

The Grandma Presence

The Mother of My Mother

Our Beloved Nona: God, Church, & Family

by Timothy Stathis

She was there.

She was as part of my life as everything else, as a little boy, a growing boy, a teen-age boy, as an emerging yet-to-be adult could perceive anything as part of life.

She ascended Godward, that is, left from her presence among us in our world, to the realm for which she knew her Soul went forth to from this world, at the very time when my boyhood was completed, that time in which I sought to purposefully place myself in a path Godward. Only then, only at that point for both she and I, did I understand her.

[*Nona for Greeks is pronounced "NAW-NAH"]

Part 1: The Greek Orthodox Church

When I eagerly pressed my case to join the Alter Boys of the Church at 7 years old, an exclusive cadre of Syracuse Greek boys usually not accepted until 9 or 10 years old, it was only because of the enthusiasm, which otherwise is seen as 'a must' and just what all Greek families should make their young boys become part of, that they let this 'little one' try.

Though it seemed but a strange kind of club to be part of, as I would hear from what I could understand in that youthful innocence, that the older boys there would be rough and tough with one another, there would be jokes about "Faint Boy" who couldn't endure the lengthy honoring standing still at the Priest's sacred Alter table without fainting, how if so-and-so messed-up on this or that part of the routine rituals that that one would get "rolled" in the back room by the older leaders, it just seemed to me I just wanted to do what my older brothers did.

I understand, though, that by the time I joined, 'the real tough players' at the top level were already gone, and a more kind and gentle Head Alter Boy was now in charge, which indeed was true. The initiation into the elite group started with one having to stand in one's normal church clothes in the side back-entranceway to the Alter area, and simply observe the flow of the 2-hour set of routines conducted by Priest and robed boys.

The whole Holy Service was in Greek, and I did not understand a word of it, just as my Grandmother spoke only Greek, and as my parents, aunts and uncles conversed with her, I also never understood what was being said. That's just the way it was as normal to my little 7-year old mind and perceptions, this "Greekness" was there, all around me. I was an observer of its flow that had meaning to those who flowed with it, of which I was simply just on the periphery. Standing in that little entranceway, all the Greek congregation was

seated out there in view, in participation in listening, prayer, and the songs of the choir: the Priest, in such elaborate robes which made a little observing boy feel him as otherworldly, holding up a cloth and chanting Greek words for which had to have some significance to the whole congregation, and the knowledgeable Alter boys, some my older brothers, going back and forth with ornate implements: the Candles atop poles, and "Fans" they called the other designed depictions upon the other poles, which I never understood why they were called that because they didn't blow air, and then the Cross on the largest of these poles, and the pain-struck presence of a dead or dying man upon it held in most reverence, this last to a little boy mind meant I was supposed to know it to be the most important of all things, but as to what it all meant and why it, the Cross and Man, these Alter Boys and what they held, this Priest and his Greek words, prayers, and songs, what this congregation was seeing, listening to, and participating in, I only understood that I should become part of it.

After my mandatory 3 sessions, 3 Sundays, at the observation post in the side entranceway view of the lighted Alter and the bustling back and forth of those who knew what they were doing bringing this or that to the Priest, I would have my verbal quizzing by the Head Alter Boy, Peter, to see if I could earn my Robe, to become part of them. I was so nervous, but made to feel comfortable by Peter...he had a natural instinctive gentleness with children.

I remember how strange a feeling it was to put on that ornate Robe, an emotional/physical transforming "from the normal to the special" as a little boy could so perceive. And then the moment, the being sent-out from that entranceway to the actual Table Alter of the Priest: the duty to simply stand next to it for one section of the ritual routines until such and such a signal meant the sacred candles were going to go out those special doors for which the chosen boys would stand astride each side of the Priest while he read from an extra-large, gold-leaf enameled Holy Bible, out in closer proximity to the watching congregation. But being a candle holder wasn't the first step in initiatic advancement.

Yes, to stand there, head bowed, hands needing to be exactly in place in relaxed palm-grip in front of oneself, doing that, just right, was the first noble step in being part of it all.

And so I did. I had done it, for all to see.

When the long, the very long service was complete, everyone dresses down out of robe, goes through the Priests Office area, and out the doorway to the Church Hall, to normal life out there.

A reaching-out in receiving gesture by my mother: "Did you see me?"

"Oh yes! And Nona was so proud of you!"

Such a moment, such a memory! I had, for the first time, entered Nona's world.

