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Number 5767



Deputy Secretary of Department of Defense, Gordon England (R) escorting Minister of Defense Frantisek Kasicky (L) into the Pentagon.

Defense Minister's Official Visit to USA Meets With Success

By John Karch

The September 3-7 visit of Slovak Minister of Defense, Ing. Frantisek Kasicky, capped this year's bilateral U.S.-Slovak Republic (SR) and NATO discussions. He was preceded by his Deputy, State Secretary Jaroslav Baska who visited the U.S. May 28-June 2 (see JEDNOTA, July 25) and the visit of the U.S. Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM E.P Giambastiani's visit to Slovakia April 29-30. Having participated in several American programs, this visit, initiated by him, may have seemed to be "homecoming" but Minister Kasicky's business program covered important bilateral and international issues. The result: "All major objectives were met."

Interesting Background

The Minister was born November 18, 1968. He is married and has two children. During 1987-91, he studied at the Military Pedagogical University in Bratislava. In 1992 he attended the Internal Command Center in Germany. In 1995 he attended the Federal German Army Academy for Information and Communication in Strausberg, Germany. In 1996 he was at a special course for military Spokespersons in Switzerland; that same year, he took his final exam at the Faculty of Philosophy, Comenius University. In 1997,

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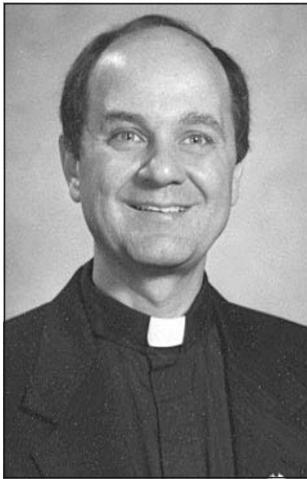
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Some Thoughts From Our Chaplain

Dear Friends,

There is a web site on the Internet that claims to predict the date of anyone's death. All one needs to do is submit one's date of birth, height, weight, and general disposition (normal, optimistic, pessimistic, sadistic) and within a few seconds the exact date of one's death is shown, together with a countdown of how many seconds remain in one's life.



Fr. Thomas A. Nasta

Of course, such a thing is for amusement purposes only, but it does at least for a moment make us think about things that are uncomfortable for us, namely, our mortality and the end of time. These themes are present in the scripture readings at Mass at the end of the liturgical year and the first Sunday of Advent.

However disturbing the notions are for us, Jesus is there for us, to calm any anxieties, strengthen our hope to reassure us that eternal life, life with him in the kingdom awaits all who listen to his voice, a voice of truth and justice, a voice of peace.

Sincerely,
Fr. Thomas A. Nasta
National Chaplain

From the Desk of the Vice President: Wisconsin Seminar

The Membership and Marketing Committee of the First Catholic Slovak Union held a sales seminar on Sunday, October 7, 2007.

The day began with a Mass at 8:00 a.m. at Blessed Savior Church, 8607 West Villard Avenue, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A breakfast buffet and seminar followed at the Grecian Inn in nearby Brookfield, Wisconsin. Many thanks go to Branch 89 for arranging and hosting this event. Recommenders from the Rev. John J. Spitkovsky District were invited to attend.

Nineteen members attended the basic seminar administered by National Vice President Andrew R. Harcar Sr. It was well received by everyone present and centered around the society's insurance and annuity products.

The Membership and Marketing Committee conducts seminars to educate its members on our attractive portfolio. We have high quality, competitive and affordable life insurance as well as exceptional rates on our annuities. If one is scheduled for your area, please attend.

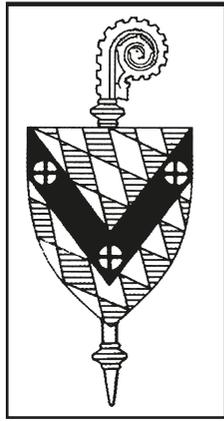
Good Luck and God Bless,
Andrew R. Harcar, Sr.
National Vice President
Membership and Marketing, Chairman



Attending the seminar were L-R Michael Novak, Sr., Branch 89 President Michael Novak, National Vice President Andrew R. Harcar Sr., Robert J. Budjac, and Slovak activist George J.E. Michuda.

MORE SEMINAR PHOTOS ON PAGE 4

Insights and Viewpoints



St. Vincent Archabbey — Homilies

Fr. Campion P. Gavaler, O.S.B. and Father Demetrius R. Dumm, O.S.B.

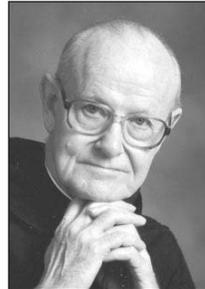
December 9, 2007

Second Sunday of Advent

Gospel Summary:

Today we hear once again the impatient voice of John the Baptist urging us to change so that we may be worthy to receive the Lord as he continues to come into our world. Crooked ways must be made straight; bad habits need to be corrected; conversion must continue. This message comes straight from God and that is why John proclaims it in the desert--a place

Matthew 3:1-12



Demetrius R. Dumm,
O.S.B.

that has always been associated with divine mystery and freedom. (See how this is portrayed in the relationship between Ahab and Elijah: 1 Kings 18:7ff). Human control has no place in the symbolic wilderness of divine freedom.

John wears the garments that identify him with the great prophet Elijah. Just as Elijah challenged the sinful king Ahab, so does John demand a break with a past of sinful human control to make room for a future where God's will is honored and obeyed. This will not be easy. And so John uses very strong language to scold those who are not interested in change that goes deeper than appearances. True conversion and true readiness for the coming of Jesus requires a conversion that touches our hearts and our deepest values.

Life Implications:

God very much wants to come to us. We also want to receive him. However, it is usually only on our own terms. We wish to remain attached to habits and attitudes, which are unworthy of us and hurtful to others. Like St. Augustine, we are inclined to say, "Change me, Lord...but not yet." Such hesitation is most unfortunate because an unqualified reception of the Lord can provide far more happiness and peace than all the objects of our sinful attachments.

What is called for is repentance and we must be careful not to confuse that with remorse.

As I See It Rudolph L. Gregus



Rudolph L. Gregus

No Comparisons

How many times have we read or heard about someone who's gotten into trouble--maybe even fired from a job--because of a brush with the law? While our "Christian" minds tell us to be sorry and even pray for the person, a little voice inside our heads may also be saying, "I am glad I would never do anything like that." And perhaps we wouldn't. But are there some things we do that are still not pleasing in God's eyes? We have to be cautious not to look so intently at someone else's wrongdoing that we overlook our own weaknesses and shortcomings. When we measure ourselves against the worst people we can think of, we come out looking pretty good. There is a danger, however, in using someone's else's behavior as a way of reflecting our own goodness.

Energy

As soil can produce nothing for us unless energized by the power of the sun, so we can produce nothing for God unless energized by the power of the Spirit.

Some Thoughts About the Past

(Under age 40? You won't understand)

My mom used to cut chicken, chop eggs and spread mayo on the same cutting board with the same knife and no bleach, but we did not seem to get food poisoning.

Our school sandwiches were wrapped in wax paper in a brown paper bag, not in icepack coolers, but I can't remember getting e.coli.

The term cell phone would have conjured up a phone in a jail cell, and pager was the school PA system.

Almost all of us would have rather gone swimming in the lake instead of a pristine pool (talk about boring), no beach closures then.

Speaking of school, we all said prayers and sang the national anthem and staying in detention after school caught all sort of negative attention.

We must have had horribly damaged psyches. What an archaic system we had then. Remember school nurses? Ours wore a hat and everything.

I thought that I was supposed to accomplish something before I was allowed to be proud of myself.

Oh yeah...and where was the Benadryl and sterilization kit when I got that bee sting? I could have been killed!

We played "king of the hill" on piles of gravel left on vacant construction sites and when we got hurt, mom pulled out the 48-cent bottle of Mercurochrome (kids liked it better because it did not sting like iodine did) and then we got our butt spanked.

Now it's a trip to the emergency room, followed by a 10-day dose of antibiotics and then Mom calls the attorney to sue the contractor for leaving a horribly vicious pile of gravel where it was such a threat.

