Mary, arriving September 23, 1955: A Celebration of Their Forty-Eight Years at Saint Demetrios Hellenic Orthodox Church in Warren, Ohio, November 23, 2003.* The Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios community’s elaborately designed farewell to their parish priest Father Dennis Michelis and Presbyter Mary, who presided over all parish functions for close to half a century. At the Community Center gala of November 23, 2003, which even featured the regional harpist Marian Mihos performing on an elevated ramp at the center of the hall, the DVD video, sponsored under the aegis of the parish, with a running narrative by Larry James Gianakos, through studios provided by then parish president C. Dino Theofilos, and as videotaped under the auspices of*

For Further Reading and Viewing, continued:

the local Cherished Moments, was premiered before the parish community and thence, with several other farewell gifts, presented to Father Dennis and Presbyteria.

Books by Father Dennis Michelis, Priest of the Warren, Ohio Saint Demetrios Parish, 1955-2003

An immensely erudite scholar, Father Dennis would donate the greater share of his proceeds from his three published works back into the coffers of Warren Saint Demetrios. In sequence of their publication, these were:

1) *The Champions of the Church* by Father Dennis Michelis (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986; issued in softcover only; 182 pages)

2) *Ten Greek Popes* by Father Dennis Michelis (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Light and Life Publishing Company, 1987; issued in softcover only; 65 pages)

3) *The Virgin Mary* by Father Dennis Michelis (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1994; issued in softcover only; 172 pages)

Regarding the Author

For the whole of his adult lifetime, Larry James Gianakos has been in the vanguard of historical research, while yet in his youth publishing a six-volume set collectively titled *Television Drama Series Programming: A Comprehensive Chronicle* (New York and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1978 through 1987), which would become a classic reference source and result in his being called “the premiere chronicler of video drama in the United States.” He wrote on the history of vintage video, for any number of national telecommunications journals, with particular emphasis on the very earliest period of the dramatic television, called “The Golden Age,” when television was largely presented live through New York City former radio studios, and all that yet exists of those productions is by way of kinescopes, or film taped from live television monitors. By way of his television appearances and lectures, when solicited by Sonny Fox Productions in Los Angeles in 1981 to help promote their series “The Golden Age of Television,” which restored nine classic kinescope productions, he began to document particularly rare and only newly surfaced teleplays on such legendary film stars as Paul Newman and Grace Kelly, later Princess Grace of Monaco.

He became a member of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Cleveland chapter, in 1991, and twice attended the prime time Emmy Award ceremonies of its sister society, The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, in 1993 and 1994. While seated between veteran actors Marvin Kaplan and Peggy McCay, who were then representing the acting divisions of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, or AFTRA, a conversation ensued in which both would propose a restoration of live theatre in the Warren area, in the manner of the area’s formerly celebrated Kenley Players. The result was the evolution of “Curtain Calls Productions,” having had a brief reign in the area from 1993-1996, with which he was also enjoined to the theatrical passion of current Saint Demetrios Parish Council Treasurer Michael Pontikos and the late Parish Council President Manuel Michelakis. Both Marvin Kaplan, and Peggy McCay, long a veteran of NBC’s longest reigning soap opera, *Days of Our Lives*, as well as Joseph Mascolo, Peggy’s co-star in *Days*, and the veteran Hollywood-based composer Richard Loring, became national members of the fledgling “Curtain Calls.”

In 1996, Larry became a member of “The Players,” one of the pre-eminent theatre organizations in the United States, established by the most celebrated American Shakespearean actor of his time, Edwin Booth, at his four-story brownstone residence at #16 Gramercy Park in Manhattan in 1888, in part to move past the grief caused by the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln by way of his younger also thespian brother, John Wilkes Booth, on April 14, 1865. Larry was elevated to the status of a Lifetime Member of the Players in 2012.

In 2008 he was commissioned by the Archive of the American Academy of Television Arts and Sciences via New York City’s Koch Productions, to compose the liner notes for the fifty-two page attending booklet to their premiere video release, on the live television era anthology drama “Studio One,” airing via CBS television from 1948 through 1958. The result was the multi-disk set *Studio One Anthology*, which the on-line *Huffington Post* would call “the best DVD boxed set of the year.” That same year he began to lecture on the live drama era through various Barnes and Noble bookstores, which carried the set. Mr. Gianakos then created his own Internet blog, entitled “The Resurrection of an Era,” commenting upon seminal dramatic teleplays, at <https://larryjamesgianakos.blogspot.com/>

