

# **St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church**

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,  
Lakewood, CO 80214

Website: [www.strafkadenver.org](http://www.strafkadenver.org)

Email: [StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com](mailto:StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com)



## **October 1, 2023 Third Sunday after Holy Cross**

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### **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**

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*  
[lhalpinraven@gmail.com](mailto:lhalpinraven@gmail.com)

Contact the office to register in the Parish

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

### **Third Sunday after the Holy Cross (Matthew 24: 23-31)**

“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.”

Today we are celebrating the Third Sunday of the Holy Cross and the passage of the Gospel is telling us about the “Signs that will precede the second coming of Christ and the End of Times.” In the last few days of His life on earth before He was going to heaven, Jesus wants to prepare His disciples for that day by giving them hope amid the great difficulties and tribulations. So, it's almost like Jesus is saying, “you are going to go through dark times, but there will be light at the end of the tunnel.”

With Jesus, like John Lennon who is not a Christian once said, “Everything will be okay in the end, if it's not okay, it's not the end.” Jesus is coming back soon on a white horse, and He is the foundation of our hope, joy, peace, and satisfaction. At the end of that day, even though we may have to go through dark times, there is light at the end of the tunnel, because Jesus is coming back.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is the great hope for humanity. That even though we are living in darkness, in sin, in pain and despair, for those who know Jesus, for those who repent and believe in Him, they will be ushered ultimately into a glorious eternity with Him. And that fills our hearts with hope and joy.

In Matthew 24, Jesus is saying, “I'm coming back soon, but there will be some signs that will precede My coming.” So, what are these signs? Jesus first spoke about the “Beginning of Birth Pains.” So, before a child

## DAILY READINGS & MASS INTENTIONS

**Sunday, October 1**

**3rd Sunday after Holy Cross**

**Holy Rosary Sunday**

*Book of Offering Page 606*

Dan 7:9-14

Phil 3:17-4

Mt 24:23-31

**Monday, October 2**

**Sts. Cyprian and Justina**

*Book of Offering Page 473 or 617*

Heb 10:32-39; Mt 14:3-14 or

Rev 7:9-17; Mt 24:32-44

**Tuesday, October 3**

**St. Dionysius the Areopagite,**

**St. Mother Theodore Guerin**

*Book of Offering Page 627*

Rev 10:1-11

Lk 6:20-26

**Wednesday, October 4**

**St. Francis of Assisi**

*Book of Offering Page 445 or 637*

Gal 6:11-18; Mt 11:25-30 or

Rev 11:1-12; Lk 5:33-39

**Thursday, October 5**

**St. Paul the Simple, Bl. Francis Xavier  
Seelos**

*Book of Offering Page 647*

Rev 12:1-12

Lk 21:34-38

**Friday, October 6**

**St. Thomas the Apostle**

*Book of Offering Page 658*

Rev 13:1,2b-4,6-7,11-12,15-18

Jn 5:17-23

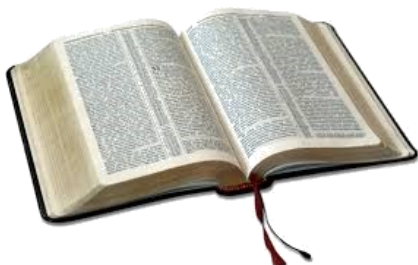
**Saturday, October 7**

**Sts. Sarkis (Sergius) and Bacchus**

*Book of Offering Page 473 or 668*

2 Cor 4:7-15; Mk 13:9-13 or

Rev 14:1-8,13; Jn 5:24-30



## Today's Gospel

**Matthew 24: 23-31**

<sup>23</sup> Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'There he is!'—do not believe it. <sup>24</sup> For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup> Take note, I have told you beforehand. <sup>26</sup> So, if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look! He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. <sup>27</sup> For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

### The Coming of the Son of Man

<sup>29</sup> "Immediately after the suffering of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

<sup>30</sup> Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

### Spiritual Message (continued)

or a baby is born into this world, the mother will have to go through great pains. There will be contractions. There will be a lot of agony. And that's exactly what Jesus likened His coming to be.

This world will be like a woman in travail. There will first be the "Beginning of Birth Pains." There will be people who will be caught up in earthquakes and famines, people who will be killed in wars and there will be rumors of wars, pestilences, infections, epidemics, pandemics. Nobody knows if we are in it because these things have always been from the beginning.

However, the "Beginning of Birth Pains" will be a period of intensification. Will be greater the magnitude, greater frequency. And then there will be an escalation to the next level, "The Tribulation." "Tribulation" is a time where lawlessness will abound. A time where the hearts of many will grow cold. A time where there will be many who will fall away from the Faith. A time where many Christians will be persecuted in the world.

