

Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church Las Vegas

Sunday of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth

Mary to Elizabeth
The Encounter of the Forerunner
and the Messiah

December 2023

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Pastor: Fr. Nadim Abou Zeid

Our Services

<u>DAILY</u>: Monday–Friday 8:00 AM English<u>SATURDAY VIGIL</u>: 4:30 PM English

SUNDAY: **9:30 AM** English & **11:30 AM** Arabic/Aramaic/English

<u>1st Sunday:</u> 4:30 PM

Rosario y la Misa en Español

2nd Sunday: 4:30 PM

Tagalog Mass

Tuesday @ 5 pm Rosary & Bible

Anointing of the Sick every 1st Tuesday

10325 RANCHO DESTINO RD. LAS VEGAS NV 89183

PHONE: 702-616-6902

www.stsharbellasvegas.org

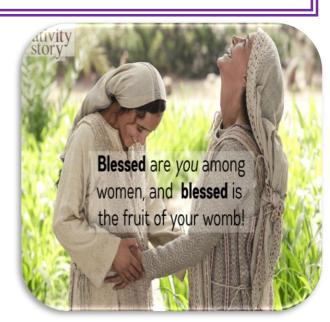
Stsharbel.lv@gmail.com

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior." (Luke 1:46-47)

Mary wanted to share her joy with her cousin Elizabeth and embarked on a journey that required days of difficult travel through the mountains in order to visit her.

Mary visited blessed Elizabeth's home with the presence of the Lord: As Elizabeth saw Mary, she and her child in her womb were filled with the Holy Spirit. Mary's song is like a battle hymn, it is filled with compassion, it is a song that gives hope to the poor and the oppressed.





This visitation explains the principles of kindness, friendship, and initiative to us. Kindness is not a difficult concept; everyone knows what one means when one talks about kindness and charity. If we are true Christians, we too have to share God's love with others. We have to take the initiative and show kindness and friendship to others. We can do this by turning these principles into joyous occasions.

Rev. Fr. Nadim Abou Zeid

READINGS:

2 Samuel 6:9-18

Ephesians 1:1-14

GOSPEL:

Luke 1:39-45



OUR HOLY FATHER POPE FRANCIS ON EVANGELIC GAUDIUM: 'REDEMPTION MARKED BY THE POOR'

On the 10th anniversary of his apostolic exhortation "Evangelic Gaudium", Pope Francis emphasizes the centrality of the poor in the Church's joyful proclamation of salvation in Christ.

Pope Francis sent a message on Friday to participants in a symposium dedicated to his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelic Gaudium* and organized by the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development.

Marking the 10th anniversary of its release, the Pope recalled his invitation for the Church to recover the missionary joy of the early Christians, who braved active resistance and injustices to proclaim the Gospel courageously.

He noted that our own times present challenges to overcome, though the difficulties are "less explicit but perhaps more insidious".

"Since they are not so visible, [modern difficulties] operate like anesthesia or like the carbon monoxide of old stoves that silently kills," he said. "Throughout history, human weakness, the unhealthy search for oneself, comfortable selfishness, and ultimately, concupiscence that lurks within all of us, are always present."

Our redemption linked with the poor

Pope Francis said *Evangelic Gaudium* sought to make it clear that the Church's evangelizing mission and our Christian life "cannot disregard the poor".

"The entire path of our redemption is marked by the poor. Everything," he said.

Jesus, recalled the Pope, was born in a stable, worked with his hands, and put the poor and dispossessed "at the center of His heart."

The Holy Father said the Church must resist any attempt to relativize Jesus' "clear, direct, simple and eloquent message...because our salvation is at stake here."

"Therefore, the Pope cannot help but place the poor at the center," he said. "It is not politics, sociology, or ideology; it is simply and purely the requirement of the Gospel."

He said the practical consequences of this "non-negotiable principle" must be borne out in every ecclesial institution and individual Christian.

"What no one can evade or excuse themselves from is the debt of love that every Christian—and, I dare say, every human being—owes to the poor," he said.

