

**TO MARK
OUR PARISH'S SILVER JUBILEE
THE 25th ANNIVERSARY:**

1981-2006

A CHRONOLOGY OF LOVE IN ACTION

By
REV. DR. IRENEU IOAN CRACIUN
PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

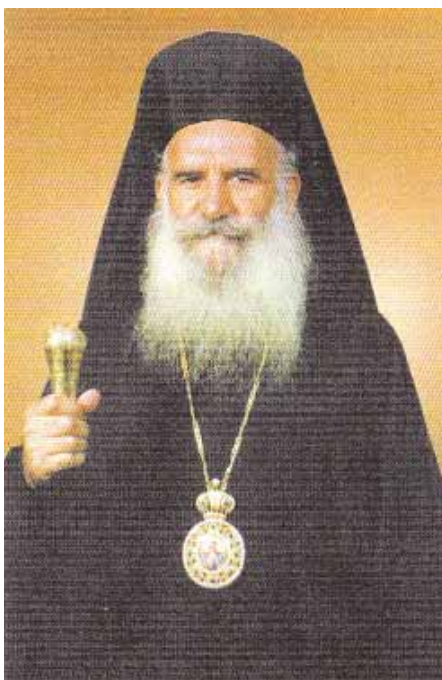
An Account based on our
Annual Reports to the Archdiocese





Dedication,

This Anniversary Account is dedicated to His All-Holiness
✙ Bartholomeos, our Father-in-Christ,
Archbishop of New Rome-
Constantinople and Ecumenical
Patriarch whose Fatherly love for all of
us in Ireland, irrespective of nationality,
was palpable during His Pontifical and
Historical Visit to our humble Sacred
Church on the ever memorable 31st
January 2005.



The story presented here was written with Faith in
the Living God, over a quarter of a century:
1981-2006, by the Parish Clergy and the People of
God: Greek Orthodox together with Orthodox of
many nationalities, all belonging to the Archdiocese
of Thyateira, acknowledging
His Eminence Archbishop ✙ Gregorios as their
Archbishop, and pledging their loyalty to the
Ecumenical Throne, our Mother Church of
Eternal Constantinople.



The First Sacred Orthodox Church in Ireland

Three inseparable constitutive elements are needed in order to establish an ecclesial community called to bear witness to Christ, Crucified and Risen from the dead, and to confess the Holy Orthodox Faith:

1. **The continuity of the Divine Liturgy** (Theia Litourghia) by resident Clergy appointed by the local Bishop to lead, teach and sanctify
2. **The People of God** (o Laos tou Theou) in
3. **The House of God** (o Oikos tou Theou)

In Ireland, the coming together of these three elements, with specific characteristics, happened by the mercy of God exactly 25 years ago, on the ever-memorable 5th Sunday of Easter, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, 24th May 1981.

**Glory be to our Tri-Une God
for our Silver Jubilee of continuous
Orthodox witness on Irish soil !**

24th May 1981 - 24th May 2006

With all due consideration, it is beyond the scope of this study to refer to the pre-1981 Orthodox presence in Ireland which, in the absence of written materials in our own Parish Office, may be documented at the Archdiocese in London.



1. Continuity of the Divine Liturgy by serving Parish Clergy

During the past 25 years there have been four serving resident Clergy:



Fr. Irineu Ilie,
First Serving Priest,
(Romanian)
1981-1982
(+1988)



Fr. Teofil Panait,
First Deacon,
(Romanian)
1981-1982
(+1996)



**Fr. Irineu Ioan
Craciun,**
Priest in charge
(Romanian - Irish)
1981-



**Fr. Tom Irenaeus
Basil Carroll,**
Second Deacon,
(Irish)
2004-

Our concelebrant brothers, Fr. Irineu and Fr. Teofil, have struggled together with us, in the very beginning, to establish the Church in Ireland which they served, for one year, with an exemplary dedication.

Both of them have since departed to the Lord.

Let Their Memory Be Eternal !

Fr. Tom's ordination to the diaconate in 2004 rooted the Church in Irish soil. He is the first Irish person from the Republic of Ireland to be ordained in the Orthodox Church.

He was received in the Orthodox Church on Palm Sunday 1986, has since completed his theological training in Ireland and he is our spiritual son in Holy Confession.

His ordination to the Diaconate had been requested for 18 years: 1986-2004.

At the present, in addition to his liturgical and pastoral duties Fr. Tom acts as the Archdiocese's representative to the Irish Council of Churches (based in Belfast), as our Parish's representative to the Dublin Council of Churches as well as to most of Ecumenical, Religious and Social events taking place in the Irish capital and elsewhere.

Given the volume of work in our Parish, for the past two years (since 2004) I have been requesting the Archbishop to ordain Fr. Tom to the Priesthood which would enhance even further his important contribution to the Church.



Having completed my theological education in Romania at the Seminary in Cluj (1969-1974) and at the Faculty of Theology in Sibiu (1975-1979) with *Magna cum Laude*, I was ordained Deacon (16th October 1979) and Priest (21st November 1979) by the Ever Memorable Archbishop of Cluj, ✙ Teofil Herineanu (+1992)

Upon my own Archbishop's recommendation and with Patriarchal Blessing, I came to Ireland as a post-graduate Theology student on 5th August 1981. Three years later, in 1984, I obtained my STL Degree in Theology followed in 1987 by my Doctorate, being the first Orthodox candidate to have such an Academic Title conferred upon by the Pontifical University of Maynooth.



It was in this capacity that the Archbishop of Thyateira, ✙ Methodios Fouyas, asked me to take charge of the newly established Parish in Dublin. Giving him my consent, Archbishop Methodios travelled to Bucharest seeking Episcopal Blessing for me from the Patriarch of Romania, ✙ Iustin Moisescu of Blessed Memory. It was on the basis of this Blessing (issued at the Patriarchate in Bucharest and dated 31st December 1981) that I served in Dublin, as a Priest of the Romanian Patriarchate, until 19th February 1998 when, upon advice, I submitted to the Archdiocese of Thyateira my Canonical card in view of my priestly transfer from the Romanian Patriarchate to the Archdiocese of Thyateira.

