



# Our Lady of Purgatory



## Maronite Catholic Church

March 20-21, 2021

### HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN

#### JOURNEY TO HOLINESS

We continue our journey to holiness with the virtue of "humility". Do any of us like to be humiliated either in private or in public? I know it is not on the top of the list for me. To be humiliated means that we are beneath other people; that we have failed in some way or another and that our pride is now at stake. But humility is one of the greatest virtues we can obtain. It is the greatest virtue Jesus Christ exemplified throughout His life and one that he instructed his disciples to embrace. Humility makes us examine ourselves in a way that we see ourselves and all of our defects, our faults, and our shortcomings. Humility requires us to see ourselves as we truly are and to submit ourselves completely and willingly to God. St. Thomas Aquinas defines humility in the Summa "The virtue of humility", he says, "Consists in keeping oneself within one's own bounds, not reaching out to things above one, but submitting to one's superior." This is humility at its core. When we empty ourselves to God, we begin to understand more and more the need of forgiveness; the understanding of our faults; and the beginning of knowing ourselves well to see our defects. As St. Bernard has said "He lacks everything who thinks he lacks nothing." All of us need to strive for this virtue of humility and by doing so we not only see our own weaknesses and defects but we will be able to

understand other's defects and weaknesses as well. And when this happens, we become more compassionate and forgiving to others. Humility is key to toward our journey to holiness.

#### FEAST OF SAINT RAFKA

Saint Rafqa, also known as Saint Rebecca, was born in Hemlaya, Lebanon on June 29, 1832. She was the only child of her parents, Saber El-Choboq El-Rayess and Rafqa Gemayel. She was baptized on July 7, 1832 and named Boutroussieh.

Her parents were devout Christians and taught her daily prayers. By all accounts, her childhood was happy and simple, until she was just 7 years old and her mother, Rafqa (for whom she was named) died. The death of her mother started a period of tribulation for Rafqa and her father, who soon experienced financial difficulties. Rafqa was sent to work as a domestic servant for four years to help support the family. During that period, she worked in Damascus, away from her father.

In 1847, she returned to find that her father had remarried and his new wife desired that Rafqa marry her brother. At the same time, an aunt wanted to arrange a marriage between Rafqa and her cousin. Rafqa was left to decide what to do with herself, split between two potential suitors and under pressure from family to make two different choices. She turned to prayer and asked God to guide her. Her answer surprised everyone. Rafqa would marry neither man, but instead would devote her life to Jesus and become a nun. Rafqa



traveled to the convent of Our Lady of Deliverance in Bikfaya. She joined the Mariamettes, founded by Fr. Josph Gemayel. According to legend, when she entered the convent and gazed upon the icon of Our Lady of Deliverance, she heard the voice of God tell her "You will become a nun."

The Mother Superior of the convent accepted her immediately, without question. Shortly thereafter, her father and his new wife arrived to try to dissuade Rafqa from her God-chosen

#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"If God sends you many sufferings, it is a sign that He has great plans for you and certainly wants to make you a saint."*

*St. Ignatius Loyola*

Fr. Vincent Farhat, Pastor | Rev. Mr. Jean Mattar, Deacon | Joseph Abraham, Sub-deacon

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OFFICE HOURS: The Church office will be open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

path. She refused to leave and remained devoted to her vocation.

She was sent to Deir El Qamar to teach catechism. The town became the site of civil unrest and on one occasion she reportedly saved a child from murder by hiding him under her robes. She served in Deir El Qamar for a year.

In 1861, she returned to her congregation and become a novice. On March 19, 1862, she took her temporary vows and was assigned to kitchen service in a seminary.

Rafqa spent her free time learning Arabic, writing, and arithmetic. She also helped convince other girls to join the congregation. In 1863, she continued working as a teacher, first at a school belonging to her congregation in Byblos, then Maad village where she and a fellow sister established a new school for girls.

Following this early period, Rafqa repeatedly heard messages from heaven. When her order faced a crisis, God told her "You will remain a nun." And she heard the voices of saints directing her to enter the Lebanese Maronite Order. She obeyed. Sister Rafqa took her solemn vows in the new order on August 25, 1872.

