SAINT JOHN CHRYSTOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

METROPOLIS FINALS

Annunciation Cathedral
Detroit, Michigan

May 16, 2015

PHOTO: Jordan George, SJCOF Senior Division winner
My Beloved Clergy and Faithful,

During these past few months, many of the parishes have had the pleasure and opportunity of seeing our young people compete in our Parish and Metropolis Oratorical Festivals. I am certain that each of us experiences a certain amount of pride in seeing our youth talk about our Orthodox faith during this Festival time.

To be certain, we can all learn something from the talks that our young people give. We are able to better understand something about our own Orthodox faith and the way in which it impacts our youth. And perhaps more importantly, at times we are also able to recognize that our young people are actually dealing with questions and ideas that we too have had in our own lifetime. Perhaps the most important difference is that our young people have made the active effort to talk to us about how the statements of our Christian faith have impacted their own lives.

Whenever I hear our young people speak about our faith, I always remember the command of our Lord, to preach the gospel to the entire world (cf. Mark 16:15). It is interesting to note that our young people accept this challenge with an openness and a sense of joy.

So the question then becomes this: when was the last time that we were comfortable in sharing our Christian faith and witness with those around us? I am not talking about us forcing our faith on others – but rather about being comfortable in talking about our Christian walk with those around us. I am wondering if we can become as innocent and refreshing as our young people who took the challenge to talk about God in a world that wants to avoid His name.

I ask you to join me in this new day, made alive by the Pentecostal tongues of fire, so that we too might become like our young people, and tell the wonder and glory of God. May his name be praised forever!

†NICHOLAS
Metropolitan of Detroit
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**Metropolis of Detroit Clergy-Laity**

Somerset Inn
Troy, Michigan

**Register Online**

Congratulations to chapter #7040 from the Annunciation Church in Chattanooga, TN. Under the leadership of President Presvytera Thea Ballas, they were the first to complete their pledge to the St. Nicholas Church and National Shrine. This chapter has grown under Presvytera Thea from 16 members in 2011 to twenty-seven members in 2014.

Because most chapters do not meet during the summer, the past month has been busy for everyone. Elections for 2015-2017 chapter board members took place in May. As per resolution at the National Philoptochos Conference in Philadelphia, election procedures were changed after many, many years. We are currently in the process of ratification so board members can be sworn in and officers elected. The rule of no consecutive third terms for officers has hampered our smaller chapters with memberships under twenty. Even though formal meetings are not held, projects and activities will continue throughout the summer.

Although most are already doing so, many chapters have committed to the new initiative proposed by National Philoptochos President Maria Logus to Feed the Hungry by providing 250,000 meals by the summer of 2016. Some chapters are running soup kitchens and others are packing lunches for the homeless while partnering with community organizations. Go to Dayton and see some Philoptochos members passing out meals from a food truck. These are some of the things we’re doing in addition to stocking food pantries, packing backpacks for children with food items for the weekend, providing meals to homeless shelters, and more.

Several chapters have had, or are planning activities to support the rebuilding of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine. Our metropolis mailed a computer flash drive to each chapter with videos of the project to be shown to members and the parish community. The goal of our Metropolis Philoptochos is to raise $201,000 based on a 2013 membership of 2010 members. Partnering with parish councils or other organizations makes that goal more realistic. I recall a quote from Rev. Fr. John Bakas from the St. Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles. By concluding his talk, he said, “We are angels with only one wing. We can only fly by holding on to one another.”

Plans are underway for our Clergy/Laity Philoptochos Conference in October. Our national president has been invited and we hope her schedule will allow her to attend at least a portion of the conference, culminating in the election of a new Metropolis Board.

As mentioned in the last issue of the Shepherd’s Staff, National Board members were given an opportunity to tour Ground Zero on the afternoon of May 6. We traveled by school bus to the Port Authority Building where we met with Rev. Fr. Alexander Karloutsos, GOAA Rebuilding Committee, Mr. Steven Plate, director of World Trade Center construction, Nick Koutsomitis, Architect of Record, and Andrew Veniopoulos, GOAA. We viewed a video of the project, donned our hard hats, signed releases and walked to the future site of the St. Nicholas Church accompanied by construction workers and two police officers (who remained with us throughout the afternoon). It was an opportunity of a lifetime to stand in what will become the sanctuary and altar as Mr. Koutsomitis explained the process of building this religious icon. Following this very moving experience we were escorted to the reflecting pools and the 9/11 museum. This magnificent structure took us back to the morning of September 11, 2001, rekindling memories of that disastrous day of terrorism. The museum is incredible with its Historical Exhibition, Memorial Exhibition and Foundation Hall. That evening we shared a meal and heard the words of Paulette Poulos, representing Leadership 100, and Anthoula Katsimatides who lost her brother when the towers collapsed.

