

# SAINT RAFKA MARONITE MISSION

32765 LYNDON STREET  
LIVONIA, MICHIGAN 48154

ONE FAITH + ONE FAMILY + ONE FUTURE



**THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 2013, DECEMBER 29**  
**THE SUNDAY AFTER THE GLORIOUS BIRTH**  
**READING: HEBREWS 11:23-31 GOSPEL: LUKE 2:13-18**

**DIVINE LITURGY: SUNDAYS, 11:30 AM**  
**CONFESSION: SUNDAYS, 10:45-11:15 AM**

**FATHER TONY MASSAD, PASTOR**  
**DEACON FRANK PETER TOMA**

### LITURGY INTENTIONS:

DEC. 29, 2013: FOR THE PARISHIONERS OF ST. RAFKA MISSION AND THEIR FAMILIES

JAN. 1, 2014: NEW YEAR'S DAY LITURGY FOR WORLD PEACE  
& FOR THE SPECIAL INTENTIONS GIVEN BY MARY MIKHAEL

JAN. 5, 2014: FOR THE PARISHIONERS OF ST. RAFKA MISSION AND THEIR FAMILIES



**Happy New Year!**  
**Wishing You the Joy of**  
**Christ's Peace in the**  
**New Year and always!**

CHURCH ADDRESS:  
ST. RAFKA MARONITE MISSION  
32765 LYNDON STREET  
LIVONIA, MI 48154

CHURCH PHONE:  
(810) 620-7882  
CHURCH WEBSITE:  
[WWW.SAINTRAFKAMICHIGAN.COM](http://WWW.SAINTRAFKAMICHIGAN.COM)

## WORLD DAY OF PEACE: NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE NO JUSTICE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS ~ POPE JOHN PAUL II, 2002

What does forgiveness actually mean? And why should we forgive? A reflection on forgiveness cannot avoid these questions. Returning to what I wrote in my Message for the 1997 World Day of Peace (“Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace”), I would reaffirm that forgiveness inhabits people's hearts before it becomes a social reality. Only to the degree that an ethics and a culture of forgiveness prevail can we hope for a “politics” of forgiveness, expressed in society's attitudes and laws, so that through them justice takes on a more human character.

Forgiveness is above all a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against the natural instinct to pay back evil with evil. The measure of such a decision is the love of God who draws us to himself in spite of our sin. It has its perfect exemplar in the forgiveness of Christ, who on the Cross prayed: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).

Forgiveness therefore has a divine source and criterion. This does not mean that its significance cannot also be grasped in the light of human reasoning; and this, in the first place, on the basis of what people experience when they do wrong. They experience their human weakness, and they want others to deal leniently with them. Why not therefore do towards others what we want them to do towards us? All human beings cherish the hope of being able to start all over again, and not remain for ever shut up in their own mistakes and guilt. They all want to raise their eyes to the future and to discover new possibilities of trust and commitment.

Forgiveness therefore, as a fully human act, is above all a personal initiative. But individuals are essentially social beings, situated within a pattern of relationships through which they express themselves in ways both good and bad. Consequently, society too is absolutely in need of forgiveness. Families, groups, societies, States and the international community itself need forgiveness in order to renew ties that have been sundered, go beyond sterile situations of mutual condemnation and overcome the temptation to discriminate against others without appeal. The ability to forgive lies at the very basis of the idea of a future society marked by justice and solidarity.



By contrast, the failure to forgive, especially when it serves to prolong conflict, is extremely costly in terms of human development. Resources are used for weapons rather than for development, peace and justice. What sufferings are inflicted on humanity because of the failure to reconcile! What delays in progress because of the failure to forgive! Peace is essential for development, but true peace is made possible only through forgiveness.

