

Rocky Mountain Maronites

A publication of Saint Rafka Maronite Church

2301 Wadsworth Blvd, Lakewood, Colorado 80214-5710

Office: 720.833.0354 • Fax: 720.833.0390

Pastor: Father Armando Elkhoury

Website: <http://www.saintrafka.org> • E-mail: father@saintrafka.org



Parish Pastoral Council

Chairman: George Maalouf • Vice Chairman: Paul Conkling • Secretary: Eva Safar • Fadi Aboujaoude • Dan Ashkar • Bob Couri • Michel Miro

Organizations

Choir: Giselle Cherabie • **Newsletter Editor:** Fr. Armando Elkhoury • **Men's Club:** George Maalouf • **Ladies' Society:** Marsha Moussallem

Divine Liturgy Schedule: Sundays at 10:30AM; On Holy Days of Obligation at 7:00PM.

Celebration of the Mystery of Penance: By appointment.

Celebration of the Mystery of Crowning: Contact father at least EIGHT MONTHS before the desired crowning date.

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MARONITES

DECEMBER 2009



Halloween 2009 Great Pictures Inside

St. Rafka Charities

Charity is an essential ministry of a Maronite Church. The word charity comes from the Greek verb to love. From God's love stems doing work of charity for it shows our love to our neighbor which the Lord has commanded.

"The first [commandment] is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12, 29-31)

(Continued on page 3)

In God we trust and hope!

My Dear Parishioners,

"Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" the angel of Lord proclaimed to the shepherds. (LK 2,10-12)

The feast of the Incarnation is not just a celebration to remember what happened 2,000 years ago. Rather, God invites to participate in it and become aware that He chose us before the foundation of the world to be an integral part and partake of His Life.

The angel of the Lord appears to us now with the same message. God fulfills his promises; He sent us a Savior who removes fears from our hearts and place in them trust and hope in Him.

Indeed, fear is not an option for us Christians. Despite the trials and tribulations we face on a daily basis, we place our lives in the hands of God our Savior and redeemer. We place our trust in Him who is our Rock and Fortress. He never reneges on His promises and always fulfills them in due time.

I place my total trust and hope in Him and pray that He will give me wisdom, patience, love, and perseverance to serve you with selfless dedication.

May He protect our community and guide our foot steps in order that we become light of the world and salt of the earth.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Your Servant in Christ,

Fr. Amando Elkhoury

ST. RAFKA CHRISTMAS PARTY

Featuring

*Christmas Activities for the Kids
Santa with gifts for the children
Christmas Raffle
Holiday Music
Lunch, Dessert & Soft Drinks*

Location

*St. Rafka Church Hall
2301 Wadsworth Blvd
Lakewood, CO 80214*

When?

*December 20, 2009
after the Celebration of
the Divine Liturgy at 10:30 a.m.*

Cost?

*Adults \$25.00
Children (ages 5-12) \$15.00
Under 5 admitted free*

RSVP

*To Deanna Soliman by 12/16
dcherabie@msn.com (preferred)
or Ph # 303-667-6787*

Payment at the door

*Please make your checks payable to:
St. Rafka Maronite Church*



(Continued from page 1)

During the 2009-2010 liturgical year, our goal is to raise \$1000.00 to support 20 people get vision care. The idea was inspired from the life of our patron saint, Rafka, the blind Maronite nun from Lebanon.

She began feeling pain in the optic nerves. The doctor who was treating her pierced through and destroyed her right eye in a barbaric manner. During bleeding and unbearable agony, Rafka said only: "In communion with Christ's passion." Her other eye deteriorated and she became totally blind. Rafka continued to suffer optic hemorrhage daily. Some time after she became visually impaired, God granted her the gift to see the nun who



was taking care of her, even if for a few short minutes.

The blind nun is now an instrument and a source of encouragement for working families to get

vision care. St. Rafka Maronite Church is teaming with Envision Colorado Inc. (www.envisioncolorado.com), a non-profit organization which was started by the Conklings, to support 20 individuals to get comprehensive eye exams. St. Rafka offers a fifty dollar coupon to further reduce the cost of each exam. Karen Hart accepted to head the charity committee at the request of the Parish council and me.

While we were contemplating charity work, our children Lio Beaini, Mario Feghali, Natalie Homsy, and Justine Moussallem along with their faith and heritage teacher Marsha Moussallem were, of their own accord, planning charity work of their own. In fact, they chose to support the Samaritan House in Denver, CO and the children at Children's Hospital.



