

# LOOKING TOWARDS OUR CENTENNIAL

This is the fifth article in our series commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> year of our Annunciation Parish and it's appropriate that we celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday of our parishioner Kalliroy Pappas who was born on August 20, 1920, in Psari, Messinia, Greece. Do you have fond memories growing-up in Sacramento that you'd like to share? Just give the church office a call! You can catch up and read articles that appeared in previous issues of the *Observer* written by Bill Triphon, Antonia Paras Chapralis, Julie Mamalis, and Demetre Fotos.

**“Εκατό Χρόνια” - “Χρόνια Πολλά!”**

**A Tribute to Mom and Yiayia**

**By Bessie Papailias**

On August 20, 2020, Kalliroy Konstantopoulos Pappas turned 100 years old and followed in the footsteps of previous Annunciation centenarians. Born in Koliotsi (above Psari, Messinia), Kalliroy grew up on a traditional Peloponnesian farm tending to olives and fields. The second of four children (three daughters and one son), she lived through many of the day-to-day difficulties that Greece endured before, during and after the war.



Many of Kalliroy's personal stories remind us of the hardships of village people during World War II. Her father, Demosthenes, owned the general store during German occupation. In order to save the family and ensure that his wife Emilia and the children were not harmed, her father gave the German soldiers whatever they wanted in the way of food and provisions, including small goats on which the invaders would feast. Her voice cracks occasionally while telling these stories and you can feel the horror and fright of those difficult years. She adds that people in villages at least had food where people in the cities starved – and for that she is grateful. To this day all she asks is that we donate to the poor who do not have food and to children who cannot fend for themselves and need medical care.

Post war, her older sister, Georgia Apostolos, married and came to West Sacramento, California. Through Georgia's efforts and her sister-in-law's Christina Apostolos, they did a "proxenia" with Harry Pappas. In 1952, Harry went to Greece and married Kalliroy on November 15th. Kalliroy arrived six months later in the United States on May 2, 1953. Although 25 years her senior, Harry and Kalliroy had a wonderful and prosperous marriage and life. To this day, Kalliroy insists that wealth is not measured by money but by family, good health, and how you treat others.

Kalliroy and Harry decided that Kalliroy would be a housewife and not work outside the home. The primary reason for this was to ensure that their daughter Bessie would learn the Greek language which was very evident when she went to Kindergarten and did not speak any English! With that, Kalliroy became the landscaper, the gardener, and the painter for their home and rental properties. She always enjoyed working in her garden and tending her vegetables, fruit trees, and bees. She also brought with her that age old tradition of making homemade wine, which according to County papers, they did annually to the tune of the allowable 200 gallons per year!

Kalliroy embraced the life in America – first and foremost learning the English language, taking care of her business and learning to drive at age 51! All of these enabled her to become independent, take care of her husband and pick up her granddaughter Eleni after school across town! She always says that making the United States her country was more than just stepping foot on American soil – it was a way of life ... one that all immigrants should embrace with pride for this great opportunity.

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Although not active in many parochial organizations, Harry and Kalliroy were among the first 30 individuals who became the “Golden Age Group” (precursor to the Annunciation Senior League - ASL). She says it was a time when seniors would get together for lunch and fellowship in the old “lower fellowship room”. Each person/couple would bring a home cooked meal, olives, cheese, homemade bread and above all homemade wine! She said it was a simple time and one that she remembers fondly. Kalliroy continued to attend the ASL up to 99 years old (!) at which time she said it was just a little too much for her.

In going through old documents, her daughter Bessie stumbled upon her mother’s citizenship papers (1956). Tucked inside the envelope was the American flag that was given to individuals the day they were sworn in as citizens. Kalliroy said she saved it because it meant she was now an American citizen, and while born in Greece, she had made the United States her country. Kalliroy continues to keep up with the political environment and is proud that she has voted in every election since she was naturalized! And, she plans to vote in November as well! Also included in the papers, there was a certificate from the Annunciation Church here in Sacramento related to the final payments for its initial construction. Kalliroy said that she and Harry had taken out a loan to pay for iconography in the dome in an effort to continue and support the Orthodox faith in this country. Kalliroy continues to be a faithful Orthodox believer who does not criticize anyone, never goes to bed without saying her prayers and does her cross before every meal.

At the great age of 100, when asked what she would say to everyone, her message is very simple ... “be kind to one another despite your differences, be happy with what you have as there is always someone who has less, help those who are less fortunate as that is what God wants us to do, do not judge others as that is not yours to do ... a simple way of life is the best!”