

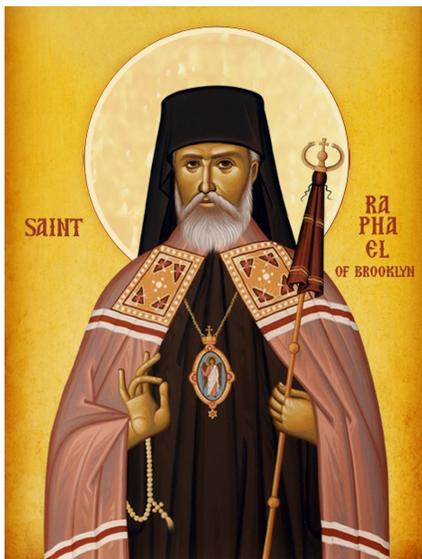
"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." *Philippians 4:13*

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St. Raphael School Journal



Newsletter
October 2019



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.

The Importance of Silence

By Samantha Woolman – Column Writer

During my years of middle school and junior high school, my beloved catechism teacher would talk about the importance of silence. He said it was good for the soul and body, and that we should strive to make time for it in our daily lives. Back then, I acknowledged his words but didn't quite understand their meaning. Now I think I have a better grasp of what he meant. Silence doesn't have to be the dead-quiet lack of sound that leaves your ears ringing. It can be a moment free of worrisome thought in which you lift your heart in prayer and reflect on life's seasons.

It's interesting to think about how life reflects nature's four seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter. In a very broad sense, they represent a human life. Spring represents birth and new life. As it progresses later into the year, rain washes the earth and renews it - similar to a baptism. As children grow into adults, become more intellectually and spiritually aware of their purpose, and determine just who they are, so spring busily prepares itself for the height of the year: summer. In this season, flowers are in full bloom, animals are active, and plants have grounded themselves in the soil. Autumn is the time where warmth still lingers but leaves are losing pigment and dropping from trees. Trees and other plants fade to match the color of the landscape...

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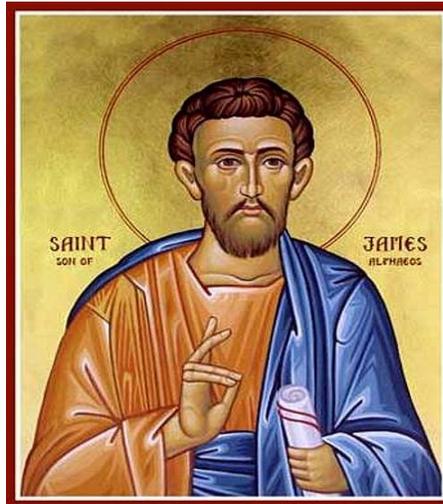
St. Raphael School Journal

Don't Forget to Follow!



If you want to see even more excellent student submissions and articles, then you should check out the St. Raphael School Journal's Website. It is frequently updated with the latest submissions and news. You can view the website [here](#).

St. James, Son of Alphaeus



Let us bless James, praising him as the messenger of God,
For he filled the souls of the pious with wise dogmas.
Standing at the throne of glory before the Master,
He rejoices with all the angels unceasingly praying for us all.

- Kontakion, Tone 2

“Saying God turns away from the sinful is like saying the sun turns away from the blind.”

- St. Anthony the Great

Feasts of the Month

October 6
Holy Apostle Thomas

October 9
Holy Apostle James, Son of Alphaeus

October 17
Holy Prophet Hosea

October 19
Righteous John

October 23
Holy Apostle James

October 27
St. Procla, the wife of Pontius Pilate

Note From the Editor

Dear St. Raphael students, parents, and everyone else, thank you for checking out our newsletter. We have been greatly blessed to have such amazing support from SRS teachers and staff. We couldn't have done this without them. Thank you!

