

Longtime local Priest who survived Nazi Occupation and Greek civil war dies at 83



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With a pen in his hand and the Bible open, the Rev. George Dimopoulos passed away at his desk in his Upper Darby home Tuesday. He was 83.

It was an appropriate end for the priest and scholar who, throughout his 55-year career, wrote weekly columns for Greek-language newspapers, taught aspiring priests in monasteries, gave Greek-language lessons to children and served at churches in Northeastern Pennsylvania for more than three decades.

"I never remember a day where he wasn't reading or writing - even to the very last breath," his son Art Dimopoulos said.

Born in Greece in 1929, the Rev. George Dimopoulos lived through the Nazi occupation and the Greek Civil War, taking shrapnel in the chest when he was 10. He was ordained a priest in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1957 and was arrested during a church service and expelled from the country for "preaching insurrection against the Turkish state" - reading the Bible, Art Dimopoulos said.

The priest then moved his family to Toronto, where he performed 2,212 weddings and baptized 4,418 children in six years for the underserved immigrant population. He came to the United States and Scranton in 1966, serving the church there for 21 years before being transferred to Upper Darby. He spent his final 14 years at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Wilkes-Barre, splitting time between his Waymart and Upper Darby homes.

The Rev. Dimopoulos also did missionary work in Alaska, Africa and India, helped to dig a well in Kenya and started to build a church in Madagascar.

"A dad and a father to so many," as his son puts it, the priest was also an author, translator and grief counselor.

Luzerne County District Attorney Stefanie Salavantis, a member of the Rev. Dimopoulos's church, said the priest helped her family deal with the devastating loss of her 34-year-old brother to a surprise heart defect several years ago.

"He was an amazing person," she said. "He truly was family."

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