Inequality at root of all social ills

Pope Francis went on to point out that *Evangelic Gaudium* urged Christians to address the problem which he told lies at the root of poverty and social evils: inequality.

He renewed his calls for new social structures and a new mentality that overturn the "absolute autonomy of market forces and financial speculation".

"If we do not achieve this change in mentality and structures, we are doomed to see the climate, health, migration, and particularly violence and wars deepen, endangering the entire human family, both poor and non-poor, integrated and excluded," he said.

The Pope noted that his first encyclical, *Laudato si'*, grew out of his realization that the climate crisis is rooted in the "inequality of this economy that kills".



DEL SUMO PONTÍFICE FRANCISCO





Pope Francis signed Evangelii Gaudium on 24 November 2013



Evangelii Gaudium, 281



Listening to cry of the poor

In conclusion, the Holy Father urged Christians to listen to the cries of the poor and the earth, so that we might fulfill our evangelizing mission and live as Jesus has invited us to do.

"Thank you again for this Symposium," he said. "Thank you for what you do. I bless you and accompany you with prayer."

Good News for a change

OUR MARONITE BISHOP GREGORY MANSOUR: 'I HOPE THE SYNOD WILL FOCUS ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP'

As a prelate whose Eastern Church is governed by synods, Maronite Bishop Gregory Mansour of the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn has offered a vision of the Synod on Synodality as a meeting on "servant leadership."

"Imagine if the Synod on Synodality was not named such, but rather was named 'The Synod on the Church's Servant Leadership' and we would address together the question: 'How can we as a Church, especially bishops, priests, and deacons in Church leadership, develop a closer following in the footsteps of Christ?'" he told CNA in an interview Sept. 28.

Mansour added the question: "How may we as members of the Church be true servant leaders to our own baptized and to the world?"

Mansour is not one of the 360-plus voting members in the upcoming October synod session, but several eastern bishops will be participating, including three Maronites — Cardinal Béchara Boutros Raï, OMM, Maronite patriarch of Antioch, head of the Synod of the Maronite Church; Bishop Mounir Khairallah of Batrun, Lebanon; and Archbishop Selim Jean Sfeir of the Archeparchy of Cyprus. "Re-imagining" the synod's brand as one on servant leadership can help the "average layman" but also Mansour himself to better understand it "through the visionary lens of Pope Francis," he said.

Mansour said that reflecting on some of the "signature outreaches" of Pope Francis, the synod on servant leadership might focus on how Catholic humanitarian agencies may impact service to migrants, to those trafficked, and to those in the midst of war; how the Church may better outreach to nonbelievers, Muslims, Orthodox, Protestants, the disenfranchised, to those Catholics who feel far from the ministry of the Church, to all clergy, and to women in the Church and outside the Church.

"We could study the ways Jesus led and ask ourselves if we could lead more like him," he said. "Thus, in the vision of Pope Francis, I hope the synod will focus on servant leadership."

Reflecting on his own experience in the Maronite synods, Mansour said discussions have included topics such as pastoral concerns, the Particular Law of the Maronites, liturgy, humanitarian outreach, and electing new bishops.

"But as far as doctrine, dogma, or moral teachings, we don't go there. Those are pretty much settled and they're not part of our synodal discussions," he said.

The Synod on Synodality has been a cause for concern among some Catholics for its choice of particular discussion topics — such as women deacons, priestly celibacy, and LGBTQ outreach — and certain controversial participants such as Jesuit priest and LGBT activist Father James Martin.



Bishop
Gregory
Mansour of
the Maronite
Eparchy of St.
Maron of
Brooklyn.

For his part, Mansour shares some concerns that participants in the synod may try to influence change in matters of Church doctrine or sacramental discipline, pointing out that some participants have publicly voiced their opinions in opposition to the Church's teaching.

One of those voting members is the Swiss Bishop Felix Gmür of Basel, who said recently that he is in favor of women's ordination and an end to mandatory priestly celibacy.

