

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

# St. Raphael School Journal

Visit our  
Website [here](#)

Newsletter  
February 2025



## 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.

## Table of Contents

Welcome back! As we step into February and the start of a brand new year, we're excited to bring you this month's edition of the Newsletter. With the start of 2025 underway, we hope you're feeling refreshed and ready for the opportunities ahead.

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

Do you have a new piece of artwork for the Fine Arts page, a question you'd like to ask, or something you're proud of that you'd like to share? Send it our way—we'd love to see what you've been working on.

Keep an eye out for exciting student submissions this month as we continue to celebrate the fresh start of the year together!

<b>The Pros and Cons Of February.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Written by Sevastiane Archer</i>	
<b>Once Upon A Time.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Written by Natasha Richart</i>	
<b>Student Submissions, We Need You!.....</b>	<b>5-8</b>
<i>Created by Mary Kjendal</i>	
<b>The Lightkeeper: A Book Review.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Written by Sophia Gheorge</i>	
<b>Poetry Corner.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Written by Mary Reese</i>	
<b>Account of the Presentation of Our Lord into the Temple.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Written by Elizaveta Durka</i>	
<b>Meet the Newsletter Team.....</b>	<b>12</b>

# 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

“He who has love has everything; he who has no love has nothing.”

-St. Nicholas of Serbia

## THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR IN THE TEMPLE



### Kontakion: Tone 1

By Your birth, You sanctified a virginal womb, / and fittingly You blessed Simeon's hands, O Christ God; / even now You have saved us by anticipation. / Grant peace to Your faithful people whom You have loved, O only Lover of mankind.

## Feasts of the Month

### February 2

*The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple*

### February 6

*Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople*

### February 9

*Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today*

### February 16

*Sunday of the Prodigal Son*

### February 22

*Saturday of Souls*

### February 23

*Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)*

## Note from the Editor

Dear St. Raphael Journal readers, thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter! This wouldn't be possible without the incredible support of the SRS teachers and staff. To see more student submissions, be sure to visit the St. Raphael School Journal Website. *To submit names for the prayer list or a student submission, email the Newsletter team here.*

Theodora Ciuca  
Managing Editor & Website Coordinator

# Featured Essay

## Pros and Cons Of February

By Sevastiane Archer

February is an interesting month. It's the shortest month of the year, yet somehow, it feels like the longest. (At least for me.) Where I live, it's often rainy, and the excitement of the holidays has faded. That burst of energy I felt at the start of the new year seems harder to hold on to, especially when some of my big goals I set after New Year's aren't going the way I want them to.

But there are pros and cons to February like there is to every month. On one hand, it's a month when I can feel stuck in a routine. There's no Christmas to look forward to, no long breaks until summer. Life feels like it's settling back into its usual rhythm.

On the other hand, February has its bright spots. For me, it's the

little things, like my sports season starting up again, fun moments at school, or even the heart-shaped everything for Valentine's Day that brings a bit of excitement.

This year, I decided to change how I approach February. I've

**"It's the little things that bring a bit of excitement."**

always struggled with making goals that are too big to realistically stick to, so instead of setting myself up for that February letdown, I decided to make smaller, more achievable goals. Things like drinking more water every day, journaling a little before bed, or even just remembering to take time for myself.

These aren't huge life changes, but they're steps in the right direction.

February is also a reminder about love. Whether it's spending time with family, writing a kind note to a friend, or taking a moment to pray for someone, these little acts make a big difference. Even though Valentine's Day usually has a romantic theme to it but for me it's a reminder about the people around me who I care about and love.

So yes, February has its cons. It's rainy, a little gray, and not exactly the most exciting month. But it's also a chance to slow down, appreciate the small things, remember all of those around you who you love and who love you and enjoy.

# Once Upon A Time

## Whispers of a Broken Heart

Waiku stared at her brother's retreating form. What had he meant? I must go, to save you. It didn't make any sense. Her mother got up and left the room too, but Waiku continued to sit.

Her heart seemed to be broken in two. She couldn't function without Asahi. He was like a solid rock to lean on, and when he went tumbling down the hill, she followed. He would die. She knew it. The guard for Princess Chiyo had their work cut out, for as the eldest daughter of the emperor, all of their enemies were trying to catch her. For a moment, Waiku considered following Asahi. She could work at the palace. She would be able to be near him, and she wouldn't spend the rest of her life crying on the lily pond.

It was then that Waiku heard voices. She listened. They were coming from outside the door that Asahi had just exited. She got up, and crept slowly across the bamboo floor. Pressing her ear to the door, she held her breath.

"... he leaves before dawn tomorrow. We will not sleep tonight, and you will do the work."

It was her mother. Talking to their manservant, Jacu. Jacu was Mother's most trusted servant.