During her time, she was known to be quiet and contemplative. She was devoted to prayer and spoke little. She commonly made sacrifices and lived in great austerity.

In October 1885, Sister Rafqa made an unusual request of Jesus, asking to share in his suffering. She immediately began to experience pain in her head, which moved to her eyes. Her superior was concerned about Rafqa's pain and ordered that she be examined by doctors and sent to Beirut for treatment.

As she passed through the nearby church in Byblos, the congregation made note that an American doctor was in the area. They located the doctor who recommended immediate surgery for Sister Rafqa.

During the surgery, she refused anesthesia, and the doctor made a mistake which caused her eye to emerge from its socket and fall to the floor. Sister Rafqa, instead of panicking, blessed the doctor, saying "For Christ's passion, God bless your hands and may God repay you."

The surgery did not succeed. Shortly thereafter, pain entered her left eye.

For the next 12 years, she experienced pain in her remaining eye and headaches. At no point did she reverse her wish to share in Christ's suffering. Instead, she remained joyful in prayer and patient in her suffering. She remained quiet for long periods, speaking infrequently, but always joyously.

In 1887, Sister Rafqa was sent with five other sisters to found a new monastery in Jrabta, Batroun in Lebanon. She did as she was asked, working patiently and diligently as she was able despite her suffering. In 1899, she became blind and paralysis set in.

Eventually she was confined to bed, mostly paralyzed and only able to lie on her right side. Her body withered, but her hands remained capable, and she used them to knit socks. A wound developed in left shoulder, which she


referred to as "the wound in the shoulder of Jesus." This continued for seven years.

On March 23, 1914, she received her last communion and called upon Jesus and the Holy Family, then went to her reward in Heaven.

After she was buried in the monastery cemetery, a light appeared on her grave for three consecutive nights and was witnessed by many.

In 1925, a case for her beatification was opened in the Vatican and the investigation into her life began in the year following. In 1927, her grave was exhumed and she was reburied in the monastery church. Pope John Paul declared her venerable on Feb. 11, 1982, and she was beatified on Nov. 17, 1985. She was finally recognized as a saint on July 10, 2001.

## OLOP 2021 LENTEN RETREAT



**OLOP 2021 LENTEN RETREAT**

# THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

**Saturday, March 27, 2021**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**True stories  
of forgiveness**  
in the most difficult circumstances

Are we too ashamed to go to the person we hurt and ask them to forgive us?

Is the hurt so deep that the thought of forgiving the one who hurt you seem impossible?

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in person**

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To sign up:  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/OLOPRetreat>

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.  
*Matthew 6:14*

## LITURGY INTENTIONS

**Saturday, March 20, @ 4:30 PM, Healing of the Leper, (Feast of Saint Photina of Samaria)** liturgy is being offered for the deceased members of the Saba Family requested by Annemarie Espindola. May their souls rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Laurence MacAllister requested by Subdeacon Joseph Abraham and Carol Ann Maslanka. May his soul rest in peace.

**Sunday, March 21, @ 10:30 PM, (Feast of the Saint Serg)** liturgy is being offered for the soul of Joseph Chedid requested by his family. May his soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Georgette Sawaya requested by Zakhia and Hiba Chedid and family. May her soul rest in peace.

**Monday, March 22, @ 6:00 PM, (Feast of Saint Rafka)**

**Tuesday, March 23, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint Rafka)**

**Wednesday, March 24, @ 6:00 PM, (NO LITURGY)**

**Thursday, March 25, @ 6:00 PM, (The Annunciation to the Virgin Mary)**

**Friday, March 26, @ 7:00 PM, Benediction of the Cross/Stations of the Cross**

**Saturday, March 27, @ 4:30 PM, Palm Sunday Vigil**

**Sunday, March 28, @ 10:30 AM, Palm Sunday**

## WINE AND HOST OFFERINGS

The altar bread and wine are in loving memory of Joseph and Marie Kenyon and deceased members of the Kenyon and Daher families requested by their family. May their souls rest in peace. Anyone who would like to give an offering in memory of a loved one or for a special intention for the month of April, 2022, please see Fr. Vincent. The cost for the month is \$75.00, which covers the cost of the communion bread and wine. Thank you and God bless.