"I am in favor of the ordination of women; it will also be a topic at the synod that will soon take place in Rome," Gmür told the Swiss newspaper NZZ am Sonntag on Sept. 24.

"To undo the clarity of faith and morals of the Church would neither be fair nor honest," Mansour said. "In fact, it could betray the very purpose explicitly stated by those preparing the synod," he added.

The synod might, however, suggest to Pope Francis better ways that members of the Church can serve those who disagree with Catholic teaching and are affected negatively by the present sacramental teaching on issues such as divorce and remarriage, or how to include more women in non-ordained roles in the Church, he said.

"The synod should focus on good governance in the Church and not on controversial changes to discipline or moral teaching," he added.

Mansour, who is supportive of Pope Francis' decision to include the laity in the synod, noted that Pope Francis, "in his wisdom," wants the universal Catholic Church to be governed by both a synodal approach and a hierarchical approach.

One without the other can lead to "chaos," Mansour said. The synodal and hierarchical approach, which has the pope as the final decision-maker, are a "good and sure" Catholic approach, he said.

"One without the other would do harm to the unity and clarity we already possess in the Catholic Church," he said, noting that the role of the pope is "essential" for unity and clarity.

"I hope the Synod on Synodality will help us better our servant leadership as Catholics. I also hope that the synod will not be tempted to suggest changes to the unity and clarity on faith and morals that Catholics have come to treasure," he added.

The synod can be a "source" of progress for the Church in "deepening our unity" and servant leadership "or it can set us on a course that does harm to both," he said.

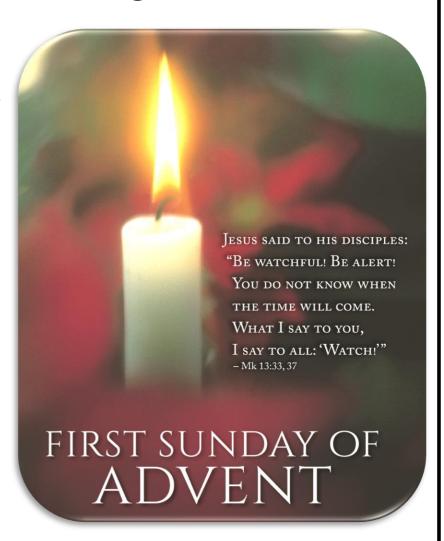
"Like everything in life it is up to us. May we be guided by the Holy Spirit," Mansour concluded.

Reappropriating Hope

Today we begin a new liturgical year: the series of seasons and weeks during which we will reflect on and re-live the saving events of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. We also celebrate the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons.

This First Sunday of Advent reminds us not only of the need to be saved, but also of our duty to be always ready to welcome the Lord. He already came as a frail Child when he was born in Bethlehem. But we have to remember that he constantly comes to us as our Savior and in our neighbor. He is about to come to us in this Eucharistic celebration in order to help us make sense of all that happens to us and around us. He is HOPE incarnate.

Today, the first Sunday of December, is also National AIDS Sunday. The Church has been at the frontlines of the battle against AIDS, helping and supported by many NGOs alongside the government. But we must all do our share to stop the alarming rise in HIV/AIDS cases that threaten the very foundation of our society: the family. As we try to learn more about this deadly disease and reach out to those who are at risk, let us also remember in this Eucharist the persons living with HIV/AIDS and the ones who are caring for them. We are called to be beacons of hope for the infirm and the healthy alike. Let this Mass be an occasion to rekindle our hope.



A Prayer for Peace in the Middle East

God of all nations and all people, we come to you, for you, working through your people, are the source for a just peace in the Middle East. We are exhausted by the screaming headlines that announce death tolls, bombing raids, and acts of terror in Iraq, Israel, Palestine and now Lebanon. We are worn out with grief for the innocent and the desperate, for the needless destruction of cities and livelihood, and for the burgeoning refugees.

We are weary of the powerful who give "windows of opportunity" for destruction and death. Where, oh God, are the powerful who give "windows of opportunity" for peace?

