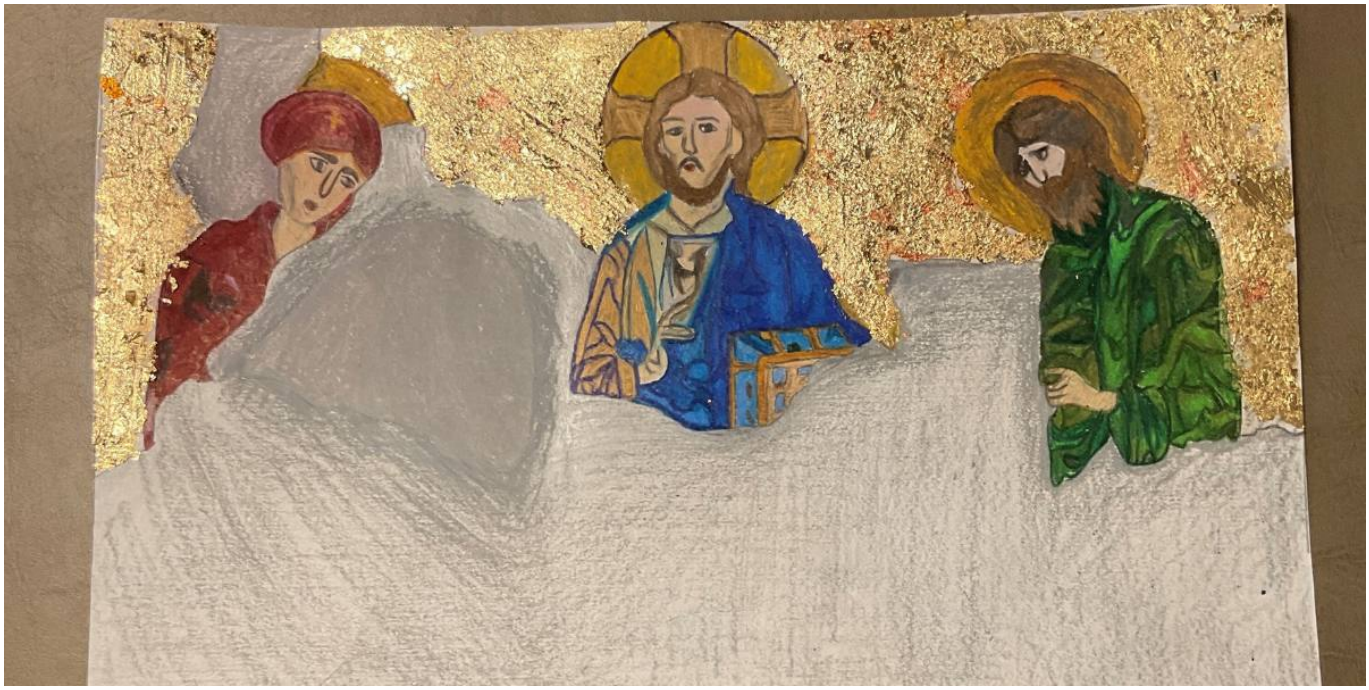
03/06/2024

Results of the Fourth Annual Drawing Contest of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine



St. Augustine, FL: The Trustees of the St. Photios Foundation, Inc. proudly share the results of the Fourth Annual Drawing Contest of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. Held in conjunction with the annual commemoration of the Fall of Constantinople, students, ages 9-12 of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, are encouraged to learn about the Fall of Constantinople and to express what was learned, through art.

This year, the children were challenged to learn about the Deesis Icon, one of Christendom's most treasured frescoes located in the upper south gallery of Hagia Sophia. This icon was concealed for centuries after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Virgin Mary and John the Baptist turn to Christ, the Son of God. The figures are two and a half times larger than life. As the south gallery was traditionally used for imperial use, it is believed that after a very tumultuous time in the Queen City, the icon was commissioned in 1261 by Emperor Michael VIII Paleologos when he reclaimed the Byzantine capital after the Latin period.

The three judges commented: "The drawings are very impressive. It was a difficult decision!" (Prof. Theodora Sergiou), "This was a hard one! Everyone did great work. The expressions depicted on the faces! Fabulous! Each submission is successful, demonstrating the artist's ambition. I see attention to detail, creating marks to

