



# Jednota

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NUMBER 5963

## President's Christmas Message 2017

Veselé Vianoce! Šťastný Nový Rok!

Dear Members and Friends:

As I write this message I can hear the NFL game in the background; the Green Bay Packers vs. the Pittsburgh Steelers.

I can remember when high school football games were played on Sunday afternoons even though NFL games were on TV on Sunday afternoon.

Today that would be unheard of. The National Football League, to some, is the new religion replacing attending Church! Hopefully, these trends will change.

Christmas for many of us, middle age and older, is a time of reflection and memories. For younger people it is anticipation of the future.

Our fondest memories are often of family and events of years past. The Christmas tree, the Christmas dinner, the family gathering, Midnight Mass, the singing of "Tichá noc". Many of us were born in the Northern climates and Christmas means snow and cold, along with warm fires, as it was and is in our ancestral homeland of Slovakia.

As you remember the year 2015 saw our 125th Anniversary with many celebrations and events, and many of you participated. In 2018 our Convention will be held in August in Cleveland, the city where our Society was founded. Planning is in progress to insure a successful fraternal event.

While we remember the history of our Society and reminisce about the many changes of the past – including the closing of Slovak parishes – we must and are planning for the present –

continued on page 3



Andrew M. Rajec

## O Come Let Us Adore Him, Christ the Lord



Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;  
he is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2:11



### Attention, ALL FCSU College-bound Seniors:

- Don't let a scholarship opportunity fly away! The FCSU is now accepting applications for its 2018 Scholarship Program.

See page 3 for details

### Enter the Christmas Coloring Contest

In This Issue  
Hey, Kids. Sharpen your crayons!  
It's time once again for  
the annual National  
Christmas Coloring  
Contest.

See pages 4 - 5 for details.



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# Insights and Viewpoints



## St. Vincent Archabbey — Homilies, Father Killian Loch, O.S.B., Father Edward Mazich, O.S.B.

### December 17, 2017 - Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61: 1 – 2A, 10 – 11

1 Thes 5:16-24

Jn 1: 6-8, 19-28

The Third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudate Sunday. Gaudate is the Latin word for rejoice and is the message of the readings and the prayers for the Mass of today. In Isaiah we hear the prophet say; "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is

the joy of my soul." Saint Paul wrote to the Thessalonians; "Rejoice always." Let us rejoice as we continue our preparation for the birth-day of Jesus, and his Second Coming.

While it is nice to hear someone tell us to "rejoice" the reality is that in the world and in our lives there are times when it is difficult to find joy. On the news we hear of wars, terrorist attacks and senseless massacres as happened not long ago in Las Vegas. We hear about hurricanes, earthquakes and fires that result in so much death and suffering. Where is the joy in all of this? In our own lives we might be facing various trials of health, family tragedies, and relationships that are suffering. How can we be joyful with all these things going on around us and in our lives?

When Saint Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians and tells them to rejoice, he is not being entertained in the house of some wealthy member of the community and being waited on hand and foot. It's easy to rejoice when everything is going right. Everything is not going well for Paul, and he wrote this letter as he was being persecuted and fleeing from town to town. Throughout his ministry Paul suffered multiple times including stoning and imprisonment, too many to list here. Yet Paul never stopped calling upon the various Christian Communities to rejoice, and in his letter to the Philippians he wrote; "Rejoice in the Lord always, I shall say it again, rejoice!"

When Paul speaks of joy he is not referring to a nice, fleeting feeling that makes one feel good, it is the rich long-lasting joy that comes from the Holy Spirit that goes to the very core of our being. This is deep inner joy that comes from knowing Jesus. Paul believed and experienced that God was always with him, the Joy of the Lord was his strength, and he knew that even in the darkest and most difficult situations God would provide for him. When have a deep personal relationship with him we experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives. These are; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Gal 5:22-23 The joy of the Lord is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. We bear fruit when we welcome and receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives. These are what gave Paul the ability to shout out for joy even during the most difficult times.

This joy can be with us at all times, even the most trying times. It doesn't take away the problems and pain we might experience, but it lifts us up to accept them, bear them, and trust the Immanuel – God is with us. Today the church calls us to rejoice and to walk in faith, for God is with us. We walk believing in the truth and beauty revealed to us by Jesus and share with Christians throughout the world the importance of his birth, and faith in his second coming. This is what opens us up to being filled with that deep joy that can be inexpressible but always present in our lives. Advent is a time that helps us to be more appreciative of the gift of Jesus, more open to his presence, and more receptive of the joy that comes from him.



Fr. Killian Loch,  
O.S.B.

### December 24, 2017 - The Nativity of the Lord (Vigil Mass)

This year the last Sunday of Advent falls on Christmas Eve; to accommodate this coincidence I chose to reflect on the scripture readings for the Vigil Mass of Christmas, which takes place late in the afternoon or early in the evening of Christmas Eve.

We first hear a proclamation from the prophecy of the Book of Isaiah, a prophet whose words are often read during Advent. In words filled with anticipation Isaiah indicates that the people of Israel were suffering, yet held great hope for the future. In fact, Isaiah says that their future exaltation will exceed their past greatness: "Nations shall behold your vindication, and all the kings your glory; you shall be called by a new name pronounced by the mouth of the Lord." The prophet assures the people of Israel: "No more shall people call you 'Forsaken,' or your land 'Desolate,' but you shall be called 'My Delight,' and your land 'Espoused'" (Isa 62:2, 4).

This promise of salvation from their enemies and glory in the sight of the nations is followed by an excerpt from Saint Paul's preaching in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul was trying to share the Good News with some of his fellow Jews as he traveled through the region of Pisidia, which is part of modern day Turkey. He drew a connection for them between King David—a figure we hear much of in the Advent season—and Jesus Christ: "I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will carry out my every wish." From this man's descendants God, according to his promise, has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus" (Acts 13:22).

Paul tried to proclaim Christ to the Jews of Pisidia but received little response; this gave him the conviction that while never abandoning his fellow Jews (see Romans 11:25-29) he must turn his efforts toward the gentiles (see Acts 13:44-52). Paul spent the rest of his life pursuing his goal of evangelizing the gentiles and bringing to them the message that they too can share in the salvation promised to Israel by Isaiah and all the prophets of old. This message that the gentiles can experience the very same vindication and glorification that the Jewish people have been promised is also discovered in the beautiful reading from the Gospel of Matthew, which offers us Jesus' genealogy.

There is a shorter form of this reading that is allowed to be read at Mass but I hope you hear the entire passage, containing as it does the record of our Lord's ancestry going back forty-two generations. These generations are defined by many names that remind us of the long journey of the people of Israel with the Lord; this is perhaps best seen in the very opening verse of the Gospel, where Jesus is directly related to the figures of David and Abraham, quintessential representatives of the Jewish people: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt 1:1).

At the same time these many generations also contain some names that call to mind how the gentile nations had already been woven into God's plan for the redemption of all his children: figures such as Rahab of Jericho, Ruth the Moabite, and Uriah the Hittite show us that even in the days of the Old Testament God was working out the salvation of all who believed in him, Jew or Gentile alike.

As we celebrate the Nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem this Christmas, let our hearts rejoice that he whose name means "salvation" (see Matt 1:21) has indeed brought salvation for all his people, including us in his promise made through Isaiah: "No more shall people call you 'Forsaken'...but you shall be called 'My Delight!'"



Fr. Edward Mazich,  
O.S.B.

## NEWSPAPER DEADLINES

All copy is due by 4:30 P.M., THE MONDAY OF THE WEEK BEFORE THE ISSUE DATE, unless otherwise stated below because of special holiday scheduling. Copy that is not received by this deadline will not necessarily appear in the following Wednesday's issue.

Issue Date  
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 17  
WEDNESDAY, FEB 14  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

Copy Date  
MONDAY, JAN. 8  
MONDAY, FEB 5  
MONDAY, FEB. 26

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## President's Christmas Message 2017

continued from page 1

ent and the future. Our Society has and must continue to adapt.

We are Catholic by faith, while respecting other religions, Slovak by ancestry and history, and fraternal in our purpose of "Jednota" or togetherness for the common good.

I want to thank the many Branches, District Officers and Recommenders for their dedicated service. The Jednota was founded and exists on the principle and ideal of fraternalism, which means we have a common bond, but it also means we respect and care for each other.

2017 has again shown growth in our assets and surplus to new record levels. However, as our valued long-time Recommenders grow older, we have to rely on independent agents and the social media to reach members, new and old. We have initiated marketing programs to reach them.

My final thought revolves around the subject of family during this coming Christmas season.

Your family includes not only immediate relatives, father, mother, sons, daughters etc., but also your fraternal family – i.e. the Jednota – and our spiritual family in Christ.

We remember and offer prayers for all of our deceased Members of the Jednota and to all Members who are ill and to those who are in physical or spiritual need.

May your family celebrate this Christmas together in peace and love. Make your family a "Jednota" family. On behalf of our Board of Directors, our Home Office staff and the Rajec family I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year.

Narodil sa Kristus Pán, veselme sa.

Christos raždajetsa, slavite jeho.

**Andrew M. Rajec**  
National President

## Christmas Greeting from the National Chaplain

Dear Friends,

Irving Berlin composed over 1,500 songs over course of his 101 years. One of his most famous gets a lot of airtime this time of year. We all know the first line. "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas just like the ones I used to know." The lyrics to White Christmas have influenced generations of people so much since its debut in the 1942 movie Holiday Inn that it seems Christmas isn't Christmas without seeing freshly fallen snow on December 25. But the reality is, unless you live in certain parts of the world, the chances of personally experiencing a White Christmas are either extremely rare or non-existent. Most people can only dream of a White Christmas.

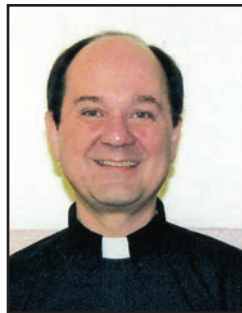
Philip Brooks, an Episcopal priest who was rector of a church in Philadelphia, went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1865. Reflecting on his experience three years later, he wrote a poem and had his church organist compose a melody so the poem could be sung by his Sunday School choir. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" was first sung in 1868.

Like "White Christmas," "O Little Town of Bethlehem" associates Christmas with dreams. "The hopes and dreams of all the years are met in Thee tonight." What are these hopes and dreams? We hope and dream for a Holy Christmas, where the focus on the sacred event itself is more important than the marketing and consumerism that surrounds it. We hope and dream for a Peaceful Christmas, where anger, hatred and violence between peoples and nations are no more. We hope and dream for a Blessed Christmas, where everyone everywhere everyday has the Lord in their minds, on their lips and in their hearts.

God bless you and your families now and throughout the New Year. You will be remembered in my Christmas Masses.

Merry Christmas!

**Fr. Thomas Nasta, National Chaplain**



Rev. Thomas A. Nasta



## Christmas Message from the National Vice President

On Christmas Day we will celebrate the coming of the Son of God to the human race.

With His birth, He brought new faith and hope to the world for a better future. A hope that could really come true if we have faith, love, patience, and practice the Ten Commandments.

Wherever Christmas is celebrated, there should be a spirit of kindness and generous giving in keeping with the message of Jesus, "Glory to God in the Highest and on Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men."

May this Christmas bring many graces and heavenly gifts to you and to all those dear to your hearts.

On behalf of my family and myself, I will pray that the light of Christ never ceases to brighten your hearts and homes. May the peace of Christ and His holy love be with you and your loved ones this Christmas Day.

**Andrew R. Harcar, Sr. National Vice President**



Andrew R. Harcar Sr.



## Christmas Greetings from the Executive Secretary

Our homes and trees are decorated, the presents wrapped, and the baking done. Christmas cards are in the mail. We are eagerly awaiting the biggest holiday of the year.

As we make our way to Midnight Mass or services on Christmas Day, our minds are racing, making sure we haven't forgotten a last minute detail. Once we are inside the church and settle into the pew, though, the "real meaning" of Christmas enters our hearts and the true celebration begins. We begin to experience Christ's peace amid all the hustle and bustle of our busy lives.

On the auspicious day our Savior was born, may you be blessed with His love and protection, His guidance and grace.

On behalf of my wife Theresa, my family and myself, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Kenneth A. Arendt, Executive Secretary**



Kenneth A. Arendt



## Christmas Message from the National Treasurer

As we prepare for the joyous season of Christmas and birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, let each of us join together to celebrate with our family and friends this Holy season. During the Christmas Holidays let each of us take the time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas and what the birth of our Savior Christ Jesus was to the world.

We as Slovaks celebrate our Christmas Eve dinner (Štedrý Večer) as a special time filled with rich traditions, special foods, family and friends. As we gather around our tables to rejoice and give thanks for the birth of our Lord, please take the time to be grateful for our families and for the opportunity it gives each of us to be able to celebrate and share this special time with each other.

During the Christmas Season, my wife Cathy and I, and the entire Matta Family extend to all of you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.

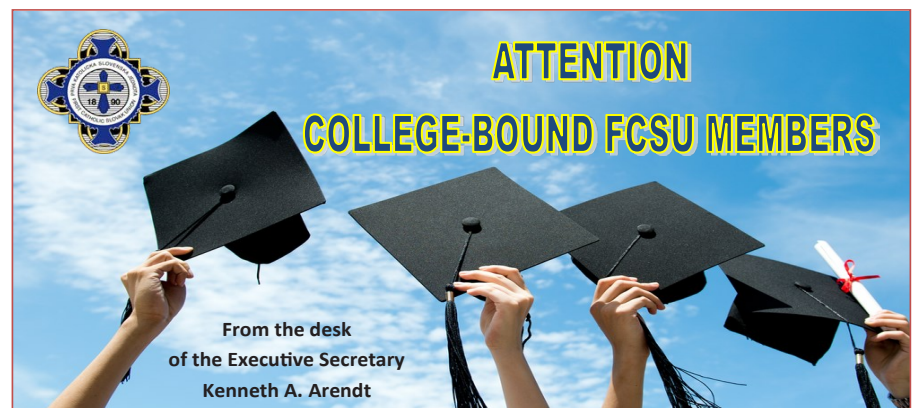


VESELÉ VIANOČNÉ SVIATKY A STASTLIVÝ NOVÝ ROK

**George F. Matta II, National Treasurer**



George F. Matta II



### THE FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION IS NOW ACCEPTING 2018 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Eighty (80) ONE-TIME SCHOLARSHIPS will be awarded to the winners.

- 75 scholarships in the amount of **\$1000.00**.
- A "Philip Hrobak Scholarship" and "Stephanie Husek Scholarship" in the amount of **\$1,250.00** each will be awarded to the highest ranking male and female applicants respectively.
- Three Scholarships of **\$1000.00** each will be given from the "John A. Sabol Nursing Scholarship Fund" to applicants who have been accepted into either an approved three or four year hospital nursing program or a fully-accredited college of their choice.

In addition, upon proof of college graduation and completed insurance application, each recipient will be issued a **paid up \$3,000 Single Premium Life Insurance Policy**.

For rules, requirements and applications go to  
[www.fcsu.com/membership-benefits/scholarships](http://www.fcsu.com/membership-benefits/scholarships)

or call the Home Office at 800.533.6682

**Applications must be postmarked by midnight,  
February 28, 2018**



# *FCSU 2017 Christmas Coloring Contest*

A

## Christmas Candles

by Evelyn Stein

When the Christ-child comes again  
Softly down the street to-night,  
Twinkling through the window pane  
Let our candles shed their light.

Though the clouds are dark above  
And the golden stars are dim,  
We can tell Him of our love  
If we set a light for Him.

Oh, the blessed Christ-child dear,  
In His robe of shining white,  
Let our candles give Him cheer  
As He passes by to-night!



B



C

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*  
*Veselé Vianoce a Šťastný Nový Rok!*



**RULES**

- Each age group is assigned a certain picture:  
**4 – 6 year olds – picture A**  
**7 – 9 year olds – picture C**  
**10 – 12 year olds – picture B**
- Enlarged reproductions of picture A, B, or C will be disqualified.
- Pictures may be reproduced for families with more than one child in a particular age group.
- Children **MUST** be members in good standing of the FCSU in order to be eligible for prizes.
- Entries without a branch number filled in will be disqualified.**
- Your child's completed entry form, colored picture, and a photo of your child must be postmarked by **December 31, 2017**.
- Mail to:  
 Rudy Ondrejco  
 Fraternal Activities Director  
 234 Ilion St.  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15207

*Please submit this form with your child's entry by December 31, 2017*  
*Please print legibly*

Child's Name: _____	Age: _____
Certificate Number: _____	Branch Number: _____ (MUST be filled in)
Street Address: _____	
City, State, Zip: _____	
Phone Number: _____	
Email Address: _____	

**PRIZES**

*Winners in each Region and age group will receive the following:*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place –\$50 Gift Card**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Place –\$35 Gift Card**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Place –\$25 Gift Card**  
**Honorable Mention - \$5 Gift Card**



## Christmas Oplatky – 2017

*Oplatky*, the traditional Slovak Christmas wafers, will be available this holiday season from Jankola Library. Orders will be accepted from October 23 until December 15, 2017.

The *Oplatky*, five in one package are thermal-sealed and can be purchased for \$5.00 per pack. In addition, the minimum cost of shipping and handling is \$7.00 and upward depending upon the number of packets ordered and the cost of priority mailing. Customized requests can be filled to meet your needs. Payment to Jankola Library is expected before receiving an order.

For more information or to place an order contact

Sister Catherine Labouré Bresnock, SS.C.M. at 570-275-5606 or  
 write to Jankola Library and Slovak Museum  
 580 Railroad Street, Villa Sacred Heart, Danville, PA 17821-1698

## Save the Date

*The Slovak-American Cultural Center presents*

# *The Slovak Ball*

*25th Annual*

## *Sat, Feb 10, 2018*

*For tickets:*  
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# The Miracle of St. Nicholas

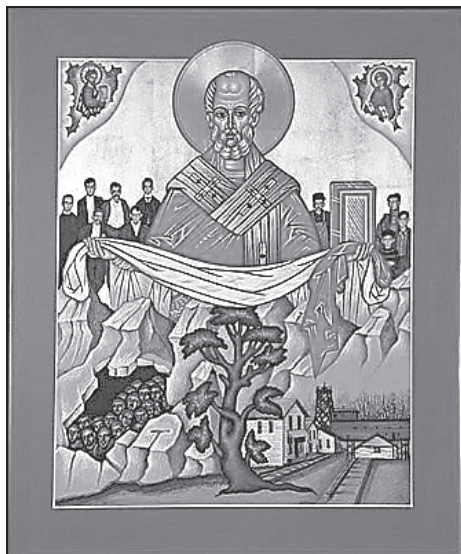
**Daniel Černý**

This December, we commemorate the 110th anniversary of the Darr Mine disaster in Pennsylvania, which killed 239 men and boys on December 19, 1907. Only two escaped. It was the worst coal mining disaster in Pennsylvania history. According to the subsequent investigation, the explosion was the result of miners carrying open lamps into an area that the previous day had been cordoned off by the fire and were filled with dangerous, inflammable gas. The owner of the mine was not held responsible for allowing this practice; yet after the disaster open lamps were no longer used in the mines. Another positive outcome was an improvement in health and safety procedures.

According to many sources, even though the number of victims was indeed very high, it could have been much higher. The usual number of miners going into the mine at any other time was around 400. Estimations from first responders spoke of saving around two hundred souls, some of them as young as ten. The reason fewer men were in the mine that day – and what ultimately saved so many lives – was the fact that the pious among them, primarily Slovaks, Rusyns, and Hungarians, instead of going directly to work that morning went instead to the local church to participate in Divine Liturgy. It was December 19th, which according to the Julian calendar corresponded to December 6th, the feastday of St. Nicholas. Saint Nicholas was and still is a patron saint to both Byzantine Catholics and Orthodox, and a familiar figure. Almost all the icon screens in churches in the Old Country bear the icon of St. Nicholas.

That fateful day during Liturgy, the faithful heard a terrible ground-shaking sound as gas and dust exploded in the mine. Everyone tried to help rescue the victims, but only two were saved – those working closest to the entrance. Many newspapers of the day covered not only the tragedy but also this most miraculous of events.

A few years after the disaster, two Eastern-



Courtesy of Fr. Edward Pehanich.

rite churches were built, one on each side of the Youghiogheny River as the original mine had entrances on both sides of the river – St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Perryopolis and St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Jacobs Creek. Both of them were dedicated to St. Nicholas, as a sign of gratitude for the events of 1907.

Throughout the years, event continued to be commemorated by Byzantine Catholics as well as the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox. And then, ten years ago, another, and maybe even greater miracle of St. Nicholas happened – the miracle of reconciliation between two faith communities separated since the schism in 1929. When commemorating the 100th anniversary, a prayer service was conducted at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Jacobs Creek. The prayer was lead by Metropolitan Basil Schott of Pittsburgh for the Byzantine Catholics and Metropolitan Nicholas Smisko for the Johnstown Orthodox. A special icon, representing the the event was blessed. The hierarchs, priests and faithful of both religions prayed together as well. Such shared prayer would have been almost unthinkable some thirty

years ago; but God has His plans and ways. We certainly hope that one day both these churches, which share the same inheritance and have a common Carpathian background of Rusyns and Slovaks, may one day fully pray as one.

The original victims of the 1907 have now been dead for 110 years. Dead are also all those who miraculously survived the disaster. Even both metropolitans, who broke the circle of wrath, anger and misunderstanding, have now passed. What remains is the memory and the message of Christ, who wants all the people to be saved. St. Nicholas exceeded in loving God at the first place and loving one's neighbor as oneself, and because of this example of faith (as our troparion hymn states) he is venerated so much by our people. Late metropolitans Basil and Nicholas understood His message and now it is our turn – our turn to continue living our daily lives as an example of faith. We must try each and every day to find God and to live our Christianity

as those who venerate St. Nicholas not only on December the 6th, but everyday, recognizing the icon of Christ in the faces of those around us, like St. Nicholas himself did.

## About the Author

Daniel Černý was born in Kosiče, Slovakia, in 1983. He currently lives and works in the capital city of Bratislava. He received his PhD in 2014 from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, with a doctoral thesis on The History of the Slovak Greek Catholics in Canada before the creation of their own Eparchy. He continues writing in his spare time, focusing on Slovaks and their diaspora, especially those of the Byzantine rite. His articles have been published by the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Jan Stanislav Institute of Slavistics), and can be found in numerous other publications and on web pages, both home and abroad – most recently in the 2017 Slovakia, published annually by the Slovak League in America.

## 17th Edition of Carpathian Cookbook Now Available



The *Carpathian Cookery* cookbook, has entered its 17th printing, having sold nearly 17,000 copies, and now is available for sale. This cookbook was requested by the Library of Congress to be in their ethnic cooking collection. The 330-page cookbook has a new look and features a protective plastic cover. The book includes sections on Christmas and Easter customs and recipes, traditional Rusyn and Slavic foods, other ethnic dishes, and many other tried-and-true recipes of St. John's parishioners. There is a variety of paska bread and kolachi (filled roll) recipes, as well as meatless dishes and Lenten recipes, suitable for the Great Fast, as well as the Pre-Christmas Fast. The cost of the cookbook is \$14.00 plus \$4.00 postage and handling (\$18.00). If ordering from Canada, please send a \$27.00 U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost. To order please send a check or money order to: Ethnic Craft Club, St. John Byzantine Catholic Church, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401, or call 724-438-6027 M-F 9AM-3PM (leave message) more information. You may contact us at: carpathian-cookery@gmail.com.



## VILIJA The Traditional Slovak Christmas Eve Supper

Slavic peoples throughout eastern Europe preserved their strong Catholic faith for centuries through the use of sacred signs and symbols. These symbols were used both in church and at home in various celebrations throughout the liturgical year. Slovak-Americans can rediscover the beauty and meaning of these traditions in order to renew and deepen their religious faith which is often weakened by our secular culture.