We did not act up at the neighbor's house either because if we did, we got our butt spanked there and then we got spanked again when we got home.

Remorse is simply a temporary regret about our unworthy behavior. It usually lasts a very short time and then we return to our old habits. By contrast, repentance means that we have found something better and more promising than our sinfulness. This discovery is the love and goodness of God. If we could only realize how much God loves us, we would be able to resist every temptation. We make this discovery primarily through earnest prayer and a deep yearning to become better persons.

Today's gospel urges us to make room in our hearts for the love of God, not as a theoretical fact or on someone else's word, but in our own experience. The Eucharist reminds us every Sunday that God loves us and has given his only Son to die for us. This means that we are very precious in God's sight. This also means that God is more than ready to enter our hearts and to lead us to true repentance.

We are asked to put aside selfish and defensive behavior so that God's love can give us the freedom to be what God wants us to be--confident and responsible human beings. In this regard, we are reminded of the words of the Book of Revelation: "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me" (3:20). This readiness of the Lord to become our best friend is true at all times, but never more so than in the season of Advent.



December 16, 2007

Third Sunday of Advent

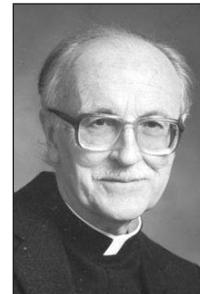
Matthew 11:2-11

Gospel Summary

John the Baptist, in prison, sent his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus replied that the outcasts of society were being helped, and the poor were receiving good news. As the disciples were going off, Jesus told the crowds that John was the messenger sent by God to prepare the way for the promised one.

Life Implications

John, sitting in Herod's prison, was quite aware of the situation in Judea. His beleaguered nation, now a province of the Roman Empire, for centuries had suffered under the oppressive rule of foreign powers. The people were victims of heavy taxation, violence, and even the desecration of their holy places and traditions. At times their own political and religious leaders were unfaithful and oppressive. In face of this pervasive evil, John believed that his mission was to prepare the way for the "coming wrath," when God would finally destroy the evil-doers and establish his kingdom.



Campion P. Gavaler,
O.S.B.

John's disciples, probably with some hesitation, told him that Jesus made no mention of the "coming wrath." Nor was there anything about rescuing John from prison. Instead, he talked about the blind, the lame, lepers, the deaf, the dead, and about poor people getting good news. Jesus, realizing that his message might not fit John's expectation, added the remark about the blessedness of the one who hears his words, and does not lose trust in him.

We may find ourselves in situations of violence, suffering and confusion; and we too will have expectations of how God will intervene. Isn't our expectation that God's presence will be some manifestation of superior power to make things right? Jesus realized that only the humble power of God's love can vanquish the reign of evil and bring about a new kingdom of justice and peace. Love must actualize itself in defending and promoting the God-given rights of every human being--the fundamental right to live and the right to participate with dignity in the life of the community. Love, which seems most weak, most impractical, most foolish in the face of evil, is the only force that can change the human heart.

Only if we are able, like John, to be freed of our own expectations, will we be able to welcome the coming of the Lord and his way of love. Then we, also like John, may prepare the way for others to welcome the Lord's coming.

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Apostleship of Prayer Intentions for December 2007

General Intention

Those Suffering from AIDS

That society may care for those stricken with AIDS, especially women and children, and that the Church may help them feel the Lord's love.

"My sister is six years old. There are no grown-ups living with us. I need a bathroom tap and clothes and shoes. And water also, inside the house. But especially somebody to tuck me and my sister in at night-time."

So 13-year old Apiwe of sub-Saharan Africa describes the life of AIDS orphans. These orphans suffer emotionally as well as physically. Their legal rights and inherited property are often usurped by adults. Deemed high-risk and written off, they are often neglected by medical and educational institutions.

Since 1988, December 1 has been known as World AIDS Day. Aware of that, Pope Benedict's prayer intention reflects his concern about the problem and its most vulnerable victims, women and children. He asks us to pray that society meet its responsibilities toward AIDS victims and that the Church may help them know God's love.

Just in terms of children in Africa, we are praying for about 15 million who have been orphaned by AIDS. About a half-million of those children will have contacted AIDS/HIV through their mothers. We pray in particular for the Stop AIDS in Children campaign in its efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission.

According to the Catholic Bishops of Africa, the way forward is prevention and care. But they remind us that it will take more than a mere medical solution. "The God of Jesus Christ must be known, believed in, and loved...if progress is to be made."

Reflection. The lepers of Jesus' day were highly contagious, socially outcasts, and medically hopeless. How did Jesus respond to them?

Mission Intention

Asia. That the incarnation of the Son of God may help the people of Asia recognize Jesus as God's Envoy, the only Savior of the World.

In his 2007 letter to the Church in China, Pope Benedict repeated a prophecy Pope John Paul II made in 1999: "Just as during the first Christian millennium the Cross was planted in Europe and during the second in the American continent and in Africa, so during the third millennium a great harvest of faith will be reaped in the vast and vibrant Asian continent."

As the Pope's own prayer group, we Apostles of Prayer respond with joy to our Holy Father's prophecy for Asia. May Asia's many souls come to recognize Jesus, God's Son, as their own Savior. May Asians know the love of God in ways surpassing even what we have known.

So far the political and religious establishments of the East have hindered the spread of Christianity there. Conversions to Christ go slowly when people already possess a well-developed cultural identity. Nevertheless, in this time of unprecedented global communication, we hope for new openness to Jesus throughout Asia.

And why not? Jesus himself was Asian, as Pope John Paul reminded us. Pope Benedict recognizes that Jesus' identity is the heart of faith. His uniqueness as true God and true man puts him outside ordinary frames of reference for most Asians-indeed, for all people, including us. By grace we come to recognize him as our Lord and our God.

Let's join the Holy Father in praying for the conversion of Asia. May the people of Asia develop a hunger to know the Living God.

Reflection How does Jesus fully reveal to us who God is and what it means to be human?

Reflections on Our Christianity Msgr. Edward V. Rosack

End Times, Part III



Msgr. Edward V. Rosack

The New Jerusalem, described in Revelation 21:27 states, "...nothing profane shall enter it, nor anyone who is a liar or has done a detestable act. Only those shall enter whose names are inscribed in the book of the living kept by the Lamb." For a listing of the profane, read Romans 1:18-32.

What happens to those who die stained with venial sins or with temporal punishment due to sins? Forgiveness is dependent upon satisfaction for sinful acts, that is, restitution in kind or word, and repentance. When, for example, a driver runs into another car in a parking lot and damages it, he cannot simply drive away. He is liable for the damages he has caused and he must express his sorrow to the one whom he has distressed. What happens to the soul of the driver who dies before he has earned his forgiveness? He cannot enter heaven because he has not fulfilled the requisites for forgiveness. Secondly, his action is not serious enough to condemn him to hell. Where does he go?

"Make no mistake about this: no fornicator, no unclean or lustful person- in effect an idolater- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Ephesians 5:5)

Mother calls her son to the dinner table where a delightful meal awaits. The son rushes in, his nostrils filled with the fragrances of hot soup, broiled meat, mashed potatoes, fresh vegetables and apple pie. He's ready! Mom notices his dirty hands and says, "You're not sitting down here until you wash your hands! No wash, no eat. No clean, no enter. 'I mean it!' she says. He knows that she does. Mom can be as sweet as honey but there are rules and the only choice is obedience or rejection. There is, however, restitution and repentance. "I'm sorry" with a show of clean hands opens the door to the dining room.