Our Orthodox youth are the future of our church. To keep them connected we have asked all chapters to refer graduating high school seniors to OCF with contact information as they go off to college.
2015 ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL METROPOLIS FINALS

On Saturday, May 16, 2015, fifteen exceptional speakers from throughout the Metropolis gathered at Annunciation Cathedral in Detroit, MI for the 2015 St. John Chrysostom Metropolis Oratorical Festival.

Introduced in 1983, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith. The top speakers in the Junior and Senior Divisions from each parish advance to the district level. Two finalists in each district division represent the district at the Metropolis Oratorical Festival. The top speaker in each metropolis division is then selected to participate in the Archdiocese Finals, which is hosted by a different metropolis each year.

Each participant received a small gift bag and Certificate of Participation to recognize their hard work. The top Junior and top Senior Division speakers are each awarded $500. This year, through the generosity of His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas and the Friends of the Metropolis, the top Junior and Senior speaker will also be awarded with air travel to the Archdiocese Finals in Pasadena, CA June 5-7, 2015.

We thank Fr. George Manias and the Annunciation Cathedral community for hosting such a wonderful event.

JUNIOR DIVISION Speakers:
First Place: Christian George - St. Nicholas/Troy, MI
Second Place: Elizabeth Martine - Holy Trinity/Carmel, IN
Honorable Mention (alphabetical order):
- Chloe Boucounis - St. Sophia/Syracuse, NY
- Ana Eveleigh - Annunciation/Rochester, NY
- Stephen Hohnholt - Holy Trinity/Nashville, TN
- Carrie Langendorf - Annunciation/Dayton, OH
- Sam Radwanski - St. Nicholas/Ann Arbor, MI

SENIOR DIVISION Speakers:
First Place: Jordan George - St. Nicholas/Troy, MI
Second Place: Victoria Martine - Holy Trinity/Carmel, IN
Honorable Mention (alphabetical order):
- Maria Makarounas - St. George/Southgate, MI
- Caroline Malakelis - Holy Trinity/Nashville, TN
- Nicole Naselaris - Annunciation/Rochester, NY
- Constance Poplos - Annunciation/Memphis, TN
- Julianna Schlabig - Annunciation/Buffalo, NY
- Ismene Vedder - Assumption/Louisville, KY

Youth News
by Eva Kokinos-Konstantakos—Director

The First Forty Days: High School to College Transition

Research has shown that many college students form the habits and social groups that they will maintain for the entirety of their college career in the first six weeks of their freshman year. Thus, OCF knows it is critical to personally contact every first-year Orthodox college student so that they know that an Orthodox family awaits them on campus during these crucial formative weeks. Through OCF’s First Forty Days Initiative, the local OCF student leaders, spiritual advisors, and lay coordinators introduce themselves to all new incoming students, making sure that they know about Orthodoxy on campus and nearby Orthodox parishes. These students also receive a summer mailing directly from the North American Office with information and materials to help them navigate their freshman year of college as Orthodox college students. It is the hope that through this personal connection, young college students will not only stay connected but deepen their faith during their years in post-secondary education and graduate to be faithful stewards of parishes across the continent.

By submitting your incoming freshmen’s information by JULY 15th, you ensure that your students will receive the full benefits of the First Forty Days Initiative. Visit www.ocf.net/parents-parishes/connect-students or email firstfortydays@ocf.net for more information!
MEFGOX News
by Vicki Pappas—President

This coming July 16th – 19th, choir members, and chanters from the nine states in the Detroit and Pittsburgh Metropolises, plus other guests from across the Archdiocese, will convene in Detroit for the 68th Annual Conference of the Mid-Eastern Federation of Church Musicians. Sts. Constantine and Helen parish in Westland will host the event. Father Teodor Petrutiu, Choir Director Maritsa Madias-Kalas, Elaine Charalambopoulos, and Alex Skylakos are heading up the team of choir and parishioners preparing this major Metropolis event. Participants will enjoy a full weekend of music, liturgical education, business meetings, and social events.