Elyse Hawkins
Managing Editor & Website Coordinator
St. Raphael School Journal

Essay Featured This Month

The Importance of Silence

By Samantha Woolman – Column Writer

...Winter can be an easy, gradual transition or a surprising jolt. Viewed as lovely and exciting for a moment, it's cold temperatures sometimes match the hearts of those experiencing the constant storms, ice, and snow. What's important to remember is that all these seasons have beauty. They also have something in common: all produce music and all contain silence. The newly awakened wildlife and sounds of melting snow, thunderstorms and chirping birds, crunchy leaves and crackling fires, snapping ice and plops of snow...all these blends together in nature's music. But all this ceases sometimes, and gives us silence in which we can contemplate.

Silence allows us to truly experience the world. People often seem so caught up in trying their best to experience everything the world has to offer that they forget to take in what is happening around them. I once read a quote that caught my attention sharply - "The trees are already growing from which your coffin will be made". The Orthodox teaching about death is not gruesome, but it does acknowledge that humans do not live forever on earth. It's important to think about this, but not to concentrate all our mental and emotional energy upon it. Just as the seasons flow from one to the next, it's good to steadily take in everything that is presented to us in life. We die, but we must first live before we die.

I think the Jesus Prayer is a wonderful way in which to both make and fill silence. Because it takes only a few seconds to say, it's a simple and beautiful way to pray without distraction. When you have a moment of time between daily tasks, it's a way in which one may give thanks and communicate with God. If there is a scheduled time for prayer, it also serves as a way to create mental silence and self-knowledge. St. Augustine of Hippo wrote a prayer for self-knowledge. A portion of it reads "Let me accept whatever happens as from You". This is a lovely reminder that a calm, quiet manner allows us to see more clearly, and that we are not given more than we can take on.

Student Submissions

Letter to Myself

By Andrea Woolman – Level 6

This month, in the SRS level 6 class, the students have written a letter to their lazier selves with reference to and in the spirit of Hesiod's "Works and Days". Below is one of the letters written by a student.

My Dear Self,

It has recently come to my attention that you have a rather bad habit of putting off tasks you dislike. This habit is one that most people acquire, but it is still, nonetheless, undesirable. You would be much better off without it. For instance, would it not be better if you went to bed on time instead of procrastinating? That is not quite what one would consider "being productive." And would not your time be better used folding the laundry correctly, instead of rushing through the work as quickly as possible? It is time that you change your attitude about work, and I have several suggestions for you.

Work is a vital part of life. It is in practically everything thing we do and, without work, one would never accomplish anything. However, play and amusement are almost, if not just as important as work. Work without play is like a meal without dessert. Without the dessert, the meal would be lacking and unfinished. Without the meal, the dessert would feel undeserved and inadequate. To fully enjoy both, one must have both the meal and the dessert. It is the same with work and play. Work without play is unending drudgery. Play without work is unearned pleasure. Therefore, "everything you do is best done in season."(Hesiod 45) Keep in mind that there is a time to play and a time to work.

Accomplishing necessary tasks is important, but completing those tasks to the best of one's ability is crucial. Work half done or poorly done is simply not done. Laundry should be folded neatly and tidily. It can be done quickly, but only if the quality of the end result is not sacrificed in any way. Time is not of the essence. You should make sure the work is done efficiently, but, more importantly, it should be done correctly! Remember that "doing things right is the best thing in the world, just like doing 'em wrong is the absolute worst." (Hesiod 38)

You have fallen into a bad pattern, but have courage. Bad patterns are simply that: patterns. They can be fixed and modified by hard work and dedication. Remember that "there's a season for everything"(Hesiod 43) and you will do just fine. Good luck!

Your friend,
Andrea

Reflection of the Month

On the Nativity of the Ever-Blessed Theotokos

By John Dye

“By your nativity, O most pure Virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life.” (Kontakion of the Nativity of the Theotokos)

Every year on the 8th of September, the above hymn is sung from thousands of Churches around the world. The occasion for this ubiquitous exclamation is the miraculous birth of the Mother of God. While not officially recorded in the Bible, the story of Mary’s nativity has been handed down through strong tradition and apocryphal narrative.

