

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

# St. Raphael School Journal

Visit our  
Website here

Newsletter  
May 2024



## 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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Christ is Risen! Congratulations to our Saint Raphael School graduates! The school year is at its end, so please enjoy this final newsletter. Inside you will find two beautiful students submissions, a summer book recommendation list and much more. Have a wonderful summer, thank you dear readers for all your support and love!

### **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 you are proud of? Send it on in! We'd love to see what you've got.

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# St. Raphael School Journal

## Praying List

### Living

Fr. Peter

Eleousa

Phyllis

Lynn

Joseph

Linda

Andrew

### Departed

Barbara Joy

Suzan

Elliot

Timothy

Fr. Porphyrios

Fr. Abraham

Anna

Zane

“Where there is prayer, the fallen spirits have no power.”  
-ELDER THADDEUS OF VITOVNICA

## EASTER SUNDAY



### **Kontakion**

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all, cried to all in the midst of the feast of the law: Come and drink the water of immortality! We fall before Thee and faithfully cry: Grant us Thy bounties, for Thou art the Fountain of our life!

## Feasts of the Month

May 5

*Great and Holy Pascha*

May 6

*Bright Monday*

May 10

*The Life-Giving Spring of the Most-holy Theotokos*

May 12

*Thomas Sunday*

May 21

*Holy Apostle John, The Theologian*

May 29

*Mid-Feast of Pentecost*

## 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.*

Gen Bell  
Managing Editor & Website Coordinator

## Acquiring Peace in a Wacky World

By Anastasia Fahey

Got peace? Let's see if we can take a few minutes and try to get a smidge of it from this article. With Great Lent and the school year coming to a close, things tend to get very busy this time of year. Our schedules are filled with tasks, final exams, and social events which makes it easy to lose ourselves in worldly cares. It is crucial for us to keep a peaceful mindset during the busyness, though.

The church has many examples of saints who maintained a peaceful mind while dealing with many worldly problems. Saint John of San Francisco exemplified this spirit in his compassionate care for orphans. Another example is Saint Elisabeth the New Martyr. God granted her peace to endure the many hardships she faced during the Bolshevik Revolution. Saint Piasios of Mount Athos was continuously helping his spiritual children with their problems. Another beautiful life is Saint Maria of Paris, who saved the lives of many during WWII. The Romanov Royal Martyrs are wonderful examples of those who face the world with a peaceful mindset.

If we want to build our connection with God, become better people, and strengthen our relationship with our children/spouse/friends like these saints then acquiring peace is what we need. In the film Man of God, there was a scene where the president of the seminary was saying his goodbyes to Saint Nectarios.

“Do you have peace, Mr President?”

***“Without having peace in your heart, you will never be able to know the truth.”***

After a long pause, he replies, “No. No, I do not. But I don’t care about that. I only care about knowing the truth.”

Saint Nectarios says, “Without having peace in your heart, you will never be able to know the truth.”

Since the world fills us with nonsense, we need to detox our mind and body and fill it with Christ to become peaceful. Great Lent is the perfect time to accomplish this. We can also reduce/remove social media from our

lives. It is a great distraction and perverts our thinking. The way we think can affect those around us, according to the book Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives. We need to learn to filter out sinful and perverted thoughts and replace them with beautiful ones. Our prayer life is another important aspect. If we neglect to communicate with the One who created and cares for us, then how will He grant us the gift of peace?

It is an amazing thing, but we cannot accomplish it on our own. We should remember, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13). Our diligent efforts are required as well if we are to attain the wonderful gift of peace. God bless you all!

# Reflection Essay

## On Repentance

By Georgia Knowles

On repentance; an entry in the journal of the new Hieromartyr Vasili of Optina.

