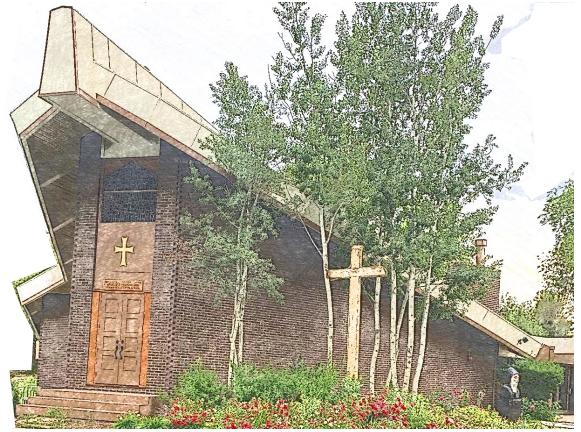


St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,
Lakewood, CO 80214

Website: www.strafkadenver.org

Email: StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com



July 30, 2023 10th Sunday of Pentecost

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 to any
Pastoral Care needs**
(Hospital, Homebound, Etc.)

Office Hours

9am-3pm, 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 10th Sunday of Pentecost - Matthew 12:22-32

What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

This is certainly a question that people ask on a regular basis. What they mean is: Can a person sin so badly that God would never forgive him? Can a man become such a murderer, drunkard, pervert, liar, etc. that he is beyond the grace of God? There are many people who seem to be almost tormented by the idea that maybe they have committed this sin against the Holy Spirit: the unpardonable sin.

Let me invite you to read Matthew 12:22-32 with me, and perhaps discover the truth behind the "unpardonable sin."

Despite all the evidence staring them in the face, the Pharisees absolutely refused to accept Jesus as the Son of God! They were so blinded by their own hatred and desire to poison the multitudes against Christ, that they could not see the absurdity of their own accusation. It is a sad, and yet all too common, occurrence when a person recognizes the truth, yet refuses to accept it. Even though they were circulating this absurd suggestion through the outskirts of the crowd, Jesus knew exactly what they were thinking and saying. And so, He responds to them with... **THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN:**

Jesus said: "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks

DAILY READINGS & MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, July 30

10th Sunday of Pentecost

Book of Offering Page 425 or 492

2 Kgs 1:2-8

1 Cor 12:1-11

Mt 12:22-32

Monday, July 31

350 Martyrs (Disciples of St. Maron), St. Ignatius of Loyola

Book of Offering Page 728

Rom 16:17-20

Lk 11:49-54

Tuesday, August 1

Book of Offering Page 473, 445 or 512

St. Shmouni & Her sons

1 Cor 10:23-33

Mt 16:24-28

Wednesday, August 2

Translation of the Relics of St. Stephen-1st Martyr

Book of Offering Page 454 or 521

Acts 21:27-28,30b-40a

Mt 23:23-26

Thursday, August 3

David the Prophet

Book of Offering Page 463 or 532

Acts 21:40-22:10

Lk 12:1-5

Friday, August 4

St. John Vianney, the Cure d'Ars

Book of Offering Page 445, 473 or 542

1 Tm 2:1-11; Lk 12:35-44 or

Acts 22:17-29; Lk 12:6-9

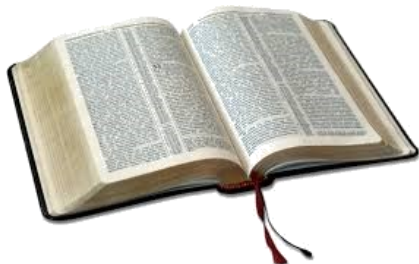
Saturday, August 5

Moses the Prophet, Dedication of Mary Major

Book of Offering Page 482 or 553

Acts 22:30-23

Lk 12:10-12



Today's Gospel

Jesus and Beelzebul Matthew 12: 22-32

²²Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see.²³All the crowds were amazed and said, "Can this be the Son of David?"²⁴But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons."²⁵He knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.²⁶If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?²⁷If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges.²⁸But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.²⁹Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered.³⁰Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.³¹Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.³²Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Spiritual Message (continued)

against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."

So, what exactly had these Pharisees done that would cause Jesus to say that they could "not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come?" The word "blaspheme" literally means "to speak against." The scribes and Pharisees were guilty of "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" because they were attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan.

The apostle Paul was himself guilty of that sin. He writes, "Even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor, yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus."

Well, obviously there is something deeper implied than simply speaking against the Spirit, if not, then the beloved Apostle Paul would have been lost eternally as well. So, what is meant by "blasphemy against the Spirit?" Let's consider some of the sinners we read about in the New Testament. The "tax-collectors and sinners" or the sinful woman who was caught in bed with a man not her husband. Yes! All of them found that Jesus had grace enough to cover their fleshly sins.

