07/07/2021

Bay Area GOYA Summer Kick Off



The Ascension Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Oakland, CA hosted a gathering of GOYA members from the bay area on Saturday, June 26, 2021. Over 60 youth from the parishes of Ascension Cathedral (Oakland), Holy Cross (Belmont), Resurrection (Castro Valley), Nativity of Christ (Novato) and Saint Nicholas (San Jose) enjoyed an evening of fellowship and rekindled friendships that had been relegated to Zoom and FaceTime for the past 18 months. Special guests for the evening included His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco and His Grace Bishop Ioannis of Phocaea.

Participants gathered on the beautiful Platea of the Ascension Cathedral overlooking the San Francisco bay and enjoyed a delicious dinner before joining in volleyball, basketball, a variety of games, and Greek dancing. An outdoor campfire offered a time for reflection, with a discussion led by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos where he shared a message of encouragement and hope with the youth. In reflecting on the effects of the pandemic, Metropolitan Gerasimos commented, “Just because you could not see your friends in person did not make them any less your friends than before. The same is true for God – He was, is and always will be our Father, and Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” He continued on to say, “Now, my beloved children, is a time to celebrate. It is a time to give thanks to

God for bringing us back together. This event tonight is not just to kick off the summer, it is to inaugurate our re-unification as a Church family."

The evening ended with a candlelit Vespers services and a long farewell amongst reunited friends with the promise of seeing each other in person again – very soon!

The Bay Area GOYA Summer Kick Off was coordinated by Rev. Father Nicholas Mueller (Assistant Priest – Ascension Cathedral, Oakland) and Anna Teodosiadis (Youth Director – Resurrection, Castro Valley). Support was also provided by the Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

Information on additional summer activities can be found online at: https://gosfyouth.org/goya#/metropolis-summer-youth-events-2021.

goarch.org