

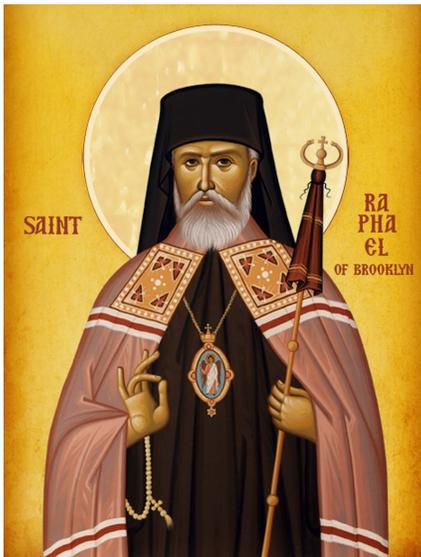
"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." *Philippians 4:13*

Visit our Website [here](#)

St. Raphael School Journal



Newsletter
December 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.

Revenge vs. Justification

By Erika Kjendal - Level 5

Upset traitor, Ganelon, takes revenge,
He plots to kill, his proud step-son Roland.
King Charlemagne, the greatest man of France,
Finds his Roland, his right-hand man, murdered
During combat, against King Marsilla.
That battle was connived by Ganelon.
Charlemagne cries, and vows to bring justice.
"Nothing will bring, our Roland back again!"
The people cry, but Charlemagne doesn't hear.
His forceful sword, crushes all the pagans.
After striking, he marches back to France.
There Ganelon, is terribly tortured,
At King Charlemagne's cruel but just command.
Then he can rest, Roland's death is honored.
Charlemagne calls it due justice for wrong;
His actions only mirror Ganelon's.

St. Raphael School Journal

Prayer List

Living

Jennifer

Douglas

Viola

Daniel

Bethany

Joy

Lincoln

Fr. Isaac & Family

Dave

George

Kim

Ivy Mae

Departed

Elliot

Allie

Peter

Michael

William

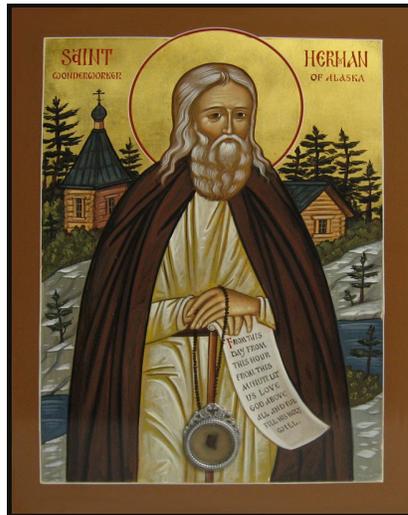
Charles

Mike

Matthew

Mat. Anastasia

St. Herman of Alaska



O venerable Herman, ascetic of the northern wilderness
And gracious advocate for all the world,

Teacher of the Orthodox Faith and good, instructor of piety,
Adornment of Alaska and joy of all America;

Entreat Christ God, that He save our souls.

- Troparion, Tone 4

“No one in creation is rich but he that fears God; no one is truly poor but he that lacks the truth.”

- St. Ephraim the Syrian

Feasts of the Month

December 4

Holy Great Martyr
Barbara

December 6

St. Nicholas the
Wonderworker

December 9

The Conception of
the Most Holy
Theotokos

December 12

St. Herman of
Alaska

December 15

Sunday of the
Forefathers

December 25

The Nativity of Our
Lord

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!

Also, if you would like to submit a student submission or names for the prayer list, feel free to [email me](#).

~Elyse Hawkins

A Reflection

Reflection on Adoption

By Thea Frederick

The Morris Adoption

My family adopted a little boy, now my brother, one year ago. It has been an incredible experience for me and my family. It has taught us many things about ourselves and has given us the opportunity to see deep grief on a closer scale and try to help ease the pain of feeling rejected and unloved. I think adoption gives people the chance to love others to a greater extent. Also, often times these children struggle with deep sadness and loss and trying to deal with and help them can be stressful, difficult, and it can be easy to lose patience. So, if you try, you can grow in patience, love, and other virtues-not to mention you get a larger perspective on suffering outside of your home. Also, these experiences can help make you appreciate the loving family you were blessed with.

Many adopt and currently the Morris family is doing so. They are a family in our parish who, during the summer, participated in the “Open Hearts and Homes Program” (an organization that allows you to host orphan children from another country, <http://www.openheartsandhomes.org/>). The Morris family hosted three Ukrainian children whom they fell in love with and are now trying to adopt (there are four in total in the sibling group that they want to adopt). The adoption is going to cost them \$50,000, and they would greatly appreciate any help you are willing to offer!

