

*"I can do all things through Christ  
who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13*

# St. Raphael School Journal

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Website [here](#)

Newsletter  
October 2023



## Kontakion of St. Raphael the Bishop of Brooklyn

You were a guardian and a defender of the Church's teaching: you protected your flock from false doctrines and confirmed them in the true faith. O holy father Raphael, son of Syria and glory of North America, always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved.

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Welcome back! I pray you all had a blessed beginning to the church and school year! The newsletter team is so excited to present this first fall edition. Hold on to your hats because we have lots to share this year! Meet the new amazing column writers, each with a brand new twist to old columns, enjoy beautiful poetry, fun quirky short stories and so much more!

### **The Newsletter is open and ready for submissions!**

Do you have questions for a spiritual father, a piece of artwork for the Fine Arts page, or an assignment of which you are proud? Send it on in! We'd love to see what you've got.

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## Praying List

### Living

Fr. Peter

Eleousa

Phyllis

Lynn

Joseph

Linda

Andrew

### Departed

Barbara Joy

Suzan

Elliot

Timothy

Fr. Porphyrios

Fr. Abraham

Anna

“It is of great significance if there is a person who truly prays in a family. Prayer attracts God's Grace and all the members of the family feel it, even those whose hearts have grown cold. Pray always.”

-ELDER THADDEUS OF VITOVNICA

## SAINT ANASTASIA OF ROME



### Troparion

Your lamb Anastasia, calls out to You, O Jesus, in a loud voice: / “I love You, my Bridegroom, and in seeking You I endure suffering. / In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in You, / and I died so that I might live with You. / Accept me as a pure sacrifice, / for I have offered myself in love.” / Through her prayers save our souls, since You are merciful.

## Feasts of the Month

### October 1

*Holy Protection of the Theotokos*

### October 12

*St. Symeon the New Theologian*

### October 19

*St. John of Kronstadt*

### October 21

*St. Hilarion*

### October 23

*Apostle James, the Brother of God*

### October 27

*St. Nestor*

## Note from the Editor

Dear St. Raphael Journal readers, thank you for checking out our newsletter! It wouldn't be possible without all the amazing support from SRS teachers and staff. If you would like to see more student submissions, please explore the St. Raphael School Journal Website. **To submit names for the prayer list or a student submission, email the Newsletter team** here.

Genevieve Bell  
Managing Editor & Website Coordinator

## It's Too Hard

By Anastasia Fahey

The other day I was stung by a bee. My finger became swollen and it was very uncomfortable, to say the least. Last year one of my friends found out he is a diabetic. He had to change his entire diet and now he can't eat the same food as everyone during social gatherings which can be inconvenient for him. One of the parishioners at my church died a few years ago after battling with a horrible illness for several months. He lost a lot of weight, and you could see the life draining out of him.

Whether we like it or not, we are going to experience suffering in this life as well as everyone around us. We all tend to avoid uncomfortable situations, and we don't like it when anything bad happens to us. This is a completely normal, human-like response, but if we know that we are going to suffer then we should try to approach it in a Christian manner. After all, the saints were not complaining when they were being martyred, but rather, they enjoyed it and thanked God. One of the most well-known stories in the bible is the life of Job.

All of his children died. He lost all his livestock and property. Even his wife turned against him. Job remained faithful to the Lord and did not become despondent over his life, and in the end, he was rewarded with more than he had before.

Furthermore, a world without suffering sounds too idealistic. Imagine if nothing bad ever happened. We would never know how beautiful goodness is because we would not be able to compare it to the bad times. Saint John of Tobolsk states in *The Sunflower* "If God did not

*"We have to accept everything as a gift from God because it is."*

Suffering is a biological commitment of every human being. We also know that it is one of the many characteristics that make up a good Christian as stated in Galatians 5:22 and 23. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." So among many positive qualities, we know that we must suffer as well. If we approach difficult circumstances with the right mindset we can become better people.

