



## Digital Guidelines for the **St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival**

COVID-19 has certainly made this a difficult year for all of us as we strive to continue church ministries, while still abiding by the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of our communities.

But with the promising recent news about multiple vaccines, we are hopeful and optimistic that the National Oratorical Festival will be able to be held in-person at St. Spyridon Church in **Loveland, Colorado**. We have selected the weekend of **June 11 – 13, 2021** for the National Festival. This festival will be virtual.

Working with the office of Internet Ministries, we have made a back-up plan for how a virtual National Festival can proceed, should we need to host the festival virtually.

Of course, we realize that because Parish, District and Metropolis Festivals take place earlier in the year and in locations where there may be different restrictions in place, the teams coordinating these festivals may need to consider hosting festivals virtually.

Please note, it is entirely up to the discretion of the Parish, District and Metropolis Festival coordinators if you plan to host your festival in-person or virtually. This document is intended to provide some guidance for you to consider, depending on how you choose to host your festival.

### **Hosting In-Person Festivals During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Please follow the mask and social distancing guidelines of your church and community. For example, churches that are meeting in-person for services where all the parishioners are required to wear masks during the service could host an Oratorical Festival in-person, if the attendees are spaced out and wearing masks – other than the speakers, when they are delivering their speeches, of course. You may want to consider simplifying the event and not hosting a meal, for example.



## Hosting Virtual Festivals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

If a Parish, District or Metropolis chooses to host a festival virtually, here are some things you may want to consider:

- If your church has been broadcasting its services, consider engaging the person who set this up for your church to work with you on hosting a virtual festival.
- Parishes can choose the platform – Zoom, WebEx or an alternative – that either the parish or a volunteer within the parish has access to.
- The event should be held live. You may want to consider having your judges join you in a room (safely distanced of course) to watch the event together and to deliberate afterwards together – if this is compliant with local safety guidelines at the time.
- Speakers should sit in front of their laptop or desktop computers to deliver their speech (as opposed to being recorded via a phone by someone standing across the room from the person). Each speaker would therefore be seen from their chest upwards. It's important to provide these guidelines to your speakers so that there is consistency. This approach minimizes the risk of audio difficulties.
- Speakers should dress as they would in church.
- You may want to schedule in advance a specific time later in the day when the finalists will be announced, so that you are giving your judges plenty of time to deliberate.
- If you are hosting a festival and anticipate having 10 or more speakers per division (Junior and Senior), you may want to consider providing a separate Zoom / WebEx link for each division and scheduling them to occur at a specific, pre-determined time of day. This way you don't have a lot of extra people on the WebEx and there is less risk of unwanted background noise.
- Because your speakers won't be in person, it could be helpful to identify and communicate the speaker order before the event. You can use a random list generator like [random.org/lists/](https://random.org/lists/)
- Please plan to have your speakers dial-in 15 minutes prior to event to ensure that everyone can be heard and seen properly.
- Ask everyone in the event to go on mute when they are not speaking.