

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

St. Raphael School Newsletter

November 2025



Kontakion of St. Raphael
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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Hello, dear readers! As we settle into the rhythm of a new school year and welcome the crisp air and vibrant colors of fall, we're excited to bring you the October edition of the Newsletter. This time of year invites us to reflect on new beginnings, renewed goals, and the growth that comes with change.

We're also thrilled to announce a brand new contest launching this month! Be sure to check the details inside. It's a great opportunity to get involved and share your creativity.

As autumn settles in around us, may this season remind you that change can be beautiful. Whether you're diving into new studies, spending time with friends and family, or simply enjoying a cozy moment with a warm drink, we hope October is fruitful for everyone! Happy reading, and God bless!

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St. Raphael School Newsletter

Prayer List

Living

Fr. Peter
Eleousa
Phyllis
Lynn
Joseph
Linda
Andrew

Departed

Barbara
Joy
Suzan
Elliot
Timothy
Fr. Porphyrios
Fr. Abraham
Anna
Zane

"What I see around me would drive me insane, if I did not know that no matter what happens, God will have the final word."

-Elder Paisios

Entry of the Most-Holy Theotokos into the Temple



Kontakion Tone 4

The most pure Temple of the Savior; the precious Chamber and Virgin; the sacred Treasure of the glory of God, is presented today to the house of the Lord. She brings with her the grace of the Spirit, therefore, the angels of God praise her:
"Truly this woman is the abode of heaven."

Feasts of the Month

November 6

St Paul the
Confessor of
Constantinople

November 13

St John Chrysostom,
Archbishop of
Constantinople

November 14

Holy Apostle Philip

November 16

Holy Apostle and
Evangelist Mathew

November 21

Entry of the Most-
Holy Theotokos into
the Temple

November 30

Holy Apostle
Andrew the First
Called

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 at \[raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com\]\(mailto:raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com\)](#)

Check out our
website [here](#)

Theodora Ciuca
Managing Editor & Website Coordinator

Contest Announcement

story contest

Have you ever imagined that you're a character in someone else's story, and someone is turning the pages, making things happen?

If that sounds familiar, then this contest run by the SRS Journal is for you! To enter, write no more than 300 words on your experiences this summer - with yourself as the main character!



Deadline for submissions: 15 November

*Winning submissions will be published in our
December edition!*

Email your entries to us at raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com

Featured Essay

How To Love

By Sevastiane Archer

.....

“See to it that you drive away the evil thoughts which the devil urges you to consent to—especially thoughts of hatred towards the brethren you should pay no attention to, because he aims to steal from you the greatest virtue: love. And if he achieves this, he has completely won your soul. Once we have lost love—God, that is, for God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him (1 Jn. 4:16)—then what is there left to save us”

-Elder Ephraim of Arizona.

This November, I have been contemplating the idea of love and how to properly love a neighbor. I have found it hard to love people around me, especially people who I don't get along with or who I feel don't like me.

In this quote, Elder Ephraim talks about how important love is, and how through love we can be in communion with God. God gives us a path to salvation through loving our neighbor. Christ calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves, if we love our neighbor we love the Lord since God is love.

Many saints have told us to love, and emphasized how important love is for our souls. Elder Ephraim of Arizona said, *“let love be the center of all actions.”* St. Porphyrius preached love saying, *“In order for others to love you, first you must love.”* St. Macarius said, *“he who loves cannot fall,”* and St. Nikon of Optina *“you must love every man, seeing in him the image of God.”* So you see, we are called to love everybody, no matter our disposition toward them.

So how can we love our neighbor? What does it mean to love to be the center of all actions? These are questions that I have been asking myself and Saint Paul answers these in Corinthians saying,

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

Love is not only in the things we say, it is in the things we do, and in the things we don't do. If I say that I love someone but the next minute I go and talk bad behind their back do I truly love them? As St. Paul gives a list of how to be loving towards people and as St. Ephraim said earlier, we must not listen to the thoughts of hatred that the devil sows in our mind about our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Through love we can be with God, it is our path to salvation. However, if we do not love and we listen to thoughts of hatred, if we are prideful and self-seeking, if we envy, then our love is taken away from us and we are left empty inside.

This year, let us love each other as God loves us and through love, find our salvation together.

Once Upon A Time

Poisons in Joffrey Part 2

By Natasha Richart

Gabrielle Huxley was in a panic. She knew someone had been listening at the door of the costume closet. The sun had been setting, and it was very obvious when someone's shoes had been blocking the incoming light by standing right up against the door. And they hadn't moved which meant that person had been listening. She had tried to warn Antony, but he was too wrapped up in the logistics of their plan to notice. So she had started moving farther into the closet and Antony had followed her, puzzled. But at least he had stopped talking.

"Someone is listening," she whispered frantically.

"What?!" Antony whipped his head towards the door, and sure enough, someone's shoes could be seen in the crack under the door. "Oh, darn."

"Now we need to have two victims," Gabrielle muttered, though she was half hoping Antony would dissuade her thought.