*The "Vilija" means the "Vigil" or eve of Christmas with its "bountiful supper" (Štedrý Večer). After the prayerful simplicity of the four weeks of Advent preparing for the coming of Christ, the Slovak family comes together on Christmas Eve with a generous table of assorted symbolic foods.*

Even though the various regions of Slovakia have made their own adaptations to the way Vilija is celebrated, some basic elements are common to many of them.

### Breaking the Oplatky wafer

These unleavened wafers symbolize Christ, the Bread of Life. Father and mother give each child or guest a wafer with honey on it. They may also trace the sign of the cross with honey on the forehead of the children to symbolize the "sweet burden" of following Christ's commandments. In some traditions all then embrace each other in friendship and break pieces off each other's wafers. The honey also represents our ability to see Christ in each person despite their shortcomings and faults.

### Sauerkraut Soup with Mushrooms (Kapustnica s Hubami)

The tart taste of the soup reminds Christians that the joy of Christ's birth will give way to the bitterness of Good Friday.

### Fish (Ryby)

The abstinence from meat formerly required of all Catholics on Christmas Eve reminds them of the need for self-denial in this life as they prepare for heaven.

### Bobalky, Orechovníky, and Mákovníky

The small biscuits that are scalded in hot milk and mixed with poppy-seed as well as the nut and poppy-seed rolls are sweet delicacies that remind Christians of the Infant King who brought joy into a sinful world in the same way that these sweets provide a welcome conclusion to the Advent penitential season.

### Pirohy and Halušky

These traditional foods of dough pockets stuffed with prunes, cheese, sauerkraut or potatoes and noodles with cabbage are common in Slovakia and Eastern Europe. Their simplicity reflects the fruit of the land and the hard work of the Slovak people.

The Vilija supper traditionally ended with the giving of gifts of fruits or nuts and the singing of Christmas carols.







# OUR FAVORITE RECIPES



## A Typical Slovak Christmas Eve Menu

- Oplatky
- Wine
- Honey
- Garlic
- Dried Peas
- Mushroom Soup
- Pagach
- Bobalky
- Stewed Prunes
- Mushroom Soup (Machanka)
- Caraway Soup
- Mushroom Stuffed Cabbage
- Bread for Christmas Eve
- Christmas Bread
- (Figs, Dates, Oranges, Apples, Tangerines)
- Mixed Nuts
- Nut Rolls
- Poppyseed Rolls
- Pirohy

## PIROHY

- 1 cup flour
- About 4 tablespoons water
- 1 egg

Mix flour and egg with enough water to make a soft dough; knead well. Roll out on floured board until thin. Cut into squares. Place 1 teaspoon filling on each square. Fold in half, making a triangle. Pinch edges well to keep filling inside. Drop into boiling salted water and cook until they rise to surface. Cook 5 minutes longer. Rinse in colander with hot water. Drain. Pour melted butter over pirohy and serve.

### Cheese Filling

- 1/2 cup dry cottage cheese
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon butter
- pinch salt
- Mix together
- Potato Filling
- 1 large potato cooked and mashed
- 1 tablespoon butter
- (Optional-grated cheese to taste)

Lekvar may be used as filling. Cooked sauerkraut may also be used as filling. Drain and rinse sauerkraut in cold water. Brown diced onion in shortening, add sauerkraut. Cook for a few minutes.

## BREAD FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

- 1 package dry yeast
- 1/2 cup lukewarm water
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 6 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons salad oil

Dissolve yeast in warm water with 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1 tablespoon sugar. Set in warm place to rise. Sift 6 cups flour in deep bowl, add 2 cups warm water, 4 tablespoons sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, 4 tablespoons salad oil.

Knead well and set aside to rise. When double in bulk, punch down, let rise second time until double. Punch down. Divide dough in two. Shape one part into round bread, cover and let stand 20 minutes.

Punch down and reshape. Place in greased pan. Allow to rise until double in bulk. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Note: The second part of this dough will be use for Bobalky.

## CHRISTMAS EVE BOBALKY

Use other half of above dough for bobalky. Knead and roll on floured board into rope. Cut and roll into balls about 1 inch in diameter. Place on floured pan, let rise 15 minutes. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until just slightly brown. Cook then place in deep bowl, pour boiling water over just to soak a little. Drain in colander. Then place in serving dish, heat honey with a little water, pour over bobalky.

Mix 1/2 cup ground poppyseed and 1/4 cup sugar and then add to bobalky. Let stand several hours in cool place (or refrigerator) for several hours before serving.

Note: some bobalky are served with sweet cabbage or sauerkraut. Sautee cabbage or sauerkraut with onion in salad oil, then mix with bobalky.

## NUT ROLLS

- 8 cups flour
- 2 cups milk (scalded)
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 large yeast or 3 envelopes dry yeast
- 1/2 pound butter
- 1/2 pound oleo or crisco
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Dissolve yeast in 1 cup lukewarm milk. Stir well. Add sugar, shortening and salt to rest of the milk and cool. Beat egg slightly and add to mixtures, then add the yeast mixture to the rest of the lukewarm mixture. Put half of the flour in a bowl and add the above mixture a little at a time. Mix well. Add remainder of flour to make soft dough using just enough flour to knead without sticking. Cover. Let rise double in bulk.

Keep in warm place. Takes about 2 hours to rise. Knead down a little to get out puffiness. Divide into 6 parts and let stand 10 minutes. Roll out and spread with nut mixture. Roll tightly and place on greased baking sheet and let rise about 1 hour and bake in 350 degrees over 35 to 40 minutes. Brush each roll with slightly beaten egg before baking. Brush with melted butter after baked.

## NUT MIXTURE

- 4 pounds nuts (ground)
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 stick butter (melted)
- 1/4 cup milk (enough to moisten nut mixture)

## PAGAČ

- 10 cups flour
- 2 yeast cakes (or 2 packages dry yeast)
- 2 sticks margarine
- 2 eggs beaten
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 1/2 cups milk (or more necessary)

Knead all together until well blended as for bread dough. Let rise double in bulk in warm place. Punch down, let rise once again. Turn

out on floured board, separate into 8 or 10 portions. Let rise until light. With rolling pin flatten enough to place about 1 cup of filling in center of each mound of dough. Bring dough up over mound and pinch together to shape a round ball. Let rest about 1/2 hour with filling then carefully roll out as thin as you want it. Place on cookie sheet. Bake until golden brown then butter on both sides. Rounds should be about 14 inches in diameter or as thin as you like them.

Filling: Fried cabbage or potato and cheese

## TWO HOUR NUT AND POPPYSEED ROLLS

- 6 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 packages dry yeast
- 1/2 cup warm milk
- 1/4 pound butter
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 3 eggs beaten
- 1 cup sour cream

Dissolve yeast in warm milk. Sift together flour, salt and sugar. Add shortening and butter. Mix as for pie crust. Add beaten eggs and sour cream. Add yeast - blend well.

Divide dough in four parts. Let rise 30 minutes. Roll each part thin as for jelly roll. Spread with one of the following fillings. Roll and place on greased pan and allow to rise for one hour or until double in bulk. Bake 35 to 40 minutes at 350 degrees.

## NUT FILLING

- 1/2 pound chopped nuts
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup scalded milk
- 1 teaspoon melted butter
- Melt butter. Add walnuts, sugar and vanilla.
- Add scalded milk. Mix well.

## POPPYSEED FILLING

- 1/2 pound ground poppyseed
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup scalded milk
- 1 tablespoon melted butter
- Combine all ingredients, mix well.

## CHRISTMAS BREAD

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 cups scalded milk
- 1 cup warm water ( NOT HOT)
- 2 packages dry or compressed yeast
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 8 cups flour
- 1 cup seedless raisins

Put sugar, shortening, salt and scalded milk in a large bowl; stir until shortening melts. Cool to lukewarm. Pour warm water into small bowl; sprinkle or crumble in yeast, stir until dissolved. Add eggs and yeast to lukewarm milk mixture and blend. Add 2/3 of flour and beat until smooth. Gradually add remaining flour, mixing well after each addition. Add raisins and turn out on floured board and knead until smooth and elastic; place in greased bowl. Brush with melted shortening, cover, and let rise in warm place until it doubles (about 1 1/2 hours). Punch down divide into 3 equal portions. Shape

into 2 round loaves; let rise again until it doubles. Brush with beaten eggs. Bake in hot oven for 10 minutes at 450 degrees then turn to 350 degrees and continue baking for 45 minutes or until golden brown.

## MUSHROOM CABBAGE

- 1 head cabbage (about 3 pounds)
- 1 large can sauerkraut
- 1 cup ground mushrooms (either canned, dry or frozen)
- 1 cup rice (uncooked)
- 2 tablespoons oleo
- 1 medium onion
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- For Sauce and Brown Gravy
- 1 tablespoon shortening
- 1 tablespoon flour

Cut core out of cabbage to loosen leaves. Place cabbage into boiling water for a few minutes. Remove leaves, cut away the thick rib from cabbage leaves. Fry the onions in the oleo until soft, add to mushrooms, rice. Season to taste. Place about 1 teaspoon in each cabbage leaf and roll. Drain sauerkraut, use about half the kraut in the bottom of the pot. Arrange rolls over the kraut, cover the remaining kraut. Fill pot with water, to top off the rolls. Cook slowly for about 2 hours.

Sauce: Brown flour in shortening. Add about a cup of water. Bring to boil, then pour over the cabbage rolls. Cook for just about 5 more minutes.

## MUSHROOM SOUP (MAČANKA)

Wash dried mushrooms. Soak overnight. In morning cook mushrooms in the water. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cook slowly for 2 hours or more.

### Zapraška (Soup thickening)

Brown 1 chopped onion in 2 tablespoons salad oil, add browned onion to mushroom soup. To remaining oil add 2 tablespoons flour slowly, brown and then add to mushroom soup to thicken. Cook for a few minutes and serve hot.

## MUSHROOM SOUP

- 7 cups fresh mushrooms (chopped)
- 3 quarts water
- 1 quart sauerkraut juice
- Salt and pepper (to taste)
- 1 small onion
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons flour
- Cook mushrooms in water about 1 hour.

Brown butter onion; add flour and brown well. Add sauerkraut juice and boil this for 5 minutes. Add to soup and boil 1/2 hour longer.

## CARAWAY SOUP

- 3 tablespoons oleo
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon caraway seeds
- 3 cups water
- 3 tablespoons flour

Melt shortening in heavy saucepan. Add chopped onion and cook over low heat until lightly golden. Add salt, flour and caraway seeds. Blend into 3 cups cold water and bring to boil, stirring constantly, until mixture is slightly thickened. Serve at once.



# Silvester - Traditional New Year's Eve Customs in Slovakia

By Professor Michael Kopanic

Slovaks refer to New Year's Eve as Silvester, since December 31 is the feast day of St. Sylvester. Traditionally, they celebrate Silvester with a special ceremonial meal and engage in activities which prepare them to start the new year with a fresh, clean slate. In addition to some convivial celebrations, especially in more recent history, Slovaks also looked for signs to predict the fortunes of the upcoming year.

## Origins

Since the late 16th century, Slovaks have referred to New Year's Eve as Silvester (different nationalities also spell it Sylvester, Szilveszter, or Sylwester). Its namesake, Pope Silvester I, served as pontiff for the Western Roman Catholic Church (314-335) during the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great. He purportedly miraculously healed Constantine of the dreaded sickness of leprosy.

Establishing a reputation for good leadership when Christianity obtained tolerance in the Empire, Silvester oversaw the building of several churches in Rome, including the Basilica of Saint John Lateran. He also headed the famous Council of Nicaea which resolved certain controversies over the nature of Christ and composed the Nicene Creed, which is recited at every Mass to the present day. The feast day of St. Silvester takes place on the anniversary of his death, which became December 31 with the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in the 16th century.

Since the Byzantine Catholic rite and Eastern Orthodox Church continued to use the old Julian calendar, they celebrate Sylvester's feast on January 2. Traditionally, Saint Sylvester's Day celebrations were marked by church attendance at Midnight Mass or a Watchnight service, but more recently, some cities have added live music, fireworks, partying, and feasting.

In addition to Slovaks, many other countries call New Year's Eve some variant of Silvester's, including Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland, and Slovenia.

## Business as Usual

In former eras, Silvester was an ordinary workday like any other in Slovakia. An article in the Slovak Spectator from 2014 commented that a hundred years ago, Silvester was not an extraordinary day, and certainly not a time for partying. Unlike today, people did not focus on celebrations or merrymaking, but looking back at the past year, and making projections for the next year.

During the morning, in some communities in Slovakia a town council would meet to elect new government officials, including a new mayor or village leader (richtár). They also filled other important local offices such as that of the gamekeeper (hájnik), the head shepherd (bača), the herdsman (pastier), the drummer (bubeník) and a beadle (a parish officer or obecný sluha).

The council would also take a look at the finances over the past year and plan for next year's expenses. If the year had been prosperous and well managed to the point there existed a surplus, it would try to attend to local projects. For instance, it might allocate some funds for renovations or to subsidize modest housing for the needy (Silvester).

In the early evening, people would also attend Mass. Going to church would also be a spiritual accounting of sorts for village folk. They would thank God for the blessings they received in the past year, express sorrow for their transgressions, and project how they could improve in the coming year.

Apart from attending religious services in the evening, little socializing occurred on that day. Until more recent history, all merriment was prohibited until the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6. Not until after World War II did that custom change and more people started going to parties after church. The post-war communist regime encouraged the celebrations and looked with askance on any church attendance.

## Silvester Meal and Preparation

Research on Slovak web pages and in books illustrated a number of other traditions on Silvester, which of course, could vary somewhat in different regions and villages. Cleaning out the old, and preparing for a new year were actually quite widespread.

In fact, in the past, Slovaks engaged in many preparatory customs for the coming year on Silvester. One formerly common in the villages included that of walking around the so-called "ometačky." These were usually poor women who would go around the village to sweep the plate on ovens in a symbolic gesture. Their work would ensure that the ovens would fire up properly throughout the coming year.

On Silvester, Slovak women prepared an evening meal which resembled that of Christmas Eve Vilija. New candles symbolized the hope for a fresh start. Unlike the Vilija meal, people did not abstain from meat. They used the same ceremonial tablecloth and placed bread on it, even some leftover bread crumbs (zvyšné chlebové drobky, or odrobinky) from the Vilija meal (Slovenské zvyky a tradície). In some regions, people placed coins or fish scales under the tablecloth in the hope of good fortune in the new year. To predict the future, they would look at the way nuts cracked and how the seeds of an apple lined up.

Typically, a meal would start out with soup (polievka) and include a meat dish. But it could not be chicken or fish, because Slovaks believed that anything that could fly or swim could bring bad luck. The gazdina (housewife) could not leave the table during the meal, an unusual custom, since she was usually running around serving others (Bosák). After the meal, everyone would take part in a ceremonial washing up to be clean for the new year, and then change into clean clothing.



A 2016 Silvester celebration in Bratislava, Slovakia.

## Youth Activities after Supper

Young men might engage in revelry on Silvester evening and put the finishing touches on the celebration. They would shoot guns and crack whips to make noise. In some regions, they would sing at midnight from the top of the local church steeple.

A Slovak Spectator article mentioned the custom of young men sauntering around the village with long willow switches to lash at young ladies they sought, as the willow was the first tree to blossom each spring. The custom appears to have originated in pagan times.

Some customs such as kurinovanie and babenovanie were formerly widespread in some villages. Kurinovanie refers to the visiting of houses by the young men to give ceremonial expression of good wishes. The term Kurinovanie derives from its root word kury (chickens). When parading down the street, one young man would wear a wreath which resembled a nest. Another would wear a skirt wrapped in rags that bound the straw. Upon entering a home, they wished a household prosperity in the future, and in particular, a productive egg yield from their kury. The gazdina would then take one piece of straw from their clothing and give it to the chickens so would lay plenty of eggs. The guys would then sing this ditty.

Kuriny, babiny,  
babine kury, dedove bajúzy.  
Nech vám kury dobre nesú!  
Odíde nám starý rok, a prichádza nový,  
vítajme ho radostne.

Translation  
Chicken men, grandmas,  
grandma's chicken, grandpa's moustache.  
May your chickens lay abundantly!  
The old year is passing, and a new one is coming,  
We joyfully greet it.

In the central Slovakia architectural gem of Čičmany, the so-called "kurina - babina" or babenovanie featured a young man dressed as a woman who would carry a mannequin dressed as female in a pillow. Accompanying him would be a parade of about 10-20 bachelors in drag (babki), playing musical instruments and wearing babušky (babushkas - head kerchiefs), and eligible young girls dressed in costume. They would sing and saunter from house to house, especially where a young man was courting a girl. Upon arrival, they would wish God's blessings, good luck and happiness to the household in the new year.

Here is a typical wish on Silvester and New Year's Day in eastern Slovak dialect.

Vinšujem vám, vinšujem, tento slávny svätý rok nový,  
aby vám dal Pán Boh zdraví, šťastá,  
hojnejšieho božského požehnáňa,  
po smrti kráľovské nebeské obsáhnutí.

I wish you, I wish you, this glorious holy new year,  
that the Lord God may grant you good health,  
more abundant divine blessings,  
and upon dying, attaining royal heavenly bliss.

As a reward, the gazda and gazdina would reward them with some refreshments such as apples, or beans, sweet pastries (koláče), grain, nuts, dried pears or plums, meats, and later, some small change. Then they would all perform a little dance together. These particular customs no longer continue, and ethnologists date their disappearance from sometime during the 1950s.

## Foretelling the Future on Silvester

People also believed that New Year's Eve afforded an opportunity for fortune telling. Whatever happened that night would foretell the future. For instance, they might look for signs to predict the weather. A red sky at dawn would forewarn of whirlwinds, storms, crop failures, and poverty. On the other hand, a heavy rain would signify that they could look forward to an abundant harvest.

Another custom involved sweeping debris into the corner of a room, so that no one would be swept out of the home, and even die. Throughout the day, custom strictly also forbade some household chores, such as washing and hanging clothes. Anyone doing so might experience a terrible death or even meet their end by hanging!

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## Branch 162 Decorates Christmas Tree for Uniontown, PA Hospital Fund Raiser

For a community project, the officers and members of Branch 162 decorated a seven foot Christmas tree in the lobby of the Uniontown Hospital. The tree is one of 22 trees that adorn the lobby with various themes and decorated by organizations within the hospital and the surrounding community. The hospital auxiliary holds this event annually and is known at the "Festival of Trees" and ran from November 14th to November 30th, 2017. This fund raiser supports the R.N. Scholarship Fund at the Penn State University, Fayette campus and last year raised over \$12,000. Raffle tickets are sold for \$2.00 each and are placed in a box at the base of each tree donated by the hospital.

The theme selected at our last branch meeting for this initial year was "The Nutcracker." An 18" nutcracker stands at the base of the tree while other related nutcracker decorations adorn the tree, such as small nutcrackers, the Rat King, coffee and peppermint ornaments. There are also four tickets to see the "Nutcracker" at the State Theater in Uniontown and a gift card to a local restaurant. At the end of the fund raiser and during a festival affair, a

name is drawn from the box of each tree and the winner takes home the tree and all of its ornaments and decorations. For more information on this fund raiser, please contact the Uniontown Hospital Auxiliary at 724-430-5000.

- Submitted by Joanne Marmol, Branch 162 Vice President and Patty Marmol, Branch 162 Treasurer. Photos courtesy of Patty and Jim Marmol.

Lobby of the Uniontown Hospital, filled with beautifully decorated trees with various themes such as Branch 162's tree, second from the right.



A close up of the base of the tree.



(L – R) Joanne Marmol, Dolores Marmol, Patty Marmol, and Betty and Rudy Holloman.



Branch 162' Christmas Tree with decorated in the "Nutcracker" theme.



Branch 162 Officers (L – R); Mark Marmol, President; Dolores Marmol, Secretary; Patty Marmol, Treasurer; and Joanne Marmol, Vice President



Andrew and Joanne Marmol

## From the National Treasurer: Ten Year-end Tax Tips for 2017

George F. Matta, II



Here are 10 things to consider as you weigh potential tax moves between now and the end of the year\*.

### 1. Set aside time to plan

Effective planning requires that you have a good understanding of your current tax situation, as well as a reasonable estimate of how your circumstances might change next year. There's a real opportunity for tax savings if you'll be paying taxes at a lower rate in one year than in the other. However, the window for most tax-saving moves closes on December 31, so don't procrastinate.

### 2. Defer income to next year

Consider opportunities to defer income to 2018, particularly if you think you may be in a lower tax bracket then. For example, you may be able to defer a year-end bonus or delay the collection of business debts, rents, and payments for services. Doing so may enable you to postpone payment of tax on the income until next year.

### 3. Accelerate deductions

You might also look for opportunities to accelerate deductions into the current tax year. If you itemize deductions, making payments for deductible expenses such as medical expenses, qualifying interest, and state taxes before the end of the year, instead of paying them in early 2018, could make a difference on your 2017 return.

### 4. Factor in the AMT

If you're subject to the alternative minimum tax (AMT), traditional year-end maneuvers such as deferring income and accelerating deductions can have a negative effect. Essentially a separate federal income tax system with its own rates and rules, the AMT effectively disallows a number of itemized deductions. For example, if you're subject to the AMT in 2017, prepaying 2018 state and local taxes probably won't help your 2017 tax situation, but could hurt your 2018 bottom line. Taking the time to determine whether you may be subject to the AMT before you make any year-end moves could help save you from making a costly mistake.

### 5. Bump up withholding to cover a tax shortfall

If it looks as though you're going to owe federal income tax for the year, especially if you think you may be subject to an estimated tax penalty, consider asking your employer (via Form W-4) to increase your withholding for the remainder of the year to cover the shortfall. The biggest advantage in doing so is that withholding is considered as having been paid evenly through the year instead of when the dollars are actually taken from your paycheck. This strategy can also be used to make up for low or missing quarterly estimated tax payments.

### 6. Maximize retirement savings

Deductible contributions to a traditional IRA and pre-tax contributions to an employer-sponsored retirement plan such as a 401(k) can reduce your 2017 taxable income. If you haven't already contributed up to the maximum amount allowed, consider doing so by year-end.

### 7. Take any required distributions

Once you reach age 70½, you generally must start taking required minimum distributions (RMDs) from traditional IRAs

and employer-sponsored retirement plans (an exception may apply if you're still working for the employer sponsoring the plan). Take any distributions by the date required — the end of the year for most individuals. The penalty for failing to do so is substantial: 50% of any amount that you failed to distribute as required.

### 8. Weigh year-end investment moves

You shouldn't let tax considerations drive your investment decisions. However, it's worth considering the tax implications of any year-end investment moves that you make. For example, if you have realized net capital gains from selling securities at a profit, you might avoid being taxed on some or all of those gains by selling losing positions. Any losses over and above the amount of your gains can be used to offset up to \$3,000 of ordinary income (\$1,500 if your filing status is married filing separately) or carried forward to reduce your taxes in future years.

### 9. Beware the net investment income tax

Don't forget to account for the 3.8% net investment income tax. This additional tax may apply to some or all of your net investment income if your modified AGI exceeds \$200,000 (\$250,000 if married filing jointly, \$125,000 if married filing separately, \$200,000 if head of household).

### 10. Get help if you need it

There's a lot to think about when it comes to tax planning. That's why it often makes sense to talk to a tax professional who is able to evaluate your situation and help you determine if any year-end moves make sense for you.

