



The Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church Of McKeesport & Duquesne, Pa

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Very Rev. Stevan (Stevo) Rocknage, Parish Priest

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January 29th, 2012 - 33rd Sunday After Pentecost - After Epiphany -Tone 8
(Remembering: The Veneration of the Precious Chains Of St. Peter - ZACHAEUS Sunday)

Today's Epistle Reading:

Ephesians 1 Tim. 4: 9-15

Today's Gospel Reading:

Matthew Luke. 19: 1-10

Resurrection

Troparion: Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three-day Burial to free us from our sufferings! O Lord, our Life and Resurrection: 'Glory to Thee!' "

Resurrection Kontakion: "By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam! Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, and the world celebrates Thy Rising from the dead, O Greatly Merciful One!"

Spiritual Thoughts: Having returned from the Youth Leaders' Conference a few days ago, where I was asked to present a workshop on Counseling Youth both Spiritually and Secularly...I must share with you several important facts that came to light in talking with both clergy and lay leaders of our youth across this country.....first, the **NUMBER ONE issue** that was **UNANIMOUSLY** agreed upon in discussions was that our parents are struggling with finding the proper balance between the demands of the secular world and their Church community....and, in **MANY** cases, have given in to the pressures of the secular world and allowed the children to "fall away from the Church". Secondly, the consensus by all as to how to 'reverse' this alarming trend was to spend more time in families "getting to know" one another - transcending the artificial barriers of school districts, etc. Thus, it was felt that ALL Church-school families needed to make concerted efforts to spend time with their peers in the community, allowing their children as well as themselves to really get to know each other and find common ground with shared issues and concerns. **WHAT A GREAT IDEA!** I am hopeful that ALL of our Church-school families will see the vital importance of doing this and to "**jump-start" this endeavor** - I want to meet with ALL parents (of Church-school children) downstairs right after the program so we can begin to plan how best to "turn ourselves around and do what is right by God for our Families".....sounds challenging, and probably a little scary - but, trust in HIM, we can do this!

(PLEASE: do NOT leave until you have met with our group - ok?) Thank you for caring enough to be a part of this revival!

Today's Special Announcements and Upcoming Activities For You:

- (1) **TODAY:** join us downstairs for the cutting of the Slavski Kolach, brunch, and a wonderful Program by our children!

- (2) **Please pray for the health and well-being of the following loved ones:**
Ellis Cannon Melva Lugares Dawn Hamm Nick Trbovich Milkie Trtica
Mara Gasparovic-NH Smilja Blagovich-NH Mimi Pavlovich-NH George Rocknage
George/Alona Evanovich-NH Boya Kecman-NH Mika Rocknage

- (3) **Also pray for the souls of those fallen asleep in the Lord:**
+Betty Vojnovich +Betty Milkovich +Delores Craven +Bertha Cervo +Milan Vranesevich
+Mildred Miljus +Amy Pacura +Arlene Crnkovich +Peter Miljus +Mildred Dokmanovich
+Sally Vranes +Priscilla Torbic +Ann Siebert +Arch-Priest Michael Lewis

- (4) **SPECIAL ITEMS TO TAKE NOTE OF:**
- **THIS WEEK:** Blessing homes continues - check your Christmas Bulletin for schedule!
- **THURSDAY:** Making Strudel for the Lenten Vespers and our Fish-Frys....9AM!

- (5) **REMEMBER THAT:** the sole purpose of the Holy Liturgy is for our participation in the Holy Mysteries of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - don't let the devil deceive you into staying away from the BEST medicine your soul will ever need

- (6) **NEXT SUNDAY: The 'Pre-Lenten Preparation Sundays Begin1!**

- (7) **SPECIAL NOTE:** our "Christmas Outreach Project" of taking hams and turkeys down to the Orthodox Pantry on the South Side last December 22nd was a WONDERFULLY successful event! Thanks to our donations and our Kolo's help, we were able to take down over 60 items, in addition to having 10 volunteers work the pantry from 5:45 to 7 PM that evening. **To the few of you who were critical of our "being disorganized", I suggest that you get involved with this wonderful ORTHODOX Ministry and see the "fruits of God's Laborers" manifested in the eyes of those helped!**
- As a result of the above experience, we will have a regular container set up downstairs to collect food supplies (dry goods, etc.), that will be taken down monthly to the Pantry...in addition, our Outreach Committee will determine which Thursday of the month to serve as volunteers at the Pantry! JOIN US!

- (8) **NEXT SUNDAY, February 5th:** we have invited a special group of youth to come in and give us a presentation on "Bible Challenge" that our Church-school will undertake in May - join us for the luncheon after Church with their presentation!

- (9) **Sunday, February 26th:** Forgiveness Sunday - we will host the Lenten Vespers at 5:00 PM!

REFLECTIONS ON OUR OWN BAPTISM

The Feast Day of the Theophany of our Lord is one of the most solemn and significant days on our Church Calendar. It is a day of great theological meaning, as the Holy Trinity was made manifest to the world at the banks of the River Jordan when Christ came to be baptized in its waters. It is also a day when the "Great Blessing of Water" takes place in our churches and homes are blessed with the newly sanctified water.

This great holy day, however, should also be a time of personal reflection for us. As we re-live the baptism of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, it is an appropriate time for us to think about our own baptism, and what its significance is for us.

In the 10th article of the Nicene Creed, we profess and acknowledge our belief in "... one Baptism for the remission of sins." Baptism is the first of the Seven Mysteries (Sacraments) that are offered to Orthodox Christians as a way of receiving God's grace. In Baptism, we are truly "born again" in a spiritual sense. As Christ explained to Nicodemus, it is essential that we all be "born of water and the spirit." According to the theology of our Holy Orthodox Church, when we are baptized, we are literally beginning our journey to eternal life. Through this Sacrament, we are buried with Christ, resurrected with Him and united to Him. When we are baptized, we become a Christian - in the words of the Apostle Paul, we "put on Christ" - and are joined to the Church. Through our godparents, we proclaim our love for Christ, our desire to serve Him and our willingness to "go and teach all nations" about Him. By virtue of our Lord's baptism in the Jordan by John, water was set apart by God as the means by which the Holy Spirit would bring to us new life and entrance into God's Heavenly Kingdom.