13/05/2024

Archdiocesan District Oratorical Festival



From Athens to Byzantium, the spontaneous outpouring of Achilles to the studied elegance of the Cappadocian Fathers, the Hellenic tradition has prized eloquence in equal measure with valor. Great leaders were renowned not only by brawn, but for their wisdom, counsel, and instruction—βουλήφοροι ἄνδρες.

Since 1983, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival has provided Greek Orthodox teenagers with the opportunity to continue in the Hellenic intellectual tradition of Oratory. Each year, contestants prepare speeches discussing the faith and the Church, where they develop research, writing, and public speaking skills.

Yesterday, May 11, 2024, in Manhattan, two finalists from each district division competed in the Metropolis-level Oratorical Festival for Direct Archdiocesan District at St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church of Washington Heights. The semi-finalists were Lukas Papadimitrakopoulos, Kyriaki Karayannis, Irene Zografos, Theodora Themelis, Mila Lyssikatos, and Eleni Smith from the junior division and Emmanuel Moustakakis, Demetra Chudley, Anastasia Vani, Alexa Pacholyk, Donna Nixon, and Grace Demacopoulos from the senior division.

District Chancellor Protopresbyter Elias Villis, together with Fr. Gregory Stamkopoulos and Fr. Sotiri Michalatos conveyed the blessings of Archbishop

Elpidophoros of America and commended the speakers for their outstanding performance. Fr. Elias also extended his gratitude to the countless volunteers, sponsors, donors, clergy, chairs, committees, staff, participants throughout the Archdiocesan District who contributed to the District and Metropolis Festivals. The top speakers, Irene Zografos and Grace Demacopoulos, advanced to the National Finals where they will represent the Archdiocesan District in the Championship round. This year the 2024 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival will be hosted by the Metropolis of Detroit and the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Buffalo, NY, on the weekend of June 7 -9, 2024.

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