### Forgiveness, the high road

Forgiveness is not a proposal that can be immediately understood or easily accepted; in many ways it is a paradoxical message. Forgiveness in fact always involves an apparent short-term loss for a real long-term gain. Violence is the exact opposite; opting as it does for an apparent short term gain, it involves a real and permanent loss. Forgiveness may seem like weakness, but it demands great spiritual strength and moral courage, both in granting it and in accepting it. It may seem in some way to diminish us, but in fact it leads us to a fuller and richer humanity, more radiant with the splendour of the Creator.

My ministry at the service of the Gospel obliges me, and at the same time gives me the strength, to insist upon the necessity of forgiveness. I do so again today in the hope of stirring serious and mature thinking on this theme, with a view to a far-reaching resurgence of the human spirit in individual hearts and in relations between the peoples of the world.

Reflecting on forgiveness, our minds turn naturally to certain situations of conflict which endlessly feed deep and divisive hatreds and a seemingly unstoppable sequence of personal and collective tragedies. I refer especially to what is happening in the Holy Land, that blessed place of God's encounter with man, where Jesus, the Prince of Peace, lived, died and rose from the dead.

-Pope John Paul II, Excerpt from the World Day of Peace Address

**WEEKLY INCOME**

Dec. 22 Sunday Collection: \$ 1,169  
 Christmas Collection (all Liturgies): \$2,752  
 Devotional Candles: \$77  
 Total \$3,998

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Dec. 31- New Year's Eve Party, 7:30 PM, Church Hall
- Jan. 1 -New Year's Day Liturgy 11:30 AM
- Jan. 2 - Social Committee Meeting, Panera Bread
- Jan. 6 - Feast of the Epiphany, Liturgy, 7:00 PM
- Jan. 7 - Bible Study, 7:00 PM, School Classrooms
- Jan. 8 - Rosary Prayer Group, 10 AM, Church

**FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY,  
 BLESSING OF WATER & HOMES**

This year, the Feast of the Epiphany falls on Monday, January 6, 2013. We will celebrate Liturgy at 7:00 PM on January 6th. Please remember that this is a Holy Day of Obligation. Abouna will be blessing water during this Liturgy so please bring your Holy Water bottles if you would like to take some home with you.

Also, Abouna Tony will be offering house blessings during this season so please sign up at the information table or speak with Abouna if you would like him to visit your family and bless your home.



**Religious Education**

**MARONITE CHRISTIAN FORMATION CLASSES:**  
 Classes for children ages 6-8 take place every other week during Liturgy in Room #8. Classes for children ages 9-12 take place every Sunday after Liturgy in Room #8.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**  
 St. Rafka Little Angels Sunday School takes place every other Sunday during Liturgy in Room #1. Please contact our Religious Education Director, Mrs. Kobrossi at cdgjjkob@aol.com with any questions.

**DAILY READINGS AND GOSPEL**

- + Sunday, Dec 29 - Heb 11:23-31 / Mt 2:13-18
- Monday, Dec 30 - Acts 7:2, 30-37 / Mt 2:19-23
- Tuesday, Dec 31 - Col 1:9b, 20 / Jn 1:1-18
- +Wednesday, January 1 Heb 7:1-10 / Lk 2:21-24
- Thursday, Jan 2- Eph 2:11-22 / Jn 14:27-31
- Friday, Jan 3 - Heb 7:20-28 / Lk 2:25-35
- Saturday, Jan 4 - Heb 6:9-12 / Lk 2:36-40
- +Sunday, Jan 5 - Heb 7:11-19 / Lk 2:41-52

**ALTAR SERVERS' SCHEDULE**

<u>December 29, 2013</u>	<u>January 5, 2014</u>
Miriam AlFarah	Charles Hilu
Nour Maoussaed	Mary Andraos
Joseph Kobrossi	George AbouAziz
John Kobrossi	MaryLou AbouAziz

**READING, SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND DONUTS/CLEAN-UP ROTATION**

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU WOULD PREFER A DIFFERENT DATE

Date	Arabic Reading	English Reading	Sunday School Help	Donuts & Clean-up
29-Dec-2013				Charbel & Amy Alam
5-Jan-2014			No School	Volunteer Needed
12-Jan-2014	Arlette Andraos	Mary Andraos		George & Arlette Andraos
19-Jan-2014			No School	Moj & Paul Jabbour

## THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

On behalf of the Family of Saint Rafka, we wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all the generous people who have volunteered so kindly toward their spiritual home of Saint Rafka over the past year. A very special thank you goes to those wonderful people who volunteer on a regular, periodic or frequent basis with projects and events. We are blessed to have those who participate in our Music Ministry, Religious Education Program, Arabic Classes, our MYA, MYO, Social Committee, Parish Council, Altar Servers, Readers, Ushers, and those who help with improving and beautifying our church building itself. It is people like these generous volunteers that help our community grow and flourish. We pray that the Lord reward them abundantly and grant them health, strength, and peace!

## ROSARY PRAYER GROUP

Please join us as we pray the Rosary on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month at 10 AM in the church. Our next Rosary Prayer Group session will be Wednesday, January 8th at 10 AM in the church. You are invited to honor our Blessed Mother as we join together to pray the Holy Rosary.



## BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study will resume on Tuesday, January 7th. Bible Study takes place on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 PM in the school classroom. This is a wonderful opportunity to gain a greater understanding of our faith through the Holy Bible.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE:

O God, Creator of the universe, who extends your paternal concern over every creature and guides the events of history to the goal of salvation, we acknowledge your fatherly love when you break the resistance of mankind and, in a world torn by strife and discord, you make us ready for reconciliation. Renew for us the wonders of your mercy; send forth your Spirit that he may work in the intimacy of hearts, that enemies may begin to dialogue, that adversaries may shake hands and peoples may encounter one another in harmony. May all commit themselves to the sincere search for true peace which will extinguish all arguments, for charity which overcomes hatred, for pardon which disarms revenge.

--Pope John Paul II

## MIDWEST CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS CONFERENCE

Catholics are constantly being challenged about their faith: Does God Exist? Why do we need a Church when we have the Bible? This January 18th, four nationally known Catholic authors and apologists will come to Saints Cyril and Methodius Slovak Catholic Church to tackle these and other questions at the 2014 Midwest Catholic Apologetics Conference.

We would like to get a group together from St. Rafka to attend this conference together on Saturday, January 18th. The conference begins with Mass at 9:00 AM, followed by the four speakers' presentations and lunch. The conference will conclude around 3:00 PM. The pre-registration deadline is January 11th and includes a light box lunch. Pre-registration cost is \$25 for adults and \$15 for students. Please see Abouna Tony if you are interested in attending.

### MIDWEST CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS CONFERENCE SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2014

PATRICK  
**MADRID**  
STEPHEN  
**RAY**  
MARCUS  
**GRODI**  
GARY  
**MICHUTA**



Conference begins with the Holy Mass  
celebrated by Fr. Ben Luedtke at 9:00AM.

Catholics are constantly being challenged about their Faith: Does God exist? How is Christ unique and do we have trustworthy information about Him? Isn't everything we need to know in Scripture? Why do we need a Church when we have the Bible? This January 18th four nationally known Catholic authors and apologists will come to SS. Cyril and Methodius to tackle these and other questions at the 2014 Midwest Catholic Apologetics Conference. Four talks...Four opportunities to be equipped to show how Catholicism is firmly anchored in Scripture, history, and reason.

\$25 ADULT PRE-REGISTRATION / \$15 STUDENT REGISTRATION / \$30 WALK-IN REGISTRATION

**CHURCH INFORMATION:**

**CONFESSION:** Every Sunday between 10:45-11:15 AM

**BAPTISM & CHRISMATION:** You must be a registered and active member of this parish. Please inform the Church Office when your child is born. Arrangements should be made with the Church three months in advance of the date you desire to have your child Baptized and Chrismated. Godparents must be baptized, at least 14 years of age or older, and must provide a letter of "Good Standing" from their lawful pastor. If you have any questions, please make an appointment with the pastor.