Part 2: Watchfulness

When I entered the world, my mother had already brought forth into the world 8 other children in 12 years, and 2 years after me she was the vessel for her last, completing 10 in 14 years. Nona, therefore, of course, was always around to help and watch over us.

We knew she was there. We knew she was watching us. We knew she was a presence among us, here and there at our house, at her house upon visits, at family gatherings in backyard picnics, at birthdays and weddings. When Mother was not around, she alone was the watchful attentive eye. Provider (of food); Protector (safety Do's & Don'ts).

Since I and my younger brother were the littlest of all, when Nona was there, especially when we were still toddlers, Nona had her extra attention upon us, especially what should and shouldn't go into our mouths.

Oh, the horror, screeches of fear, exasperations of emergency that ensued should something small discovered by us be discovered on the floor and start to go from hand to mouth! This is how we learned. Our playful, or inquisitive sense of exploration and discovery, cut quite short quite suddenly with Mother's or Nona's catching a moment of finding something to choke on. But not only choking, a piece of food hitting the tainted realm of disease (the kitchen floor) was conveyed to us as being something that would certainly bring-on an emergency as bad as choking. It must not have taken too many screeches from the watchful women to make us learn this. I can remember the first few, especially as being elder in this lesson to my little brother.

I recall this one time while I sat upon the kitchen floor eating a cookie and part of mine broke-off and fell to the floor and I went to pick it up and was about to put it in my mouth when my mother ran to my rescue and quickly snatched it out of my hand. "No, Timothy, if it's on the floor it's DANGEROUS! Don't do that again. You could get really sick. If food falls on the floor, pick it up and throw it away or give it to me."

It must have been within a day or two of that profound lesson in safety, that I caught sight somehow of Nona in the kitchen cutting some kind of food or other and a piece of whatever it was flew to the floor not far from me. I saw Nona go over to it, pick it up and then put it in her mouth. My jaw must have dropped in awe-struck amazement at this death-defying act. I envisage this moment at seeing Nona in that simple thin garment she was always clothed in going on as though nothing had happened wondering why she didn't suddenly keel-over.

Later that afternoon, Robby and I, me perhaps 5 years old, and Robby 3, had just received a small bowl of a couple of little carrot sticks from Nona and were chomping on them when Robby dropped his on the floor. He picked it up and was about to put it in his mouth and I

exclaimed: "Noooo! Don't eat it!" He, wide-eyed, looked at me with fear and surprise and froze, holding it in his hand then looking at it. I then said to him, "Give it to Nona; she can eat ANYTHING!"

Jumping ahead a decade in time, I now 15, and, at that time, perhaps just a few of the youngest of The Ten were yet still living at 132 Hancock Drive, those still there were yet placed in the charge of Nona on a Summer day when my mother was away. That didn't stop my plan with my friends, a plan known by my mother and Nona, that my friends and I were going to ride our bikes to Jamesville Lake to take-out the boat jointly owned by 4 of my brothers and myself, out for an afternoon of fun; fun for the challenging long bike trip and then the boat and being independent with just friends, free of any adult oversight, frolicking on a little lake.

While out there, the dark clouds starting rolling in, the winds noticeably picked-up, and being a 20 minute ride home we began back. Back at Hancock Drive, Nona noticed the dark clouds rolling in and winds picking up, and she was mindful of me. I wasn't mindful of anything but getting back to home, shelter! before getting drenched in a storm on route!

The lightheartedness of the friends in joking conversation and silly banter that marked our way out to the lake and upon it, was altered now to a certain intensity in each of us pressing on in mustering every bit of skill we had in speed and safe navigation of traffic, with perhaps a shout out to the others, "I hope we can beat it!" meaning the rain, as distant rolling thunder was heard by us all.

First this friend, then that one, peeling off of our bonded adventure toward each's direct route home. Then I, alone, digging hard into my pedals on any hill, whipping down any hill, the intensified wind pushing back, the thunder getting louder and closer in sequenced booms.

Then Hancock Drive, sprinkles in the face, but only that, I had beaten it, as I slowed to make the turn into the driveway. And seated there in simple thin garment upon the porch, with an eye upon me, eyes wider now in seeing me, scrutinizing eyes turning and melding into a smiling face, and then an applause, yes, Nona actually clapped her hands several time muttering some kind of Greek prayerfully expression of gratitude, clearly the happiest old woman in the world as I rounded past her down the driveway hill, and as I entered the back garage the onslaught of gushing rain descended in torrents.

