

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

St. Raphael School Journal

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Newsletter
October 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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Welcome back! I pray you all had a blessed beginning to the school year! The newsletter team is so excited to present this first fall edition. Before we begin let's give a special round of applause for all the summer art contest contenders! And congratulations to our talented three winners, Thomas Bean, Pelagia Millwood, and Joe Saur! Congratulations artists! Enjoy the October Edition!

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

"A good character is a matter of choice, not chance."
-ST. BASIL THE GREAT

PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS



Kontakion

Today the Virgin stands in the church, / and with hosts of Saints, and invisibly prays to God for us. / Angels worship with Hierarchs, / and Apostles rejoice with Prophets, / for the Theotokos prays to the Pre-eternal God for us.

Feasts of the Month

October 1

Protection of the Theotokos

October 6

St. Innocent Enlightener of the Aleuts, Apostle to America

October 9

Glorification of St. Tikhon, Apostle to America Holy Apostle James

October 18

Apostle & Evangelist Luke

October 23

Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord

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

Reflection of the Month

Reflection On The Eastern Gate In the Book Of Ezekiel

By Lizzie Durka

Dear Reader,

Throughout the tradition of the Church, there have been many ideas as to what the Holy Prophet Ezekiel meant by mentioning “the eastern gate” and the altar with measurements of 1 cubit by 1 cubit.

In Ezekiel 43:1-12, the prophet was led out from the “east gate”, the glory of the Lord entered, and then the “gate” was shut (44:1).

According to the Holy Church Fathers, this passage, together with Ezk. 44:1-5 foreshadows the Incarnation, when the Holy Spirit overshadowed the most holy Virgin, the Theotokos, in the temple, and the Son of God was conceived in her womb.

In Ezekiel 43:13-17, the altar here, as well as the altar in church, images the heavenly altar.

“The altar is the soul of the righteous man, which lays upon itself before His eyes as many sacrifices as it

has done good.

And what is the drain of the altar nonetheless is the patience of good men, which, while it humbles the mind to endure adversities, shows it to be placed low down after the manner of a ditch? Well, too, this same trench is directed to be of one cubit, because if patience fails not, the measure of unity is preserved.”

-St. Gregory the Great

“the altar here, as well as the altar in church, images the heavenly altar.”

The eastern outer gate is seen as the womb of the most holy and pure Virgin, which was ‘shut’ because the ‘Lord God’ had entered it. (44:1-2). The Church sees this passage as describing the ever-virginity of Mary the Theotokos. And although many Western denominations reject this doctrine,

it was held to be true by Martin Luther and John Calvin—despite what modern-day Lutherans and Calvinists believe in regards to the Theotokos. St Jerome writes that the “east gate” images the Virgin Mary, whose womb is “Always shut and always shining, and either concealing or revealing the Holy of Holies; and through her the Sun of Righteousness, our high priest after the order of Melchizedek goes in and out”

At the great feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, we sing “Today the House of God receives the gate through which no one may pass; so it has brought an end to the worship commanded by the shadow of the law.”

The Beauty Of Laughter

By Theodora Ciuca

Laughter is a universal part of being human. It's something we all experience, no matter where we come from or what language we speak. But why do we laugh? What does it mean for us?

At its most basic level, laughter is a physical reaction. When something is funny, our bodies respond with laughter, which can range from a small chuckle to big belly laughs.

Some researchers think laughter has evolved to help us bond with others. When we laugh together, we create a sense of belonging and trust, making it an important part of social interactions. Laughter is not just a personal experience; it's deeply social. When we laugh with others, we strengthen our connections. Shared laughter can break down barriers and help us feel closer. It can also lighten difficult conversations.

Laughter also serves as a powerful coping mechanism. In stressful or painful situations, finding humor can provide relief and perspective.

Many people turn to comedy during tough times, using laughter to navigate feelings of sadness or anxiety.

This can be especially evident in the way comedians tackle serious topics, finding humor in their own struggles.

By sharing their experiences, they help others feel less alone and encourage a collective release of tension.

Research shows that laughter can trigger

“Laughter is more than just a reaction; it’s a vital part of life that can bring us together.”

the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, which promote an overall sense of well-being.

This physiological response highlights how laughter can be a vital part of our mental health toolkit, encouraging resilience in the face of adversity.

Studies show that laughter can reduce stress, improve our mood, and even boost our immune system.

In a world that can often feel overwhelming, finding humor in everyday life can help us cope. Laughing becomes a way to show resilience and hope, reminding us that even during tough times, we can still find joy. Hospitals and therapy programs increasingly incorporate laughter and humor as part of healing practices, recognizing its importance in emotional recovery.

Philosophically, this leads us to think about how humor can help us deal with life's challenges. By finding laughter in our struggles, we assert our strength and embrace the ups and downs of life. This perspective encourages us to maintain a lighthearted approach even when facing serious issues, which can foster a more optimistic outlook.

Laughter is more than just a reaction; it's a vital part of life that can bring us together, lighten our burdens, and remind us of the joy that can be found in everyday moments.