We are disheartened over the voices of revenge and fear who shout: "Evacuate your cities if you value your life! Prepare the way for war!" Where are the loud voices crying in the wilderness: "Come to the table of belonging. Prepare the way for lasting peace?"

Sustaining God, pour out your Spirit on the Christian community in Lebanon who have upheld your face and life in the land of our spiritual ancestors. Protect them and all the innocent who seek peace, reconciling justice, and simply sustenance for each day in your much-loved land.



Redeeming Christ, forgive us our cynicism and our perceived helplessness that only belittles your church and us and betrays our calling to be your hands and feet in your world.

Sustaining God, use us in our circles of influence to be the voice of Jesus who knew that war has no victors, not one.

Spirit of Peace, move us from the inside out into acts of prophetic compassion and non-violent struggle which honor every man, woman, and child. Give us the strength to face the suffering of all those who are made in your image and to reach out with your love.

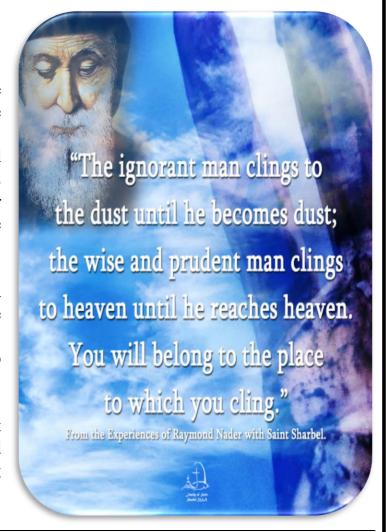
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

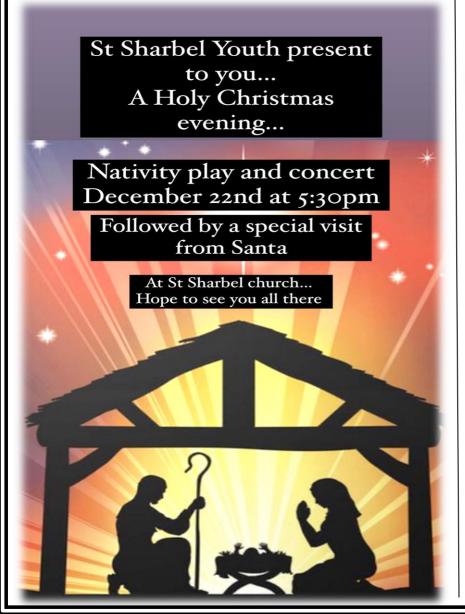
MIRACLES OF SAINT SHARBEL <u>Healing of Abda Harb</u>

She got cancer in her neck and it was extended to her tongue. The day the date of the surgery was set, her son made a vow and he went bare-foot to the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul in Annaya. When he arrived, he knelt in the cell of St. Sharbel in agony and started praying the rosary. While praying, he had a vision that his mother was dead and lying in a coffin. He started praying deeper and when he finished he felt a relief and serenity. He went to the hospital armed with a greater hope.

Further to the surgery, the doctor said: "I did my best". When Abda recovered conscience, she thanked her son for praying for her in the hermitage. Her son, amazed, asked her: "Who told you?" She said: "When they started the surgery, Saint Sharbel came and took me to the hermitage where you were praying for me."

Afterwards, she underwent many medical tests and all revealed that she was completely healed and the disease disappeared. She visited the convent of Saint Maron in Annaya and got her healing registered on March 29, 2011.







*4 Masses Collection \$4,384 *General \$1,610 \$5,994

*Weekly Expense \$8,750 **Shorfall** - **\$2,756**

*Building Fund \$ 460 *Helping Hands \$ 303

The <u>weekly shortfalls</u> are covered by the monthly Auto Pay. Its consistent and guarantees to keep us going. To avoid shortfall please give through Auto Pay.