I have had nothing but good experiences and interactions with the Morris family. The whole family is very loving and sweet. They are one of the best families I could think of in our parish to go through an adoption. I hope you will support the Morris family, if you are able, in their endeavor to provide these wonderful children a wonderful loving family and home of their own!

Go [here](#) to view their gofundme account and support them.

Essay Featured This Month

Friends, Angels, and Prayers

By Samantha Woolman – Column Writer

Recently, my church has welcomed several new parishioners and been preparing for the christmation of a few more. Just a few days ago, the catechumens were conversing about the names they plan to take on when they are received into the Church. It was interesting to hear the reasons why they are choosing the specific names - the reasons varied from “I’m choosing this patron saint because I love being in the kitchen” to “I feel as if I’m being called to take on this name”. Their thoughts brought to mind why I love the saints so much.

These preparations, questions, and the general excitement reminds me of the days leading up to my own christmation. I was 12 years old at the time, and one of the most vivid memories I have is the choosing of a patron saint. My mother brought me and my sisters a book of saints from which we read about their lives and looked through their icons and pictures. After much thought I chose St. Sophia, a martyr who lived in Rome with her three daughters.

St. Sophia is a generally well-known saint, but I shall briefly relate her story for those who may be unfamiliar with her:

St. Sophia, a widow, lived with her three daughters (St. Faith, St. Hope, and St. Charity) in Rome during the rule of Emperor Hadrian. When the emperor heard about their steadfast faith and love in Christ, he summoned them and commanded them to offer sacrifices to the goddess Artemis. They refused, remaining strong in their faith. Angered by this, Hadrian had the sisters tortured (during which several miracles occurred) and eventually killed. During this time, St. Sophia encouraged her daughters to hold fast to the hope of the Life to come. After they girls were martyred, she buried their bodies and remained by their graves for three days, after which she reposed and joined her daughters in Heaven.

Cont. on the Next Page

Essay Featured This Month

Cont. Friends, Angels, and Prayers

By Samantha Woolman – Column Writer

St. Sophia was (and still is) special to me for several reasons. Firstly, my godmother had also taken the name Sophia at her christmation. Secondly, St. Sophia had three daughters whom reminded me of myself and two younger sisters. Finally, I thought the name “Sophia” was beautiful. It was not until several years after I had become Orthodox that I realized the ages of St. Faith, St. Hope, and St. Charity when they were martyred (12 years old, 10 years old, and 9 years old) were the very same ages of myself and my sisters when we were received into the Church.

Before I became Orthodox, I had attended several various Protestant churches. Because of this, I had never prayed to a saint, never venerated an icon, and never known the comfort they can provide. I once witnessed a conversation in which a Protestant asked an Orthodox person why one would ever pray to a saint if one could pray directly to God. The Orthodox person responded by saying that asking a saint to pray for you is similar to asking a friend to pray for you. If you would ask someone here on earth to pray for you, why would you not ask someone that much closer to God to pray for you? This struck me as something lovely...something that brings into perspective the explanation of icons being “windows into heaven”.

The saints were once people, just as we are. They have joined the Conquerer of death in His Kingdom, and encourage us to cease fearing death. The saints have passed onto the other side of death, but are still willing to love us. They have left us their stories, their works and writings, and their memory. They are truly like the best of friends in Heaven.

What an amazing thing to have saints who care about us, and are willing to intercede for us! And what a gift it is that we have friends above to whom we can bring our troubles and ask them to pray for us! And how beautiful that we are all called to be saints of God in Heaven!

Kyrie Eleison!

Student Submissions

The Black Rabbit of Inle and His Journey to Midcommon Culminating Activity for Watership Down

By George Ciurca – Level 5

I watch my empire every day, always growing. The dead greet me as I walk by, and I greet them just as well. One day Frith came to visit me, he doesn't usually come because he is so busy. He looks at me straight in the eye and said "Black Rabbit of Inle, do you feel your kingdom is getting too crowded." I looked at him and answered with a simple yes. Frith looked at me "do you know why?" I told him that I did not know why my kingdom was overflowing with the dead. He looked at me very solemn "well the human beans are getting too powerful, with their sticks that scream and blast out lead, one scream and the rabbit dies in the ground." He looked out at my kingdom, "this is a big game for them; they are mocking us, laughing that we fall so easily. They hunt so many of us, I want you to go to the midcommon (earth) and find out how bad this is."