“To whom shall I liken myself, who wish to overcome my pride? I shall liken myself to a man trying to bring down a mountain with my hands. I use all my knowledge; I put in all my strength. I see that my desire is infeasible- the mountain stands unshakably- yet I do not abandon my labor. I see the futility of my efforts; I weep over my helplessness; I mourn the infeasibility of my plan. Despondency darkens my reasoning; laziness binds my body; helplessness wounds my heart. ‘For what is all this?’ they tell me. ‘Your labor is needed by no one.’ ‘It is needed,’ I respond through tears, ‘it is needed, for God himself is helping me in it.’”

Dear reader, seeing as how it is nearing the end of Lent, and the struggle begins to double in intensity as we strive to overcome our passions that God has so

graciously revealed to us, I thought it fitting to reflect on these most powerful words. Writing his thoughts into a private notebook and setting it down in his cell for no other eyes to see, what a marvel it is that the holy martyr Vasili’s . . . . .

***“Without having peace in your heart, you will never be able to know the truth.”***

words could inspire zeal in the heart of a highschool student, just a few decades later. His words inspire us not to give up in the struggle, a hopeless struggle without the help of our Christ. He mourns, he becomes despondent, he is overcome by laziness, his effort is useless, but he runs to God. The blessed Vasili helps us to understand how truly incapable we humans are. We may labor and toil over our salvation, we may struggle ceaselessly without rest, but if it

wasn’t for Christ’s giving our very breath, and assisting us in every way toward our goal, we would be running on a spiritual treadmill, exhausting ourselves but getting nowhere. ‘The struggle is needed,’ he says, because God Himself is helping him! What a good God we have, Who is so ready to help us, His children who so often abuse and mistreat His love! Through the prayers of Saint Vasili, may we nevermore sadden Christ, our Sweetest Lover with our sins, but forever gladden Him with our struggle towards His kingdom, Amen!

# Christ is Risen!

## Advertisement

Happy Easter!  
Christ Is Risen!

Our team prays you have a blessed  
Easter and Light Week!



# Congrats Grads!

## Advertisement



# Student Submissions

## Summer Art Contest!!

# ART CONTEST



**theme: summer**

**deadline: 31 August**

**submit: your artwork, your name, and your age**

**The winners will be published in the first newsletter of the school year!**



**email your submission, name, and age to [raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com](mailto:raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com)**