The Samaritan House, which is run by the Capuchin Friars, hosts and takes care of the homeless in downtown Denver. It can accommodate over 320 men, women and children each night. There are separate facilities for single men, single women and families with children. Residents receive a bed, food, clothing and various services on site, including case management, medical care, and referrals for employment, social service assistance and educational opportunities. It is heavily dependent on donations from the community. I have included in this issue items needed on continual basis at the Samaritan House.

The items you bring to support the Samaritan House will be carried by our children during the Divine Liturgy as their and our offerings to God. We humbly ask Him to accept them from our sinful hands and to help us be instruments to show his Love to human beings through our humble charitable work.



Our children also asks us to collect gently used video games, controllers, and consoles to donate to the children at Children's Hospital. Children nowadays enjoy their electronic toys and games. Our children thought of others who also enjoy playing video games and chose to donate their precious toys to them.

I am inspired by the thoughtfulness and generous act of our children and hope you are too. I pray that you will support our charitable efforts. We ask you to help us raise a minimum of \$1000.00 to help individuals to get the eye care needed.

Take a look at the wish list included on page 4 to help the Samaritan House. Bring your items to church and hand them to Marsha Moussallem who in turn will put them in a basket to be presented as part of our gifts to God during the offertory procession, likewise with the video games, controllers, and consoles.

**LET US SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN'S CHARITY WORK
HERE IS A WISH LIST OF THE MUCH NEEDED ITEMS
FOR THE SAMARITAN HOUSE**



Supplies: 8.5" x 11" White Copy Paper, Letter Size Folders- 8.5" x 11" (Manila), Interdepartmental Envelopes- 10" x 13", Letter Size Hanging Folders, **Toners:** HP 12a, HP 49x, Brother TN 350, Brother TN 460, Kyocera (3035,5035) Toner A.

Chalk, Dry Erase Markers, Highlighters, Paper Clips (regular & jumbo), Scotch Tape, Standard Staples, Post-Its (all sizes), White-Out, Pens, Push Tacks, Rubber Bands, Permanent Markers, Binder Clips (all sizes), Pencils, Golf Pencils, Staplers, Tape Dispensers, Note Pads (all sizes), Note Cards, 3 Ring Binders, Blank Envelopes (all sizes), Glue Sticks, Laminating Sheets,

Staple Removers, 3 Ring Hole Punchers, Gojo NXT Purell Instant Hand Sanitizer Refill, 33.8 oz., 3 1/2 Floppy disks, CDR's, Coin Envelopes, Blue, letter-sized paper pocket folders (**HUGE NEED**), Basic Computer Workbooks/Training Guides (**HUGE NEED**)

Women's Items: Women XL stretch pants, basic t-shirts, etc--> "Everyday" type clothing is **NEEDED!**, **HUGE NEED:** DOUCHES, Feminine hygiene products-pads/tampons, **HUGE NEED:** BRAS (ALL SIZES), **HUGE NEED:** WOMEN'S WHITE SOCKS & WOMEN'S S/M UNDERWEAR, AND SHOWER SHOES!, Pantyhose, Women's black dress shoes, **HUGE NEED:** HATS, GLOVES AND BOOTS

Men's Items: 34-36" inseam jeans, 40+ jeans & lg/xl sweat pants, Wallets, **HUGE NEED:** ---> ****BOXERS: ALL SIZES****<---, MENS' WHITE SOCKS & CONSTRUCTION GLOVES, & SHOWER SHOES!, Men's black dress shoes, ****XL MEN'S COATS****, **HUGE NEED:** HATS, GLOVES AND BOOTS

Baby/Children's Items: **HUGE IMMEDIATE NEED:** PACK N' PLAY CRIBS, **HUGE NEED:** BABY SOAPS/WASHES, LOTIONS, OILS, & POWDERS!!, **HUGE NEED:** Gifts for babies (ages 0-3yo), Diapers: Sizes 4, 5, and 6, Bigger Size Pull-Ups, Portable crib sheets, Crib bumpers, Wipes, Bottles and sippy cups, Bottle brushes, INFANT SOCKS & INFANT BLANKETS, HATS, GLOVES AND BOOTS.

