20/05/2021

Youth Shine in 2021 Metropolis of San Francisco Oratorical Virtual Event



Congratulations to Kathleen Virsik and Maria Daniels for being selected as Metropolis of San Francisco finalists for the Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. This year's virtual event brought together participants from throughout the Metropolis of San Francisco, all of whom are to be congratulated for their

thought-provoking and eloquent presentations.

Kathleen Virsik took first place honors in the Senior Division. She attends Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Belmont, CA where she attends Sunday School, sings in the choir, and volunteers for the parish's annual Greek Festival. The topic for her award-winning presentation was "We live in a highly polarized society – left vs. right, personal liberty vs. common good, and other issues where it seems everything is politicized. How are we as Orthodox Christians called to navigate this environment?" Kate is 16 years old and is currently completing her junior year in high school. One of her favorite extracurricular activities is playing trumpet in the United States Naval Sea Cadet Corp Band of the West.

Maria Daniels was named the first place winner for the Junior Division. She is 14 years old and attends Saint John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Beaverton, OR where she is active in youth ministry and serves as a chanter. Maria's topic for her Oratorical Festival presentation was "Choose one parable from the Gospel of Luke chapters 15 or 16 that is particularly meaningful to you and explain what we can learn from it." She chose to speak on the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Maria attends a private school that prioritizes music education and has performed in her school's competitive Festival Choir. She loves serving the church through chant, in which she has been involved for the past ten years.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos described the presentations of these youth as, "nothing short of amazing and inspirational to hear your words, observe your poise, and witness the eloquence in your presentations. I will leave it for you to tell us if it was harder to be videotaped or present your speeches in person, but either way, the outcome was still incredible, and I continue to count the blessings that come forth from this ministry and the educational opportunity it provides to all the participants at our parishes."

Special gratitude is extended to the organizing committee for the Metropolis, led by Dr. Eve Tibbs (Chair, Metropolis Christian Education Ministry), Johanna Carter (Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries), and Mrs. Aristi Anagnos. The judges for the Metropolis Oratorical Festival were: Junior Division – Diane Elias, Andrea Fouts and John Strzelecki; Senior Division – Thomaida Hudanish, Madelyn Jones, and Konstantine Salmas.

"And now it is your turn, my beloved young people, to take the reins and lead us through your examples of words and deeds," remarked Metropolitan Gerasimos. "Many of our adults could not do what you have done – both in the professionalism of your preparation and study, and the composure you demonstrated during your

presentations.”

Congratulations to all the participants!

SENIOR DIVISION

First Place

Kathleen Virsik – Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church – Belmont, CA

Second Place

Ereni Delis – Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church – Belmont, CA

Third Place

Naomi Solomon – Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church – Peoria, AZ

Honorable Mention

Evan Anagnostopoulos – Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church – San Bernardino, CA

Noah Carandanis – Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral – Portland, OR

Niat Solomon – Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church – Peoria, AZ

Kathy Zeppos – Saint Basil Greek Orthodox Church – San Juan Capistrano, CA

JUNIOR DIVISION

First Place

Maria Daniels – Saint John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church – Beaverton, OR

Second Place

Samuel Virsik – Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church – Belmont, CA

Third Place

Andrew Waldo – Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church – Chandler, AZ

Honorable Mention

Dimitri June – Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral – Los Angeles, CA

Kostas Schelcher – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church – Long Beach, CA

Nile Solomon – Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church – Peoria, AZ

Garifalia Tsiglieris – Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church – Belmont, CA

Vasilia Tussing – Holy Resurrection Greek Orthodox Church – Salem, OR

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