Where do you wash your hands? In Latin, to make clean, to purify is "Purgare." That's where we get the name Purgatory. It's a place and state for temporal penal purification. Metaphorically, it's jail and the chain gang. "I warn you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny." (Matthew 5:26)

In 2 Maccabees, we read in chapter 12:38-46 that Judas took up a collection for his fallen troops on whose bodies he found amulets sacred to the idols of Jamnia. He sent 2,000 silver drachmas to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. "Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin." (vs. 46)

Once a person has died, he cannot gain any merit for himself by prayer, good deeds, sacrificial acts, etc. His case is closed. He is totally dependent upon the mercy of God, upon his redeeming sufferings in Purgatory and upon the prayers, good deeds, sacrificial acts, etc. of those alive who remember him. It is the mercy of God, suffering it out and intercession by the living that releases him from his confinement. The joy of all of this is that release from Purgatory guarantees admission into Heaven

Matthew 12:32. "...whoever says anything against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." Saint Gregory the Great comments on this passage: "In this sentence it is given to understand that many sins can be remitted in this world, but also many in the world to come." Those in heaven need no forgiveness. Those in hell are not entitled to it. Who other than those in Purgatory can be the recipients of this remission?

1 Corinthians 3:11-15. "No one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid, namely Jesus Christ. If different ones build on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, the work of each will be made clear. The Day will disclose it. That day will make its appearance with fire, and fire will test the quality of each man's work. If the building a man has raised on this foundation still stands, he will receive his recompense; if a man's building burns, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as one fleeing through fire."

At the end of the world, according to the Bible, there will be only Heaven and Hell. (Matthew 25:31-46) All nations will be summoned before the Son of Man and he will separate them into two groups as the shepherd separates sheep and goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand, the goats on his left. And Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, ends this passage with these words, "These (the goats) will go off to eternal punishment and the just (the sheep) to eternal life." Saint Augustine writes, "Let purification punishments be counted on only before that last and terrible judgment."



FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL SECRETARY: **FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION ANNUITY INTEREST RATE INCREASES THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2007**

Effective April 1, 2007, the annual yield on existing First Catholic Slovak Union Flexible Premium Deferred Retirement Annuity and Individual Retirement Account (IRA) is 5.00% (4.879% APR).

The annual yield on the Park 2 Annuity 4.75% (4.641% APR).

The annual yield on accounts with the "Cash Interest" Option will be 4.75% (4.641% APR).

Settlement Options will be based on an annual yield of 4.50% (4.402% APR).

If you have any questions about our annuities or IRAs, please contact the Home Office at 1-800-JEDNOTA.

THESE RATES WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2007.

Kenneth A. Arendt, National Secretary

NEWSPAPER DEADLINES

All copy is due by 4:30 P.M., THE MONDAY 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.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2008

Copy Deadline

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28

Correspondents who are announcing upcoming events should remember that the JEDNOTA is printed EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY, and should take into account the extra time lost in the postal system. Therefore, please plan to have your announcements to us in ample time for them to be printed and received by the readership.

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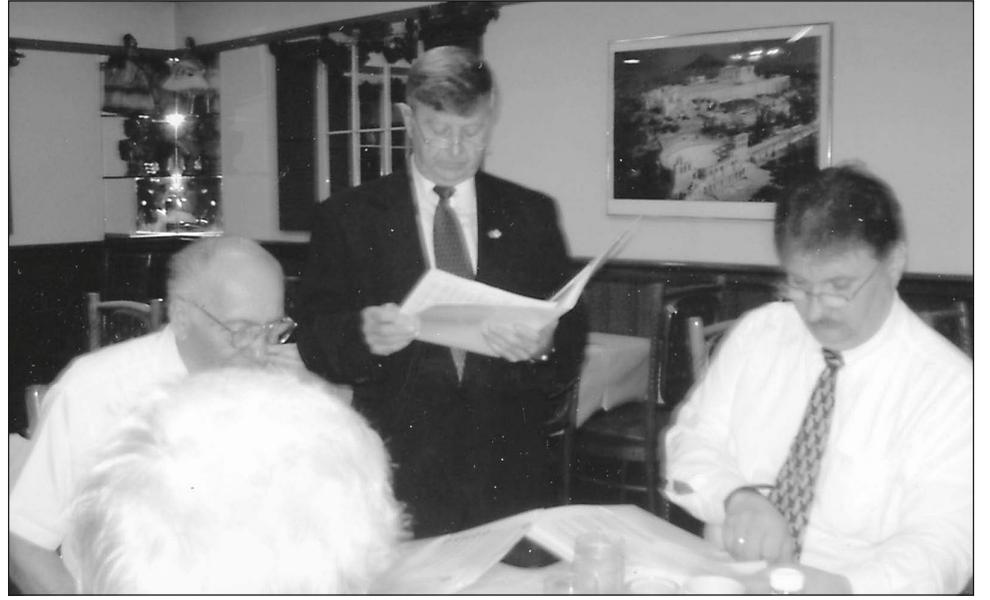
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Wisconsin Seminar Photos

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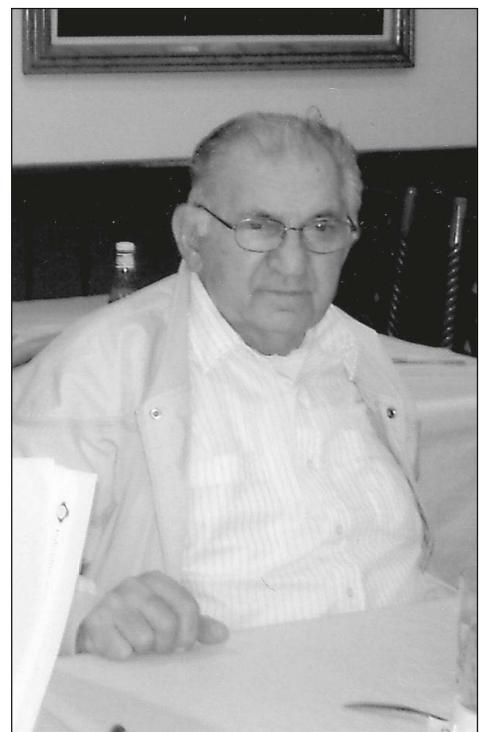


Michael Novak, President of Branch 89, conducted a short meeting before the seminar.



National Vice President Andrew R. Harcar Sr. explained our insurance and annuity portfolio to the attendees.

Attendees at the Milwaukee seminar



Defense Minister's Official Visit to USA Meets With Success

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he received a scholarship for Spokespersons of Central Governmental Agencies, USA.

During these years the future Minister combined employment with further education and training. During 1991-93, he was Senior Officer for Social Management. For the next five years he was Editor of the Military weekly OBRANA; Managing Director of Press and Information in the Minister's Office; the Ministry's Spokesman; and Deputy Director of the Minister's Office.

From 1998 to 2000, he was Chief of the State Secretary's Office at the Ministry of Defense (MOD). During 2000-01 he attended the Defense Language Institute, Texas and Defense Information School in MD. In Bratislava, during 2001-03, he was Chief, Office of MOD, Director of Communication Department, Ministry Spokesman, Director of Military Defense Intelligence of MOD, and Secretary of Parliament Committee for Defense and Security. During 2003-04 he was on the Special Committee of the Slovak Parliament for Control of Slovak National Security Agency and the Committee of Slovak Parliament for Control of Use of Information-Technical Means. In 2003 he attended the CIA's Special Intelligence Course: Operations Management Seminar, USA/Slovakia.

Minister's Delegation

Accompanying Minister Kasicky were the following: COL Jozef Viktorin, Director General, Department of Defense Policy, International Relations and Legislation, MOD; CAPT Vladimir Gemela, Adviser to the Minister and Spokesman; Silvia Torbova, Head of Protocol, MOD; and Jan Maixner, Chief State Adviser for Bilateral Relations, Division of International Relations. Representing the Slovak Embassy in Washington were Ambassador Rastislav Kacer; COL Jaroslav Gofjar, Defense, Military and Air Attache, who also represented the SR National Liaison Team to Allied Command for Transformation (ACT) in Norfolk. COL Jozef Kotlar, Chief of the National Liaison Team completed the group.

The Program

The Delegation arrived in Washington, D.C. on September 3, Labor Day, and proceeded to Norfolk, VA, venue of NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) HQ. They were welcomed by the Supreme Allied Commander, Air Force GEN Lance L. Smith, who hosted a dinner for them. Officially the next day, the program began with a flag raising ceremony (Slovak and American flags), held in the HQ Flag Plaza, honoring the SR's national day, the color guard, flag detail, and U.S. Fleet Forces Band participating. GEN Smith presented Minister Kasicky an official flag plaque and the Minister reciprocated by awarding the GEN Smith with a First-Degree Commemorative Medal of the SR. In attendance were the HQ staff and families. Statements and discussion followed.

