

St Dimitrios celebrations Tamworth NSW

This year, once again I had the opportunity to return to Tamworth, my wife's home town, to celebrate the Feast Day of Ayios Dimitrios. Each year many people return to Tamworth for this event. They come from Sydney, Brisbane and Armidale, along with the locals as well as the surrounding small towns to celebrate this Saint's day.



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΤΑΜΒΟΡΘΗ & ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΩΝ
ΕΝΓΛΩΤΤΙΣΤΩΝ ΙΕΡΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ
ΗΤΗΣ ΣΕΒΑΣΜΙΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑΣ
Κ.Κ. ΣΤΥΛΙΑΝΟΥ 8-2-76

Κος Δημ. Ψαρακας (Αντι Προεδρος) Κος Α. Κολογηραου (Ζυμβ),
Κος Ανδρ. Αντωνιαδης (Προεδρος Newcastle) Θεο. Επισκοπος Θεσσαλονικης
Κ.Κ. Παντελεημων Κος Χρυσ. Πλουμιδης (Βοηθος Γραμματεως)
Εξ. Αρχιεπισκοπος Αυστραλιας Κ.Κ. Στυλιανος,
Κος Λ. Βαριπατης (Γραμματεως) Αδ. Πατερ. Δεωργ. Κουκουλας
Κος Κωνστ. Λουρης (Γαμμας) Κος Δεωργ. Τζαναβαρας (Προεδρος),
Κος Δημ. Κουτακος (Ζυμβ) Κος Βασ. Βαριπατης (Ζυμβ)
Αθαν. Κος Θεοδ. Λουρης Τελωνης

This year's service was conducted by the Rev John Varvaris, after which the locals provided a light lunch for everyone.

It was moving to be back in Tamworth again to be part of this annual celebration. This church was officially consecrated in 1975 by His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos and was the result of the hard work and dedication of the Greek Community of Tamworth and the surrounding areas. In the photo above with His Eminence are representatives of The Greek Community: Jim Psarakis (Vice President), Archilles Kaloyirou, Andrew Antoniathis (Consul General of Newcastle), His Grace Bishop Panteleimon, Chris Plumidis (Assist Secretary), His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, Stan Varipatis (Secretary), Fr George Koukoulas (from Dubbo), Con Souris (Treasurer), George Tjanavaras (President), Jim Kontakos, Bill Varipatis.



The many Greek migrants who made country Australia their home also brought the Orthodox Religion to these areas. They made a respected name for themselves and their community. It would be hard to find a country town in Australia that was not touched by the Greek influence. They brought a hard working ethic and community spirit as they established



themselves and became a part of Australia.

Their influence is still present in many of these towns and still remembered by many of the locals, even after these many years.



While in Tamworth

this time, I meet an elderly Australian couple and we began talking about the changes in the town. They were interested as to where I was from and my link to Tamworth. When I told them my wife was born in Tamworth and is the daughter of the Late Stan Varipatis (Patty, as they were known to them) who was one of the three brothers who had the 'Ritz Café', their stories started.

The wife told me of her time, when she was a young girl on the farm, her mother would bring her and the other kids to town, and if they were good she would take them to the "Ritz" for lunch. She said "I still remember, they made the best orange juice in town".



Her husband also started telling me of his fond memories of going into the "Ritz" and losing himself in their selection of lollies.

They told me how the Greeks improved the area and about their friendliness and willingness to be a part of the community.

I know that this would have been the same for many other towns around Australia.

Our parents and grandparents came to Australia with





nothing. Some were in their early teens, travelling on their own at an age where we would now worry to send them to the local shops on their own. But here they came to make a new life for themselves. They had a strong family and work ethic, nothing was given to them, they knew they had to work hard to establish themselves.

This generation and the ones that followed bear the fruits of their hard work and commitment to making a better life here in this wonderful country, Australia.

But alas, as the years go by and as the children of these Greek families grew up and left the towns to make a life for themselves in the “big cities”, the parents followed. This has now left the work to maintaining the history of these towns

to the few who are still there.

Let us all do what we can to help preserve their work and influence in the towns that our forefathers touched and made a such difference.

We have been approached by a number of people wishing to celebrate St Dimitrios Day in Tamworth next year, who cannot travel on their own. If you are interested in attending next year please advise the Kytherian Association and we will look at arranging a bus trip. It’s a great opportunity to see the achievements of a hard working community and be part of this holy celebration.

George Giaouris
Treasurer

Great Martyr Dimitrios, the Myrrh-flowing and Wonder-working Saint,

was a Christian and the son of the military commander of Thessalonica in the early fourth century. St. Dimitrios was the only son and was, because of this, most carefully cherished and educated. When his father died, Dimitrios was appointed by Emperor Maximian to take his place. Maximian was an opponent of Christ and charged Dimitrios to persecute and to kill the Christians in that city.

Instead, Dimitrios disobeyed Maximian and openly confessed and preached Christianity. Hearing of this, the Emperor was furious and on his way back from battles against the Sarmathians he went to Thessalonica to look into the matter. He summoned Dimitrios and questioned him about his faith. Dimitrios confessed his belief as well as his disgust for idolatry (and thus openly criticising the Emperor himself). The enraged Emperor cast him into prison, and Dimitrios, knowing his fate, had his servant Lupus give his wealth to the poor (being glad that suffering for Christ was to be his lot).

An angel of God appeared to Dimitrios saying, “Peace be with thee, thou sufferer for Christ; be brave and strong!” After several days, the Emperor sent soldiers to the prison to kill Dimitrios. The soldiers came into the cell finding the Saint at prayer, and killed him with their spears. Christians then secretly took his body and buried it, and his relics began producing a healing fragrant myrrh. A small church was soon built over his relics, and when an Illyrian nobleman, by the name of Leontius, ran prayerfully up to the relics of St. Dimitrios and was completely cured of an incurable disease,

he built a much larger church replacing the small one.

Once, when barbarians plundered the city, two maidens were abducted. When the leader of the barbarians learned that the maidens could embroider, he threatened them to produce the likeness of St. Dimitrios. They finished on the eve of the Saint’s feast and they wept asking for his forgiveness.



Suddenly, Dimitrios appeared and transported them like an angel of God to the safety of his church in Thessalonica and left them among the people during a vigil.

The Saint appeared on other occasions. When Emperor Justinian attempted to move the Saint’s relics to Constantinople, flames shot out of the tomb and a voice commanded them to, “Leave them there, and don’t touch!” and thus the relics have remained since in Thessalonica.

As the defender of Thessalonica, St. Dimitrios has many times appeared and saved the city in times of trouble. The Russians also regarded St. Dimitrios as the protector of Siberia.