

## Reverend Gregory N. Eliades

Asia Minor by virtue of its geography is a crossroads between Europe and Asia. As such, it has historically been a region of conflict that often times has seen violent confrontation. The Macedonian struggle of 1904-1908 and the Balkan War of 1912-1913 saw many Greeks seeking safety in the region of Halkidiki in Greece. The most dramatic migration of displaced Greeks from Asia to Halkidiki took place in 1922. It was during this period that the vast majority of Semendrians fled the interior of Asia Minor to Halkidiki in northeastern Greece.

The Reverend Gregory N. Eliades was born in Semendre, Asia Minor in 1859 where he lived with his wife, Sateria and four children. He was ordained into the priesthood in 1900. In 1924, he founded the first Greek Orthodox church in Karkara, Greece.

The Reverend Eliades came to the United States circa 1926 to reside in Pontiac, Michigan, alternately with his son and daughter.

As the community grew, a church to fulfill the spiritual needs became a necessity. Previously, a hall was rented to hold church services. In 1928, forty members of the community met and organized the St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Pontiac, Michigan.

Reverend Eliades became the first priest. It was through his devotion and spiritual guidance that the church was able to function through times of difficulty.

The first church was erected on Hill Street in 1928. After a few years the city of Pontiac purchased the church property in the early 1930's and built the City Hall. This necessitated a move and property at 97 Mariva was purchased. The new church began in 1931. Later in 1935 the hall was built and dedicated.

Reverend Eliades, the first priest, served the community in 1928, 1932, 1939, 1940 and 1941. He died on March 23, 1952 and the funeral was held on March 27, 1952. Seven priests participated in the funeral service.

The present church, St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan was completed in November 1966.

The sacred utensils, which were hand made of silver in 1866, together with the Holy Gospel with silver inlay dated 1754, embarked upon an incredible journey with Father Gregory Eliades as they traveled from Asia Minor to a small village in Greece, before crossing the Atlantic Ocean to their final destination – the city of Pontiac, Michigan.

Subsequent to the death of Father Gregory, these sacred utensils and Holy Gospel became the property of his son, William B. Gregory, now deceased. His wife and children donated these sacred utensils and the Holy Gospel to the Shrine of St. Photios in St. Augustine, Florida on June 27, 2003.

The family of William P. Gregory include:

- His widow, Sophia Gregory of White Lake, Michigan
- His son, Nicholas G. Gregory of Waterford, Michigan
- His daughter, Bethania Gregory of White Lake, Michigan
- His daughter, Elizabeth Bisbikis of White Lake, Michigan

They are all present members of St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, which originally began in Pontiac, Michigan, with the Reverend Gregory N. Eliades being the first priest.

Father Gregory's daughter, Sophia Savvas (deceased), formerly of Farmington, Michigan, was married to Azarius Savvas (deceased).

Her children are:

- Anastasia Mulopulos of Toledo, Ohio
- Evanthia Samra (deceased), formerly of Farmington, Michigan
- Savva Savvas of Las Vegas, Nevada

Additionally, Father Gregory has grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren in the United States and Greece.