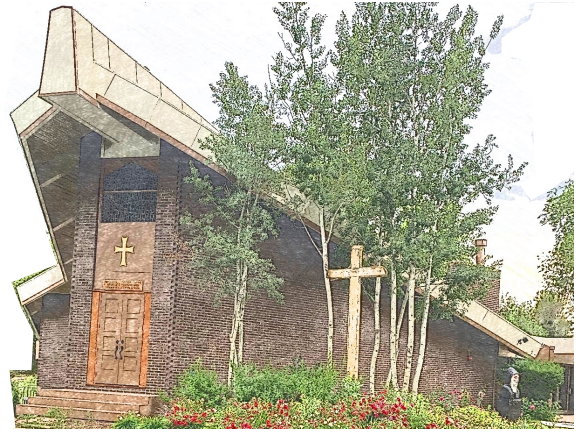


St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,
Lakewood, CO 80214

Website: www.strafkadenver.org

Email: StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com



December 24, 2023—Genealogy Sunday December 25, 2023—Glorious Birth of Our Lord

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

John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

With these words from John’s Gospel, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas that is full of heavenly Joy and peace.

Remember that the true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart. Pray that Christmas Day and season and all 2024 should be like glue that keeps all of us sticking together as wonderful and loving community, showing always kindness, mercy politeness and generosity towards our families and church.

God gave us himself at Christmas, so, let us love one another with genuine affection and action, taking delight in honoring each other.

While you are doing your taxes think about your church and the future of your community and do not hesitate to give some of your resources to God through your church and the poor around you.

Merry Christmas and happy New Year and all the best in 2024 to all of you and to your family members.

Fr El- Badaoui Habib
Saint Rafka—Church Administrator

DAILY READINGS & MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, December 24

Genealogy Sunday

Book of Offering Page 66 + Novena

Is 11:1-19

Rom 1:1-12

Mt 1:1-17

Monday, December 25

The Glorious Birth of Our Lord

Book of Offering Page 76

Is 8:23,9:1-6

Heb 1:1-12

Lk 2:1-20

Tuesday, December 26

Felicitations to the Virgin Mary

Book of Offering Page 76

Eph 1:3-14

Lk 1:46-55

Wednesday, December 27

St. Stephen, the 1st Martyr & Deacon

Book of Offering Page 76

2 Cor 11:19

Mt 23:29-24

Thursday, December 28

The Adoration of the Magi,

St. Marina (Margaret) in Pisidia, M

Book of Offering Page 76

Rev 21:9-10, 21-27

Mt 2:1-12

Friday, December 29

The Flight into Egypt, The Massacre of the Children of Bethlehem

Book of Offering Page 76

Heb 11:23-31

Mt 2:13-18

Saturday, December 30

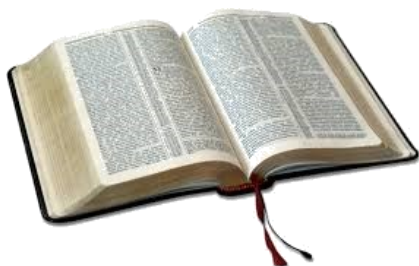
The Return from Egypt to Nazareth,

St. Anysia, M

Book of Offering Page 76

Acts 7:2, 30-37

Mt 2:19-23



Today's Gospel

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah (Matthew 1: 1-17)

¹ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ and Ram the father of Ammin'adab, and Ammin'adab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ and Salmon the father of Bo'az by Rahab, and Bo'az the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uri'ah, ⁷ and Solomon the father of Rehobo'am, and Rehobo'am the father of Abi'jah, and Abi'jah the father of Asa, ⁸ and Asa the father of Jehosh'aphat, and Jehosh'aphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzzi'ah, ⁹ and Uzzi'ah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezeki'ah, ¹⁰ and Hezeki'ah the father of Manas'seh, and Manas'seh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josi'ah, ¹¹ and Josi'ah the father of Jechoni'ah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹² And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoni'ah was the father of She-al'ti-el, and She-al'ti-el the father of Zerub'babel, ¹³ and Zerub'babel the father of Abi'ud, and Abi'ud the father of Eli'akim, and Eli'akim the father of Azor, ¹⁴ and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eli'ud, ¹⁵ and Eli'ud the father of Elea'zar, and Elea'zar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Spiritual Message (continued)

Christmas 2023

Today we are celebrating one of the most important feasts in our Christian faith /calendar. We are celebrating the birth of Christ the Messiah, the word who became flesh and dwelt among us, the incarnation of the son of the living God, in the human flesh/form.

