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Defender
of our Faith

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

901 Hartman Street, McKeesport, Pa. 15132 **Our Web-site:** stsavapa.org*

***(PLEASE VISIT OUR Parish Website, and Also Our Facebook & Twitter Pages!)**

Very Rev. (Stavrophor) Stevan Rocknage, Parish Priest

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DECEMBER 9th – 28th Sunday After PENTECOST – Tone 3

(Commemorating the Saints – St. Alypius the Stylite & Innocent of Irkutsk)

Today's Epistle Reading:

EPISTLE: Colossians 1: 12-18

Today's Gospel Readings:

MATINS: Lk. 24: 36-53/**LITURGY:** Lk. 18: 35-43

Troparion: “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His mighty arm! He has trampled down death by death, He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted the world His Great Mercy!”

Kontakion: “On this day, Thou didst rise from the tomb, O merciful One, leading us from the gates of death! On this day, Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the prophets and patriarchs, they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power!”

Spiritual Food For Thought: So today, we take time out to once again set a course for the Year 2019 through the submission of our STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE CARDS. Besides the obvious fact that our pledges provide a financial foundation for our Church to do God's work on earth, especially in our community and the area around it, the really **CRUCIAL part** of our Stewardship effort is that we **develop our 'role'** in the Ministry of our Church as the Body of Christ! This means that, as best we can, we must offer our **TIME**, our **TALENTS**, and our **RESOURCES** to our Church – in the **BEST** way possible that maximizes our effectiveness in Her Ministry and in our own souls! **How do we do this?** It is precisely this challenge that our **Orthodox Natural Church Development Program** is geared to answer as we move forward in the coming year! You will be seeing and hearing a lot about the upcoming **Second Phase** of the ONCD Process – the formulation of the Focus Groups and Facilitators to lay the ground-work for our coming to terms with the findings in the Surveys taken back in September. In addition, we are encouraged by the Mission Statement our Church Health Team has adopted as we move forward:

“No matter what your present or past status in the Orthodox Church; no matter What your current family or marital situation; no matter what your past or present Religious affiliation; no matter what your personal history, age, background, race, Or color: YOU are invited, welcomed, accepted, and loved here at the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church Community!”

Today's Special Announcements and Upcoming Events For Our Parish:

- (1) **TODAY:** we will take our **Second Collection** for the Needy at Christmas – people are so desperate at this time of year - so whatever you can do to help will be so appreciated by them!
- (1-A) **Congratulations** to our son and daughter-in-law, Dushan and Lauren, on the birth of their son, **Nathaniel Dushan Rocknage** on Friday – May God Grant You All Many Years!”
- (2) Today is **Stewardship Sunday** – please bring forth your Pledge Cards at the appropriate time!
- (3) **MONDAY:** Education Class is cancelled.
- (4) **TUESDAY:** nutroll baking as usual!
- (5) **REMINDER: this Saturday – decorating the Church at 10AM – YOU are needed!**
- (6) **THURSDAY the 13th:** Choir rehearsal at 7 PM – upstairs in Church (rehearsing new music)!
- (7) **Please pray for the health and well-being of our following loved ones within our parish:**
Nick Trbovic Carl Magdic Lucy Pcholinski Katie Repasky Donna Moss-NH
Stella Stipanovich -NH Ann Vunovic-NH Beverly Stipanovich Keith Bedell
Margaret Ivkovich Melva Buzzelli-NH V. Rev. Adam Yonitch V. Rev. Paul Lazor
Mark Vojnovich-NH Vlade Baskot Melva Dandrea Child Danijela Belo-H
- (8) **Also pray for the souls of those fallen asleep in the Lord:**
+ Ray Moss +Helen Tankosich +V.Rev. Dragan Filipovic V.Rev. Dennis Pavichevich
+Martha Zivkovich- +Ann Cervo +Helen Lia +Alex Stipanovich +Dan Ikach
+Sophie Vranesevic +Alex Hutsko +Louise Zivkovich +Mimi Pavlovich
+Nick Pilipovich +Kh. Stefanie Yazge +Mika Rocknage +Sharon Young +Amy Pacura
+Betty Perich +Dorothy Shumkaroff +AP Stevan Stepanov/+Rastko Trbuhovich/
+Vasilije Sokolovic +George Medich +Arlene Crnkovich +George Martich
- (9) **Don't forget: you can help the St. Cyril Food Pantry** – by donating ½ ham for their Christmas Drive – BEFORE their Christmas Dinner on the 20th!
- (10) **Upcoming Events:**
- **NEXT Sunday, December 16th:** Parish Advent Party – Lenten Goods needed !
(Sing-a-long, Q and A with Fr. Stevo on Christmas, Visit From St. Nicholas!)
- (11) **Wednesday, December 19th:** Feast Of St. Nicholas – 9:30AM Liturgy!
- (12) **STEELER PARTY!** Sunday, December 30th – right after Liturgy – (Game at 1 PM) Large-screen TV's on site – bring POSNO goodies – SIGN-UP in hall on Board!

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A WITNESS FOR CHRIST

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It has often been said that *"the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the faith."* The infant Christian Church of the first centuries, struggling in an inhospitable and pagan world, was indeed inspired by the acts of martyrdom that occurred at the hands of the Romans. It wasn't long before the faith began to infiltrate the ranks of the imperial army.

ST. MERCURIOS was a Roman soldier, an officer of great courage and skill. His triumphs in battle brought him to the attention of Emperor Decius, who made him a general. But even generals have enemies, those who are envious of their attainments. Mercurios, a secret Christian, had his share of those who watched him carefully for anything that might discredit him.

It was soon noticed that Mercurios did not attend the pagan services to the Roman gods, but that, in fact, he attended Christian worship services. Decius was informed of the breach of Roman law, and he promptly confronted the soldier. Without hesitation, Mercurios expressed his faith in God alone, and in His Son the Saviour, Jesus Christ. The emperor then issued orders for his death, which occurred about the year 251 in Cappadocia. Many sick people have been healed by the wonder-working relics of this ancient saint.

It can be said that the lives that Christians lead today still bear witness to the commitment of the "warriors" of long ago. Let us go forth and live our lives, showing people around us the vitality of our faith in the Lord. May our good works continue to be for the glory of our Father in heaven.