A good portion of the weekend will be spent learning about music and the theology of our faith. The Federation has planned a Church Music Institute (CMI) that occurs within the Convention, including a series of workshops on various topics. Thursday afternoon will begin with a read-through of music available to parishes, followed by a workshop conducted by a priest and a choral musician, “The Apolytikia: Their Theology and Their Melodies.” Concurrently, a Chanter’s Workshop on the Second Mode will be led by Christine Stavros of Traverse City; Christina was part of the first group of chanters to earn a Byzantine Music Certificate from Holy Cross. She will also present the evening workshop for everyone, entitled “Rediscovering Byzantine Chant: A Look at Hymns in Worship.”

On Friday, Metropolitan Nicholas will present another of his informative instructional sessions, this time about “The Ecumenical Councils,” which is the feast that will be celebrated on the Sunday of the Convention. On Saturday, two young Orthodox church musicians from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music will conduct separate workshops for men and women on “Vocalizing for Men’s/Women’s Voices.” These workshops are open to any parishioner and we welcome your attendance.

Another major event of the weekend will be the Grand Banquet, held on Saturday evening. It will begin with a moving Candle-Lighting Ceremony remembering all the church musicians who have departed from this life. Later in the evening, recipients of MEFGOX Memorial Scholarships will be announced as well as the recipient of the Patriarch Athenagoras Medal, given by the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians to church musicians who have made outstanding contributions to church music at the Metropolis level.

On Sunday, July 16th, the assembled church musicians will provide the liturgical music for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy to be celebrated with Metropolitan Nicholas. Chanters will join the kliros with the chanters of Sts. Constantine and Helen. The choir will sing the musical setting composed by recently departed †Presvytera Anna Gallos, performing it as a tribute to the time and talents she gave to her Church. Presvytera wrote this music in the 1970s and it was one of the early translations of the texts of the hymns into English. Presvytera’s late husband, †Father George Gallos created the translation and then he and Anna collaborated to assure that the music fit the texts and also matched the liturgical action. Mrs. Pamela Cramer, Choir Director of the Annunciation Cathedral of Houston Texas will serve as Guest Director and George Cholak from Sts. Constantine and Helen will be Guest Organist. A choir of 100 or more is expected, and we hope you won’t want to miss this beautiful Liturgy!

We hope the church musicians of your parish are planning to join us for this educational and spiritually uplifting event. Non-musicians interested in church music are also welcome to attend any and all parts of the Convention. You will find more details about the July 16th – 19th weekend on the Federation’s website: www.mefgox.org.
Our way of life has been purchased at a high price. We say “thank you” on Memorial Day to all the men and women who have placed their lives in jeopardy for us. We honor those who are now serving in the armed forces of our country and we remember gratefully the veterans of the wars of yesterday who responded to their country’s call in the hour of danger.

Our fathers, grandfathers, immigrants or not, were tough people living through tough times. They loved this country and were proud to be Americans even though many of them could not speak English very well; many fought for this country and some died for it. They had work ethics and no sense of entitlement. That is the heritage we are called to remember and to perpetuate.

Thus, Memorial Day has become a day when we remember not only our soldiers but also all our loved ones who are no longer with us. To many it is also a ‘Memorial Service Day’ when pilgrimages are made to cemeteries to place flowers on the graves of the departed and pray for the repose of their souls. Thus it leads us to think about death and about our relation to the dead.

Ordinarily we are reluctant to face the fact of death. These days, the subject is either carefully avoided or cleverly disguised. Through a conspiracy of silence, imminent death is concealed as long as possible from the one whom it most directly concerns. And when the inevitable event takes place, the evasion continues.

The Christian view of death has none of this evasion. In every case of death, life, as we now know it, comes to an end. If this were not so, resurrection, the creation of new life by the power of God, would have no meaning, for only the dead can be resurrected. The foundation of the Christian hope is the resurrection of Christ. It is the risen Lord who assures us, “Because I live, you will live also.”

As we remember our dead we wonder: where are they now and what is their condition? The answer must be: the blessed and faithful dead are with God and they are closer to him than before. Heaven means nearness to God, and it starts here, in church. That is what it means to a Christian. "To depart and be with Christ," says Paul, is "far better" than life on earth. He says also: “For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”. Death is real, but we, who believe rely on the word of his Lord, "He who believes in me, even though he dies, he shall live" (John 11:25). The life to which he comes is to be with Christ and to be "changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

As we remember our country’s heroes, our founders and our own loved ones we offer our thanks to God and say with St. Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians: You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

*Fr. Teodor Petrutiu is the Parish Priest of the Sts. Constantine & Helen Church in Westland, Michigan.
Friends of the Metropolis | Jan 1—May 31, 2015