Being appointed Parish Priest by Archbishop Methodios in 1981, in parallel to my academic studies, and later academic work: teaching, lecturing and publishing. I assumed the responsibility of a formidable task: the organisation of the first Orthodox Community in Ireland and the building of the first Orthodox Church on Irish soil since the Great Schism of 1054. This task was made possible only by the great power of God.

On this anniversary moment, I would like to offer thanks to the Lord:

- for 27 years of Priesthood, 25 of which I have served in Dublin,
- for 25 years of sanctifying, teaching and leading the People of God in Ireland unto the path of salvation,

- for well over one thousand Christenings of children and adult people who have become communicant members of the Church by Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion. All children and adult people of many nationalities baptised in our Sacred Church hold Greek Orthodox Baptismal Certificates issued by the Archdiocese of Thyateira,





- for many Weddings of couples united - in Christ - for life. Every couple married in our Sacred Church holds a Greek Orthodox Marriage Certificate issued by the Archdiocese of Thyateira,



- for receptions of converts, men and women who have embraced Holy Orthodoxy coming from heterodox confessions,

- for funerals of children, men and women of all ages who departed to the Lord in the hope of Resurrection,



- for the Sacrament of Holy Confession whereby many, very many devout people received forgiveness, inner healing and spiritual direction in life,

- for all our children, the future of our Parish, who every Sunday morning are being instructed in the Orthodox Faith by our dedicated Sunday School teachers.



- for 25 years of unbroken continuity in proclaiming the Paschal Mystery; the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, the very foundation of our Faith and in offering the Divine Liturgy, the very heart of the Church life, in spite of innumerable trials and humiliations experienced along the way.

For most of these 25 years I served the Divine Liturgy as the only Orthodox Priest in the whole country, an immense responsibility, as the People of God were gathering for this one Divine Liturgy coming from the four corners of Ireland.



During the entire period of 25 years of service, priority was given to Greek needs by celebrating, every Sunday, the Divine Liturgy mostly in Greek. Equally, the spiritual needs of non-Greek people needed to be taken into consideration and thus, with Episcopal Blessing, two fundamental parts in the Greek Liturgy: the Creed and the Our Father have always been repeated in the languages of all non-Greek people present in Church.

During the past few years, an ever-increasing spiritual need on the ground prompted an Episcopal Blessing for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in some other languages, and at times different than the main Sunday Greek Liturgy. Thus, in order to fulfil our pastoral responsibilities, the Divine Liturgy is being also celebrated in English, Romanian, Russian (Old Slavonic), Serbian, Georgian and occasionally in Arabic.

Any spiritual person would immediately grasp here the joy of continued Pentecost in our midst upon seeing how so many people are getting closer to God by praying in their own languages while offering the Undivided Trinity their sacrifice of Orthodox Doxology.

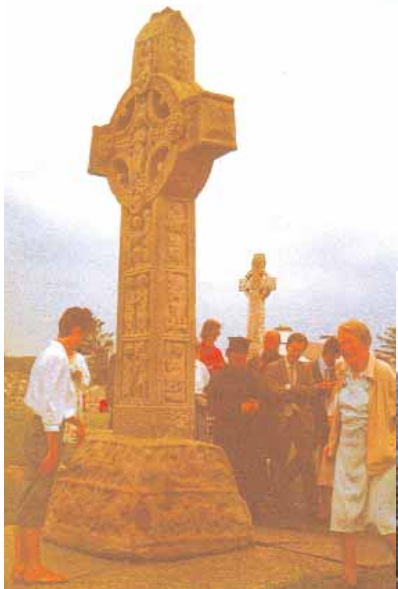




Thus, while addressing the variety of spiritual needs existing at ethnic level we have also safe-guarded the unity of our Parish Community by all of us confessing the same Holy Orthodox Faith, by gathering around one and the same Altar, by commemorating one and same Bishop i.e. - His Eminence Archbishop ✙ Grigorios of Thyateira - and by being the Children of Faith of our Mother Church of Constantinople.

Between 1981-1994 the Divine Liturgy was offered on Altars just blessed for temporary use in various locations in Dublin as well as in our private Chapels across Ireland.

In one occasion the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the historical Christ-Church Anglican Cathedral in Dublin.



In order to connect with 'the Land of Saints' of the ancient Irish Celtic Church, the Divine Liturgy was also celebrated in two of the holiest monastic sites of Ireland: at the Great Lavra of St.Ciaran (+549) Abbot of Clonmacnois (in 1988)



and at the Great Lavra of St. Kevin (+612) Abbot of Glendalough (in 1989 and 1990).

In addition, as Priest in charge I had the privilege to attend main Ecumenical ceremonies and Irish National events culminating in great honour of granting a Liturgical Blessing at the inauguration of the President of Ireland, H.E. Mary MacAleese, in 2004.

Undoubtedly, it is such tremendous continuity of the Divine Liturgy and of the Liturgical and Sacramental life in all its magnificent complexity and beauty over a quarter of a century that constitutes the highest accomplishment of our ministry for which we humbly give Thanks to the Lord.





In appreciation of my Liturgical and Pastoral work I have gratefully received:

- **The Golden Cross**, bestowed on me by His Grace Bishop ✙ Niphon, an Emissary of the Patriarch of Antioch to the Patriarch of Moscow (in 1995)
- **The Jewelled Cross**, bestowed on me by His Eminence Metropolitan ✙ Kirill of Kaliningrad and Smolensk (in 2001). And the highest honour:
- **The Cross of our Mother Church of Constantinople** bestowed on me by His All-Holiness ✙ Bartholomeos Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, during His ever memorable Pontifical Visit to our Sacred Church, on 31st January 2005



2. The People of God **(o Laos tou Theou)**

The first Orthodox Parish in Ireland, to which I was appointed by Archbishop Methodios as Parish Priest in 1981, is a multi-ethnic - Pan-Orthodox Parish - by birth.

