

St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church

2301 Wadsworth Boulevard,
Lakewood, CO 80214

Website: www.strafkadenver.org

Email: StRafkaLkwd@outlook.com



September 17, 2023 First Sunday after Holy Cross

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

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
lharpincraven@gmail.com

Contact the office to register in the Parish

Spiritual Message from Father El-Badaoui Habib

Text: Mark 10:35-45

In the name of the +Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

“God did not call you to be served, but to be servants.”

Today we are celebrating the First Sunday of the Holy Cross, and we see that today’s gospel reading provides a remarkable contrast between being served and being a servant. In this reading we hear the story of two of Jesus’ disciples, James and John, who make the request to Jesus to receive a position of prominence in the Kingdom: “Let one of us sit at your right, and one at your left in Glory” they ask of Jesus.

The disciples’ impudence and lack of understanding is beyond belief. Did they forget the encounter with the children...? And it angers their fellow disciples. But what seems to anger the other disciples is not so much that James and John have misunderstood Jesus’ teachings, but that James and John went to Jesus requesting a place of power ahead of the rest of them.

DAILY READINGS & MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, September 17

1st Sunday after Holy Cross

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Deut 17:14-20

Tm 2:1-10

Mk 10:35-45

Monday, September 18

The Flight of the Lord Jesus to Egypt

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Rev 1:1-8

Mk 8:34-9:1

Tuesday, September 19

St. Januarius

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Rev 1:9-20

Mk 9:33-37

Wednesday, September 20

St. Eustatius & His Wife and Children

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Rev 2:1-7

Mk 9:38-50

Thursday, September 21

St. Quadratus, Bishop of Athens

Book of Offering Page 647

Rev 2:8-11

Mk 10:17-27

Friday, September 22

St. Phocas & His Companions

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2 Cor 13:5-13; Lk 21:10-19 or

Rev 2:12-17; Mk 10:28-31

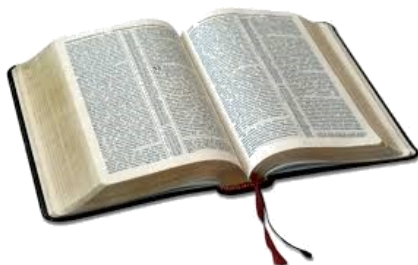
Saturday, September 23

Jonah the Prophet

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Rev 2:18-29

Mt 20:1-16



Today's Gospel

The Request of James and John (Mk 10:35-45)

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶ And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" ³⁷ And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹ They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Spiritual Message (continued)

The other disciples do not seem to be acting out of righteous indignation; rather, it appears that they are jealous. And Jesus' loving response to them all is to take the opportunity to contrast earthly greatness with divine greatness. Earthly greatness is defined as having power over, whereas divine greatness is defined as being servant to.

Today, there are examples all around us of the secular quest for greatness and its often-accompanying spectacular fall. The Credit Crunch has been a huge example of how secular notions of power, wealth and greatness are so flimsy, so fragile, so built out of a 'confidence' that has no true foundation. The wealth that as Jesus says will corrupt and decay.

In contrast to worldly greatness, to be great in God's eyes is to be a servant modeled after Jesus' own life of service. For many listeners, the story of James and John is disconcerting because if James and John, who knew Jesus personally, couldn't incorporate his teachings into their lives, how on earth are we to do so?

