



Our Lady of Purgatory



Maronite Catholic Church

March 16-17, 2024

HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN

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 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.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"If God gives you an abundant harvest of trials, it is a sign of great holiness which He desires you to attain. Do you want to become a great saint? Ask God to send you many sufferings. The flame of Divine Love never rises higher than when fed with the wood of the Cross, which the infinite charity of the Savior used to finish His sacrifice. All the pleasures of the world are nothing compared with the sweetness found in the gall and vinegar offered to Jesus Christ. That is, hard and painful things endured for Jesus Christ and with Jesus Christ."

Saint Ignatius of Loyola



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.

Fr. Vincent Farhat, Pastor | Rev. Mr. Jean Mattar, Deacon

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

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.

THE FEAST OF SAINT RAFKA WILL BE CELEBRATED AT 6:00 PM, ON FRIDAY, MARCH 22, BEFORE ADORATION/STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Friday, March 22, 2024, Stations of the Cross, 12:00 Noon in English and at 7:00 PM in English and Arabic. I hope you will join us.

EASTER FLOWER DONATIONS



As we prepare for the Risen Lord on Easter, donations are being accepted to help with the cost of the Easter flowers. If you would like to donate towards the flowers, you may do so in memory of a loved one or special intention. Please write your intention on the envelope and we will remember your intention at a special Liturgy. Thank you for your kindness.

WITH THANKS AND GRATITUDE

On behalf of this community of OLOP, I would like to thank Paul Moses for donating a commercial deep fryer to our kitchen. Thank you and God bless you always.

FISH FRY TICKETS ON SALE

Our Fish Fry will be held on Friday, March 22, immediately following Adoration/Stations of the Cross. Tickets are now on sale by calling the office at 508-996-8934 or by emailing the office at officeolop@gmail.com. Tickets are \$15.00 for the fish dinner. Please specify your preference of baked fish or fried fish. Dinners come with French fries, Cole slaw, fresh baked or fried fish, tartar sauce, and dessert.

SAINT JOSEPH SODALITY BRUNCH

Join us on Sunday, March 17, after the 10:30 Liturgy as we celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph.

Brunch will be held at the **Venus de Milo Restaurant, 75 Gar Hwy, Swansea, MA, at 12:00 noon**, cost is \$40 per person and \$20 for Children. You can either call **the office** or contact:

Amal Barbour at 508-801-9685, Jacques Barbour at 508-725-6705, or Rana Choubah at 269-352-5253. This brunch is open to all parishioners who would like to join. Hope to see you there.

If anyone wants to become a member of the St. Joseph Sodality, please see Fr. Vincent we will be inducting new members on Sunday, March 17 during Liturgy. Hope to see you there.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION



Tuesday, March 19, we will gather for Eucharistic Adoration at 6:00 PM. This is an opportunity to spend some time with Jesus and ask for His help. Mark your calendars and please join us for this beautiful service.

MYO/OLOP PALM SUNDAY BAKE SALE PRE-ORDERS

The MYO along with parishioners of OLOP are preparing for the Palm Sunday Bake Sale. This will feature maamoul with dates, walnuts, or pistachios, kaak ma haleeb, biklawa, ghreybee, as well as assorted bake goods and pies by the MYO.

Half of the proceeds will benefit the children with the cost of attending the National MYO Retreat in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Please support our youth in this endeavor. Pre-order sheets are available online or in the church.

MYO GATHERING

The MYO will meet on **Saturday, March 16**, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM, in the Church Hall immediately following Divine Liturgy. Dinner will be served, along with a talk with Fr. Vincent, and games. We will also be planning for the bake sale. **Mark your calendars.**

UPCOMING LENTEN EVENTS AT OLOP

Friday, March 22, Fish Fry following Stations of the Cross/Adoration of the Cross at 7:30 PM.

Tickets will be sold in advance for the fish fry dinner.

Saturday, March 23, Sunday, March 24, MYO/OLOP Palm Sunday Bake Sale **Friday, March 29, GOOD FRIDAY MERCY MEAL:**

After the burial of Jesus on Good Friday, we will have a potluck Mercy Meal in the church hall. Everyone is encouraged to bring a meatless dish to pass. Dinner will follow the Good Friday service.

SAVE THE DATE

**Maamoul Days:
Tuesday March 19,
Wednesday March 20,
Starting at 10:00 AM**

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, March 16, @ 4:30 PM, (The First Council of Constantinople, Feast of Saint Pappas). Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Joseph Tavares requested by Dan and Helena Tavares. May his soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the souls of the deceased members of the Saba family requested by Annemarie Espindola. May their souls rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for all the souls in Purgatory requested by Sean, Marie and Keira McLaughlin. May all the souls in Purgatory rest in peace.

(Sunday, March 17, @ 10:30 AM, (Feast of Saint Patrick). Remember Me In Your Kingdom Liturgy. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Joseph Chedid requested by family. May his soul rest in peace.

Monday, March 18, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Doctor of the Church). Maronite Sisters of Christ the Light convent.