My own appointment, as well as the multi-ethnic composition of the first Parish Council - dully elected and endorsed by Archbishop Methodios prior to my arrival to Ireland -, bear witness to this fact.



The First Parish Council

Members:

(Elected in 1981 and endorsed by Archbishop Methodios)

1. Phoebe Moussoulides (Cypriot) President;
2. Frixos Joannides (Cypriot) Deputy-President;
3. Captain Michael Popov (Russian) Vice-president;
4. Rory McEoghain (Irish) Treasurer;
5. Tino Nicholas (English) Secretary;
6. Prof. Petros Florides (Cypriot)
7. John Grant (Scottish)
8. Costas Gamouras (Greek)
9. Gregory Strachan (Scottish)



Given the jurisdictional fragmentation on ethnic considerations of Orthodox witness in Western Europe, Archbishop '✙'Methodios' idea of creating - in Ireland -

- one Orthodox Community
 - out of many small ethnic groups,
 - brought together in the unity of the Orthodox Faith and
 - placed canonically under the jurisdiction of the Mother Church of Constantinople,
- was both original and canonical from a theological point of view.

Original, because nowhere else in the Western world would 16 ethnic groups come together to form one community of Faith, and

Canonical, because all Orthodox outside the boundary of their own countries should belong - *de iure* - to the Mother Church of Constantinople.

Archbishop Methodios' idea appealed to me in my theological formation and with my youthful enthusiasm of 25 years ago I started to work in the direction of its implementation, but without spectacular results.



Despite innumerable difficulties, from 1981 to 2000 we managed to have in Ireland:

- one Orthodox Community,
- united around one Altar,
- in the celebration of one Divine Liturgy,
- by one serving Priest
- under one canonical jurisdiction, that of the Mother Church.

Naturally, the first two ethnic groups in our Parish make up were

the Greeks and the Greek Cypriots. They had been present in Ireland



for decades prior to the opening of the Church availing occasionally of the Divine Services either by visiting priests or briefly, in the 70's, by two local Russian priests.

I would like to note, with respect, that the Greek men and women of that first generation (of whom incredibly few are still living in Ireland) have impressed me deeply by their character, loyalty to the Church, and healthy patriotism. Names such as Phivos and Hera Moussoulides (First President and Ctitor),

(✙) Athina Goulandris, Costas Gamouras, Zoe and Costas Hagianastasiou, (to mention only some names of those who no longer live in Ireland) are forever engraved in my heart.

From the outset we celebrated:

- all five Greek National Days: 25th. March, 28th October, 1st. April, 20th. July and 1st. October, have been celebrated in Church,
- Heretismi are chanted according to Greek custom on the first five Fridays during Great Lent,
- the Paraklesis is celebrated during Dekapenteavgustou, and
- Vasilopitta is always cut on New Year's Day while
- every Sunday morning the main Divine Liturgy is celebrated mostly in Greek.



The Serbian ethnic group was present in our Parish from the beginning, our first Christening, in November 1981, being that of a Serbian boy. The Serbian ethnic group remained with us until the opening of the Russian Church in 2000 where most of them are now attending. At Easter this year (2006) a Serbian Parish was born in the city to be served by a visiting Serbian priest coming from England and celebrating occasionally in our Church, in Serbian, with Episcopal Blessing.

Some Serbs are still attending regularly our Church.

The Russian ethnic group were also with us from the very beginning which explains why a Russian man was appointed as vice-president of our first Parish Council in 1981. These were mostly old Russians who left Russia at the time of the Bolshevik revolution. The Russian presence continued in our church until 2000 when



the Russian Parish was formed and placed directly under Moscow (not under the Russian Diocese of Sourosh based in London). In addition, there are Russians belonging to the Russian Church in exile who also come to us, with a priest coming from London to celebrate for them, in Russian, using our Church. This explains the rare privilege of receiving in our Church, from time to time, the visit of the Kursk Holy Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, highly loved by our parishioners.

In addition from the beginning among the members of our Parish were counted a number of converts to Orthodoxy from a Western background: **Irish, Scottish, English, American, French, and Maltese**. It is to be appreciated the effort made by the good converts to radically change their way of life in order to embrace, existentially, Holy Orthodoxy!

Later, other faithful joined our Parish coming from the middle-East: **the Lebanese and Palestinian ethnic groups**. The Palestinians coming to us from the Holy Land itself are to this day a constant presence in our Church which explains the fact that our Parish Council has a Palestinian vice-president.

Following the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, many easterners of diverse ethnic background came to Ireland in unexpected large numbers mostly for economic reasons. Thus in the 90's to the already mentioned ethnic groups the following were added: **the Romanian, Bulgarian, Estonian, and Georgian ethnic groups**.

During the past 10 years the Romanians in our Parish have shown an exemplary practice of the Faith and have made an outstanding contribution to our Church life from every point of view. To keep things in perspective we need to say that only a relatively small number of Romanians come to our Church, (mostly my spiritual children in the Sacrament of Holy Confession) while the vast majority of Romanians are being organised in two very large and well-to-do Parishes: one in Dublin 4 and one in Cork, both being placed under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Romania.



With its 16 different ethnic groups - present at one time or another - and having all four distinct Eastern Orthodox cultural backgrounds represented:

1. Greek/Cypriot,
2. Slavic,
3. Arabic and
4. Romanian,

plus a representative selection of Western converts to Orthodoxy, our Parish - small in size as it is - is indeed a microcosm of Orthodoxy planted on Irish soil, loyal to the Mother Church of Constantinople.



But Unity is always difficult especially when considerations other than Faith-related ones are at work.

Internally, the past 25 years have been marked, at times, by inter-ethnic tension at the expense of liturgical, pastoral and missionary progress while externally, the creation of other Orthodox Parishes -a positive fact in itself since it takes care of the massive influx of Orthodox people to this country-has brought to Ireland a jurisdictional fragmentation of Orthodox witness unknown here prior to the year 2000.