Once Upon A Time

Sweet Sweet Freedom

Waiuku's delicate fingertips broke the surface of the water, creating ripples that spread out in perfect blue rings, gently swaying the water lilies. A beautiful ibis stood at the edge of the far-away bank, cocking its head and staring at Waiuku, knowing such a human didn't belong there.

A cool breeze lifted up Waiuku's silky black hair, tossing it this way and that before flinging it over her shoulder and then rushing off to some other land.

Waiuku looked in the direction it had gone, staring as if she could see it, though had anyone had seen her they would have thought she was admiring the willow trees that surrounded the water.

There was another gentle plop in the water, but it wasn't from her fingers this time. Crystal tears fell into the water, making the brilliantly colored fish swim hastily away.

A rustle came from the reeds that stood out straight in the water, and then the wind was back, as if taunting Waiuku. The wind ran around her again, pulling at her earrings and then disappearing, free as any bird.

Waiuku knew she must get back, or Asahi would be looking for her. But she waited. She didn't know why, but she waited. And then it came. The wind was back, and tilted her small boat back and forth, as if begging her to come play with it. But I can't. The wind soared away, as fickle as a small child. It flew up high in the air, as if to show that it wasn't tied down by anything. I wish I was the wind.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Student Submissions

Art Contest Results

Our winner for 7-10 is Joe Saur!



Student Submissions

Art Contest Results

Our winner for 11-13 is Pelagia
Millwood!



Student Submissions

Art Contest Results

Our winner for 14-18 is Thomas Bean!



Student Submissions

Advertisement

Student Submissions

We want your work!
Send your artwork, creative writing, photography, poetry, and more to be published in the St. Raphael School journal.

raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com



Graphics
By
Mary
Kjendal

Stump the Priest

If you have a question for a priest, and you don't know who to ask, send it our way! We will ask a priest your question, and the answer will be published in the next newsletter.

Send your questions to us at raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com.

Student Submissions

Advertisement



If **you** are enrolled in a **Liberal Arts** course, any level, a **writing** course, or a **poetry** course, please send us a paragraph about your class to be published in the next newsletter! Tell us what class you are taking, who the teacher is, what you're reading/writing, etc.

The SRS Journal would like to spotlight different courses each month, and the upcoming edition is spotlighting literature/writing classes. Please send your paragraph to us at raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com in time for publication! (For November, please email us your paragraph in the beginning of October.)



Theosis of the Arts

Hagia Sophia

By Sophia Gheorge

Hello everyone! Christ is our midst! I hope that you have had a wonderful and blessed summer vacation. In this column, I would like to share a very special experience I had this summer: visiting Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, which was once the great Byzantine empire.

My family and I were coming back from visiting our family in Romania. We had a nineteen hour long layover, so during that time we decided to tour Istanbul, and one of our stops was Hagia Sophia. It took about an hour from the airport to get there, and on the way we got to see many historical places and sights; we also drove by the Bosphorus for a little. I had so many feelings and thoughts during that time, I would wonder what was standing in the current location we were in during the time of the great kings?

Hagia Sophia is HUGE. It took only five years and ten months to build it. The muslims now sadly use it as a mosque. In the upper gallery though, the mosaics are uncovered. They're so beautiful

While walking up to the gallery, I was in awe. Imagine how many great saints and people have preached and been in this place. St John the Goldenmouth, St. Constantine the great and his mother St. Helen, and Saint Olympiada the Deaconess to name a few. So many holy feet have tread that ground. It was mind blowing.

The gallery was really big. We got to see paintings of the cherubim on the walls, the Deesis mosaic, other mosaics with emperors and the Theotokos, and many more.

It has truly been a priceless moment for me, and if I can, I will definitely visit again. If any of you have the chance of visiting, you really should, and you won't regret it!



Teeny Tiny Specks Of Dust

By Mary Reese

*I'm sitting in a dark attic, watching dust
float around,
Teeny tiny specks of fluff, softly drifting
down.*

*Running from the light beams, swiftly and
then slow,
But when caught in the pale light, suddenly
they glow.*

*What if they were wishes, what if they
were dreams?
Sent to fly, not to return, never coming back,
it seems.*

*What if they were memories, what if they
were souls?
Sent adrift, in constant movement, not to
have a hold.*



Meet the Newsletter Team!

Theodora Cuica



Co Managing Editor

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

- *Philippians 4:13*

Mary Kjendal



Column Writer

"A rose does not speak, but its fragrance spreads far in silence."

- *St. Theophan the Recluse*

Sevastiane Archer



Column Writer

"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*

Mary Reese



'Column Writer

Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.

~ *Dr. Suess*

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*

Sophia Gheorghe



Column Writer

"It isn't what we say or think that defines us, but what we do."

- *Jane Austen*

Lizzie Durka



Column Writer

"Let us not then be anxious about the praise of men, nor seek to display our good deeds before others, but let us bury them in the secret place of our hearts, and let God alone see them."

Natasha Richart



Column Writer

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

- *The Little Prince*