



Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America

SAINT NIKOLAI OF ZICHA



2009

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

The 2009 Oratorical Festival theme is:

***“LIFE and SALVATION: Why Being Orthodox In
Today’s World is Crucial!”***



PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in St. Nikolai of Zicha Oratorical Festival 2009. We are happy to provide you with the information that will guide you in this spiritual journey that will enrich your life as an Orthodox Christian teen.

Please read all instructions carefully. If after reading everything you happen to have any questions, we suggest that you contact your local parish priest or our Youth Ministry Committee at youth-ministry@earthlink.net

May our Lord bless you and guide you in this blessed endeavor!

What is St. Nikolai of Zicha Oratorical Festival?

St. Nikolai of Zicha Oratorical Festival is a triennial oratorical contest in which the youth of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, ages 14-18, are given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the Orthodox faith, writing and oratorical skills in the English language.

Is this the first Oratorical Festival?

St. Nikolai of Zicha Oratorical Festival 2009 is the second one. The first one took place in Detroit in 2006 where each diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America was represented with one oratorical festival delegate.

So then, the competition starts first within each diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church?

Yes. Your diocese (this is either your diocesan office/coordinator or director of Christian education) will announce the time, place, and other pertinent information about submitting your written paper and place of competition on your diocesan/regional level. We will list all coordinators for each diocese to make it easier for you to contact them:

1. Midwestern Metropolitanate – Fr. Vasilije Vranic, ph. 847-549-0798, doreledu@gmail.com
2. New Gracanica Metropolitanate – Fr. Tom Kazich, ph. 847-223-8829, tkazich@owc.net,
3. Eastern Diocese – Fr. Rodney Torbic, ph. 724-966-7428, stgeorge@alltel.net
4. Western Diocese – Fr. Bratso Krsic, ph. 619-276-5827, FrBratso@aol.com
5. Canadian Diocese – ph. 905-878-3438, webmaster@istocnik.com

Please, give me more information about the text itself, e.g. length, how to organize it, etc.

First, you should know that your written text of oration will be judged on the following criteria: how the theme was developed, subject adherence, and overall organization of the text, usage and grammar, creativity.

Second, the length of your written text should not be more than 1100 words or 10 minutes of oration. The text can be anywhere from 600 – 1100 words or 6 to 10 minutes of oration.

Third, we suggest that you memorize a great portion of your oration. This will help you to look at your audience during the oration.

Fourth, the body of your text has to be well developed, i.e. your opening statement has to be very strong; the main body of your text has to have the theme well developed, and the

conclusion also has to be strong and clear to your audience that you have finished your oration.

Here is more information for written text:

1. All orators must be communicants in a parish or mission of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America.
2. Each contestant must currently be a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior in High School.
3. Text must be typewritten - double-spaced, using 8 ½ x 11 paper. Participants must submit their entry text copy and if possible, should include a disk or CD copy.
4. A brief personal résumé (including full name, age, parish, and city, grade in school, church school, and civic activities, awards, future vocational goals or plans, etc.) using the form at the end of this section must be submitted with your written text.
5. The “Permission to Travel” form must also be submitted with the written text. If chosen to be a **finalist**, the entrant must participate in the second phase of the competition which is the oral presentation phase. A written authorization from his/her parents gives the finalist permission to attend the National Youth Conference for the National Oratorical Festival. This form appears at the end of this section.

For Finalists (each diocese will be represented with one finalist):

In addition to rules 1-5 above, written orations which are selected for the oral presentation competition phase of the festival (finalists), must follow these additional rules:

1. **Important to keep in mind if your written oration is selected for oral presentation:** As you write your oration, please keep in mind that if your written text is selected and you will deliver your oration, there are time limits to which you must adhere. Time limits for orations when delivered are as follows:

	Minimum	Maximum	Leeway
High School Division:	6 minutes	10 minutes	30 seconds

If the orator speaks **BEYOND** the leeway time, nine (9) points, divided amongst the three judges, will be deducted from his/her final score. An additional nine (9) points will be deducted each time that leeway is exceeded.

2. In the oral presentation:
 - a. Only gestures, intonation, eye contact, and other methods of physical communication can be utilized. Props and costumes are not allowed.
 - b. Since the oration is a speech, not a sermon, contestants are not to use the opening: “In the name of the Father...”