# Student Submissions

## Art Page

Drawn By: Georgia Knowles

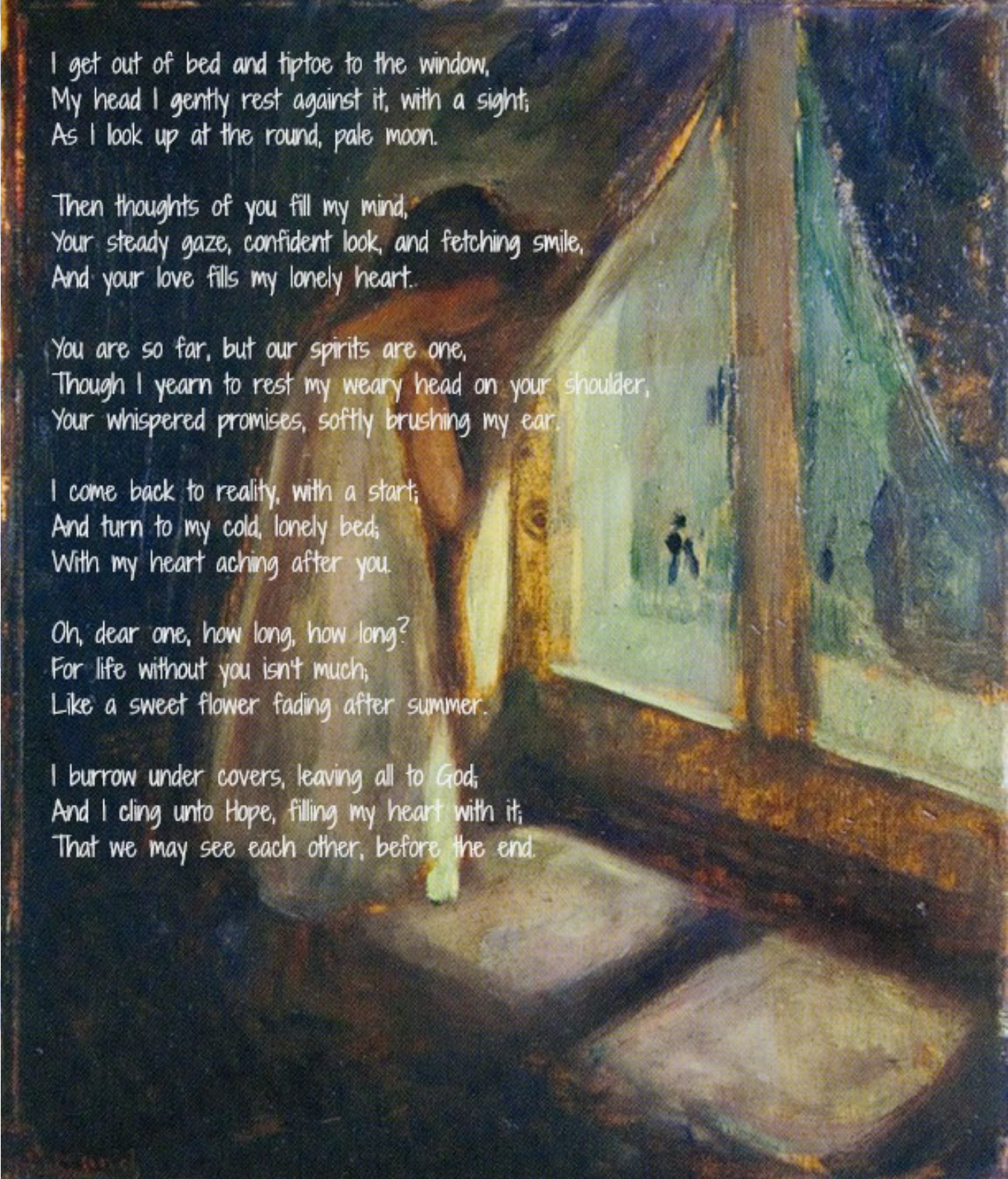




# Student Submissions

## Poetry Page

A Young Soul's Yearning by Anonymous



I get out of bed and tiptoe to the window,  
My head I gently rest against it, with a sigh;  
As I look up at the round, pale moon.

Then thoughts of you fill my mind,  
Your steady gaze, confident look, and fetching smile,  
And your love fills my lonely heart.

You are so far, but our spirits are one,  
Though I yearn to rest my weary head on your shoulder,  
Your whispered promises, softly brushing my ear.

I come back to reality, with a start;  
And turn to my cold, lonely bed;  
With my heart aching after you.

