

# 2022 Saint Kosmas Oratorical Festival

[saintkosmas.org/saint-kosmas-oratorical-festival](http://saintkosmas.org/saint-kosmas-oratorical-festival)

**March 15-16, 2022 – Gold Canyon, Arizona**

**The 2022 Saint Kosmas Oratorical Festival is open to all Orthodox Christian youth, ages 8-19, regardless of jurisdiction or method of schooling.**

Participation requires the student and one parent to be registered for the 2022 Saint Kosmas Conference. There are no additional fees for participation beyond conference registration.

**Senior Division:** Birth Years 2002-2006 (age 15-19 in 2021, turning age 16-20 in 2022)

Speech Length: Minimum: 4 minutes; Maximum: 5 minutes

**Junior Division:** Birth Years 2007-2010 (age 11-14 in 2021, turning age 12-15 in 2022)

Speech Length: Minimum: 3 minutes; Maximum: 5 minutes

**NEW! Elementary Division:** Birth Years 2011-2013 (age 8-10 in 2021, turning age 9-11 in 2022)

Speech Length: Minimum: 2 minutes; Maximum: 5 minutes

A copy of the written speech must be submitted by February 28 to secure a slot in the speaking schedule. (The speech may still be altered after this submission.) It is permitted for a participant to present two speeches at the festival. To qualify to speak twice, the two speeches must be on two different topics from the topics presented, and one of the speeches must be submitted in written form by January 31, and the second by February 28. If no speech is submitted by January 31, the participant is eligible to present a maximum of one speech at the festival. Please see the website for a full explanation of eligibility and entry requirements.

**Registration:** [saintkosmas.org/saint-kosmas-oratorical-festival](http://saintkosmas.org/saint-kosmas-oratorical-festival)

**Questions:** [saintkosmas.org/contact-us](http://saintkosmas.org/contact-us)

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### TOPICS

#### **ORATORICAL TOPIC #1 (FREEDOM):**

("Freedom" Topic for Junior and Elementary Divisions): We live in a culture that tells us we are free to do whatever we want. Develop a speech on how such an understanding of freedom differs from an Orthodox Christian approach to freedom. As you develop your ideas, make sure to use Orthodox resources to support your argument. Good sources could include, but are not limited to, a story from the Desert Fathers, hymns sung in the Church, writings of contemporary saints and holy elders, and the Holy Scripture.

("Freedom" Topic for Senior Division): Throughout history, freedom has been understood in a number of different ways. Develop a speech on how Orthodox approach the topic of freedom. Make sure to use Orthodox resources such as the Holy Scripture, the Church Fathers, and liturgical texts to support and develop your ideas. In addition, contrast the Orthodox approach with at least one other approach to freedom in the world today.

#### **ORATORICAL TOPIC #2 (BEAUTY):**

("Beauty" Topic for Junior and Elementary Divisions): When envoys were sent by St. Vladimir to Constantinople to inquire into the Orthodox faith, they attended the Divine Liturgy at Agia Sophia and reported back, "We no longer knew whether we were in heaven or on earth." Develop a speech on what this story tells us about the importance of beauty in

the Orthodox Church and how such a view of beauty contrasts with that of the modern culture. As you explore the Orthodox understanding of beauty, make use of resources such as Holy Scripture, the Church Fathers, hymnography, and/or liturgical texts to strengthen your argument.

("Beauty" Topic for Senior Division): Fyodor Dostoyesvky famously said in *The Idiot*, "Beauty will save the world." Develop a speech on what is an Orthodox approach to understanding beauty, and what role beauty plays in the spiritual life. Make sure to use Orthodox resources such as the Holy Scripture, the Church Fathers, hymnography, and liturgical services and texts to support and develop your ideas. In addition, contrast the Orthodox approach with at least one other approach to beauty in the world today.

### **ORATORICAL TOPIC #3 (CHASTITY):**

The ideal of chastity is deeply challenged in our culture today. Develop a speech that offers an apologetic to our culture as to why Americans should value chastity from an Orthodox perspective. Use concrete examples and draw from the wisdom of the Church in developing your position. Make sure to use Orthodox resources such as the Holy Scripture, the Church Fathers, and liturgical texts to support and develop your ideas.

### **ORATORICAL TOPIC #4 (OBEDIENCE):**

St. Silouan the Athonite writes, *"The spirit of obedience is necessary not only in monks but in everyone else, too. Even the Lord was obedient. The proud and those who are a law unto themselves prevent the indwelling of grace and therefore never know peace of soul; whereas the grace of the Holy Spirit enters with ease into the soul of the obedient, bringing joy and quiet."*

Develop a speech on what you think St. Silouan the Athonite means when he says these words in relation to our daily lives in families and living in the world as Orthodox Christians. Use concrete examples and draw from the wisdom of the Church in developing your position. Make sure to use Orthodox resources such as the Holy Scripture, the Church Fathers, and liturgical texts to support and develop your ideas.

### **ORATORICAL TOPIC #5 (WISDOM):**

As Christians, we are called to seek wisdom in our daily lives. In St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he writes,

*For the word, that of the Cross, on the one hand, to those who are perishing is foolishness, but on the other hand, to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For it hath been written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will set at nought the comprehension of the intelligent." Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Did not God make foolish the wisdom of this world? For since in the wisdom of God, the world knew not God through its wisdom, it pleased God through the foolishness of the preaching to save those who believe. For indeed, Jews seek for a sign, and Greeks seek wisdom; but we proclaim Christ Who hath been crucified, to Jews, on the one hand, a stumbling block, and to Greeks, on the other hand, foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, God's power and God's wisdom. Because the foolish thing of God is wiser than man, and the weak thing of God is stronger than man. (1 Corinthians 1: 18-25)*

Further, at the feast of Pentecost, we chant, "Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit and through them didst draw the world into Thy net. O Befriender of Man, glory be to Thee!"

In light of this Biblical passage from the Apostle Paul and the hymn of Pentecost cited above, develop a speech articulating how the Orthodox Church understands wisdom and how such an understanding differs from the wisdom of this world. Further, make sure to include why this distinction is important in our daily lives. Make sure to use Orthodox resources such as the Holy Scripture, the Church Fathers, and liturgical texts to support and develop your ideas.