*\* This information is prepared by an independent third party, Broadridge Investor Communication Solutions, Inc. and is provided for informational and educational purposes only.*



# A Slovak Christmas

Naomi Hužovičová



A Slovak Christmas begins on Štedrý Večer, literally bounteous evening, which is Christmas Eve. Christmas trees in Slovakia are traditionally put up on this day, although now some families put them up a few days before. The day is spent cleaning and cooking in most households, while burning incense (frankincense and myrrh). Some families still take a walk to the cemetery before supper, to pray for deceased loved ones and ancestors. It's also a chance to slip the presents under the tree. When you return, Ježiško has already brought the presents.

Gifts in Slovakia are brought by Ježiško, Baby Jesus. You can send letters to him at the post office, with the postal code 999 99, and a letter will be sent back, though we've never done it. St. Nicholas, Mikulaš, comes on Dec. 6 leaving goodies in boots and Santa Claus is mostly for just decorative or commercial purposes.

When we sit down to the evening meal, there is a whole ritual before we begin eating. Underneath each plate is a bill (or coins if that's all we happened to have in our wallets this year), a hope that the coming year will be generous financially. The smell and smoke of incense is thick in the air; the lights are turned down; the night is still and quiet. My husband reads the story of Christ's birth from the Bible. We then share slices from one apple, a symbol of unity. A walnut each is opened, as an indicator of health for the next year and each eats a clove of garlic (or piece of clove) for good health.

Then is the children's favorite, oplatky with honey. Oplatky are thin wafers, some say symbolic of the Eucharist, or communion wafers. We drizzle them with honey and make 'sandwiches'.

For supper, each area of Slovakia has varying traditions. We have cream of lentil soup with prunes. The prunes sound weird, but it is actually really good. Another popular soup is sauerkraut soup, sometimes creamy, with prunes and dried mushrooms. My mother-in-law remembers having vegetarian pea soup with prunes.

Traditionally Christmas Eve was a day Catholics didn't eat meat, so the main course consists of fish and potato salad. During Advent fishmongers sell live carp, and people used to keep the carp in the bathtub (my mother-in-law has a second bathtub in the basement) until it was time to kill them for dinner. This tradition is dying out, as it's easier to buy fish for it. Neither my husband nor I are big fans of carp (although I have made a great soup from it) so we have trout instead, baked whole with lots of butter.

Old style Slovak potato salad is oil- and vinegar-based with lots of onions, but now most Slovaks make a creamy potato salad, with mayonnaise, tartar sauce, and cream.

By the end of dinner the children are antsy to open gifts and we always prolong the anticipation by cleaning up after the meal first. Then it's time for gifts, fresh exotic fruit, and all the sweet treats that have been prepared.

Classic Slovak sweet treats include medovniky, spiced honey cookies, pupaky (tiny yeast dough buns covered in ground sesame seeds, honey, and butter), and linecke cookies (something like a sugar cookie made into a sandwich with jam).

Afterwards some go to Midnight Mass, although we go in the morning with the children. We combine Slovak customs with Canadian customs, so on Christmas day we have a big pancake breakfast with all the trimmings (including maple syrup) and open any gifts that have come from Canada.

The Christmas day meal usually consists of bone broth soup, schnitzel (breaded deep fried cutlets), and creamy potato salad. This is the usual celebratory meal for any occasion in Slovakia.

### About the Author

Canadian-born Naomi Hužovičová lives in Slovakia with her Slovak husband and their four beautiful children. She shares her reflections on traditional food as well as recipes and life in Slovakia on her blog Almost Bananas. Go to [www.almostbananas.com](http://www.almostbananas.com) for more.

# ★CONGRATULATIONS!★

## From the Desk of the Executive Secretary

On behalf of the Officers and Board of Trustees of the Jednota Benevolent Foundation, Inc., congratulations to the 2017 Jednota Benevolent Foundation, Inc. Scholarship Award recipients. Each of the following students will receive a one-time check for \$500.00:

Madison Kovach - Danville, Pennsylvania  
Sarah Kozma - Elyria, Ohio  
Patrice Ann Moritz - Chandler, Arizona  
Joshua Ruffing - Bentleyville, Pennsylvania  
Charlene Westfall - Aurora, Ohio

Matthew Hlas - Akron, Ohio  
Michael Hradesky - Mayfield Hts, Ohio  
Megan Horensky - Slatington, Pennsylvania  
Zachary Cipolla - Aliquippa, Pennsylvania  
Monique Vavro - Great Neck, New York

We want to thank all the applicants who participated in the program and most especially the scholarship committee for their efforts and support in making the difficult decision of selecting the winners. We wish each and every participating applicant the best of luck in their future endeavors.

# Two Classic Slovak Christmas Recipes

Courtesy of Naomi Hužovičová

### Medovníky: Slovak Spiced Honey Cookies



- Ingredients
- ½ cup (125 g) butter
  - ½ cup + 1 Tbsp (180 g) honey
  - 1¾ cup (220 g) powdered sugar (I used powdered rapadura)
  - 3 eggs
  - 1½ tsp baking soda
  - 3 tsp medovniky spice mix
  - 5 cups (600 g) all purpose flour
  - 1 egg

#### Instructions

1. Heat butter, honey, and sugar in a small pot until just melted, stirring constantly.
2. While warm but not too hot (so you don't cook them) add the eggs and mix.
3. In a bowl mix dry ingredients and pour in the warm mixture. Mix dough until incorporated. The dough will be somewhat sticky.
4. Cover and cool in a cold place (the fridge) for a few hours or overnight.
5. Roll out the dough about 4mm (1/64 inch) thick, using only enough flour to keep the dough from sticking. Cut out with desired cookie cutters. Transfer to a greased or lined cookie sheet.
6. Beat an egg and brush the cookies with the egg with a pastry brush.
7. Bake at 180C (355F) for about 10 min, or until golden.
8. When cool, store in an airtight container for a few days up to practically forever.
9. Leave plain or decorate with your favorite icing (I mixed egg whites with icing sugar). Classic medovniky are often decorated only in white, with lots of curls and dots.

### Cream of Lentil Soup with Prunes

- Ingredients
- 200 g/ 1 cup green lentils
  - 2 bay leaves
  - 2 cloves garlic
  - 250 ml/ 1 cup heavy cream
  - 150 g/ less than 1 cup prunes
  - milk
  - 2 tbsp arrowroot powder (or cornstarch or other thickener)
  - salt, pepper

#### Instructions

1. The night before, soak lentils and prunes separately in water for 7 or more hrs. This step is not strictly necessary, but renders the lentils more digestible, cook faster, as well as helping lentils keep their shape when cooking and not turning to mush.
2. Cover lentils with water an inch/2 cm higher than the lentils, add bay leaves and chopped garlic, a bit of salt and pepper, and simmer until lentils are soft, about 10-15 minutes.
3. If prunes are homemade, you can add them to the lentils cooking. If the prunes are bought, and therefore much softer, you can add them 5 min before serving.
4. When you are almost ready to serve the soup, add cream and a couple splashes of milk. In a half full glass of cold milk or water, stir the arrowroot or other thickener. When mixed, pour into the soup while stirring. Allow the soup to almost simmer, keeping an eye that it doesn't burn.
5. Serve and enjoy!



## Branch 153's November Meeting

St. Stephen Branch 153 held its second meeting of the year on November 4, 2017 at the Cucina Biagio restaurant in Harwood Heights, IL. The 2017 officers were re-elected to serve in the upcoming year. They are President: John Jurcenko; Vicwe President: Rudy Bernath; Recording Secretary & Treasurer: Dorothy Jurcenko; Auditor: Liz Bernath.

- Submitted by Rudy Bernath, Region 7 Director





QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE  
FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION  
OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

HOME OFFICE (TELECONFERENCE)  
6611 ROCKSIDE ROAD, SUITE 300  
INDEPENDENCE, OHIO 44131  
PHONE: 216-642-9406 \* FAX: 216-642-4310

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2017

*The Quarterly Business Meeting of the Board of Directors of the First Catholic Slovak Union of the United States and Canada will be held on:*

SATURDAY, December 16, 2017 at 9:00 A.M. (telephonically).

The Executive Committee Meeting will be held on Saturday, December 16, 2017.

All correspondence relative to the Quarterly Business Meeting of the Board of Directors should be directed to the attention of the Executive Secretary, Kenneth A. Arendt, and should be sent to the Home Office prior to December 8, 2017.

For any additional information contact the Home Office at (216) 642-9406 or (800) JEDNOTA.

Andrew M. Rajec  
National President

Kenneth A. Arendt  
Executive Secretary



## Results of the Supreme Court Hearing of the First Catholic Slovak Union of September 21, 2017

The Supreme Court of the First Catholic Slovak Union (FCSU) was called into session on September 21, 2017, at the Home Office of the First Catholic Slovak Union, 6611 Rockside Road, Suite 300, Independence, OH, to rule on complaints filed in March of 2017 against the 2014 FCSU Board of Directors, the President, and the Executive Secretary by Robert Kristofik.

**Complaint # 1** – Bonuses awarded to the President and the Executive Secretary at an October 17, 2014 Board Meeting by the Board of Directors violated the Bylaws of the First Catholic Slovak Union.

**Finding** – the complaint was dismissed. The FCSU Supreme Court, by majority, voted that the bonuses were appropriately awarded and did not violate the Bylaws of the First Catholic Slovak Union.

**Complaint # 2** – 990 Forms for 2013 – 2015 were incomplete and improperly filed with the IRS.

**Finding** – The FCSU Supreme Court unanimously voted that the filings were prepared in good faith and accurately by the Society's outside CPA firm with no deliberate omissions. The complaint was dismissed, pending a review by an outside auditor to verify the finding.

**Complaint # 3** – Expense vouchers by the President were filed late, in violation of the 60-day requirement as stipulated by the First Catholic Slovak Union Bylaws.

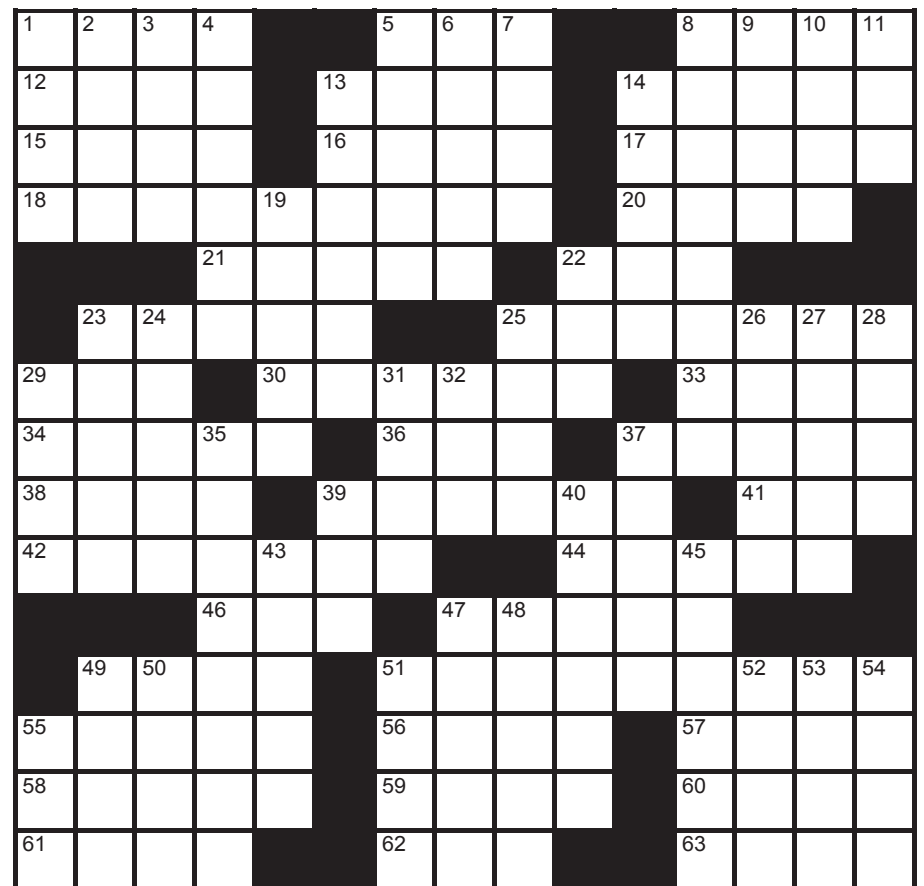
**Finding** – the complaint was dismissed. The FCSU Supreme Court unanimously voted that the issue had already been addressed by the Board of Directors and had been rectified to their satisfaction.

**Complaint #4** – the Executive Secretary committed "misconduct in office" by failing to disclose Andrew P. Rajec's employment.

**Finding** – the complaint was withdrawn by Robert Kristofik citing lack of merit.

*Published per FCSU Bylaw on the Supreme Court, 7:10 (d) which stipulates that "after a verdict is rendered ... it shall be the duty of the President to carry out the findings of said Court in accordance with the Bylaws."*

# Jednota Crossword Puzzle



### Across

- 1 Panhandles
- 5 Astern
- 8 Skillful
- 12 Dutch export
- 13 Midleg
- 14 Princess topper
- 15 Debate side
- 16 Inactive
- 17 Slipped up
- 18 Powerful vortex
- 20 Dispatched
- 21 Consumed
- 22 Catchall abbr.
- 23 Waste maker
- 25 Sunrise to sunset
- 29 Jailbird
- 30 Blacker
- 33 Exclude
- 34 Church instrument
- 36 Psychic power
- 37 Small goose
- 38 Between ports
- 39 Couch
- 41 Force unit
- 42 Land characteristics
- 44 Helpers
- 46 Movie holder, briefly
- 47 Carriage
- 49 Four-star review
- 51 Fill again
- 55 Back tooth
- 56 Leisure
- 57 Stage solo
- 58 Cut short
- 59 Twosome
- 60 After paper or lumber
- 61 Raise a stink

- 62 Giant legend
- 63 Bone (Prefix)

### Down

- 1 Laser light
- 2 *Giant* author Ferber
- 3 Box office take
- 4 Expresses pleasure
- 5 Auto pioneer Citroën
- 6 Smuggler, e.g.
- 7 Swarm
- 8 Movie VIP
- 9 Deserve
- 10 Worry
- 11 Tiny amount
- 13 Young pet
- 14 Ill-tempered
- 19 Lustrous fabric
- 22 Wax collector
- 23 Gym equipment
- 24 Choler
- 25 The D in USDA (Abbr.)
- 26 Public persona
- 27 Goes for the gold?
- 28 Feminine suffix
- 29 Ulster
- 31 Razor-sharp
- 32 Follower (Suffix)
- 35 Termite eater
- 37 Neutral shade
- 39 Half-brother of Tom Sawyer
- 40 Young raptor
- 43 Stave off
- 45 Generator
- 47 Humdinger
- 48 Knock down
- 49 Bench wear
- 50 Balm ingredient
- 51 Make over
- 52 Camera part
- 53 River deposit
- 54 Healthy
- 55 Deface

See Solution on Page 13



# BRANCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BRANCH 1 - CLEVELAND, OHIO

The Saint Joseph Society-Branch 1-will hold its next meeting on December 8, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. at Joe's Deli in Rocky River. This is our annual Christmas party. Following the party, we will go to Sts. Cyril & Methodius Hall located at 12608 Madison Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio 44107 for our meeting. Election of officers will be held at this time. All members are encouraged to attend.

**Marie A. Golias, Secretary**

## BRANCH 2 - PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 2, will hold a meeting Tuesday January 9 for election of Delegates for the upcoming 51st convention in August 2018. The meeting will be held at Kretzlers at 7pm. Please RSVP to Joanne Lako at 412-766-3222.

**Joanne Lako, Secretary**

## BRANCH 5P - EXETER, PENNSYLVANIA

The Saint John the Evangelist Society, Branch 05P, will hold a meeting on Sunday, January 14, 2018, at 1:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the home of Marion Rubino, President, 67 9th St. Wyoming, PA.

On the agenda will be a discussion of branch business and activities. The agenda will include election of delegates for the 2018 FCSU National Convention in Cleveland, OH.

All members are invited and encouraged to attend.

Please call Marion Rubino if you plan to attend 570-693-0399.

**Mary Jo Rubino, Secretary**

## BRANCH 6 - STREATOR, ILLINOIS

The St. Stephen Society, Branch 6K, will hold their annual meeting on Sunday, January 7, 2018, at 12 noon at Al's Restaurant, 1603 N. Bloomington St., Streator, IL. On the agenda: election of officers for 2018 and election of four (4) delegates to the 51st Quadrennial Convention of the First Catholic Slovak Union which will be held August 4 - 8, 2018, in Cleveland, OH. All members in good standing are urged to attend to be considered for an office or as a delegate. A luncheon and afternoon of fraternalism will follow the meeting. For more information, contact Paul Chismar at (815) 822-8851 or Robert and Stella Elias, Sr. at (815) 672-1764.

**Paul Chismar, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 7 - HOUTZDALE, PENNSYLVANIA

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Society Branch 7 of the First Catholic Slovak Union will hold a meeting on Sunday, December 10, 2017 at 9:00 A. M. at Christ the King Parish Center, 100 Brisbin St. Houtzdale, PA. Election of officers will take place. All members are invited to attend the meeting.

**Joseph C. Cervenak, President**

## BRANCH 10 - OLYPHANT, PENNSYLVANIA

St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 10, will hold its semiannual meeting with an audit and election of officers at 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 10, at the Regal Room, 216 Lackawanna Ave, Olyphant.

**William F. Nalevanko, Secretary**

## BRANCH 19 - BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

St. Joseph Society Branch 19K will hold its annual meeting at 10:00AM on Sunday, December 10, 2017, at the home of Jacqueline Zack, 15 Brookhedge Road, Trumbull, CT.

We will have election of officers at this meeting and the election of delegates to the 2018 National Convention in Cleveland, OH. We will distribute our annual donations to our charities.

The members of Branch 19 wish all the members of the First Catholic Slovak Union a Holy and Happy Christmas Season and a Healthy New Year.

**Henry Zack, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 24 - CLEVELAND, OHIO

Branch 24 will hold a meeting on Sunday, December 17, 2017, at 1:00PM at the Hungarian Business Club, 15805 Libby Road, Maple Heights, OH, 44137. The branch will hold election of officers at this meet-

ing. Luncheon will be served directly after the meeting; for reservations, please call Branch Activities Director Susan Lang at 216-577-9699.

**Robert J. Kopco, President**

## BRANCH 24 - CLEVELAND, OHIO

Branch 24 will hold a meeting on Sunday, January 28, 2018, at 1:00PM at the Hungarian Business Club, 15805 Libby Road, Maple Heights, OH, 44137. The branch will hold election of delegates to the 2018 National Convention at this meeting. Luncheon will be served directly after the meeting; for reservations, please call Branch Activities Director Susan Lang at 216-577-9699 after 6PM.

**Robert J. Kopco, President**

## BRANCH 38 - WHITE OAK, PENNSYLVANIA

Holy Trinity Society, Branch 38 will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 7:00 pm at 3409 Eisenhower Drive, White Oak, PA 15131. The agenda will include officers' reports and discussion on 2018 fraternal social activities. At this meeting, we will be electing branch officers and electing delegates to the 2018 National Convention. All Branch 38 members are urged to attend, and all visitors are welcome.

If anyone is interested in FCSU Annuities or Life Insurance, please call Florence Matta at 412-466-7460.

**Logan Haselhoff, President  
Florence Matta, Secretary/Treasurer**

## BRANCH 40 - STREATOR, ILLINOIS

The St. Clement Society, Branch 40, will hold its annual meeting on Sunday January 21, 2018, at 2:00 PM at Chipper's Grill, 1733 North Bloomington St. Streator, IL. All members of Branch 40 are urged to attend the meeting. Convention delegates will be elected at the meeting. Election of branch officers will take place as well. Lunch will follow. Please make reservations by calling (815) 672-6682 before January 18th.

**Timothy Graves, Secretary**

## BRANCH 41 - YONKERS, NEW YORK

The Holy Trinity Society Branch 41 will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday December 16th at 3P.M. in the lower meeting hall of St. Casimirs' rectory, 239 Nepperhan Ave., Yonkers.

**Stephen J. Kubasek, Jr., President**

## BRANCH 41 - YONKERS, NEW YORK

The Holy Trinity Society Branch 41 will hold an election of delegates to the 51st Quadrennial Convention of the First Catholic Slovak Union at a meeting to be held on Saturday December 30th at 3PM in the lower meeting hall of St. Casimirs' rectory, 239 Nepperhan Ave., Yonkers.

**Stephen J. Kubasek, Jr. President.**

## BRANCH 55 - PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

The Annual Meeting of Branch 55 K.J. is scheduled to be held on Sunday, January 28, 2018 at 2:00 P.M. at the residence of the President and Secretary-Treasurer in the Dining Room at the Wesley Enhanced Living complex, 8401 Roosevelt Boulevard, Philadelphia, PA. Mass will be held at Wesley Hall at 11:00 A.M. followed by lunch.

Elections will be held for Branch Officers and Delegates and their Alternates to the 51st International Convention to be held from Saturday August 4, 2018 to Wednesday, August 8, 2018. Please call the President or the Secretary at 215.613.8987, or 215.637.6530 if you wish to be a Delegate to the Convention. Elections of District 8 Delegates and their Alternatives for the year 2018 will also take place.

Regular business will also be conducted. Please bring non-perishable food for Aid for Friends in Need. All members are cordially invited to attend.

Attention! Any high school or college student that attends this meeting will receive a copy of Joseph Trojcek's recently published book, FOCUS ON YOUR LIGHT. Joe, a multi-faceted entrepreneur, is a member of the FCSU, who shares his insights and experience in building a successful career centered in the field of music. In his book, Joe presents helpful ideas for anyone interested in starting a business or furthering his/her career.

Lunch will be catered; therefore, we request that

you RSVP by January 13th in order to make reservations at Wesley. For directions to the meeting, please call the President at (215) 613-8987 or Secretary at (215) 637-6530.

In the event of severe weather, or any other emergency, we will conduct a telephone conference meeting with those who cannot attend.

Fraternally yours,

**Helena T. Gaydos, President**

## BRANCH 75 - SHAMOKIN, PENNSYLVANIA

The Assumption of the B.V.M. Society, Branch 75KJ will hold its semi-annual meeting on Sunday, December 10, 2017, at 10:00AM at the residence of Financial Secretary Ronald M. Anderson, 8 South Shamokin Street, Shamokin, PA, 1782. Agenda items include: the presentation of the fiscal year-end reports: nomination and election of officers for the coming year will be held and any additional branch business will be entertained, including the 2018 National Convention. All interested members should make an effort to attend his semi-annual meeting.

**Ronald M. Anderson, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 89 - MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Branch 89 invites all members to join us for a meeting on Saturday, January 27, 2018 and elect branch officers as well as elect delegates to the 2018 National Convention in Cleveland, OH. A luncheon will follow directly after the meeting. The location is Alliot's Restaurant, 3041 North Mayfair Road, Wauwatosa, WI. The event will start with social time from 11:00AM - 11:30AM. The meeting will then start at 11:30AM and continue until approximately 1:00PM, directly after which lunch will be served. Lunch for members is complimentary; guest cost is \$20 per person. Reservations are required and must be made by January 23, 2018, by calling Mike Novak @ 414-445-5382. Checks should be made payable to: Knights of St. Mary & Joseph Branch 89. Mail to: Mike Novak, 3237 N. 93rd St, Milwaukee, WI, 53222.

In addition to election of branch officers and delegates, some topics of discussion will be: donations, 2018 activities, and insurance adjustments.

Fraternally,

**Mike Novak, President**

## BRANCH 98 - TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT

There has been a merger between Branch 098K Torrington, CT and Branch 019K Bridgeport, CT. All members of Branch 098K will now hold membership in Branch 019K.

This merger has taken place as of November 15, 2017.

