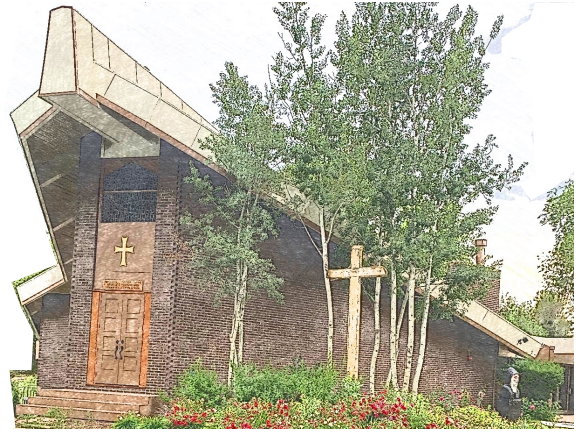


St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,
Lakewood, CO 80214

Website: www.strafkadenver.org

Email: StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com



January 14, 2024 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Schedule of Masses & Services

Sunday Mass 11:00 AM

Tuesday-Thursday Mass 6:00 PM

Friday Mass 6:30 PM

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
lhalpincraven@gmail.com

Contact the office to register in the Parish

Spiritual Message from Father El-Badaoui Habib

Second Sunday of Epiphany and of the year (John 1: 35- 42)

Today we are celebrating the second Sunday of Epiphany. In our reading this evening, after seeing Christ, we heard John saying: “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” For those two disciples it was like a new start, a fresh start, and from those words of John everything changed for them. What is it that changes? Well, they begin to follow Jesus.

At the start, they are standing with John the Baptist. But when Jesus walks past, they left John and went to follow Jesus because they believed in John's word. How do we follow Jesus today when we can't see him? What does it look like to be a follower of Jesus? We're going to see three things from the passage that helps us to know what a follower of Jesus is. First, knowing Jesus; second spending time with Jesus; and third, telling others about Jesus.

I want to suggest that it is a bit like following a football team....

When you support a team, you try to know about them. So, you know who's on the team, who the

DAILY READINGS

Sunday, January 14

2nd Sunday of Epiphany

Book of Offering Page 107

Jer 1:4-10

2 Cor 4:5-15

Jn 1:35-42

Monday, January 15

Our Lady of the Sowing,

St. John Calybites

Book of Offering Page 454, 117 or 128

Col 1:9-17; Lk 11:27-32 or

2 Cor 12:1-10; Mt 14:1-12

Tuesday, January 16

Memorial of the Chains of St. Peter

Book of Offering Page 463, 117 or 128

2 Cor 1:3-7; Mt 16:24-28 or

2 Cor 1:12-24; Lk 5:1-11

Wednesday, January 17

St. Anthony the Great

Book of Offering Page 445, 117 or 128

Eph 6:10-18; Mk 10:28-31 or

2 Cor 2:1-11; Mt 4:18-25

Thursday, January 18

Establishment of the Chair of St. Peter

St. Athanasius of Alexandria

Book of Offering Page 117 or 128

2 Cor 2:12-17

Mt 9:9-13

Friday, January 19

St. Macarius of Egypt

Book of Offering Page 117 or 128

2 Cor 12:17-13:4

Mt 9:35-38

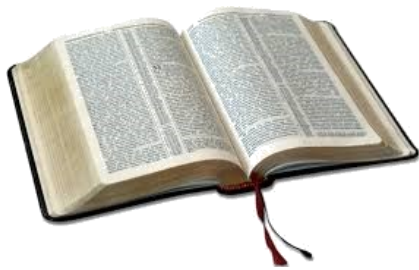
Saturday, January 20

St. Euthymius the Great

Book of Offering Page 117 or 128

2 Cor 13:5-13

Mt 10:1-6



Today's Gospel

The First Disciples of Jesus (John 1:35-42)

³⁵ The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

³⁸ Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

Spiritual Message (continued)

manager is, and what they're like. In a similar way, when the disciples start to follow Jesus, they come to know about him and to know him. When Jesus walked past, John the Baptist points to Jesus and says 'Behold, the Lamb of God.' (Jn. 1:35). Jesus is the Lamb of God.

The title 'Lamb' in the bible has three different meanings. First, Jesus is the paschal Lamb. He is the one who was slaughtered and by his death saved us. By his death on the cross, all the sacrifices in the old temple stopped, and he became the only true sacrifice that for the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of the World. Jesus is the Lamb of Passover who passed from death to life, and he is the victorious Lamb of revelation, who has 7 eyes, 7 horns, and 7 spirits. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

The first step in following Jesus is to know him as our Savior. Jesus died on the cross so that we can be friends with God. So, on this first point, it's so much more than just knowing about a football team. It's not just knowing about Jesus, but actually knowing him as our Savior. Knowing

Continued on page 4

NEWS & EVENTS

This week at St. Rafka Church

Sun 14	Mon 15	Tues 16	Wed 17	Thurs 18	Fri 19	Sat 20	Sun 21
2nd Sunday after Epiphany Mass 11:00am Religious Education Classes 10—10:50	<i>No Mass</i> <i>Our Lady of the Sowing, St. John Caly-bites</i>	<i>No Mass</i> <i>Memorial of the Chains of St. Peter</i>	<i>No Mass</i> <i>St. Anthony the Great</i>	<i>No Mass</i> <i>Establishment of the Chair of St. Peter, St. Athanasius of Alexandria</i>	<i>No Mass</i> <i>St. Macarius of Egypt</i>	<i>Mass 11:30 am</i> <i>St. Euthymius the Great</i>	Sunday of the Priests Mass 11:00am Religious Education Classes 10—10:50
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 & Upcoming Events:

1. Religious Education classes before liturgy (10am—10:50).
2. This Sunday we will pray for the rest of the soul of Kabalan Kass Hanna, the father of Bernadette Shehadeh (6-year anniversary), and for Najla Sekkarieh, sister of Fouad and Joseph Sekkarieh, who passed suddenly in Syria last week. Prayer of Bakkour and a mercy meal after Mass for Najla.
3. Sunday, January 28, 2024—Visit from Denver Archbishop Samuel Aquila. His Excellency will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us. Lunch to follow.

Learning About the Saints—St. Anthony the Great (Jan. 17)

Anthony was born around 251, to wealthy parents who owned land in the present-day Faiyum region near Cairo. In the course of his long life, Anthony would live to see the Emperor Constantine's establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman empire. Anthony himself, however, would establish something more lasting – by becoming the spiritual father of the monastic communities that have existed throughout the subsequent history of the Church.

Around the year 270, two great burdens came upon Anthony simultaneously: the deaths of both his parents, and his inheritance of their possessions and property. Anthony decided to sell everything he owned and donate the proceeds, setting aside a portion to provide for his sister. Anthony himself, however, sought a more comprehensive vision of Christian asceticism. He found it among the hermits of the Egyptian desert, individuals who chose to withdraw physically and culturally from the surrounding society in order to devote themselves more fully to God. But these individuals' radical way of life had not yet become an organized movement.

Anthony lived alone in a secluded desert location, depending on the charity of a few patrons who would provide him with enough food to survive. This first period as a hermit lasted between 13 and 15 years. Anthony became engaged in a spiritual combat against unseen forces seeking to remove him from the way of perfection he had chosen. These conflicts took their toll on Anthony in many respects. When he was around 33 years old, a group of his patrons found him in serious condition, and took him back to a local church to recover.

After his recovery, Anthony moved to a mountain on the east bank of the Nile river. There he lived in an abandoned fort subsisting on the charity of those who implored his prayers on their behalf. He attracted not only these benefactors, but a group of inquirers seeking to follow after his example. In the first years of the fourth century, when he was about 54, Anthony emerged from his solitude to provide guidance to the growing community of hermits that had become established in his vicinity. Although Anthony had not sought to form such a community, his decision to become its spiritual father – or “Abbot” – marked the beginning of monasticism as it is known today.

St. Anthony may have been up to 105 years old when he died, sometime between 350 and 356. In keeping with his instructions, two of his disciples buried his body secretly in an unmarked grave. The great Doctor and Father of the Church, St. Athanasius, was a student of St. Anthony, and also his biographer.



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)

Him as the one who has changed things for us through his death and his resurrection. So, the first question is this – do you know Jesus? Is Jesus your Savior?

The second step in following Jesus is that we will want to spend time with Him. If you support a football team like the Denver Broncos, you will want to spend time with them – watching their games, cheering them on at the Arena Stadium

It's just the same with Jesus. Look at the passage. The two disciples start to follow Jesus, and Jesus turns around to ask what they want. And what is it they ask Jesus? 'Where are you staying?' So then Jesus says, 'Come and you will see,' they went to see, and 'stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour' (that is, about 4pm). As they followed Jesus, they spent time with him – talking to him and listening to him. But how do we spend time with Jesus now? We can spend time with Jesus as we take the time to read his word, and time for prayer, for worship, for adoration, for confession. So, as you follow Jesus, do you take time with him, reading your Bible and praying?

The third step in following Jesus is to be like those two disciples in this passage which is to tell others about Jesus. Going back to football teams, what is it like if your team wins? It's good news, and you want to share it!

But more important than winning a football game, in our reading we see the joy and delight that Andrew has when he goes to tell his brother Simon. Do you see what he says? 'We have found the Messiah' (which means Christ) our king and savior. This Messiah has come to save us and to free his people from oppression and hurt and sadness. He would also bring in God's kingdom. So, when Andrew finds the Messiah, he goes off and finds his brother and tells him. If you read on in the chapter, Jesus calls Philip to follow him, and Philip goes off and tells Nathanael as well.

The Messiah has come to save us from the sin of selfishness- I want everything to be for me not like John.....

When we find Jesus, when we know Jesus, when we're saved by Jesus, when we follow Jesus, when we spend time with Jesus, then we naturally want to tell other people about Jesus too! When Jesus is our friend, we want other people to know him too, so we talk about him. In the passage we see Andrew telling his brother, Simon and bringing him to Jesus. Do we share Jesus with our family and close friends? Sometimes it can be harder to be close to family than to strangers. Yet we want those we love to also know Jesus. So be encouraged today, to stick to it, and find ways to talk about Jesus in the home.

At the end of the day, I want to say that following Jesus is the best thing we can do. Maybe you've not started yet – please do think about it – you won't regret it.

Following Jesus is a fresh start – as we know Jesus, as we spend time with Jesus, and as we tell others about Jesus, Jesus works in our lives. Amen