Yes, it was as though, and perhaps even likely the case, that Nona thought, not in words but in instinct, that she felt, not in anxiety of it, but in driven emotion to duty, that somehow by her occupying her post at the porch, looking outward, watchful of the approaching storm and awaiting me arriving into visualization, that she together in communion with the all-powerful God who watched-out over all the faithful, that the storm would be held off until I was safely home, that she, unless she did her duty therein, me as her charge might have been out vulnerable to the forces of the world where she could not protect me, but she knew that she and God could do it, and did, and in clapping for me, she was applauding the work of the Almighty.

I believe that she, arced in time with me on route, connected in bond of devoted love, as God's delighted faithful one, that she, had indeed held off the storm.

Every once-in-a-great-while one or another of us would sleep-over at the Cannellos house, just for the fun of something different with family. The Cannellos's had Nona living with them. This in particular, made for the ambience of their house to feel different; it just was how it was, but it was different.

I remember once, clearly as though I could shut my eyes then open them and be there again in that ambient moment; laying down upon the bed, cousins asleep beside me, I put my head up as I heard, then saw, Nona quietly, slowly, with carefully measured steps in quietude, enter bearing a candle, her wisdom-creased face and peaceful air approaching the dresser-top upon which she had a small alter. She placed the candle there, stood and stared at it, murmuring in Greek. She looked over to us, to me, the light now shining from the alter on her profile, she paused, looked back at the Alter, a few more soft Greek words not to us, not to me, but for us, for me, and she exited. Watchfulness, to the very last moment of waking consciousness. I sat back, the soft little light of her Alter illuminating the dresser-top accouterments, and laid-down to sleep.

Part 3: A Lifetime of Knowledge & Wisdom

Knowledge differs from Wisdom in that knowledge is an accumulated set of learned information and developed skill from which, then, wisdom may draw from for perception, guidance, insight, and astute action....when the need, a need, arises in the complexity of life, the challenges presented in daily life.

Water.

Our lives, in all things, of course, like ALL LIFE, is intimately connected from life's origins, even in the womb, to water, the protective bubble that encases us inside our Mothers' very life, to the body's need for safe fresh drinking water, to the life that gives the life from the oceans, to the water cycle in evaporation, clouds, and rain, then Nature's geography and geology, found in Earth's under-realm just above bedrock, then surface creeks and rivers, and fresh water lakes.

Hers was a life in origin upon that geographic landscape most closely connected to the vastness and forces of the ocean, born and growing-up upon the Greek Island of Cephalonia.

The perils of life and death, the fragility of life and the proximity of death ever as a shadow all around life, was her growing-up experiential realm with witnessing her mother lose babies soon after childbirth, mother in danger of dying in childbirth, and compounding all this, her own little brother, whom she adored and tried to act like mother

in protection when she was but little herself, she would face the horrid experience of the dear one drowning while playfully swimming by the ocean's shore.

But she married to her beloved husband who brought her to America where he would learn to love water and boats, so the lives of their progeny, and ours through their daughter, our mother, were founded too in the joy of life by, in, and upon the water. In fact, the story goes that all and everything of the existence of my brothers and sisters, and all who have come after us, is found in origin in a boat! How's that?

To ask the hand of his beloved in marriage of my mother's father, Nona's husband, he would become our father, rowed-out upon a boat in a lake with his prospective father-in-law to be. Having soon before returned from the European Theater of World War II, my father likely used "Sir" in addressing my mother's father:

"Sir, I would like to ask your permission to take your daughter Maria as my wife."

"Well," my grandfather thoughtfully began and then with a rather wry smile and sarcastic tone, "you can have her, but if you want my advice, you'll be better-off to jump into the lake now..."

The sarcastic meaning is obvious and we feel the humor of the Boat Captain, but after a lifetime in retrospection on the life of the then young Veteran, carried over through a lifetime in devotion to his wife and family responsibilities, one might interpret or imagine for fun that he interpreted the meaning in pure innocence and took it to mean that, for the honor of having her hand in marriage, the worthy damsel was only worthy of one who would be willing to do anything for her, even risk his own life in jumping into turbulent waters on her behalf!

His long life in devotion to her, in giving all of himself and all needed sacrifice over and over again, is a life lived-out in the symbolic meaning of his willingness to jump in a lake for her at risk of his own peril therein. He did so, a thousand times over throughout their 66 years of marriage.

The Lake.