If you should need any service on your policy, or new or additional insurance, please contact:

JACQUELINE ANN ZACK  
15 BROOKHEDGE RD  
TRUMBULL, CT 06611-3212  
(203) 268-4727

We wish to thank all the past officers for their dedication and efforts through the years performed in the spirit of fraternalism.

**Kenneth A. Arendt, Executive Secretary**

## BRANCH 108 - CONNELLVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

St. John the Apostle Society, Branch 108 will hold a meeting on Sunday December 17, 2017 at 1:00 PM at 1916 Second Street, S. Connellsville PA. Election of Officers will take place at this meeting.

**Dolores Kocis, President**

## BRANCH 157 - N. CATASAWQUA, PENNSYLVANIA

Branch 157 will hold a meeting on Sunday, December 17, 2017, at 11:30AM at the Jednota Hall, 5th & Grove, N. Catasawqua, PA. On the agenda: election of branch officers for 2018 and a discussion of the upcoming National Convention in Aug. Following the meeting, the branch will have its Christmas party, with Santa arriving at 1:30PM.

On Wednesday, December 27, 2017, the branch will hold a general meeting to discuss branch business and upcoming activities. This meeting will also be held at Jednota Hall, 5th & Grove, N. Catasawqua, PA. It will begin at 6PM.

**Gregory M. Harakal, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 200 - FORD CITY, PENNSYLVANIA

Branch 200 invites you to attend our monthly

branch meetings which are held the 1st Thursday of every month (except June & July) in the upstairs Social Hall, 910 6th Avenue, Ford City, PA 16226. So for the rest of 2017: Dec. 7th with Election of Officers.

We look forward to your presence at the monthly meetings held in the banquet hall directly following the BOD's meeting at 7pm. If you are not local to attend, please send your ideas to me @ vschaub123@gmail.com as we are compiling memorabilia for our 125th Anniversary in 2020.

Fraternally,

**Vicki L. Schaub, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 213 - VALENCIA, PENNSYLVANIA

St. Michael the Archangel, Branch 213, will hold a semi-annual meeting on Sunday, December 10, 2017, at 1:00PM. The meeting will be held at 2603 Eloquent Lane, Valencia, PA, 16059. On the agenda: election of branch officers and general branch business. All members are invited to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

**Joseph Belechak, Secretary**

## BRANCH 228 - LORAIN, OHIO

The St. John the Baptist/Holy Trinity Lodge, Branch 228, will hold an election of delegates to the 51st Quadrennial Convention of the First Catholic Slovak Union at our meeting to be held on Monday, December 18, 2017 at 7 P.M. at the American Slovak Club on 30th and Broadway in Lorain, OH. The Convention will be held in Cleveland, OH, from Saturday August 4th through Wednesday August 8th, 2018, at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown Hotel. We currently expect to be permitted to seat eight (8) delegates at the Convention to represent our Branch and will also elect alternates to serve if a delegate is unable to attend the Convention. We hope to have all delegates and alternates decided upon at this meeting so the certification process can begin immediately after the meeting.

Once again, I challenge our younger members to consider being a convention delegate and becoming even more involved in our organization. It is a truly special experience that is interesting, fun and gives a sense of accomplishment knowing that you are directly contributing to the operational direction taken by the FCSU for the next four (4) years. Please contact Tom Zuffa at 440-320-6523 or Len Zilko at 440-988-3236 if you are interested in becoming a convention delegate candidate and, of course, come to this very important meeting.

As a reminder, our meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of each month except for the months of January, February, July and August when no meetings are scheduled. The Branch will hold its annual election of officers, by-law review and election of two (2) representatives to serve on the American Slovak Club Board of Directors at each December meeting. All meetings begin at 7 P.M. and are held at the American Slovak Club. Visit the websites for the FCSU at fcsu.com and the Slovak Club at americanslovakclub.com for an update on current activities. You are sure to find many items of interest.

**Thomas B. Zuffa, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 254 - PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Wenceslaus Society will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, January 14, 2018, at 11:30AM at Panera's Restaurant in the Mt. Lebanon Galleria located at the corner of Washington and Gilkeson Roads. The meeting will include election of officers and election of delegates to the 2018 National Convention. Lunch will be provided. For reservations, contact Albina Senko at 412-343-5031.

**Albina Senko, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 259 - STRUTHERS, OHIO

The St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 259, will hold their annual meeting at the Bedford Trails Golf Course Restaurant in Coitsville, OH, on Sunday, December 10, 2017, at 2PM. We will have election of officers for the coming year 2018, followed by a luncheon - with reservations to be made by calling 330-755-8316.

We would like to extend our wishes for a Holy and Happy Holiday Season to all members.

**Vivian Sedlacko, Secretary**

continued on page 16



# DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENTS

## DISTRICT 1 – THE REV. MATTHEW JANKOLA DISTRICT

The Rev. Matthew Jankola District 1 will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, December 10, 2017, at 11:00AM at the home of Jacqueline Zack, 15 Brookhedge Road, Trumbell, CT. We had to move our September 10, 2017 meeting from our usual meeting place with little advance notice and we want to give District 1 members a chance to attend the District 1 meeting.

We will have election of officers for 2017-2018. We will plan our agenda for the coming year and our participation in the 2018 National Convention.

We hope to see many members at this District 1 meeting.

Laura Minese, Secretary

## DISTRICT 3 - GEORGE ONDA DISTRICT-WESTMORELAND COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

The George Onda District will hold a special meeting on Saturday, December 9, 2017 to elect a District Convention Delegate (and an Alternate) to attend the 2018 FCSU National Convention. We will meet in the Formation Room at St. Florian Roman Catholic Church, United, PA following the 5PM Mass.

Linda L. Gonta, Secretary

## DISTRICT 6 - PITTSBURGH DISTRICT

Branch 35 will host the next district meeting on Sunday, April 8, 2018, at 1 PM. The meeting will be held at the Holy Trinity Parish Hall at 529 Grant Avenue Extension in West Mifflin. We will discuss social and business activities for 2018. Matters concerning the upcoming national convention will also be on the agenda. Expect announcements concerning delegates' meetings.

Fathers' Day is Sunday, June 17, 2018. The district Fathers' Day brunch still needs a host branch. Branch 38 will host the Fall Meeting at a date to be determined, probably after publication of the 2018 Steelers schedule.

As always, members are urged to check the Jednota for updates on FCSU business matters as well as contests and tournaments. The national convention is coming next year; be careful to fulfill all requirements for sending delegates.

While we look forward to seeing everyone at the FCSU district meetings, remember there are many other local Slovak events that also merit your attention:

\*\* WPSCA monthly meetings are held on the 1st Monday of the month at 7 PM at the Mt Lebanon Public Library: January 8, 2018 – Slovak Hockey, February 5, 2018 – Sights in Slovakia, March 5, 2018 – Medovniki, April 2, 2018 – Slovak Castles, May 7, 2018 – Slovak Weddings, June 4 – the Pittsburgh Agreement. Become a member of the WPSCA to get the newsletter listing all of their events.

\*\* 100th Anniversary of the Pittsburgh Agreement: Senator John Heinz History Center – Thursday, May 31, 2018 at 6 PM.

\*\* 95th Slovak Day at Kennywood – Thursday, July 19, 2018.

\*\* Slovak Language Classes are held Tuesdays in spring and fall. Contact Bozena Hilko at bozi@comcast.net. Fall classes are directed toward intermediate and advanced students. Spring classes are for beginners. Children's classes in the summer.

\*\* Don't forget the Western Pennsylvania Slovak Radio Hour – 3-4 PM, Sunday's – WPIT-AM 730. The program is also streamed live at www.wpitam.com.

\*\* You can follow the Pittsburgh Slovaks and the Western PA Slovak Cultural Association on Facebook. The National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids also has a Facebook page. Check out your family's hometown in Slovakia. Even a small village may have a Facebook page.

\*\* Various Slovak programs and courses are available through the University of Pittsburgh Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. See www.slavic.pitt.edu

\*\* If you're interested in study abroad, Slovakia has a number of major universities; some have programs taught in English. Check out www.slovakia.com/study-in-slovakia/

\*\* The National Slovak Society Museum in McMurray PA is available to visitors Monday-Thursday from 9-3. Contact Sue Ondrejco for information and reservations. See www.nsslife.org/Museum.php. Plan a Christmas trip to see the animated, hand-carved Nativity.

\*\* The CzechoSlovak Genealogical Society International will hold its next meeting in Nebraska in 2019. "Nasa Rodina," their quarterly publication, has many interesting articles on Slovak history and genealogy. See www.cgsi.org.

\*\* FCSU insurance information and forms can be found at www.fcsu.com. Many interesting Slovak-related links may be found at fcsu.com/resources.

If anyone knows of additional Slovak events in Western Pennsylvania that they wish to be included in our district notice, they should email information to the secretary.

Faternally,

Margaret A. Nasta, District Secretary, manasta@verizon.net

## DISTRICT 7-THE REV. JOHN MARTVON DISTRICT

Attention! All branches, the meeting that was scheduled for Oct.22 at 2:00 PM was rescheduled for Dec 10 at 2:00 P.M. at the St. Michael Church in Beaverdale, PA. Due to mix up with the hall. Election of officers, and election of delegates for the convention will be held. Very sorry for any inconvenience it may have caused. There is a luncheon afterward. All branches are invited to attend; any questions please call 814-322-1052.

Sharon Allison, Secretary

## DISTRICT 10 – THE REV. STEPHEN FURDEK

Mark your calendars our first meeting of 2018 will be held at the Slovak J Club, 485 Morgan Ave, Akron, OH 44311 on January 21, 2018 at 2 pm. We will be electing delegates to the upcoming Convention. Please plan to attend and learn more about convention activities and issues we may be addressing at the convention. Our Society is only as strong as its members –take an active part and help keep our Society strong.

If you plan on attending, please call Linda Hanko @330-706-0151 or 330-690-9611. We need a headcount for refreshments. Please RSVP one week before the meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Hanko, Secretary/Treasurer

## DISTRICT 12 – THE MONSIGNOR ANDRE HLINKA DISTRICT

On Sunday, December 3, 2017, at 1:00PM, a meeting of the Andre Hlinka District will be held at Kings Restaurant in Bentleyville, PA. There will be an election of officers and discussions relative to district business and election of delegates to the 2018 National Convention in Cleveland, OH. Members of the various branches are urged to attend. Any questions, call Joseph Tarquinio at (724) 929-9788. We from District 12 wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Frances Tarquinio, Secretary

## DISTRICT 14 –THE REV JOSEPH KOSTIK DISTRICT

The District Christmas Party will be held on December 19, 2017, at 6:00PM at Rachel's Restaurant, 54 Westchester Drive, Austintown, OH. Tickets are \$25 each. Immediately following the party, the district will hold a meeting for the election of delegates to the 2018 National Convention in Cleveland, OH. All members and guests are welcome. Call Barb Hosa at 330-286-2969 for reservations. Thank you.

Barb Hosa, President

## DISTRICT 16 - THE MSGR STEPHEN KRASULA DISTRICT

The Msgr Stephen Krasula District 16 will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, December 10, 2017 in the Rectory of St. John Nepomucene Church, 411 East 66th Street, New York, NY immediately following the 10:15 Slovak Mass. On the agenda will be branch reports, financial report, election of officers and discussion of plans for future activities in 2018. We urge members of Branches 41, 45 and 716 to attend and participate in this meeting. Representatives from other Districts are also cordially invited to attend. Refreshments will be served after the meeting. The Slovak Mass at 10:15 will be in remembrance of Jozef Bilik, past President of Branch 716 FCSU.

Joan Mary Skrkon, Secretary

## DISTRICT 19 – THE MONSIGNOR MICHAEL SHUBA DISTRICT

On Sunday Dec 10, 2017, the annual meeting for Monsignor Michael Shuba District will be held at 1:30PM, at Sts Cyril and Methodius Church Hall. Address: 5255 Thornwood Dr, Mississauga, Ontario.

At this meeting the election of officers for the district will be held, as well election of delegates to the upcoming Convention in August 2018.

Lunch will be available, please RSVP to Mike Kapitan at 416-543-4111

Respectfully,

Anne Mitro, Secretary

## Join Youngstown /Spišská Nová Ves Sister Cities on its 20th Tour of Slovakia, July 2018



Are you ready with your passport to enjoy two weeks of excitement, fun, good food, entertainment, great people and fond memories for the rest of your life?

Join Jim and Kay Bench on the 20th Sister Cities tour of Slovakia. Talk to the oldest living Slovak member of your family to find where your ancestors lived in Slovakia. Think of the joy you will feel meeting long-lost relatives or just being able to walk in the village of your ancestors.

Visit historic UNESCO sites, towns and village such as Bratislava, Trenčín, Košice, Pezinok, and other towns

and villages too numerous to mention. Go rafting on the Dunajec river, enjoy wine tasting, see the beautiful Tatra mountains, enjoy a grand reception with the Mayor of Spišská Nová Ves, enjoy dinner and entertainment at Kolibas [whose rustic designs reflect traditional shepherds' housing], see folk performances and form long-lasting friendships. Enjoy the comfort of traveling on a large air conditioned bus with a restroom on board.

Tour dates are July 10-24, 2018. For additional information call Jim at 724-858-5843 or Kay at 724-771-7900. Don't wait any longer. You have put it off for too long. Now is the time to go. A complete itinerary will be provided. Travel arrangements are being arranged by Paul Hudak Adventure International Travel, Cleveland Ohio 800 524 2487.

We are waiting for your call!

## Answer to Puzzle

*Solution to Puzzle from page 11*

B	E	G	S			A	F	T			D	E	F	T	
E	D	A	M			K	N	E	E		T	I	A	R	A
A	N	T	I			I	D	L	E		E	R	R	E	D
M	A	E	L	S	T	R	O	M			S	E	N	T	
			E	A	T	E	N			E	T	C			
	H	A	S	T	E				D	A	Y	T	I	M	E
C	O	N		I	N	K	I	E	R		O	M	I	T	
O	R	G	A	N		E	S	P		B	R	A	N	T	
A	S	E	A		S	E	T	T	E	E		G	E	E	
T	E	R	R	A	I	N				A	I	D	E	S	
			D	V	D			B	U	G	G	Y			
	R	A	V	E			R	E	P	L	E	N	I	S	H
M	O	L	A	R			E	A	S	E		A	R	I	A
A	B	O	R	T			D	U	E	T		M	I	L	L
R	E	E	K				O	T	T			O	S	T	E







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Please note this IS NOT a race or a competition; it is just a way to get active and stay active. You participate at your own pace.

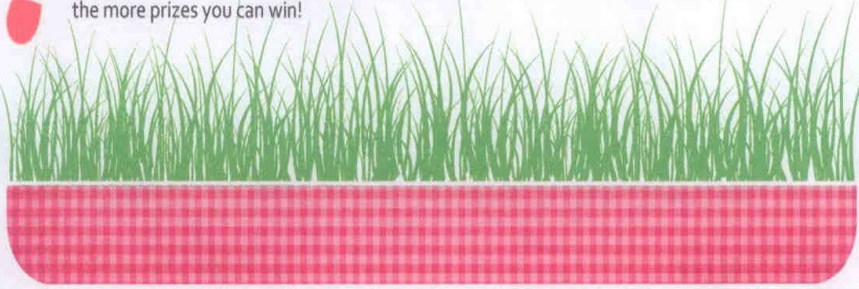
### Rules:

1. The objective of the Best Foot Forward Walking Program is to reach milestones to be eligible for level awards. The pursuit of the milestones leads to a healthy way of life.
2. Participants **MUST** be members in good standing of the FCSU in order to be eligible for prizes.
3. A member can start the program at any time during the year.
4. Tally sheets should be sent in periodically throughout the year.
5. Walking minutes from January 1, 2017, and forward will be used to determine the milestones.
6. Awards will be given in October & April.
7. Awards will be based on the number of minutes you walked.
8. Pedometers may be used to track steps. (20 minutes of light cardiovascular activity = 1,000 steps).

Milestone	Award
900 minutes	Hat
1800 minutes	Hip pack
2700 minutes	Water Bottle
3600 Minutes	Ice/heat bandana

**1 STEP ONE**  
Register: Fill out the registration form and mail to:  
Best Foot Forward  
FCSU Activities  
234 Ilion St.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207  
To receive your welcome kit.

**2 STEP TWO**  
Just **START WALKING!**  
Log your walking minutes. The more you walk, the more prizes you can win!

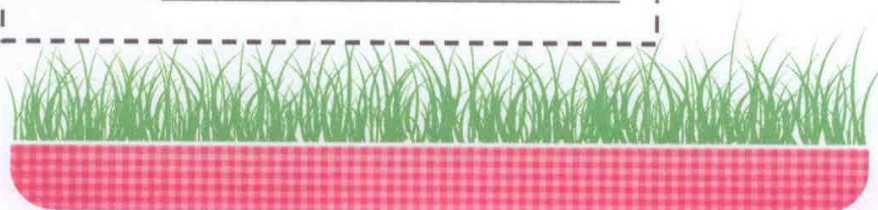


## Best Foot Forward Walking Program

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Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
Best Foot Forward  
FCSU Activities  
234 Ilion St.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207



For additional sign up forms, tally sheet, and program details, go to  
<http://www.fcsu.com/events/>



## Hi, Kids (& All Those Young at Heart)

I don't know about you, but this year has sure zoomed by for this little guy. Feels like I blinked and the calendar is already rolling toward Christmas. Aaaaannnddd – BAM. Here I am in the crazy elf outfit again. I bet you're wondering how they got me into it this year. Well, the good folks here at the First Catholic Slovak Union just had to remind me of the Christmas Day tradition in my homeland of Slovakia. There, people don't only get together to wish each other a Merry Christmas. In the villages and smaller towns, the kiddos dress up in costumes and walk around singing Christmas songs and stuff. At every house they stop, they get treated to all kinds of yummy appetizers and pastries. Well worth the pointed shoes and stripped stockings, I say;-)

Then again. We can't forget the Reason for the Season. In Slovakia, lots of folks also go to church on Christmas Day – even if they've already been to Midnight Mass. They pray together and celebrate that Baby Jesus got born.

Whatever the traditions in your family, here's hoping you and yours have a Veselé Vianoce (Merry Christmas) and a Stašný Nový Rok (Happy New Year).



See you in 2018. Until then, keep your ears up and your tail waggin'  
Tvoj priateľ' (your pal)

Chewy

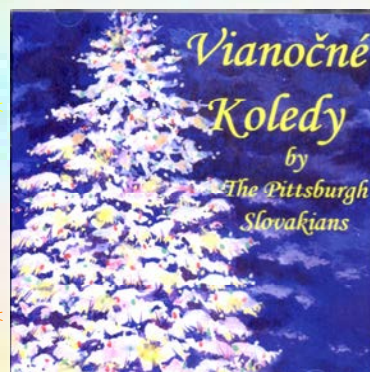
## FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ~ HOLIDAY HOURS

**The Home Office and Jednota Estates Office will be closed on the following days:**



**December 25 & 26, 2017 in observance of Christmas Eve & Christmas Day**

**January 1, 2018, in observance of New Year's Day**



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# BRANCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

continued from page 12

## BRANCH 260 - CAMPBELL, OHIO

The branch will hold its semi-annual meeting on Sunday, December 17, 2017, at 1:00PM at Bedford Trails Restaurant, Coitsville, OH. On the agenda: election of officers and general branch business.

Fraternally,

**Paul Ritz, President**

## BRANCH 292 – WINDBER, PENNSYLVANIA

St. John the Baptist Society, FCSU, Branch 292 KJ, will hold their semi-annual meeting and Christmas Party at 12:30 p.m., Sunday, December 17, 2017 at the Slovak Club, 1300 Jackson Avenue, Windber, Pa. 15963. A buffet dinner will follow the meeting. All members are asked to attend these events. The Officers extend to all wishes for a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Edward T. Surkosky, F.I.C., President**

## BRANCH 293 – LANSFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

St. Joseph Society, Branch 293KJ, will hold its annual meeting on Friday, December 15, 2017, at the home of the financial secretary at 6PM: Robert J. Lakata, 527 E. Bertsch St., Lansford, PA 18232-2210. Election of officers will take place at this meeting.

**Robert J. Lakata, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 312 – BAGGALEY, PENNSYLVANIA

Branch 312 will hold its annual meeting at 1:00PM on Sunday, January 28, 2018, at the home of Branch President Mark Smolleck, 1121 Monastery Dr, Latrobe, PA, 15656. On the agenda: election of branch officers and election of delegates to the National Convention.

Best wishes to our members for a Blessed Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year.

**Micki Smolleck, Secretary/Treasurer**

## BRANCH 313 - CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Branch 313, St John the Baptist, will hold a meeting on Saturday, December 16, 2017 at 11:30 am. The meeting will be at Southfork Restaurant, 14631 South LaGrange Road, Orland Park, IL. Members are invited to come and meet their officers and enjoy a complimentary fraternal luncheon. For further information, please call Ken at 773 463 2686.

Please remember President Joseph Bugel in your prayers. He passed away on September 12, 2017.

**Ken Jurinek, Vice President**

## BRANCH 401 – EAST VANDERGRIFT, PENNSYLVANIA

Branch 401 will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, December 17, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. **Due to a scheduling snafu by the East Vandergrift Slovak Club...(that is the day of their Christmas Party), it has become necessary to change the venue for this meeting to another location than previously published. The meeting will be held at: The Slovak Club of Parks Township, 214 Lincoln Ave, North Vandergrift, PA, 15690.** This meeting will include election of branch officers as well as election of delegates to the 2018 National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. ALL Br. 401 members, new and old, are cordially invited to attend. Please consider attending as we are striving to grow and become more active in our communities. Refreshments will be available after the meeting and of SPECIAL NOTE: the Pgh. Steelers don't play until 4:25p.m.!! Peace and Fellowship to all.

PS - Any questions, please contact Patrick Froncek at 724-664-8216.

**Patrick Froncek, Secretary**

## BRANCH 410 – UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

SS. Peter and Paul Society, Branch 410, will hold a meeting on Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 1:30 PM the **Highland House, 92 West Main Street, Uniontown, PA.** All members of Branch 410 are invited to attend.

Election of officers for the year 2018 will be held at this meeting. Those who are interested in being a delegate to the 51st International Convention being held in Cleveland, Ohio, from Saturday, August 4 to August 8, 2018 are requested to attend this meeting. Election of delegates to the convention will be voted

on and completed at the Dec. 14th meeting.

Call for reservations by Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at 724-425-2576.

**Geraldine Buchheit, Secretary**

## BRANCH 419 – WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

Branch 419 will hold a meeting on Sunday, January 21, 2018, at 12:30PM. The location is Norm's Restaurant, North Sherman St, Wilkes-Barre, PA. On the agenda: along with regular branch business, election of delegates to the FCSU's 51st International Convention will be held at this meeting. All are welcome.

**Francis Wassil, President**

## BRANCH 484 – CORAL, PENNSYLVANIA

St. Joseph Society, Branch 484KJ, will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, December 17, 2017, at 2:00PM. It will be held at the home of Financial Secretary Monica Rura, 819 Power Plant Road, Coral PA, 15731. The agenda will include financial reports, election of officers, payment of bills, donations, membership, etc. All members are cordially invited to attend and to participate in the discussion of obtaining new members.

**Monica Rura, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 493 – CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Society, Branch #493 in Chicago, would like to wish all its members VESELÉ VIANOCE a ŠŤASTNÝ NOVÝ ROK! (Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!) Once again, we will send \$5.00 McDonald's gift cards to all our junior members for Christmas. We prayerfully mourn the loss of members who passed away during 2017: Charles Mazalan, George R. Dzurko, Edward John Gromos, Joseph Hribik, and Laverne Hribik.