Concretely, if between 1981-2000 we commemorated *one* Orthodox Bishop 'of Ireland' i.e. the Archbishop of Thyateira, now there are *seven* Orthodox Bishops who are being commemorated simultaneously in Ireland none of whom is actually residing here.

At present, our numerically small Parish Community is retaining its original multi-ethnic composition which is vitally important for its survival.

In conclusion, at Community level during the past 25 years we managed to create ***one Pastoral Parish Community*** of people attending the Liturgy officiated by Clergy appointed by the Archbishop of Thyateira, who follow the Thyateira Constitution and ought to elect a Parish Council for running its administration.

What we have not managed to do was to convert this existing, multi-ethnic Pastoral Parish Community into ***one Eucharistic Body of Prayer***, above ethnic borders and language considerations.

This means that our initial vision of ***one Community of Faith*** by people actually participating in the Liturgy just as the Liturgy says "with one mouth and one heart" and participating in the Sacraments of the Church, especially Holy Confession which gives the pulse of lived Orthodoxy, has still to be fulfilled. Among the contributing factors one may consider our inability, as Orthodox, to deal with the 'catholicity' of our own Faith as well as the significant differences in the manner of worship that exist at the level of different Orthodox ethnic groups.

Instead, in the recent years we have been truly blessed with the successful creating of Communities of Faith at the level of nearly every ethnic group within our one Pastoral Parish Community for which we give Glory to God in Trinity.



3. The House of God (o Oikos tou Theou)

1981-1993: The homeless Years

During that time, at a high cost of sacrifice, the uninterrupted Divine Liturgy was celebrated in offered or rented accommodation, largely unsuitable and, many a time, in humiliating circumstances.

That was:

- a time in which the Authorities hardly took any notice of our Orthodox presence (seen as a temporary novelty for Ireland)
- a time in which we literally struggled to survive given our more that modest human and material resources
- a time of difficult economic climate in Ireland
- a time of deeply sharing in the Cross of Christ, an experience which has marked us profoundly

May God bestow His blessings upon all those who heeded our cry for help in our hour of desperate need (1981-1993) and offered us shelter or, at least, allowed for an affordable rent at the following addresses:

1. St Mary's Church
Mary Street, Dublin 1
(1981-1986)



2. Trinity College Chapel
City Centre
(Easter 1986)

3. Gonzaga College Chapel
Ranelagh, Dublin 6
(May-Nov. 1986)

4. The 'Tin' Church
Mountpleasant, Ranelagh, Dublin 6
(1986- March 1994)





In addition, until the year 2000 we also had four Chapels strategically located across Ireland and housed in the homes of our parishioners where the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at least on the Chapel's Dedication day for our parishioners living there and friends:

1. The Chapel of St. John the Baptist: 1984 - 2000

Located in Artane, Dublin North

Dedication day: 7/1 & 29/8

2. The Chapel of the Life-Giving Spring: 1988 - 2000

Located in central Ireland, Portarlinton, Co. Laoish

Dedication day: Bright Friday

3. The Chapel of St. Nicholas: 1990 - 2000

Located in the South of Ireland, Monkstown, Cork

Dedication day: 6/12 & 9/5

4. The Chapel of St George: 1999 - 2000

Located in the North of Ireland, Limavady, Co Derry

Dedication day: 23/4 & 3/11

These Chapels - opened in difficult times and with a great deal of sacrifice - were closed in 2000 when new Orthodox parishes, under different jurisdictions, came into existence across Ireland and rendered their presence as unnecessary.

1994-2006: The first Sacred Orthodox Church in Ireland

The present Church property at 46, Arbour Hill, Dublin 7, was bought for the sum of (Irish) £ 80,550-00 on 12th November, 1993.

Among a group of parishioners who were directly involved in this process the following people made an outstanding contribution:

Dimitris Kotsonouris, Panos Levantis and Prof. Petros Florides.

£ 38,780-00 of this sum was - directly and immediately - paid by the Parish, from its own Church Building Fund.

This fund was initiated in 1986 by the then President of the Parish Council, Frixos Joannides, an exemplary personality in the life of the Parish for the entire period of 25 years. This Fund summed up all our Parish savings of the previous 12 years of financial austerity (1981-1993), as well as all donations received by us in response to our several Appeals made in connection with the Fund. Substantial donations in this Fund were gratefully received from: Ms. Christina Goulandris (Dublin), Andrew David (Coca Cola - London) The Leventis Foundation (London) and Archbishop ☩ Chrysostomos of Cyprus.



The needed additional sum of IR£ 42, 270-00 was borrowed from the Bank of Greece in London. The borrowed sum was paid back, in full, in four years (1994-1998) the monthly mortgage repayments being covered by Standing Orders from devout parishioners as also by contributions from the Greek Embassy in Dublin.

(N.B. My Annual Reports to the Archdiocese contain the complete Lists of all Names of Donors & their gratefully accepted contributions. The originals of these Annual Reports are now in London with copies being kept in our Parish Office where they may be viewed on request)

1994: From a factory to the first Orthodox Church in Dublin, its Consecration

As all our Parish money went into buying the property, the first thing that was needed to do was to raise money for the re-construction of the factory building into an Orthodox Church and for providing it with all that was needed for Liturgical use in view of its Consecration.



The cost of re-constructing the former factory into the present Sacred Church was IR£ 8, 800 (a large sum of money for that time).

The construction work undertaken by the Cove Construction Ltd., Dublin included:

- building the separating wall between the Church and Parish room

at the back.

- construction of the Sanctuary apse and of the central nave in the Naos (consisting of seven arches and four Byzantine-type columns)
- building the Sanctuary platform level
- building the Sanctuary niche
- re-opening the Sanctuary apse window
- break openings for 2 new doors, supply and fit new exterior doors and frames
- building an arch at the entrance to the inner Narthex
- re-plastering of most of the Church walls, including the removal of the massive factory fire-place
- painting the whole Church and Parish Office



- fixing the roof of the Church
- fixing the iron gates at the Church's main entrance.

