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Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America: The 19th Annual Orthodox Youth and Camp Workers Conference in Phoenix, Arizona



“Children are not our future – they are our present!”

By the grace of God, on the twenty-third and twenty-fourth of January, at St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church in Phoenix, Arizona, Orthodox youth workers from various jurisdictions and the entire country were gathered at the 19th Annual Orthodox Youth and Camp Workers Conference. Participants of the conference were honored to partake in the six keynote sessions followed by table discussions. The conference consisted of four speakers and presenters: Fr. Josiah Trenham, Gabrielle Otte, Dr. Eugenia Constantinou, and Jonathan Ignatius Green.

On Thursday, Dr. Eugenia began the conference with a presentation concerning the Bible and Church Fathers in Youth Formation followed by a panel presentation and discussion. That evening, the faithful gathered in the Church and together sang an akathist for our Orthodox Youth. Following the akathist and a delicious dinner prepared by the hosts, Jonathon Ignatius Green presented his documentary film “Social Animals” to spread awareness of the dangers of social media within the lives of our teenagers.

On Friday morning, Gabe Otte, Chief Executive Officer of Freenome and a devout Orthodox Christian spoke about recovering from failure and our role as youth leaders within the world. During the second session, Fr. Josiah Trenham, parish priest and father of ten children, spoke about the challenges of the digital age and helping our youth to resist the radical social agenda.

The Orthodox Church in America needs to dive into the depths of Orthodoxy and articulate a new – based on the Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, the Divine Services, the Holy Fathers and Mothers throughout history as well as this present day – a deliberate path forward in genuinely developing a current, effective, Orthodox approach to Youth Formation, that will address the unique needs and circumstances of Orthodoxy in America. My participation was made possible by the blessings of His Grace Irinej, the Bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of the Eastern America and the support of the Christian Education Department of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of the Eastern America.

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