On the 5th, the group left for Washington, meeting with Ambassador Kacer, followed by a visit to the Pentagon. They were met by Deputy Secretary of the Department of Defense (DOD), Gordon England, and exchanged information. The Minister then visited the nearby Iwo Jima Memorial where he laid a wreath. In the evening the Minister was honored at an Embassy Reception hosted by Ambassador Kacer and Defense Attache COL Gofjar. The Ambassador introduced the Minister who made himself and his delegation available to the invited Slovak American and other guests.

In the early morning of September 6, the Minister and his Delegation appeared at CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) for a "senior" dialogue with the Minister on "The Role of Small Nations in NATO and the EU: The Slovak Experience." The "senior" meant a small, select number of invitees. The Minister spoke and opened himself for questions. The focus was on "security challenges facing the Central European region" and "CEE involvement in NATO."

The Minister concluded his US visit with a stop at the Defense Information School (DINFOS), including a meeting with the Commandant, CAPT W. Curry Graham, USN, and students. The Minister made remarks and a discussion followed. A luncheon hosted by Friends of Slovakia followed. Then the delegation said farewell to the U.S. as it flew to Vienna and returned to Bratislava.

Essence of Discussions

In the Minister's visit to ACT, both the Commander and the Minister made remarks. The Slovak Delegation was provided information on ACT. The Minister addressed the Commander, representatives of ACT, VA State and city of Norfolk representatives, Slovak compatriots, and members of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic involved in ACT. His discussion with Deputy DOD Secretary England was the culmination of bilateral meetings with DOD during 2007, having been organized after the visit of State Secretary Baska and the visit to Slovakia of ADM Giambastiani.

This, the Minister's first visit to the U.S. after his appointment, "met the targets set." It "confirmed a clear interest of MOD in further development of bilateral relations with the U.S. The high level personal discussions have also provided the partners with more detailed information, especially the explanations on fulfillment of obligations of SR within NATO and



Slovak Minister of Defense Frantisek Kasicky hands over the Slovak flag to member of the flag detail at the official flag raising ceremony at ACT HQ.

on intentions of the SR Government related to involvement of the SR in international crisis management."

"The visit has also contributed to the mutual understanding of opinions in the areas of common interest and it created the conditions for further development of particular cooperation of MOD SR or the Armed Forces of the SR with DOD, the U.S. Armed Forces, and with ACT."

The Minister stated that in the future Slovakia would participate in selected operations of the international crisis management, while Afghanistan, Cypress, and the Balkans would be of priority interest.

"As far as Afghanistan is concerned, we have a unit in Kandahar and we are currently engaged in the activities of Provincial Reconstruction Teams," the Minister said. At present we contemplate joining the education and training teams and sending a surgical team to the military hospital in Kabul, while "we will provide supporting rather than combat units." The U.S. appreciated our existing involvement, including material support provided to Afghanistan.

Another issue discussed was the financing of military units deployed to unscheduled operations of NATO. These should be

co-financed by the member country and NATO. Regarding the transformation of NATO, a change in the planning and budgeting system in the Department was pointed out and it was observed that a feasible financial plan and a guideline containing the main tasks and priorities for 2008 were approved by the Slovak MOD.

Therefore, the objectives of the forces as proposed by Slovakia are feasible also for 2009-2010. This change was perceived positively by U.S. officials, namely as a pragmatic step in the management of the Department.

The war on terrorism was another item of the agenda. In this connection, the head of the Department briefed about the intelligence service bill and about the proposed project in the military training area list—as a center of extra-departmental nature. It is one-of-a-kind project that combines the selection and training with recovery of specialists.

In ACT, the Minister presented very openly the attitude of Slovakia to the issue of the U.S. missile defense site in the Czech Republic and Poland. This issue should be the subject of extensive discussion. "It must be viewed in the regional context and presented to the meeting of NATO... while Russia and the EU should not be put aside," he said.

At the end, the Minister commented on measures adopted by the Defense Ministry in connection with imminent floods. The Defense Ministry monitored the development of the hydro-meteorological situation in Slovakia and in case of emergency the respective units of the Armed Forces are ready to participate in the rescue works.

Minister Kasicky repeated his invitation to DOD colleague to visit the SR.

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- Tax on the interest earned is deferred until the annuity funds are drawn.
- The minimum deposit is \$1,000.00.

Please contact your Branch Officer or the Home Office for applications.

FCSU 2007 Christmas Coloring Contest



The First Christmas Eve

© Russell E. Coate

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through the Inn,
Not a creature was stirring,
Except little Ben.

A trav'ler had told him
Of a beautiful sight -
A manger, a mother,
A babe born that night.

The story had touched him,
Sunk deep in his heart,
And he thought of it, pondered it,
Savored each part.

The trav'ler had told of
A very great star,
And wise men had seen it
From countries afar.

And shepherds abiding that night
With their sheep,
Had heard angels tell
Of the new babe asleep.

All had followed the star
To the manger of hay,
And shepherds and wise men
Had knelt down to pray.

For the poor little babe
Was a tiny new King,
Bringing hope and great joy
To the children of men!

The wise men had brought for Him
Myrrh, Frankincense, Gold,
And a shepherd boy offered
A wee lamb from his fold.

But what could a small boy
Like Ben give a King?
No rubies, no diamonds,
And he had no gold ring.

And none of Ben's own toys
Would do for a King,
Not the slingshot, the marbles,
The whistle, or string!

Ben slipped from his bed
And walked out through the yard.
The moon was aglow,
And how bright were the stars!

It seemed like the heavens
Were beaming with joy
At the news of the birth
Of the new baby boy.

Ben followed a path
To the back of the Inn.
"The Child lies back there,"
Said one of the men.

Then Ben saw the stable
In the dim lantern light.
He saw cattle and sheep there,
Bedded down for the night.

And there in a manger
Lay the new baby King,
With Mary and Joseph there,
Calm and serene.

Then Ben knew the gift
That he would impart,
And he softly whispered,
"I'll give you my heart."

Then he knelt by the manger
So crude for a King,
And worshipped the Holy One,
SAVIOUR OF MEN!

C



RULES

- Each age group is assigned a certain picture:
4 - 6 year olds - picture C 7 - 9 year olds - picture A
10 - 12 year olds - picture B
- Enlarged reproductions of picture A, B, or C will be disqualified.
- Children MUST be members in good standing of the FCSU in order to be eligible for prizes.
- Your child's completed entry form, colored picture, and a photo of your child to the Fraternal Activities Director must be postmarked by **January 2, 2008**.

Susan Ondrejco
234 Ilion St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15207

Please submit this form with your child's entry by January 2, 2008

PRIZES

Winners in each age group will receive the following:

1ST PLACE

Jednota Duffle Bag and \$25.00

2ND PLACE

Jednota Duffle Bag and \$15.00

3RD PLACE

Jednota Duffle Bag and \$10.00

HONORABLE MENTION

\$5 Gift Card

Child's Name _____ Date of Birth: _____

Certificate Number: _____ Regional Director: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

FCSU Quarterly Meeting

The Board of Directors of the First Catholic Union held their Quarterly Meeting, Friday and Saturday, September 14-15, 2007, at the Home Office in Independence, Ohio. From all indications the meeting was productive and successful. Here are a few photos from this meeting:



Andrew R. Harcar Sr., National Vice President and Chairman of the Membership and Marketing Committee (right), presented Regional Director George Sprock with one of seven awards given for insurance and annuity production for the years 2005 and 2006.



National Secretary Kenneth Arendt introduced the Home Office Staff to the Board of Director. L-R are Adriana Anderko, Marjorie (Marge) Szczepaniak, Julie Cherryholmes, and Barbara Sutila.