The payment of IR£8,800 was made to the **Cove Building Ltd.** - immediately and directly - from the specific, individual donations received in response to appeals addressed to all parishioners, as well as to all Dublin based Church Leaders and Friends of the Parish both here and abroad.

The largest contribution of more than half of the cost came very kindly from the RC Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland ✠Desmond, Cardinal Connor.

Other donations were received from:

Archbishop ✠Gregorios of Thyateira,
John & Celia Grant (Ireland),
Nicholas Koumarianos (Greece)
Rosete Yanny (Ireland),
Orthodox Fellowship of St. John the Baptist (UK)
Georgos Gouras (Greece)
Jenny Gerrard (UK) and
Paul Duffy (Ireland)

Our Church interior is modelled on the 14th Century Byzantine Church of the Dormition in Kalambaka, at the foot of Holy Meteora in Thessaly and the construction work was completed by the Cove Company in a record time of only two months: February-March 1994.



The most important object, **The Holy Altar**, was modelled on a 4th C. Altar found in the Byzantine Museum in Athens. It was designed in the best Byzantine Tradition by Irish Sculptor Chrystopher Ryan and cut in lime-stone by Hughes Sculptors Ltd. in Carlow. The Altar top, one tonne in weight, rests upon five lime-stone columns planted on a concrete base reaching in depth the ground level. The base is resting at ground level upon a Cross made of bricks which encloses also a metallic box containing Holy Relics of Our Holy Father Chariton the

Confessor (Feast Day 28th September) (brought from Athos by our treasurer of Blessed Memory, John Grant). The box also contains prayer lists (some 13000 names) received at the Sanctuary from our devout parishioners, as well as written information about our Sacred Church and Parish.

The Altar, donated by Ioan & Aurelia Craciun (Romania), was fixed in place on 26th. February, 1994





The same year we gratefully received the following donations:

Two gas heaters, two electric heaters and much needed **Office equipment** donated by Rev. Fr. Abbot Colmcille of Mount St Joseph Abbey, Roscrea, (Ireland)



The Campanarion, housing our two Sacred Bells dedicated to the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, was built opposite the Sanctuary entrance.

The construction materials and work pay were covered by donations from:

Fr. Evagoras, Andri & Anthony O'Brien and devout people of Liopetri Village (Cyprus) Ilie Nicolae (Romania) Pastor P G Fritz and The Lutheran Church in Dublin, Sr. Maria Coronata & The Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ireland).

The Sanctuary furniture for the side Chapels of Prothesis and Diakonikon Donated by The Oxford - Greek and Russian - Parishes (UK)

Patronal Icon of the Presentation placed in the Narthex

Hand-painted in the best Byzantine tradition, by Emmanuil Manoles, Iconographer, in Athens

Donated by devout parishioners

Sanctuary six sets of candle-shaped lights and the Inner Narthex candelabra

Donated by parishioner

Five large Kandiles, gold plated

Donated by: Megas Iraklis, Athanasios Papakostantinou, Charakas Panagyotis, Ioanis Dimitrios, Andreou Georgios, Andreou Dimitrios, Athanasios Georgios, Kanakis Dimitrios (Greece)



Lime-stone plaque with inscription and gold plated frame, made and fitted above the Narthex entrance

Made by Hughes Sculptors Ltd. in Carlow

Donated by Tom O'Reilly (Ireland)



Oval hand rail and iron gate fitted at the entrance to the Parish Office;
Metal cross made and fitted on the main gates, cutting through opening and fixing gate at the side of the Church needed for Processions around the Church
Donated by: Allman Family (Japan)
Two large iron Crosses placed on the roof of the Church
Donated by M. K. Papadopoulou, (London) Notarios of the Ecumenical Throne.
Three steel flag poles fabricated, aluminium painted and fitted
Made by Jim Carroll, welder
Donated by Tatyana I Kirillova (Russia)
Three Red Stained Glass window Crosses made and donated by
Yvonne Donlon, Stained Glass Artist, Sligo (Ireland)
Sign gold-leafed plaque, fitted at the entrance of the Church
Made by Kevin Smith of Signwriting, Dublin.
Donated by: Irish-Hellenic Society and Rev C J Rountree
Two Candelabras
Donated by Andri, Maria & Anthony O'Brien (Cyprus) and Ioan Iuga (Romania)





On the ever memorable Sunday, 6th November 1994, The Consecration of the first Orthodox Church

on Irish soil took place by the prayers of His Eminence Archbishop ὙGregorios of Thyateira. Co-celebrating with him were: the Parish Priest, Fr. Athanasios & Fr Sotirios from London with two Deacons: Fr Cyprian (London) and Fr Panaghiotis (Germany). In the attendance were the Ambassadors of Greece, Cyprus, Romania and Russia, Representatives of the RC and Anglican Churches, Government and local Authorities, a large gathering of faithful and friends of the Parish.



The Consecration service consisted in:

- a Vigil on the night of 5th November 1994 (Great Vespers & Lity)
- the Veneration of the Holy Relics from three Saints: Holy Great Martyr George the Victory Bearer (✙303) (23rd April), Holy Martyr Triphon (✙250) (1st February) and Our Holy Father John of Choseva ✙520) (3rd October)



- Matins in the early hours of the morning on 6th November
- Procession with the Holy Relics around the Church
- the Service of the Consecration itself
- the Divine Pontifical Liturgy followed by
- the celebration of the 40 consecutive Divine Liturgies (6th Nov. - 15th Dec. 1994) on the newly consecrated Altar by the Parish Priest in accordance with Orthodox Tradition.



