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Congratulations to the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival National Finalists



Dallas, Texas – The Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, is pleased to announce the 38th Annual St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival National Finalists. They competed on Saturday, June 4th, 2022, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas. This year's Oratorical Festival saw a national increase in participants, despite a hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, and a significant increase in scholarship donations. Congratulations to the 1st Place National Finalists from the Junior Division, Chris Zouras, and the Senior Division, Evan Anagnostopoulos!

The National Junior Division Awards were presented to:

• 1st place recipient Chris Zouras, from Ascension of Our Lord of Lincolnshire, IL, Metropolis of Chicago, was awarded $5,000 in scholarships.

• 2nd place recipient Elena Gore, from Holy Trinity of Nashville, TN, Metropolis of Detroit, was awarded $3,500 in scholarships.

• 3rd place recipient Minas Sharp, from Assumption of Scottsdale, AZ, Metropolis of

San Francisco, was awarded $2,500 in scholarships.

Honorable Mention Awards were also given to the National Junior Division. Each received $1,500 in scholarships, a plaque, and a certificate. The six recipients were: Eoanna Sarosy from Archangel Michael of Port Washington, NY, Direct Archdiocesan District. Victoria Carabus from Holy Trinity of Charleston, SC, Metropolis of Atlanta. Helen Dunning from Sts. Constantine and Helen of Webster, MA, Metropolis of Boston. Maria Macesanu from St. Basil the Great of Houston, TX, Metropolis of Denver. Gabriella Bourantas from St. George of Media, PA, Metropolis of New Jersey. Loukas White from Sts. Constantine and Helen Cathedral of Cleveland Heights, OH, Metropolis of Pittsburgh. The judges were Christina D. Andrensen, Kosta Georgeton, and Fr. Gregory Farman.

The National Senior Division Awards were presented to:

• 1st Place recipient Evan Anagnostopoulos from Prophet Elias of San Bernardino, CA, Metropolis of San Francisco, was awarded $5,000 in scholarships.

• 2nd Place recipient Demetra Feradouros, from Sts.Constantine and Helen of Palos Hills, IL, Metropolis of Chicago, was awarded $3,500 in scholarships.

• 3rd place recipient Ana DeBassio, from St. Barbara of Orange, CT, Direct Archdiocesan District, was awarded $2,500 in scholarships.

Honorable Mention Awards were also given to the National Senior Division. Each received $1,500 in scholarships, a plaque, and a certificate. The six recipients were: Paraskevi Christopoulos from St. George of Knoxville, TN, Metropolis of Atlanta. Miles Kaufman from St. Gregory the Theologian of Mansfield, MA, Metropolis of Boston. Labrini Panagopoulos from Holy Trinity of Tulsa, OK, Metropolis of Denver. Nicholas Douglas from Annunciation of Memphis, TN, Metropolis of Detroit. Kailah Callaham from Sts. Constantine and Helen of Annapolis, MD, Metropolis of New Jersey. And George Papoutsis from Holy Trinity of Camp Hill, PA, Metropolis of Pittsburgh. The judges were Fr. Vasile Tudora, Irene Cassis, and Joni Zavitsanos.

The awards presented at the Oratorical Festival Nationals were from the annual St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Scholarship Fund, which donated $15,000 worth of scholarships. And this year, the FAITH Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism Scholarships generously donated $25,000 worth of scholarships. This resulted in the scholarships presented this year more than doubling in value, with the 1st place speakers each receiving $5,000. Finalists are also eligible to apply for the Chrysostom Scholarship Program of Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek

Orthodox School of Theology.

The Metropolis of Denver graciously hosted this year's St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Nationals. His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah designated Holy Trinity of Dallas, TX, led by Fr. Mark Pakes, to host the National Festival's participants, families, and clergy for a weekend centered around faith, education, and fellowship.

National Chairperson Kathy Orfanakos Demacopoulos kicked off the Oratorical Festival Nationals with His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Director of the Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Rev. Fr. Lou Christopulos, Chancellor of the Denver Metropolis, and Fr. Mark Pakes. Nine juniors and nine seniors from each Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Metropolis presented topics ranging from their favorite church service to the importance of iconography. The Oratorical Festival can be watched here: www.goarch.org/oratorical

After the speeches, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America virtually joined the Festival for a private Q&A session with the Oratorical Festival National Finalists. This was a rare opportunity where participants asked His Eminence questions about his childhood, his faith, and how he plans to visit each parish across America. His Eminence shared invaluable wisdom to the youth about how our ego is one of the only things between us and our path to Christ.

It was a jam-packed weekend, which began with a Paraklesis service, a welcome dinner, and an ice cream social. The Oratorical Festival Nationals, followed by the Awards Ceremony Luncheon. The local committee at Holy Trinity also graciously brought the participants and their families to the Circle R Ranch in Flower Mound, TX. Everyone enjoyed an authentic Texas BBQ followed by some country line dancing and, of course, some Greek dancing too. The families closed out the weekend with Sunday's Divine Liturgy, where the first place speakers presented their speeches to the Holy Trinity community. The Philoptochos then hosted a beautiful luncheon for the families. The Parish Host Committee, led by Chairperson Lindsey Petropoulos, planned a truly memorable weekend for the finalists and their families. View photos from the Oratorical Festival weekend: flickr.com/photos/goarch/albums/72177720299526458

Congratulations to the National Finalists, and everyone who participated from across America!

Have questions? Want to join the Oratorical Festival next year? Interested in

volunteering?

Contact the Department of Religious Education:

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