

# **St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church**

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,  
Lakewood, CO 80214

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## **December 31, 2023—The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple January 1—The Circumcision of Jesus**

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:lhalpincraven@gmail.com)

Contact the office to register in the Parish

## **Spiritual Message from Father El-Badaoui Habib**

### **Sunday of the Finding of the Child Jesus in the temple. (Luke 2:41-52)**

Today we celebrate the Sunday of the finding of the Lord in the Temple and this passage of the Gospel teaches us some interesting lesson about Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.

Luke stated in this Gospel reading that, "Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom".

So, we learn that Joseph AND Mary made the journey to Jerusalem EVERY year for the feast of Passover. It shows the devotion and commitment that Joseph and Mary possessed and was probably since they knew from Divine experience that their son, Jesus, was the Son of God. Jewish males were obligated to keep three festivals: The festival of unleavened bread called Passover, the festival of booths or Tabernacles, and the festival of weeks or Pentecost. Jewish women were allowed but not required to attend these festivals. Adult Jewish males who lived within 20 miles of Jerusalem was required to attend Passover annually, while others tried to do it once in their lifetime.

"After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances."

## DAILY READINGS

**Sunday, December 31**

***The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple***

*Book of Offering Page 87*

1 Kgs 3:5-14

Heb 7:11-19

Lk 2:41-52

**Monday, January 1**

***The Circumcision of Jesus***

***\*\*Holy Day of Obligation\*\****

*Book of Offering Page 97*

Mic 4:1-4 *or* Gen. 21:1-5

Eph 2:11-22

Lk 2:21-24

**Tuesday, January 2**

***Pope St. Silvester I***

*Book of Offering Page 87*

Heb 7:1-10

Jn 14:27-31

**Wednesday, January 3**

***Malachi the Prophet***

*Book of Offering Page 87*

Heb 7:20-28

Lk 2:25-35

**Thursday, January 4**

***Pope St. Caius, M,***

***St. Elizabeth Ann Seton***

*Book of Offering Page 445 or 87*

1 Cor 1:26-31; Mt 5:13-17 *or*

Heb 6:9-12; Lk 2:26-40

**Friday, January 5**

***St. Paul, the 1st Hermit,***

***St. John Neumann,***

***Vigil of the Glorious Epiphany***

*Book of Offering Page 445 or 87*

Phil 3:7-12; Mt 11:25-30 *or*

Rom 5:1-11; Lk 3:1-6

**Saturday, January 6**

***Feast of the Glorious Epiphany***

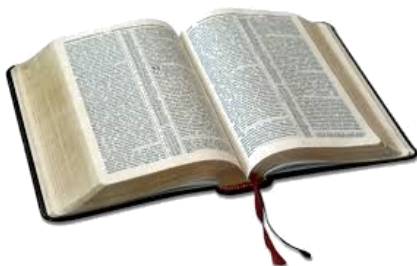
***\*\*Holy Day of Obligation\*\****

*Book of Offering Page 107 + rite*

Ez 36:22-28

Ti 2:11-37

Lk 3:15-22



## Today's Gospel

### The Boy Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

<sup>41</sup> Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; <sup>43</sup> and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, <sup>44</sup> but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; <sup>45</sup> and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him.

<sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions; <sup>47</sup> and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." <sup>49</sup> And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup> And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. <sup>51</sup> And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.

<sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

### Spiritual Message (continued)

It seems a little careless that Jesus' parents wouldn't have noticed Him missing for a whole day, but the way these journeys were completed allows us to understand the situation. When journeys like this were made the men stayed together, the women with the women, and the children with the children. Times were simpler and the threat of harm did not exist as it does today. Children would play together and in a day's journey, they probably travelled less than 15 miles.

Then we read: "but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers."

Imagine the panic of parents searching for their child for three days! Jesus was sitting in the temple and sitting was usually a posture for teachers and for students. I don't think that Jesus was sitting in the temple teaching the teachers, but he was as we read