**Robert Tapak Magruder, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 553 – AKRON, OHIO

St. John the Baptist, Branch 553 welcomes the members from former Branches 319 Mansfield and 714 Dayton to our lodge. We invite you to attend our lodge meetings and fraternal events.

The first Lodge meeting will be held on Sunday, February 11, 2018 at 2 pm to be held at the Slovak J Club, 485 Morgan Avenue, Akron, OH 44311. We will be discussing the upcoming convention and electing delegates to represent our Branch. If you plan on attending, please call Linda Hanko at 330-706-0151 or email me at lhanko@neo.rr.com.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

**Linda M. Hanko, Financial/Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 581 – GARY-WHITING, INDIANA

The St. Michael the Archangel, Branch 581, will hold a meeting on Sunday, December 11, 2017, at 1PM at the Lake Park Restaurant, 7 East Old Ridge Rd., Hobart, IN. The agenda will be election of officers, election of delegates to the 2018 National Convention in Cleveland, OH, insurance premiums for children to be paid for the first year, and the upcoming play.

RSVP Ann, 219-947-2793 or George, 219-926-2410

**Ann Buczek, President**

## BRANCH 595 – MUSKEGON HEIGHTS, MICHIGAN

Sunday, December 17: monthly branch meeting at 2PM; election of officers will take place, please make sure to attend.

Sunday, December 31: New Year's Eve Party; \$15 per person Swiss Steak Dinner served 4PM-6PM; dance to Stan Mroz Orchestra 5PM-9PM.

Sunday, February 4: Polka Dance from 3PM-6PM; food available for purchase.

Refreshments every Tuesday and Thursday .50 off

Hours are Mon-Fri, 1PM-8PM, Sat 12noon-8PM  
Come down and enjoy yourself. All events take place at Tatra Hall 2536 Sixth St. Muskegon Heights 231-733-2575

**Susan Hornik, Secretary**

## BRANCH 706 – DYER, INDIANA

St. Anthony Society, Branch 706, will hold its second semi-annual meeting on Saturday, December 16, 2017, at the residence of Branch Secretary,

Lynda Tanis, at 3:00PM. On the meeting agenda, we will discuss: the Slovakia Christmas Tree at the Museum of Science and Industry, coordinated by Chairman, Mark Fayta, and Co-Chairman, Amber Miller; the Easter Coloring Contest, organized by Barbara Fayta; and the Spring District 2 Outing, arranged by Lynda Tanis. Members of the Branch, including members of Branch 40, previously met on November 4 at the Museum of Science and Industry to set-up the Slovakia Tree for the 2017 Christmas Around the World Exhibit. Amber Miller purchased new garland for the tree and Barbara Fayta and Lori Seida handmade new candy ornaments. Mark Fayta gave directions to update some of the older wooden sled ornaments to portray some of Slovakia's castles, reflecting more of Slovakia's Heritage. Members of the Branch also attended the Museum's Dinner on November 21, an appreciation event for the volunteers who've helped setup the Christmas trees. In addition, we will be praying for those who we have lost in our District, especially the well-respected and loved, Joseph Bugel. He will be greatly missed.

Please email Lynda Tanis at: Lynda.tanis@comcast.net by Monday, December 8, if you would like to attend or would like to send any information to be reviewed at the meeting.

**Lynda Tanis, Branch Secretary**

## BRANCH 716 – NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The St. Stephen Society, Branch 716 will hold a special meeting on Sunday, February 18, 2018 after the Slovak Mass at 1:00 PM in the hall of St. John Nepomucene Church. On the agenda will be a discussion of future activities by the Branch in the upcoming months. All members are urged to attend. As usual, a hot lunch will be served and prepared by our President Jan Skrkon.

**Joan Skrkon, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 731 – YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

Members of Saint Joseph Branch 731 will celebrate Mass at 11:00 am on December 17, 2017 for deceased members of our branch. The election of officers for 2018 will be held at this annual meeting following the Mass. Also on the agenda is the election of delegates for the 51st International Convention of the First Catholic Slovak Union. The Mass and annual meeting will be held at Saint Matthias Church, 915 Cornell Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio.

**Jim Bobby, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 746 – LINDEN, NEW JERSEY

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 746, will hold its next meeting on Sunday, December 10, 2017 at AMICIS RISTORANTE, 1700 W. Elizabeth Avenue in Linden, NJ at 3:30pm. The agenda will include election of officers, as well as discussion of plans for next year's activities, including election of Convention delegates. A Christmas holiday dinner will follow the meeting. (\$30.00 for non-members). Please call Joanne Tkach Polt @732-762-3148 by December 1st if you plan on attending.

**Mary Kapitan, Secretary**

## BRANCH 764 – WARREN, OHIO

Branch 764 will hold its next meeting on December 10, 2017, at the home of Rosemary Heald, 379 Quarry Lane, NE, Warren, OH, 44483. The meeting will start at 4:00PM, with election of branch officers and a discussion of the February 2018 Feast Day Dinner at the church on the agenda. For more information, contact William Hrusovsky at 330-372-1948 or at hrusovskyw@embarqmail.com.

**William Hrusovsky, Secretary/Treasurer**

## BRANCH 764 – WARREN, OHIO

Branch 764 will hold a meeting on January 23, 2018, at 9:30AM at Kozy Kitchen Family Restaurant, 2723 Elm Road, NE, Warren, OH, 44483. On the agenda: election of delegates to the 2018 National Convention in Cleveland, OH, next August; as well as discussion of year's activities. For more information, contact: William Hrusovsky at 330-372-1948 or email hrusovskyw@embarqmail.com.

**William Hrusovsky, Secretary**

## BRANCH 785 - MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

On Sunday Dec 10, 2017, the annual meeting for Jednota Branch 785 will be held at 2:30pm, at Sts Cyril and Methodius Church Hall. Address: 5255

Thornwood Dr, Mississauga, Ontario.

At this meeting the election of officers for the branch will be held, as well election of delegates to the up coming National Convention in August 2018.

Lunch will be available; please RSVP to Milan Zoldak 647-350-0604

Regards,

**Sharon Tomas, Secretary**

## BRANCH 844 – LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Branch 844 will hold their Annual Slovak Mass On Saturday Dec. 23, 2017 at 12 noon, at St. John Paul II Polish center located at 3999 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda Ca. 92886.

Lunch will be served after the mass along with the presentation of gifts for the children. Come and join us in celebrating the Slovak Spirit of Christmas.

Also following the festivities Branch 844 members will hold a meeting to review officers' reports, hold elections to elect new officers, and discuss branch activities.

We hope to see you there and would like to wish everyone A Merry Christmas and A very special New Year.

Fraternally Yours,

**Milan Konko, Secretary**

## BRANCH 855 - PARMA, OHIO

Branch 855 will hold an officer's and general meeting on Sunday, December 10, 2017 at 2:00PM at the residence of Branch Financial Secretary Michael Kolesar at 7917 Whitehaven Drive, Parma, OH, 44129. The agenda includes a discussion of the upcoming 2018 Convention and a newly elected officer orientation, and development of a strategic plan for the Branch.

Fraternally,

**Linda Kolesar, Secretary-Treasurer**

## BRANCH 856 – WASHINGTON, DC AND AREA

Branch 856 will hold a special meeting January 8, 2018 at 1:00pm at the Thomas Jefferson Library 7415 Arlington Blvd. Falls Church, VA, 22042. At this meeting will be elections of branch officers for 2018 and election of delegates for the 51st International Convention scheduled for August 2018 in Cleveland, OH. The officers of Branch 856 would like to welcome members of Branch 326 that were just merged with Branch 856 in Washington, DC and area. We would like to meet and see you attend our meetings. Please feel free to call or write me if I can help you with your needs. My address is: Katherine Nowatkoski 806 Blackfriars Loop, Cary, North Carolina 27519. Phone: 919-651-0363 or e-mail knowa000@hotmail.com

**Katherine Nowatkoski, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 857 – LEVITTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The Annual meeting of the St. Michael the Archangel Branch 857 will be held on Wednesday, December 13, 2017. The meeting will be held at 7:30PM at 15 Kraft Lane, Levittown, PA. At that meeting there will be the election of officers for 2018 as well as the election of delegates to the 2018 Convention.

Fraternally,

**Damian D Nasta, Recording Secretary**



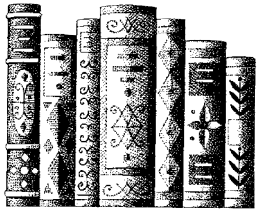
## For Christ the Lord is Given

A Babe is born in Bethlehem,  
A star shows bright in heaven;  
The angels sing and shout for joy:  
For Christ the Lord is given!

Rejoice! Rejoice! God's only Son,  
Incarnate One Most Holy:  
Descends to free from sin's darkdeath  
The humble and the lowly.

Rejoice! Rejoice! The Light has dawned:  
For Christ the Lord is given!  
The Father's word who leads to life,  
And endless bliss in heaven  
Copyright 2016 George Kossik





## Book Corner

### Holy Wind, Holy Fire - Finding Your Vibrant Spirit through Scripture



Sister Pamela Smith, SS.C.M. has written a new book; *Holy Wind, Holy Fire - Finding Your Vibrant Spirit through Scripture*. "We all want our lives to be brighter, more meaningful, and more sacred," says Sister Pamela Smith. "We all need that get-up-and-go that gladdens us and makes sense of our lives." We express this need in many different ways, but in each case what we really want is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When this Spirit is with us and in us, we can expect to be living confidently, vibrantly, resolutely. But who is this Holy Spirit? How can we get to know and draw closer to this Third Person of the Holy Trinity, who has the power to transform us and give us a share in the very life of God? The best way to experience who the Spirit is by seeing what the Spirit does, and in this beautiful book Sister Pamela invites us into a wonderful journey through

the Old and New Testaments to catch glimpses of the Spirit at work. Reading, reflecting, and praying with this book will help to re-energize and awaken us to the energy and joy that only the Holy Spirit can give.

The book can be purchased through Twenty-Third Publications.

- Submitted by Sister Barbara Sable, SSCM

## LIGHT ONE CANDLE

**Tony Rossi, Director of Communications, The Christophers**

### Dickens, Scrooge, and the Road to Redemption

Considering that Christmas music, decorations, and music are everywhere from late November to the beginning of January, it might be hard to conceive of the fact that there was a time when the holiday wasn't celebrated so festively and generously. If it hadn't been for British author Charles Dickens and his best known book "A Christmas Carol," it might have stayed that way. Now, the new movie "The Man Who Invented Christmas" tells the largely unknown story of how the book came to be, all while exploring the rich, complex, and redemptive life of Dickens himself.

The success of "Oliver Twist" in 1838 brought Dickens fame and fortune. This man from humble beginnings was able to support his wife and children in a lavish London home. But when his next three books are "flops," Dickens realizes needs to write another best-seller. Inspiration strikes when he hears his new Irish housemaid, Tara, telling a ghost story to his children. She says her grandmother used to say Christmas Eve was the only day of the year when the spirits of the afterlife could cross the threshold into our world.

Dickens decides to write a Christmas story, which doesn't please his publishers. "Does anyone really celebrate Christmas?" they ask, noting that it's just an excuse to take a day off work. Dickens perseveres, deciding to self-publish. And he continues picking up little inspirations for the story throughout his daily life, from a decrepit old waiter named Marley, to a miser's burial in a dark graveyard, to a heartless high society member who rails against the poor as "surplus population." The latter comment especially affirms Dickens' commitment to craft a story that serves as "a hammer blow to the heart of this smug, self-satisfied age."

But everything doesn't start coming together until Dickens formulates the name of his main character: Scrooge. Not only does Scrooge come alive to the author, he comes alive to the film's viewers as well because we are taken into Dickens' mind to witness the creative process at work. Much like "Hidden Figures" made a story about math surprisingly exciting, "The Man Who Invented Christmas" does the same for the writing process. But at its heart, this is a tale of a good man struggling with his demons.

Though elements of "A Christmas Carol" stem from outside sources, there is a central conflict that flows from Dickens himself. He is generous to the poor and always willing to promote the good works of various charities, yet he holds a grudge against his own father for something that happened in the past. Hard as it is to believe, there is a level of Scrooge's hard-heartedness in Dickens as well.

At first, he can't conceive of Scrooge's redemption because he believes that men don't change. He even kills off Tiny Tim for good despite the protestations of friends who read his unfinished manuscript. Confronting his past finally leads Dickens to discover and practice mercy and love, a gift he then extends to his family and his main character. Dan Stevens brings complexity, humor, and vulnerability to his role as Dickens, while Christopher Plummer's charismatic turn as Scrooge conveys curmudgeonliness, cruelty, and ultimately, warmth and hope.

In the end, "The Man Who Invented Christmas" presents a charming and hopeful exploration of the second-greatest Christmas story ever told. And like Dickens reminds us in the movie, "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another."

## Silvester - Traditional New Year's Eve Customs in Slovakia

continued from page 8

Around Silvester, some families also performed the traditional *zakáľačka* (*zabijačka*) or slaughter. It provided a bountiful feast for the family, and the meats would also often be used for the many weddings that took place typically in winter up to *Fašiangy* (Shrovetide or the Winter Carnival), before the onset of the Lenten fasting.

### Silvester in Present Day Slovakia

Since Slovakia became independent in 1993, Bratislava has become the center of the more modern version of New Year's Eve celebrations of Silvester that we are familiar with. The capital city has turned the holiday into a cultural event with live music played by Slovak groups. The event has increasingly attracted crowds of thousands to herald in the new year, and as many as 20% of the participants have come from abroad! In 2006, about 100,000 visitors attended a celebration in the historic center of the town, rivaling the crowds in larger European cities such as Krakow, Poland.

Every year, Bratislava City Hall organizes cultural events held in several places throughout the city, and they usually start in the early evening and have restricted entry for purposes of security. The main stages are located Franciscan Square, Hviezdoslav Square, Michalská Street and along the Danube riverbank between the Old Bridge and the New Bridge. Among the sensational attractions is an artificial ski slope!

Music typically plays throughout the evening, and like in New York City, crowds gather at 15 minutes before midnight to count down the clock to the New Year. Promptly at midnight, fireworks (*ohňostroji*) begin and are launched from the Danube riverbank and from the ships on the Danube, creating a colorful splash reflected in the water.

Many flock to the pubs (*krčme*) afterwards to toast "Na zdravie" (To your health!) in the new year. In other places, people hold parties with friends and family, and play various games. Most older Slovaks tend to stay home and watch the fireworks and other events on television.

There are also Silvester and New Year's wishes (*vinše*) that people exchange in person, and on social networking sites like Facebook. But there is a noticeable lack of reference to God in many of the newer wishes that one finds.

### Conclusion

While many of the more elaborate past Slovak customs associated with Silvester have disappeared in modern society, the Slovak cultural association (*Matica slovenská*) and individuals have determined to recapture some of their cultural past treasures are trying to revive some of these traditions. Their preservation and future enactment depends on the youth, for they have the most energy and the ability to bring them back if people believe they are a treasure worth retaining. One can only hope that Slovaks will revive the beautiful and unique customs which have enriched their culture.

Vinšujem Vám, našim čitateľom a bratským členom, aby ste mali šťastlivý a požehnaný nový rok!

Translation: I wish you, our readers and fraternal members, a Happy and Blessed New Year 2018!

### Sources

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Check out the First Catholic Slovak Union website at [www.fcsu.com](http://www.fcsu.com)

A great source for the latest information about our Society - and events in the greater Slovak community.

Check out the First Catholic Slovak Union website at [www.fcsu.com](http://www.fcsu.com)





# Rest in Peace, Our Departed Members

The First Catholic Slovak Union has a Mass said for each of our deceased members at St. Andrew Abbey in Cleveland, Ohio.



Branch:	Name	Branch:	Name	Branch:	Name	Branch:	Name
016P	Theresa A Patsko	200K	Linda J McNeal	382K	Edward P Kucha	746K	Judith Rader Wendt
019K	Edward D Salata Jr	240P	John Fricovsky Sr	456K	Andrew J Vavreck	769K	Margita Vozarik
035K	Frank M Yaniga	259K	Norma Jean Alexander	484K	Barbara N LaFrance	823K	Rosemary A Yakubisin
040K	Daniel E Ashbrook	260K	Susan Reichert	493K	Anna J Bapties	831K	Phyllis E Bordell
040K	Maria M Harcar	276K	Dorothy M Krall	553K	William J Jurkowski	831K	Pauline Buday
055K	David A Trisch	313K	Joseph M Bugel	553K	Catherine V Rekettye	856K	Stephen C Matula
089K	Joseph Horil	333K	James Janosky	682K	Theresa M Tokasz	900K	John Chapko
089K	George A Zylka	333K	Patricia H Viehdorfer	743K	Mary J Anderson	901K	Patricia Ann lwasiuk
112K	Teresa M Watson	373K	Mary S Turel	746K	Carol A Disney	916K	Mario Perretta

\*Processed through the month of November

## OBITUARIES

**JOHN P. SHIMKO, SR.**  
**BRANCH 292 –**  
**WINDBER,**  
**PENNSYLVANIA**



John P. Shimko, Sr., age 97, of Penn Hills, PA, on Thursday, December 15, 2016. Be-loved husband of 35 years to the late Kathleen Shimko. John was the last survivor of his generation. He was father of Kathleen "Katie"; John (Sonia); Robert (Karen); Mary; Joseph (Michele); and David Shimko; and the late Margaret "Peggy" (Joe) Kelly-Pisano; loving grandfather to Kristen, Andrew (Beth) Shimko; Sara (Matt) Elsasser; Emily, Katie and Ryan Shimko; and proud great-grandfather to Colt Elsasser; also survived by numerous nieces and nephews. John proudly served as an Air Force pilot & Flight Instructor in WWII and worked for Sears for 36 years. Friends were received at the William F. Gross Funeral Home, Penn Hills on Sunday, December 18, 2016. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the next day in St. Gerard Majella Church.

**JOSEPH M. BUGEL**  
**BRANCH 313 –**  
**ORLAND PARK, ILLI-**  
**NOIS**



Branch 313 President Joseph M. Bugel, 95 of Orland Park, IL, passed away peacefully on September 12, 2017, at Palos Community Hospital. Joe was born in Chicago, IL, on October 13, 1921, and raised in Clearing, IL. He had four sisters, three of whom are deceased: Josephine, Lillian, and Dolores. He is survived by sister Rosie (Oran) La Clair in California. Joe graduated from Tilden High School. After attending IIT, he went to work

for Root Brothers making parts for the war effort. In 1944, he enlisted in the US Army Infantry. He was a staff sergeant and was sent overseas to the Philippines where he engaged in the Liberation Battle of Luzon and received a Bronze Battle Star. After the war, he returned home and opened his own grocery store which he ran for seven years and married his beloved Theresa (Jurinak) who predeceased him in 2010. Married 62 years, they raised two children: Darlene (Curt) Johnson and Robert (Nancy) Bugel in the Roseland and Orland Park neighborhood. He was blessed with six grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. Joe worked for High Low Foods as a market manager and retired at the age of 62. After retirement, he work many years for his son at Bel Air Auto Collision Restoration. Joe was very active in the First Catholic Slovak Union where he served as Branch 313 President for many years. He also held positions with the Society as District 2 President and District 2 Auditor, and he and Theresa attended many National Conventions. At age 70, he sat for the State of Illinois Insurance Test and passed to receive his license to sell insurance policies. Joe will surely be missed by his many family members and friends. As a former member of the late Holy Rosary Church, a Slovak parish, Joe was an usher and choir member. Funeral services were held on September 22, 2017, at Lawn Funeral Home. A Memorial Mass was celebrated on Saturday, September 23, 2017, at St. Michael's, Orland Park, where Joe was a devoted member. Interment followed at Holy Sepulchre Catholic Cemetery. Rites were held at a graveside service.

- Submitted by Darlene Johnson



*My father, Stephen Kolada, died in September 2017 at the age of 97. Although he was born in Chicago, and was a member of the First Catholic Slovak Union Branch 153, he was raised in Namestovo, Slovakia. He wrote the following essay after he moved permanently to the United States and about 18 months after he learned to speak and write English. He didn't know at this writing that he would be drafted to serve in World War II four years later. Dad was captured by the Germans in November 1944, and imprisoned in a Prisoner of War camp until May 1945 at the end of the war. I found this essay among his possessions, still timely after all these years.*

- submitted by Mary Kolada Scott, Ventura, California

## Christmas: December 25, 1940

There is a war in the world, but there is still Christmas, and it will continue forever. The war will pass, but the quieting beams of "Peace on Earth, Good Will to all Men" will never pass.

Yes, it's a Christmas Day, the most joyful day of all the year, the season of joy and gladness that lightens the hearts of children and brings songs to their lips should always be memorable to them.

But this year, Christmas seems to mean more to everyone than ever before. Here in the United States there is yet peace, but in all the land we hear the hum of defensive preparation. For only one or two days will the machines cease from turning out engines of destruction in a season when peace and joy and good will should reign. There will be sadness in many homes – for men killed in France, in Norway, in Greece and in Egypt – for men, women and children killed by bombs on Britain. But there is genuine thankfulness that Britain is still free, and renewed determination that it shall continue to be free. How many are out of their sweet homes and how many passed away as a result of this horrible war? How many left their relatives and families? And yet, how many shall come back to join with their father, mother, sister and brother? Who knows? Today he is saying "Good bye" and tomorrow he may be killed in the field of battle, and never come back.

Thank God that we still have our freedom and let us turn to Almighty God and pray for "peace on earth, good will to men." It's very nice that we can observe this Christmas Day in peace. We can sing the beautiful carols without fear. We can sit around our charming Christmas tree on the Christmas Eve. We can go to church and do what we wish. Yes, there is joy in our hearts on this very day but there are crying and misery too, in the whole world. Devastation of cities and the slaughter of innocents are the hates bred of armed conflict. But there is still the immortal flame of love and hope that burns in human hearts. Many soldiers don't have any place to go for their dinner, for instance, in England, but there are people who invite them to join together on that Christmas Day, even in the shelter.

Let us turn our eyes to the "King of Peace," especially on this day, and ask Him to end wars and the horror of war, and to heal the discords that tear nations asunder, that they might live in loving harmony. Oh, hear our trustful prayers and give back to the world order and peace, that the people may live as brothers and sisters, and that they may have a much better Christmas next year. In order that all humanity can enjoy Christmas Eve at home, which they desire in these days.

## Reminder For All Branches

Among the requirements to complete in order to qualify for your Branch stipend, under Bylaw Section 14. RULES GOVERNING LOCAL Branches, is the following:

14.01 General Rules

a) Branch: and district meetings must be held in the close proximity of the hub of its members. The meetings shall be held at least semiannually, one of which must be for the elections of officers, who shall assume their duties upon election. **Notice of each of these meetings shall be published in the Official Organ at least thirty (30) days in advance of such meeting.**



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## JEDNOTA Publication Schedule for 2018

### Issue Date

### Deadline to Receive

January 17

January 8

February 14

February 5

March 7

February 26

March 21

March 12

April 11

April 2

April 25

April 16

May 9

April 30

June 6

May 29

(to accommodate  
Memorial Holiday)

June 20

June 11

July 18

July 9

August 22

August 13

Sept 19

Sept 10

October 17

October 8

November 14

November 5

December 12

December 3

## Struthers, OH – Branch 259 Accepting Scholarship Applications



Attention Branch 259 members: a \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a member of Branch 259 who qualifies. For an application and additional information, please contact: Vivian Sedlacko at 330-755-8316 or Rosemarie Yugas at 330-755-9048.

Applications must be submitted to: 17 Wilhelm Street, Struthers, OH, 44471. The deadline for submission of applications is December 29, 2017.

Fraternally yours,

Vivian Sedlacko

For news about Slovakia, Financial Tips, and more,  
find us on:  Facebook.