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas

Ann Arbor, MI – St. Nicholas
St. Nicholas Philoptochos
Kotsis, Fr. Nicolaos and Presbytera Sandra
Pliakas, Deacon Vasilios and Diaconissa Kyriakoula
Daniels, Tony and Clevie
Yates, Bill and Margaret

Bloomfield Hills, MI – St. George
St. George Philoptochos
Abell, Deacon Jeffrey and Diaconissa Alice
Iakovides, Dimitri

Buffalo, NY – Annunciation
Annunciation Philoptochos
Sakellaris, Fr. John and Presbytera Pavlina
Kuvshinoff, Boris and Barbara

Carmel, IN – Holy Trinity
Holy Trinity Parish
Holy Trinity Choir
Bartz, Fr. William and Presbytera Emily
Mamalis, Presbytera Janet
Andros, Cheryl
Antonopoulos, Dean Apostoles, Stacey
Baker, Dan and Sylvia
Brochhagen, Curt and Renee Christoff, Bill and Karen
Conrad, William and Kathleen
Dervenis, Nicholas and Sharon
Dimos, Jim and Kathy
Drukas, Doreen
Dunbar, Pete and Lea
Eaton, Joe and Florie
Eleftheri, Lawrence and Beth
Freudenberg, Jim and Cindy
Graffeo, Barry and Matina
Hostetler, Duane and Eleny
Johnson, Ronald and Sunday
Kourmoulos, Karen
Lisch, Michael and Jean
Oberlies, Toula
Pappas, Donna
Pappas, Leon and Andrea
Pappas, Nicholas and Tracy
Pavlos, Victoria
Payne, Martha
Rowlas, Julie
Sofianopoulos, Nick and Vickie
Woodruff, Jim and Cindy
Xidas, Paraskevi
Young, Michael and Helen
Zeheralis, Chris and Becky

Chattanooga, TN – Annunciation
Annunciation Parish
Ballas, Fr. Stavros and Presbytera Thea
Bouloukos, Dino
Dimopoulos, Barbara
Fox, Ann
Kosmidis, Alex
Kouris, George
Mena, Michael
Merritt, Steve and Venetia

Cincinnati, OH – Holy Trinity – St. Nicholas
Holy Trinity – St. Nicholas Parish
Assaley, Lewis and Patricia

Dayton, OH – Annunciation
Annunciation Philoptochos

Detroit, MI – Annunciation Cathedral
Bennett, Constance
Kazolis, Koula
Politis, Dean
Tapazoglou, Nikolaos and Christine

Farmington Hills, MI – Holy Cross
Hountalas, Fr. Dean and Presbytera Olga
Boudouris, Constantino and Joanne

Fort Wayne, IN – Holy Trinity
Walsh, Fr. Andrew and Presbytera Sophia
Byzika, Edison and Angela
Fiotisos, William
Maggos, Eleftherios and Paraskevi
Poursanidis, Haralambos and Trisha
Spirou, Arthur and Mary

Grand Blanc, MI – Assumption
Assumption Parish
Daughters of Penelope, Iris Chapter #242
Chinonis, Dennis E. and Debra
Chinonis, Sandra
Hountalas, Yanni
Kallis, Agape
Kaloydis, John and Karen
Karabinas, Pavlos and Ruth
Schultze, Joanne
Steinhoff, G. Olga
Yeotis, Catherine
Yiannatjis, Helen

Grand Rapids, MI – Holy Trinity
Cassis, Deacon E. George and Diaconissa Vicky
Gray, Mark and Alexis
Nicholas, James and Georgia

Indianapolis, IN – Holy Apostles
Holy Apostles Parish

Ithaca, NY – St. Catherine
Bantuvanis, Ann
Bezirganian, John

Jamestown, NY – St. Nicholas
St. Nicholas Parish
Cheronis, James and Christine

Kalamazoo, MI – Annunciation
Ingalls, Bob and Andriana

Lansing, MI – Holy Trinity
Holy Trinity Parish
Holy Trinity Philoptochos

Lexington, KY – Panagia Pantovasiliisa
Panagia Pantovasiliisa Philoptochos
Karounas, Dennis and Chrisi
Smither, Steven and Eugenia

Little Rock, AR – Annunciation
Delfos, Fr. Pierre and Presbytera Harriet
Louisville, KY – Assumption
Wingenbach, Fr. Gregory C.
Balakos, Michael and Lori
Blackford, Charles and Patricia
Taylor, Robert