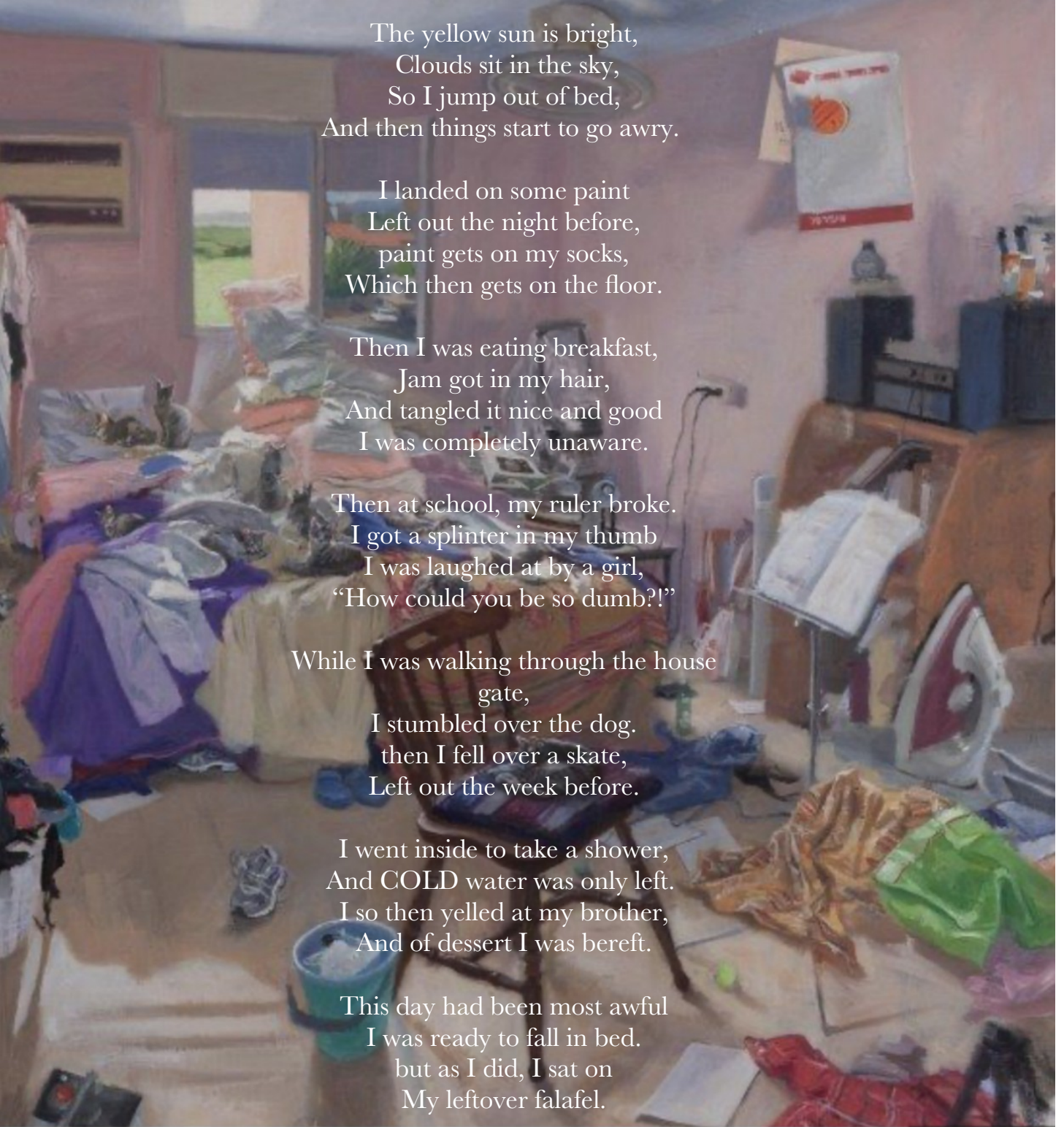
Oh, dear one, how long, how long?  
For life without you isn't much;  
Like a sweet flower fading after summer.

I burrow under covers, leaving all to God;  
And I cling unto Hope, filling my heart with it;  
That we may see each other, before the end.

## THE WRONG SIDE OF THE BED

By Natasha Richart

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The yellow sun is bright,  
Clouds sit in the sky,  
So I jump out of bed,  
And then things start to go awry.

I landed on some paint  
Left out the night before,  
paint gets on my socks,  
Which then gets on the floor.

Then I was eating breakfast,  
Jam got in my hair,  
And tangled it nice and good  
I was completely unaware.

Then at school, my ruler broke.  
I got a splinter in my thumb  
I was laughed at by a girl,  
“How could you be so dumb?!”

While I was walking through the house  
gate,  
I stumbled over the dog.  
then I fell over a skate,  
Left out the week before.

I went inside to take a shower,  
And COLD water was only left.  
I so then yelled at my brother,  
And of dessert I was bereft.

This day had been most awful  
I was ready to fall in bed.  
but as I did, I sat on  
My leftover falafel.

## Summer Book Recommendations!

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By Sophia Gheorghe

Christ is in our midst! As summer is drawing near, and school will be ending soon, we all look forward to a relaxing vacation. Maybe read some good books, and be able to enjoy them without being stressed out about homework and overdue assignments. I would like to share with you three really good, fun and easy to read books that teach us some valuable lessons. They are some of my favorites, and I hope that you will like them too!