Visit [www.facebook.com/FirstCatholicSlovakUnion](http://www.facebook.com/FirstCatholicSlovakUnion)



## Traveling with Family to Find Family Roots

**Judith Northup Bennett,  
Branch 918**

This September's 2017 Slovakia Heritage Tour was a family affair in more ways than one with mothers, fathers, daughters, cousins and sisters coming together to find their family roots and return to the Slovak way of life they learned from their parents and grandparents. By the end of the tour, after hearing each other's stories and becoming reacquainted with many Slovak traditions, we said good bye feeling like we had traveled with our Slovak-American cousins.

Throughout the tour, we sang; danced; listened to Slovak music and admired Slovak folk crafts and the new wine at the festivals; marveled over their beautiful, livable old cities; explored castles and medieval churches; crossed dramatic and beautiful landscapes; and visited with Slovaks in small villages and larger towns.

As we learned about Slovak history and immigration to the United States, we learned first-hand from our travel group how many families went back and forth between the US and Slovakia in the early 20th century. Two of the families had fathers who were born in the United States and taken back to Slovakia as children only to be trapped in Slovakia because of World War I. These men made the fateful decision to return to the United States after the war, marry and raise their families as Slovak-Americans.

Three sisters, Marian Bruce, Irene Morse and Lorraine Trapp, fulfilled a long-held dream to return to the villages where their parents spent their childhood. Both parents were born in the US and taken back to Slovakia. They knew that their mother went to elementary school in Drienov (near Košice). They walked the streets of the town and found family names in the graveyard.

A search for their father's Drejovic family roots was more complicated with a couple

of false leads. His parents, their grandparents, had returned to Slovakia with their three young sons just before World War I. After the war the three older boys returned to the states leaving their parents and three younger siblings in Slovakia. With the help of a researcher, the sisters found their father's town, Udavske near Humenné. They visited the town registry and were able to find the graves of one of their uncles and his family.

Traveling together in their native land, the three told stories about growing up as Slovak-Americans. Marian, the oldest, remembered summer visits with her grandmother who lived on an Indiana farm preserving many of the traditions from the Old Country. On the tour, her Slovak language picked up in childhood, and assumed to be forgotten, began to flow. Marian amused Slovaks with a saying her grandmother taught her, "Ty hlúpa husia!" (you are a stupid goose.)

Margery Amato and her daughter Laura were the most successful in connecting with family and friends, visiting people in Poprad, Prešov, Bratislava and their family's small village of Údol where all of Margery's grandparents were born and her father Stefan Knapp grew up. Stefan's mother and father returned with their two young sons to make a life in Údol but World War I began. Stefan's father fled back to the US to avoid serving in the Hungarian army, leaving his wife and children behind in Údol. The family wasn't able to return to the US until 1921 when Stefan was 14 years old.

Margery and Laura walked Údol's small country streets and went off into the fields that their ancestors once worked. They were surprised by family resemblances and a feeling of closeness even though the family had lost contact decades ago. They plan to keep in touch by Facebook and email, and hope some of the younger relatives will visit the US someday.

"I was overwhelmed with how beauti-



The three sisters (L- R) Irene, Lorraine and Marian pose with Anna (far right) in Tichý Potok.

After viewing Anna's hand-weaving studio which is in her kitchen, our group was treated to Slovak kolace(cakes), and Šariš music by Anna's grandchildren.



ful Slovakia is with its mountains and farm lands. I would love to go back and see more," Margery said. She said that one of the interesting things was learning about what it was like for her family living under a communist system for four decades. "Our family is so happy to be free."

Whether it's the haunting music of the fujara or a Šariš dance tune that brings us back to a wedding or festival from our Slovak-American childhood, it's often a surprise traveling in Slovakia when we see a village garden scene, hear a voice, or taste a special food to have a rush of memories and emotions start flowing back.

The pull of Slovakia has been strong for Phyl Grich who first visited her Slovak family for a 2016 family wedding. She returned on this year's tour to get an expanded overview of Slovakia and a better understanding of

the Slovak traditions she knew as a child. She visited with her father's cousin and her family in Sabinov.

"Knowing my grandmother as a child and meeting some of her family who visited the States, I feel a strong connection that I can't explain. When I'm with them I feel like I'm back with her and my father," Phyl said. "I enjoy seeing the old customs that they're still doing today. After all these years since my grandmother left Slovakia, this is my family and it's wonderful to get to know them again."

The 2018 Slovakia Heritage Tour will be from September 7 -16, 2018. For more information, on this tour or planning a private family tour, check out our web site [www.slovakiaheritage.com](http://www.slovakiaheritage.com) or contact Judy Northup-Bennett, 978-544-5144, [slovakiaheritage-tours@gmail.com](mailto:slovakiaheritage-tours@gmail.com).



After visiting the mining museum and exploring the beautiful village of Špania Dolina...a toast with special Devin red current wine.



Two musicians from the Detva region play the fujara and talk about the shepherd traditions of that region.



Holly selects a traditional duck meal at the Modra Wine Festival.



In Sabinov, Marian talks with Tonka and her daughter Zuzka who sang for us.



Music brings us back to our childhood. A talented Orava folk music family.



Some of the Branch 716 officers and members attending the meeting at St. John Nepomucene Church.

Branch 716 President Jan Skrkon presiding over the Nov 12th meeting



### Branch 716 Elects Officers at Nov Meeting

On November 12, 2017, the St. Stephen the Martyr Society, Branch 716, held a meeting at St. John Nepomucene in New York City, to elect its officers for 2018. The official slate is as follows:

President- Jan Skrkon  
Vice-President-Nina Holy  
Recording Secretary-Joan Mary Skrkon  
Treasurer-Maria Bozekova  
Trustee-Anna Bilik  
Trustee-Serfina Surlak  
Sergeant-At-Arms- Jan Lysak

- Submitted by Joan Skrkon, Recording Secretary



# MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2017

### HOME OFFICE, INDEPENDENCE, OHIO

**OPEN MEETING:**

President Andrew Rajec opened the meeting at 9:00 AM and asked Vice President Andrew Harcar, Sr., to lead the prayer.

**ROLL CALL:**

Members attending: Andrew M. Rajec, President  
 Kenneth A. Arendt, Executive Secretary  
 Andrew R. Harcar, Sr., Vice President  
 George F. Matta II, Treasurer  
 Sabina Sabados, Regional Director via teleconference  
 (by invitation of the President)

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES:**

The Executive Secretary presented the minutes of the September 2017 Executive Committee Meeting. A motion was made by Andrew R. Harcar, Sr., and seconded by George F. Matta II, to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**AQS MANAGEMENT, INC.:**

Larry White, representing AQS Management, Inc., presented an extensive Investment Portfolio Transaction Report by telephone and Webex to the Executive Committee. Each member of the Committee received a copy of the presentation in advance for his/her review. Following the report, Mr. White answered the Committee's questions.

Larry White led a discussion regarding repositioning our portfolio to improve our IMR (Interest Maintenance Reserve) by the end of year.

Larry White presented a list of bonds to the Executive Committee for possible liquidation to improve our IMR position.

The President asked Larry White his opinion concerning our equity positions.

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT:**Investment Updates

The Executive Secretary submitted a written report to the Executive Committee on the investments and transactions with the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB), UBS, MAI Fund, and Clutterbuck Fund. Following the report, the Executive Secretary answered the Executive Committee's questions.

Portfolio Review

The Executive Secretary updated the Executive Committee on the report from our portfolio custodian, Key Bank, found everything in order, and answered the Committee's questions.

The President stated we will have presentations from our three equity fund managers, Clutterbuck, MAI and UBS.

Mortgages and Overdue Mortgages

The Executive Secretary presented the report for the month of September for the Committee's review and answered their questions.

Monthly Disbursements

The Executive Secretary reported that the following disbursements were incurred and paid during the month of September:

Disbursements for the month of September 2017:	
Death Benefits & Accumulations	\$ 156,851.30
Cash Withdrawals & Accumulations	\$ 33,366.12
Matured Endowments & Accumulations	\$ 0.00
Trust Fund	\$ 0.00

The Executive Secretary also presented the Membership and Annuity Report. The Executive Committee reviewed the remainder of the disbursements and the Executive Secretary answered all questions.

The Executive Secretary stated we are preparing to file our 3rd Quarter Financial Statement and gave a preliminary report of our financial statement.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

The Treasurer gave a written report on the investment update to the Executive Committee and answered the Committee's questions.

The Treasurer led a discussion on our Investment Policy based on the recommendations of Larry White.

The President stated the Committee will review the Investment Policy and it will be discussed at the Board of Directors Meeting.

**ECONOMIC OVERVIEW:**Annuity Rates:

The President led an extensive review of the current annuity rates. It was decided the rates remain the same and be reviewed at the next Executive Committee meetings in November and December.

**SALES AND MARKETING:**

The Vice President gave a production report on our agents. He stated we are still recruiting and adding new agents, and at present have 289 agents. The Home Office is sending the independent agents monthly updates on our products, in addition to frequent phone contacts by Andrew P. Rajec, Director of Independent Agents.

The Vice President stated that our in-house marketing team is working with the marketing firm on completing a promotional video that should be completed by the end of the year. The Vice President stated we will have a preliminary video to view at the next Board of Directors meeting. This video will be available in both English and Slovak.

The Executive Secretary stated that our extensive recruitment program to increase our number of independent agents is still in progress. Emails along with postcards are being sent to potential agents in the states we are licensed in to inform them who we are, our rates, and the products we offer. Our plan is to eventually run this program in the 27 states we are licensed in. Much depends on our future insurance and annuity goals.

The Executive Secretary gave an update on the IRS approval for FCSU to act as a passive or non-passive nonbank trustee or custodian of health savings accounts and as a passive or non-passive nonbank custodian of Coverdell education savings accounts. The Home Office is in the process of setting up the plans with a target to present the plan in January 2018. Staff training is scheduled to take place before implementation. A description of the plans will be sent to the Board of Directors before being marketed.

The Vice President gave an update on the 2017 Membership Meet, a 7 day cruise to the Eastern Caribbean aboard Allure of the Seas being held November 12-19, 2017. He stated we have an excellent turnout and is in the process of planning activities.

The Vice President stated he is in the process of creating an incentive program for our agents to increase our annuity and insurance sales.

The Vice President stated he is working with our in-house marketing team to come up with new ideas to help our branches setup and promote fraternal activities within their branch. They are also working on ideas to improve communication between the Home Office and the branches to educate them on our insurance and annuity products.

**MIDDLETOWN PROPERTY:**

The President led a review of the proposals we received on our property in Middletown. The President stated we are waiting on more information on the two preliminary proposals we received. When we receive the final proposals the Board of Directors will be notified.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

The President stated we will have presentations this afternoon from our three equity managers; Bob Clutterbuck from Clutterbuck, Seth Shalov from MAI and Sean Hardy from UBS.

Each broker gave an extensive review of our investments and presented possible new investments that we may take advantage of.

**REQUESTS FOR ADS AND DONATIONS:**

Requests for donations and ads were reviewed and acted upon.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Kenneth A. Arendt and seconded by Andrew R. Harcar, Sr., to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Vice President Andrew R. Harcar, Sr., closed the meeting with prayer.

Andrew M. Rajec  
President

Kenneth A. Arendt  
Executive Secretary

## Miss Slovakia 2017, A Treasures of Slovakia Tour "Find"



Meet Miss Slovakia, Vanessa Bottanova, a 19 year-old student who represented her country in the 2017 Miss Universe Pageant shown on FOX TV the evening of November 26, 2017.

We have a connection! Sue Podhorsky Corbin, Gloria Podhorsky Streeter, and others in the family came on our 2008 Treasures of Slovakia Tour. We found lots of long-lost family for them in a number of western Slovak villages including the Bottan family in Vistuk who now live in Piestany.

The American Podhorskys are connected through Gisele Bottan, their grandmother. Little did anyone dream on that first visit that Vanessa would be chosen Miss Slovakia for the Miss Universe Pageant.

While her family in Slovakia wasn't able to attend the Pageant, three generations of the "new" American family – Sue and Mike Corbin, daughter Erica Weier, and Erica's daughters Sydney and Delaney –planned to be there November 26th in Las Vegas, NV, waving many mini Slovak flags to cheer Vanessa on.

When you go hunting for family you never know what you will find!

- Submitted by Helene Cincebeaux, Branch 278



Statement as of September 30, 2017 of the **FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA & CANADA**  
**ASSETS**

	Current Statement Date			4 December 31 Prior Year Net Admitted Assets
	1 Assets	2 Nonadmitted Assets	3 Net Admitted Assets (Cols. 1 - 2)	
1. Bonds.....	352,287,124		352,287,124	342,319,430
2. Stocks:				
2.1 Preferred stocks.....			0	
2.2 Common stocks.....	2,461,133		2,461,133	2,436,201
3. Mortgage loans on real estate:				
3.1 First liens.....	666,770		666,770	834,868
3.2 Other than first liens.....			0	
4. Real estate:				
4.1 Properties occupied by the company (less \$.....0 encumbrances).....	846,357		846,357	894,327
4.2 Properties held for the production of income (less \$.....0 encumbrances).....	626,354		626,354	655,649
4.3 Properties held for sale (less \$.....0 encumbrances).....	755,821		755,821	755,821
5. Cash (\$.....14,834,774), cash equivalents (\$.....1,993,222) and short-term investments (\$.....7,985,479).....	24,813,475		24,813,475	23,961,405
6. Contract loans (including \$.....0 premium notes).....	1,078,587		1,078,587	1,118,825
7. Derivatives.....			0	
8. Other invested assets.....	4,961,038		4,961,038	4,752,203
9. Receivables for securities.....			0	
10. Securities lending reinvested collateral assets.....			0	
11. Aggregate write-ins for invested assets.....	0	0	0	0
12. Subtotals, cash and invested assets (Lines 1 to 11).....	388,496,659	0	388,496,659	377,728,729
13. Title plants less \$.....0 charged off (for Title insurers only).....			0	
14. Investment income due and accrued.....	4,964,445		4,964,445	4,632,409
15. Premiums and considerations:				
15.1 Uncollected premiums and agents' balances in the course of collection.....	21,965		21,965	18,990
15.2 Deferred premiums, agents' balances and installments booked but deferred and not yet due (including \$.....0 earned but unbilled premiums).....			0	
15.3 Accrued retrospective premiums (\$.....0) and contracts subject to redetermination (\$.....0).....			0	
16. Reinsurance:				
16.1 Amounts recoverable from reinsurers.....			0	
16.2 Funds held by or deposited with reinsured companies.....			0	
16.3 Other amounts receivable under reinsurance contracts.....			0	
17. Amounts receivable relating to uninsured plans.....			0	
18.1 Current federal and foreign income tax recoverable and interest thereon.....			0	
18.2 Net deferred tax asset.....			0	
19. Guaranty funds receivable or on deposit.....			0	
20. Electronic data processing equipment and software.....			0	
21. Furniture and equipment, including health care delivery assets (\$.....0).....	8,514	8,514	0	(0)
22. Net adjustment in assets and liabilities due to foreign exchange rates.....			0	
23. Receivables from parent, subsidiaries and affiliates.....			0	
24. Health care (\$.....0) and other amounts receivable.....			0	
25. Aggregate write-ins for other than invested assets.....	550	550	0	0
26. Total assets excluding Separate Accounts, Segregated Accounts and Protected Cell Accounts (Lines 12 through 25).....	393,492,133	9,064	393,483,069	382,380,128
27. From Separate Accounts, Segregated Accounts and Protected Cell Accounts.....			0	
28. Total (Lines 26 and 27).....	393,492,133	9,064	393,483,069	382,380,128



Statement as of September 30, 2017 of the **FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA**  
**LIABILITIES, SURPLUS AND OTHER FUNDS**

	1 Current Statement Date	2 December 31 Prior Year
1. Aggregate reserve for life contracts (including \$.....0 Modco Reserve).....	310,091,000	302,291,581
2. Aggregate reserve for accident and health contracts (including \$.....0 Modco Reserve).....		
3. Liability for deposit-type contracts (including \$.....0 Modco Reserve).....	42,037,937	41,098,805
4. Contract claims:		
4.1 Life.....	300,000	300,000
4.2 Accident and health.....		
5. Refunds due and unpaid.....		
6. Provisions for refunds payable in following calendar year - estimated amounts:		
6.1 Apportioned for payment.....	400,000	400,000
6.2 Not yet apportioned.....		
7. Premiums and annuity considerations for life and accident and health contracts received in advance less \$.....0 discount; including \$.....0 accident and health premiums.....	45,672	60,668
8. Certificate and contract liabilities not included elsewhere:		
8.1 Surrender values on canceled contracts.....		
8.2 Other amounts payable on reinsurance including \$.....0 assumed and \$.....0 ceded.....		
8.3 Interest maintenance reserve (IMR).....	682,570	753,160
9. Commissions to fieldworkers due or accrued - life and annuity contracts \$.....0, accident and health \$.....0 and deposit-type contract funds \$.....0.....	13,155	19,208
10. Commissions and expense allowances payable on reinsurance assumed.....		
11. General expenses due or accrued.....	42,784	67,352
12. Transfers to Separate Accounts due or accrued (net) (including \$.....0 accrued for expense allowances recognized in reserves).....		
13. Taxes, licenses and fees due or accrued.....	18,072	18,072
14. Unearned investment income.....		
15. Amounts withheld or retained by Society as agent or trustee.....	5,929,447	5,292,048
16. Amounts held for fieldworkers' account, including \$.....0 fieldworkers' credit balances.....		
17. Remittances and items not allocated.....		
18. Net adjustment in assets and liabilities due to foreign exchange rates.....	9,511	9,511
19. Liability for benefits for employees and fieldworkers if not included above.....		
20. Borrowed money \$.....0 and interest thereon \$.....0.....		
21. Miscellaneous liabilities:		
21.1 Asset valuation reserve.....	2,809,703	2,607,558
21.2 Reinsurance in unauthorized and certified (\$.....0) companies.....		
21.3 Funds held under reinsurance treaties with unauthorized and certified (\$.....0) reinsurers.....		
21.4 Payable to subsidiaries and affiliates.....		
21.5 Drafts outstanding.....		
21.6 Funds held under coinsurance.....		
21.7 Derivatives.....		
21.8 Payable for securities.....		521,933
21.9 Payable for securities lending.....		
22. Aggregate write-ins for liabilities.....	1,190,835	840,835
23. Total liabilities excluding Separate Accounts business (Lines 1 to 22).....	363,570,686	354,280,731
24. From Separate Accounts Statement.....		
25. Total liabilities (Lines 23 to 24).....	363,570,686	354,280,731
26. Aggregate write-ins for other than liabilities and surplus funds.....	0	0
27. Surplus notes.....		
28. Aggregate write-ins for surplus funds.....	0	0
29. Unassigned funds.....	29,912,383	28,099,397
30. Total (Lines 26 through 29) (including \$.....0 in Separate Accounts Statement).....	29,912,383	28,099,397
31. Totals (Lines 25 + 30) (Page 2, Line 28, Col. 3).....	393,483,069	382,380,128



Statement as of September 30, 2017 of the **FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA**  
**SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS**

	1 Current Year To Date	2 Prior Year To Date	3 Prior Year Ended December 31
1. Premiums and annuity considerations for life and accident and health contracts.....	14,993,448	16,317,359	21,457,823
2. Considerations for supplementary contracts with life contingencies.....			
3. Net investment income.....	12,021,839	11,993,354	15,527,524
4. Amortization of Interest Maintenance Reserve (IMR).....	300,000	325,000	584,693
5. Separate Accounts net gain from operations excluding unrealized gains and losses.....			
6. Commissions and expense allowances on reinsurance ceded.....			
7. Reserve adjustments on reinsurance ceded.....			
8. Miscellaneous income:			
8.1 Income from fees associated with investment management, administration and contract guarantees from Separate Accounts.....			
8.2 Charges and fees for deposit-type contracts.....			
8.3 Aggregate write-ins for miscellaneous income.....	4,992	46,574	56,936
9. Totals (Lines 1 to 8.3).....	27,320,279	28,682,287	37,626,976
10. Death benefits.....	2,026,270	1,809,207	2,386,321
11. Matured endowments (excluding guaranteed annual pure endowments).....			
12. Annuity benefits.....	12,208,176	11,053,158	14,573,618
13. Disability benefits and benefits under accident and health contracts including premiums waived \$.....0.....			
14. Surrender benefits and withdrawals for life contracts.....	409,710	357,379	503,013
15. Interest and adjustments on contract or deposit-type contract funds.....	125,564	115,392	154,320
16. Payments on supplementary contracts with life contingencies.....			
17. Increase in aggregate reserve for life and accident and health contracts.....	7,799,419	11,129,883	14,671,464
18. Totals (Lines 10 to 17).....	22,569,139	24,465,019	32,288,736
19. Commissions on premiums, annuity considerations and deposit-type contract funds (direct business only).....	234,896	208,993	273,703
20. Commissions and expense allowances on reinsurance assumed.....			
21. General insurance expenses and fraternal expenses.....	2,474,800	2,464,210	2,923,796
22. Insurance taxes, licenses and fees.....	72,083	109,856	127,367
23. Increase in loading on deferred and uncollected premiums.....			
24. Net transfers to or (from) Separate Accounts net of reinsurance.....			
25. Aggregate write-ins for deductions.....	(38,238)	(273,071)	(390,690)
26. Totals (Lines 18 to 25).....	25,312,680	26,975,007	35,222,912
27. Net gain from operations before refunds to members (Line 9 minus Line 26).....	2,007,599	1,707,280	2,404,064
28. Refunds to members.....	301,673	296,458	413,708
29. Net gain from operations after refunds to members and before realized capital gains (losses) (Line 27 minus Line 28).....	1,705,926	1,410,822	1,990,356
30. Net realized capital gains (losses) less capital gains tax of .....0 (excluding \$.....229,410 transferred to the IMR).....	91,392	(11,616)	(164,465)
31. Net income (Lines 29 + 30).....	1,797,318	1,399,206	1,825,891
<b>SURPLUS ACCOUNT</b>			
32. Surplus, December 31, prior year.....	28,099,397	26,397,416	26,397,416
33. Net income from operations (Line 31).....	1,797,318	1,399,206	1,825,891
34. Change in net unrealized capital gains (losses) less capital gains tax of \$.....0.....	215,071	144,525	358,567
35. Change in net unrealized foreign exchange capital gain (loss).....			
36. Change in nonadmitted assets.....	2,189	2,189	2,919
37. Change in liability for reinsurance in unauthorized and certified companies.....			
38. Change in reserve on account of change in valuation basis (increase) or decrease.....			
39. Change in asset valuation reserve.....	(202,145)	(136,342)	(415,908)
40. Surplus (contributed to) withdrawn from Separate Accounts during period.....			
41. Other changes in surplus in Separate Accounts Statement.....			
42. Change in surplus notes.....			
43. Cumulative effect of changes in accounting principles.....			
44. Change in surplus as a result of reinsurance.....			
45. Aggregate write-ins for gains and losses in surplus.....	553	1,571	(69,488)
46. Net change in surplus for the year (Lines 33 through 45).....	1,812,986	1,411,149	1,701,981
47. Surplus as of statement date (Lines 32 + 46).....	29,912,383	27,808,565	28,099,397



## Správy zo Slovenska

### Slováci sa najviac boja terorizmu, sociálnej nerovnosti i úpadku škôl

Temné myšlienky nad budúcnosťou vyvolávajú u Slovákov najviac hrozby terorizmu, prehľbovania sociálnych rozdielov v spoločnosti a tiež stagnácia a úpadok slovenského školstva. Vyplýva to z reprezentatívneho výskumu Inštitútu pre verejné otázky (IVO). „Obavy z terorizmu pociťuje 73 percent respondentov, prehľbovania sociálnych rozdielov sa bojí 71 percent opýtaných a stagnáciu a úpadok školstva ako vážny problém do budúcnosti vníma 65 percent tých, ktorí v prieskume odpovedali,“ informovala Zora Bútorová z IVO. Okrem „domácich hrozieb“ majú Slováci obavy aj z vývoja za hranicami SR. „Možného oslabenia Európskej únie (EÚ) sa v prieskume obávalo 52 percent respondentov, 47 percent z nich videlo riziko v pokračujúcom konflikte medzi Ruskom a Ukrajinou a 41 percent v dezinformačnej kampani, ktorú vedie Rusko proti Západu,“ dodala Bútorová.