Yet the singular passion of Larry’s lifetime has been the acquisition of, and systematic documentation of, Pulitzer Prize literature in particular, which is America’s highest literary distinction

Regarding the author, continued:

since the evolution of the prize through a benefaction to New York City's Columbia University by way of the bequest of the late newspaper mogul Joseph Pulitzer, first presented in June of 1917, for honored literature in 1916. In his volumes on television drama, Mr. Gianakos continuously included an appendix entitled "Pulitzer Prize Literature Adapted for American Television." Collecting his first First Edition author signed Pulitzer work when he was just nineteen, the collection swelled to epic proportions when in 2008 he enjoined with his boyhood friend, the regional Attorney Robert P. Safos, and like Larry, having had a long generational lineage to the Warren Saint Demetrios Parish. Today, the Gianakos-Safos Collection of Pulitzer Prize Literature, consisting of some 4,600 pieces of the most axiomatic copies of first printing Pulitzer Prize literature, almost all author signed and inscribed, for all six categories of Pulitzer literature, including fiction, plays, poetry, biographies, histories, and general nonfiction, in all states and issues, limited and series, for the full breadth of the award's history, from 1916 through 2022, is considered the finest in the world, and called by James Cahill, the Aliso Viejo, California-based bibliophile and antiquarian bookseller of Quintessential Rare Books--possibly the leading authority on the collecting of seminal first editions, including Pulitzer Prize literature--as being an "*Absolutely fabulous collection; that's all I can say, probably the best in the country... Truly, a work of art collection that museums don't even have.*" A website was established regarding the collection at www.gianakos-safos.com

With a design to initially prepare a narrative film on the extraordinary educational aspects for the broader world in having assembled this now definitive collection, which also includes a staggering 500,000 images, each of which has been meticulously documented, the collection, through another parish affiliation, would come to the attention of the Bristol, England based MarbleMen productions, consisting of the highly cultivated London-born Nikkos J. Frangos and his cousin and mentor George T. Lemos, the heirs to Greek shipping magnates, with Nikkos having been raised in the Belgravia, London townhouse of Lord Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh--which is now a London landmark.

Larry would come to call Mr. Frangos a "Renaissance Man," owing to his astonishing life as a globe-trotting adventurer, actor, poet, painter, designer, athlete, race-car enthusiast and innovative entrepreneur, and likewise label Mr. Lemos as an "Artist-Soul." In a meeting in Manhattan in January of 2014, Mr. Frangos would label the collection as having truly held "the collected wisdom" for the greater world. Thus inspired, and aware that the centenary year of the Pulitzer Prizes was fast approaching, his MarbleMen productions would put up the necessary capital to executive produce the documentary *The Pulitzer at 100*, which would be directed and produced by Oscar and Emmy-winner Kirk Smon, in conjunction with his brother Chevalier Ron Simon, the longtime television curator of Manhattan's Paley Center for Media, whom Larry had known since he had first published his television chronicles in the late 1970s.

First screened theatrically in Manhattan in 2017, and later released nationally via the STARZ cable network, *The Pulitzer at 100*, featuring readings and interviews with several Pulitzer Prize laureates, and such Hollywood Oscar winners as Dame Helen Mirren, Natalie Portman, and celebrated director Martin Scorsese, remains the only feature-length documentary on the centenary celebration of America's most esteemed literary honor. Its website, which also notes the books of The Gianakos-Safos Collection, is at www.thepulitzerat100.com

In 2015, Larry had the honor to present a testimonial to veteran actress Peggy McCay, affiliated with the short-lived regional Curtain Calls, at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles. Peggy had assembled others of her regular cast from *Days of Our Lives*, including the also Curtain Calls affiliated

Regarding the author, continued:

Joseph Mascolo, and John Aniston, the Cretan-born veteran actor who had long portrayed Victor Kiriakis, the Greek entrepreneur who was the former love interest with Peggy's character Caroline Brady, and who is better known these days as the father of the Hollywood A-lister Jennifer Aniston. Larry would hear from the current also actress wife of Mr. Aniston himself, of just how much the Greek Orthodox parish of Saint Nicholas in Los Angeles had already much missed our very own Father Constantine Valantasis.

All of which brings together the history of Warren Saint Demetrios and Larry's personal history—and which can only mean that there is something truly magical about anyone having been a parishioner of Warren Saint Demetrios!

[This work could not have been achieved without the relentless assistance of parish secretary Arlene DiCesare, and the unbridled enthusiasm of Fathers Constantine and Demetri, the members of Parish Council, and of The Centenary Committee.]