"Will Waiku not suspect when Asahi does not write to her?"

"I will come up with some sort of alibi. In any case, we must get rid of him. The little money we have left from his father will go to him to run the family as soon as he turns of age. I need that money. If he is gone, I get it."

Waiku stood shocked. Her mother wanted to kill Asahi.

"And if Waiku finds out?"

"She will not. She spends all her time at the pond."

"As you wish," said Jacu, and the voices faded away.

# Student Submissions

## Advertisement



St. Raphael School Journal

### STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

Send us your artwork, writing, poetry, photography, and more to be published in the upcoming edition of our school newsletter!

email your submissions to us at [raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com](mailto:raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com)

The advertisement features a light pink background with a decorative border of soft pink flowers. The text is enclosed in a thin gold rectangular frame.

Graphics By

Mary  
Kjendal



### ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL Stump the Priest

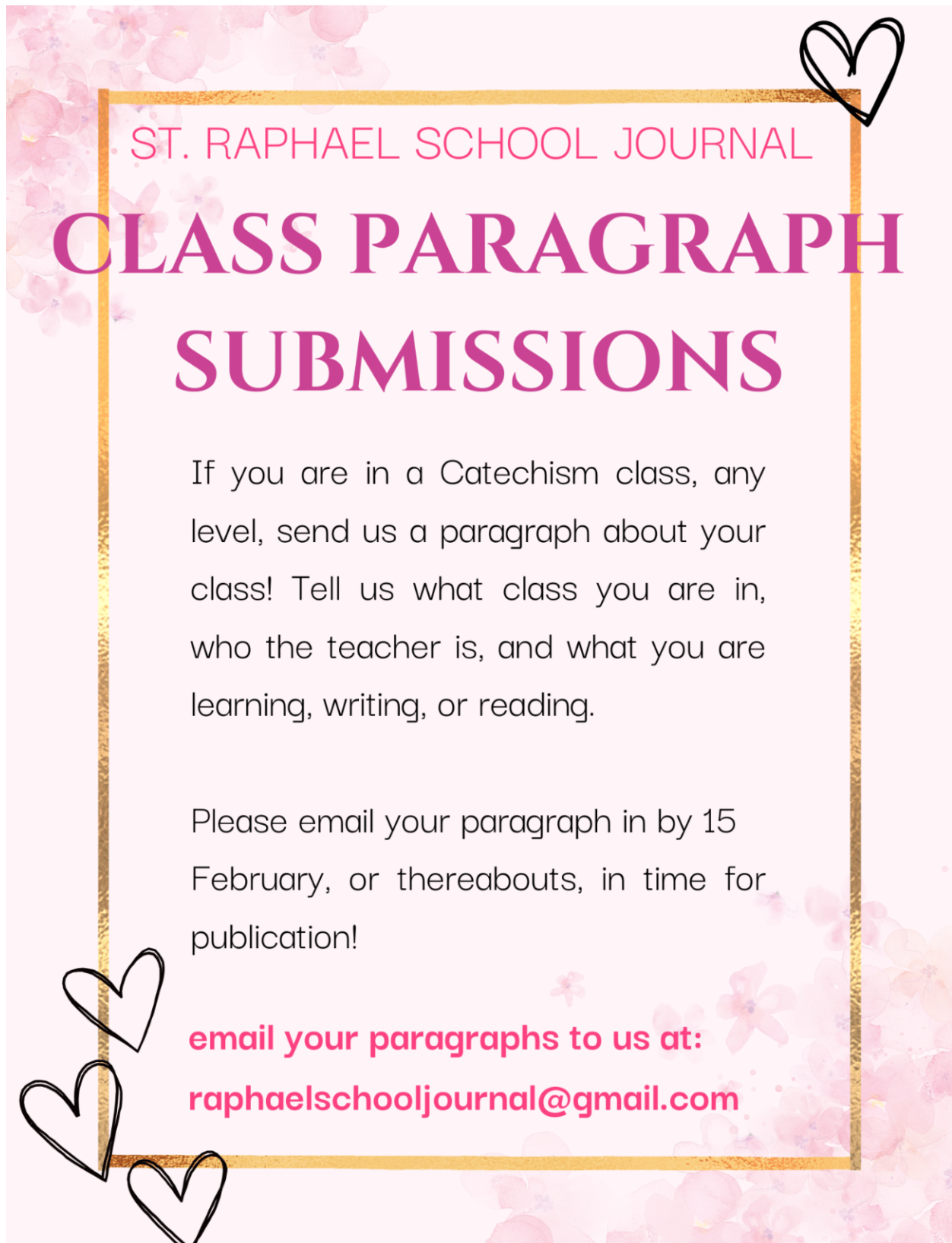
Do you have a question about the Church or the Faith, and you're not sure who to ask? Send us your questions, and a priest will answer them! We will publish the q+a in our next newsletter.