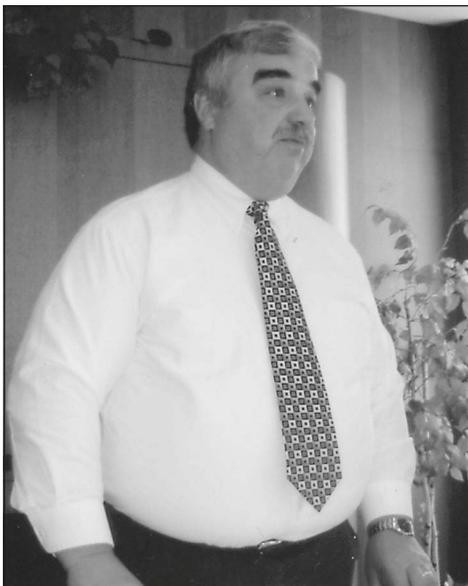
Our National Chaplain, Father Thomas Nasta celebrated Mass each day for the Board members in the Home Office.



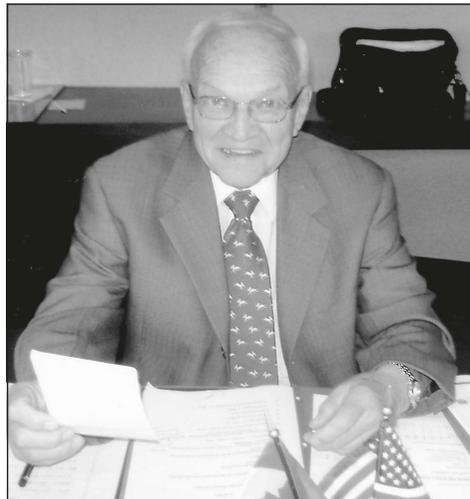
National President Andrew M. Rajec gives his presidential report.



Home Office Staff L-R: Roseanne Krockner, Amber Germ, Karen Davis, Piroska Merai, and Joseph (Joe) Mitrik



National Secretary Kenneth Arendt gives the financial report to the Board.



National Treasurer George Matta gives his report to the Board.



National Vice President Andrew R. Harcar Sr. (right) updates the Board of Directors on membership and marketing.



Regional Directors Damian Nasta and George Sprock.



L-R National Vice President Andrew R. Harcar Sr., Regional Director Regis Brekosky, and National President Andrew M. Rajec.



L-R Canadian Regional Director Milos Mitro, Fraternal Activities Director Susan Ondrejco, and National President Andrew Rajec.

BRANCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Branch 2 — PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 2, will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday, December 1, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. at the Slovak Civic Federation, 1200 Hodgkiss Street, Northside, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The election of officers for the coming year will take place. Refreshments will be served, so please call Recording Secretary Regina Ondrejco to say you will be attending.

Hope to see many of you on Saturday, December 1, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. at the Slovak Club on the Northside.

Regina Ondrejco, Secretary

Branch 2 — PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Michael the Archangel, Branch 2, will hold a Family Holiday Get Together on Sunday, January 6, 2008. All members are encouraged to make plans to attend. It will be free to members and will include refreshments and entertainment. More details will be sent to your homes or you may contact Recording Secretary Regina Ondrejco at 412/421-1204 for more information.

Hope to see many of you on Sunday, January 6, 2008.

Regina Ondrejco, Secretary

Branch 3P — HAZLETON, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Joseph Society, Branch 6P, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 30, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. in Saint Joseph Church cafeteria, North Laurel Street, Hazleton, Pennsylvania. The election of officers for 2008 will be conducted followed by a short update on local branch activities. New ideas for branch activities will be entertained and any changes of address or beneficiaries can be submitted at this meeting. All members are encouraged to attend and get involved.

Mike Koval, Financial Secretary

Branch 6 — STREATOR, ILLINOIS

The officers of Branch 6 wish to announce that there will be an Essay Contest for all members of Branch 6 in age groups 7 to 10, 11 to 15, and 16 to 21. The title of the essay is: "What Thanksgiving Means to Me." A maximum of 250 words and a minimum of 50 words will be accepted. A \$25 savings bond will be awarded in each age category. Submit your entries by November 30, 2007 to Catherine Michlik, 1331 North 1709 Road, Streator, IL 61364. Please include your name, address, phone number and policy number. For further assistance call Catherine Michlik at 815/672-3836.

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 9, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at Chipper's Grill. The election of officers will take place at this meeting. Members must be present at this meeting to be elected.

Paul Chismar, Recording Secretary

Branch 7 — HOUTZDALE, PENNSYLVANIA

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Society, Branch 7, will hold its next meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 9:00 p.m. at Christ the King Parish Center, 100 Brisbin Street, Houtzdale, Pennsylvania. The election of officers will take place. Members are urged to attend.

Marie Sedlak, Recording Secretary

Branch 19 — BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

The St. Joseph Society, Branch 19, will hold the Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. in SS. Cyril and Methodius Church Hall, now named the Rev. Matthew Jankola Hall. The election of officers will also take place at this meeting.

We hope our members will take advantage of these meetings and join us.

Henry Zack, Recording Secretary

Branch 24 — CLEVELAND, OHIO

The St. Andrew Svorad Society, Branch 24, will hold a meeting on Sunday, January 20, 2008, at 2:00 p.m. at the Karlin Club, 5304 Fleet Avenue. On the agenda will be the election of officers and a discussion of the Senior Promotion Program. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

Bob Kopco, President

Branch 41 — YONKERS, NEW YORK

The Holy Trinity Society, Branch 41, will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday, December 1, 2007 after the 5:00 p.m. Mass at Most Holy Trinity Church at the home of President Brother Paul Fialkovic, 40 Dalton Road, Yonkers, New York. Financial reports will be presented and suggestions will be discussed. The election of officers will take place at this meeting. We urge all members to attend this meeting. Refreshments will be served.

Robert J. Lutz, Recording Secretary

Branch 45 — NEW YORK CITY

The St. Matthew the Evangelist Society, Branch 45, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 12:30 p.m. after the Slovak Mass at St. John Nepomucene Church, 66th Street and First Avenue, New York City. On the agenda will be a financial report, officers' reports, a report on last year's activities, and a discussion of events for the coming year. The election of officers will also take place. We urge all members to attend this meeting.

Joseph Jurasi, President

Branch 75 — SHAMOKIN, PENNSYLVANIA

The Assumption of the B.V.M. Society, Branch 75, will hold its Semiannual Meeting on Sunday, December 2, 2007, at 10:30 a.m. at the residence of President and Financial Secretary Ronald M. Anderson, 8 South Shamokin Street, Shamokin, Pennsylvania. The fiscal end of year reports and financial statements will be presented. The Auditors' report will be submitted and the nomination of officers for the coming year will take place. All members are requested to attend this semiannual meeting.

Ronald M. Anderson, President & Financial Secretary

Branch 90 — OLYPHANT, PENNSYLVANIA

The Holy Trinity Society, Branch 90, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 2, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Michael P. Glinesky, 129 Grant Street, Olyphant, Pennsylvania.

Barbara Sochovka, Financial Secretary

Branch 96 — CARROLLTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch

96, will hold a meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Stella Papson, 138 Sunset Road, Carrolltown, Pennsylvania. The election of officers will be conducted at this meeting.

Stella Papson, President

Branch 153 — CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

At the annual meeting of the St. Stephen Society, Branch 153, members approved a motion to give a Christmas Gift to our younger members. Members age 14 and under will receive a gift during the coming Christmas holidays.

We wish a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to all our members.

Dorothy Jurcenko, Financial Secretary

Branch 162 — UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Wendelin Society, Branch 162, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 16, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. in the third floor meeting room of the Meridian Point Apartments, Confer Vista Road, Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Branch activities will be discussed and the election of officers will take place. All members are invited to attend.

Dolores Marmol, Secretary

Branch 166 — BINGHAMTON, CAPITAL AREA, PEEKSKILL, SYRACUSE, AND POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK

The St. Joseph the Guardian Society, Branch 166, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 1:15 a.m. at the Old Country Buffet, Town Square Mall, Vestal Parkway. On the agenda will be the election of officers for 2008, and a discussion of all other topics relating to the Branch. Members are encouraged to attend. Please call Sue Gabriel at 607/729-8034 or Arlo Meeker at 607/775-4896 by December 4, 2007 if you plan to attend. Thank you and hope to see you at the meeting.

