

Inaugural fundraiser for the new parish of Holy Cross, Glenelg North, Adelaide



The parish of St Panteleimon, Glenelg, was Adelaide's "accidental" parish. Prior to moving to the new parish of St Sophia (Holy Wisdom) in Bowden in January 2023, the Archdiocesan offices for the District of Adelaide had for decades been located at 533 Anzac Hwy, Glenelg North. This site was originally the local Assistant Bishop's residence and its function as the Archdiocesan offices was intended to be temporary, and likewise the small chapel on the site dedicated to St Panteleimon was originally designed as a private chapel for use by the residing Bishop that could only comfortably accommodate around 50 people - far too few for a fully-functioning parish.

The chapel, however, was the only Greek Orthodox church in the South-Western suburbs of Adelaide, so when it opened for Sunday worship, by God's grace, its attendance grew steadily over the years to serve the people living in that part of

the city. The parish attempted to compensate for the chapel's small size by establishing undercover outdoor seating around the chapel with A/V equipment to accommodate those who could not fit inside; however, this was a compromise that was not sustainable for the parish's long-term development. For many years it has been apparent that the parish needed a new home.

However, the search for a new home for the parish has been challenging. Glenelg is a popular seaside locality, and as such real estate is prohibitively expensive, with an average home on a small block costing well over \$1M. The parish faced a dilemma: in order to afford the real estate in the area, they needed to attract more parishioners – but without a larger church they could not consistently attract the numbers they needed to afford the development. But recently, by Divine Providence, an opportunity arose that enabled the parish to find a way forward: the “Flambouron” Philanthropic Society of SA owned a hall in the very same suburb, on a 650m² block with more than five times the capacity of St Panteleimon, and they were contemplating selling.

With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, the local hard-working Parish Priest of 23 years, Fr Panagiotis Photakis, and his committee, started to investigate the possibility of acquiring the Flambourian hall and moving their growing parish into it. At first there was a concern that the Council would not allow the hall to be converted into a Church, but after a simple application process the Council approved the change of use and the path was cleared for the parish to enter into negotiations. Through God's grace, the Flambouron” Philanthropic Society of SA agreed to sell the property to the parish for only \$1M (well below market rates). With the assistance of a loan from the Consolidated Trust, the parish finally had a new home and settlement is slated for the end of October 2023.



One question remained: the chapel of St Panteleimon would always remain for historical reasons, so the new Church would need a new saint or feast for dedication. On September 14th 2023, the Elevation of the Holy Cross, the joyous news came from His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, that the new parish would be named "Holy Cross". Glory be to God for all things.

The current Flambourian hall requires some work to make it into a functional Church, and the parish has been working on plans to make this into a reality in preparation for handover. But in order to pay for these changes and for the hall itself, it needs some funding – so, with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, the Parish of Holy Cross organised a "Gala Dinner", generously hosted at the hall of the Holy Monastery of St Nectarios, on the evening of Sunday the 1st October 2023. Fr Panagiotis presented initial renovation plans for the new hall, and His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope outlined the history of how the parish had reached this point – thanking and congratulating Fr Panagiotis and the committee for their efforts in reaching this point. With much gratitude, His Grace conveyed the heartfelt blessings, prayers, and appreciation of His Eminence to all in attendance.



The evening was well supported with 150 attendees, catered by volunteers from St Panteleimon/Holy Cross who were generously assisted by the Philoptochos from the host parish of St Nectarios and other volunteers from across the District. It featured performances from the students of the Byzantine School of Music as well as traditional Greek music by some of the locals. Through the generosity of those in attendance, the parish managed to raise over \$9,000 for their project. It was a great start to this new and exciting phase in the life of the parish of St Panteleimon/Holy Cross.

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