Service of Consecration

October 16, 1977

Following the Orthros, the Consecration Service began with three processions around the church. This sets the church as a sacred area to unite us with the Lord and to connect the earthly and heavenly worlds.

His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos stopped before the main entrance of the church placing the paten with the Holy Relics on the table and the scripture text was read. Representing Christ, His Eminence knocked on the door three times and began a symbolic dialogue with an angel asking that the church doors be opened and that he be admitted into Heaven. The doors were unlocked and His Eminence entered with the Holy Relics followed by the clergy, choir and congregation.

On entering the Sanctuary, His Eminence poured Holy Chrism on the Holy Relics. This symbolized the unity of the Martyrs with Christ, the Anointed One, who gave the fullness of Grace to his Martyrs and ultimately to us. The Consecration of a church or Baptism of the Altar Table, represents the center of all Sacraments. The Holy Relics, along with the names of the parishioners, were placed into a cavity in the Altar Table which represents the tomb of Christ. To seal it permanently, His Eminence poured wax mastic which included myrrh, incense resin and laudanum over it. This was a binding and unifying agent representing the external bond between Christ and His Holy Martyrs.

The Holy Relics of St. Anastasia, the Healer, St. Iakovos, the Ascetic, St. Loginos, the Centurion and Ascetic, were encased in a silver relic case and deposited inside the prepared cavity of the Altar Table. The opening was sealed to keep them there in perpetuity and thus linking the Church Triumphant (souls reposing in heaven) and the Church Militant (the faithful Orthodox Christians). These Saints lived and martyred in and around Thessalonika, Greece where our Patron Saint Demetrios martyred.

The Savanon, a white linen protective garment, was worn over His Eminence's vestments. The washing of the Altar Table represents the Baptism of our Lord. His Eminence poured water on the Altar three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. (After the service the Savanon is cut into small pieces as an amulet and they are given to the congregation.)

The Altar was anointed with Rose Water, symbolizing the sweet-smelling fragrances that anointed the Lord's body before His burial. Then Chrismation Oil was used to invoke the Holy Spirit in the act of Chrismation. The table was then dried with the Antimencia by the priests. Four icons of the Evangelists were fastened with mastic on the four corners of the Altar Table.

The altar was first covered with a white linen shroud, the Katasarkion, and tied with a cord. This represented the Lord's burial shroud. Just as His shroud is for all times, so is the shroud on the Altar Table. A brighter, more elaborate cloth, the Altar Cloth, was placed over the shroud. This symbolized the Lord's glorious and divine light. Next, the Antimensia and the Book of Gospels are set on the Table, representing the Teaching Ministry of our Lord. The last appointment to be placed on the Altar was the Tabernacle, representing the presence of Christ in the Church, for it contains the reserved Holy Communion.
The Archbishop then anointed the nave of the Church and the Icons in the sign of the cross with Chrismation Oil symbolizing the sanctification of all humanity by Christ's grace.

His Eminence invited the congregation to participate in the offering of light to the Vigil Lamp by placing oil into the lamp and making an offering. The Vigil Lamp was placed near the Tabernacle, never to be extinguished. This Eternal Light represents the ever-present light that Christ brought into the world. The Consecration service was followed by the Divine Liturgy.

The Church has now been baptized, confirmed, anointed, sanctified, consecrated and dedicated to God for eternal use as an Orthodox Christian House of Worship.

Symeon of Salonica states: "The entire Church is anointed, symbolizing the sanctification of all Humanity by God's Grace."

Anthony Stratis carries the banner, followed by Peter Athas, John Condorodis.

Clergy exit the church. Fr. John Athas is in the center.

Archbishop Iacovos exits the church.

Archbishop followed by the Parish Council and the congregation.

Service of Consecration

Archbishop followed by the Parish Council and the congregation.

Lead altar boys circling back east to the front of the church.

Archbishop proceeds north.

Procession continues east.