Arlo Meeker, Vice President

Branch 173 — WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 173, of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Area, will hold its Annual Meeting on December 13, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. at Norms, North Sherman Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The meeting will be for general business. If you have any questions or plan to attend, please contact Dorothy A. Ungvarsky, 15 Grove St., Mountaintop, PA 18707, Phone 570/403-2067, or e-mail at chumley4@prodigy.net, so that arrangements can be made.

Dorothy A. Ungvarsky, President

Branch 199 — Hostetter, Pennsylvania

The Holy Trinity Society, Branch 199, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 16, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. at the Home of Frances Pipak. The election of officers will take place. All members are invited to attend.

Sophie Pipak

Branch 213 — RENFREW, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Michael Society, Branch 213, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. at 3061 Kensington Court, Renfrew, Pennsylvania. On the agenda will be the election of officers for the coming year. All members are welcome to attend

the meeting.

The officers of Branch 213 wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Joe Belechak, Secretary

Branch 240P — TAYLOR, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 240P, will hold a meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Stephen J. Kavulich, 41 Hedge Row Run, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. All members are welcome to attend.

Mark, Kavulich, Secretary

Branch 259 — STRUTHERS, OHIO

The St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 259, will have a Mass offered for all members, both living and deceased, on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 8:30 a.m. in Holy Trinity Church, Struthers, Ohio. The Annual Meeting will be held after the liturgy at the Bedford Trails Golf Course in Coitsville, Ohio. All members are urged to attend.

Vivian Sedlako, Recording Secretary

Branch 260 — CAMPBELL, OHIO

The St. Matthew Society, Branch 260, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. at Msgr. Cyril Adamko Hall at St. Elizabeth Church. The election of officers will take place along with a discussion of plans for the coming year. All members are urged to attend.

Charles M. Terek, President

Branch 266 — HAZLETON, PENNSYLVANIA

The SS. Peter and Paul Society, Branch 226, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 30, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. in Saint Joseph Church cafeteria, 604 North Laurel Street, Hazleton, Pennsylvania. The election of officers for 2008 will take place. There will also be a discussion of branch activities for next year. Please spread the word so more of our members will attend and become more involved in branch activities. Please plan to attend.

Richard Lazar, Financial Secretary

Branch 290 — RARITAN, NEW JERSEY

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 290, will hold its Annual Meeting on Friday, December 14, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. On the agenda will be the election of officers and a discussion of the new insurance programs. Please call Joe after 6:30 p.m. at 732/469-5256 for the location of the meeting.

Joseph Minarovich, President

Branch 292 — WINDBER, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 292, will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday, December 15, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. at the Slovak Club, 1300 Jackson Avenue, Windber, Pennsylvania. All members are asked to attend this meeting. The Christmas Party will follow the meeting.

The officers of Branch 292 extend to all wishes for a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ed Surkosky, President

Branch 293 — LANSFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Joseph Society, Branch 293, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, Decem-

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BRANCH ANNOUNCEMENTS continued from page 8

ber 9, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. at St. Michael's Church Social Hall, 124 East Abbott Street, Lansford, Pennsylvania.

Anyone needing more insurance or service should contact Mr. Robert Lakata, 527 East Bertsch Street, Lansford, PA 18232-2210, or leave a message at 570/645-4872 and your call will be returned.

Robert Lakata, Financial Secretary

Branch 313 — CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 313, will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 5, 2008, at 11:00 a.m. at the Mother of Sorrows Convent, 5900 West 147th Street, Oak Forest, Illinois. On the agenda will be the election of officers and a discussion on ways to find new membership for the branch.

We are trying to locate the addresses for the following members: Kenneth W. Michalik, Charles Morince, Phyllis Morince, Barbara E. Perkins, Kimberly Rozema, Thaddeus Rozema, Robert Ruby, Josephine Ruzon, Angela Schandor, Lorna Talaby, and Sandra Tatkus. If you have an address or telephone number for any of these members please call Joseph Bugel at 708/349-7873.

**Joseph M. Bugel,
President-Financial Secretary**

Branch 320 — Stockdale, Pennsylvania

The officers of the SS. Peter and Paul Society, Branch 320, invite their members to attend the next meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 12:00 noon at the residence of Frances Tarquinio, 209 Sylvan Drive, Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania. The election of officers will be held and other pertinent business will be discussed. Since a Christmas Lunch will be served, please call Fran at 724/929-9788 and let her know if you will be attending.

Mary Anne Higginbotham, President

Branch 327 — POTTSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 327, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 16, 2007, at 9:15 a.m. in Holy Trinity Church Social Hall, 370 South Street, Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Bernardine Uhas, Secretary

Branch 393 — HANNASTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Joseph Society, Branch 393, will hold a meeting on Sunday, December 2, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. at the home of John and Mary Ann Nalevanko, 459 Front Street, Hannastown Road. All members are invited to attend.

Mary Ann Nalevanko, Secretary

Branch 410 — UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The SS. Peter and Paul Society, Branch 410, will hold a meeting on Tuesday, December 4, 2007, at 4:00 p.m. at the Highland House. On the agenda will be the election of officers. All members are asked to attend.

**Geri Buchheit, Recording Secretary/
Financial Secretary**

Branch 421 — NANTY GLO, PENNSYLVANIA

The Holy Name of Jesus Society, Branch 421, will hold its Semiannual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. at the home of John Stager, 124 Circle Drive, Ebsburg, Pennsylvania. The nomination

and election of officers will take place at this meeting.

Lillian R. Stager, Secretary-Treasurer

Branch 456 — HAWK RUN, PENNSYLVANIA

The SS. Peter and Paul Society, Branch 456, will hold its next meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 12:00 noon at the Lincoln Club Meeting Room, Fourth Street, Hawk Run, Pennsylvania. The election of officers will take place. All members are urged to attend.

Frank Danko, Secretary

Branch 484 — GRACETON, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Joseph Society, Branch 484, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. in St. Francis Church Hall, Coral, Pennsylvania. On the agenda will be the election of officers, an update on the Senior Promotion Program, and a discussion of a scholarship. Input from members is encouraged. All members are welcome to attend.

Joseph E. Rura, Financial Secretary

Branch 493 — CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The Assumption of the B.V.M. Society, Branch 493, will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday, December 8, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. at Mabenka's Restaurant, 7844 South Cicero Avenue, Burbank, Illinois. Attendees will enjoy a delicious meal. If you plan to attend, please notify Robert Tapak Magruder at 502/244-6643 or 773/505-0117. Members of other lodges who attend will pay with separate checks.

**Robert Tapak Magruder,
Financial Secretary**

Branch 553 — AKRON, OHIO

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 553, will hold its Annual Vilija on Sunday, December 2, 2007, at the Slovak J Club, 485 Morgan Avenue, Akron, Ohio. The celebration will begin at 4:00 p.m. The cost is \$15.00 per person. Children age 16 and younger will be admitted free. The branch will also be commemorating our 100th Anniversary in conjunction with the Vilija. We invite all Jednota members to come and help us celebrate both events. Call the Slovak J Club for tickets at 330/773-4978.

Branch 553 will hold the election of officers for 2008 on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. at the Slovak J Club. Any member interested in running for an office must submit their intentions in writing to Vera Thomas care of the Slovak J Club by November 30.

Linda M. Hanko, Secretary

Branch 567 — ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Society, Branch 567, will hold its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, December 19, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. in St. John the Baptist Church Social Hall, 924 North Front Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania. All members are urged to attend the meeting and to take an interest in our activities. The annual report will be given. The Pork and Sauerkraut Dinner was a success and enjoyed by all.

The officers of Branch 567 wish everyone a Blessed and Merry Christmas. May God bless and watch over you.