Toiletries: **HUGE NEED:** DENTAL FLOSS & CHAPSTICK, Travel sized: deodorant-especially for females, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, & Alcohol-free mouthwash, Razors, Hair brushes, Sunscreen, African-American hair products

Miscellaneous items: **HUGE IMMEDIATE NEED:** Twin size blankets/sheets, Lightweight blankets, Standard sized/lightweight bath towels, YEAR-ROUND NEED: BUS TOKENS/PASSES, CALLING CARDS, GIFT CARDS, & FAST FOOD CERTIFICATES, 3- AED's (Costly item), First aid supplies: BP cuff and stethoscope, Shoelaces: work boots/dress shoes, Belts (all sizes), Pillows and pillow cases, birthday wrapping paper, holiday wrapping paper-also: gift bags, bows, & scotch tape, combination lock/keys, Power Inverter 800 Watt (for vehicle), school supplies and calculators, towels, backpacks/duffle bags**

Huge need for Holidays 09: Turkeys-Turkeys-Turkeys!!!! Also: \$10 Wal-Mart gift cards and FUN winter pj's- all sizes/genders

Food items: Fresh fruit/veggies, #10 sized cans of vegetables, Creamy peanut butter, Honey, Regular coffee and creamer

December 2009

Dear Saint Rafka's Parishioners and Friends,

YEA! We are ready and able to begin our charity work as a parish!



I am very privileged that the Parish Pastoral Council and Fr. Armando asked me to head St. Rafka Charities Committee. Charity work is something to be passionate about. I hope by working together our church will be an instrument to help others.

The Maronite nun who prayed to God to allow her to share in Jesus' suffering became blind and bedridden for many excruciating years. Rafka never complained and carried her painful cross with joy for she was united with Christ.

We, who chose her as our blind patron saint, would like to offer a little hand to our brothers and sisters and encourage them to seek eye exam. It seems appropriate that our first year of charity

work be directed toward eye care.

The Conklings saw the need to provide eye exams at low cost to families who are without medical insurance or were turned down by Medicare. They established Envision Colorado (417 South Lowell Blvd, Denver, CO 80219 • 303.922.2007 • www.envisioncolorado.com), a non-profit organization, specifically for this purpose. Our efforts to help others will be through Envision Colorado.



Our goal for this year is to raise \$1,000.00 which

we will use to reduce the cost of comprehensive eye exams at Envision Colorado by \$50.00 each visit. There are many ways you can help St. Rafka Charities to reach the set goal.

1. Pray that God, through the intercession of St. Rafka, will bless our work
2. Make a donation. Please make your checks to St. Rafka Maronite Church and add the word Charity in the memo line.
3. Scarves for sight. Buy or Help sell beautiful scarves. Your spouse, neighbors, co-workers, friends, family members and

probably you would love to have one. All the proceeds will go toward our charity work.

If you are interested in helping, talk to me or email me at: karenhart@cherrycreekcountryclub.com.

Our track record proves we always exceed expectations so let's join together in this effort to reach our goal.