Christmas Novena

(تساعية عيد الميلاد)

(Simbang Gabi) (Novena De Navidad)

begins on 12/15- 12/22 @ 6 pm

Except:

12/16 & 12/23 @ 4:30 pm 2/17 @ 5 pm



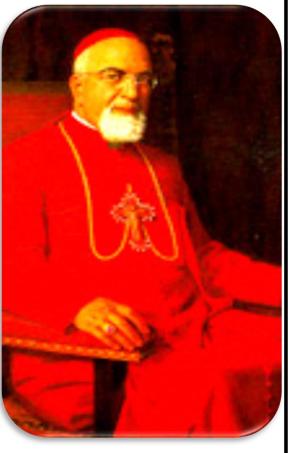
FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Born in Jezzine on April 1st 1894, though his primary studies were attended at a school in his village, it followed with the school of the Mariamite sisters at Deir el Kamar, and finally at the college of La Sagesse. He traveled to Rome before the beginning of the First World War and continued his studies at a university. He was ordained priest on December 7th, 1917. He traveled to the United States where he spent 14 years. In April 1934 he was elected Bishop for the region of Tyr and was ordained Bishop in December 1934.

In June 1955, He was elected patriarch and participated in the Second Vatican Council where he defended with boldness the rights of Patriarchs to keep the belief in the Middle East who were facing storms and hurricanes.

He was the first Maronite Cardinal. During his reign Father Charbel MAKHLOUF was declared Blessed. He died on January 11th, 1975 in Bkerke.

Patriarch Boulos MEOUCHI (1955-1975)



FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION December 8

Today is a Holy Day of Obligation in the United States, a day on which we celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (the Immaculate Conception has been, since 1846, the Patroness of the United States). Note that it is *she*, Mary herself, who is the Immaculate Conception; the day does not refer to Mary's conceiving Jesus by the Holy Ghost, but to the conception *of* Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, by Mary's father, St. Joachim. What makes her conception immaculate is not that she was conceived by the Holy Ghost of a virgin, as was Christ Our Lord, but that from the very moment of her conception, she was filled with grace by God, Who knew, in His omniscience, that she would say "yes" to the Angel Gabriel and become the Mother of the Savior. Exactly nine months from now, on September 8, we will celebrate Mary's birthday.

Most of what we know about Mary's parents, SS. Anne and Joachim, is derived from the apocryphal Protoevangelium of St. James and the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary. St. Anne is the patron of childless people, pregnant women, and grandmothers (her Feast Day is 26 July); St. Joachim is the patron of grandfathers. (In the painting above, St. Anne sits in the chair, and her husband stands at *her* right. Cleophas is seen in the right-hand corner reading, and Jesus, Mary and Joseph are in front).

As said, at the very moment of Mary's conception in St. Anne's womb, God filled Mary with grace and preserved her from the stain of sin so she might be a pure vessel by whom Christ could enter the world; "Immaculate Conception," then is a title for Mary -- a title reflecting her being and which reveals that the New Adam saved the New Eve from the stain of original sin in an act foretold in the first Book of Scripture:

Genesis 3:15

I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel. Adam and Eve, Mary and Jesus -- the only four persons with human natures who were, *in their first moments*, without sin (and, of course, Mary and Jesus remained sinless).

Mary is the All Holy, and it had to be this way: Christ took from her *His very Flesh and Blood* -- the Flesh that was scourged for us, the Blood that was spilt for us, the Bread of Life that saves us!

Symbols for the day are any of the usual Marian symbols (the color blue, her crown of 12 stars representing the 12 Tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles), but especially those which emphasize her purity, such as lilies and her Immaculate Heart.

There are no special practices today that I know of, but, as with all Marian Feasts, it is a good day to pray the Magnificat, the Litany of Loreto, the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin, the Akathistos Hymn to the Theotokos, the Ave Maris Stella (Hail, Star of the Ocean), the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, etc. (You can download the Litany of Loreto in Microsoft Word .doc format, in English or in Latin.)

The Epistle reading today will be from Proverbs 8:23-25, the Gradual will be Judith 13:23, the Tract will be Psalm 86:1, and the Gospel will be Luke 1:26-28.

Good News for a change

Eucharistic Adoration

- •Do you want peace & quiet?
- •Do you want to have a date?
- •Do you want to be loved?
- •Sign up for a date with Jesus!

