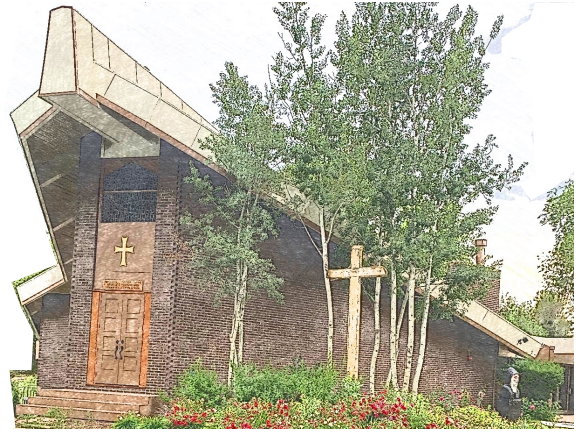


St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,
Lakewood, CO 80214

Website: www.strafkadenver.org

Email: StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com



December 17, 2023 Revelation to Joseph

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
lhalpincraven@gmail.com

Contact the office to register in the Parish

Spiritual Message from Father El-Badaoui Habib

The Sunday of the Revelation to Joseph. (Matthew 1:18-25)

In the name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Today we are celebrating the Sunday of the revelation to Joseph. And I want to say that the most ugly, dark, and hardest things for a righteous man and an innocent woman are doubts, unfaithfulness and lies.

This passage of the gospel is telling us about the hardest dark time for that young man, the righteous Joseph, who does everything he needs to be done in preparation for his wedding. Then what he never imagined would happen - his fiancée is pregnant. He knows he is not the father. Suddenly his world, his dream of being a family with Mary, shatters.

In his twenty years, he has never encountered something like this that has left him so out of control.

DAILY READINGS & MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, December 17

Revelation to Joseph

Book of Offering Page 57+ Novena (6 pm)

Is 7:10-16

Eph 3:1-13

Mt 1:18-25

Monday, December 18

Daniel the Prophet

Book of Offering Page 57+ Novena

Rom 10:14-21

Jn 7:1-10

Tuesday, December 19

St. Athenodorus, M

Book of Offering Page 57+ Novena

Rom 11:1-12

Jn 7:11-18

Wednesday, December 20+ Novena

St. Ignatius of Antioch, M

Book of Offering Page 473 or 57

Rom 8:31-39; Jn 12:23-30 or

Rom 12:1-8; Mt 4:18-25

Thursday, December 21+ Novena

St. Julian, M

Book of Offering Page 57

Rom 11:25-36

Jn 7:31-36

Friday, December 22

St. Anatasia of the Balkans, M

Book of Offering Page 57+ Novena

Rom 12:1-8

Jn 7:37-44

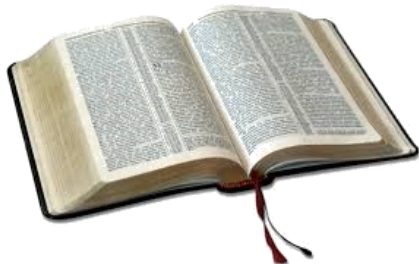
Saturday, December 23

St. Eugenia, M

Book of Offering Page 57+ Novena

Rom 12:9-21

Jn 7:45-53



Today's Gospel

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah (Mt. 1:18-25)

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; ¹⁹ and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; ²¹ she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Spiritual Message (continued)

A decent man with an open, gentle face, he grasps for the least destructive solution that his world allows. The engagement, broken beyond repair by this infidelity, will be declared dead. The girl will be sent back home in quiet shame, where she and her child will live out their days beyond the circle of respectability. He couldn't take the unfaithfulness of Mary, he decided to leave her quietly.

It's not a solution that leaves Joseph satisfied; it does little to dissolve his anger, shame, and hurt and to keep his reputation high. In this deep sleep there comes a dream. It is not a small, it is a **BIG DREAM**. This dream is an uneasy place for him to be, for yet again he feels out of control as never before.