Sincerely Yours,

Karen Hart

ST. RAFKA MARONITE CHURCH

OFFERS



CARVES FOR



SIGHT

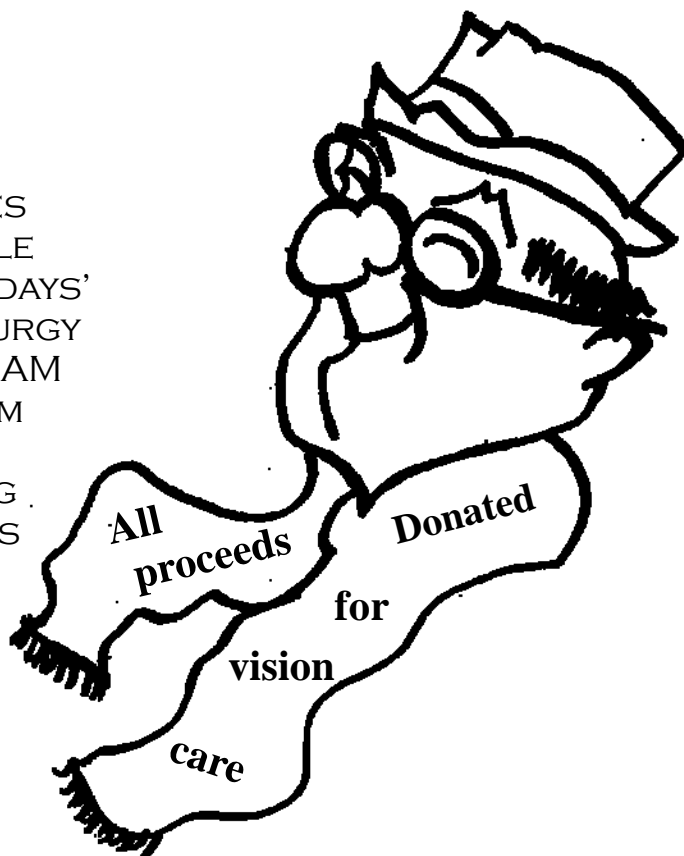
LOOK

FOR MORE
DETAILS
ABOUT

**ENVISION COLORADO
NON-PROFIT EYE CLINIC
417 S. LOWELL BLVD.
DENVER, CO 80219
303.922.2007
envisioncolorado.com**

**ST. RAFKA MARONITE CHURCH
2301 WADSWORTH BLVD.
LAKEWOOD, CO.80214
720.833.0354
bestkeptsecretindenver.com**

SCARVES
AVAILABLE
AFTER SUNDAYS'
DIVINE LITURGY
AT 10:30 AM
OR FROM
ST. RAFKA
PARTICIPATING
PARISHIONERS





Ignatius of Antioch (December 20)



Ignatius was a convert from Paganism, probably of Syrian origin. He was a close disciple of John the Evangelist and possibly the third successor of Peter to the See of Antioch. As a prisoner condemned to death because of his Christian faith, he wrote seven letters during his journey from Antioch to

Rome.

This bishop is esteemed as a great leader in the Antiochene Church because of his charisms of teaching and prophetic inspiration. It is under the stewardship of this bishop that the three-fold structure of the priesthood, bishop, priest, and deacon, was clearly formulated. He was also the first to use the term "Catholic" (i.e. universal) in reference to the Church of Christ.

The sermons of Ignatius center around the unity of the community of believers with the bishop. To be united with the Lord and to share in the Mysteries, one must be united with the emissary sent from the Lord.

Ignatius himself wrote: "Be eager, therefore, to be confirmed in the commandments of our Lord and his apostles, so that whatever you do may prosper in body and spirit, in faith and charity, in the Son and Father and Spirit, in the beginning and in the end, along with your most reverend bishop and the priests...and the deacons...Be obedient to your bishop and to one another, as Jesus in his human nature was subject to the Father and as the apostles were to Christ. In this way there will be union of body and spirit."

His letters reveal him as a man totally dedicated to Christ and yearning for martyrdom.

Ignatius is especially venerated in the Eastern Churches, especially those of the Antiochene branch. The Maronites and the Orthodox celebrate his feast on December 20. The Syrians commemorate him on Nov 16 and Jan. 29.

Our Offerings to God: Everything we have comes from God; life, each other, talents, treasures. Our offerings to God are to thank him for his generosity toward us.

November 01	1,108.00
November 08	1,113.00
November 15	1,089.00
November 22	1,579.00
November 29	1,323.00

Total **\$6,212.00**



Maronite Vocation Website

Visit vineyardofthelord.com the official Maronite Vocation website for the Maronite Eparchies in the United States. Check out the reference section and especially the Maronite Tube.

Holy Days of Obligation



The Circumcision of Jesus. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on **January 1, 2010 at 10:30am**

The Feast of the Epiphany. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on **January 5, 2010 at 7:00pm.**



(Mark 8:22–26) The Blind Man of Bethsaida. ²²When they arrived at Bethsaida, they brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. Putting spittle on his eyes he laid his hands on him and asked, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴Looking up he replied, "I see people looking like trees and walking." ²⁵Then he laid hands on his eyes a second time and he saw clearly; his sight was restored and he could see everything distinctly. ²⁶Then he sent him home and said, "Do not even go into the village." **Peter's Confession about Jesus.** ²⁷Now Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." ²⁹And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

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<http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/mark/mark8.htm>

Date	Lectionary Readings	Divine Liturgies Intentions
December 6	 <i>Birth of John the Baptist</i> Gal 4:21-5:1; Lk 1:57-66	 Various Intentions
December 13	<i>Revelation to Joseph</i> Eph 3:1-13; Mt 1:18-25	In memory of Luke Louth Offered by <i>Susan Childress</i>
December 20	<i>Genealogy</i> Rom 1:1-12; Mt 1:1-17	In Thanksgiving for Huy Offered by the <i>Nguyen Family</i>
December 25	<i>Feast of the Glorious Birth</i> Heb 1:1-12; Lk 2:1-20	For the Parishioners of St. Rafka Maronite Church and their loved ones
December 27	<i>Sunday of the Glorious Birth</i> 2Cor 11:1-9; Mt 23:29-24:2	For the Trang Family

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