Many years before the birth of Christ, an elderly Jewish couple wept that they were barren. As their tears dropped to the ground, their prayers climbed to God. He blessed them with a child, whom they dedicated to the Lord when she turned three. This child was Mary. Little did the parents know that the girl sent by God would grow up to be so virtuous, so perfect, and so righteous that she would be deemed worthy to be the mother of the Messiah.

October Highlights

Collected and Written by Andrea Woolman

Level 4 Literature

This September, the Level 4 Literature students read *Where the Red Fern Grows*. They have had many discussions about it and are now working on their culminating activity. For this assignment, they must write a letter to the marshall in town and update him on what has happened since Billy brought the two pups home. Everyone has done a great job on it. The classmates have only just started reading their next book, *The Aeneid for Boys and Girls*. The class has enjoyed these books immensely and recommends them to everyone.

Contributed by True Jones.

Level 6 Literature

Level 6 Literature is taught by Mr. Lockridge. The class has recently finished *Works and Days* by Hesiod. In the spirit of Hesiod, each student wrote a letter to his lazier self, encouraging himself to work harder and to be more diligent. In addition to reading *Works and Days*, the classmates have also finished the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles. Mr. Lockridge led the conversation as the students discussed themes found in the text such as blindness, the power of the Greek gods, and fate.

Contributed by Andrea Woolman.

Level 4 Catechism

In Level 4 Catechism, the class meets every Friday at 1:15 pm. The students have learned about the following words: created, uncreated, good, evil, image, likeness, soul, body, ascetic, and God. The classmates have discussed all of the words and what they thought of them. Everyone gave examples of the words and discussed the meaning in their own words. The class has also learned two timeline dates: c. 3267 BC (Noah enters the Arch) and September 1, 5509 BC (Creation of the world according to the Byzantine Calendar). The class has read and discussed their thoughts about three stories of creation: a Greek myth, an Iriquois myth, and, of course, the story of creation according to Genesis. The homework of the students is to report what they have learned during that day to their parents. Everything has gone quite smoothly during the last three classes, and the course is enjoyed greatly.

Contributed by Samuel Jenkins.

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More School News

October Highlights Cont.

Collected and Written by Andrea Woolman

Level 5 Catechism

In Catechism 5 (taught by Fr. Nicholas) the students are learning about the creation of Adam and Eve and the Fall. So far, they have read a few chapters from the beginning of Genesis and a section from John Chrysostom's Homilies on the Fall. The class begins by Fr. Nicholas asking a question such as: "What's your favorite ice cream?" The students then take turns reading and discussing the readings. Class ends with a prayer.

Contributed by Aislinn Hawkins.

Level 6 Catechism

This month in Catechism Level 6: Living in Christ, taught by Fr. Noah Bushelli, the students have begun to read the book Unseen Warfare, and have discussed ways to insure we have a full trust and faith in the Lord. They have been submitting a synopsis every Friday on the chapters read that week, summarizing their interpretation of the reading. In addition, one student per week is asked to give a "spiritual reflection" of something that happened to them and reminded them to glorify God in all things.

Students have begun to write their first essay of the year, "Distinguishing Between False and True Humility". The title is self-explanatory, and they will all have written the final draft by October 4th.

Contributed by Owen Bender.

Level 7 Catechism

Catechism VII is taught by Fr. Tim Hojnicky. This year, the class is reading through An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith by St. John of Damascus. In the first class, they began by looking at the historical context St. John of Damascus was writing in and did some more research into St. John himself: his personal life and beliefs. In the classes since then, they have begun to read through and discuss sections throughout the first book. The class' first essay of the school year is due September 27th. This essay will be looking at the student's topic of choice taken from topics discussed by St. John in Book 1. Hopefully, one of those essays will appear in an upcoming newsletter.

Contributed by Elyse Hawkins

Russian 1

The students in the Russian 1 class (taught by Kristin Edwards-Kubrina) meet twice a week and have started by learning the Russian alphabet and some conversational questions and statements. They have been working out of the Golosa Russian workbook and textbook....

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More School News

October Highlights Cont.

