22/02/2022

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros Closing Remarks at the Awards Banquet



Beloved Brother, Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco,

Dear Clergy and Presvyteres, and your children,

Honorable Archons, Metropolis Board and Philoptochos Sisters,

Esteemed Trustees of the FDF,

Parents, Benefactors, Supporters and Friends,

Participants at this 45th Annual Folk Dance and Choral Festival,

Beloved in Christ,

What a joy it has been to come together again in person to celebrate our Faith and our Culture! I congratulate all of the organizers, on both the Metropolis and Parish

levels. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, you have found a way to bring this event about, and it has been a marvel to witness once again the enthusiasm, artistic skill, and faith of our young people. This 45th Annual Folk Dance and Choral Festival is source of pride all across the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. You have inspired many to follow in your footsteps (or should I say dance steps!). As Your Archbishop, I am proud to be here as we begin to celebrate the Centennial of our Church.

I am also proud to say that here at the Awards Ceremony, it is as much about celebration as it is about competition. Each of you has offered your very best efforts and talents. Therefore, despite the rankings, each of you is a champion. The awards that are given out tonight are reflections of the light inside each and every one of you. And the source of that light is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. 1

The grace and skill that you have demonstrated gives praise and glory to your Creator. For God fashioned the Universe like a divine dance, filled with swirling galaxies and percussive acts of creation. In your joyous movements and brilliant sounds, you place into the Universe your love of, and your dedication to, the arts of dance and song.

The movements of your bodies reflect the turnings of the heavenly bodies. And the sounds of your voices and instruments are the echoes of creation, ringing like celestial bells across the Universe. I hope that all of you are as proud of yourselves as I am of you. You have all excelled and deserve the hearty applause of all.

As I depart this 45th FDF know that I will cherish your talents and joy in my heart, until we meet again.

I pray that God will continue to bless and guide you, and that your time together here will abide in your hearts forever.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

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