Then we will have the third stage, that's the "Abomination of Desolation", That refers to a super villain, a super evil wicked man, who will set up an image of himself in the temple of God,

# NEWS & EVENTS

*This week at St. Rafka Church*

Sun 1	Mon 2	Tues 3	Wed 4	Thurs 5	Fri 6	Sat 7	Sun 8
<p><b>3rd Sunday after Holy Cross</b>  <b>Holy Rosary Sunday</b>  <b>Mass</b>  <b>11:00am</b></p> <p>7 days Mass for Neamat Abd Sater</p>	<p><i>No Mass</i></p> <p><i>Sts. Cyprian and Justina</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 5 pm</i></p> <p><i>St. Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Mother Theodore Guerin</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 5 pm</i></p> <p><i>St. Francis of Assisi</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 5 pm</i></p> <p><i>St. Paul the Simple, Bl. Francis Xavier Seelos</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 6:30 pm</i></p> <p><i>St. Thomas the Apostle</i></p>	<p><i>Mass 11:30 am</i></p> <p><i>Sts. Sarkis (Sergius) and Bacchus</i></p>	<p><b>4th Sunday after Holy Cross</b></p> <p><b>Mass</b>  <b>11:00am</b></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>							

## ***Registration for Religious Education is now open!***

There is a link on our Website under “Religious Education” to the registration form. There are also copies of the form in the vestibule (church entrance) for your convenience. We want to begin classes as soon as possible for the 2023-2024 catechetical year.

Classes are for all students at all levels of Faith Formation - those preparing for the Holy Mysteries (sacraments) or those who are fully initiated in the Catholic Faith.

We will be offering classes on Wednesday evenings in local churches (south and north), and on Sunday mornings at St. Rafka.



## 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)

demanding the worship of the world. He is doing something that is abominable, something detestable, something hateful. And He will also bring in great destruction, desolation. That leads to a wave of contractions, which is called, “The Great Tribulation” where many “Cosmic Signs” will appear. The sun, the moon, the stars, this planet, there'll be lots of geographical changes, and then Jesus will return.

So today we're going to focus on the last two events - “The Cosmic Signs”, and “The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.” Verse 29 states, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” It is to tell us that everything important in the eyes of man will fall, will be destroyed, disappear and collapse, all knowledge, all the stars, every kind of light because the light of Christ at his second coming will be brighter and more obvious.

However, we must know that Jesus is not saying here something that is very weird or unusual, or something that is novel or cannot happen. Because this has been spoken off many times in the Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah 13:10, 24:23, Jer 4:23-28, Joel 2:10, 3:15, Amos 5:20, 8:9, Rev 6:1. I think and believe that the planets will be out of order. There will be perplexity on earth and people will be scared and terrified. But Jesus is telling us not to be afraid because he has victory over the world.

Verse 30. I said: “Then will appear in heaven, the sign of the Son of Man.” What is the sign of the son of Man? The word ‘glory’ here, I believe, refers to the great brightness of His coming. To the Cross that has appeared in the Sky full of light. We already read of Jesus revealing His glory in Matthew 17, in the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James, and John saw Jesus transfigured before their eyes. They were caught up with His brightness. On his second coming it will be even greater brightness. It will be so obvious, so bright for all the world to see. So, when Jesus returns it will be so bright, so glorious! So, Jesus is saying, “In the last days, my coming will be so obvious, so radical, so bright, so evident. It's like that lightning that shines from the west all the way to the east, or from the east to the west.

But when He comes back in great glory, how do you think the world will react? Will we cheer? Will we celebrate? Will we say, “Yes!” I think some of us may. But by far, they won't. You say, “Why?” Because Jesus says, “Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn.” [Matt 24:30] They will cry. They will wail. They will lament. They will be sad. But why would they be sad?

Because Jesus is coming to punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; He will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless. He will make people rarer than fine gold and mankind and the gold of Ophir. Therefore, “He will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place at the wrath of the LORD of hosts, in the day of His fierce anger.” [Isaiah 13:10-13]

The earth will mourn because they know this is the judgment of the Lord. This second time Jesus is going to come not as a humble servant, but as a wrath-filled executioner of justice. He's going to come as a lion. He's going to come as the One who will destroy evil. That's why He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

So in the midst of judgment, there will be a gathering of His elect, a gathering of those who are chosen to belong to God, a gathering of those who will repent, and those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is wonderful redemption, there is wonderful salvation. “The Son of Man will send His angels and they will gather out of His Kingdom, all causes of sin and all law breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace, in that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Good Christians and bad Christians will be living together, side by side. “But there will come a time of harvest, there will be a time where Jesus will return and when He returns, he will send out his angels, telling them, “Gather the weeds first, and bind them in the bundles to be burned and gather the wheat into My barns.” [Matt 13:30] So there will be a gathering of fake ones, fake believers, and the real believers. So, there will be great hope and joy! Because Jesus comes and He gathers His church, His people to Himself.