With a brand new school year ahead of us, we can expect some difficult assignments or late nights catching up on work. We know that bad things are going to happen to us or we might have problems at home. Many of us are probably worried about the future as we approach graduation. We have to accept everything as a gift from God because it is. Know that through any trying time, there is always someone there to help you and that bad times don't last forever. Hard moments shape how we become, so embrace them with a good attitude. "For God to help, one must have a desire to struggle. And when we say a desire to struggle, we mean that one must be willing to make some effort to overcome his particular weakness. If God sees even a little true will, He provides abundant help for man, He sends His grace in great abundance." +St. Paisios of Mt. Athos

## A New Ecclesiastical Year Kicks Off With GOYA

By Thomas Bean

Sunday Night: It had been a fun hour of just messing around while playing ping-pong, basketball, cornhole, and volleyball. All 68 middle-schoolers and teens were crowded into our church hall boiling with the excitement of a new ecclesiastical year. But we weren't excited only for the ecclesiastical year, we were excited for a new year full of GOYA. GOYA stands for Greek Orthodox Youth Association. Now, what is GOYA? GOYA is a middle school through high school Greek Orthodox youth group.

In the Atlanta Metropolis GOYA, you go to Atlanta for the Winter Youth Rally event, the Hellenic Dance Festival, cross-dive, trips to help the needy, and sometimes, you just get together to have fun. This night was the first get-together for our church's GOYA after the summer, so we were all super excited.

When the priest finally called us, we took our seats in a circular position in the middle of the hall. Our priest, Fr. Mark Leondis, walked into the center of the circle of seats and welcomed us with excitement.

He introduced himself to us while putting in the occasional pun or joke in his introduction. After his small speech, he introduced the GOYA advisory team, meaning the adults who would act as our counselors and chaperons for the rest of the year.

Finally, after going through their names, Fr. Mark began the part where everybody fears... icebreakers. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, icebreakers can be one of the hardest parts of any camp, school, or some type of group.

*"just remember that God is always there for you."*

Now, although these can be tough, they also help us get to know each other better, and sometimes, those people that you introduced yourself to could be life-long friends. The hard part for me in an icebreaker is that sometimes I get so nervous in front of so many people, (yes, even people who have been my friends for years) but then I realize that you know what? God is always there for you no matter what situation you might be in.

So when you feel nervous or unsure, just remember that God is always there for you. Having that in mind, all of us in the hall easily went through the icebreaker. After the icebreaker, we were able to do...more icebreakers. Except this time you didn't just say "Hi, I'm Athanasi and I don't like avocado ice cream." This time we had to think of our favorite church and GOYA memory and tell it to someone. I picked my first service at the altar as my church memory and for my GOYA memory I picked a Saint Augustine trip we took to see the St. Photios shrine. The experience was beautiful and I got to meet some new kids who are pretty nice people. As we enter this new, exciting, and blessed ecclesiastical year, let us keep God in our minds and strive to be faithful Orthodox Christians. Amen.