Notwithstanding the above, my father was not keen on the recreation in and around water, but my mother was, for herself and her children, and he acquiesced to her in this regard and supported her desire for family Summer Camp rentals from early days once all the children had been brought into the world, the first camp on Otisco Lake being when the youngest of The Ten was just 2 years old.

Although Nona always feared the water, especially, that is, fearing it as it had to do with children frolicking in and around it, as the experience of such frolic she witnessed the drowning of her baby brother, all she could do from her perspective was to be the presence of wisdom in its regard, conveying that it should be a place necessitating a constant vigilant eye of protection. And so this was her example unto my mother, and when either or both were upon the Lake at camp, they could only really half enjoy it, enjoying it

vicariously through the joy the children were having, and half-enjoying the peacefulness of the nature surroundings with that strain of anxiety about it too.

I have three distinct memories of Nona at the Lake.

Regarding the above, I recall a time, a rare time, that my mother had left the watchfulness by the water to Nona while she went shopping in the city, and though my mother went off frequently for that reason, she only did so with strict understanding that no one could be in the water or boats until she was present. Especially in this memory, the Cannellos children were present too. All pressed Nona to let us go off in the boat for water skiing. Nona was always the presence of peace & tranquility, often a sounding-board of my mother's expressed anxieties with a consoling air, but here in my youthful observations, I shockingly saw her raise her voice in Greek exasperated power, and put into place the ones trying to convince her to let them have their way. Nona raised her sewing bag over her shoulder as though she was going to hit Lisa with it. Well, I think we all were shocked and understood, and everyone backed-down.

Speaking of that sewing bag....

In the early days before the 5 youngest brothers of the Ten bought the famous Heap batman-winged Boat, each pitching-in \$20 apiece, we always relied on the boat of Uncle George. Boat covers to keep the rain out, especially then, were made of thick heavy canvas. Slowly over time Uncle George's cover got a tear, then a rip, and finally in one windy storm in trying to put it on, it ripped completely through. "Well, give it to Nona, maybe she can do something with it," was uttered, but without much hope, for the canvas was VERY thick and the cover quite lengthy. Figuring that if even it was possible, it would take her a week or more, everyone settled on accepting the likely unlucky chore of needing to bail-out the boat if it rained, in pouring rain, in the interim. It did rain again, a gushing storm just 2 days later, but we were saved from facing the downpour to bail, for the boat was fully covered, Nona somehow miraculously hand-sewing the monstrosity in a day and half!

Lastly of these camp memories specifically of Nona thereupon, was a time of my emerging maturity, when I was more awake in sensitivity beyond my internal world of my own desires, and I had developed more of, among other such things, the sense of the appreciation of what went on inside the thought & feeling realm of the adults around me, beginning to realize that perhaps they had gained something in their lives which could help me to navigate through life as I was seeing it now and what life might soon become for me.

It was a low-key family gathering at the famous Gross's camp, it was the Summer before the winter departure of what would become my first set of my three exploratory hitchhiking travels over the next 2 years. Camp always meant that any family member was always welcome at any time, to drop out to the lake, and for this reason my mother always wanted to be sure there was plenty of food, just in case.

On this sunny afternoon my mother's sisters were there, and with Nona, all sitting in semi-circle by the water as younger ones were swimming about in the water. I was sitting

on the picnic bench just behind them but not far from my mother. They were talking in Greek conversing much with Nona. Suddenly the scene hit me, and I understood something. Here was Nona with her 3 daughters. Out and about and all around were their children. Her body was now one that she knew slowed down, but all that was important in her life was thriving all around her. I watched her. She seemed so animated in her conversing and in her pausing in smile in view around her. She spoke again in Greek about something to her daughters who were so respectful in listening and responding. I wanted to know what it was she was saying. What was this woman who was oldest among us, the Mother presence of all present, saying. I whispered to my mother, "What's she saying?"

"Oh, she's just talking about who she saw and spoke with at Church and what she talked about with some of her Greek friends there. About their families."

I understood something then, felt something, about Mothers and Grandmothers, and the circle of Greeks from which we came forth from into the world, of which I now was emerging within, closer to becoming an adult.

Part 4: Nearing the End

She never returned to Greece.

When given an opportunity she refused the offer saying, in her way, that all her life's cares were here where she was with daughters, grandchildren and watching over the ever evolving emerging lives of all who, in essence, came forth as a result of her and her husband. From the day her husband died, she ALWAYS wore black in his honor. I remember a day, astounding to all, when once for a wedding she wore her style of thin simplicity but embroidered with subdued patterns of flowers in blue.

