

## Brief History of the Annunciation Cathedral

Prior to 1890, there was little effort to organize the pioneering Greek immigrants living in the Boston area. In 1890, approximately one hundred Boston Hellenes formed the Plato Society to help themselves with the many problems of living in their new setting and to provide religious services. The Society engaged a Syrian Orthodox priest who spoke Greek to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at a rented hall. After several years, the lack of financial strength caused the Society to disband.

In 1899, with an increase in immigrants and finances, efforts were resumed to bring the Greeks of Boston together. At this point in time, the Boston Greeks had the good fortune of having several Hellenes prominent in the American social, intellectual and business world that had a strong interest in establishing a Greek Church. Evangelos A. Sophocles (1842), a professor of Classical Literature at Harvard University, John M. Rodokanakis (1829-1906), a successful merchant and Greek Consul in Boston, Michael Anagnostopoulos (1837-1906), a noted educator and Director of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, and Augustine Synadinos, a wealthy international merchant of Egyptian cotton, provided organizational and administrative guidance for the Greek immigrants.

Under the leadership of Michael Anagnostopoulos, a committee of nine was formed to collect funds for a Church and to draft by-laws for its functioning. Their meetings and perseverance resulted in a Massachusetts Charter granted on August 25, 1905. The Church was incorporated under the name Hellenic Association of Boston - the corporate name of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of New England. Under the leadership of John Parmenides, a committee raised \$10,000 for land to build a Church behind the former Hotel Bradford on Winchester Street. The new Church officially opened February 13, 1907, and was named Evangelismos (Annunciation) of the Virgin Mary. It included a Parochial Day School for teaching English, special classes for immigrants, Greek language, history, culture, plus a library and reading room.

In 1916, under the leadership of Cathedral president Constantine Zevitas, a decision was made to relocate the Church on land purchased for \$530,000 at the corner of Parker and Ruggles Streets. The new area was in close proximity to the world famous Museum of Fine Arts and Wentworth Institute, and provided an attractive and suitable setting for the new Church. During World War I, political factionalism following the Greek disaster in Turkey and financial problems resulted in a delay of building plans for several years.

The twenties were years the Boston Community was absorbed in their own immediate problems and participating effectively as responsible citizens. The notion of returning to the homeland became remote, and the political questions of their distant homeland were left to be decided by its own citizens. On June 28, 1923, V. Rev. Joachim

Alexopoulos was appointed the first Bishop of Boston and the new Church, his seat, became a Cathedral. In this capacity, the Cathedral served as the Mother Church of New England and helped establish and support new parishes in the region that had become a magnet for Greek immigration. First services at the new Annunciation Church were celebrated on September 14, 1924, the Feast Day of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, by Rev. Emmanuel Papastephanou.

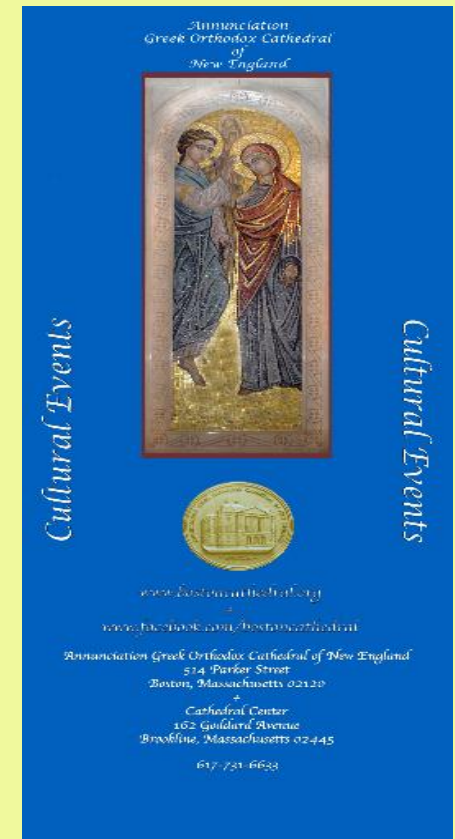
In 1922, architect Harchadoor S. Demoorjian designed the present Cathedral, a majestic example of Classical and Byzantine architecture. The late Classical Revival influence of the Cathedral followed examples set by the Boston Public Library and the Museum of Fine Arts. The Cathedral was finally built during the years 1923-24 by the J. R. Worcester Company. It was to symbolize the diligence, sacrifice and achievement of pioneering Greek immigrants wishing to sustain the bond between their faith in America and the Mother Church in Constantinople. In 1935, Kenneth Conant, an internationally known medieval architectural historian and archeologist at Harvard, was commissioned to do the stained glass windows. Conant had converted to Orthodoxy and became involved with the Cathedral community.

The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral of New England celebrated its 100th Anniversary during the year 2003, being one of the oldest parishes in the United States and one of the first to be declared a Cathedral of the Greek Orthodox Church in the western hemisphere.

The Cathedral is officially designated as a Boston landmark and listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. As the Seat of the Metropolis of Boston, the Cathedral is recognized as the Mother Church for the faithful of New England. Through its history, the Church has provided spiritual inspiration and guidance for many Greek Orthodox communities in New England and throughout America. The best measure of the Cathedral's contribution to the Greek Orthodox Church is the number of its clergymen who were elevated to high Ecclesiastic Offices, such as the V. Rev. Joachim Alexopoulos who became the first Bishop of Boston and later, Metropolitan of Demetriados, the V. Rev. Athenagoras Cavadas who became the Bishop of Boston, and later Archbishop of England and the V. Rev. Iakovos Coucouzes who became Bishop of Melita, and from 1959 to 1996, Archbishop of North and South America.