Her hands started to tremble.

Antony, on the other hand, looked excited at the prospect of two murder victims.

But then he noticed the look on her face.

"You're getting cold feet." It wasn't a question.

"We could go to jail for this!"

Antony rolled his eyes. "One person might have heard our conversation and now you want to fling all our plans out the window?!"

"It's not worth going to jail for."

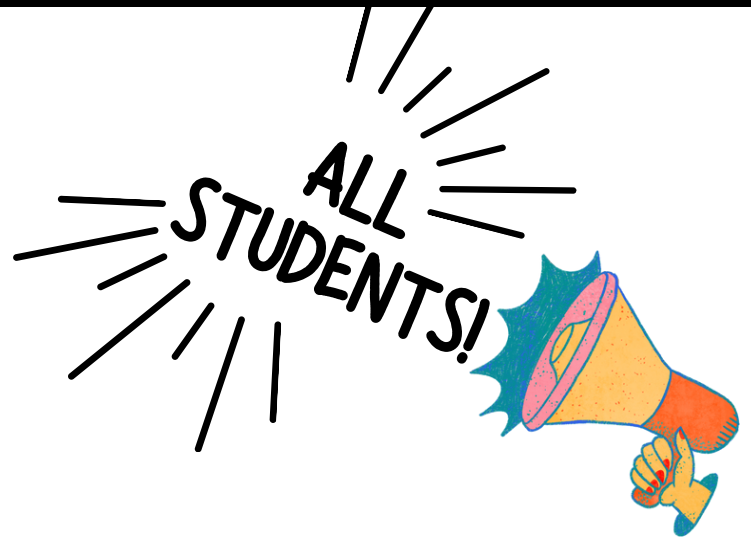
"But if it works, we could be principals again! You know both of us are worth more than corps de ballet members."

She knew it was true. She was good. And Sylvie Maronne did not deserve to be Giselle in Giselle. She deserved that role. A little pit of envy and anticipation wormed its way into Gabrielle's focus. Her gaze hardened. She deserved that role. Antony smiled.

Advertisement

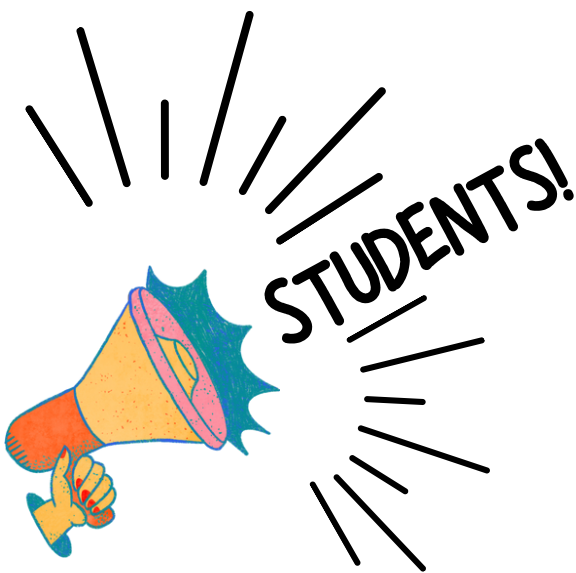
Publish your work!

Send us your poetry, artwork, photography, creative writing, and essays to be published in upcoming issues of our newsletter!



Stump the Priest

Do you have a question for a priest, but you're not sure who to ask? Email us your question, and it will be answered by a priest; the question and answer will be published in the next newsletter.



Email us at:
raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com

Join our team!

Are you interested in becoming a part of our newsletter team? We would love to meet you! We are looking for responsible, dedicated students to fill team roles. Email us if you are interested!

raphaelschooljournal@gmail.com

Mary's Poetry Corner

Autumn

By Mary Kjendal

Autumn is a cozy hush
That falls when people often rush
To open school and hit the books
While fresh-picked apple pie slow-cooks.

Too seldom does a burdened child
With protestations far too mild
Fall on single-minded ears
And miss the passing of the years.

Doggedly pursuing studies
While the mill-creek slowly muddies;
Missing storms that shake the leaves
And rattle all the piled sheaves.

It's not too late— still yet are found
Brilliant leaves lie on the ground;
But at her desk, her eyes not bright,
Sits a tired student, a doleful sight.

Short Story Corner

The Fisherman and the Magic fish

A Russian fairy tale retold by Seraphim Weaver

A long time ago, by the shore of a vast, blue ocean, stood the humble hut of a fisherman and his wife. They were very poor, and it was not uncommon for them to have almost nothing to eat.

One day, the old man cast his net into the ocean and caught nothing. He cast his net again—still nothing. The third time, he caught only one fish, but it was unlike any other he had ever seen. It was a large, beautiful goldfish.

As he was untangling it from his net, the fish spoke and said, “Put me back into the ocean, and I will repay you a royal ransom. I will give you whatever you ask of me.”

