

# **Statute of the National Competition "My Heavenly Patron / My Orthodox Church" – 2025**

The competition is organized and conducted with the blessing of His Holiness, the Bulgarian Patriarch Daniel, and the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Bulgarian Patriarchate (BOC – BP).

The coordination of the competition activities is under the leadership of Metropolitan Gavriil of Lovech, Head of the Cultural and Educational Department, and is carried out by his team at the Holy Synod of the BOC – BP.

## **Competition Theme**

The National Synodal Competition "**My Heavenly Patron / My Orthodox Church**" – 2025 is dedicated to:

1. The Holy Trinity, the Most Holy Theotokos, the holy angels, and Orthodox saints and/or
2. The Orthodox Christian church.

Participants can either intertwine both themes in their works or choose and develop only one of them.

## **I. Objectives of the Competition**

The competition aims to encourage children's and students' creative talents and expressions related to the treasury of Christian art, church and social history, Orthodox holiness, and spirituality.

### **Main objectives:**

- Deepening children's knowledge of God, the Theotokos, the holy angels, and Orthodox saints, focusing on their protection and beneficial influence on the believer.
- Encouraging participants to reflect on themes such as:
  - God as our universal protector or as a patron of people bearing His name.
  - The Theotokos as the greatest protector of humanity after God.
  - Saints as patrons, intercessors, and righteous figures, testifying to the existence of God and the divine essence of Orthodox faith.
  - The significance of the Orthodox church as a home of God, a place of worship, and a spiritual center uniting believers.
- Expanding children's understanding of Orthodox worship, church traditions, and the role of saints in the personal and communal faith.
- Motivating children, parents, and teachers to actively participate in church life and preserve Orthodox Christian traditions.

## **II. Participants**

Children from kindergartens (3rd and 4th groups) and students from 1st to 12th grade from all schools, extracurricular centers, and dioceses in Bulgaria and abroad can participate. Non-Bulgarian citizens or

individuals outside the BOC-BP diocese may also participate, provided that literature and IT submissions are in Bulgarian.

### III. Competition Regulations

The competition is held in **four age groups**, with each participant allowed to submit a maximum of **two works** in the same or different categories.

1. **1<sup>st</sup> age group** – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> kindergarten groups;
2. **2<sup>nd</sup> age group** – 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade;
3. **3<sup>rd</sup> age group** – 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade;
4. **4<sup>th</sup> age group** – 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### IV. Categories

The competition consists of three main categories:

1. **Visual Arts**
2. **Literature (Poetry & Prose)**
3. **Photography & Information Technology**

#### Category I: Visual Arts

##### Participation Requirements:

- Submissions must be **original** and should not have been entered in other competitions.
- The works should emphasize the **spiritual and social** significance of the church, its history, symbolism, and meaning.
- Participants can illustrate Orthodox religious sites, traditions, and saints. Works featuring **pagan elements** are not accepted.
- Any **plagiarized works** will be disqualified.

##### Techniques and Formats:

- Accepted forms: **Iconography, painting, and graphics.**
- Materials and techniques: **Open choice.**
- Format: must be mounted on a **35x50 cm passe-partout** (except for wooden icons).

Each submission must have the following details written clearly on the back:

- Category
- Full name of the participant
- Age, group/class

- City/village, region, school/organization
- Contact address and phone number of the participant
- Name and contact of the supervising teacher/parent

By entering the competition, participants agree to allow their works to be used for exhibitions, publications, and charitable purposes.

### **Category II: Literature (Poetry & Prose)**

#### **Participation Requirements:**

- Submissions must be **original** and unpublished in other competitions.
- Works should focus on the **spiritual and social significance** of the Orthodox church, its history, symbols, and role in religious life.
- Stories should **not be mere retellings** of saints' lives or religious events but should **offer personal insights** and reflections on their meaning.
- Any **plagiarized works** will be disqualified.

#### **Submission Process:**

- Entries must be submitted in **printed format** (one copy) and sent via **email** to **skpotdel@bg-patriarshia.bg**.
- Each work must include the following details:
  - Category and genre (poetry or prose)
  - Title of the work
  - Full name of the author
  - Age and class
  - City/village, region, school/organization
  - Contact address and phone number of the participant
  - Name and contact of the supervising teacher/parent

By entering the competition, participants agree to allow their works to be used for exhibitions, publications, and charitable purposes.

### **Category III: Photography & Information Technology**

#### **Participation Requirements:**

- Submissions must be **original** and should not have been entered in other competitions.
- Works should emphasize the **spiritual and social** significance of the Orthodox church, its history, symbols, and meaning.

- Any **plagiarized works** will be disqualified.

The competition is open to students interested in photography and digital projects in **two age groups**:

1. **3<sup>rd</sup> age group** – 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. **4<sup>th</sup> age group** – 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Subcategory 1: Photography**

- Only **printed** black-and-white or color photographs (size: **20x30 cm, A4**) are accepted.
- Series of 2 or 3 related photos can be submitted as a single entry.
- Digital copies must also be sent via email to **skpotdel@bg-patriarshia.bg**.

Each submission must have the following details written clearly on the back:

- Category and subcategory
- Title of the work
- Full name of the participant
- Age, class
- City/village, region, school/organization
- Contact address and phone number of the participant
- Name and contact details of the supervising teacher/parent

By entering the competition, participants agree to allow their works to be used for exhibitions, publications, and charitable purposes.