Collected and Written by Andrea Woolman

...They have also been slowly learning the Our Father in Russian. Each week they work on writing their Russian letters and learning the sounds the letters make, along with doing their workbook. During their classes, they spend their time learning new words, writing, and saying letters. They have just started being introduced to some grammatical concepts.

Contributed by Thea Frederick

Greek 1

In Greek 1 (taught by Mallory Stripling), the students have started by learning the basic Greek alphabet using a primer of Stripling's own making. They will do this over the next 5 weeks. The class meets once a week and is learning Biblical Greek with modern pronunciation. Eventually, the classmates will move on to learning from the Elementary Greek workbook and textbook by Memoria Press. The class will also be learning one hymn a month. At the moment, the students are working on Bless the Crown of the Year. Every class is started by saying the Lord's Prayer in Greek, then each student saying one thing they are thankful for in Creation. The students then learn their lesson and work on their hymn.

Contributed by Aislinn Hawkins.

Greek 2

The Greek 2 students meet once a week and are taught by Mallory Stripling. They have started by reviewing some of the basic grammatical elements that were learned in year one. They have been using the Koine Greek textbooks and workbooks by Memoria Press. Each month they learn a hymn in Greek. This month they learned "Bless the Crown of the Year" and are now learning "Save O Lord Thy People". During class time, they go over the new chapter, grammar, and words introduced in the lesson book. They then practice the hymn. In between classes, the students read their lesson, do the workbook, and continue to practice their hymn.

Contributed by Thea Frederick.

Byzantine Chant 2

In Byzantine Chant Year II, Samuel Herron has been going over, in depth, the theory of the plagal 4th mode (also called the 8th tone), its musical patterns, its scale (which is slightly different from the Western C major scale), how to interpret the music, and the rubrics of the liturgical services. He has also been discussing some history of Byzantine chant and famous chanters. As well, he has been teaching the class about the different types of hymns (where and when they are sung), and the theological relevance of chanting in church. Each week, the students are assigned hymns to learn and sing (during the past month they have studied "Lord I have Cried" and the Resurrectional stichera). The students record themselves chanting the hymn and post it for grading.

Contributed by Katherine Frederick.

Mid-Winter Spiced Porridge for a Crowd

By Ghea Frederick

Ingredients:

- 2 cups steel-cut oats
- 8 cups water
- 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon cloves
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ½ vanilla bean, split, or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt

Optional Ingredients:

- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup chopped dried apricots
- ½ cup chopped dates
- ½ cup chopped figs or raisins
- Zest of 1 orange

Directions:

Combine everything except the orange zest and toppings in the bowl of a 3-quart or larger slow-cooker. Set the cooker on it's lowest cook setting ("LOW" or 8-10 hours), and leave overnight.

If you happen to get up in the night, give the porridge a stir as you pass by. If not, no worries.

In the morning, break up the thin film that forms over the top of the porridge and stir it in. Scrape the sides and bottom. Stir in the orange zest.

Serve with toppings. Leftover porridge will keep refrigerated for at least a week. Reheat with a little milk or water to make creamy again.

Toppings:

Chopped roasted nuts, jam, fresh fruit, more dried fruit, milk, yogurt, leftover eggnog

Meet the Newsletter Team!

Samantha Woolman



Column Writer

"And so let us be glad and bear with patience everything the world throws at us, secure in the knowledge that it is then that we are most in the mind of God."

- St. Basil the Great

John Dye



Column Writer

"Behold, I have commanded you. Be strong and courageous. Do not be cowardly or fearful, for the Lord your God is with you in all things, wherever you go."

- Joshua 1:9

Elyse Hawkins



Managing Editor
Website Coordinator

"Acquire the Spirit of Peace and a thousand souls around you shall be saved."

- St. Seraphim of Sarov

Andrea Woolman



Column Writer

"...and music is before all other arts the awakening of the heart."

- Baroness Marenholz-Bulow

Thea Frederick



Column Writer

"If you have the strength to be thankful in troubles then that is when the Holy Spirit shines through you."

- Elder Arsenie