PARTICIPANT'S RÉSUMÉ

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Age: _____ Email address: _____

Parish/City: _____

School Grade: (Entering upcoming Fall) _____

Awards: _____

Future Vocational Goals/Plans: _____

Activities (Church/School/Civic): _____

PERMISSION TO TRAVEL

(High School Division Entrants Only)

I, _____, give my permission for
(*Parent/guardian name*)

_____ to attend the National

Youth Conference and Oratorical Festival in 2009 at _____
(place, date and time to be announced)

_____ in the event he/she is selected as a

finalist.

(*Parent/guardian signature*)



Festival Theme

“LIFE and SALVATION: Why Being Orthodox In Today’s World is Crucial!”

Introduction

For Orthodox Christians, the journey of our lives began at baptism. Ours is a journey of Faith, and our first step was a ‘leap’ – into the baptismal font. At baptism and chrismation, our feet were placed on the path paved by Saints who journeyed before us.

As followers in their footsteps, we carry the same Faith, the truth within us. “The truth” (that God became man, and that in the person of the Jesus Christ, our Savior, we were redeemed and brought back into communion with God) sounds solid, like a rock. However, the ‘truth’ of Orthodoxy is as active as it is solid. This truth that we carry within us compels us to live in a certain way: the Holy Spirit, whom we received at our Chrismation, enlivens that truth in us. As a result, the truth becomes a ‘Way of Life’ – the Orthodox Way of Life – a golden opportunity to live in communion with God while living our life on earth.

Through the centuries, many Orthodox believers have learned how crucial it is to live “The Orthodox Way” in renouncing the secular world. These men and women have found out, through trial and tribulation, that the things of ‘this world’ are filled with temptations that can lead us away from God; as a result, they made definitive, conscious choices to “lay aside all earthly cares...” and focused on living out their lives seeking salvation in Christ By following Him daily.

It is our hope that as you study our Festival Theme, and its related questions, you will see the glory and majesty of our Savior Jesus Christ, as He guides you in moving on the Path to Salvation by being Orthodox FIRST in this life.

Senior Division Related Topics

- **Question 1:** For Orthodox Christians, the journey of life begins at our baptism. Ours is a "Journey of Faith", and our first step taken is into the baptismal font. **What is so important about the Mystery of Baptism for your life?**
- **Question 2:** The Nicene Creed begins with the words, *“I believe...”*; **Explain how these words serve as the focal-point for your living a Christ-like life?**
- **Question 3:** In Genesis 1:26, it is written that Adam and Eve (i.e. all of us) were “...created in the Image and likeness of God...” –**What does it mean to you (and for your life) that you are created in God’s Image?**
- **Question 4:** In the Nicene Creed, we say this about Jesus Christ: *“Who for us men, and for our salvation, come down from heaven...”* **In your life, what do you think Jesus is saving you from?**

- **Question 5:** "...The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the bed-rock of our Orthodox Faith"; Explain the importance of our Lord's Resurrection in your life.
- **Question 6:** The Nicene Creed also affirms that our Lord will come again, "...*To judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end...*"; **Explain how our Holy Orthodox Faith teaches you to prepare for the end of your life AND the judgment of your soul?**

Topics with Speaker Tips

Question 1

For Orthodox Christians, the journey of life begins at our baptism. Ours is a "Journey of Faith", and our first step taken is into the baptismal font. **What is so important about the Mystery of Baptism for your life?**

Speaker Tips:

All faiths have some type of ritual or ceremony to welcome or introduce believers to their religion. For some, this occurs in adolescence or early adulthood, when that person is considered capable of understanding the consequences of this decision. However, for Orthodox Christians, we are generally baptized soon after birth. And it is our Kum and Kuma, along with our parents, who stand for us in front of God and affirm that we accept the beliefs of the Orthodox Church. If you have recently attended an Orthodox baptism, you see how the godparents answer the priest when he asks us to accept God into our life; it is our godparents who first recite the Creed, firmly proclaiming "I believe in one God, Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth..." on our behalf.

Therefore, baptism as the start of the Orthodox Christian's "Journey of Faith" occurs almost in our subconscious; in other words, how much do you really remember from when you were six weeks old? Nevertheless, as we grow older and begin to take an active role in our Christianity by saying daily prayers with our family, attending Sunday school, or participating in our church community, we already have a strong and solid foundation in Orthodoxy.

This has been so from the earliest history of Christ, when Jesus came to the eleven apostles and said: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, ever to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

It is a journey that we expect to last our entire lives, even though it was started by somebody else!