1995:

We continued to provide our new Church with the following:

The Kolimvitra (Baptismal Font) bought in Cyprus and donated by: Nicholas & Eleni Shuhaibar (Palestine) Timothy McFadden (USA) & Dr James Lacey (USA)

The Choir ANALOGION

Made of red-deal wood by Bill Kelleher (Cork)

Donated by His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece Mr. Anivas Veliadis and Mrs. Veliadis

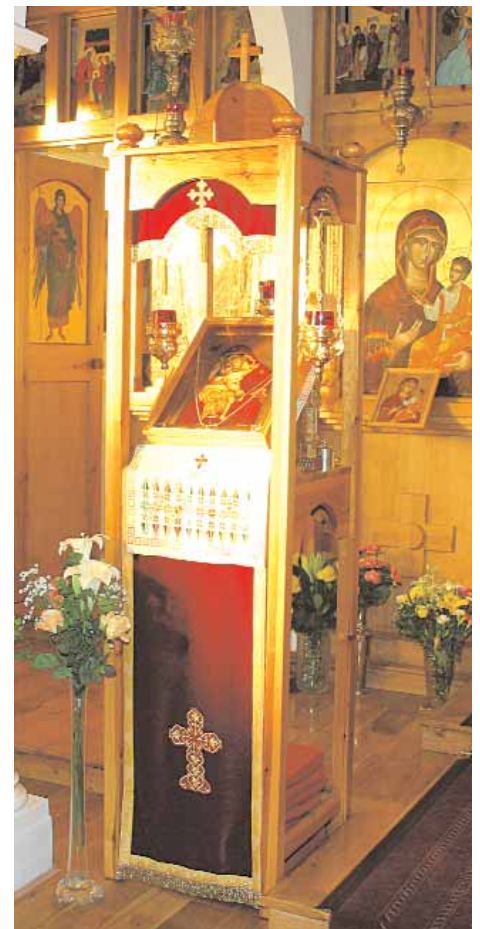
The main metal Cross on the Church roof

Donated by M K Papadopoulou, Notarios of the Ecumenical Throne (UK)



1996:

The Throne of the Mother of God holding our Precious Glikofiloussa Icon which came to us from Tinos (Greece) on 8th September 1993.



The throne was made by Bill Kelleher, lime-wood, in Cork.

Donated by H.E. the Honorary Consul of Cyprus Mr. Frixos Joannides.

On the side of the Throne facing the Iconostasion a **Brass-plaque** was placed in Eternal Memory of our Co-Founding Clergy: Fr Irineu Ilie (+1988) & Fr Teofil Panait (+1996)

Two new solid and iron-enforced doors towards the courtyard

Payment made from the Church current account



20 Stasidia (Church designed chairs)

Made by Bill Kelleher (Cork), they were donated by:

1. Frixos Joannides, Honorary Consul of Cyprus
2. Presbytera Maria Niamh Corbally Craciun
- 3-5. John Drostan & Celia Grant
6. Dimitrios Kotsonouris
7. Toulla Efthimiou Conran
- 8-9. Panos Levantis
10. Costas Stavrakis
11. Margaret O'Donovan
12. Tom Carroll
13. Nicholas Shuhaibar
14. Koula Papasana
15. John Johansson
16. Despina Florides
- 17-18. Nora Salveta
19. V. Politis
20. M. Torrance

Two new complete sets of priestly Vestments & Liturgical items

Donations from Romania

New rich-velvet Byzantine Altar covers

Donated by parishioner

Two new Candle holders along with the restoration of the two older

Proskinitaria

Donated by parishioner

1997:

The Mosaic Icon of the Annunciation

In the niche at the front of the Church facing the street

Donated by parishioner

A new metal canopy raised to protect the main entrance to the Church

Payment made from the Church current account

(now replaced at the front of the Church)

1998:

Two new Church-Banners with double hand-painted Icons:

Jesus Christ/The Baptism; The Mother of God/ The Annunciation

With brass poles and crosses

Made at the Holy Monastery of Prislop (Romania)

Donated by Ioan Finnian and Emma Teodora Elena Craciun





1999:

A Silver Altar Blessing Cross

Donated by H. E. Nicholas Emiliou, the Ambassador of Cyprus

A new set of bright Priest-Vestments made in Cyprus

Donated by Nora Salveta



2000:

Year of the Presidential visit

This year was marked by an outstanding event. By diligent work of our Fr. Deacon Tom, then still a lay person, the President of Ireland H.E. Mary MacAleese, accepted our invitation to pay a visit to our Sacred Church. Thus, on Sunday 16th January 2000, H.E. the President of Ireland was met at the gates of the Church by the Parish Priest holding the Book of the Gospels and the Holy Cross in the joyful sound of our Sacred Bells.

H.E. The President of Ireland attended the Divine Liturgy presided by the Archbishop and then spent some time in our parish room meeting with people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. The Ambassadors of Greece, Cyprus and Romania were in attendance. The President left inspiring words in our Golden Parish Book and was visibly impressed by the many languages used in the Service including the Our Father said in Irish.

The same year,

An amplifying system was acquired for the Church

Donated by John & Celia Grant

Office items, (among them two Fax-machines)

& large quantities of Irish Saints Post Cards & Church Cards

Donated by our benefactor Steve Higgins (Galway)

A large gold-plated Icon of the Resurrection

Donated by Spillios & Georgia (Greece)



2001:

The Iconostasion (1994-2001)

Designed by the Parish Priest and made of red-deal wood by Bill Kelleher, a carpenter from Cork.

The total cost of the Iconostasion: IR£ 8,220-00

Materials & Labour costs were donated by:

Mr. Phoebus Moussoulides (Cyprus)

Mrs Athina Goulandris' Family (UK & Ireland)

Tom O'Reilly (Ireland)

Pegeen O'Sullivan (U.K.)

John Grant (Dublin)



The Royal Icons on the Iconostasion, the Royal Feast Icons and the Holy Archangels Icons (19 Icons in total) were specially commissioned and hand-painted in the best Byzantine tradition, by Iconographer Emmanuil Manoles, in Athens. The Icon of the Annunciation on the Royal Doors was hand-painted in Brasov, Romania, by Iconographer Daniela Rotariu.

The Icons on the Iconostasion were donated by: Levantis Family (Greece); Craciun Family (Romania); and devout people of Liopetri village in Cyprus.