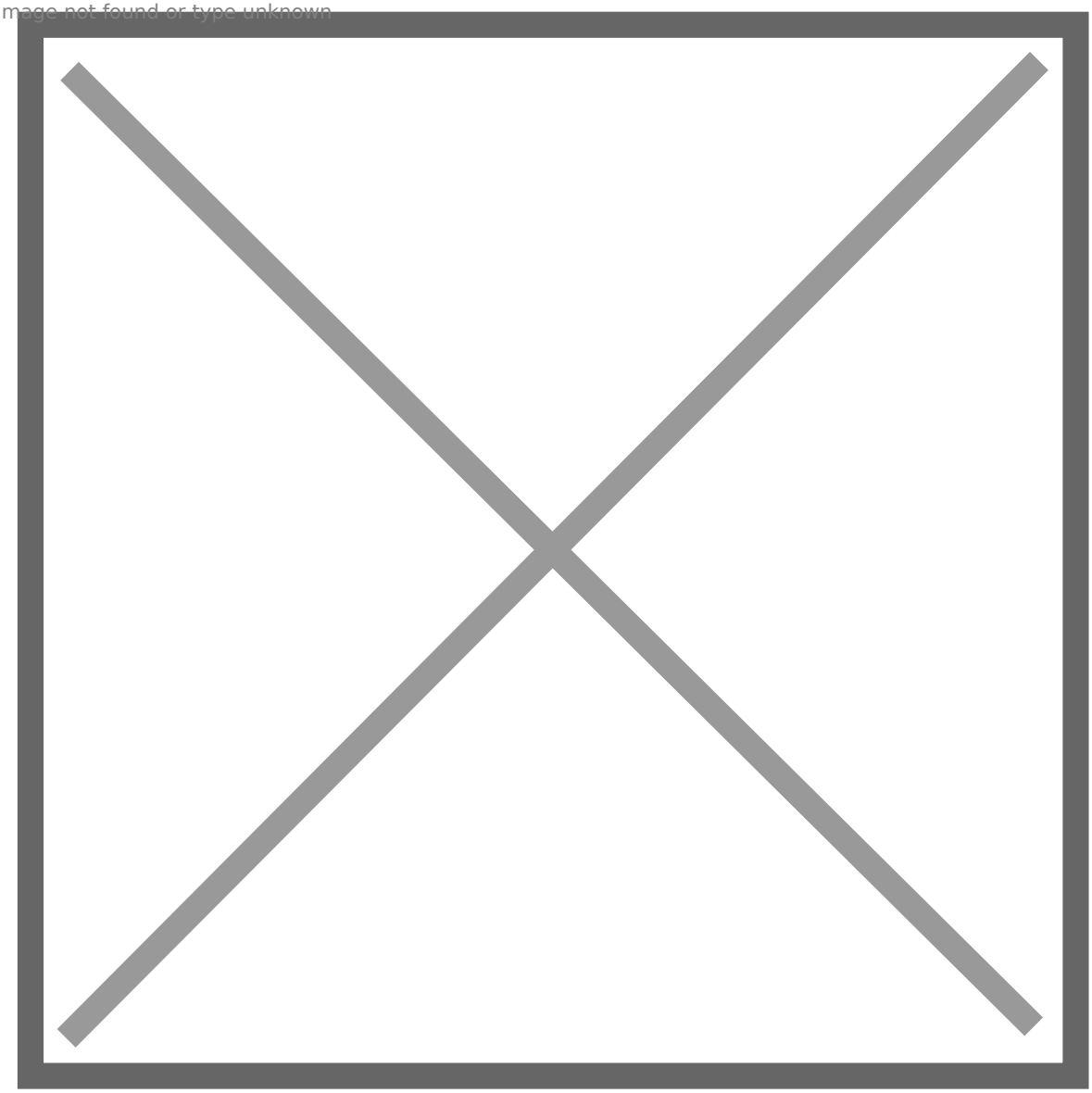
suggest texture and use of color to suggest reflected light.” (Prof. Laura Mongiovi), and “the children did an amazing job on their artwork, to me they are all number ones” (Carol Pappas).

Digital prints of the 8 x 10 originals will be exhibited in the St. Photios Museum special exhibit area through May 31, 2025.

The ranking of the twelve submissions by judges Carol Pappas, Laura Mongiovi, and Theodora Sergiou resulted in Irene Shizas winning the $250.00 prize. Irene is a 12-year-old who attends St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Clifton, NJ. Congratulations to Irene and to all the participants and their parents: Melody and Gerry Mastrokalos of Astoria, NY, Maria Gavras of Moorestown, NJ, Theodora Tsiplakos of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, Valentina Stabile of Cherry Hill, NJ, Sophia Miliotis of Astoria, NY, Haris Tsoplakis of Mullica Hill, NJ, Sofia Forcella of Tarpon Springs, FL, Sophia Bournelis of Canton, OH, Despoina Mandikou of Flushing, NY, and Sofia Danforth of Byron, GA.

The Trustees are grateful to William, Pamela, and Michael Toundas of Jacksonville, FL who have underwritten the entire cost of this project for the past four years.

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Photos: Stella Shizas

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