05/08/2021

St. Sava Camp 2021 in Jackson, California – First Week



We've been saying it for over a year now. With anticipation and hope, coupled with wishful thinking, that things will eventually get back to normal. And though it might not be the normal we remember, things seem to slowly resemble how they used to be. One of those things we used to do was have church camp in Jackson, California. Glory to God, with the blessing of His Grace Bishop Maxim of Western America, we were able to have camp this year!

For the clergy assigned on the first week, Fr. Milovan Katanic, Fr. Vidoslav Vujasin, and Fr. Norman Kosanovich, it was hard to tell that camp was at 50% capacity. It was hard to tell over all the laughter, the running around, from all the splashing and noise coming from the pool, music and the sound of children dancing kolos in the hall, the more competitive ones (and some clergy) out at the ping-pong table; the sound of the children interacting with one another during meal times, then

there’s the loud banging when someone was discovered with their elbows on the table. In short, the sound of camp. The sound of normal. Religious class during that first week was full of life. Children came to camp with questions which ultimately ensued in lively discussions. Our children are always filled with questions, they have a yearning and desire to know more about their faith. It might not always seem so but given the camp environment, the daily presence of the clergy, the church services, etc., the children are given an opportunity to open up and they inevitably begin asking about their faith, oftentimes very deep questions. The fact the pandemic had disrupted religious education life in the local parishes was more than evident in these talks.

This was also evident Wednesday evening, the evening traditionally set aside for confession. Confession began immediately following Vespers. As it was winding down the campers were treated with an outdoor movie, an inspirational documentary, not yet released in theaters, entitled, “Beyond the Peak“. The movie documents the spiritual trek of Raymond Rajkovic and a group of men from the St. Nicholas Serbian Church in Indianapolis, a trek that leads them to the tallest mountains in America bringing renewal and transformation in their faith. Not only was the movie inspiring but perhaps even more inspiring was how the children reacted to it. They were fascinated and moved by the story, following it intently until the very end when they burst in thunderous applause. It was only afterward that we learned that Fr. Marko Bojovic, the local priest in Jackson and one of the co-stars of the documentary, wasn’t

able to join us in watching the movie as he had confessions which lasted to nearly eleven o’clock that evening. It was obvious, he noted, that after months of quarantines, social distancing, zoom meetings and classes and just an array of restrictions, the children had much on their mind.

The next morning children and counselors, in their Sunday best, made their way to the St. Sava Serbian Church in Jackson for the Divine Liturgy. Upon arriving at the church they venerated the relics of St. Sebastian of Jackson and were anointed with oil by Fr. Vidoslav. The young campers sang beautifully during the service. We should note that they sang beautifully at all the daily services throughout the week. At the conclusion of the service a Memorial was served in memory of the newly departed servants of God, V. Rev. Stavrophor Fr. Dusan Bunjevic and Rev. Deacon Triva Paul, both of whom were an integral part of this camp.

St. Sava Camp is a place our children go to see their friends gathered from all ends of this vast Diocese, to talk, exchange stories, laugh, but also learn about their faith, pray together. This special place brings delight to both body and soul, the



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