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- Entertainment
- Classifieds

Rev. Michael C. Harmand



January 18, 2007 Rev. Michael C. Harmand, beloved pastor, retired, of St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, passed away peacefully on January 18. Father Harmand was one of the new generation of Orthodox Priests. He was born and raised in the United States but graduated from the University of Athens College of Theology in 1938. Father Harmand has the distinction of being the first American born to be ordained for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. When Father and family arrived in Syracuse on October 2, 1951, to become the 14th priest to assume the pulpit of St. Sophia's, no one envisioned that Father would be the spiritual leader of three generations; the founders of the church, their children and their children's children. When Father Harmand arrived in Syracuse, St. Sophia was a church in transition. The church had relocated from Montgomery Street to Massena Street as a temporary site. Father recognized that a new church was contemplated by the community and recommended that a permanent building fund committee be created. Those funds became the nucleus to defray the cost of the new St. Sophia Church on Warring Road, DeWitt. Eighteen years after his recommendation, it was a joyous event when he assisted in celebrating the opening Liturgy on September 9, 1973. Father has always taken a keen interest in the youth of the community. Shortly after his arrival and under his leadership the Sunday School program was reactivated. Furthermore, to encourage the youngsters of the parish to retain the Greek language, he taught Greek School to the youth. Instruction in Greek, however, was not limited to the youth. Father has encouraged members of the parish who are deficient in Greek to attend evening classes under his direction. Many non-parishioners had enthusiastically joined these classes and paid tribute to Father for his leadership in his efforts to preserve the language in the parish. It has been written, among the gifts that God has sent, one of the most magnificent is music. Father was certainly endowed with a musical gift. His beautiful tenor voice has enriched the church services over the past 50 years. His musical talents had also been directed to church music. He devoted many hours in directing and rehearsing the church choir. Father was also an accomplished musician, playing various instruments. Father organized a mandolin ensemble at the Massena Street church, which performed for the parish community and brought a little bit of Greece to many a social event. At the new St. Sophia in DeWitt, Father organized a children's orchestra, which delighted the community. Drama was another feat undertaken by Father Harmand. In 1953 he directed the choir in presenting a long-remembered, hilarious Greek comedy portraying the trials and tribulations of a Greek family confronted with a generation gap in the United States. Father has within these few years participated in musical productions undertaken at St. Sophia's under the direction of his son, Dr. William Harmand. To inspire Pan Orthodoxy in the Syracuse community, Father, in cooperation with the other Orthodox priests in the area, established the Sunday Vesper services held during the Great Lent. Father has also worked with the adult groups in the church community. Father encouraged the Holy Cross Society to reorganize as the Philoptochos Society, which is the primary ladies organization in the parish. The parish community was pleased and proud when on March 9, 1972, Father was elevated by the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church to Protopresbyter, the highest rank in the Orthodox Church which a married clergyman may attain. The parish, with respect, great esteem and agape, have honored Father over the years. The most noteworthy are on the occasions of his 10th, 20th and silver anniversaries as the pastor of St. Sophia's; also on the occasion of his 40th and 50th years in the service of our Lord. As a lasting tribute to Father Harmand, St. Sophia Chapel was dedicated as the St. Michael Chapel in November 1986 by Bishop Timothy of Detroit. Although in failing health this past year, Father Harmand continued to serve the

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church faithfully with great devotion. His family and friends will greatly miss this outstanding clergyman. Survived by his wife of 67 years, the former Mary Charouhis; son, Dr. William (Kathleen) Harmand; daughter, Elaine (Dr. Thomas) Pagedas of Milwaukee; grandchildren, Michael Ian Harmand, Constance Pagedas, Elizabeth Pagedas Schamalbach and Michael Pagedas. A Divine Liturgy will be offered at 9 a.m. Monday followed by services at 11 a.m. at St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church, with burial to follow in Oakwood Morningside Cemetery. Calling hours will be Sunday 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the church on the corner of Tecumseh and Waring Rd. The family requests that in lieu of flowers donations be sent to either St. Sophia's or the church of your choice. To leave a note of condolence, please visit www.burnsgarfield.com garZBURNS
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