Then Eucharistic Adoration is for You!



- ·Sign up forms are available on the table in the Adoration Chapel
- •Check the hours that are available on the picture frame on the table or in the white binder
- •If you have already sign up, it is your responsibility to make sure you show up or call someone to cover your hour. Names and telephone numbers are in the white binder.

Questions: Contact the Parish Office or Mylynn Lim at 702 769-2382

If you need to report child or vulnerable adult sexual abuse by a Cleric (Priest or Deacon), Member of a Religious Congregation, Lay Employee or Volunteer in the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles contact

Dr. Laura Kahwaji Victim Assistant Coordinator (323) 428-6815





THE FIRST BLIND MAN IN PORTUGAL TO BECOME A PRIEST

Father Tiago Varandas, aged 35, was born with congenital glaucoma which gradually impaired his vision. However, this did not deter him from pursuing his dreams and ambitions. He initially pursued a course in History and aspired to become a teacher. Later on, he felt called to the priesthood.

The ordination of Father Tiago Varandas, the first blind priest in the country, took place under the guidance of the Archbishop of Braga. This moment was deemed significant as it posed a challenge not only for society but also for the Catholic Church.



The Bishop further underlined that this ordination serves as a call to raise awareness and consciousness, emphasizing that all individuals, regardless of their disabilities, hold value in society, just like everyone else.

Currently, the Archbishop of Braga envisions Father Tiago Varandas taking on the responsibility of coordinating two departments: Christian education for adults, and the ministry involving people with disabilities. Additionally, Father Tiago Varandas will also be involved in the tasks related to the reception of individuals and the administration of the sacrament of confession.



Archbishop D. Jorge Ortiga emphasized that it is not the ordinal of being the first or second that matters in this context. Rather, what remains important is the acknowledgement that the call of God extends to everyone, irrespective of their individual limitations.

José Carriço, a relative of Father Tiago Varandas who attended the ordination, expressed his belief that completing six years of Theology, despite having a preexisting university degree, demonstrates the new priest's preparedness for the mission he was called upon by God



NUESTRO NOTICIAS DE LA COMUNIDAD ESPAÑOLA

El Grupo Guadalupano de la Iglesia de San Charbel

Te invita a que asistas a la Misa y El Rosario que se celebran el primer domingo cada mes comenzado,

DIA: Domingo 3 de Deciembre del 2023

HORA: Rosario 4:30 pm Misa 5 pm

DONDE: Iglesia Catolica de San Charbel 10325 Rancho Destino Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89183

Despues de la Misa te invitamos a que nos acompañes a una pequeña recepcion donde compartiremos: café, postres, y bocadillos con todos los asistentes.

Si tienes alguna duda communicate con: Oficina de la Iglesia 702-616-6902



Ruega por nosotros



10325 Rancho Destino Rd Las Vegas Nv 89183





Our Filipino Community News



PASKO: Christmas in the Philippines

The Tagalog word **Pasko** derives from the Spanish word *Pascua*. Although the word *Pascua* means Easter, *Pascua de Navidad* refers to Christmas.

The Philippines is known for having the world's longest Christmas season. The four months that end with the syllable -ber are considered Christmas months, which is why stores and households start playing carols on the first day of September! And the holiday season extends beyond December 31st. It doesn't end until the Feast of the Epiphany or Three Kings (**Tatlong Hari**) which falls around January 6. If Mexico has piñatas, the Philippines has its parol. Of course, a parol is not something to hit with a stick. It is a Christmas lantern, most commonly in the shape of a fivepointed star. The bamboo or rattan frame is covered with rice paper, tissue or cellophane. Almost every family either builds or buys one to hang by the window or door. Shopping malls construct giant versions of parol. Traditionally, a candle was placed inside for light to shine through; for safety reasons, people now use bulbs or even a flashlight. Families, schools and other places also display a creche or nativity scene called belen. Christmas trees made of plastic are decorated with lights, tinsel and balls.