Why is this? How is it possible that something so powerful and permanent happened at the moment of baptism, that without us being truly aware of it, we accepted and began

practicing Orthodoxy? What keeps us doing so, even with the distractions of growing up in a world that does not always embrace what we are taught to believe?

Question 2

The Nicene Creed begins with the words, “*I believe...*”; **Explain how these words serve as the focal-point for your living a Christ-like life?**

Speaker Tips:

Faith is the foundation of our Orthodox Christian life. It is the Fundamental virtue of Abraham, the forefather of Israel and the Christian Church. As it says in Genesis, “...Abraham believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” (Gen. 15: 6)

All through His life, our Lord was calling for faith: in Himself, in God His Father, in the Gospel, and in the Kingdom of God. In looking at His Life on earth, and the example He set for us, it is obvious that the crucial Condition of our Christian Life is faith – for with faith comes hope and love, and every good work, gift and power of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, if you believe, i.e., have Faith in God, then that opens up an entire realm of possibilities for growing in life, both spiritually and as a creature of God. **So, what about your Faith helps you deal with the trials and tribulations of the world that you live in?**

Also, what aspects of Faith do you feel have helped (or hindered) your growth in the Church?

Finally, what is the difference between ‘faith’ and ‘reason’, and is understanding (and living) this difference crucial to your growth as an Orthodox Christian?

Question 3

In Genesis 1:26, it is written that Adam and Eve (i.e. all of us) were “...created in the Image and likeness of God...” –**What does it mean to you (and for your life) that you are created in God’s Image?**

Speaker Tips:

The word for Image in Greek is *Ikon*.

God created Adam and Eve in His Image and likeness; thus making Mankind different from the rest of Creation. However, God’s Image was not fulfilled in Adam. It took the New Adam, Jesus Christ, to truly show what it means to be created in the Image and likeness of God—to become an *Ikon* of God.

Adam was “**the type of the one who was to come.**” (Romans 5:14). A fuller comparison of this relationship to Christ can be read in I Corinthians 15: 45-49.

Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man (Christ) is from heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Although we were created in the Image and likeness of God, in our sinful state we have forgotten how to incorporate this Image into our daily lives. It is only through following Christ’s example that we too can become *Icons* of God.

How does the Cross of Christ fit in with fulfilling the Image of God in which you are created?

The verse in Genesis reads: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” **How does the differentiation of gender (male and female) fit in with being created in the Image and Likeness of God?**

How does attempting to live as an Image of God affect your life in this world?

Question 4

In the Nicene Creed, we say this about Jesus Christ: “*Who for us men, and for our salvation, come down from heaven...*” **In your life, what do you think Jesus is saving you from?**

Speaker Tips:

Salvation is a gift from God. Jesus Christ came down from heaven & gave us this gift, what should we do to receive it – how should we live our lives?

When friends help us out (save us) from certain things it is usually obvious. When our Lord saves, do you think it’s obvious? Why or Why not? Jesus saving us on the Cross is a great act of Love, He continues by helping us bear our burden and carry our cross – Thanks be to Him - what could we do in response?

Question 5

“...The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the bed-rock of our Orthodox Faith; Explain the importance of our Lord’s Resurrection in your life.

Speaker Tips:

1. Jesus Christ took on our human nature so that He might free us from death, “the last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26). The risen Christ leads us “from death to life, from earth to heaven,” as we sing in the Paschal hymns. He invites humanity to receive in Him the forgiveness of sins and to share in His eternal victory.
2. In Christ we have conquered the fear of death. We now know that death has no dominion over us. Knowing and believing this basic truth of our Faith, please write how this effects your daily living, e.g., your daily encounter with others, your decision making, your relationship with your relatives, friends, etc.
3. *Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life. (Pascha troparion)* This troparion is sung by Orthodox Christian starting with the Resurrectional Matins and up until the leave-taking of Pascha. It expresses the essence of the Feast of Feasts. It tells us that Christ is risen; that life reigns; that ever to those in the tombs Christ gives life. This is the most joyous message shared by the Christian throughout the centuries. Knowing this truth in what way do you think you are different from a non-orthodox? In what way can you share the joyous message of Christ’s resurrection with them and why is that important?
4. St. Paul says: “*set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*” (1 Tim. 4:12) How do you live, preserve and even defend your Orthodox Faith amidst your peers who might not live a Christian life?
5. Please, consider the following verses: “In Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. (1 Cor. 15:14-17)
6. Please, ponder on: “*Christ’s resurrection is the fulfillment of God’s plan for the salvation of others.*” Saint Anastasius of Sinai