**MARRIAGE:** You must be a registered member of this parish. Allow a minimum of eight months for necessary preparations including pre-marriage sessions. The Code of Canons of the Oriental churches (CCEO) makes this time frame an absolute necessity. Exceptions will be made only for extreme, valid reasons. The couple to be married should contact the church prior to making any other arrangements.

**SICK CALLS:/SHUT-IN:** Please call Fr. Tony at (810) 620-7882

**MARONITE CHRISTIAN FORMATION CLASSES:** MCF Religious Education classes take place on Sundays during and after 11:30 Liturgy. St. Rafka Little Angels' Sunday school is offered every other Sunday during Liturgy.

**ARABIC LANGUAGE CLASSES:** Arabic Language Classes take place on Sundays after 11:30 Liturgy.

**MUSIC MINISTRY:** If you are gifted with music and would like to be part of our choir, please see Milad Hallis on Sunday.

**MYO AND MYA:** Youth ages 12-17 are encouraged to join our parish Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) and young adults ages 18-35 are welcome to join our parish Maronite Young Adults (MYA). Please see Fr. Tony Massad for more information on either of these groups.

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE:** We meet twice a month to plan, organize and execute the social events in our church. We welcome new members. Please contact Moj Jabbour at (734) 674-9991.

**NEW PARISHIONERS:** Welcome! Kindly ask to meet the Pastor and register at the church office during regular hours or in the Sacristy following weekend Liturgies.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Please contact Fr. Tony Massad at (810) 620-7882 or by email at st.rafkachurch@gmail.com. Announcements must be received by Wednesday, 12 noon, at the latest.

Church Phone: (810) 620-7882  
 Church Email: st.rafkachurch@gmail.com  
**Parish Council**  
 Elias Boueri, President (586) 709-2788  
 Rula Chidiac, Vice President (248) 701-1960  
 Helen Habib, Secretary (248) 763-5574  
 Linda Akouri (248) 318-5600  
 Sonia Alitawi (734) 634-8355  
 Charles Boumaroun (734) 748-5050  
 Rita Ghafari (248) 302-1440  
 Waleed El-Ayoubi (313) 720-3872  
 Raymond Hilu (734) 536-4234

**Stewardship Committee**  
 Sonia Alitawi (734) 634-8355  
**MYO Coordinator**  
 Linda Akouri (248) 318-5600  
**Spiritual Committee**  
 Rita Ghafari (248) 302-1440  
**Religious Education Coordinator**  
 Madlein Kobrossi (248) 426-7463  
**Choir Director**  
 Milad Halis (313) 570-1855  
**Social Committee**  
 Moj Jabbour (734) 674-9991

**WORSHIP TOGETHER...**

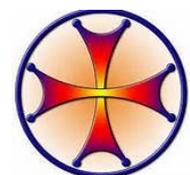
As Maronite Catholics, we are encouraged to attend Liturgy at one of our Maronite Churches in Michigan:

St. Rafka Maronite Mission - Livonia - Sunday - 11:30am

St. Sharbel Maronite Church - Warren - Saturday - 4pm, Sunday - 9:30am & 11:30am

St. Maron Church - Detroit - Sunday - 9:30am & 11:30am

Our Lady of Lebanon - Flint - Saturday - 5pm. Sunday - 10am



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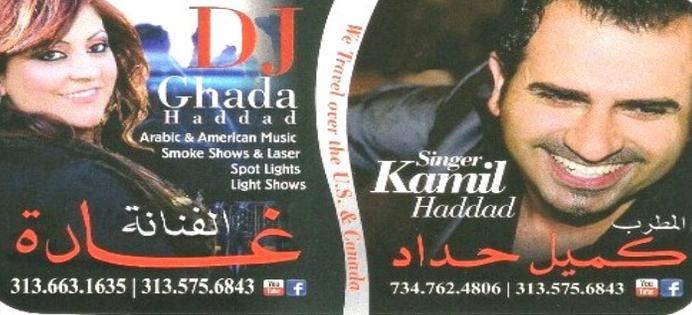
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