

St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,
Lakewood, CO 80214

Website: www.strafkadenver.org

Email: StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com



February 18, 2024 Healing of the Leper

Schedule of Masses & Services

Sunday Mass 11:00 AM

Tuesday-Thursday Mass 6:00 PM

Friday Mass during Lent 5:50 PM followed by
Stations of the Cross

Saturday Mass 11:30 AM

Holy Days on Weekdays 6:30 PM

Confession: Tuesday-Thursday 5:00 – 5:45 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
lhalpinraven@gmail.com*

Contact the office to register in the Parish

Spiritual Message from Father El-Badaoui Habib

The Second Sunday of Lent: The Sunday of the Leper - Make Me Clean!

Mothers: Do you *always* want your beloved child to run up to you and give you a big hug, on *all* occasions, always?

One day, two boys full of mud and dirt were whispering among themselves, turning towards their mum saying; "We love you, Mommy!" They ran towards her with the intention of giving her a big hug. She ran in the opposite direction. Her actions declared: "If you really love me, you will clean yourself prior to hugging me!"

But Mothers don't always run from their dirty children. Consider that your precious child has fallen in the mud, and now runs toward you, tears streaming through the dirt. What do you mothers do? Do you say, "Don't come near!" Do you say, "You made your mess -- now clean it up?" Or do you take your child into your arms and comfort him/her, then gently clean all the sand and dirt from their eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth. You love them, clean them, and comfort them.

Today we will see how Jesus responds in exactly this way to a leper. This incident gives us a beautiful picture of the way Jesus responds to us when we come to him, admitting our own inadequacies, acknowledging that he alone can make us clean, and throwing ourselves on his mercy.

To understand this passage of the gospel, we must understand what leprosy means. What does the leper ask? What does Jesus do and command?

DAILY READINGS

Sunday, February 18

Sunday of the Healing of the Leper

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2 Kings 5:1-14

Rom 6:12-23

Mk 1:35-43

Monday, February 19

The 500 Martyrs of Tyre, M

Book of Offering Page

Rom 2:6-14; Mt 10:16-25 or

1 Thes 3:6-13; Mt 6:22-24

30th Anniv. Of Eparchy of Erection of Our Lady of Lebanon by Pope St. John Paul II

Tuesday, February 20

St. James, the Hermit of Cyrrhus

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Eph 6:10-18; Lk 18:9-14 or

Gal 2:11-17; Mt 7:1-12

Wednesday, February 21

St. Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch

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Rom 3:19-27

Mt 12:38-45

Thursday, February 22

Establishment of the Chair of St. Peter in Antioch

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Phil 4:4-10

Lk 8:4-15

Friday, February 23

St. Polycarp of Smyrna, M

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Rom 1:18-25

Mt 18:23-25

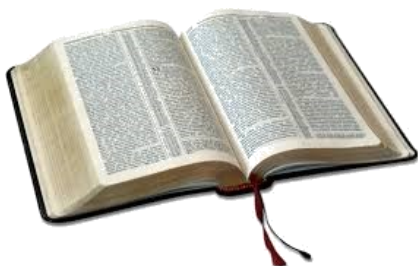
Saturday, February 24

St. Margaret the Penitent

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Heb 12:28-13:9

Mk 11:19-25



A Preaching Tour in Galilee (Mark 1: 35-43)

³⁵ In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷ When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸ He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹ And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

⁴⁰ A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." ⁴¹ Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³ After sternly warning him he sent him away at once.

Spiritual Message (continued)

"Leprosy" was considered an unclean sickness, encompassing many more diseases than modern leprosy or any other disease. Any spreading disease that affects the skin but goes deeper, any disease that ends up exposing raw flesh, would be termed leprosy in Jesus' time.

An unclean person had not necessarily committed a sin but was not fit to worship God. In the course of our life, we pick up dirt and refuse; if we are Christians, we are fundamentally clean, but need regular foot-washing to make us fit for worshiping God.

Jesus and Paul are pointing out that God is holy, God is pure. We cannot approach God when we are not pure and clean. We can't come before God with minds full of lust, deceit, greed, and selfishness. We must approach God on His terms and on His terms only. Like the mud-covered boys running to hug their mother, if we truly love God, we will show it through preparing ourselves for that embrace. That's the central concept behind being clean or unclean.

But leprosy is much different. All other forms of uncleanness require that the person stay away from the temple, to live outside the camp, to be cut off from the congregation of Israel. Lepers had to wear signs of mourning; they could approach no one, touch no one. Whenever anyone began to walk near them, they would call out; "Unclean! Unclean!" to warn them to stay away.