What about the traitor -- one of the inner circle who betrayed the Lord "with his eyes open" even after he had been warned? Peter was all this;

NEWS & EVENTS

This week at St. Rafka Church

Sun 30	Mon 31	Tues 1	Wed 2	Thurs 3	Fri 4	Sat 5	Sun 6
<p>10th Sunday of Pentecost</p> <p><i>Sts. Abdon & Sennen, Bl. Solanus Casey</i></p> <p>11:00am</p>	<p><i>The 350 Martyrs, Disciples of St. Maron, St. Ignatius of Loyola</i></p>	<p><i>Mass</i> 5:00 pm</p> <p><i>St. Shmouni & her sons</i></p>	<p><i>Mass</i> 5:00 pm</p> <p><i>Translation of the relics of St. Stephen 1st Martyr</i></p>	<p><i>Mass</i> 5:00 pm</p> <p><i>David the Prophet</i></p>	<p><i>Mass</i> 6:30 pm</p> <p><i>St. John Vianney</i></p> <p><i>First Friday</i></p>	<p><i>Mass</i> 11:30am</p> <p><i>Moses the Prophet, Dedication of Mary Major</i></p> <p><i>First Saturday</i></p>	<p>The Transfiguration of the Lord</p> <p>11:00am</p> <p>Bible Discussion with Deacon George after Mass</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 StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com</p>							



Festival Work
Food Prep, Setup, and yard cleanup

**Saturday, August 5, beginning at 10 am
&
Sunday, August 6, after Mass**

**Saturday, August 19, beginning at 10 am
&
Sunday, August 20, after Mass**

SAINT RAFKA
MARONITE CATHOLIC CHURCH

LEBANESE & MIDDLE EASTERN
Annual Food & Cultural Festival

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 2, 2023 | 11AM - 10PM
2301 WADSWORTH BLVD., LAKEWOOD, CO 80214

HOOKAH | FOODS | GIFTS | KIDS ZONE | CULTURAL DANCING | LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

ADMISSION FEE: \$4 | FREE (CHILDREN UNDER 5)

QR Code



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)

he denied his Master three times the night that the "Friend of Sinners" most needed a friend. He cursed and swore that he did not even know the man.

What about murderers? "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Even murder -- even the murder of Jesus Christ -- could be forgiven.

Sin against the Holy Spirit is not a matter of speech; the words spoken are only "fruit" from a sin-filled heart. That is why Jesus states very clearly: "You brood of vipers! How can you speak well when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

What is "blasphemy against the Spirit?" It is the final and complete rejection of Jesus Christ. This sin is a denial of the Spirit's message and rejection of the Lord's deity. Jesus made it clear that all sins can be forgiven. Adultery, murder, blasphemy, and other sins can all be forgiven; they are not unpardonable. But God cannot forgive the rejection of His Son. It is the Holy Spirit who bears witness to Christ and convicts the lost sinner.

According to the Catholic Catechism there are no limits to the mercy of God, but if anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness-of-heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss. This is a sin against the Holy Spirit?

More specifically, what sins offend the Holy Spirit? There are six sins that offend the Holy Spirit. These are:

(1) Despair

"By *despair*, man ceases to hope for his personal salvation from God, for help in attaining it, or for the forgiveness of his sins. Despair is contrary to God's goodness, to his justice - for the Lord is faithful to his promises - and to his mercy."

(2) Presumption of God's mercy

"There are two kinds of *presumption*. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high), or he presumes upon God's almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit)." (C.C.C. # 2092)

(3) Impugning the known truth

To "*impugn*" the known truth means to attack it by word or argument, to resist it, to contradict it, or even to oppose the known truth or to challenge it as false.

(4) Envy the spiritual good of another

In the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, "*All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually as the Spirit chooses.*" To envy the spiritual good of another is to *question* the Divine judgment of the Holy Spirit in His distribution of spiritual gifts. It is to be jealous of another person who has a gift different than one's own gift. Through envy, one rejects the gift that he has received from the Holy Spirit, determining in his own mind that the gift he has received is not good enough for him and he wants someone else's gift.

(5) Obstinaity in sin

To be "*obstinate*" means to resist the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, to be stubborn, to persist in sin, to be unyielding.

(6) Final impenitence

"*Impenitence*" means to be uncontrite, unrepentant, hardened, unconverted, to be without regret, shame, or remorse.

God is all merciful and all just. He cannot forgive a sin that we refuse to repent of. He gave us free will to choose to love Him or reject Him. In His goodness and perfection, God will not interfere in our freedom to choose.