### V aktuálnom úniku informácií je približne 3500 dokumentov týkajúcich sa Slovákov

V rozsiahlej databáze nedávno uniknutých finančných dokumentov o osobách a podnikoch investujúcich svoj majetok v tzv. daňových rajoch (kauza Paradise Papers) sú aj dokumenty týkajúce sa priamo Slovákov. V práve aktuálnom úniku informácií je i približne 3500 dokumentov, ktoré sa týkajú Slovenska.

Tri a pol tisíc dokumentov je naozaj veľa, to nie sú iba jednotlivci, to je mix ako firiem, tak jednotlivcov. Dokumenty sa vzťahujú na časové obdobie od 90. rokov 20. storočia do roku 2016. Novú rozsiahlu databázu uniknutých finančných dokumentov označovaných ako Paradise Papers, ktorá poskytuje dôkazy o nezverejňovaných investíciách veľkých nadnárodných spoločností, ale i významných politikov v tzv. daňových rajoch, zverejnilo Medzinárodné konzorcium pre investigatívnu žurnalistiku (ICIJ).

### Archeológovia sa pochválili objavenými pokladmi mincí

Verejnosť, ale i žiaci základných škôl a stredných škôl využili v stredu 8. novembra Deň otvorených dverí (DOD) v nitrianskom Archeologickom ústave (AU), aby sa zoznámili s výsledkami práce slovenských vedcov. Kým po minulé roky vedci prezentovali predovšetkým moderné prístroje a technológie, ktoré pri výskume využívajú, tento rok sa vo väčšej miere pochválili aj samotnými nálezmi. Návštevníci mohli vidieť aj jeden z najnovších objavov archeológov. Je ním poklad pozostávajúci celkovo z 870 strieborných a strieborno-medených mincí, ktoré boli nájdené v auguste tohto roku v obci Lučivná. Sú v ňom zastúpené uhorské, rakúske, tirolské, štajerské, české a sliezské platidlá Leopolda I. v hodnotách 15-grajciar až duarius. Poklad mal v čase ukrytia hodnotu asi 1200 grajciarov, teda 12 až 15 zlatých, čo bol asi trojmesačný plat bežného človeka.

### Na stretnutie študentov drevárstva a lesníctva prišlo 165 účastníkov z 18 krajín

Séria odborných prednášok, prehliadka závodov, návšteva Lesníckeho a drevárskeho múzea vo Zvolene a mnoho iného bolo pripraveného pre celkovo 165 účastníkov podujatia Interfob 2017 Slovakia. Tí pricestovali z 18 európskych krajín. Najväčšie stretnutie študentov lesníctva a drevárstva organizujú študenti Technickej univerzity vo Zvolene (TUZVO) a prebiehala v novembri striedavo v Liptovskom Mikuláši a vo Zvolene. Súčasťou stretnutia boli aj prehliadky niektorých drevospracujúcich a lesníckych závodov. Vo štvrtok ešte prebieha v Liptovskom Mikuláši workshop. Interfob pomáha vytvárať partnerstvá a spolupráce naprieč Európou a prepája študentov v odvetví lesníctva a drevárstva. Podujatie sa koná pod záštitou prezidenta Slovenskej rektorskej konferencie a rektora Technickej univerzity vo Zvolene Rudolfa Kropila a Študentskej rady vysokých škôl Slovenskej republiky.

### Najmenší národný park PIENAP oslavuje 50 rokov

Najmenší národný park na Slovensku, Pieninský národný park (PIENAP), oslavuje 50. výročie svojho vzniku. Pri tejto príležitosti nedávno v Červenom Kláštore ocenil minister životného prostredia László Sólymos prácu miestnych ochranárov a zdôraznil ich status v spoločnosti. „Je to krásne výročie, ale vieme, že ten príbeh už začal oveľa skôr, v roku 1932 bola vyhlásená prvá slovenská prírodná rezervácia v Pieninách ako prvá v Európe,“ zhodnotil minister. V Červenom Kláštore ocenil tých, ktorí sa zaslúžili o rozvoj a ochranu prírodného bohatstva Pienin. „Za tie roky je badať zmeny v našom národnom parku. Len keď si vezmeme Haligovské skaly, ktoré boli v minulosti doslova priznané, chýbal tam les. Ľudia žili v tomto regióne, starali sa o krajinu, teraz vidíme na zarastajúcich lúkach a biotopoch, že ľudia z regiónu zutekali. Jedna vec je mať národný park, ale žiadna správa národného parku nemôže mať dostatok ľudí na to, aby zmanažovala takéto územie. Je tam potrebný človek, ktorý tam žije. Ak to tu chceme zachovať, musia tu ľudia žiť a vrátiť sa k tradičnému spôsobu obhospodarovania krajiny,“ konštatoval riaditeľ Správy PIENAP-u Vladimír Klč. Podľa neho vzhľad krajiny má vplyv aj na turizmus.

### Bratislava a Miláno sú na čele uchádzačov o liekovú agentúru EÚ

Bratislava a Miláno sú na čele uchádzačov o získanie sídla Európskej agentúry pre lieky (EMA) po brexite. Uvádza to začiatkom novembra britský denník Financial Times s tým, že ide o tvrdý lobingový zápas, ktorý tento mesiac vyvrcholí. Denník cituje vysokopostavených diplomatov, podľa ktorých ponuky Slovenska a Talianska vyčnievajú v tomto súboji 19 krajín. Silnými uchádzačmi sú aj Amsterdam a Kodaň. EMA so sídlom v Londýne sa pokladá za kľúčovú v korune viac ako 40 špecializovaných agentúr Európskej únie a ministri majú rozhodnúť o jej novom sídle v tajnom hlasovaní 20. novembra, pripomínajú Financial Times. Agentúra má 900 zamestnancov na plný úväzok a hrá dôležitú úlohu pri schvaľovaní nových liekov na trh EÚ. Diplomati hovoria, že bratislavská ponuka zaujala aj napriek tomu, že viac ako 70 percent zamestnancov by dalo podľa agentúry výpoveď, ak by sa presťahovala do slovenskej metropoly. Slovenskú ponuku považujú predstavitelia za najsilnejšiu zo strednej a východnej Európy - regiónu, kde nie je umiestnených tak veľa európskych agentúr.

### Najčítanejším denníkom je Nový Čas, týždenníkom Plus 7 dní

Najčítanejšími celoštátnymi denníkmi v druhom a treťom kvartáli roku 2017 boli Nový Čas, Pravda a Plus jeden deň. Vyplýva to z najnovšieho prieskumu MML-TGI, ktorý predstavila spoločnosť Median SK.

Nový Čas si udržal prvú pozíciu s 15 percentami. Čítanosť na úrovni šesť percent majú denníky Pravda a Plus jeden deň. Nasleduje denník Sme s piatimi percentami a Šport so štyrmi percentami. Korzár a Hospodárske noviny majú čítanosť troch percent populácie vo veku 14 - 79 rokov. Najčítanejším týždenníkom je Plus 7 dní so siedmimi percentami. Šesťpercentnú čítanosť má týždenník Báječná žena. Život a Nový Čas pre ženy majú päť percent. Štyri percentná obyvateľov Slovenska čítajú Eurotelevíziu. Týždenníky Slovenska a Katolícke noviny majú trojpercentnú čítanosť. Sieť týždenníkov Regionálne noviny (regionPRESS) dosiahla desať percent a sieť Petit Press MY noviny päťpercentnú čítanosť. Najčítanejším titulom medzi dvojtyždenníkmi je TV max s piatimi percentami. Nasledujú Tele plus, Bratislavské noviny a Relax s dvomi percentami. Dvojtyždenníky Stop i Žena a Život dosiahli jednopercenťnú čítanosť.

### Výber zo slovenskej tlače

## Matica slovenská je na rázcestí a prechádza generačnou výmenou

### Novým predsedom Matice slovenskej je Marián Gešper

Marián Gešper po svojom zvolení dvojtretinovou väčšinou hlasov (258 hlasov, 67,01 percenta) uviedol, že „Matica slovenská je národná a kultúrna inštitúcia. Nebudeme sa zaoberať kontroverznými témami. Budeme sa zaoberať a propagovať preverené historické udalosti a osobnosti, ktoré pozitívne vplývajú na náš národný rozvoj. Viac musíme podporovať aj kultúru, hlavne folklór. Pod našimi krídlami pôsobi vyše dvestoštyridsať folklórnych a umeleckých kolektívov. Na tie sa chcem zamerať. To je naša výkladná skriňa.“ Pred samotnou voľbou sa valné zhromaždenie stotožnilo s výkladom dozorného výboru MS, že M. Tkáč už absolvoval druhé funkčné obdobie a podľa stanov MS nemohol kandidovať tretíkrát. Bývalý predseda síce predniesol iný právny výklad, s ktorým sa však matičiari nestotožnili. Na predsedu teda kandidoval len M. Gešper a Roman Michelko, súčasný člen predsedníctva Matice.



## Demokracia je krehká, má veľa nepriateľov a nie je zadarmo

Demokracia je krehká, má veľa nepriateľov a nie je zadarmo. Mladí považujú dnešok za samozrejmosť, nechce sa im študovať minulosť, čo pomáha nárastu extrémizmu. Upozornil na to slovenský minister zahraničných vecí Miroslav Lajčák (nom. Smeru-SD) na sociálnej sieti rezortu diplomacie v súvislosti s výročím Nežnej revolúcie 17. novembra.

„Demokracia je predovšetkým o zodpovednosti za ochranu výdobytkov, ktoré sa nám podarilo dosiahnuť. Je o pripomínaní si, že je krehká a má veľa nepriateľov. Ale hlavne je o uvedomení si, v každej ďalšej generácii, že nie je zadarmo,“ píše Lajčák na profile rezortu zahraničia.

Demokracia je podľa jeho slov aj o dodržiavaní pravidiel, vyznávaní hodnôt a rešpekte voči právam vlastným i druhých. „Ak je niečo, v čom naozaj značne zaostávame, tak je to vzdelávanie nastupujúcich generácií, ktoré dnešok považujú za samozrejmosť, pretože sa im nechce študovať minulosť. Pomáhajú tak spoluvytvárať hrozbu jej zopakovania, čoho dôkazom je okrem iného nárast popularity extrémistických strán v Európe,“ zdôraznil.

Poukázal, že dnes si spolu s našimi susedmi pripomíname Nežnú revolúciu, Deň boja za slobodu a demokraciu, ktorý sa spája aj s Medzinárodným dňom študentstva. Odpor proti totalitnej moci počas druhej svetovej vojny si 17. novembra podľa Lajčáka pripomínajú študenti na celom svete. Rezort diplomacie pripomína, že komunizmus na desaťročia výrazne ovplyvnil obe krajiny, kedysi aj spoločnú Československú socialistickú republiku.



Miroslav Lajčák

TASR

## Vianočné zamyslenie

Pokračovanie zo str. 28

zmeniť svoj život k lepšiemu. Niektorí kresťania však stále zostávajú v tomto stave duchovného počatia Ježiša, ale neprinesú ho a neporodia na svet, a musíme to s bolesťou konštatovať, že čoskoro po Vianociach ho potratia. Kristus nemôže v nich žiť, lebo akonáhle skončia Vianočné sviatky, už si vedome a dobrovoľne volia úplne iný štýl života a to „život ovládaný hriechom“.

Duchovní otcovia hovoria: „Počína Ježiša, ale neporodí ho ten, kto počuje Slovo Božie, ale nepraktikuje ho. Ten prevádza jeden duchovný potrat za druhým, robí si predsavzatie, že sa obráti, ale potom na toto svoje predsavzatie sústavne zabúda a necháva ho neuskutočnené. Dá sa o takomto človeku povedať, že je to síce človek, ktorý má vieru, ale chýbajú mu skutky.“

Zamyslime sa nad určitými chybami duchovného života, ktorých sa niektorí kresťania dopúšťajú. Skutočné a sväté prijímanie je len to, ktoré je trvalé. Vôbec nejde v našom duchovnom živote o to, aby sme si raz po prípade dvakrát do roka splnili svoju povinnosť voči Bohu a láskavo išli na spoveď a na chvíľu prijali Ježiša do seba. Boh nechce od nás láskavosť ale lásku. Vo svätom prijímaní ide o naplnenie prikázania lásky k Bohu. Sväté prijímanie, ak nie je a nemá byť aktom trvalého odovzdania, tak potom vôbec nie je sväté, ale môže to byť len Judášov bozk. Zrada Krista. Ísť na svätú omšu a nehľadať možnosť stretnutia s Kristom vo sviatosti, je ako dohodnuté rande, na ktorom dievča oznámi svojmu chlapcovi, že ho už nechce, že si našla iného.

Pre tých, ktorí to s Kristom myslia skutočne vážne, sú určené tieto slová. Uvažujme teraz o pozitívnom prípade pravého a úplného materstva, ktoré nás robí podobnými Panne Márii. Sv. Bonaventúra, hovorí, že duša počína Ježiša, keď je nespokojná so životom, aký vedie, a pod vplyvom svätých vnuknutí a zapálená svätým žiarom sa konečne rázne odtrhne od svojich starých návykov a chýb a je akoby duchovne oplodnená milosťou Ducha Svätého dá si predsavzatie, že začne nový život. Došlo ku Kristovmu počatiu.

Keď bol požehnaný Boží Syn počatý, narodí sa v srdci, ale len vtedy, ak duša všetko rozumne uvažila, vyžiadala si vhodnú radu a vyzývala Boha o pomoc a ihneď uskutoční svoje sväté predsavzatie a začne uskutočňovať to, čo v nej už dávno zrelo, ale sa to stále odkladalo z obavy, že nie je k tomu súca. Ale jedno musíme zdôrazniť: Toto predsavzatie „začať nový život“ sa musí ihneď prejavovať niečím konkrétnym. Ak nie je predsavzatie uskutočnené, bol síce Ježiš počatý, ale nebol zrodený. Ide o jeden z mnohých duchovných potratov. Je to jeden z toľkých odkladov, ktorými je pretkaný náš život a ktoré sú hlavným dôvodom, prečo je tak málo svätých.“

Svoju úvahu zakončím výzvou sv. Augustína: „Matka ho nosila v lone, my ho nosíme v srdci. Panna otehotnela keď sa v nej vteliť Kristus, naše srdce nech otehotnie vierou v Krista. Ona porodila Spasiteľa, naša duša nech porodí spásu a chválu. Nech nezostanú naše duše neplodné, ale nech sa stanú plodnými pre Boha.“

**Nech vianočné sviatky prehĺbia vašu radosť a istotu z viery, že narodené Dieťa v jasiach je Emanuel – Boh s nami. Nech vás On sám v dnešný deň naplní hlbokým pokojom a nech vás sprevádza svojim požehnaním na cestách vášho života. Toto Vám všetkým vyprosujeme a prajeme k vianočným sviatkom my bratia menší.**

Františkáni.sk



# Oznámenia spolkov a spoločenské podujatia

## Aktivity v Slovenskej záhrade vo Winter Park, Florida

Slovenská záhrada (SZ) v mestečku Winter Park, v blízkosti Orlanda, je v tomto čase jediným centrom slovenského života vo Floride. Každoročne usporiada niekoľko kultúrnych a spoločenských podujatí, ktoré prilákajú Slovákov aj zo vzdialenejších miest vo Floride, ba aj z iných amerických štátov.

Na **sobotu, 9. decembra** pripraví vedenie SZ bohatú predvianočnú večeru (viliu) s tradičnými štedrovečernými pochúťkami. Začiatok o 2. hod. popoludní. Slovenská záhrada pozýva na tieto podujatia širšiu slovenskú verejnosť, vrátane sezónnych návštevníkov zo „severu“. Informácie o týchto podujatiach a o členstve v SZ možno dostať na tel. č. 407-677-6894, alebo cez e-mail: slovakgarden@centurylink.net

## Výročná schôdza Okresu Msgr. Krasuľu č. 16

Výročná schôdza okresu Mons.Štefana Krasuľu č. 16 sa bude konať v **nedeľu 10. decembra 2017** na fare Kostola sv. Jána Nepomuckého, 411 E 66th Street, New York, NY, hneď po slovenskej sv. omši o 10:15. Na programe budú hlásenia spolkov, finančná správa, voľby úradníkov na ďalšie obdobie a plán činnosti na rok 2018. Pozývame všetkých členov spolkov 41, 45 a 716, aby sa zúčastnili tejto schôdzy. Zástupcovia iných Okresov sú tiež vítaní. Po schôdzi bude občerstvenie. Slovenská sv. omša o 10:15 bude za Jozefa Bilika, bývalého predsedu spolku č. 716 FCSU.

## 1. zbor SLvA v NYC pozýva na oslavu 110. výročia SLvA 10. decembra

Najstarší zbor Slovenskej ligy v Amerike – 1. zbor v New Yorku, pripravuje oslavu 110. výročia existencie Slovenskej ligy v **nedeľu 10. decembra t.r.** v spoločenskej hale slovenského kostola Sv. Jána Nepomuckého (First Ave a 66th Street).

Výbor 1. zboru pripravuje v spolupráci s predstavenstvom Slovenskej ligy zaujímavý program. Slávnosť sa začne o 12.30. hod. popoludní. Na oslave sa bude podávať ľahší obed a občerstvenie. Vstup na oslavu je voľný.

## Slovakia – ročník 2017

Slovenská liga oznamuje, že v týchto dňoch vyšiel ďalší ročník Slovakia – ročník 2017 (Volume XCVIII). Toto vydanie má 171 strán a obsahuje bohatý výber príspevkov na rôzne témy so vzťahom na slovenskú históriu, kultúru a literatúru. Slovakiu si možno objednať za \$10.00. V tejto sume je zahrnuté aj poštovné.

## Štedrá večera vo farskej hale Kostola sv. Jána Nepomuckého v NY

V **nedeľu 17. decembra** bude kostolnej hale Kostola sv. Jána Nepomuckého podávaná Štedrá večera. Začiatok bude o 12.30 hodine. Vstupné je \$20.00 za osobu. Bližšie informácie a rezervácie na telefón 347-277-6433, alebo na farskom úrade počas pracovnej doby na čísle 212-734-4613.

## Slovenský ples v

## Royal Manor, Garfield, NJ.

Slovensko-americké kultúrne centrum vás srdečne pozýva na podujatie roka - 25. výročný slovenský ples v **sobotu 10. februára 2018** v The Royal Manor, Garfield, NJ. Koktejllová hodina začína o 19.00 hod., po ktorej nasleduje večera a tanec. Živá hudba orchestra Express Band. Organizátori pripravujú zaujímavý program a bohatú tombolu. Vstupenky na tel. číslo 973-357-1209. Bližšie informácie na adrese: slovak-americancc.org

Sabina Sabados, predsedníčka

## Jankolova knižnica opäť

## ponúka tradičné Vianočné oplátky

Tradičné slovenské vianočné oplátky, sú opäť k dispozícii túto sviatočnú sezónu od Sestier SS. Cyrila a Metoda v Jankolovej knižnici a Slovenské múzeum v Danville, Pa. Objednávky prijímajú od 23. októbra do 15. decembra 2017. Oplátky stoja \$5,00 za balík. Okrem toho, za manipuláciu a poštovné je \$7,00. Ďalšie informácie sú k dispozícii v Jankolovej knižnici alebo u Sestry Catherine Laboure Bresnock, SS.C.M., riaditeľka tel. 570 275-5606 alebo napíšte do Jankola Library and Slovak Museum, 580 Railroad Street, Villa Sacred Heart, Danville, PA 17821-1698.

# Korene amerických Slovákov

## Motto:

*Keď sa Slovák preč do sveta uberal, pod  
Machnáčom na tom vršku zavolal.  
Zavolal on na tom vršku po dvakrát:  
zbohom, otec, zbohom, matí, sestra, brat*

Keď prišla zvesť, že v r. 1492 objavil Krištof Kolumbus Ameriku, vyplávali tam aj iní námorníci a neskôr aj odvážni a podnikaví ľudia, kupci, obchodníci... Medzi prvými odvážlivcami, ktorí tam prichádzali, boli ľudia z ostrovných a prímorských štátov ako: Anglicko, Írsko, Španielsko, Portugalsko, Francúzsko, Nemecko, Švédsko, Nórsko, Dánsko... Zakladali si tam osady, kolónie, začali obrábať pôdu a pestovať najnutnejšie potraviny potrebné pre živobytie.

Neskôr, so začínajúcim a postupne sa rozvíjajúcim priemyslom, hlavne baníctvom a strojárstvom, pociťoval nedostatok pracovných síl. A tie začali prichádzať nielen z afrického kontinentu, ale už aj z európskeho vnútrozemia, teda aj zo Slovenska, ktoré bolo v tom čase súčasťou Rakúsko-Uhorskej monarchie.

Prví Slováci sa v USA objavili asi pred 400 rokmi (cesta loďou tam trvala 14 dní) a usadzovali sa po príchode do New Yorku a patričnej registrácii v okolitých prímorských štátoch: New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Massachusetts... Neskôr aj ďalej v štátoch: Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Maryland... Pracovali prevažne v baniach, v strojárskom priemysle, na farmách...

Nebolo pre nich ľahké opustiť rodnú vlasť, obec, mesto, rodinu, priateľov, príbuzných, známych... a vysťahovať sa do ďalekej neznámej krajiny až hen „za veľkú mláku“. Nie div, keď sa mnohým pri lúčení objavili aj slzy v očiach. A neboli medzi nimi iba slobodní, ale často aj ženatí muži, bezdetní manželia, ba aj rodiny s deťmi. Pochádzali väčšinou z chudobných regiónov a oblastí bez priemyslu ako: Orava, Kysuce, Liptov, Abov, Zemplín, Šariš, Spiš, Horehronie...

No nie všetci, ktorí emigrovali do USA, sa tam rozhodli zostať. Poniectori, keď si našetrili peknú kôpku dolárov, sa vrátili na Slovensko. Iní, ktorí sa nevedeli prispôsobiť tamajšiemu prostrediu a spôsobu života alebo sa im priveľmi cnelo za domovom, sa tiež vrátili. No mnohí z nich majú dobré zamestnanie, lepšie podmienky a príležitosť pre vzdelávanie a sebarealizáciu, ako by mali na Slovensku, sa nevrátili a usadili tam.

Stávalo sa občas, že sa mládenec oženil a krátko po svadbe vycestoval do USA v nádeji zarobiť si peniaze a dostať tam aj manželku, čo sa takmer vždy podarilo. No poznám aj konkrétny prípad, keď to nevyšlo. Sused z mojej rodnej obce Radoma, Michal Pavliča, sa vysťahoval bez manželky do Kanady a odtiaľ neskôr do USA. Pracoval na farmách, ale aj v pennsylvánskych baniach. Po čase napísal manželke, že by bol rád, keby prišla za nim do Scranton PA. Zmienil sa pritom, že v prípade, ak bude súhlasiť, pošle pre ňu agenta so šifkartou, ktorý ju dopraví k nemu. Jeho manželka Zuzana uvažovala o vycestovaní a čoskoro mu napísala, že by mohla vycestovať k nemu.