Many eminent religious hierarchs and political statesmen have served at the altar or visited the Cathedral. Among them are Ecumenical Patriarchs Athenegoras, Demetrios and Vartholomeos; Patriarchs of Jerusalem Benedictos and Diodoros; Archbishops Athenegoras, Michael, Iakovos, Chrysostomos, Spyridon, and Demetrios; Hierarchs, Cardinals, Protestant Bishops, Royals, former United States Presidents and numerous other political dignitaries. In looking forward, the Cathedral, through its many significant contributions in the life of the Church and the Greek-American Community for over 100 years, will continue to maintain its historical and spiritual prominence as the Seat of the Metropolis of Boston

## ANNUNCIATION Greek Orthodox Cathedral of New England



*The Cultural Events Committee Presents  
**THE LECTURE SERIES 2011**  
Featuring lectures on Hellenism, Education,  
and other topics of interest to our community.*

**The Cathedral Center  
162 Goddard Avenue  
Brookline, MA 02445**

**V. Rev. Dr. Cleopas Strongylis, Dean**

**Demetris Photopoulos, Ph.D.  
Parish Council President**

### **Cultural Events Committee Members:**

Carol Travayiakis, Chair; Demetra Anagnostopoulou, Dr. Marica Arvanites, Debra Babalas, Ellen-Marie Demeter, Despina Dimitropoulos, Simone Dodge, Dr. Elaine Iuanow, Dimitrios & Annette Kaselis, Demetrios Kosmidis, Dr. Maria Koulmanda, Alex Mavradis, Anna Minos, Bette Novicki, Theodora Orphanos, Tina Papadopoulos, Dr. Demetris Photopoulos, Konstantinos-Ioannis Ramos.

The Cultural Events Committee coordinates and hosts a series of lectures and cultural events on Hellenism, Education, Health, Safety and Culture. All events are free and open to the public. For more information please contact the Cathedral Office at (617) 731-6633. Your ideas are welcomed and appreciated. Please email your recommendations to [frcleopas@gmail.com](mailto:frcleopas@gmail.com)

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### **PAST LECTURES**

**Thursday, February 25, 2010** “*The Influence of Hellenic Culture and Civilization in the American Educational System*” by Professor Ilias Tomazos, the Director of the Paideia Program at the University of Connecticut, who has emerged as a pioneer in the preservation of Hellenic Heritage in his home state of Connecticut.

**Friday, April 16, 2010** “*Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases*” by Dr. Maria Koulmanda, Director of Non-Human Primate Research at the Transplantation Institute, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center & Dr. Spyridon Akrivakis, Clinical Instructor in Medicine at Tufts.

**Friday, May 21, 2010** “*A Dedication to the Pontian History and Culture*” by the Hellenic Pontian Society *Panagia Soumela* of Boston.

**Thursday, September 23, 2010** “*Security & Terrorism*” by Police Commissioner Edward Davis and former Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Boston Warren Bamford. They presented on how Police Depts. and public safety nationwide have changed since 9/11.

**Saturday, October 23, 2010** “*Musical Odyssey*”; a Concert of Contemporary Greek Composers by *the Greek Music Ensemble*. Featuring composer, Mr. Panos Liaropoulos, and *The Greek Music Ensemble*, the concert took place at *The Cathedral Center*. Listeners were delighted in the music of Hatzidakis, Thedorakis, Vangelis and a few other surprises for music lovers of all ages.

**Thursday, November 11, 2010** “*Code Burgundy; The Long Escape*” by John Katsaros, Veteran, who recalled the B-17 bombing mission, how his plane was severely damaged, how he parachuted onto French soil with severe injuries and how he eventually made his escape to England, with the help of the French underground.

### **TONIGHT’S LECTURE**

*The Cultural Events Committee  
Presents tonight,  
Thursday, March 31, 2011  
at 7:00p.m.*

A Panel Discussion on  
“*The Theological School of Halki;  
Past, Present & Future*”

### **Panelists**

Mr. Christos Papoutsy, Historian  
*Historical Review on The Theological  
School of Halki*

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Mr. George Rockas, Esquire  
*The Significance of Halki – Prospects &  
Obstacles to its Reopening*

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Mr. Nick Larigakis, President/AHI  
*Halki – U.S. Position and Responsibility*

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The Honorable Bruce Tarr, State Senator  
*Halki – The Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts Position & Actions*

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Professor Michalis Psalidopoulos  
*Halki – An Economist’s View*

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**Moderator, Mrs. Mary Papoutsy**

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### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Thursday, May 19, 2011.** “*Environmental issues/The Importance of Sustainability.*” Panel discussion - Presentation by MIT Professor Nicholas A. Ashford (Azgounis). Details to follow. The Cathedral Center, Brookline, MA, 7:00PM

**Saturday, October 22.** “*Musical Odyssey II.*” A musical journey in The Athens of Yesterday! “Filled with Nostalgia and Melodies with “Palies Athinaikes Kantades & Rebetica Songs”. A fundraising event. Details to follow. The Cathedral Center, Brookline, MA, 7:00PM