

HISTORY OF THE MAUI GREEK ORTHODOX MISSION PARISH AS RECALLED BY KAREN SOLOMON

George and I first attended services on Maui in approximately 1998. Fr. George Besinas from Sts. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Honolulu held services approximately once per quarter in St. Anthony's Chapel in Wailuku. About 6-12 people attended. The core group consisted of the Bergers, Alexeevs, Biniaris' and Dimitrakopoulos.'

When Fr. George left, Fr. Dean Kouldukis replaced him and began visiting Maui about once per month. With a roster that he provided, we began making calls and sending out notices of services. Ads were placed in the newspaper and our congregation began to expand. His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony visited our home and decided to give us "Mission" status. He gave the challenge to Fr. Dean, who enthusiastically accepted.

For the next several years, our strategy for growth was "communication." Handwritten and typed information was sent out along with ads in the paper and the telephone book. We constantly updated our addresses and phone numbers. With help, we followed up with personal phone calls. We began to expand!

We hosted a very successful Kapalua Dinner party. Later (February of 1999) the Dimitrakopoulos' hosted a special meeting in their brand new home. There were about 12 of us there: Fr. Dean, Fr. (Demetrios) Nektarios, Dimitrakopoulos', Solomons, Fanchers, Bergers, Biniaris and Terry Murata. We agreed to move to Kihei where it was more central and where we had the advantage of more tourists. Fr. Tony of St. Theresa's Catholic Church was gracious enough to allow us to begin use of their Chapel. We began to grow. We now had a core of about 30 regulars plus 10 part-timers.

The Dinsmoors hosted some great social functions at their home. We had a couple more get together in Kapalua. We were on the road to success.

We hosted another dinner for His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony, with His Eminence Chrysostom of Cyprus, and His Grace Anthimos. Fr. Dean was in attendance and a total of about 65 people! His Eminence agreed to send us a full-time priest and accepted volunteers for our first "council."

The "council" began its work and things began to happen. Fr. James Adams was assigned to us as a full-time priest. For our first year we began to grow, having sometimes 45-47 in attendance. Stewardship began. Fr. James was able to procure a booth for us at the County Fair and we had our first Greek Food Festival. With the hard work of Barbara Batbie as chair, it was a big success.

It was during the second year of Fr.'s assignment that attendance began to falter. Many felt that we did not have the ability to support a full-time parish. Others felt that through faith we would endure. His Eminence Anthony ultimately recalled Fr. James to the Mainland and requested Fr. Dean to revert to once a month liturgies.

Currently, we are once again working very hard to revive and gain strength for our Orthodox Church on Maui. With the help of Fr. Nick Gamvas from the Cathedral in Honolulu, with faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and your prayers we will succeed.