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Thessaloniki: An Icon that was saved from the fire of 1917, returned to the Church of Saint Dimitrios



The icon of Our Lady the Theotokos which was saved by a family of Thessalonians from the fire of 1917 that burned the church of Saint Dimitrios and all of Thessaloniki, was delivered yesterday, on Sunday, 26 November 2023, to the church of Saint Dimitrios, by the newly enthroned Metropolitan Philotheos of Thessaloniki.

This icon was in the church of Saint Dimitrios and was rescued by the Kaltsa family, who took it with them when they left Thessaloniki in 1930 and later settled in Chalkida.

As reported by makthes.gr, the history of the icon was narrated to the congregation by His Eminence Metropolitan Filotheos of Thessaloniki, handing it

over after the Matins and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy held in the church of the patron saint of Thessaloniki, Saint Dimitrios.

“On the last Sunday that I served the Divine Liturgy in Chalkida, in the church of Saint Nicholas where I was baptised, raised and ordained by the Metropolitan of Chalkida, at the time of distribution of the antidoron, a gentleman came and said to me: “at the end, I want to speak with you”.

The man waited for me to give the antidoron and as soon as I finished he came to me and said: “I want to give you something for Thessaloniki”. I say “my pleasure, when do you want to meet?” We met one day and he brought me this Icon.

This man, named Georgios Kaltsas, came from Thessaloniki, his parents and grandparents lived here. In the 1930’s they left Thessaloniki and after many years he and his family found themselves in Chalkida.

This icon of the Virgin Mary was in the church of Saint Dimitrios before the fire of 1917 and his family, in the great fire of ‘17, rescued this Icon.

And this Icon was left in the hands of his family, to this man who – by any chance? - nothing is accidental in our life, he wanted to offer it to me because he told me that the place of this Icon is in the Church of Saint Dimitrios and not in his house. So we thank him very much. May we all have the blessing of the Mother of God.

I will personally undertake the costs of the conservation of the icon and we will place it here in the Church so that we will have the blessing of reminding us of the fire of 1917 which destroyed the city but was saved thanks to Saint Dimitrios and may God, through the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Dimitrios, prevent any threat against the city” said Metropolitan Filotheos who, after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, accepted the well wishes of the clergy and the people.

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