Question 6

The Nicene Creed also affirms that our Lord will come again, “...*To judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end...*”; **Explain how our Holy Orthodox Faith teaches you to prepare for the end of your life AND the judgment of your soul?**

Speaker Tips:

The coming of the Lord at the end of the ages will be the **Day of Judgment., the Day of the Lord** foretold in the Old Testament, and predicted by our Lord Himself. (Daniel 7; Matthew 24) While the exact time of the ‘end’ is not foretold, not even by Jesus, our Faith teaches us to always be prepared by **constant vigil and good works.**

How is it possible to live in this world and still prepare for the ‘end of this World, according to our Orthodox Faith – **consider the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount) to help you.**

The Parable of the Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday) is an important ‘insight’ into “how to” live prepared for the end of this world. **What are your thoughts about this Gospel message?**

What does our Serbian Orthodox Church’s Liturgical Life give us to Prepare for the ‘end of the world’?

What does our Orthodox Faith give us to prepare for our passing from this world (our death) into the next – God’s Kingdom (our resurrection)?

Bibliography

General Bibliography for the topics:

Question 1

1. **The Orthodox Study Bible**, Thomas Nelson Publishers
2. **"The Orthodox Way"** by Bishop Ware
3. **"The Orthodox Church"** by Bishop Ware
4. **"Of Water & the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism"** by Alexander Schmemmann
5. **"Conversations with Patriarch Bartholomew I"**, section on the Sacraments
6. Podcast on Ancient Faith Radio called **"The Illuminated Heart"** by Kevin Allen (<http://ancientfaith.com/podcasts>)

Question 2

1. **The Orthodox Faith, Volume I**, Dept. Of Rel. Education Orthodox Church of America
2. **Orthodox Study Bible** – selected passages mentioned above.
3. **"These Truths We Hold"** St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, Chapter 6.
4. **"Celebration of Faith"**, Vol. 1 Sermons, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, SVS Press, 1991

Question 3

1. **Book of Genesis, Romans, I Corinthians**
2. **On the Incarnation**, St. Athanasius, (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1979).
3. **On Creation**, St. Gregory of Nyssa, (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1999).
4. **Three Treatises on the Divine Images**, St. John of Damascus, (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2003).
5. **The Orthodox Faith**, Vol. I, Doctrine, Hopko, Fr. Thomas, (New York, NY: Dept of Religious Education of the O.C.A., 1981): pp 52-57.
6. **Why Male and Female?**, Rocknage, Christopher, pp 4-6.

Question 4

1. **Orthodox Study Bible** (Look up Salvation)
2. **ARE YOU SAVED** By Barbara Papas

3. **THEOSIS** by Archim. Gregory Kapsanis
4. **“Foot Prints in the sand”** – Google it
5. **The Path to Salvation** by Theophan the Recluse
6. **How Are we Saved** by bishop Kallistos Ware
7. **A Treasury of Serbian Orthodox Spirituality** (Volume II & IV) by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

Question 5:

1. **The Orthodox Study Bible, New Testament and Psalms**, St. Athanasius Orthodox Academy, 1993
2. **The Orthodox Study Bible, Old and New Testament**, St. Athanasius Orthodox Academy, 2008
3. **Raised In Glory: Orthodox Understandings of Death, Resurrection, and Immortality**, by John Chirban
4. **The Urgency of Resurrected Faith**, by Very Rev. John Breck. This article can be found at: <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-lifearicle.asp?SID=6&ID=139&MONTH=September&YEAR=2007>

Question 6:

1. **The Orthodox Faith, Volume I**, Dept. Of Rel. Education Orthodox Church of America
2. **Orthodox Study Bible** – selected passages mentioned above.
3. **“These Truths We Hold”** St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, Chapter 6.
4. **“Celebration of Faith”**, Vol. 1 Sermons, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, SVS Press, 1991

Vendor Contact Information

Bishop Nikolai Bookstore: 847-362-2441
 Narrow Path Bookstore: 1-800-513-8447
 Holy Trinity Monastery Bookstore, Jordanville, NY 13361
 St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press: 1-800-204-2665
 Holy Cross Bookstore: 1-800-245-0599
 Life and Light Publishing: 952-925-3888
 Conciliar Press: 1-800-967-7377
 St. Tikhon’s Bookstore: 888-454-6678
 Alexander Press: 514-738-4018
 Spiritual Works: 877-774-0217
 Christopher Rocknage: debeque.rock@gmail.com