The man was startled, for he had never heard a fish speak. He untangled it with great care so as not to hurt it. Then he said, “God bless you, dear little goldfish! I thank you, but I don't want your ransom. Go back to your home in the ocean and roam wherever you please.” When the man returned home, he told his wife what had happened. She began to scold him, saying, “You simpleton! He offered you a royal ransom. You could have at least asked for a new wash tub—ours is falling apart!”

She scolded him for so long that the man went back to the shore where he had caught the goldfish. He called for it, and the goldfish swam up to the surface of the calm, still ocean.

“What is it that you want, old man?” the goldfish asked.

The old man bowed deeply and said, “My wife has scolded me mercilessly. She says she wants a new wash tub because ours is falling apart.”

The goldfish replied, “Do not worry, old man. When you go home, you will find a new wash tub. God be with you.”

When the man got home, he saw a new wash tub sitting in front of the hut. But when his wife saw it, she began to scold him again.

“You simpleton! You were offered a royal ransom, and you asked for a mere wash tub? Go ask the goldfish for a cottage!”

Again, the old man went to the shore and called the goldfish. Again, it swam up to the surface of the slightly troubled sea.

“Dearest goldfish,” said the man, “my wife has scolded me even more mercilessly. She says she wants a cottage.”

The goldfish answered, “Do not worry, old man. When you go home, you will find a cottage. God be with you.”

And indeed, where once stood his hut, there now stood a beautiful cottage.

Short Story Corner

The Fisherman and the Magic fish

A Russian fairy tale retold by Seraphim Weaver

When the old man went inside, his wife scolded him even more. “You simpleton! You asked for no more than a simple cottage! Go tell the fish that I’m tired of being a peasant—I want to be a fine lady!”

So the old man trudged back to the shore and called the goldfish. It swam up to the surface of the now churning sea.

“Old man, what is it that you want?” the goldfish asked.

“My wife has gone completely mad,” said the old man. “She says she wants to be made a Tsaritsa.”

The goldfish answered, “Do not worry, old man. Go home, and your wife will be a Tsaritsa.”

The old man hurried home and could not believe what he saw. A magnificent palace stood before him, and inside sat his wife at a grand table. Servants and nobles attended her, pouring fine wines and laying out white cakes and costly foods.

The old man bowed low and said, “Oh, mighty Tsaritsa, I hope now your soul is content!” But the proud woman ordered her guards to drag him away and forbade him from ever approaching her again, under penalty of death.

As time passed, she became even more arrogant. One morning, she sent for her husband and said, “Go tell the goldfish I am tired of being Tsaritsa. I want to be the mistress of all the seas and oceans, with my home under the vast blue ocean. I want the goldfish to serve me and do whatever I wish.”

The old man dared not argue. Once again, he went to the shore and called the goldfish. It swam up to the surface of the now boiling, black ocean.

“What now, old man?” the goldfish asked.

“My wife is insane,” said the man. “She is still not content. She says she wants to become the mistress of all the seas and oceans, with her home under the ocean, and she wants you to serve her.”

The goldfish said nothing. It merely swished its tail and vanished into the depths. The old man waited for hours in vain, then sadly walked back toward the palace. But instead of a palace, he saw his old hut again—and on the doorstep sat his wife with a broken-down wash tub at her side.

THE END

Reflection of the Month

Guard Your Mind!

Teachings of Elder Joseph of Vatopaidi Monastery [Mount Athos]

.....

“Let’s be attentive, guarding our mind!

An irrational thought comes to our mind. We try to chase it away but it won’t leave.

Then we make use of the resistance, opposition, as the Fathers say...

Resistance has two forms:

We say: “O, you devil, run away! I’m a Christian!” He won’t leave, he’s wicked...

Then we make use of the second method and we humble ourselves saying: “You idiot, you are not ashamed? Are you a human or a devil?

What are these that you think about?” This thing crushes the devil and he runs away immediately. And then comes the divine grace and comforts us...

Therefore, guard your mind!

Do not waste your time in vain!

Do not listen to useless things!

Do not spread rumors about each other!

Keep your schedule tight!

Do you have too much time? Run to your room and open a book!

The words of the Fathers are words of the Holy Spirit. That is why they feed our souls, wake us up, guide us, challenge us, teach us...

Therefore Fathers, be attentive, we have to win this battle.”

Meet the Newsletter Team!

Theodora Ciuca



Managing Editor

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

-Philippians 4:13

Mary Kjendal

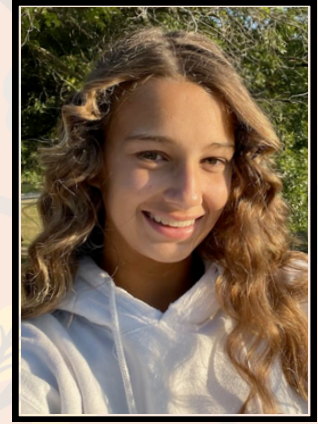


Co-Managing Editor

"A rose does not speak, but its fragrance travels 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

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

Elizaveta Durka



Column Writer

"Write me of hope and love, and hearts that endure."

-Emily Dickinson