Pollyanna is about an orphaned girl that lives with her strict aunt— that takes her in because she believes that it is her “duty” to do so— Polly Harrington. Pollyanna loves people, and she wins everybody with her sweet, sunny personality. She also teaches everybody she meets the “glad game”, which changes the lives of the people that start playing it.

The Fullness of Joy is a book written by Georgia Briggs, author of Icon. It is about a bear that discovers St. Serafim in the woods, and how she stays with him when temptations are at their strongest. I personally thought that this book was more heartbreaking than Icon, as to me it seemed to be much more touching and deep.

The third and last book that I would like to share is The Lion and the Saint. It is about St. Gerasim and his pet lion, Jordanes. A little hamadryas, a kind of baboon, is also part of the group, and this beautiful story is full of the love and unity that the saint and beasts have toward each other.

*~ I hope that you all will have a wonderful summer break! ~*

## Course Spotlight Catechism

Collected by Mary Kjendal

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### Catechism Level 6 By Masha Sleeper

This year, I have been blessed to take Catechism Level 6 with Fr. Noah Bushelli. We have been reading *Unseen Warfare*, a book, as the title suggests, on spiritual warfare. It has helped me so much with understanding the spiritual life and how we, as Christians, ought to live. Along with reading and discussion, each student in the class also does a service project for their church. We also write essays on what we are reading and peer review each other's essays. Fr. Noah is an amazing and incredibly knowledgeable teacher, and it helps very much to have his guidance in this book.

### Catechism Level 7 By Sofia Ringe

In Catechism Level 7 Theology, led by Fr. Tim, students are continuing their studies of Orthodox doctrine with the help of Elder Cleopa's two volume series, *The Truth of Our Faith*. They are wrapping up their discussions on the Orthodox Mysteries, and they look forward to covering Holy Week and Pascha! Students are also in the process of preparing their final course paper, in which they will defend an aspect of Orthodox theology to an unbeliever. It's hard to believe the end of the year is already upon us!

# Meet the Newsletter Team!

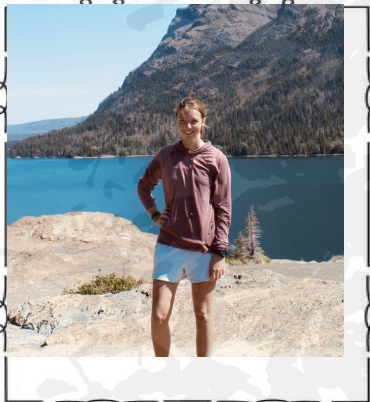
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Assistant Editor

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

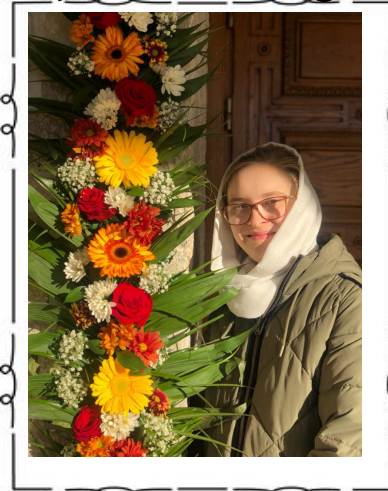
**Mary Kjendal**



Column Writer

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

**Sophia Gheorghe**



*"To honor is saint it to imitate a saint." - St. John Chrysostom*

**Georgia Knowles**



Column Writer

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

**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*

**Thomas Bean**



Column Writer

*"A generation which ignores history has no past and no future."  
Robert A. Heinlein*

**Anastasia Fahey**



Column Writer

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

**Natasha Richart**



Column Writer

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

**Sevastiane**

**Archer**



Secretary

*"Prayer is the place of refuge for every worry, a foundation of cheerfulness, a source of constant happiness, a protection against sadness."  
- St. John Chrysostom*