

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

# St. Raphael School Journal

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Newsletter  
November 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! As we look forward to November and the season of gratitude, we're thrilled to bring back our popular "Stump the Priest" column, where questions asked by readers are answered by our priests here at St. Raphael. We're blessed to be writing for you all so enjoy reading!

### **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*

"God asks little, but he gives much."

-ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM



### Kontakion

You received divine grace from Heaven, / and by your lips you teach all men to worship the one God in Trinity, / O most blessed Venerable John Chrysostom. / We praise you, as is meet, / for you are a guide, making divine things clear.

## Feasts of the Month

### November 9

*St. Nectarios of Aegina*

### November 13

*St. John Chrysostom*

### November 16

*Apostle Matthew the Evangelist*

### November 17

*St. Gregory of Neocaesarea*

### November 21

*The Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple*

### November 25

*St. Mercurius*

### November 30

*Apostle Andrew*

## 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

## Patience and Perseverance

By Sevastiane Archer

I don't know about you, but giving thanks to God when I don't feel grateful at all is something I struggle with. It takes patience and perseverance, both things I lack. You might be wondering, patience? Why would patience be something you need to give thanks to God? Well, for every person, it is different, but for me, if I am struggling with something and I don't want to give thanks to God, it helps me to know that "all things work together for good for those who love God..." - Romans 8:28. It doesn't say that immediately it will work together for good. Sometimes, it takes patience to see God's plan for us. So, at the moment, I like to say a prayer, take a breath, and ask God to give me the patience I lack to see that this is from God.

Now, let's talk about perseverance. When you look at successful people, you might wonder how they reached their level of success. Success can mean different things to different people. Some might define it as having a lot of money, while others might see it as being famous.

"All things work together for good for those who love God..."  
Romans 8:28.

From my perspective, I like to think of success as having a solid relationship with God. One common trait among all these 'successful' people is perseverance. So, how can we apply this concept to our relationship with God?

We all know we won't wake up one day and suddenly have unceasing prayer and love for everyone. The saints of our church persevered every day with God's help. They endured torture, slander, and hardships, yet they were able to wake up each day and thank God for all that He had given them. Saint Nektarios was constantly slandered by people he considered friends. It didn't take one day when he woke up and decided that he would forgive them all. It took a lifetime of prayer and cultivating love.

Cultivating prayer and love might be challenging, but we can achieve it with perseverance and God's help. Pray for your enemies, read the Gospels, and ask God's help. Through this, we can become closer to Him and trust the Lord.



# Once Upon A Time

## Echoes Of Loss

At last, though, Waiku's tears ceased to fall. Her boat slowly drifted to shore, as if it was forcing her to get out. Gathering her pale silk skirts around her so they would not fall into the pond, she stepped out, and hurried along the stone path that led into the grove of peach blossoms. Even here, she did not stop, but continued until she reached the back doors of her house, her black hair flying out around her shoulders. Sliding open the screen doors, she slipped inside, and closed the screens behind her, shutting out the cool air and sun.

"Waiku, sit down," her mother said calmly.

Waiku's mother was sitting on a reed mat on the ground, and motioned to a cushion opposite her. Waiku bowed her head and obeyed. Her mother was always in this room at this time of day. The scent of orchid and rose water filled the air, but Waiku found her throat constricting as she sat down. She could not bear the smell of orchids and rose water. She hadn't been able to bear them since that day the king's messenger had come with the message that her father had died fighting in the mountains. Fresh orchids had been put out that day, and the maids had sprinkled rose water over all the furniture for a special dinner the family had been planning to host that night.

Ever since then, Waiku had escaped to the pond almost every day to cry and breathe in something that was not orchids or rose water.

This had been the last room that her father had sat in before he had left to join the rest of the troops. Everything was the same as it had been then. The brown horsehair cushion still rested in the corner next to the day, the portrait of her great-grandfather still stood in the place of honor over the table. The green mat was still there, as was the stained bamboo floor.

Waiku looked at her mother. There was a tear in her eye. Just then, Asahi entered the room. His black hair was tied in a neat ponytail, and his normally tender eyes were fixed with determination. But when he saw Waiku, Asahi's eyes grew sweet again, and he smiled gently. But it was a sad smile.

"What has happened?" Waiku asked, a tremor in her voice. Asahi had only ever smiled like that at her once. It had been the day their father died, and he had come to find her in the peach grove. She had been painting. That was the last time she ever touched a brush again.

TO BE CONTINUED...

## Stump The Priest

Answered By Fr. Timothy Hojnicky

**Q:** How do we restore our wavering faith and how do we deal with doubt?

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Greeting! First off, faith is not something that just happens. Faith is ultimately a gift from God. We need to pray daily (and the Church services talk about this!) to increase our faith. I think if we are honest, all of us at one time or another have had doubts. Doubt is not necessarily a sin. Everyone has doubts. The question is what we do with it.