NEWS & EVENTS

This week at St. Rafka Church

Sun 17	Mon 18	Tues 19	Wed 20	Thurs 21	Fri 22	Sat 23	Sun 24
Revelation to Joseph Mass 11:00am Christmas Performance & Party Novena 6 pm	Confession 5:30 pm <i>Mass 6 pm + Novena</i> <i>Daniel the Prophet</i>	Confession 5:30 pm <i>Mass 6 pm + Novena</i> <i>St. Athenodorus, M</i>	Confession 5:30 pm <i>Mass 6 pm + Novena</i> <i>St. Ignatius of Antioch, M</i>	Confession 5:30 pm <i>Mass 6 pm + Novena</i> <i>St. Julian, M</i>	Confession 5:30 pm <i>Mass 6 pm + Novena</i> <i>St. Anatasia of the Balkans, M</i>	Confession 5:30 pm <i>Mass 6 pm + Novena</i> <i>St. Eugenia, M</i>	Genealogy Sunday Mass 11:00am Novena & Confession 6-7 pm Vigil of the Glorious Birth begins at 11pm
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. No Religious Education classes this Sunday, December 17. Classes resume Sunday, January 7 before liturgy (10am—10:50).

Upcoming Events:

1. This is the last Sunday for the Ladies Society Craft and Bake Sale.
2. St. Rafka Christmas Party is this Sunday December 17. This includes Youth Christmas Program and lunch with Santa immediately following liturgy! Cost for the lunch is:

\$30 per adult
\$15 children 5-12
Children under 5 for free

3. St. Elias Church Orthodox Church and community is having their annual New Year's Eve party on the December 31, 2023. It is a fundraising function to support their church. For those who are able to support, please book your ticket using the link in the email sent with this bulletin.
4. Sunday, January 28, 2024—Visit from Denver Archbishop Samuel Aquila. His Excellency will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us. More details to follow.

Thank you to everyone who donated for the Giving Tree. The families who received your gifts are VERY grateful!



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)

The dream speaks with the voice of command. He's told not to be afraid. He's told to take pregnant Mary as his wife. In his dream He finds out strange things about this unborn child, he found out that the father is not any man from the village. This child was conceived by the Holy Spirit of God! Not Joseph, not any man in Nazareth. And Joseph's role towards the baby is both to give him a name and help Him prepare for His mission.

He's to be named Jesus, a name that means savior, healer, and the one who rescues, and delivers his people out of slavery from their sins. Isaiah rolls around inside this vast, majestic dream. Something about a virgin who has a baby, a baby named Emmanuel, in other words, "God with us." Joseph learned that verse in childhood. A line from an old prophecy which he had no idea then what it would come to mean to him.

When Joseph awakens from the dream, he did as the angel told him and he no longer feels afraid. He will follow through on his intention to marry; the child in Mary's womb will be raised as his own, and God will be the one to put together the pieces, make sense of this puzzle. Joseph's task is to be Joseph the foster father of God's son; Nothing more, nothing less. God's task, on the other hand, is to make this child a savior, an Emmanuel, as he promised in the dream. And that will be enough to do.

To live in fidelity to our baptism means to listen to the big dream and heed the call not to be afraid. In our baptism, our burial, and all the deaths in between, there is a larger purpose that waits to be revealed.

So, there is new life beyond each subsequent darkness. In the problem there shines the power. What hangs as the heavy burden has hidden within it the blessing.

Your dark time or mine can be the road to a larger purpose. What poor young Joseph first sees as a disaster and the ruin of all his hopes, turns out to be Emmanuel, God with us, the one who calls to us during winter nights that we may share with Him in resurrection. Amen.

Christmas Schedule

- **Confession each evening at 5:30 pm**
- **Saturday, December 16 through Saturday, December 23—6 pm Mass & Novena.**
- **Sunday, December 24, 11 am Mass of the day—Genealogy of Jesus**
- **Sunday, December 24, Novena and Confession 6—7 pm**
- **Sunday, December 24, 11 pm Vigil Mass (to end at midnight)**
- **Christmas Day—11 am Mass**
- **New Year's Eve, 6 pm Mass (vigil)**
- **New Year's Day, 11 am Mass**