Today we don't remember this event which had taken place in Bethlehem 2023 years ago, but we are celebrating the Birth of Christ that is happening now in every part of the world because God is not limited in time. He surpasses the times, days, and years and what has happened two thousand years ago in the grotto of Bethlehem is happening in this church as well as in every church and in the heart of the believers of Jesus everywhere in the world.

Christmas is a message from God, not to be afraid, "For behold, I proclaim to you good news of a great Joy." For today in

Continued on page 4

NEWS & EVENTS

This week at St. Rafka Church

Sun 24	Mon 25	Tues 26	Wed 27	Thurs 28	Fri 29	Sat 30	Sun 31
Genealogy Sunday Mass 11:00am Novena & Confession 6-7 pm Vigil of the Glorious Birth begins at 11pm	The Glorious Birth of Our Lord Mass 11:00am	<i>Mass 5 pm</i> <i>Felicitations to the Virgin Mary</i>	<i>Mass 5 pm</i> <i>St. Stephen, the 1st Martyr & Deacon</i>	<i>Mass 5 pm</i> <i>The Adoration of the Magi, St. Marina (Margaret) in Pisidia, M</i>	<i>Mass 6:30 pm</i> <i>The Flight into Egypt, The Massacre of the Children of Bethlehem</i>	<i>Mass 11:30 am</i> <i>The Return from Egypt to Nazareth, St. Anysia, M</i>	The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple Mass 11:00am Vigil Mass for the Circumcision of Jesus 6 pm
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 24. Classes resume Sunday, January 7 before liturgy (10am—10:50).

Upcoming Events:

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

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



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 city of David a savior has been born for you, who is Messiah and Lord. Jesus was born to bring joy, and love to our hearts God's peace to our minds and to reconcile us with the father and with one another.

The purpose behind the birth of Christ is nothing more than reconciliation. Reconciliation is the restoration of peace. Peace with God, peace with others and peace in our own heart. It is the powerful miracle cure for broken lives and relationships. Reconciliation defuses conflict and turns chaos into calmness. It swaps your stress for God's serenity, turns tension into tranquility, and produces peace of mind instead of panic or pressure.

But the question that I want to ask; is peace on earth really possible? When we look around us we see rudeness and not kindness, conflict, disagreement and not peace. We see these things in every family, in every society... The starting point to peace in our life is to understand the causes of conflict. Always there are many reasons but there are two main ones:

The first is our natural self-centeredness. It is when I want everything my way, and you want it your way. Then my agenda clashes with yours. Neither of us is willing to compromise out of love.

And the second is when we expect others to meet needs in our lives that only God can meet. We make demands of others instead of looking to God. No human being can fully meet all your needs. That's a job for God.

The apostle Paul said on this subject; "Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks to God. And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

1-Jesus was born to offer you Peace with God.

If you are trying to live your way instead of God's way, you are in conflict with God. He created us to live for his purposes, not to fight with him and to go against his rules that he has designed for our lives. It is an unspoken war where each of us chooses to disobey what God has told us to do. This causes tensions in our minds and fatigue in our bodies. The symptoms that we are in war with God are easy to spot - irritability, a quick temper, insecurity, impatience, arrogance and boasting, and holding grudges and many other attitudes and habits that the bible calls the works of the flesh.

In contrast, the effect of being reconciled to God- being at peace with him- are the qualities you would love to have in your life. The bible calls them the fruits of the spirit. It is when the Holy Spirit controls our lives and he will produce this kind of fruit in us: the fruit of love, of joy, peace patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness and self- control.

The good news of Christmas is that Jesus came to be the bridge of reconciliation between you and God. "God was in Christ, making peace between the world and himself. So, peace comes from surrender- total, unconditional surrender to God. It is when you give up the rebellious attitude that you can pick and choose which of God's rules you will follow and which ones you will ignore.

2- Jesus offers you the peace of God.

God's peace is rooted in prayer. The more you pray, the less you will panic. The more you worship, the less you worry, and you will feel more patient and less pressured. The path to the peace of God comes through living and enjoying one day at a time, accepting what cannot be changed, instead of worrying about it, trusting in God's loving care and wisdom. He said to us: "Come to me all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens and I will give you rest"...

3- Jesus shows you how to make peace with others

It is because He wants you to experience the joy of being at peace with all the people in your life. That's why He blessed the peace makers for they will be called the sons of God. What does it mean to be a peacemaker? It is to actively seek to put an end to every conflict. It is to take the initiative in promoting reconciliation when relationships break down, and you offer forgiveness to those who hurt you the most and to bring people together instead of dividing them. It is to work for reconciliation that ends hostility. And to be able to forgive your brother's sins, failures, and insults as Jesus forgives you from his cross.

On this occasion, I wish you a very merry Christmas, blessed one and that God will choose all of you to work for reconciliation and peace. Amen.