Memphis, TN – Annunciation
Annunciation Philoptochos
Daughters of Penelope, Memphis #180
Berends, Fr. James and Presbytera Anne
Tobias, Richard and Angela

Muskegon, MI – Annunciation
Honeycutt, Fr. James and Presbytera Juliana
Ladas, Paul and Patricia

Nashville, TN – Holy Trinity
Holy Trinity Philoptochos
Hohnholt, Fr. Gregory and Presbytera Sofia
Billo, John and Kassiani
Gaddis, Jim and Tasoula
Lamberson, Lambert and Helen
McNeil, Larry
Taras, Nick and Donna
Weeks, Timothy and Teresa

Nashville, TN – St. John Chrysostom
Turner, Fr. Parthenios and Presbytera Marion
Demmas, Constance
Derryberry, Paul
Dozier, Matthew
Gore, James and Stacy
Light, Oxsana
Marchetti, John and Linda
Pappas, Tom and Lisa

New Buffalo, MI – Annunciation-St. Paraskevi
Martin, Fr. Paul and Presbytera Nikki

Plymouth, MI – Nativity of the Virgin Mary
Nativity of the Virgin Mary Parish
Kheir, Angela
Kyriacou, Costis and Kathleen
Randall, Michael and Anne

Rochester, NY – Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit Parish
Cowles, Fr. Patrick and Presbytera Mary

Saginaw, MI – St. Demetrios
St. Demetrios Philoptochos
Cook, Fr. Timothy and Presbytera Katherine
Bazakis, Andrew and Ann
Metropoulos, Katherine
Stamas, James and Marsha

Southgate, MI – St. George
St. George Parish
St. George Philoptochos
Cook, Fr. Anthony and Presbytera Elizabeth
Cranford, Joanne
Dionyssooulos, Stavros and Eleni
Galas, Sam
Kircos, Angelo and Sophia
Kircos, Louis and Paula
Kontos, Chris and Frances
Kontos, John and Marika
Kozaitis, Mina
Liakos, Michael
Makarounas, Panormitis and Kyriaki
Minton, Nicholas
Papalas, Mary
Vougiouklakis, Peter and Christina

Springfield, OH – Assumption
Lagos, James H. Lagos Company, Inc.

St. Clair Shores, MI – Assumption
Assumption Parish
Varlamos, Fr. Michael and Presbytera Tina
Anathanassopoulos, Nick and Sarah
Callas, Kalliopi
Thomas, Tom and Lynn

Sterling Heights, MI – St. John
St. John Choir
Kotsis, Harry and Katherine
Lionas, James and Helene
Raphitis, Mike and Betty
Salonikas, George and Niki

Syracuse, NY – St. Sophia
Smith, Fr. David and Presbytera Donna

Toledo, OH – Holy Trinity Cathedral
Holy Trinity Cathedral Philoptochos
Biernacki, Gerald and Pauline
Photos, Thomas M.
Proestos, Kypros

Traverse City, MI – Archangel Gabriel
Archangel Gabriel Philoptochos
Strez, Fr. Ciprian and Presbytera Sinziana
Underwood, Robert and Theresa
Stamos-

Troy, MI – St. Nicholas
George, Christian
George, John and Marlo
George, Jordan
Mortis, George and Hionia
Xydas, Spiros

Vestal, NY – Annunciation
Annunciation Parish
Gianakouras, Harry and Katerina

Westland, MI – Sts. Constantine and Helen
Sts. Constantine and Helen Parish
Ochadleus, William and Georgene

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Ahepa – Alpha Chapter #40 – Troy, Michigan
Detroit Greek Independence Day Committee
Metropolis of Detroit Philoptochos
Ponkey, Marsha
Radulescu, Deacon Alexandru and Diaconissa Silvana

Thank You
Dear Friends,

God has called us to do mighty deeds for the glory of His name and for the love of His people.

You are called upon to join in this reality of “faith working through love” as we continue to manifest the love of God for His Church and His people.

When you support the Friends of the Metropolis campaign, you are part of a greater outreach that proclaims with one universal voice that God is truly our hope and our rock of salvation.

Because of your devotion and help to the Friends program, ministries and programs are implemented on a Metropolis-wide basis which strengthen and enhance our faith and our joint ministry of service.

If you have not yet become part of the Metropolis-wide effort, I would like to invite you to join forces with the faithful throughout our Metropolis in support of the ministries which are part of the Office of the Metropolitan.

Thanking you for your kind and generous response, I remain, with paternal blessing and prayers,

†NICHOLAS
Metropolitan of Detroit