As I left, El-ahrairah and Hazel met me at the gate and told me that they were assigned under me by Frith. As we entered the midcommon, we smelled a dark smoke burning our noses. We could easily smell the dead corpse, reeking of lead. What had been beautiful warrens, with plenty of grass and playing rabbits was now a "road". We found the ruins of a warren and inside of it a rabbit, just waiting. The rabbit looked at me then at Hazel and said "are you here to take over the warren." I looked at him and said "no, we're just passing by, what happened here." The rabbit told me of how the man came with their sticks and killed many rabbits. He told me it was because the humans had hunted the other warrens that they kept pushing deeper into the woods, and destroying the other warrens. I asked the rabbit "why would the human hunt us?" The rabbit responded "they do it for all sorts of reasons such as our furs, they wear them like trophies or they are hungry and we're the first thing they see. The worst part is that they make it a tradition, they teach their children how to use the sticks and how to use the dogs to find us." Hazel looked uncomfortable, and asked El-ahrairah if we could leave.

As we left the rabbit bid us goodbye, and our journey continued. We entered the woods, and it smelled of dogs and lead. As we continued, we ran into a fox by mistake and as he looked at us he ignored us. Hazel asked if the fox was going to eat them. The fox looked up and said "I won't eat your little morsels, I hunt for dogs. Ever since the men came they disrupted the forest." Hazel asked "how so?" "The fox looked at Hazel" the humans have disrupted the food chain, I haven't seen a rabbit in years, some say they have left this earth for good and they are never returning, others say that they have left to learn the ways of the raccoon." El-ahrairah looked at Hazel "what's a raccoon."

[View Remainder of Essay Here](#)

Reflection of the Month

Thanksgiving

By John Dye

It is October of 1621, and the Pilgrims have just finished their first harvest. A great feast is planned, and when the day finally arrives, the fifty-three pilgrims are joined by ninety Native Americans. Together they give thanks to God in unity, and soon after the feast begins. This is the first of many “Thanksgivings” celebrated here in America. While it may not seem obvious at first, this is, in a sense, quite similar to the Divine Liturgy we celebrate every week. In fact, the word “Eucharist” literally means “thanksgiving.” The connections between the holiday and Liturgy do not end there, however.

First, when the Pilgrims and Native Americans gathered together to celebrate Thanksgiving, they put their differences aside. This festival was the work of the people, not of two different groups. In the Liturgy, we do much the same. If we are truly gathered to commemorate the Last Supper and partake of the Eucharist, or even to be good people, we cannot allow ourselves to be caught up by discrimination. Second, both the holiday and the Church service aren't about us. Sure, when we celebrate Thanksgiving it is a feast that we prepare and consume. But all of the food and drink come from God. This is why it is called “Thanksgiving.” Likewise, when we attend Divine Liturgy, we are commemorating the sacrifice God made for us, and the gifts he constantly gives.

In conclusion, thanksgiving isn't our holiday. It is about much more than family gatherings and food. It is about our gratitude to God for everything he has done for us and unity among men.

December Highlights

Collected and Edited by Andrea Woolman

Level 5 Literature

November has been going well for Level 5.2 British Classics! The class wrapped-up Beowulf with some amazing culminating activities and were then able to start and finish The Song of Roland. The class found it interesting to compare Roland to Beowulf, and they also explored the structure of a laisse (an old form of a poetic stanza with specific guidelines). By the end of the book, the students were able to write their own laisse! Now the classmates have just started An Island Story: A History of England for Boys and Girls. So far, it seems that it will prove an interesting read!

Contributed by Erika Kjendal

Level 6 Literature

Throughout the month of November the Level 6 Literature students were kept busy reading and discussing Nicomachean Ethics by Aristotle. After many lengthy and detailed discussions, the students were assigned the task of writing an essay that gave a short synopsis of Nicomachean Ethics, defined Aristotle's idea of virtue, and explored the virtue of prudence. The class ended the month by previewing Livy's The Early History of Rome.

Contributed by Andrea Woolman.

Level 4 Catechism

In the beginning of November, Level 4 Catechism talked about the apostles and how they were related to Christ in marriage and in love for each other. The students discovered how confusing it can be to find the bloodlines in the apostles and Christ. The class has recently been talking about these words: Church, Doxology, Litanies, Petition, Supplication, and Liturgy. Each student learned the Greek name for the church which is Ekklesia, Litanies, Ektenis/Ekteniya, and Liturgy, Leitourgios. We split Doxology into the words Doxa and Logia. Doxa and Logia meaning Glory and Word, respectively. Together, the words mean Words of Praise. The students discussed what each word meant to themselves. As well, the classmates learned that the liturgy has three main parts: Proskomedia (Bringing of Gifts,) the litany of Catechumens, and the litany of the Faithful. The class had some wonderful student work for the midterm essay. This November has been very fruitful in conversations and has been a wonderful month Catechism Level 4.

