

# **History of the Silver Theotokos Icon**

## **Donated By**

### **The Lemnios Family**

My maternal grandparents, Andreas and Styliani were married in 1890, Andreas, a carpenter by trade was 19 and Styliani was 16. Two years later they had their first child, a healthy baby boy whom they named Euripides. Then followed seven pregnancies which resulted in either miscarriages or infants who passed away shortly after birth. Both Andreas and Styliani despaired of having any more healthy children, they made two pledges to the Theotokos. That if they had a healthy child, they would name him Evangelos if a boy, Evangelia if a girl. They also would commission a silver icon of the Theotokos to be made. The next pregnancy in 1900 resulted in a healthy female infant and true to their word, they named her Evangelia and they had the silver icon made. (The case in which it resides was made by Andreas.) Evangelia was my mother.

Evangelia prized her icon. She carried it in 1923 after the Greek-Turkish war forced the Greek peoples living in Turkey to settle in Greece and the Turkish peoples living in Greece forced to settle in Turkey. Each group could carry only what they could carry leaving the majority of their possessions behind them. In the late 1920's when she, my father, Zaharias and I emigrated to the United States, she carried the icon. After we emigrated, my parents decided to live in Newburyport, Massachusetts. The icon was displayed prominently on a wall of the house in which we lived with a red lantern (καντήλι) illuminating it.

In Newburyport, Zaharias and Evangelia were early members of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos. My father was President of the church council for five terms; my mother was President of the Philoptochos for an equal number of terms. They were faithful worshippers and leaders of the parish. When they died, they were buried side-by-side in the Highland Cemetery of Newburyport.

A few months before my mother's death, she gave me the silver icon, but she told me that I was to keep it only until I felt that it was time for me to pass it on. Approaching the age of 98, I think this is that time. With all its history, I believe the most appropriate recipient of the icon is the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos of Newburyport, Massachusetts. I am sure it will be appropriately displayed so that it can be venerated by the faithful. It will please both my parents. Therefore, I am making that donation.

Thank you,

William Z. Lemnios  
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