NEWS & EVENTS

This week at St. Rafka Church

Sun 17	Mon 18	Tues 19	Wed 20	Thurs 21	Fri 22	Sat 23	Sun 24
1st Sunday after Holy Cross Mass 11:00am	<i>No Mass</i> <i>The Flight of the Lord Jesus to Egypt</i>	<i>Mass 5 pm</i> <i>St. Januarius</i>	<i>Mass 5 pm</i> <i>St. Eustatius & His Wife and Children</i>	<i>Mass 5 pm</i> <i>St. Quadratus, Bishop of Ath- ens</i>	<i>Mass 6:30 pm</i> <i>St. Phocas & His Compan- ions</i>	<i>Mass 11:30 am</i> <i>Jonah the Prophet</i>	2nd Sunday after Holy Cross Mass 11:00am
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							

Learning About the Saints

September 17—St. Sophia and Her 3 daughters, M

The Life of St. Sophia and her Daughters

The Holy Martyrs Saint Sophia and her daughters Faith, Hope and Love were born in Italy. Sophia was a pious Christian widow who named her daughters for the three Christian virtues. St. Sophia raised them in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they did not hide their faith, openly confessing it before everyone.

The faith of Saint Sophia and her daughters was brought to the attention of Emperor Hadrian. Emperor Hadrian ordered that they be brought to Rome. When they appeared before the emperor, all those present were amazed at their composure. They looked as though they had been brought to some happy festival, rather than to torture. Hadrian urged Faith, Hope, and Love, one by one to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis, but each daughter stood strong in their faith.

The emperor then ordered Faith, Hope, and Love to be tortured. St. Sophia was subjected to another type of grievous torture: she was forced to watch the suffering of her daughters. She displayed adamant courage and urged her daughters to endure their torments for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom. All three maidens were beheaded, and joyfully bent their necks beneath the sword. At the time of their martyrdom, Faith was twelve, Hope was ten, and Love was nine.

In order to intensify St. Sophia's suffering, the emperor permitted her to take the bodies of her daughters for burial. Sitting by their graves for three days, she gave up her soul to the Lord. Even though she did not suffer for Christ in the flesh, she was not deprived of a martyr's crown. Instead, she suffered in her heart. Believers buried her body there beside her daughters. Their relics have rested at El'zasa, in the Church of Esho since the year 777.

St. Sophia and her daughters—Faith, Hope, and Love, pray for us.



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)

These stories are a reminder for many of us that, try as we might, all too often our actions are more reflective of motivations of the secular world than the divine.

So how do we become better servants? One way is by making sure that the motivation for our service is love. Eighteenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Secker said, “God has three sorts of servants in the world: some are slaves, and serve Him from fear; others are hirelings, and serve for wages; and the last are sons [and daughters], who serve because they love.”

In the week ahead, as you seek to serve God, check your motivation. Divine servanthood is always motivated by love.

Another way to become better servants is by being mindful of who it is that calls us to serve. We should remember that in all things we serve God and God alone. By becoming more aware of God’s presence in everyday life, we can strive to understand that all we do is somehow God. With this approach, even the most mundane tasks that might not usually be associated with our spiritual lives can be viewed as service. Yet another way to become better servants is by ensuring that our church is a “servant church.” Theologian Karl Barth in his book *Dogmatics in Outline* describes the living church as one that:

“Proclaims the Gospel to every creature. The Church runs like a herald to deliver the message. It is not a snail that carries its little house on its back and is so well off in it that only now and then it sticks out its feelers and then thinks that the claim of publicity has been satisfied. No, the Church lives by its commission as herald. Where the Church is living, it must ask itself whether it is serving this commission or whether it is a purpose in itself.”

Is this parish a living-servant church? Does it have a clear understanding that it exists in service to Jesus? Do all actions stem from Jesus’ commission to proclaim the gospel? Does our worship, community outreach and missional activities all have the possibility to transform those they touch? If not, then how can we make it so, for, after all, the mission of the church is the mission of Jesus Christ. We are a missional church, and we must be a beacon in this place motivated – each one of us – to mission, evangelism, and the spread of the Gospel in practical, prayerful ways.

The story of James and John is disconcerting because even the most pious listeners can see a bit of themselves in the story. How many of us can truly base our lives and actions on the divine definition of greatness – servant hood?

Fortunately, this story closes with a message of hope. Jesus proclaims that the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Jesus promises us that although we will all fall short, through his death we are redeemed.

And that is the Good News. Amen