

20/07/2019

Russian Church holds iconography, art competition for convicts



Thanks to an annual competition held by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Federal Penitentiary Service (FPS), prisoners have the opportunity to speak about their Orthodox faith and reveal their inner world through iconography and art.

Church on the Blood Photo: foma.ru

Since 2013, the Synodal Department for Prison Ministry and the FPS have organized the “Not by Number but by Humility” competition, which focuses on Orthodox painting in even years and on iconography in odd years. The contest has been attracting more and more participants, and, most importantly, changing them for the better, reports [Foma](#).

St. Nicholas Photo: foma.ru

Prisoners from all across Russia participate in the competition. Winners have come from Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Tula, Samara, Tyumen, Krasnoyarsk, and many other regions, and even beyond: One of the most recent winners came from Belarus.

"We Are Not Alone" Photo: foma.ru

The main goals of such a unique event are the spiritual and moral correction of the convicts and the formation of respect for spiritual values and the historical heritage of Orthodoxy. It is also an opportunity for them to creatively express their views on the Orthodox faith and everything connected with it.

Synaxis of Russian New Martyrs and Confessors. Photo: foma.ru

The icon-painting competition in odd years is divided into three categories: church, analog, and home icons, and the painting competition in even years also into three: Orthodox historical portraits and the Orthodox image of our contemporaries, the dome as a symbol of the Orthodox Church, and religion in the life of prisoners.

St. Daniel of Moscow Photo: foma.ru

The winners in the preliminary and final rounds receive gramotas from their local

dioceses and the Synodal Department and valuable gifts from sponsors. The competition is held throughout the year and winners are announced at the annual International Christmas Readings.

"With God in our Hearts". Photo: foma.ru

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The first winners, in 2014, painted images of the Pantocrator, the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God, and St. Sergius of Radonezh, and many other creative works.

"Faith in My Heart". Photo: foma.ru

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- Source: orthochristian