# Once Upon A Time

by Mary Kjendal

Once upon a time there was a fat cat. This fat cat was named Leroy, and he lived on a doorstep downtown. Leroy woke up every morning to a bowl of tuna laid out for him. He had no idea who set the tuna out for him, but he didn't really care. Tuna is tuna, right? One cold morning in the middle of December, Leroy woke up and stretched. He licked his face and paws clean and took a deep breath in through his nose, waiting for the delectable smell of canned tuna to reach him. But there was no tuna smell. Leroy opened one eye distastefully. No bowl of tuna. He opened the other eye. Still no bowl of tuna. Plot twist? Leroy rarely left his doorstep. It was comfortable and sunny and provided food. Everything about his doorstep was still true, except the food part. Leroy didn't have anything better to do, so he closed his eyes again and went to sleep. The next morning, there was still no bowl of tuna. Leroy looked up to the sky, looking for something to suggest that a bowl of tuna would arrive in the near future. Nothing. On day 5 of his tuna-less predicament, Leroy got to his paws and yawned. Enough was enough. Leroy had been mildly disturbed when he saw one of his chins was receding. So he walked off the doorstep. The plot thickens. He looked around, uninterested, hoping to see a bowl of tuna on the next doorstep. No luck. Leroy sighed at the unpleasant disaster that had befallen him. He continued down the street, holding on to the hope that some other doorstep other than his would have a bowl of tuna waiting for him. No luck. Leroy peered down an alley repugnantly. There was a dumpster with what looked like food scraps hanging out of it. Leroy turned his head and walked back toward his doorstep. However, he soon found that he had a problem. He had no idea what doorstep was his. None at all. Bad news. They all looked red or brown and most of them had green things growing in bowls, just like his did. But none of them had tuna on them. Leroy was starting to get vaguely alarmed. If his tuna

appeared tomorrow, he might not be there to receive it. He huffed and faintly meowed. His week was going downhill very fast. By the time it was dark he lay on a doorstep that he thought probably wasn't his. Leroy was too tired to care.. Very early in the morning he awoke to a shoe in his side. It hurt a lot. No tuna for his trouble, either. Leroy jumped off the doorstep and yowled. Seeing that nothing cared, he sulked down the street, looking for tuna. He walked slowly, dragging his tail down the sidewalk. He paused in front of a puddle and stared down at his reflection. He meowed morosely at the thinning cat he saw. He picked up his paws and kept walking. Soon he passed the dumpster he hadn't cared about the other day. Now when he looked at it he thought maybe food scraps wouldn't be so bad. After all, it had been a long day. A long week. He tried to leap onto the dumpster, and to his surprise, he made it. He found a bone that still had some meat on it, so he licked it. No, Leroy's not a dog. It tasted edible, so he ate all the meat off of it and licked his paws. He arched his back and sprung down from the dumpster. He purred happily as he rounded the corner and the sun hit him in the face. He walked down the street for the rest of the evening. Just as the sun was setting, Leroy spotted something on a doorstep. Guess what he found. He leapt onto the stoop and sniffed. A bowl of tuna was set out on the step, right by the green thing that grows in a bowl. Leroy licked the tuna once and purred. He sat down testily, thinking about something. About what? Leroy knew he could survive without his daily tuna supply. In fact, life was sort of not boring without it. But he also knew he had lost more fat rolls and at least 2 double chins since his week of no tuna. It was a hard choice. Really? Not really. Leroy lay down complacently and licked his face and paws clean. He took a deep breath in through his nose, and started on his tuna. After he had finished, he licked his paws once more, and settled down to sleep.

# Student Submissions

## Advertisement



The Saint Raphael Newsletter Is Calling For:

# STUDENT

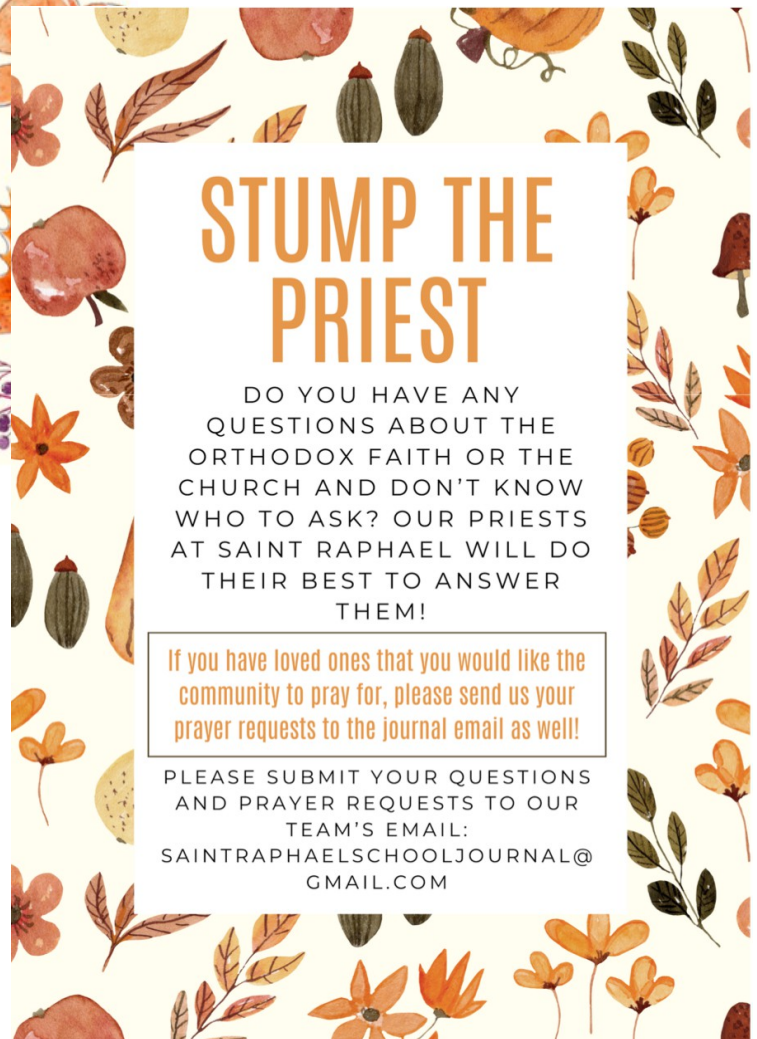
submissions

SEND YOUR POETRY,  
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# STUMP THE PRIEST

DO YOU HAVE ANY  
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE  
ORTHODOX FAITH OR THE  
CHURCH AND DON'T KNOW  
WHO TO ASK? OUR PRIESTS  
AT SAINT RAPHAEL WILL DO  
THEIR BEST TO ANSWER  
THEM!

If you have loved ones that you would like the  
community to pray for, please send us your  
prayer requests to the journal email as well!

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS  
AND PRAYER REQUESTS TO OUR  
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Theo C



# Theosis of the Arts

## Pumpkin Pancakes!

By Theodora Cuica

Good morning! Good Afternoon! Good Evening! And welcome to the Column “Theosis Through The Arts”! I am so happy to be back with all of you and I hope you had an amazing summer! Now that we’re in October, I was thinking that in place of our usual column, we could switch it up and have a cozy recipe. I love this one so much and it's always so tasty. This recipe can be doubled, tripled, or even quadrupled for the whole family and they fit the colder weather too! So here it is!

### *Ingredients:*

1 cup all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons granulated sugar  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 cup canned pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)  
1 large egg  
1 cup buttermilk (or substitute with 1 cup milk mixed with 1 tablespoon white vinegar or lemon juice)  
2 tablespoons melted butter or vegetable oil  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
Cooking spray or additional butter for greasing the griddle or pan



### *Instructions:*

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and all the spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and cloves).  
In another bowl, whisk together the pumpkin puree, egg, buttermilk, melted butter or oil, and vanilla extract until well combined.  
Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Be careful not to overmix; a few lumps are okay..  
Heat a griddle or a large skillet over medium-high heat and lightly grease it with butter.  
For each pancake, ladle a portion of the batter onto the hot griddle.  
Cook until bubbles form on the surface of the pancake and the edges start to look set, usually about 2-3 minutes.  
Flip the pancakes and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes on the other side, or until they are golden brown and cooked through.  
Remove the pancakes from the griddle and keep them warm while you cook the remaining batter.  
Serve the pumpkin pancakes hot, topped with your choice of maple syrup, whipped cream, chopped nuts, sliced bananas, or chocolate chips.

I hope you enjoy your homemade pumpkin pancakes, perfect for a cozy fall breakfast or brunch!