Keď sa jedného letného dňa objavil v jej dome agent so šifkartou v ruke a požiadal ju, aby sa vychystala na ďalekú cestu k manželovi, zrazu zmenila svoje stanovisko o emigrácii, začala usedavo plakať a odmietla vycestovať. Agent sa vrátil bez nej, no dopravil do USA niekoľko iných osôb k ich rodinným príslušníkom, ktoré súhlasili s vycestovaním a mal pre nich zabezpečené aj šifkarty. Michala Pavliča správa o manželkinej odmietnutej emigrácii zarmútila. Keď dostal od nej list, v ktorom ho okrem iného žiadala, aby prišiel domov, vyhovel jej požiadavke a na Vianoce bol už na Slovensku.

V USA sa usadilo mnoho slovenských rodín. Ich dospelí synovia sa po čase oženili, dcéry povyďávali a odsťahovali sa k manželovi a často aj za prácou na iné miesto. Môžem to demonštrovať aj na mojich príbuzných v USA, ktorí sú roztrúsení po viacerých štátoch. Moja sesternica Mary Addis (Stelmak) sa odsťahovala od rodičov z Cleveland OH na juh do Cottonwood AZ, sesternica Kathy Potter (Stelmak) žije v Parma OH, bratranec Steve Stelmak býva v Houston TX. Sesternica Dorothy Kaplafka (matka Mary Gnall – Stelmak), sa odsťahovala od rodičov z Mahanoy City PA do New Boston PA, bratranec John Gnall žije v Silver Spring MA, bratranec Julian Gnall (reverend) býva v San Diego CA...

Počas mojej 9 týždňovej návštevy v USA som sa zúčastnil pri príležitosti každoročného stretnutia (reunion) so všetkými vyššie spomínanými. Pýtali sa ma, prečo sa aj moja matka nevysťahovala k otcovi do Scranton PA, kde pracoval ako baník. Mój otec chcel, a žiadal ju o to v liste, no ona odmietla.

Viacerí americkí Slováci prichádzajú na Slovensko, aby spoznali krajinu svojich predkov, ich rodnú obec, mesto, navštívili cintorín, kde sú pochovaní, či kostol, kde ich krstili alebo sa sobášili, ich rodný dom alebo pozemok, na ktorom kedysi stál... Jedni prichádzajú individuálne, niekedy aj s príbuznými iní, s cestovnou kanceláriou *Treasures of Slovakia* takmer na 5 mesačné turné pričom navštevujú aj okolité krajiny, kde žijú slovenské lokality.

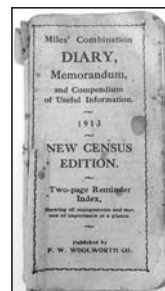
Ich potomkovia pracujú teraz na rôznych miestach a postoch ako: robotníci, úradníci, učitelia, lekári, kňazi, námorníci, vedeckí pracovníci, farmári, letci... pre dobro, blaho a rozkvet USA.

Nuž, ich korene na Slovensku sú rozvetvené doširoka a tak rozvetvené sú aj ich rodinné stromy, konáre a vetvy, ktoré z nich narástli už v USA.

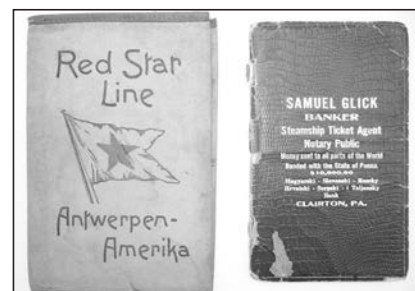
Andrej Štelmák, Sliach



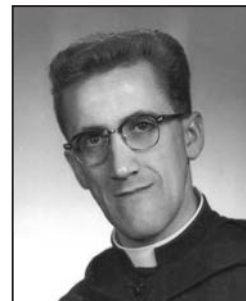
Gnalls family.



Zápisník z  
banky - Diari.



Obal na šifkartu  
a zápisník z banky.



Bratranec  
Julian Gnall.

## Modlitba za rodinu

*Pane, Ty si Otcou každej rodiny na Zemi. Ty si Otcou všetkých ľudí.*

*Daj skrze Tvojho Syna Ježiša Krista, ktorý sa pre nás stal človekom a skrze Ducha Svätého, ktorý je posilou Tvojej lásky k nám, aby sa každá rodina na Zemi stala pre každú ďalšiu generáciu svätou láskou a života, lebo len Ty si opravdivá Láska a Život.*

*Daj, aby Tvoja milosť sprevádzala myšlienky, slová a skutky všetkých manželov a manželiek pre dobro ich rodín a rodín na celom svete.*

*Daj, aby mladí ľudia našli v rodine pevnú oporu pre svoju ľudskú dôstojnosť a pre rast v pravde a láske.*

*Daj, aby sa láska posilnená milosťou sviatosti manželstva ukázala silnejšou než všetky slobody a skúšky, ktorými rodiny niekedy musia prejsť.*

*Na prihovor Svätej rodiny daj, aby svetová misia našej matky Cirkvi v rodine a prostredníctvom rodiny priniesla svoje ovocie. Skrze nášho Pána, Ježiša Krista, ktorý je Cesta, Pravda a Život po všetky veky vekov. Amen.*



## V období adventu, vianočných sviatkov až do Troch kráľov sa spieva Tichá noc..

Atmosféru a čaro adventného obdobia a Vianoc už takmer dve storočia umocňuje v Európe, ale aj iných častiach sveta známa pieseň Tichá noc, svätá noc..., ktorá sa v súčasnosti spieva už vo viac ako 200 jazykoch. Aj na Slovensku sa táto svetoznáma rakúska pieseň hrá a spieva v adventnom a vianočnom období až do sviatku Troch kráľov nielen v kostoloch, ale i na adventných a vianočných koncertoch, ľudia ju počúvajú v domácnostiach i na verejných priestranstvách.

Pieseň Tichá noc, svätá noc... po prvý raz zaznela na Vianoce v roku 1818 v kostolíku v rakúskom Oberndorfe. Zaspievali ju duchovný Joseph Mohr a učiteľ a organista Franz Xaver Gruber. Text piesne zložil Joseph Mohr, rodák zo Salzburgu. Ten požiadal učiteľa Franza Xavera Grubera z Arnsdorfu, ktorý v Oberndorfe zastupoval organistu, aby k jeho básni skomponoval vhodnú melódiu s dvoma sólovými hlasmi a - pretože organ mal poruchu - so sprievodom gitary. Podľa tradície Gruber, dojatý textom piesne a jeho posolstvom pokoja a lásky, skomponoval za necelú hodinu nesmrteľnú melódiu, ktorá sa rýchlo šírila aj do ďalších obcí a miest v Rakúsku aj iných krajinách.

Joseph Mohr (1792-1848) vyštudoval teológiu a v roku 1817 bol vysvätený za kňaza. Okrem spomínaného Oberndorfu pôsobil aj vo Wagraine, kde zomrel. Jeho hrob ešte stále navštevujú domáci a zahraniční turisti, najmä počas vianočných sviatkov.

Učiteľ a organista Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863) pochádzal z dedinky Unterweitzburg, kde sa narodil ako tretie dieťa v rodine chudobného tkáča. Jeho otec spočiatku o talente syna a jeho lásky k hudbe nechcel ani počuť. Nadaného chlapca podporoval aspoň učiteľ, ktorý ho učil noty a hru na organ. Raz učiteľ ochorel a na obdiv miestnych veriacich ho skvele zastúpil dvanásťročný Franz. Hral tak nádherne, že obmäkčil aj otca, ktorý mu dovolil nielen ďalej sa hudobne vzdelávať, ale dokonca mu sám kúpil harmónium. Po štúdiách Gruber pôsobil ako organista v Arnsdorfe, neskôr v Oberndorfe spolu s kaplánom Mohrom. Zomrel v roku 1863 v mestečku Hallein, kde bol správcom chóru. Počas svojho života Gruber skomponoval okolo 90 cirkevných skladieb.

Tak ako Mohr ani Gruber neupadol do zabudnutia. Na škole v Arnsdorfe je pamätaná tabuľa pripomínajúca rodisko piesne Tichá noc, svätá noc. Dom, v ktorom skladateľ zomrel, zdobí jeho reliéf.

TASR



St. Catherine of Siena Church, New York City

## Advent je obdobím radosti a nádeje

Zapálená prvá svieca na adventnom venci, symbolizujúca začiatok adventu - obdobia duchovnej prípravy kresťanov na slávenie Vianoc, charakterizuje atmosféru prvej adventnej nedele v kresťanských chrámoch i v mnohých domácnostiach.

Advent je obdobím radosti a nádeje, je spomienkou na blížiacu sa slávenie udalosti spred vyše 2000 rokov, keď sa v Betleheme narodil malý Ježiško. Zároveň však advent ľudom pripomína aj očakávanie nového, konečného príchodu Ježiša Krista na konci vekov.

V katolíckej cirkvi je dnes aj začiatok nového liturgického roku a koná sa celocirkevná zbierka na charitu. Chrámové rúcho v advente je fialové.

V katolíckych kostoloch na celom Slovensku dnes čítajú Pastiersky list biskupov Slovenska na prvú adventnú nedeľu. Jeho ústrednou témou je svätenie nedele a snaha biskupov o rešpektovanie nedele ako voľného dňa, keď majú byť rodiny spolu s deťmi. Biskupi sa obracajú na podnikateľov, majiteľov obchodov a firiem, aby neposielali otcov a matky do práce, keď to nie je nevyhnutné. Súčasne apelujú na veriacich, aby nedele venovali Bohu a rodine, nechodili v tento deň nakupovať, zúčastňovali sa na bohoslužbách a navštevovali príbuzných, najmä starých a chorých.

Aj v Evanjelickej cirkvi augsburského vyznania (ECAV) na Slovensku je dnešná prvá adventná nedeľa začiatkom nového cirkevného roka. Aj evanjelici dnes zapalujú prvú sviecu na adventnom venci.

Advent je v kresťanských cirkvách aj dňom častejších modlitieb, vnútorného stíšenia, odpúšťania a väčšej snahy pomáhať bližným, ktorí potrebujú pomoc. Neodmysliteľnou súčasťou tohto obdobia sú adventné koncerty alebo literárno-hudobné programy v kostoloch.

TASR



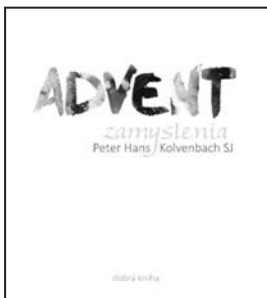
## Vo vydavateľstve Dobrá kniha vyšla knižná novinka s názvom Advent

Vo vydavateľstve Dobrá kniha vyšla publikácia s názvom Advent. Autorom zamyslení na každý deň posvätného adventu je holandský jezuita, páter Peter Hans Kolvenbach SJ, ktorý prežil svoj život v Libanone, v Ríme a opäť v Libanone.

„Často máme skúsenosť, že oživovať myšlienky a modlitbu inšpirovanými slovami Svätého písma nie je ľahké. Objavovať, že Božie slovo je životodárnym prameňom, ktorý naplňa našu túžbu po Bohu, ktorý uspokojuje naše srdcia, nás stojí mnoho úsilia. Potrebujeme ľudí, ktorí by podnecovali naše uvažovanie. Vďaka nim slovo, o ktorom rozjímame, zapáli v nás iskru viery, nádeje a lásky. S vedomím tejto potreby ponúkame na adventné chvíle modlitby a osobné stretnutia sa s Pánom, hlboké rozjímania, ktoré napísal jeden z najvýznamnejších jezuitov na prelome 20. a 21. storočia, páter Peter Hans Kolvenbach SJ, bývalý generálny predstavený Spoločnosti Ježišovej. Knižka obsahuje zamyslenia nad všetkými evanjelióvymi úryvkami, ktoré sa čítajú pri adventných omšiach,” informoval František Sočufka SJ.

Kniha má 128 strán (formát 12,5 x 16 cm, viazaná). Knihu si môžu záujemcovia objednať priamo v internetovom obchode Vydavateľstva DK (www.dobrakniha.sk) alebo kúpiť v kníhkupectvách Dobrá kniha (Bratislava – Hviezdoslava-vovo námestie 22, Košice – Hlavná 89, Piešťany – Teplická 32, Trnava – Štefánikova 44) alebo v exercičných domoch v Prešove či Piešťanoch.

TK KBS



## Pred 28 rokmi sa nám otvorili dvere k slobode a demokracii

Pred 28 rokmi, 17. novembra 1989, skončil totalitný režim a otvorili sa nám dvere k slobode a demokracii. Na sociálnej sieti to napísal prezident SR Andrej Kiska, ktorý si na Nežnú revolúciu zaspomínal aj so svojim nemeckým kolegom Frankom-Walterom Steinmeierom.

„17. november viedol pred 28 rokmi ku koncu totalitného režimu u nás. Bol dňom, kedy sa nám otvorili dvere k slobode a demokracii. Padol múr, padli ostnaté drôty. Tento deň, dnešný deň je pre nás skutočne veľmi významným sviatkom. Sviatkom začiatku našej modernej histórie,” uviedol Kiska.

Vyzdvihol, že dnes môžu stáť s nemeckým prezidentom ako partneri. „Ako krajiny, ktoré sú spolu v jednom úžasnom projekte Európskej únie. Ako partneri v rámci Schengenu, kde neexistujú hranice. Ako partneri, ktorí majú rovnakú menu. Ako partneri, ktorí zdieľajú rovnaké hodnoty – demokraciu a slobodu,” uzavrel Kiska.

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*Daniel Huber's historic map of Vienna was recently restored and placed on display in the Betliar Museum as part of the 300 year anniversary of the birth of Maria Theresa.*

FOTO TASR - Roman Hanc



V máji tohto roku uplynulo 300 rokov od narodenia jednej z najvýznamnejších osobností našich dejín – kráľovnej Márie Terézie. SNM - Múzeum Betliar je jediným múzeom na Slovensku, ktoré pripravilo výstavu o panovníčke a jej dobe pod názvom Mária Terézia - kráľovná a jej doba v zbierkach Andrassyovcov. Na snímke jeden z najvzácnejších predmetov na výstave - unikátna mapa Viedne z roku 1778 od Josefa Daniela Hubera, ktorá bola nedávno nákladne zreštaurovaná. Mapa má rozmery 3,7 m x 4,1 m a rezidenciu Márie Terézie zachytáva z vtáčej perspektívy v Múzeu Betliar 23. novembra 2017.

## Ježiškovi doposiaľ napísalo viac ako 1,7 milióna detí

Ježiškovi doposiaľ v rámci Vianočnej pošty napísalo viac ako 1,7 milióna detí z celého sveta. V tomto roku dostal na svoju adresu 999 99 Ježiško prvý list už 22. apríla, a to z Taiwanu, zo Slovenska dostal prvý pozdrav v septembri. V poradí 19. ročník Vianočnej pošty v piatok oficiálne otvorili v Rajeckej Lesnej.

„Zásadným motívom, ako každý rok, sú posolstvá od detí Ježiškovi, ktoré píše vlastnou rukou na pohľadnice alebo listy na špeciálnu adresu, kde vyjadrujú svoje očakávania, požiadavky alebo možno len emócie, ktoré sa spájajú s ich životmi. A to, čo by si možno najviac želali, čo nie je nutne spojené s darčekom pod stromčekom, ale týka sa ich bežných starostí a života, či už v rodine, škole alebo medzi priateľmi,” načrtol generálny riaditeľ Slovenskej pošty Róbert Gálik.

Najnedočkavejšie sú podľa neho listy a pozdravy práve zo zahraničia. „Nás teší, že fenomén Vianočnej pošty zo Slovenska obletel takmer celý svet. A prvé listy prišli z Taiwanu, Číny aj zo Singapuru. Už ich máme do tohto momentu viac ako 200, nielen zo zahraničia, ale aj zo Slovenska,” doplnil.

Súčasťou otvorenia Vianočnej pošty bola i inaugurácia špeciálnej vianočnej poštovej známky v Bazilike Narodenia Panny Márie. „Vždy motívom pre každoročnú známku, využívanú v rámci Vianočnej pošty, je predloha z kresieb, ktoré sme zozbierali rok predtým,” ozrejmil Gálik. Na známke je tento rok veselý snehuliak od Barbory Ďuríkovej. Krstným otcom známky je minister dopravy Ľubomír Ďurica. Autorkou domčeka so snehuliakom na FDC je Sofia Tadanaiová a predlohu anjela na FDC pečiatku nakreslila Viktória Csábiová. Obe sú, podobne ako Ďuriková, zo Základnej školy na Rozmarínovej ulici v Komárne.

Vianočnú poštu organizuje Slovenská pošta, a. s., od roku 1999 a počas doterajších ročníkov prišlo na adresu 999 99 Ježiško spomínaných viac ako 1,7 milióna listov. Vlni dostal Ježiško najviac pozdravov zo Slovenska, no pisali mu aj deti z Taiwanu, Číny, Česka, Rakúska, Nemecka, Maďarska, Poľska, ale i Bahrajnu, Namíbie či Thajsku.

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## Radostiplné vianočné sviatky a Šťastný Nový rok



Nativity Scene in the Immaculate Conception Church, New York

*Vianoce sú krásnym sviatkom, keď si želáme a prosíme,  
aby Božia láska, ktorá žiari z očí dieťaťa Ježiša,  
ožiarila naše srdcia a naše rodiny.*

*V tomto duchu praje Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota všetkým našim členom  
požehnané a láskou naplnené vianočné sviatky, veľa šťastia a zdravia v Novom roku*

## Vianočné zamyslenie

Dnes oslavujeme sviatok Narodenia Pána Ježiša, nášho Spasiteľa. Cítim nedostatočnosť ľudských slov, keď vám mám opätovne ohlásiť tú radostnú zvesť, ktorá patrí všetkým ľuďom, že „sa nám dnes narodil Kristus Pán“. Slovo „dnes“ neznamená nejaký časový úsek, ale vyjadruje skôr začiatok vzťahu človeka k Bohu. Liturgia Cirkvi preberá biblické výpovede o tom, čo sa „dnes“ stalo a už celé dve tisícročia ich s pokorou, ale aj s nádejou a radosťou opakuje.

Radujeme sa nad tým, že sa zjavila Láska. Láska sa vtelila. Boh sa stal človekom. Vianoce znamenajú stretnutie s láskou. Predovšetkým s láskou Božou, ktorá v malom dieťati Ježišovi prišla na svet. Sú stretnutím s Božou láskou, ktorá sa prejavila úplne ľudským spôsobom. Vianoce sú stretnutím s láskou, ktorá je v bezbrannom dieťati ponúknutá všetkým ľuďom. Sú stretnutím s láskou, ktorá otvára dvere viery, hoci nemá žiadne donucovacie prostriedky. Táto láska sa však žiadnemu človekovi nevnučuje. Je jednoducho darom. Obohatí len tých, ktorí sa jej otvoria a ju prijmu. A predsa je táto Láska príkazom. Je príkazom, ktorý je nutné dodržať, ak chce človek dosiahnuť šťastie a nie večnú záhubu.

Posolstvo Vianoc je aktuálne pre každého z nás, lebo vychádza z radostnej skutočnosti, že Boh má o človeka záujem. Dokonca dnes vidíme, že Boh človeka miluje, skláňa sa k nemu. Ale ak chceme vidieť Boha – Dieťa ležiace v jaslách alebo v Máriiných rukách, musíme sa hlboko skloniť.

Ak človek nežije duchovným životom, môže sa mu zdať, že pri narodení Syna Božieho išlo len o historickú udalosť, síce veľmi peknú, ale dnešnému človeku nič nehovoriacu. Ak však žije duchovným životom, začína chápať, že „počatie z Ducha Svätého“ v každom z nás a „narodenie Krista“ do našich skutkov je stále aktuálnou vecou.

Všetci, ktorí ste sa dobre pripravili po duchovnej stránke na Vianoce a vykonali ste si dobrú a úprimnú vianočnú spoveď, iste priznáte, že sa s Vami čosi dobré stalo. Prežívate pokoj a radosť nielen z vonkajších vecí a udalostí, ale priamo zo srdca. To, čo sa udialo pri Vianočnej spovedi a ak to pokračuje dobrým predsavzatím, môžeme pokojne nazvať „počatie Krista z Ducha Svätého“. Platí totiž slovo Kristovo, že nielen Preblahoslavená Panna Mária je a má byť jeho matkou, ale každý, kto počúva Božie Slovo a zachováva ho, každý kto plní vôľu Božiu, je jeho matkou. Duchovne počína Krista každý, kto chce

Pokračovanie na str. 25

## Dvadsať rokov Pápežského slovenského kolégia sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Ríme

Pápežské slovenské kolégium sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Ríme si v sobotu 18. novembra 2017 pripomenulo dvadsiate výročie svojho vzniku. Slávnostnej svätej omši predsedal kardinál Jozef Tomko, emeritný prefekt Kongregácie pre evanjelizáciu národov, ktorý vo svojej homílii pripomenul históriu vzniku Slovenského ústavu sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Ríme, ktorý bol predpokladom pre neskorší vznik kolégia. Upriamil pozornosť prítomných na konkrétne historické požiadavky doby, v ktorej inštitúcia vznikala, ale predovšetkým nepretržitý odkaz vierozvestov sv. Cyrila a Metoda, „ktorých tradícia sa zachovala ako plameň horiaci naprieč stáročiami“. Kardinál pripomenul udalosť deväťdesiatych rokov minulého storočia, kedy sa zo základov položených Ústavom začala rodiť ďalšia, nová inštitúcia: Pápežské slovenské kolégium sv. Cyrila a Metoda, ktoré vo svojom názve dostala hrdý odkaz na svoj pôvod i smerovanie k jednote so Svätým Otcem.

Na slávnosti sa zúčastnil bratislavský pomocný biskup Mons. Jozef Haľko, ktorý je delegátom Konferencie biskupov Slovenska pre KBS pre Pápežské slovenské kolégium sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Ríme a Pápežský slovenský ústav sv. Cyrila a Metoda a zodpovedný za pastoračiu Slovákov v zahraničí. Prítomným bol veľvyslanec Slovenskej republiky v Taliansku Ján Šoth. Dvadsať výročie kolégia si prišli pripomenúť aj predstavení niektorých kolégií v Ríme: Pápežského kolégia Germanicum et Hungaricum, Maďarského inštitútu, Pápežského inštitútu S. Maria dell Anima. Koncelebrovali aj profesori viacerých rímskych univerzít a inštitútov ako aj diecézni a rehoľní kňazi študujúci alebo pôsobiaci v Ríme alebo v Rímskej kúrii.

Pápežské slovenské kolégium sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Ríme bolo založené 15. septembra 1997. Zriadil ho pápež sv. Ján Pavol II. na žiadosť Konferencie biskupov Slovenska, aby poskytovalo ubytovanie slovenským kňazom, ktorí na Pápežských univerzitách a inštitútoch v Ríme absolvujú postgraduálne štúdium. Počas dvadsiatich rokov svojej existencie sa stalo domovom pre desiatky kňazov všetkých slovenských diecéz, ktorí dnes vďaka získanému vzdelaniu kvalifikovane napomáhajú realizácii poslania Cirkvi na Slovensku, ale aj vo svete. V súčasnosti v kolégiu býva sedemnást kňazov - študentov. Jeho správu má na starosti rektor Pavol Zvara a vicerektor Viliam Zemančík. Komunitu dopĺňa päť sestier z Kongregácie milosrdných sestier sv. Vincenta - Satmárok.

TK KBS



The Papal Slovak College of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Rome celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on November 18, 2017.



Vianočné trhy v Bratislave sa začali 24. novembra 2017.

The annual Christmas Fair opened in Bratislava on November 24, 2017.