Tuesday, March 19, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint Joseph the Virgin, Spouse of Mary). Liturgy is being offered for the living and deceased members of the David and Daher families requested by Mariam David and family.

Wednesday, March 20, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint Photina the Samaritan Woman).

Thursday, March 21, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais).

Saturday, March 23, @ 4:30 PM, (Lazarus Saturday, Feast of Saint Rafka). Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Walter Chomak requested by family. May his soul rest in peace.

Sunday, March 24, @ 10:30 AM, (Hosanna Sunday, Feast of Saint Artemon, Bishop of Saleucia).

THE SANCTUARY CANDLE BURNS FOR....

This week the sanctuary candle burns for a special intention in Honor of Saint Joseph by Rose David. Anyone who would like to offer the sanctuary candle for a loved one or special intention, this will be offered each week. An offering of a \$10.00 donation is appreciated.

FINANCE COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Jimmy Kalife, Wassim Chedid, Rose Dupre, Rana Choubah, Nigel Hitchings, and Joseph Barckett.

OLOP

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Our Capital Campaign is still underway. I am happy to inform you that we are over halfway to our goal. We are continuing the Capital Campaign through June. I thank all of you who have contributed thus far. May God continue to bless Our Lady of Purgatory Church.

MCF CLASS SCHEDULE MARONITE CHRISTIAN/ FORMATION SESSIONS

February - May 2024 at the Church Hall

Tuesdays:

March: 19

April: 2; 9; 23

May: 7 last class

First Communion: May 5, 2024

IN OUR PRAYERS

Abouna Tanios Abi Ramia, Kenneth Macedo, Muriel Moline, Patricia Farhat, Ghada Karam, Beverly Parlapiano, Michael Bruce, Magda Moosa, Sharon Conti, David Techlin, Debbie Freedenberg, Josephine Chedid, Efrangieh Daou, Reggie Thomas, Peter Helmer, Renee Helmer, Octavia David, Jacob Rego, Amal Assaf, Denise Magaletta, Fernanda Thomas, Angela Scorza-Anderson, Theresa John, Laurette Bou Ramia, Annie Peter, Mariam David, Norma Thomas, Zita Drouin, Lucienne Rodrigues, Ed Da Rocha, and Edmond Salameh. If anyone is missing from this list, please contact the Church office.

DAILY READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF 03/18-03/23/24

Monday:

Romans 15: 25-33

John 7: 32- 36

Tuesday:

Ephesians 3: 1-13

Matthew 1:18-25

Wednesday:

Thessalonians 4: 1-9

Luke 11: 37-48

Thursday:

Titus 2: 1-8

Luke 18: 31-34

Friday:

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

Luke 4:1-13

Saturday:

1 Thessalonians 2: 17-3:5

John 11: 55-12:11

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Fadi Bark, Johnny Kalife, Vicki Thomas Marini, Jacques Barbour, and Smitty Cabral.

WINE AND HOST OFFERING

The altar bread and wine for the month of March is offered for Samir and Georgette Sawaya requested by Zakhia and Hiba Chdid.

PASSION WEEK DIVINE LITURGIES

Monday, March 25, 7:00 PM,

Feast of the Annunciation

Coming to the Harbor

Tuesday, March 26, 7:00 PM,

Coming to the Harbor

Wednesday, March 27, 7:00 PM,

Rite of the Lamp

Thursday, March 28, 7:00 PM,

Holy Thursday

Friday, March 29, 10:00 AM,

Signing of the Chalice

Friday, March 29, 7:00 PM,

Great Friday of the Crucifixion,

Saturday, March 30, 10:00 AM,

Saturday of the Light

Prayer of Forgiveness service

Saturday, March 30, 4:30 PM,

Easter Vigil

Sunday, March 31, 10:30 AM,

The Glorious Resurrection

LECTORS FOR MARCH

2024

Saturday, March 16,

Mae Dickinson

Intercessions: Eric Tavares

Sunday, March 17,

Halim Choubah / Jano Baroody

Saturday, March 23,

Annemarie Espindola

Intercessions: Smitty Cabral

Sunday, March 24,

Mae Dickinson / Hiba Chdid

(If you are not able to read on your given day, please contact Mae Dickinson).

WEEK OF MARCH 09-10, 2024

Sunday Collection	\$	4,712.00
Second Collection	\$	138.00
Donation: Fryer	\$	1,295.00
Memorial Donation	\$	300.00
Easter Flowers	\$	225.00
Sanctuary Candle	\$	10.00
Coffee Hour	\$	55.00
Candles	\$	33.00
Total	\$	6,718.00

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

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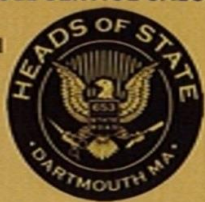
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Eternally in our hearts and in our thoughts. We miss seeing your face, hearing your voice, seeing your smile and hearing your laugh. We cherish the day we will join you in GOD's Heavenly Kingdom. We Love you and miss you even more with each passing day.

Joseph & Marie Kenyon

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