***Happy cooking! And God bless you!***

## October Country

By Natasha Richart

The sky is blue,  
The breeze is fresh.  
The grass is green,  
The meadow at rest.

A gurgling creek.  
Runs under a tree,  
A perfect spot,  
To sit and just read.

The crops smell sweet,  
Apples and pears,  
Plump, yellow wheat,  
Enough to share.





## Course Spotlight on Catechism

Collected by Sophia Spanos: Edited by Annalise Dawson

### Women of Faith: Orthodox Women Saints

Using the three-book series *Encountering Women of Faith*, this class aspires to learn about Orthodox women saints, in the hope of applying this knowledge to our own lives and to connect the lives of these women in the “cloud of witnesses” (Hev. 12:1) with contemporary issues today. Recently, the class has been learning about the lives of the Righteous Susanna and Saint Susanna the Deaconess. The class is conducted much like a book club, reading and discussing the assigned passages. Students read some of the text on their own, making notes of questions or comments along the way. Some parts are read together in class, pausing for discussion and reflection. At the end of each chapter, there are discussion questions in the books that are gone over together, in addition to any other questions or comments that may arise. In keeping with “restful learning,” the assignments aren't tedious. Assignments include reading the assigned texts, sometimes providing brief answers to questions provided, occasional small projects that may be artistic in nature, and a final project that will include a visual aspect, as well as written text.

### Catechism 6:

The goal of the Catechism classes is to grow in love for God and His Church through deeper knowledge of Theology, Scripture, Saints, History,

and Spirituality in order to live and share these truths. Studying *Unseen Warfare* by St. Theophan the Recluse, the class is currently discussing the ideas of trusting God more and properly managing mind and will. They are writing an essay distinguishing true and false humility; a large part of the classwork is writing based. Every week short summaries are due and throughout the year there are six short essay assignments, all of which must go through peer editing and have outlines submitted to ensure clarity of thought prior to writing. A typical class follows the same pattern; greetings, prayer requests, prayer and opening hymn, spiritual reflection from a student, “housekeeping” (discussing administrative issues like upcoming or late assignments and service projects), synopsis presentation by a student on the reading, discussion (the bulk of the class), and finally looking ahead to the next reading and closing prayer. This class aims at an introduction to the spiritual life, learning how to manage thoughts and feelings, and behaviors to counteract evil influences and draw near to Christ

### Catechism 4:

The goal of the Catechism classes is to grow in love for God and His Church through deeper knowledge of Theology, Scripture, Saints, History, and Spirituality in order to live and share these truths. Catechism 4 fulfills this through learning what words mean from the Bible, Theology, and Hymnody and understanding the overarching history of salvation

# Meet the Newsletter Team!

## Annalise Dawson



Co Managing Editor

*"To love beauty is to see light"*  
-Victor Hugo

## Georgia Knowles



Column Writer

*"If you don't come back, sir, then I shan't, that's for certain."*  
-Samwise Gamgee

## Anastasia Fahey



Column Writer

*"God can't give us peace and happiness apart from Himself because there is no such thing."*  
C.S. Lewis

## Theodora Cuica



Assistant Editor

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*  
- Philippians 4:13

## Genevieve Bell



Managing Editor

Website Coordinator

*"To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world."*  
- Dr. Seuss

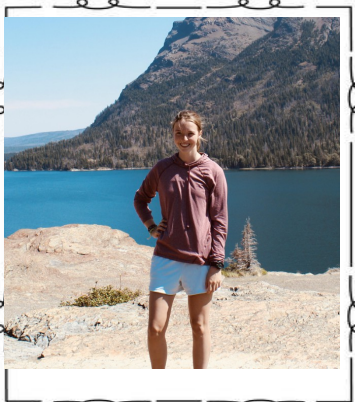
## Natasha Richart



Column Writer

*"All grown-ups were once children...but only few of them remember it."*  
- The Little Prince

## Mary Kjendal



Column Writer

*"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."*  
Winston S. Churchill