

1998; Dept of Immigration & Ethnic Affairs, 1984).

For the continuation of the Orthodox faith, however, this pattern of worship was far from ideal. In 1897, led by Athanasios Cominos, and interim committee was established with the intention of founding the Greek Community of NSW in Sydney as well as working towards the construction of a dedicated Greek Orthodox Church to service the needs of the growing community. Particularly amongst the Greek community, a legitimate church was essential in ensuring that their religious celebrations were recognised both in the new community and also back in Greece. There was a significant fear in the community that marriages would not be valid in the Motherland if they were not conducted in a recognised religious institution by an appointed Orthodox priest. To counter these growing concerns, the community decided to attract a Greek Priest to Australia, largely through the construction of the first dedicated Greek Orthodox church in Australia.

(*Gilchrist, vol 1; Tsingris, 1998; Greek Orthodox Community of NSW website*)

In the meantime however, the Orthodox Greeks turned to the Anglican Church who opened the doors of the St James Parish Hall in Sydney to be available for regular Orthodox worship, pending the construction of a Greek Orthodox Church. These services were conducted by Archimandrite Dorotheos Bakaliaros who, from 1895, was the first Greek Orthodox priest in Australia to administer religious services to the communities of Sydney

and Melbourne. During this period, Archimandrite Dorotheos also encouraged the construction of a dedicated church for the parishioners and, in late 1897, fund-raising efforts had begun. Within six months, the land had been donated by Ioannis Cominos (the brother of Athanassios), and donations of 390 pounds had been collected from the Orthodox community to go towards the building project.

(*Gilchrist, vol 1; Turnbull & Valiotis, 2001; Tsingris, 1998; Sydney Morning Herald, 1898*).

The first step in the construction of the Holy Trinity (Ayia Trias) Church, this being the first Greek Orthodox place of worship in Australia, was the laying of the foundation stones in an official ceremony on May 29th, 1898. This date is significant in the history of Orthodoxy, being the date the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople fell to the Turkish in 1453 and it has since become the date on which all Holy Trinity churches are founded. Through this tradition, May 29th has also become the date that represents the courageous extension of Hellenism and Orthodoxy around the world.

(*Gilchrist, vol 1; Turnbull & Valiotis, 2001; Tsingris, 1998; Fr Miltiades Chryssavgis & Fr John Chryssavgis, 1985*).

The ceremony to lay the three foundation stones in 1898 was presided over by Archimandrite Dorotheos, who conducted the service in Greek, and was attended by the Consul-Generals of Greece and France, the Consuls of Russia, Argentina and Sweden and a large congregation of Orthodox Greeks and Lebanese. The three stones were laid (two in opposite corners, and



one in the centre where the altar would be placed) and within each stone was placed a small iron cross, a bottle of holy water and a collection of English and Greek silver coins.

(*Tsingris 1998; Sydney Morning Herald, 1898*)

The fund-raising efforts continued at the ceremony with a further 190 pounds collected. Along with the money already raised, the construction of the Holy Trinity Church was underway and, by 1899, it was completed and furnished for a total of 848 pounds and eight shillings. For another 454 pounds and 11 shillings, the community also built a residence for the priest adjacent to the church.

(*Gilchrist, vol 1; Sydney Morning Herald, 1898*)

The Holy Trinity Church was constructed with the intention that it would be a place of worship for the Orthodox faith, whether its congregation was Greek, Lebanese, or Russian. All doctrinal groups were acknowledged by the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople and so were regarded as sister churches within the Orthodoxy faith. Financial contributions towards the construction of the Holy Trinity Church were also made by Lebanese migrants, some of whom also served in official positions in the Orthodox Community.

With a newly built church

servicing such a diverse congregation, the Holy Trinity Church was in need of a bilingual priest and, after approaching the patriarchate of Jerusalem, Father Serafeim Phocas was appointed as the first accredited resident Orthodox priest for the Holy Trinity Church. Arriving in Sydney in March 1899, Fr Serafeim, along with Fr Athanasios Kantopoulos from Melbourne, led the Easter and official consecration ceremonies at the Holy Trinity Church on April 16, 1899. For a community of only approximately 500 faithful, the erection and consecration of a designated church and priest residence was a great achievement for Sydney's developing Orthodox community.

(*Gilchrist, vol 1; Tsingris, 1998*)

During Fr Serafeim's term as the resident priest at the Holy Trinity Church, he officiated in hundreds of religious ceremonies. However, he was obliged to step down from his position in 1913 due to bad health (Fr Serafeim died August 15, 1917). During his term, however, relations between the Orthodox Greeks, Lebanese and Russians had remained cordial but with a revised constitution adopted in 1914 and the transfer of spiritual allegiance from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to the Church of Greece, membership at the Holy Trinity

Church became limited to those of Greek descent only. This caused tension within the diverse congregation and, as such, the Lebanese and Russian Orthodox members received strong encouragement to seek an alternative location for worship. Although regular services continued to be held at the Holy Trinity Church for some time, when the St George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral in Redfern was opened by the Orthodox Lebanese members in 1920, official relations between the groups came to an end. The Orthodox Russians also followed suit, moving from the Holy Trinity Church at a similar time to hold their services at the St George Cathedral. (Gilchrist, vol 1 & 2; Michael Alex Protopopov, 2005; Paul Convy & Dr Anne Monsour, 2008)

With the retirement of Fr Serafeim, the leaders of the Greek Orthodox Community approached the Church of Greece for another priest to serve the congregation and, in late 1913, Fr Dimitrios Marinakis arrived in Sydney. Fr Marinakis served as the resident priest at the Holy Trinity Church for some 10 years but, during this time, the church and its community experienced the beginning of the friction that would play a significant role in its history. During his term Fr Marinakis