Email your questions to us at:  
[raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com](mailto:raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com)



# Student Submissions

## Advertisement



ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL JOURNAL

# CLASS PARAGRAPH SUBMISSIONS

If you are in a Catechism class, any level, send us a paragraph about your class! Tell us what class you are in, who the teacher is, and what you are learning, writing, or reading.

Please email your paragraph in by 15 February, or thereabouts, in time for publication!

**email your paragraphs to us at:**  
**[raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com](mailto:raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com)**

# Student Submissions

## Art

Embroidered by: Sophia Knowles



# Student Submissions

## Art

Off To Neverland  
Painted by Jacqueline Saur





# Theosis of the Arts

## The Lightkeeper: Book Review

By Sophia Gheorge

.....  
*“You, Beloved, who were lost from the beginning, who never came, I do not know which songs are dear to you.”*

-Rainer Maria Rilke

Christ is in our midst! In this column, I would love to share with you all a book that I got for Christmas: *The LightKeeper*. This book has such a beautiful story; its plot a complicated, twisted web with intriguing series of events which click together in time. *The Lightkeeper* is a mix of sci-fi and romance, and it also references the sign of the Cross even though it isn't clear if the main character is Orthodox or not.

The main character is an ageless and nameless girl that travels through time to tend lighthouses that are in need of her; either the lightkeeper of the respective lighthouse is gone, injured, or even dead. She has tended many lighthouses; she has been to Gurnet Point, Plymouth Harbor, Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1776; Little Red Lighthouse, Hudson River, NYC, 2010; Colossus, Rhodes, Greece, 226 BC, just to name a few. *The Lightkeeper* (as the girl is called before she is named) does not remember how she came to be who she is, nor does she remember her childhood, or having a family. She is human, but she isn't capable of feeling pain, and she is basically immortal, always moving through time. Because of that, she doesn't have a permanent home. As time goes by, she starts feeling lonely. Because of her position, whenever she encounters people they look at her as a good ghost or sweet dream, and if she encounters someone in a crowd or city, they either forget her altogether or they remember her as a distant, pleasant memory. As the story goes on, a beautiful but complex connection is made, which leaves you to contemplate the mysteries of this world.

*The Lightkeeper* was definitely a good read, and I highly recommend it. It is found on Ancient Faith, the ISBN is 978-1-944967-89-5. It has some violent scenes, a little bit of romance, and slight cussing. I hope you all enjoy it as much as I have!

# Poetry Corner

## Dancing In The Heavens

By Mary Reese

---

Soft and gentle, hardly there,  
Moving like a shadow, an illusion.

Swift and slow, in perfect unison,  
Swaying back and forth.

Dark and light, lovely colors,  
Make the sky an artwork.

Delicate and graceful, bursts of  
brightness,  
Dancing in the heavens.

# Reflection Of The Month

## Account of the Presentation of Our Lord into the Temple By Elizaveta Durka

Dear Reader,

Today we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord into the Temple. Forty days after His birth, Jesus was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord. According to the Law of Moses, a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple for forty days. At the end of her purification, the mother went to the Temple with the child to offer a sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin, though not needing purification, fulfilled the Law out of humility.

The righteous Elder Simeon, who had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he saw the Messiah, went to the Temple at that moment. He received Jesus in his arms and thanked God, saying, "*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation*" (Luke 2:29-32). He also prophesied to the Virgin Mary about Jesus' future and her own suffering. Saint Anna the Prophetess, an 84-year-old widow, also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to those seeking redemption.

Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns over the centuries. Today, we also commemorate the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos known as "the Softening of Evil Hearts" or "Simeon's Prophecy," symbolizing the fulfillment of Simeon's prophecy. During the divine services of this great feast, we sing:

*Hail, Virgin Theotokos, full of grace; for from you has shone forth the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, giving light to those in darkness. Be glad, O righteous Elder; for you received in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who bestows upon us resurrection.*

# Meet the Newsletter Team!

Theodora Ciuca



Managing Editor

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

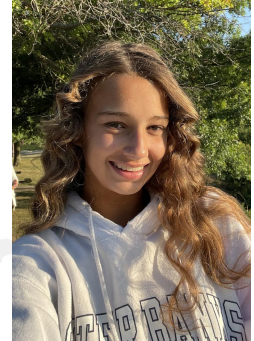
Mary Kjendal



Co-Managing Editor

*"A rose does not speak, but its fragrance spreads far in silence."*  
- St. Theophan the Recluse

Natasha Richart



Column Writer

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

Mary Reese



Column Writer

*Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.*  
~ Dr Seuss

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

Sophia Gheorghe



Column Writer

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

Elizaveta 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."*