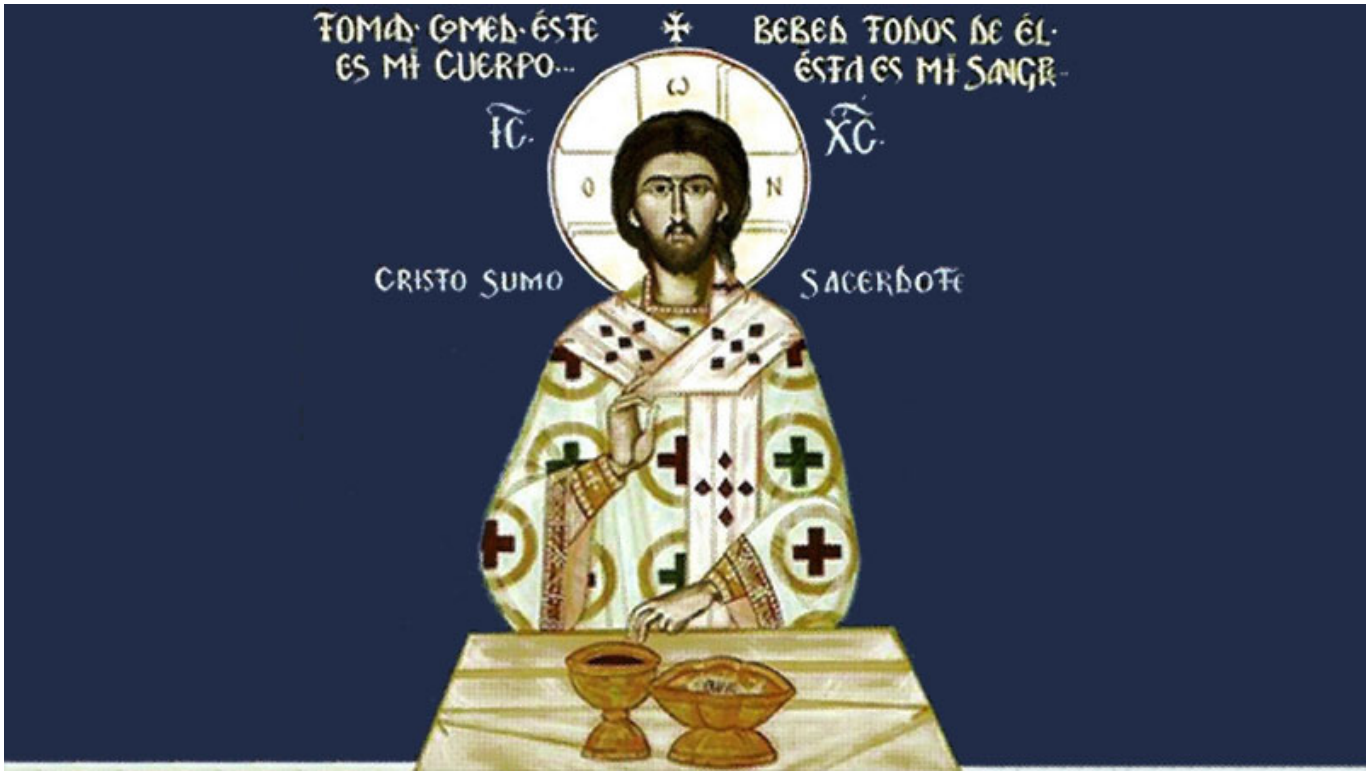
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Greek Orthodox Archdiocese to Host First-Ever Spanish Outreach Conference in the United States



Saint Augustine, FL – The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America will host its first-ever conference for the organization of outreach ministry to Spanish-speaking persons with a conference at Saint Photios National Shrine in St. Augustine, Florida, this April 28-30.

The conference is part of an initiative spearheaded by Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, the Shrine's Hierarchal Proistamenos, or pastor, and will explore strategies to better serve Spanish-speaking Orthodox Christians and reach out to new members. Participants will seek to create a foundation for a lasting national ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

Fr. John Bakas, Dean of the St. Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles, will headline the conference with a keynote address entitled, "Breaking Down Ethnic Barriers." Various panel discussions and workshops will review existing Spanish-language liturgical materials and ways to expand into communities where existing Spanish-speaking Orthodox Christians exist.

The conference will feature dozens of clergy and laypeople from throughout the nation who are Spanish speakers or who have experience with Spanish-speaking communities. Unique to a Greek Orthodox gathering, worship services will be conducted entirely in Spanish.

The initiative was launched by Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, who tasked Bishop Demetrios with the organization of a missionary and philanthropic outreach to Spanish-speaking persons throughout the nation, believed to be one of the fastest-growing groups of Orthodox faithful in the country.

“We are not seeking to transform our Greek Orthodox Church into an Hispanic Orthodox Church,” noted Bishop Demetrios, “We are simply seeking to make our parishes more welcoming to those who come to us from such a cultural background, while enhancing our ministry to retain the families of our parishes where inter-cultural experiences are a present reality.”

Thus far, over twenty clergy and laypeople have expressed an interest in this initiative, according to Bishop Demetrios and there is room for more participation.

The funding for the conference was provided by a grant from Leadership 100, an organization of the Greek Orthodox Church that provides financial support to various church-based initiatives.

For additional information or to participate in the program, please email .

St. Photios is the first National Shrine of the Archdiocese and is located in historic St. Augustine, Florida, on St. George Street between Orange and Cuna Streets, in a building that once served as a place of refuge in the 1700s for Greek settlers that fled a failed British colony and were supported by Spanish settlers.

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