

St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,
Lakewood, CO 80214

Website: www.strafkadenver.org

Email: StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com



December 10, 2023 Birth of John the Baptist

Schedule of Masses & Services

Sunday Mass 11:00 AM

Tuesday-Thursday Mass 5:00 PM

Friday Mass 6:30 PM

Saturday Mass 11:30 AM

Holy Days on Weekdays 6:30 PM

Confession: Tuesday-Thursday 4:00 – 4:45 PM

**Please call the office to alert us of any
Pastoral Care needs**
(Hospital, Homebound, Etc.)

Office Hours

9:30 am-3:30 pm, Wednesday & Friday
720-833-0354

StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com

Rev. El-Badaoui Habib, Parochial Administrator

Linda Craven, Office & Business Manager

*Philip Kyburz, Grand Knight,
St. Rafka Council of the Knights of Columbus*

Linda Craven, Religious Education
lharpincraven@gmail.com

Contact the office to register in the Parish

Spiritual Message from Father El-Badaoui Habib

The Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1: 57-66)

Today we celebrate the Sunday of the birth of John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus. He was born to Elizabeth who was past normal childbearing years, and her husband Zachary was in disbelief about having a son in his old age. Hence, Zechariah became mute as a form of punishment for his lack of faith. We hear in the Gospel that as soon as he wrote the name John, his tongue was loosened, and he was able to speak again.

The birth of a baby is always a happy occasion because every child is a gift from God. For the couple Zechariah and Elizabeth, the long-awaited child brought joy not just to them but to all their neighbors. Additionally, the unusual circumstance of the birth of John the Baptist became a hot topic

DAILY READINGS & MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, December 10

Birth of John the Baptist

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1 Sam 1:9-11, 19b-23

Gal 4:21-5:1

Lk 1:57-66

Monday, December 11

St. Daniel the Stylite

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Rom 9:1-5

Lk 1:67-80

Tuesday, December 12

St. Spiridion the Wonderworker, Our Lady of Guadalupe

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Rom 9:6-13

Mt 11:11-15

Wednesday, December 13

St. Lucy, M

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Rom 9:14-18

Mt 17:9-13

Thursday, December 14

St. Nemtallah El-Hardini

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Rom 12:1-8

Mt 4:18-25

Friday, December 15

St. Eleutherius and His Mother

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Rom 9:30-33

Mt 11:16-19

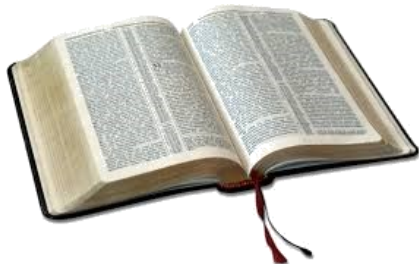
Saturday, December 16

St. Haggai the Prophet

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Rom 10:1-13

Jn 5:31-36



Today's Gospel

The Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:57-66)

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, ⁶⁰ but his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." ⁶¹ And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name." ⁶² And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marveled. ⁶⁴ And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. ⁶⁵ And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; ⁶⁶ and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

Spiritual Message (continued)

among the villagers who became fearful and who were surely amazed at the work of God.

John was born under unique circumstances. His parents did not choose his name. His name was given from above which is derived from the Hebrew Yohanan, meaning "graced by God." God is Merciful. He was born with a very special mission – to prepare the way of the Lord. The child then grew, and he was filled with God's Spirit. He went on to live in the desert until the day of his public ministry.