Often, we hear about the "doubting" Thomas. As a Church we celebrate this amazing interaction with our Lord and the Apostle Thomas on the Sunday after Pascha. However, it is more accurate to call that event the "Belief of Thomas," since it is the first time in Scripture that Jesus is addressed as God directly: "My Lord and my God!" But it came about BECAUSE of Thomas' doubt. God can actually use our doubt to draw us closer to Him. For instance, if I struggle with something and then give up, that's not good. But, if I struggle with something and that causes me to read up on it and understand the topic better, then my doubt can actually be used to bolster my faith. In that process God blesses us to cast out doubt and to strengthen our faith. Again, it is what we do with it.

Secondly, I think the truth is that most of us fall into the category of the possessed boys' father in the 9th Chapter of St. Mark's Gospel. When he was told that everything is possible to him who believes, frustrated and desperate, he says: "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief."

Ultimately, we deal with doubt with humility. Humility acknowledges that there are things we don't know or understand, but at the same time we acknowledge the fact that God knows all, and we pray for the faith to put our trust in Him alone. May God grant us an increase of faith, and the patience and grace to weather the storm of doubt this world throws at us.

Fr. Timothy

# Student Submissions

## Art

.....

Drawn by: Zhanna Christiansen



A dove and his friends at Saint Nectarios church in  
Aeigina, Greece.

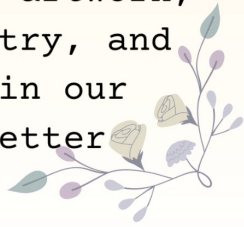
# Student Submissions

## Advertisement

### STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

*Send us your work!*

we would love to  
publish your artwork,  
writing, poetry, and  
photography in our  
school newsletter



EMAIL YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO  
RAPHAELSCHOOLJOURNAL@GMAIL.COM



Graphics By

Mary  
Kjendal

*Stamp the Priest*

Do you have a question for  
a priest, but you're not  
sure who to ask? Email us  
your questions, and we  
will publish the question  
and answer in the  
newsletter, answered by a  
priest.

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# Student Submissions

## Advertisement

### CLASS ADVOCATES

If you are in a SCIENCE course at St. Raphael School, any level, please send us a paragraph about your class so we can publish it in our newsletter!

You can tell us what you are studying, what projects you are working on, etc.

Send your paragraphs to [raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com](mailto:raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com), in time for publication

For the December newsletter, please email your paragraphs in by the middle of November





# Theosis of the Arts

## On Giving Thanks To God

By Sophia Gheorge

“For if God does not for a moment tire of giving us good things, how can we tire of thanking Him for these good things?”

- St. Nikolai Velimirovich

Christ is in our midst! As we get closer to the end of the month, a new holiday comes up. Thanksgiving is a beautiful time where our family gets together to (mainly) thank God for all the blessings He has given us the past year.

Thanksgiving shouldn't be the only time we should thank God for everything He has given us, we should be thanking Him everyday. As Saint Nikolai Velimirovich says in the quote above, we should never be tired of thanking God for all the good things He gives us, as He is never tired of giving us the good things.

But you might say, “how can I remember to thank God ALL the time? I always forget!” My question is, do you forget to brush your teeth in the morning? Or do you forget to do your homework on time? Probably not, since those things have become a habit, and you know you have to do them. That's how giving thanks to God should be. It should become a habit; thanking Him when you get up in the morning, when you say your morning prayers, before and after meals, when you're hanging out with friends, when doing school work, when you get something you really wanted, when you go to bed. We have a whole day to thank Him for every minute thing, we have to take the time and be sincere about it. And when He sees that we are actually thankful, you'll see blessings in every little thing in your life, and the whole world will be dear to you.

“Glory to God for all things” were St. John Chrysostom's last words. And he lived a hard life, the imperial people were always persecuting him. Instead of looking at the negative things, he always looked at the bright side. Because of that, Christ gave him strength to battle the thoughts he must have had about his persecutors. And look where that got him! He's one of the greatest hierarchs of our time. I want to end with a fragment from the song of the Three Holy Youths; it is found in the book of Daniel.

“Bless the Lord, O Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, And sing a hymn to Him, And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages; For He delivered us from Hades

And us from the hand of death. He rescued us from the midst of the burning fiery furnace, And saved us from the midst of the fire. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, Because His mercy endures forever. Bless the Lord, the God of gods, All you who worship Him, And sing a hymn and give thanks to Him; For His mercy endures forever.”

~ Daniel 3:88-90

# Poetry Corner

## Night's Diamonds

By Mary Reese

I watched you shine, a cold white light,  
A tiny spark in the cold dark night.  
Like a sentinel you were watching me,  
What a pitiful world is the one you see.

At first just one you bravely shone,  
Then suddenly you weren't alone.  
A thousand diamonds way up high,  
A show of sparkles in the sky.

You took the darkness, made it bright,  
You were not selfish with your light.  
Courageously you lead the way,  
But then you hide, when comes the day.

When I awake you start to fade,  
I miss the tiny lights you made.  
But darkness returns, as it always does,  
You'll shine, a diamond in the rough.

# Meet the Newsletter Team!

Theodora Ciuca



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