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# NEWS & EVENTS

## *This week at St. Rafka Church*

Sun 31	Mon 1	Tues 2	Wed 3	Thurs 4	Fri 5	Sat 6	Sun 7
<p><b>The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple</b></p> <p><b>Mass 11:00am</b></p> <p>Vigil Mass for the Circumcision of Jesus 6 pm</p>	<p><b>The Circumcision of Jesus</b> (Holy Day of Obligation)</p> <p><b>Mass 11:00am</b></p>	<p><i>Mass 6 pm</i></p> <p><i>Pope St. Silvester I</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 6 pm</i></p> <p><i>Malachi the Prophet</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 6 pm</i></p> <p><i>Pope St. Caius, M, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 6:30 pm</i></p> <p><i>St. Paul, the 1st Hermit, St. John Neumann,</i></p> <p><i>Vigil of the Glorious Epiphany</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 11:30 am</i></p> <p><b>Feast of the Glorious Epiphany</b> (Holy Day of Obligation)</p>	<p><b>1st Sunday after Epiphany</b></p> <p><b>Mass 11:00am</b></p> <p>Religious Education Classes Resume</p> <p>Mass in Co-Lo Springs, 5 pm</p>
<p>The deadline to receive events and articles for the bulletin is Thursday at 12:00 PM Submit them to the Parish Office at <a href="mailto:StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com">StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com</a></p>							

### Reminders:

1. No Religious Education classes this Sunday, December 31. Classes resume Sunday, January 7 before liturgy (10am—10:50).

### Upcoming Events:

1. Mass in Colorado Springs, 5 pm, January 7, 2024
2. Sunday, January 28, 2024—Visit from Denver Archbishop Samuel Aquila. His Excellency will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us. More details to follow.

**New Year's Eve, 6 pm Mass (vigil)**  
**New Year's Day, 11 am Mass**

**Vigil Mass for the Feast of the Epiphany, 6:30 pm, Friday, January 5**  
**Mass for the Feast of the Epiphany, 11:30 am, Saturday, January 6**



## 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)

asking questions and the Jewish teachers were obviously amazed at the questions AND the answers that came from a twelve-year-old boy. "All who heard him were astounded" Luke is telling us that even as a small boy, Jesus was already preparing Himself as a teacher who obviously possessed great wisdom and authority as we will later read in Luke.

"When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be at my father's house? This verse states that his parents were "astonished" and astonished means: "filled with the emotional impact of overwhelming surprise or shock". Indeed, his parents were searching for Jesus in Jerusalem for three days... Jesus' answer is interesting. Jesus states that HE MUST be in my Father's house. Jesus is compelled as the Son of God to be in the temple and appropriately gives the title "Father" not to His human father but to the Father, God.

Jesus at a very young age is establishing among his peers that, He is the Son of God and HE MUST fulfil the duty that the Heavenly Father has predestined. Wouldn't these words be coming out of the mouth of a twelve-year-old shock you? I would be disturbed. It approached the line here that as a human boy who is not the Son of God, the Messiah is being disrespectful to his parents. However, if we know that Jesus is the Son of God, then His words are appropriate and right, for the Son of God is the Son of the Father in heaven, and His duty is to His Father, not to Joseph and Mary.

We read that Jesus' parents "did not understand what He said to them". Even though Mary and Joseph were visited by Angels, and Mary was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Mary and Joseph reacted as any human parents would react. It was confusing, difficult, and maybe even frustrating being parents to the Messiah and losing Him at the age of twelve. And when they found him, they heard him telling them that he must be at his father's house. Even though Joseph and Mary have had Divine experiences, the full impact and reality of who Jesus was and what would take place, could not have entered their thoughts and minds. That's why they were very astonished and surprised.

In addition to that, Jesus as the son of Man was obedient to his earthly parents - "He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart." I see this verse meaning two things and the most important being that as Jesus became "obedient" to his parents, He had to "come down" from the spiritually high place that He was at in the Temple, and come back to the reality that He was also a human man possessing a tent of flesh as the Messiah who had human parents. This verse shows that Jesus in no way dishonored his parents and broke one of the Ten commandments, because obedience is honoring one's parents. It might have seemed to be disrespectful to Mary and Joseph for leaving the caravan to go to the temple, but disrespect doesn't lead to sin unless one becomes disobedient. However, when they found Him, he went with them "And Jesus advanced (in) wisdom and age and favor before God and man."

Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. We see the Son of God emerge at an early age, but we also see that Jesus had to develop and mature. Jesus did not emerge from the womb of Mary as a man, but he was born as a 100% human and was born as an infant to be one of us. He HAD TO be born as one of us and HAD TO die as one of us. We read about His growth and know that Jesus matures into 100% man as He gets older. The verse tells us that Jesus advanced in Wisdom, in age and in favor.

What is wisdom? Wisdom is the knowledge we collect over the years, and it goes beyond the understanding of facts. Wisdom involves values and priorities. It involves understanding what really matters. However, Divine favor comes from a true and strong relationship with God, and human favor comes from relationships with humans. We see that Jesus is growing and developing not only wisdom, but Divine and human relationships. To this kind of growth Jesus is calling us today. Amen.