

The Chapel of St. Anastasia

Through the excellent, untiring efforts of Michael Gurlides and the Decorations Committee as well as the tremendous generosity of the Leondis family, The Cathedral of St. Paul has renovated her beautiful chapel and dedicated it to St. Anastasia, the Great Martyr.

St. Anastasia was a Roman lady of noble descent. Her father was an opulent and noble pagan; but her mother, who was a Christian, caused her to be baptized in her infancy, and secretly reared her in sentiments of Christian piety, in which she made great progress.

St. Anastasia had been married to a noble Roman, named Publius, who was a pagan; he loved his wife much, but having discovered her acts of piety, and that she was a Christian, from a loving husband he became a cruel tyrant, confined her to the house, and treated her like a slave. The saint, rejoiced that she could suffer for the love of Jesus Christ. Publius, having been appointed by the emperor ambassador to the King of Persia, gave orders to his domestics that they should maltreat his wife during his absence and that there should be no fear if she would be found dead upon his return. But God ordained that Publius meet with an untimely death upon his journey; while the saint, having regained her pious labors in behalf of the prisoners of Jesus Christ.

St. Anastasia, inflamed with the love of God, occupied her time in consoling the Christians, particularly those who were in prison, who she exhorted to suffer for the faith. She was arrested and brought before the prefect of the region, who got no satisfaction from her defence and so then he sent her to the emperor Diocletian. Diocletian was unsuccessful in exhorting her to abandon a religion which was prescribed throughout the empire, and so sent her back to the prefect Florus. He sent her to the pontiff of the capitol, in the hope that he could convince her to sacrifice to the gods.

The authorities shut her in prison, with the intention of starving her; but the Lord miraculously

preserved her life. Florus transferred her to another prison thinking the jailer had transgressed his orders to starve her - but she continued to live without food. Florus then ordered her to be put on board a ship which was bored with holes and was supposed to sink. The ship soon filled with water, but instead of sinking went ashore; and the miracle worked the conversion of all these

persons, who afterwards had the glory of suffering martyrdom for Jesus Christ. St. Anastasia was conducted to the island of Palmarola, under sentence of death; she consummated her triumph in the flames.

Her relics were later transferred Constantinople, and placed, in the celebrated church of the Resurrection, called The Anastasia. Later her relics transferred again to Thessaloniki where they remain uncorrupt to this day.

Her feast day is celebrated on December 22, and this year Fr. Nicholas Magoulias celebrated the first Divine Liturgy in the newly renovated chapel that day.

Also, on January 3rd, Fr. Nicholas returned and served with Frs. Luke and Andreas in the blessing of the chapel. Special prayers were said for the renovation of a temple.

John and Joan Leondis dedicated their efforts in the renovation towards the memory of another Anastasia, that is, their god-daughter Stacey Leondis. Stacey will always be remembered as the young lady who shared many of the same healing qualities of her patron saint. We are continually grateful for the unending generosity of the Leondis family.

The renovated chapel now contains stasidia, a traditional chair used in Greece and other Orthodox countries that allows worshippers to stand or sit for great periods of time.

Special thanks to Mr. Michael Gurlides for buying the formerly used pews and donating them to St. Mark of Ephesus Greek Orthodox Church in the Boston area.

We pray that Stacey's memory remains eternal and that St. Anastasia the Great Martyr intercedes for all of us at the Cathedral of St. Paul.