NEWS & EVENTS

This week at St. Rafka Church

Sun 18	Mon 19	Tues 20	Wed 21	Thurs 22	Fri 23	Sat 24	Sun 25
Healing of the Leper 11:00am Religious Education Classes 10—10:50	<i>No Mass</i> <i>The 500 Maytyrs of Tyre</i>	<i>Mass 6 pm</i> <i>St. James the Hermit of Cyrrhus</i>	<i>Mass 6 pm</i> <i>St. Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch</i>	<i>Mass 6 pm</i> <i>Establishment of the Chair of St. Peter in Antioch</i>	<i>Mass 5:50 pm</i> <i>Stations of the Cross 6:30 pm</i> <i>St. Polycarp of Smyrna, M</i>	<i>Mass 11:30 am</i> <i>St. Margaret the Penitent</i>	Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman 11:00am Religious Education Classes 10—10:50
The deadline to receive events and articles for the bulletin is Wednesday at 12:00 PM Submit them to the Parish Office at StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com							

Every Friday of Lent, Mass is at 5:50 pm followed by Stations of the Cross.

Lenten Observances

Abstinence

All Maronites who are physically capable are to **abstain** from meat on **Ash Monday** and all **Fridays of Lent**.

Fasting

Ash Monday and **Great Friday of the Crucifixion** are also days of **fasting**. Fasting in the Maronite Church involves **eating and drinking nothing at all** (except water and medicine) from **midnight until noon**. The rest of the day normal meals can be taken, but without meat. All Maronites who are physically capable should fast on these two days.

The Pillars of Lent



PRAYER



FASTING



ALMSGIVING

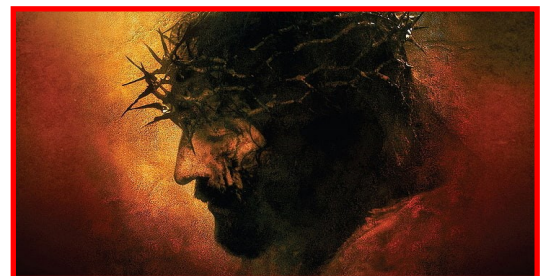
Bishop Elias' Lenten Appeal

The Goal for the 2024 Lenten

Appeal is **\$4,000**.

If you want your **Sunday donation** to be specifically for the Appeal, please designate it as such on your check.

On Great Friday of the Crucifixion (March 29) we will have the annual collection for the Holy Land.





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)

It was a very dangerous sickness, so as leprosy advances, the leper hardly looks human. No fingers. No toes. Face disappearing. Isolated from others. No one wants to draw near, no one wants to touch. *And in a sense, the leper can't touch because they cannot lose their sense of feeling.*

So, leprosy is a symbol not of the need for preparation prior to entering God's presence, but a *symbol of being lost*. Leprosy is a picture of sin eating us away, going deep into your being, gradually destroying who we are, making us less and less human, destroying all of our relationships, in the end leaving us alone, despised, rejected, hopeless.

What does the leper ask and do? The leper falls on his knees before Jesus, and begs him, pleads with him, saying, "If you are willing . . ." These actions tell us that he knows four important facts:

1. He knows that he is unworthy to come closer to this man and especially a prophet.
2. He knows that he can't heal himself or make himself clean. But he knows that Jesus can heal him! That's why he says, "If you want, you *can* make me clean!" He believes with all his heart that Jesus is the one person in the entire world who can cleanse him.
3. Finally, he knows that Jesus has the right to refuse. "If you are willing..."

He was supposed to shout, "Unclean!" to keep Jesus away! But instead, he runs to Jesus, and Jesus does not turn away. Then what does the leper ask? Does he say, "Heal my disease!"? No. "If you want, you can make me clean!" because "I want to worship God! I want to be a part of God's people, in relationship to Him! I want to touch others, to be in relationship to the people of God!"

That is what the leper is asking. Of course he wants physical healing. But becoming clean is much more than becoming healed! **WHAT DOES JESUS DO?** Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." Jesus *touches* him.

The result of Jesus' touch was that immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed, cured." By cleansing the leper, Jesus is providing spiritual healing as well as physical healing. After healing and cleansing the leper, Jesus says:

"See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." (Mark 1:44)

Learning About the Saints—Establishment of the Chair of St. Peter in Antioch (Feb. 22)

The Chair of Saint Peter at Antioch (34 – 42)

Antioch in Syria was the city where the first Pope of the Catholic Church, Saint Peter, set up his Chair after his departure from Jerusalem around A.D. 34. This was at the house of a noble Gentile Christian named Theophilus, the one to whom Saint Luke dedicates his two books: the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

Antioch was a major metropolitan city of the ancient world with a diverse population and was the place where Christ's followers were first called Christians. Nearly seven years later, in the year 42, Saint Peter set up his Chair at Rome, at the home of Saint Pudens, a senator, and his mother, Saint Priscilla. Saint Peter occupied his Chair at Rome for twenty-five years, from the year 42 to the year 67, when he was crucified for the Faith.