Contributed by Samuel Jenkins.

Cont. on the Next Page

More School News

December Highlights Cont.

Collected and Edited by Andrea Woolman

Level 5 Catechism

In Catechism 5: God's Presence in the Saints, the classmates have finished the study of Abraham with a discussion on Sodom and Gomorrah. The students then skipped to Joshua and the fall of Jericho. Next week they will discuss the death of Joshua and then move on to Judges.

Contributed by Aislinn Hawkins.

Level 6 Catechism

As predicted, the Level 6 Catechism class is tying off loose ends this November with Christmas Break being from December 13th to January 17th. The students continue to read Unseen Warfare. The recent chapters have elaborated on how to properly use the five senses, as well as imagination and memory, for the glory of God. Students are now working on drafting their third essay. This essay is to summarize everything the class has learned so far. The assignment will be a bit unique, as Fr. Noah has encouraged the students to be as creative as they can.

Contributed by Owen Bender.

Level 7 Catechism

Catechism Level VII continues to read through An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith. They have almost completed the Book 2. In their weekly meetings, they meet and discuss the readings. Classes end with the highly popular priest-in-the-hot-seat segment. By the time of this publication, the students in this class will have submitted their third short paper of the semester. This paper is to be written on one of the sections seen in the later part of Book 2.

Contributed by Elyse Hawkins

Russian 1

In Russian 1, the students have taken their second vocabulary quiz of the year and have just finished learning the Our Father in Russian. They are now memorizing it for their next oral quiz. The students are also learning some Russian songs, the first one they are learning is called Tonkaya Ryabina. The song is about a rowan tree which will never be able to leave her place, even though there is an oak tree across the road which she would like to be with.

Contributed by Thea Frederick

Cont. on the Next Page

More School News

December Highlights Cont.

Collected and Edited by Andrea Woolman

Greek 1

In Greek 1, students have begun to work on the hymn “The Virgin Cometh Today: Kontokian of the Forefeast of the Nativity”. The classmates are now in Lesson 9 of their Elementary Greek books and have started to learn how to use different noun endings in a sentence. At the moment the classmates are memorizing 1 Corinthians 13:13 (“And now remains faith, hope, love these three; but the greatest of these is love.”)

Contributed by Aislinn Hawkins.

Greek 2

In Greek 2, the students are working on their monthly hymn. The classmates are also doing their weekly workbook and tests. All else has continued much the same as last month.

Contributed by Thea Frederick.

Byzantine Chant 2

In Byzantine Chant Year II, the students are continuing their study of the plagal 4th mode and are about to begin studying the 4th mode. They have been given a choice of learning either the 5th or 9th eothinon. They are then to record themselves singing it in parallagi (solfege) and in Melos (with the words). The class has continued to do weekly targeted listening (listening to well executed hymns sung by different chanters). This helps the students to apply what they have learned by making observations concerning the style, execution, interpretation, and overall sound of the chanter’s performance.

Contributed by Katherine Frederick.

Recipe of the Month

Potato and Corn Chowder

By Thea Frederick

Here is a good recipe for the Nativity fast and the cold weather!

1 cup diced yellow onion
¼ cup celery (or ½ teaspoon celery seed)
2 bay leaves
4-6 cloves fresh garlic, minced
1 ½ teaspoon fresh chopped rosemary
6-8 medium potatoes-diced
2 cans coconut milk+2 cups frozen corn
4 cups vegetable stock
¼ cup nutritional yeast flakes
Salt and pepper to taste
1-2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon arrowroot or cornstarch + 1 tablespoon water to thicken

Directions:

Heat olive oil over medium high heat in a 2 quart pot. Add bay leaves, onion, and celery, and saut³/₂-3 minutes. Add garlic and cook another 1-2 minutes.

Whisk nutritional yeast into the vegetable stock. Add coconut milk to pot along with diced potatoes, and corn, rosemary, salt and pepper. Lower heat to medium low and simmer slightly covered for 20 minutes, or until potatoes are cooked through.

Smash some of the potatoes with the back of a spoon, potato masher, or use an immersion blender, but be sure to leave a nice amount of chunky potatoes. Return soup to boil and add arrowroot slurry (only if you want to thicken your soup).

Serve hot.

Serves: 4-6

Preparation time: 30 minutes

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