Children receive fresh bills of money called aginaldo, usually when they visit their godparents and elderly relatives on Christmas morning.

Mostly Catholics, Filipinos begin a novena (a series of nine masses) on December 16th. The masses are part of the cherished religious tradition of **Simbang Gabi**, which literally means "Night Worship." Filipinos go to church at four o'clock in the morning and afterward have breakfast

together. A traditional drink during this season is a warm

ginger tea called salabat and a traditional treat is a flat but

The Tagalog word for gift is **regalo**, but Filipinos have a special word for "Christmas gift" — **pamasko**. The Filipino

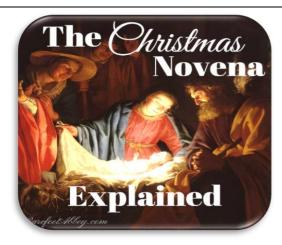
version of Secret Santa is called **Monito Monita** or **Kris Kringle**. Students in their classes and office workers all hold gift exchanges during the Christmas season.

thick yellow rice cake called bibingka.

On Christmas Eve (**Bisperas ng Pasko**), a few Filipino towns commemorate Joseph and Mary's search for a place to stay with a reenactment called **panunuluyan**, a tradition very similar to the Mexican *posadas*.

What every Filipino looks forward to is **Noche Buena**, the grand family dinner after the midnight mass. Christmas morning is the time for visiting relatives. Filipinos wear new if not their best clothes. Children do **mano**, which is kissing or bringing to their forehead the hand of an elderly person. This is when they receive their **pamasko**, certainly **aguinaldo** from godfathers and godmothers. Christmas lunch and Christmas dinner are with family.

MALIGAYANG PASKO!



In the Middle Ages, particularly in Spain and France, novenas of prayers were offered nine days before Christmas, signifying the 9 months our Lord spent in the womb of our blessed Mother. These special novenas helped the faithful prepare for the festive, yet solemn, celebration of the birth of our Lord.



Look at the candy cane.
What do you see?
Stripes that are red like
the blood shed for me.
White is for my Savior
who's sinless and pure.
"J" is for Jesus, my Lord,
that's for sure!
Turn it around and
a staff you will see.
Jesus, my sheperd,
was born for me!

author unknown

". . . And by His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5

WEEKEND

Saturday 4:30 pm Dec 2

Gagarin Family

+Randy Rogado

(Blessing of Ashes)

Sunday 9:30 am Dec 3

+Gary Pollard

+Cristeta Lopez

Sunday 11:30 am

+Yvette Amin Elhaber (Rita Mouaness's Mom)

Sunday Spanish Mass 4:30 pm

+Miguel Caceres

HOLY MASS INTENTIONS



DAILY 8AM

MONDAY Dec 4

Faithful Departed

TUESDAY Dec 5

Gottfried Family

WEDNESDAY Dec 6

Unborn Babies

THURSDAY Dec 7

+Jose Tinio Jr.

FRIDAY Dec 8

Thanksgiving to the Immaculate Conception

- **1. TUESDAY:** 5:00 P.M. Praise and worship followed by Rosary & Anointing of the sick in the Chapel.
- 2. SECOND COLLECTION: this weekend for the Maronite Patriarchal Charities.
- 3. SPANISH MASS: Sunday 12/3 at 5:00 PM Rosary at 4:30 PM in the Chapel. FEAST OF GUADALUPE, Tuesday 12/12 at 5:20 pm in the Main Church.
- **4. CHRISTMAS NOVENA:** 12/15 12/23 Please join us nightly for 9 days novena at 6 pm except for Saturday's at 4:30 pm. In the Chapel. All are welcome!
- **5. BLD PRAYER GROUP:** Praise and worship every Friday from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the Chapel. Everyone is welcome!
- 6. BLESSING OF ASHES, USE OF GARDEN AREA, BAPTISM, FUNERALS, MEMORIAL MASS & HOUSE BLESSINGS The Office must be called in advance so that we can check Father's calendar for availability. All necessary paperwork must be filled out to reserve the date.