

THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT



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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APRIL 7th – Feast Of The Annunciation Of The Virgin Mary – Tone 4
(Remembering St. Tikhon – New Holy Martyr – Patriarch of Moscow)

Today's Epistle Reading:

EPISTLE: Hebrews 2: 11-18

Today's Gospel Readings:

MATINS: Lk 1: 39-45/**LITURGY:** Lk. 1: 24-38

Sunday Troparion: “When the women disciples of the Lord, learned from the Angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse, and elatedly told the Apostles: ‘Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!’ “

Annunciation Troparion: “Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the Coming of Grace! Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: ‘Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!’ “

Spiritual Food:

— The Feast of the Annunciation —

Today, March 25, we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation. On this day, the angel announced to Mary that she had been chosen by God to bring the Savior into the world. We call it Annunciation because it is the announcing of the greatest good news mankind has ever heard: the coming of God into the world, and more especially, into our lives, to overcome sin and death for us, to make us sons and daughters of God, heirs of His everlasting Kingdom.

If there is the bad news of a world gone mad, take heart, there is also the good news of One who can restore it to sanity. If there is the bad news of man's sin, guilt and anxiety, there is also the good news of a loving Savior who says, “Him that cometh to me I will in no way cast out.” If there is the bad news of man's weakness, his inability to achieve his potential, there is also the good news of God's power. If there is the bad news of suffering, there is also the good news of a God who loves and cares; a God who comes to be with us in our suffering to strengthen, comfort and support us. “Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, yea, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand” (Is. 41:10). If there is the bad news of death, there is also the good news of the Resurrected Christ, by His death trampling upon death to grant to those in the tombs everlasting life.

Here indeed is the greatest good news in the world. The world is literally dying for the kind of happiness the good news of the love of God in Christ has the power to give.

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

- (1) **TODAY:** we will celebrate a dual parastos for +Dorothy Shumkaroff and +Dan Ikach, given by their loving families...Memory Eternal to our departed loved ones!
- (2) **TONIGHT:** Pittsburgh Deanery Vespers at St. Nicholas in Monroeville – 5 PM!
- (3) **WEDNESDAY: Pre-Sasnfified Liturgy** – 6:30PM – Confession at 5:45!
(Pot-Luck Dinner after – please stay for the fellowship!)
- (3-A) **THURSDAY: Choir Rehearsal** – for Holy Week and Pascha – 7 PM!
- (4) Our Fish-Fry continues this FRIDAY from 12 to 6 PM – You are needed!

- (5) **Please pray for the health and well-being of our following loved ones within our parish:**
Donna Moss-NH Katie Repasky Violet Petrovich Ann Vunovic-NH
Beverly Stipanovich Sandy Miller Keith Bedell Margaret Ivkovich Melva Buzzelli-NH
V. Rev. Adam Yonitch V. Rev. Paul Lazor V. Rev. Joseph Cervo Helen Mochan
Vlade Baskot-NH Melva Dandrea Matthew Schaffer John Ratesic

- (6) **Also pray for the souls of those fallen asleep in the Lord:**
+ Mark Vojnovich +Nick Trbovic +Stella Stipanovich +Ann Suzich
+Lucy Pcholiniski +Protas Dr. Filipovic , Den Pavichevich, St Stepanov/
+Rastko Trbuhovich,+Vaso Sokolovic/Zvonko Kotorcevic +Carl Magdic
+Ray Moss +Ann Cervo +Helen Lia +Alex Stipanovich +Dan Ikach
+Sophie Vranesevic +Louise Zivkovich +Mimi Pavlovich +Nick Pilipovich
+Kh. Stefanie Yazge +Mika Rocknage +Sharon Young +Amy Pacura
+Betty Perich +Dorothy Shumkaroff +George Medich +Arlene Crnkovich +Helen Medic

- (7) Please SHARE with your friends regarding our ONCD Program that: NOW is the Time to start signing up to be a part of the Focus Groups for Phase Two! Sign up at the Tutors' Desk...or go to our St Sava Web-page at): stsavapa.org/oncd.html

- (8) **MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**
-Sunday, April 14th: Bus Trip To Johnstown Vespers – Bus leaves here at 2:45PM!
(Sign-Up Sheet at the Tutors' Desk!)
- (9) **St. Cyril of White Lake Food Drive:** bring in donated goods – basket in foyer of Entrance!

- (10) **April 19th and 20th:** Lazarus Saturday – Confessions that Friday at 6 PM – Liturgy with Procession around the Church at 9:30AM Saturday – Luncheon after!

- (11) **SIGN-UP TO GUARD THE TOMB:** Back of the Church! (Good Friday & Holy Saturday)
- (12) **Sunday, May 5th:** Baptism of Nathaniel Dushan Rocknage – after Liturgy!
- (13) **Sunday, May 12th:** MOTHER'S DAY – Come celebrate with us!
- (14) **Sunday, May 19th:** Parastos for +Nick Trbovic – after Holy Liturgy!

A TEACHER OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The medical community advocates stress management techniques involving relaxation, quietness and meditation for reasons of physical health. The Church, however, has for centuries urged such disciplinary measures for spiritual as well as body health.

One of the great teachers of such spiritual discipline is **ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER**, who is honored on the Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast. He received his name from a book of spiritual exercises called "**The Ladder of Perfection**," containing 30 steps or rules for attaining spiritual growth. He spent years in the monastic community on Mt. Sinai, and died about the year 606.

The starting point for spiritual life is to "*wrestle with the mind*," and then to control the passions of our nature. St. John goes on to speak of the need for prayer of the lips, then for mental prayer, and finally to contemplation. Stress is placed on the Name of Jesus: "*Let the memory of Jesus combine with your breathing, then you will know the profit of silence.*" Again he speaks of the distractions to prayer and meditation: "*Flog the foes with the Name of Jesus, for there is no stronger weapon against them either in heaven or on earth.*"

As we go through the days of the Great Fast, we need guidance from teachers. St. John in fact says: "*As a man travelling without a guide easily loses his way and goes astray, so a man guided by self-will easily perishes even if he possesses all worldly wisdom.*"

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