

BIOGRAPHY
VERY REVERAND JAMES N. CHAKALOS
JANUARY 26, 1924 - SEPTEMBER 4, 2006

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Father James N. Chakalos was born in Keene, New Hampshire on January 26, 1924. As a young boy, he took a special interest in the Greek Orthodox Religion and followed his Father's footsteps as a "Psalti". He later attended The Holy Cross Seminary until 1942. Upon which time he was called into military service during World War II. Father Jim served as a member of the United State Army Air Force from 1942 until 1945. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and during his military service to our country; he was promoted to the position of Investigator.

On May 12, 1946 Jim and Ellie were married at St. Demetrious Church in Jersey City. In 2006 they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They have two children, Georgia and Nicholas (deceased) and two grandchildren, Julia and James. Father Jim attended Asbury Business School in 1953, and continued his education at Monmouth University in 1956.

Father Jim was initiated into the Asbury Park A.H.E.P.A. Chapter in 1953. At that time, this Chapter had only five (5) members. Father Jim became instrumental in helping this Chapter grow into on of the largest districts in the region. He served as the A.H.E.P.A. Chapter President from 1966-1971. During this time Father Jim had the distinction of initiating a record 26 new members into A.H.E.P.A. in one ceremony. Three of these new Ahepans later advanced within the organization and served as District Governors. Father Jim has spent over 50 years as an active brother in the A.H.E.P.A and during that time his efforts have help perpetuate the ideals of Hellenic Culture. In recognition of his outstanding performance and achievements throughout his A.H.E.P.A years, he was honored in 2002 as "Ahepan of the Year".

Upon completion of his religious studies, Father Jim was ordained a priest in 1972 and was assigned to the St. George Parish in Asbury

Park. During his tenure as pastor to the Asbury Park congregation, he served as the State of New Jersey Youth Director for 7 years. Under his leadership, the Asbury Park GOYA recruited a record of 126 members.

In 1972, Father Jim and his wife, Ellie, founded the Hellenic Dancers of New Jersey. Since the inception of the Hellenic Dancers hundreds of young Greek-American of first, second and third generations have dedicated themselves to the perpetuation and sharing of their rich cultural and heritage with American audiences. Ellie has researched and amassed a repertoire of over 300 dances, songs and traditions from virtually every corner of the "Greek World". Today this outstanding troupe has been the recipient of standing ovations by prestigious and appreciative audiences exceeding at times 34,000 persons. Their performances have been by special invitation only, and including civic, cultural, philanthropic, academic and social affairs. In 2007 The Hellenic Dancers will be celebrating 35 years of dance.

His next assignment was to St. Barbara's Greek Orthodox Church in Toms River in 1982. In 1992, he was assigned as assistant pastor at Kimisis Tis Theotokou in Holmdel. Father Jim served this community with devotion, leadership and love. Father Jim was a very special priest in the community. Everyone in the community would always have a different name in his eyes. He would walk by and say hello "Janet", "Stella" and the parishioners would respond back even though that wasn't their real name. You could not but love Father Jim. He was the "best", there was nothing he wouldn't do for you. He would try and get it done no matter what it took. He was truly a "Father" to all in the Kimisis community. On August 15, 2006 Father Jim was elevated to the level of Very Reverend James N. Chakalos. Father Jim was overwhelmed with his elevation and was so very proud of it.

On September 4, 2006 our beloved Father Jim fell asleep. We will miss him deeply but will always remember all the happiness and joy he has given to us. Father Jim would have celebrated his 35 years of priesthood in 2007.

Father Jim will have a special place in our hearts forever.
May his memory be forever eternal.