There are three most important lessons that we can learn from our gospel reading today:

1. Like John, we were also born with a purpose. We have

NEWS & EVENTS

This week at St. Rafka Church

Sun 10	Mon 11	Tues 12	Wed 13	Thurs 14	Fri 15	Sat 16	Sun 17
Birth of John the Baptist Mass 11:00am Religious education classes 10 am	<i>No Mass</i> <i>St. Daniel the Stylite</i>	<i>Mass 5 p.m.</i> <i>St. Spiridion the Wonderworker, Our Lady of Guadalupe</i>	<i>Mass 5 p.m.</i> <i>St. Lucy, M</i>	<i>Mass 5 p.m.</i> <i>St. Nemptallah El-Hardini</i>	<i>Mass 6:30 p.m.</i> <i>St. Eleutherius and His Mother</i>	<i>Mass 11:30 a.m.</i> <i>St. Haggai the Prophet</i>	Revelation to Joseph Mass 11:00am Christmas Performance & Party
The deadline to receive events and articles for the bulletin is Thursday at 12:00 PM Submit them to the Parish Office at StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com							

Reminders:

1. Religious Education classes before liturgy (10am—10:50).
2. Youth Christmas Program practice after Divine Liturgy (in the church) - **Final Practice**
3. Giving Tree collection of all gifts—Last day to give.

Upcoming Events:

1. Ladies Society Bake Sale (Contact Gisel Cherabie for details, 303-960-8646).
Annual Craft/Bake Sale December 10th and 17th.

How you can help:

*Prepare crafts or baked goods wrapped and priced to sell. (use the Signup Genius link in the email sent with this bulletin).

*Purchase items to benefit St. Rafka.

2. St. Rafka Christmas Party Sunday December 17, 2023. This will include Youth Christmas Program immediately following liturgy and lunch with Santa! To RSVP, please contact Carla Beaini at (720)291-9786. The Evite link is in the email.

3. Sunday, January 28, 2024—Visit from Denver Archbishop Samuel Aquila. His Excellency will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us. More details to follow.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Sunday, December 24th, 11 am Mass of the day—Genealogy of Jesus
Sunday, December 24th, 11 pm Mass (to end at midnight)
Christmas Day—11 am Mass



St. Rafka Parish Mission Statement

Faith, hope, and love, reinforcing our family values, promoted through heritage and prayer for the glory of God, the edification of the Holy Church and the salvation of the world.

Spiritual Message (continued)

our own special mission in life which was given to us from birth. Part of our mission is to find out our mission if we have not yet found it. But generally, as believers, we share

in the mission of John – that is, to prepare the way for others to find Christ. By becoming light, we make the path of others easier in their journey towards the Kingdom. Woe to us if we become their stumbling block instead.

2. Like John, we did not choose our parents or even our names. We must learn to accept who we are and strive to love our parents and others for who they are. There is an old saying that says: “What we are is our gift from God and our parents; what we become is our gift to them.”

3. We have our weaknesses and so we need to be “graced by God.” We need the guidance of the Spirit for us to accomplish our mission. We need to constantly ask for strength through prayers. Like John, we should find time to go into the “desert” to be in communion with our creator because “apart from Him, we can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Let us now join the Psalmist in singing praises to God because we were fearfully and wonderfully made, and His works are wonderful. (Psalm 139:14)

Learning About the Saints

St. Nemtallah El-Hardini—December 14

Nimatullah Kassab, also known as Saint Nimatullah Kassab O.L.M., was a Lebanese monk, priest, and scholar of the Maronite Church. He was born in 1808 in the village of Hardine, Mount Lebanon Emirate, and died on December 14, 1858, at the Monastery of Saints Cyprian and Justina in Kfifan, Batroun District, Lebanon. He was beatified on May 10, 1998, and canonized on May 16, 2004, by Pope John Paul II.

Saint Nimatullah Kassab is venerated in the Catholic Church and is the patron saint of Beirut, Lebanon. He is also known for his devotion to the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

After his death, his body was placed in a sealed coffin and moved to a separate cell in the monastery in 1862. In 1864, his tomb was opened for reburial, and to the surprise of the monks, his body was found to be intact. Since then, his body has been exposed to the veneration of the public until 1927, when a Committee of Inquiry into his possible canonization had completed its work.

St. Nemtallah was a teacher and mentor of St. Sharbel, was renowned for his sanctity and humility, and has been credited for numerous miracles through his intercession.

It is believed that the body of Saint Nimatullah Kassab is still incorrupt