



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΙΚΑΓΟΥ

### For Immediate Release

#### St. Nicholas of Oak Lawn, Illinois Parishioner John Vranas Named Winner of the 2021 National Oratorical Festival

**LOMBARD, IL, June 22, 2021** – The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago announced today that John Vranas, a parishioner of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Oak Lawn, Illinois, has won this year's Speech category of The Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical and Fine Arts Festival.

The nationwide festival allows youth in grades 10 through 12 to compete in Speech, Vocal Solo, Essay, Poetry, and Iconography categories. Participants first compete at the parish level, where winners move on to the Metropolis Oratorical Festival, and then to the National Oratorical Festival.

John Vranas placed in both Speech and Vocal Solo categories in the Metropolis Oratorical Festival competition, and moved on to compete nationally in the Speech category. John's speech discussed how COVID-19 impacted churches, forcing their closure, and how the Greek Orthodox faith adapted by live streaming services. He spoke about not taking things like in-person practice of religion for granted. Moving church online impacted everything from communion, to his Oratorical Festival presentation.

"I've been participating in the Oratorical Festival since I was in the fourth grade," John Vranas said. "It was a wonderful experience this year, even if it was on Zoom. We were able to have a satellite party at my church, and so I was able to deliver my oratory in front of many friends and family."

The Metropolis level festival was held at Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Glenview, IL this year on May 8. Fr. Kosmas Kallis, the Metropolis Youth and Young Adults Director, said that youth participation often leads to a deeper, richer understanding of the Greek Orthodox faith.

The National Oratorical Festival occurred over the weekend of June 11 to 13 at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York, New York.

"We are proud of John's achievement and delighted to see him use his God-given talent as a way to express his faith," Fr. Kosmas said. "With so many impressive young members of the faith participating, the entire experience was special and rewarding, and we eagerly look forward to next year's oratorical festival."

Every Spring, students within the age groups are allowed to enter the Oratorical Festival. The top three national speakers of each category receive college scholarships of \$2,000, \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively. In addition, this year, Honorable Mention speakers were awarded \$500. For more information about the festival, visit this link or email Fr. Kosmas at [frkosmas@chicagometropolis.org](mailto:frkosmas@chicagometropolis.org).

#### About the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago

Tracing its roots back to 1923, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago is the Diocese of Greek Orthodox faithful in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin as well as northern Indiana and southeastern Missouri, consisting of 58 parishes and two monastic communities. The Metropolis is one of eight Metropolises in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and is presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael. The central offices of the Metropolis are located in Chicago, Illinois. For more information, please visit <http://chicago.goarch.org>.

For More Information:

Chris Varones

312-213-3887 | [chris.varones@aesopgroup.com](mailto:chris.varones@aesopgroup.com)