## BISHOPS APPEAL UPDATE

As of this publication, we have collected \$1,285.00. Throughout Lent, we will be taking a second collection to help meet our stated amount of \$3,500.00. I thank you all in advance for your continued support of our Church and our Eparchial responsibilities as well. God bless all of you.

## SAINT CANDLES FOR SALE

We are offering Saint candles which will be sold after Divine Liturgies and on the website. The candles we are offering are the picture of Our Lady of Purgatory stained glass that is in the sanctuary, Saint Maron, Saint Charbel, Saint Rafka, Saint Rita, and Our Lady of Fatima. These candles come in red or amber. The inserts are removable after they are finished and may be replaced with another insert. As the candle burns down, the pictures are illuminated. These beautiful candles may be viewed in the Church or on the website. The cost of the candles is \$8.00 each. This includes the glass and the candle insert. You may also purchase the insert candles for \$3.00 each or 4 for \$10.00. Please take a look at the different candles we offer by visiting our website at [www.ourladyofpurgatory.org](http://www.ourladyofpurgatory.org) or by visiting the table at the back of the Church.

## March Lector Schedule:

**Saturday, March 27,**

Rachel Higgins

Intercession: Anna Higgins

**Sunday, March 28,**

Joan Mello/Gaby Baroody

## IN OUR PRAYERS

Michael Ellis, Kenza Sellami, Tommy Hatem, Jacob Rego, Amal Assaf, Peter Helmer, Denise Magaletta, Fernanda Thomas, Hiam Cheiab, Leo and Ida Roderick, Theresa John, Laurette BouRamia, Annie Peter, Jeannie Francis, Mariam David, Norma Thomas, Zita Drouin, Lucienne Rodrigues, Ed Da Rocha, Edmond Salameh, and Alice Daher. If anyone is missing from this list, please contact the Church office.

## CONFESSION

Please know that confession is available before liturgies. You may also call to set up an appointment.

## WEEKLY COLLECTION FOR March 13-14, 2021

<b>Sunday Collection</b>	<b>\$ 2,290.00</b>
<b>Bishop's Appeal</b>	<b>\$ 538.00</b>
<b>Education Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 200.00</b>
<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>\$ 250.00</b>
<b>Saint Candles</b>	<b>\$ 400.00</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 3,678.00</b>

## PASSION WEEK SCHEDULE AND LECTOR SCHEDULE

<b>Monday, March 29, 2021</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Coming to the Harbor Smitty Cabral</b>
<b>Tuesday, March 30, 2021</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Coming to the Harbor Rachel Higgins</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 31, 2021</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Rite of the Lamp, Anointing of the Faithful with blessed oil Carol Ann Maslanka</b>
<b>Thursday, April 1, 2021</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Rite of the Washing of the Feet Mae Dickinson and Jano Baroody</b>
<b>Friday, April 2, 2021</b>	<b>10:00AM</b>	<b>Signing of the Chalice Rose David</b>
<b>Friday, April 2, 2021</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Great Friday of the Crucifixion Jean Barbour and Gaby Baroody</b>
<b>Saturday, April 3, 2021</b>	<b>10:00AM</b>	<b>Prayer Service of Forgiveness Mae Dickinson</b>
<b>Saturday, April 3, 2021</b>	<b>4:30PM</b>	<b>Glorious Resurrection Vigil Carol Ann Maslanka</b>
<b>Sunday, April 4, 2021</b>	<b>10:30AM</b>	<b>Glorious Resurrection Ann Dupre and Hiba Chedid</b>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY BY SENDING IN YOUR WEELY COLLECTIONS VIA MAIL. THIS HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL FOR THE CHURCH. GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

# Counseling ASSOCIATES

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[Sample bulletin block / graphic is optional / In email.]



Joseph & Marie Kenyon

*How empty life is without you.  
Your Love and Patience has made  
us into who we are today. Your  
Guidance has set our path in life.  
We Miss seeing your face, hearing  
your voice, seeing your smile and  
hearing your laugh. We Love you  
and miss you even more with each  
passing day*

*Your Loving Children*

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