Central heating system for the Church and Parish room

Organised by Toulla and paid in full by the Church from its own Sunday collections, a total of IR£ 4500. The work was done by Tony Kelly, a gas contractor.

Two valuable donations from a Cypriot family in London Georgios & Maria Georgakis: **a Byzantine Candelabra & a large hand-painted Icon of the Annunciation.**



2002:

A complete set of Easter bright covers for Holy Altar, Royal Doors, Throne, and table

Donated by Chrystophoros and Georgia

2003:

The great restoration work

By 2003 the Church building, (an over 100 years old building according to an outside stone inscription) had considerably deteriorated both inside and outside. There were five major roof leaks so that the rain water had to be collected by buckets inside the Church. The rain water infiltration in the Church walls also caused huge parts of plaster to fall off the walls. The former factory floor as well became unsteady in parts of the Church while the smoke from candles darkened the whole interior for lack of ventilation. In such a situation, thanks to providential intervention by our Church Great Benefactor engineer Steve Higgins of Galway, the Church restoration project was set into motion.

Steve Higgins, John Grant of Blessed Memory, Toulla Efthimiou - our Psaltissa and best co-worker during these 25 years of service -, and parishioner Mihai Oprisan were at the very heart of this project.

The great restoration work included:

1. an entirely new roof for the Church: new timber, insulation, felt, best quality new (blue Bangor) slates.
2. complete renovation of the roof for the Parish room and its extension.
3. a new addition to the roof: a dome with the Cross on it, which has also a practical purpose: to serve as a roof vent.
4. a newly built Exo-narthex for lighting the candles and the Pangari. This extension was required by the Fire safety regulations. Our previous non-compliance with these regulations would have led us to losing our insurance.
5. re-plastering of large sections of the Church interior walls which had been damaged by rain water infiltration.
6. insulating the entire floor of the Church and a new solid timber floor placed inside the Church as well as in the newly built Exo-narthex.
7. a new cupola in the centre of the Church ready for the required Icon of the Pantocrator.
8. re-painting of the whole Church, by Tady's, member of the Hellenic Community of Ireland
9. varnishing the entire Iconostasion and stasidia.
10. an immense volume of electrical work to put in order the entire electrical system
11. a new gate at the main entrance to the Church.
12. a ramp at the Church's new entrance, wheelchair friendly, as required by Irish law.
13. a new water drainage system around the Church replacing the old non-functional system.
14. properly insulating the pipes carrying the main supply of running water for the whole property.



15. partly painting on the outside of the Church and 'washing up' the whole Church building with water combined a special protective solution on high pressure.
16. painting and repair works in the campanarion
17. a new canopy over the main doors of the Church.

The cost of Church restoration work (2003 phase) stands at 69,095 Euro.

This sum covers: Labour: 16,020 Euro (a fraction of the real cost, since our people offered their labour for a low-pay or even free of charge, for love of God and His Church), Materials: 46,075 Euro, and the Architect's fees: 7,000 Euro.





The payments were made from donations - by parishioners and friends of our parish - given exclusively for Church needs - as follows:

- a) for a new roof for the Church: The Roof Fund
- b) for the extension (Exo-narthex) building: The Extension Fund

ad a) In the roof fund we had: 35,357 Euro
collected from two sources:
1. Contributions from the Greek Embassy
(for the years 1999-2003): 15,895 Euro and
2. Savings from our Sunday collections + donations by parishioners and friends of the Parish: 19,462 Euro

ad b) In the extension fund we had: 33,738 Euro
All of this money was given to the Church by Parishioners and Friends specifically in honour of the Silver Ordination Jubilee, the 25th Anniversary of The Parish Priest's ordination to the Priesthood (1979-2004).

The money from the Extension Fund covered entirely the expenses connected with the building of the new Exo-narthex, also covered the cost of the new Church wooden floor, as well as of the outside roof-dome.

(A complete list of all donations and donors to this Fund is available in the Parish Office)

2004:

The Pantocrator Icon painted inside the Dome

Donated by our Great Church Benefactor the Irishman Steve Higgins of Galway

(In Honour of Fr. Ireneu's Silver Ordination Jubilee)



Second Dome inside the Church

Donated in Memory of our Regretted Treasurer John Drostan Grant (+26/4/2004) by Irish and Scottish Friends

New Up-dated Amplifying System for the Church

Romanian donation

New Candelabra placed in the centre of the Church

Romanian donation

(In honour of the 10th Anniversary of the Consecration of our Church: 1994-2004)



2005: Year of the Historical Patriarchal Visit



This year will be for ever remembered as the year in which our humble Church & Parish were blessed with the Pontifical Visit of His All-Holiness ✠ Bartholomeos, Archbishop of New-Rome Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch. His All-Holiness attended our Vespers, delivered a soul-touching Homily and imparted Apostolic Blessing to the many people present, coming from the four corners of Ireland. His Fatherly love for all of us, irrespective of nationality, was palpable.

In return, we gratefully respond to His love with our heartfelt loyalty to the Ecumenical Throne and our Mother Church.

This year we also proceeded with the **renovation and up-grading of our old brass candle-holders.**

Work done by Vincent & Co in Dublin West
Romanian donation

A new boiler for use in the Parish room
Palestinian donation



The Dome Icon of the Holy Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God,

Iconographer: Eleftherios Foulidis
(London)

Romanian donation

The entire Church floor-sanding and varnishing,

Work professionally executed by
E.V.Kidd Company-Dublin

Romanian donation

The carpet (runner), fittings and labour
by Arnotts, Carpet Dept

Romanian donation

Byzantine Icon of St. Zinon the
postman

Greek donation

ProceSSIONAL Byzantine (large) Icon of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of
God, hand-painted at the Holy Monastery Putna in Romania

Romanian donation

Large metallic cupboards for use in Church and room

Romanian donation

6000 Church cards (for all occasions), **Church postcards and Business cards**
Romanian donation



2006:

**The completion of the Church restoration work
by the Court-yard project.**



By great dedication of our
parishioner Mihai Oprisan, builder,
our 25th Anniversary was marked by
a large project, namely the
Church Court-yard project

Cost of materials: 3.100 Euro;

Cost of labour: none

The work included:

1. raising of the Court-yard ground
floor as to absorb the existing ramp
2. paving with bricks the whole
court-yard
3. erecting the new Proskinitarion
4. major repairs on the two main
stone pillars at the gates of the
Church



5. re-plastering around the main Church doors, and painting the same
6. fixing the corner garden, new edges and filling up with top soil
7. painting the whole wall opposite the Church
8. paving with bricks at the front of the Church
9. general cleaning all around the Church and disposing of the rubbish accumulated over the years.