### **2) Subcategory “Information Technologies”:**

#### **Format of the works under “Information Technologies”:**

ONLY artistically and technologically QUALIFIED works meeting the parameters set in the statute are accepted for participation. Only AUTHORIAL, i.e. ORIGINAL, and not foreign photographic images, texts, drawings or other artistic elements may be combined. Icons / murals - may be used freely. For different genres the following are allowed: photo formats - JPG, PNG, TIF, TIFF; graphic design programs - Adobe Photoshop, Corel DRAW, Adobe Illustrator, Microsoft Paint, Corel Painter Classic, Macromedia Free Hand, InDesign, etc. ASF, ASX, MPG, MPEG, WMV, SWF, AVI, MOV, and other programs with free access to use (if the program is explicitly mentioned in the description of the works).

WORKS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN ELECTRONIC FORM:

> to the e-mail of the Cultural and Educational Department: [skpotdel@bg-patriarshia.bg](mailto:skpotdel@bg-patriarshia.bg) (if larger, via a download link from the Internet);

> or electronically to the postal address of the Cultural and Educational Department

**Genre scope:**

### **A. Electronic presentation / picture / page**

- Power Point presentation (up to 10 slides);
- electronic holiday sticker;
- electronic picture;
- electronic greeting card;
- electronic photo collage (size - up to 15 MB, resolution - up to 300 dpi, color depth - up to 24 bit; maximum width and height of the image up to 2048 pixels);
- electronic poster / leaflet (announcement, invitation for an upcoming celebration / event in a church environment - PDF format).
- electronic website of a church/monastery/church institution, consisting of three subpages with varieties: (a) home, schedule of services and news with photos of the temple/monastery/institution; (b) home, schedule of services and library; (c) home, schedule of services, clergy at the temple/monastery; (d) home, schedule of services, activities at the church/monastery/institution; (e) home, schedule of services and history of the church/monastery/institution, etc. The projects are not published on the Internet, but are produced in static form, without the use of social networks.

### **B. Electronic advertising**

- electronic banner - static / dynamic / flash (e.g. for websites of temples and monasteries, church institutions, church bookstores, shops, etc.);
- electronic logo (for book publications, posters, websites, etc. - PDF format).

### **C. Video**

- video announcement (up to 1 min. - for an upcoming celebration in a church setting);
- video clip (up to 3 min.);
- video film (up to 3 min. - interview, report, short documentary).

Each entry must contain the following information at the end of the electronic file or as an additional file:

- section, sub-section and genre;
- title of the entry;
- author's full name;
- age, grade;

- city/village, district, school/educational center/student club/parish school/other institution with an educational unit;
- address and contact phone number of the entrant;
- name of the teacher/supervisor/parent and their contact phone number.

By entering the competition, participants agree to allow their works to be used for exhibitions, publications, and charitable purposes.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF COMPETITION WORKS: March 31, 2025**

(This is the final date for submission via postal or courier service.)

**ADDRESS FOR SUBMISSION:**

**PENKA HRISTOVA**

Cultural and Educational Department

Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Bulgarian Patriarchate

For the National Competition "**My Heavenly Protector / My Orthodox Church**" – 2025

**4 Oborishte Street**

**Sofia 1000, Bulgaria**

E-mail: [skpotdel@bg-patriarshia.bg](mailto:skpotdel@bg-patriarshia.bg)

**AWARDS:**

In each category and subcategory and each age group, diplomas and prizes will be awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. There will also be a Special Prize of the Holy Bulgarian Patriarch Daniel, as well as incentive prizes. For some of the highest awards, short training sessions are provided as a form of awarding, etc. when possible. The Committees reserve the right not to award some prizes (in the absence of sufficiently worthy entries) or to duplicate some prizes (in the case of particularly strong entrants and equivalent entries).

Participants who are not among the winners will only be awarded a certificate of participation if they request this in advance. (Teachers/parents wishing to request a certificate of participation should write a free text application containing the names of the students/children, category/subcategory/genre in which they are participating, grade/group, age, school/school/center, address, contact phone number, and to state specifically that they want certificate(s)).

**COMPETITION RESULTS AND EXHIBITION**

The winners in each category will be announced after the jury's decision on website of the Bulgarian Patriarchate, Section News: <http://bg-patriarshia.bg/news>, on **16<sup>th</sup> April 2025**. They will receive awards, and all participants will receive certificates of participation (only upon written request via e-mail or post).

The official award ceremony will take place on **18<sup>th</sup> May 2025** after a Divine Liturgy in the Church “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” in Sofia, Bulgaria (47 George Washington Str., Sofia, Bulgaria).

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

An exhibition featuring the winning works will be held at the end of the competition. Selected works may be included in a **charity auction** or a **printed collection**, supporting charity initiatives for children.

AWARDED COMPETITION WORKS are NOT RETURNED TO THE PARTICIPANTS, but remain in the archives of the Holy Synod of BOC – BP. Participants are encouraged to photograph/copy their entries for their personal archives. The current statute stipulates that, after the competition exhibition, works from the “Visual Arts” category and the “Photography” subcategory will participate in a charity auction, supporting charity initiatives for children.

On successful completion of the electronic works, they may be offered for approval and application in the activities of a church/monastery/church institution.

Some of the works may find their place in the publications of the Holy Synod, on the Official website of the Holy Synod, and in other media.

#### **Contact details:**

Dr. Desislava Panayotova, Programmes and Projects Expert - tel. +359 2 987 56 11, ext. 217

Biser Bozhkov, Training and Qualifications Expert - tel. +359 2 987 56 11, ext. 217

Dr. Penka Hristova, Executive Secretary - tel. 0879 510 162

Cultural and Educational Department of the Holy Synod of BOC – BP

E-mail: [skpotdel@bg-patriarshia.bg](mailto:skpotdel@bg-patriarshia.bg)

HEAD OF THE CULTURAL AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AT THE HOLY SYNOD OF BOC – BP

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