She honored the memory of her husband at her altar, and we can now guess that part of her emotions in evening approach with the candle at night, before rest, were emotions spent in memories in her devotion to him and in gratitude for the life led with him, stretching back to when he had brought her from humble dwelling in Greece to the home they made together here where she now stood.

Together they had lost a daughter too early, their second, Barbara, an innocent beloved mother of two girls, suddenly taken in her early 40's. I asked my mother once how she, my mother was affected by that: "Of course we were all very upset and suffered. But the depression didn't linger for Thea Corny, Thea Eleni, and me, though we missed her, but we were so busy with the daily cares of our children that demands so much of a mother."

"How did it affect Nona and your father?"

"They were very sad, both, very sad, for a long time."

Nona had sisters back in Greece.

I recall how once I was at her house, which was the Cannellos house, I watched from another chair in the room Thea Corny and Nona seated together at a table and a letter from one of her sisters was opened, and Thea Corny was reading it to Nona in Greek.

There was such delight on Nona's face as she took-in the news. I suppose that on occasion she dictated a letter to have her daughter send in reply of the news from her life in America, and one can imagine that news was all about family, taking pride in the families to which she was Matriarch.

She never learned to read, nor to speak English. She managed in her world as Matriarch, how she understood her duty to God in all He provided for her to care for.

Approaching the days of rest from this long life lived, then, in duty, the duty she sensed was her very reason for existence, the duty fulfilled as she could comprehend her purpose of existence: church, prayer, providing food & shelter, comfort, consoling others, care for the ill, handmaid of God in hoping for His blessing upon those whom she naturally loved because they were "family," all this a natural progression of aging onward toward the body slowing down, approaching the inevitable time of leaving the body to be received wholly into the embrace of the Lord God who already had with Him her husband and daughter.

When I was in the midst of the first of my "Three Sets of Travels" earlier mentioned, when I was somewhat settled on a forested land among a small group of people where I had built a tiny A-Frame shelter, not much bigger than a tent, but made of wood with a window from which the stars could be seen, I had written home to Syracuse from there and this being the first place in my, by then, two months of excursions in the East in winter, Florida being a natural place from which to find myself for a hitchhiker traversing without money for a shelter from the cold, I was stable enough there to receive back a letter from my Mother.

The letter I received, in part it read: "Please come home. Nona is very sick."

In my open field surrounded by forest, viewing the stars above, I read this letter sent from 1200 miles away. My whole memory of it was that somehow my mother's perception of wanting me near had to do with the aggregate family attention upon the illness of her mother, this motherly, grandmotherly presence always among our lives, of she who was now suffering. That that would be meaningful, heartfelt to her, if I was there too at this time, that was precious.

As I had found "something" of what I had set-out to find and find-out about myself in juxtaposition to "The world out there," for now, and I knew it was only a temporary step achieved among more needing to be ascended, and there was a winding-up of certain aspects of what the Florida's people's aims were for which I had entered at an interval in it all, I used the letter, its motherly request, as the impetus to hit the highway again, this time back North, now just before Spring, for an interval back among family.

Home.

The sense of "Home" for a woman is different than that of a man's connection in thought, word, and deed of it. A woman, born with a womb and a million eggs of life's potential-emergence within her, has her child's first home within her, a place of her offspring's comfort, protection, and nourishment as the baby growing inside her, as its Soul's connection to the Above becomes more conscious of developing physical form within her, within The Mother Presence, who radiates love throughout her body as the baby-within's first felt emotions of existence, yes, a woman and her baby senses all this.

The woman, the mother, is super-sensitive to what outer "home" the child will be born into, and looks to the dependence she has then to the father provider of it, and where there is no father, to any who so care in so providing the newborn's place in the world. If she is completely on her own, she and the child are the all & everything of her sense of reason-for-being. The child's need is great, and "Home" is the place of needs met and needs fulfilled.

And so it is throughout all the years of her child's or children's growth unto maturity, and then "home" is the place always for family, always an extension of her very body, thoughts & feelings, as the greater womb of the expanded lives of those who emerged from within her, her place to ever give of herself for nourishment, protection, and love's care to family, for whom she ever-hopes all shall return unto her.

Nona did not want to die in a hospital.