And finally, a Romanian family donated a new Gospel - Book Stand, a masterpiece hand-carved in lime-wood, especially made in Romania and brought to Dublin just before the closure of the Anniversary Year, 2006.



Thus, the first 25 years of our Sacred Church and Parish come to an end, with prayers before God for all the People of God whose names have been mentioned as well as for the many Parishioners and Friends who, although not mentioned here by name, have kept the door of our Church open and the Vigil lamp alive for a quarter of a century.

In Ireland, our Church & Parish have made an impact.



If prior to 1981 Orthodoxy was hardly known here, since then by responsible work, Orthodoxy has become known in academic/ educational, social and ecumenical areas of Irish life. We participate, by invitation, in all major Irish national, social and religious events and the Parish Priest's academic work is highly regarded.



Our children, mostly born in Ireland, are instructed in the Orthodox Faith by family and our Sunday school and they, as second generation of Orthodox grown up in Ireland, - we pray - will take the Church into the future, a future known only to our Tri-une Living God in whom we trust and to Whom we ascribe all Glory, Honour and Worship.





Epilogue

Our Sacred Church & Parish being dedicated to the Most Holy Mother of God in honour of her Annunciation (25th March) and her Entry into the Temple (21st November) we trust that all that has been accomplished here during the past quarter of a century has been made possible only by her Holy Protection.

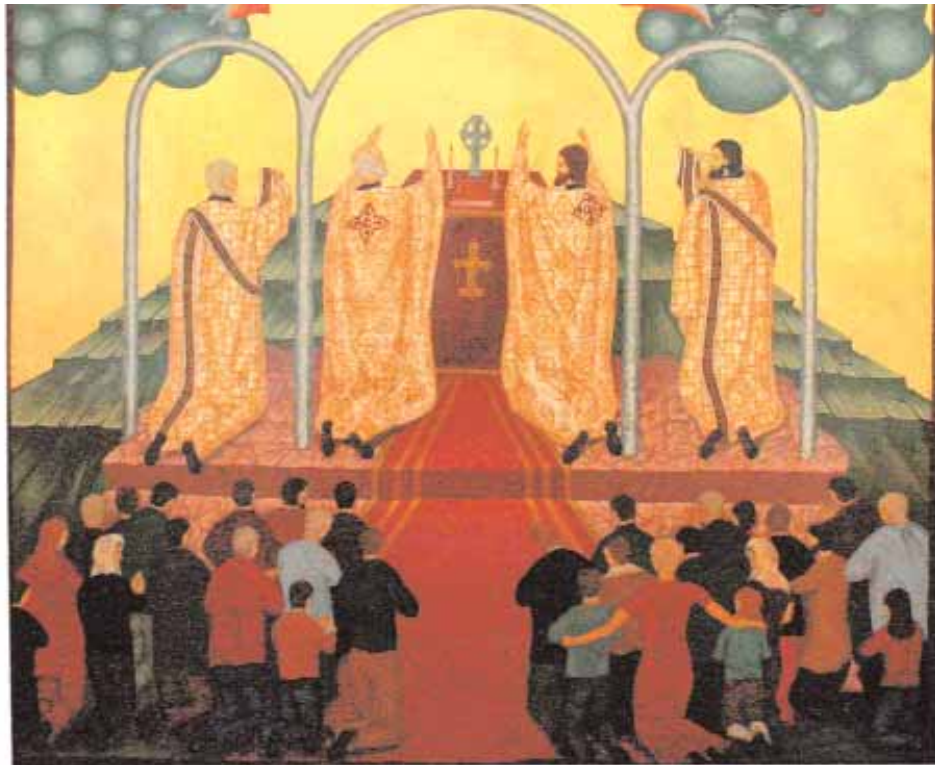


Not accidentally five of most crucial moments of the past 25 years have been marked by the providential coming to us of the Kursk, Wonder-Working Holy Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God:

- in July 1993, upon eviction from Ranelagh when we unexpectedly managed to buy the factory building in Arbour Hill
- during Lent 2002, when we applied for planning permission (difficult to obtain) in order to commence the restoration work
- in August 2003, giving us the needed 'push' to begin the restoration work
- in September 2004, on completing the main restoration work and again
- in January 2006, to grace by her presence in our midst the 25th Anniversary of her own Sacred Church in Dublin.

**On your 25th Anniversary,
- Sacred Church of the Annunciation -
accept this pure offering in the manner of the Akathistos Hymn**

**Hail Thou,
our Teacher of the Faith, Spiritual fortress and Gate to Heaven,
of all Churches in Ireland the most humble,
Hail Thou and again I say to Thee Hail
for the Lord has chosen Thee
to be the Bethlehem of Orthodoxy in the Land of the Irish.**



IN MEMORIAM

Fr. Ireneu Ilie (+1988)
Fr. Teofil Panait (+1996)
Athina Goulandris (+1989)
Marguerite Rountree (+1990)
Penelope Lady Grant (+1991)
Gheorghios Levantis (+2002)
John Drostan Grant (+2004)

Acknowledgments to:

Founders, Benefactors, Parishioners and Friends of our Parish
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira, GB & Ireland
Leaders of Christian Churches based in Dublin
Embassy of Greece
Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus
Hellenic Community (Society) of Ireland
Irish Hellenic Society
Parish Council members, Chairpersons and Church trustees
My parents and family