Helen Fiala, Recording Secretary

Branch 581 — GARY, INDIANA

The St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 581, will hold its end of year meeting on Sunday, December 16, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. at Pruzin Funeral Home, 6360 Broadway, Merrillville, Indiana. The election of officers will be held. Also on the agenda will be a discussion of our new FCSU Senior Promotion. This includes a \$200 annual premium with a \$100.00 rebate for the first year, to add up to \$6,500 more insurance. If you cannot attend, contact me at 219/926-2410 for more information on this promo. It is for ages 55 to 80.

George Kelchak, Financial Secretary

Branch 628 — HOMESTEAD, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 628, will be held on Sunday, December 30, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. at 821 Laura Avenue, West Mifflin, Pennsylvania. The agenda will include a review of branch activities and the election of new officers for the New Year.

Sylvia J. Vehec, Recording Secretary

Branch 635 — NEW BRIGHTON, PENNSYLVANIA

The officers of the SS. Peter and Paul Society, Branch 635, invite their members to attend the Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. at the Fallston Fire Hall, Fallston, Pennsylvania. On the agenda will be the election of officers, insurance topics, and a discussion of activities. All members are urged to attend. A luncheon will be served after the meeting.

Vincent Ciganik, President

Branch 636 — TOLEDO, OHIO

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Society, Branch 636, will hold a special meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Mrs. Helen Springer, 1634 Bond Street, Toledo, Ohio. The purpose of the meeting is to vote on the merger of Branch 636 with Branch 743 in Sterling Heights/Detroit, Michigan. Currently, Branch 636 has only one officer and can no longer provide the assistance members require. Branch 743, founded in 1921, has over 600 members and holds semiannual meetings. All members of Branch 636 are urged to attend this meeting.

Helen Springer, Officer

Branch 682 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

The St. George Society, Branch 682, will hold its Annual Meeting and Christmas Party on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. at the Materials Research Building located behind Holy Trinity Church, Struthers, Ohio. On the agenda will be the election of officers for 2008 and a discussion of activities during the past years and plans for the coming year. The Christmas Party will be held after the lodge meeting. All members are invited to attend.

Joseph Scavina, Financial Secretary

Branch 721 — BANNISTER, MICHIGAN

The Ss. Cyril and Methodius Society, Branch 721, will hold its next meeting on Sunday, December 2, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. at St. Cyril Catholic Church Meeting Room. All members are urged to attend.

Joseph Beno, Jr., Secretary

Branch 731 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

The St. Joseph Society, Branch 731, will hold its Annual Meeting and Election of Officers on Sunday, December 16, 2007, at 12:30 p.m. at Saint Matthias Rectory. Plans for activities in 2008 will be discussed at this meeting. We look forward to seeing you.

James Bobby, Secretary

Branch 743 — DETROIT, MICHIGAN

The St. Joseph Society, Branch 743, will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. On the agenda will be officers' report, a 2007 financial report, approval of the 2008 budget, a discussion of branch activities, and other business pertaining to the branch and the First Catholic Slovak Union. The election of branch officers will also take place. In addition to the regular agenda a vote will be taken at this meeting to accept the merger into our Branch of members of Branch 636 in Toledo (Rossford), Ohio. All members are encouraged to attend. Members are also urged to attend the celebration of the Slovak Mass before the meeting at 11:30 a.m. at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, 41233 Ryan Road, Sterling Heights, Michigan.

Please note that due to the construction at the church the location of the annual meeting has been changed. We will meet after the Mass at 1:00 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 34781 Ryan Road, Sterling Heights. The hall is located just south of 15 Mile Road on Ryan Road. Please come and enjoy our annual Christmas meeting with your fellow branch members.

Members who need assistance with their policy or need to change their address or beneficiary should contact the Financial Secretary of Branch 743, Joseph C. Rimarcik, 42909 Sussex Park Drive, Sterling Heights, MI 48314-3087, or phone 586/254-0225.

The officers of Branch 743 wish you a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year.

**Joseph C. Rimarcik, President
and Financial Secretary**

Branch 746 — LINDEN, NEW JERSEY

The St. John the Baptist Society, Branch 746, will hold its next meeting on Sunday, December 16, 2007, at 12:30 p.m. in the upstairs room in Msgr. Komar Hall at Holy Family Church, Linden, New Jersey. On the agenda will be the election of officers for 2008 and a discussion and planning of events for the coming year. Final preparations for the planned spring bus trip to the Sand Castle Winery will be finalized. Please bring your suggestions. A holiday get together will follow.

Mary J. Kapitan, Secretary

Branch 764 — WARREN, OHIO

The SS. Cyril and Methodius Society, Branch 764, will hold a meeting on Sunday, December 2, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. at 379-E Quarry Lane, Warren, Ohio. All members are welcome to attend.

Joanne Odom, Secretary

Branch 780 — SAGINAW, MICHIGAN

The officers of the SS. Peter and Paul

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BRANCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Society, Branch 780, wish to remind all members that the Annual Meeting and Election of Officers will be held on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. at the home of the Financial Secretary, 1367 Briarson, Saginaw, Michigan. At this meeting there will be a potluck dinner and celebration for the coming holidays. All members are encouraged to come and bring their families. For more information call Ben at 989/791-1775, Mary at 989/791-3505, or Cathy at 989/792-0186.

The officers of Branch 780 wish all the members a very Blessed Christmas and a Joyous New Year.

Catherine Karlsen, Secretary

Branch 785 — TORONTO, ONTARIO

The St. John Society, Branch 785, will hold a joint Annual Meeting with the Msgr. Michael Shuba District on Sunday, January 13, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church Hall, Mississauga, Ontario. The election of officers will take place. All members are urged to attend.

Milos Mitro, Regional Director

Branch 796 — EGYPT, PENNSYLVANIA

The Holy Trinity Society, Branch 796, held its Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 11, 2007, in Holy Trinity Church Hall, Whitehall (Egypt), Pennsylvania. The meeting was opened by Bernard G. Hudak with a prayer for all living and deceased members of the Jednota and Sokol. Our new pastor, Rev. Thomas A. Derzack attended the meeting. It was very nice for him to take time out of his schedule and attend our meeting and join in the singing of Slovak songs. Father Derzack was an active member in his previous parish in Lansford. Members of Slovak Catholic Sokol also attended the meeting with us.

President Bernard Madeja led a discussion on selling insurance and annuities. This past year we signed up two new members. Next on the agenda was the election officers. The following officers were elected: Bernard Madeja, President; Bernard G. Hudak, Vice President and Recording Secretary; and Thomas Hudak, Treasurer.

We pray for our new president that he may be blessed by our Lord and that he will lead us in great harmony. A special thanks goes to the Fabian family for preparing all the Slovak food. We thank Pat Fabian, Monica Fabian and Dot Madeja. It was a great affair.

Bernard G. Hudak, Recording Secretary

Branch 844 — LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The St. Joseph the Guardian Society, Branch 844, will hold its Annual Slovak Christmas Mass and Lunch on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at St. John Bosco High School, 13640 Bellflower Boulevard, Bellflower, California. Mass will begin at 11:00 a.m. A delicious authentic Slovak lunch will be served after the Mass along with the presentation of gifts to the children. Come and join us in celebrating the Slovak spirit of Christmas.

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

We hope to see you there. We wish ev-

eryone a Merry Christmas and a very special New Year.

Milan Konkol, Secretary

Branch 853 — ELLSWORTH, PENNSYLVANIA

The Holy Name of Jesus Society, Branch 853, will celebrate the Christmas season with the Annual Holiday Spaghetti Lunch on Saturday, December 15, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. at Rego's Restaurant, Charleroi, Pennsylvania. There will be no charge for Branch members. Nonmembers attending will be charged \$14.00 per person. Payment will be made that day. For a seating count, make your reservations by December 8 by calling 412/341-1537. Leave your name and the number of people attending. Also leave the name and ages of any Branch children attending.

The officers and members of Branch 853 wish everyone a Blessed Christmas Season.

Monica Rodacy-Boone, President

Branch 856 — WASHINGTON, D.C.

Our Mother of Sorrows Society, Branch 856, will hold its Annual Meeting on Thursday, December 6, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. at the Thomas Jefferson Library, 7415 Arlington Boulevard, Falls Church, Virginia. On the agenda will be a discussion of the District meeting, a financial report, and the election of officers for 2008. All members are urged to attend.