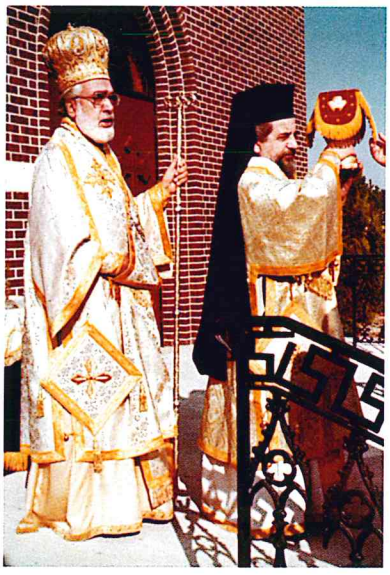
Service of Consecration

Clergy coming east.

Procession having circled the church proceeds.

Archbishop followed by the Mosko Paspalakis, Theodore Kypreos, George Karpodinis and the congregation.

Archbishop, Theodore Kypreos, barely showing George Saites, George Karpodinis, Michael Forest, and Dr. James Carratt followed by the congregation.



Bishops continue the service from the entrance of the church.

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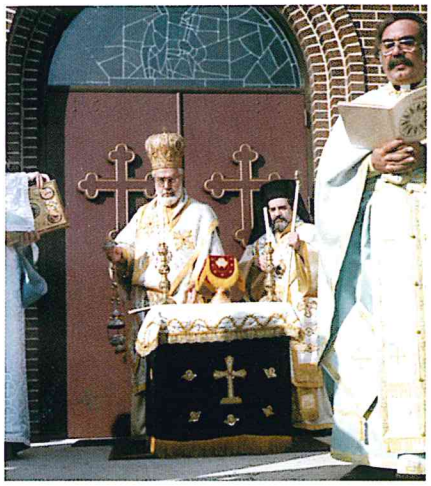
Clergy Assist.

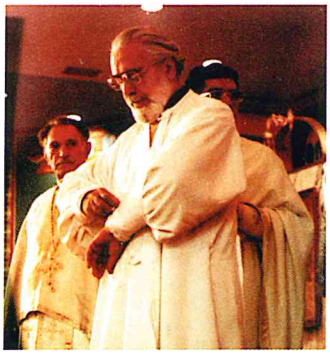
His Eminence censes the Holy Table and the Holy Gifts.



Hymns chanted.

His Eminence reads from the Holy Gospel shown with Fr. George Papadeas and other priests.

The Archbishop knocks on the church doors three times with his pastoral staff and shouts, "Open, open the gates and let them remain open forever and let the King of Glory enter."



His Eminence dresses in the Savanan or shroud to begin the consecration of the Holy Altar.

His Eminence pours hot wax to seal the Holy Relics in the Altar.

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Icons of the four Evangelists are pasted on the corners of the Altar.

Each icon receives a blessing.

The Altar is blessed.

St. Demetrios icon in the narthex is blessed.

The church is blessed.

Services having concluded, President Theodore Kypreos receives the blessing for the congregation. Behind the Archbishop stands Fr. Athas , Fr. Geotes and Fr. Papadeas - the three priests that most recently served St. Demetrios.

His Eminence, dressed in his vestments again, conducts the Liturgy.

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Services having concluded, the banquet is about to begin. Mosko Paspalakis, who had the honor of opening the doors of the church and who is a Parish Council member, Michael J. Forest, master of ceremonies, Archbishop Iacovos, Fr. George Papadeas.

Fr. George, His Eminence and Theodore Kypreos.

Seated:
Fr. George, His Eminence Archbishop Iacovos, Presvytera Bess Papadeas having been honored with the Grand Cross of the Holy Order of the Holy Sepulcher.
Standing:
Michael J. Forest, Dr. James A. Carratt, His Grace Bishop Philotheos of Meloa, Cantor George Moutsopoulos, His Grace Bishop Methodios of Boston and Theodore Kypreos having been honored with the title of Archon Depoutatos.

Memories from our former priest, Fr. John Athas.

Remarks of Master of Ceremonies, Michael J. Forest.

Front row: Philoptochos President Angie Constant, our former priest, Fr. Geotes, Bishop and Parish Council member Chris Theos.

Head altar boy Anthony Stratis (later ordained a priest at St. Demetrios).

Altar boy Johhny Spirides carrying St. Barbara's banner followed by Fr. Geotes