In 1979, I was just beginning to awaken, and I knew I was only back for a short time before I had to take next steps. In that 10 week interval following my 1st return, I recall an evening when my sister told of how earlier in the day when the family was trying desperately to get Nona to go to a hospital for they feared her illness otherwise fatal, Nona was uncharacteristically argumentative, refusing to go. It was reported that she had said, in Greek, of course: "When people my age go to the hospital they don't come back. I am not leaving my home!" My father was called upon to go to her house and try to convince her, and she threw a shoe at him in defiance!

She did ultimately go to the hospital under the compromising promise that after whatever Doctor's attention they wanted her to have, she would be brought back home, no matter what, that they promise her that if she, upon returning home again takes a turn for the worse, that they will not take her from her home again... saying, "...from my home, my family here, I will pass-on to God."

The day before I had determined as the day of my second departure in travel out from Syracuse, I recall how I had been praying upon the Reservoir hilltop that overlooked the cityscape, a place I had become very accustomed to for my contemplations; I walked directly from there over to 400 Robineau Road to see Nona.

My mother was there at her bedside.

Though the body didn't function as it rested, Nona's face was aglow. She was fully conscious of the presence of her daughter and of me upon my visit as she looked to me, as she smiled at me.

Being filled in this mutual communication that needed no words, the Grandmother's comfortable awareness of her daughter beside her and love for one of her eighteen Grandchildren, another one grown now, no longer a little child, but for whom she replayed in her memories the whole spectrum of new birth, through crawling, through childhood frolic, to teenager to now, to one now to go out from Home unto the world, this was a further moment of a lifetime spectrum of moments such as these, another to acquiesce to The Will of God.

When my mother told her, in simple terms: "Timothy is going away," her time-condensed reflection, it seemed to me in that moment was: Care, worry, concern, compassion, the giving of comfort, all as purpose for her sense of reason for being, no longer able for these, to actively give her all as she had always done, now knowingly confined to the bed of her 'great rest', that it was given to her otherwise now, a beloved one of her God, to, simply and deeply-felt, be an instrument of His Blessing for her beloved ones.

"O Theós na páei mazi sou (*May God go with you*), she said; she so gave of herself one last time to me, the handmaid of God, in blessing to her grandchild.

I went out from that Radiance from her Presence.

For her, a little more time in awareness of and giving of her attention upon her 3 living daughters, and all their offspring, and for these others who were close-by, a visit to that radiant presence.

The day of eventuality arrived, and as many as were able to be contacted from throughout the city, dropped what they were doing and made their way to her, and entered her room at her bedside when it was known her time was near. I was away traveling, and unable to be contacted.

She was most deservedly so, a beloved Grandmother, loved by God's Presence which we can be assured she felt, He so near to her, even as she at this end-time was in constancy of feeling love for her family every day as she lay with one or another of her daughters at her bedside, and frequent visits of grandchildren.

For her, it is certain, these well-known words of prayer help us understand how she felt in these end-days:

*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.*

*He restoreth my Soul;
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness,
...for His Name's Sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil; For Thou are with me.
Thy rod, and Thy staff;
They comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a table in the presence of my enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.*

*Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the House of The Lord, forever.*

When we think of you, our Beloved Nona, when we feel something within us, that we know are emotions of thee, of you for us and us for you; when all of this family generations hence reflect in feeling for whomever is *their Grandmother Yia Yia*, I pray that we sustain that consciousness of your Grandma Presence more than in just fleeting, passing moments, but that each of us in such time of memory of you, in each time, that in such times, this ever adds to all you gave us already while we were in your life, while you were among us on Earth, and we, conscious of you in The Hereafter, now, add to that which we have already become because of you, ...even while...

....your Memory ever renews God's Love for all for whom you are the Matriarch of, of our existence, and our children's, and so we pray: *May your Memory Be Eternal.*

And, we pray, may it be so, as you would so wish it so, that such shall always be for every grandchild, **to each and every grandmother now and yet-to-be**, grown from the branches of your Family Tree, The Grandma Presence likewise so felt, deeply.

*Forever and ever, unto the Ages of Ages,
Amen*





The Two Grandmothers



Nona pictured with her 3rd Daughter, Maria, and her Husband, Demo Stathis, future parents of "The Ten."



On Marshall St. near Cosmos with Maria & her youngest, Rob



A Wedding Reception of one of Nona's Grandchildren.
Pictured: Andrea, Maria, Nona, Tony, Timothy



Above:
Nona with Husband Pete and
his Mother, Grandmother of
Nona & Pete's 4 Girls:
Eleni, Barbara, Maria, Corina



Nona's Granddaughter, Andrea
with her Granddaughter, Claire.