

22/02/2023

Archbishop Elpidophoros Congratulatory Remarks at the Awards Banquet 46th Annual Folk Dance and Choral Festival



Beloved Brother, Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco,

Your Graces, Right Reverend Bishops,

Dear Clergy and Presvyteres, and your children,

Honorable Archons, Metropolis Board and Philoptochos Sisters,

Esteemed Trustees of the FDF,

Beloved Parents, Benefactors, Supporters and Friends,

Dear Participants at this 46th Annual Folk Dance and Choral Festival,

Beloved in Christ,

Here we are again! What a joy these past few days have been. This annual celebration of our Faith and our Culture is truly one of the highlights of my year and of our Holy Archdiocese of America. So many congratulations are due to the

Metropolis of San Francisco and to all the organizers on both the Metropolis and Parish levels. I know that you labor all year to make these days so very special, and you have certainly done it again this year, the 46th of the FDF.

Tonight, we celebrate all of you. You who have placed in the competitions, and you who have participated. Each of you has been generous with your talents, with your enthusiasm, and with your synergy.

Συνεργεία is a wonderful Greek word that is about more than mere cooperation. It means co-inspiration, co-encouragement, co-enthusiasm, co-influence, and co-motivation. It is the energetic outpouring that is always greater than the sum of its parts, because you are a greater reality together, bound by love and service to one another.

All of you have offered your very best, and all of you are champions. You have all responded to the theme of this 46th annual Folk Dance and Choral Festival, and you have risen to the occasion with grace, with dignity, with artfulness, and with excellence. I am very proud of all of you and I know that I speak for everyone who witnessed your performances, when I say, you are all winners.

Therefore, when you applaud your fellow competitors as they receive their awards, you are also applauding yourselves. You are affirming the profound and shared aspiration to rise as a community of champions. You are affirming that you are a body of believers, and faithful stewards of an ancient culture, which is lived out through your experience in modern times. The grace and skill that you have manifested this past week is a testament to your love of your Greek Orthodox identity. And you all will reap the many rewards that it brings – because being part of our Γένος of faith and culture – native or adopted – is a tremendous gift of God.

I pray that all of you are as proud of yourselves as I am of you. You have all excelled and deserve the heartfelt congratulations of all.

I leave this 46th FDF with a heart filled with cherished memories and inspired moments.

May you have a blessed Lent, a profound Holy Week, and a glorious Pascha!

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

Photo: Brittainy Newman

goarch.org