For more information call Stephen Matula at 703/671-3013 or Katherine Nowatkoski at 703/860-1693.

**Katherine M. Nowatkoski,
Financial Secretary**

Branch 857 — LEVITTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 857, will hold its Annual Meeting on Tuesday, December 11, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of the Financial Secretary Andy Herman, 15 Kraft Lane, Levittown, Pennsylvania. The election of officers for 2008 will take place at this meeting.

The officers of Branch 857 extend to all wishes for a Safe, Happy and Holy Holiday Season.

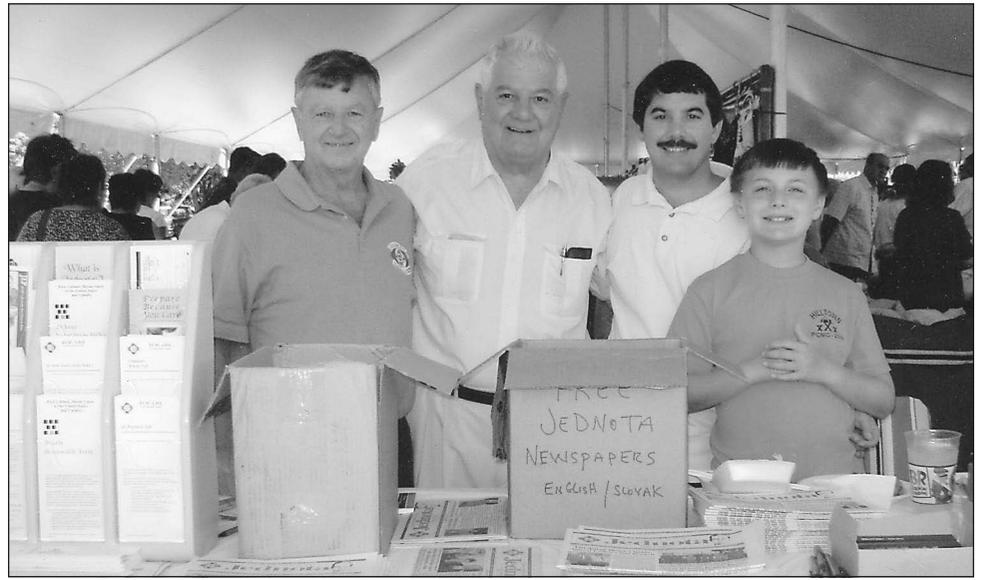
Damian D. Nasta, Recording Secretary

Branch 888 — WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

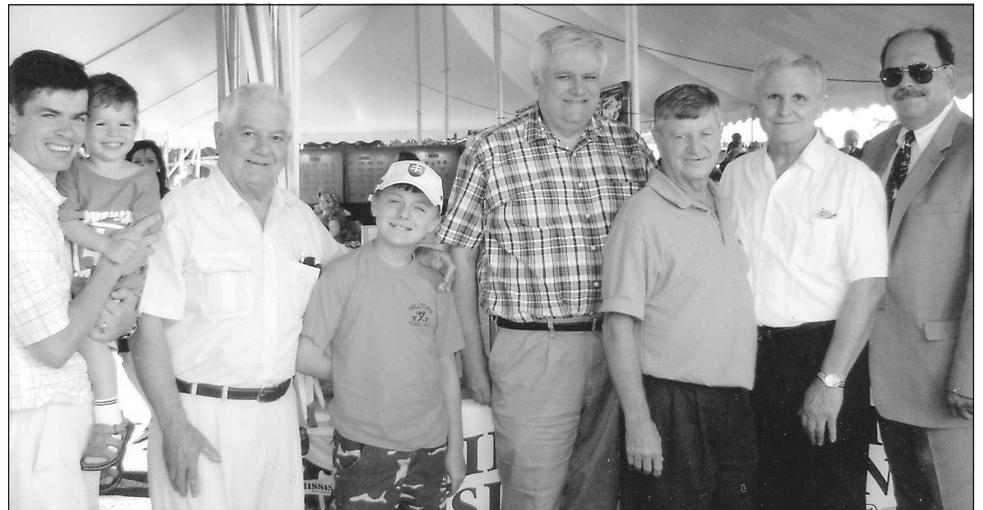
The Holy Trinity Society, Branch 888, will hold its next two meetings on Wednesday, December 5, 2007, at 5:45 p.m. and on Sunday December 9, 2007, at 1:15 p.m. Both meetings will be held at 4649 Perth Road, West Palm Beach, Florida. Contact David Rafaidus at 561/776-0449 or jednota888@yahoo.com for directions and further information. On the agenda will be future Branch activities, a treasurer's report and a discussion of items of interest to the membership. All Branch members are invited to attend.

David Rafaidus, President

**SIGN UP A
NEW MEMBER
TODAY!**



Working the FCSU booth are L-R, National Vice President Andrew R. Harcar Sr., Regional Director Joseph Minarovich, District officer Stephen Minarovich, and Jonathan Minarovich.

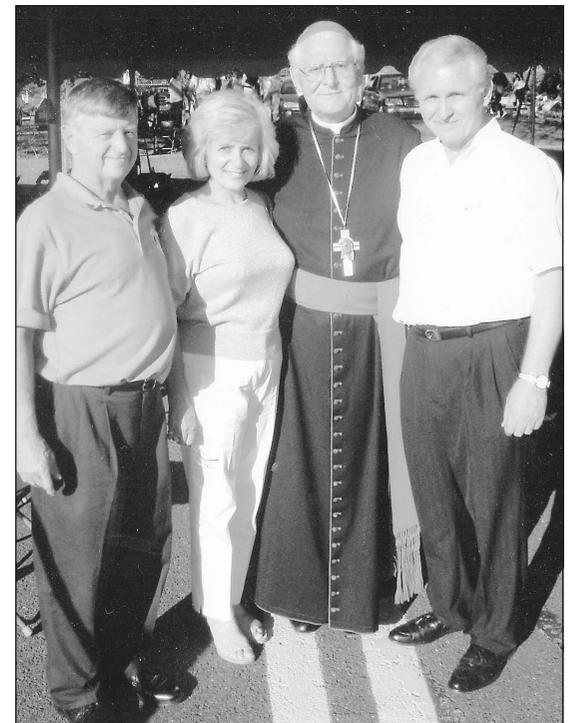


FCSU officers and friends at the Jednota information booth.

FCSU Officers Attend New Jersey Festival

On Sunday, September 23, 2007, the Membership and Marketing Committee set up a booth at the New Jersey Slovak Festival. The festival was held at the New Jersey Arts Center in Holmdel, New Jersey. An estimated crowd of 10,000 people attended this year's event.

In an effort to increase the visibility of the First Catholic Slovak Union, officers have been attending many of the Slovak festivals and events around the country. Copies of the JEDNOTA newspaper and information on FCSU products were distributed to the attendees.



Greeting Archbishop Jan Sokol of Slovakia at the festival are L-R, National Vice President Andrew R. Harcar Sr., Idka Rajec, and National President Andrew M. Rajec.

From the Desk of the Executive Secretary

Holiday Hours

The Home Office will be closed on the following days during the holidays:

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

December 24 and 25, 2007

New Years Eve and New Years Day

December 31, 2007 and January 1, 2008

DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENTS

PITTSBURGH DISTRICT – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The Pittsburgh District will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 2, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. at Holy Trinity Parish Hall, 529 Grant Avenue Extension, West Mifflin, Pennsylvania. All branches are expected to send representatives. The election of District officers will be held at the meeting. The meeting agenda includes officers' reports, a discussion of the District program for 2008, and a discussion of other FCSU business. A light luncheon will follow the meeting.

The officers of the Pittsburgh District wish all the members a happy and blessed holidays season.

Margaret Nasta, Recording Secretary

REV. MATTHEW JANKOLA DISTRICT — Bridgeport, Connecticut

The Rev. Matthew Jankola District will hold its Annual Meeting and Election of Officers on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church Hall, 79 Church Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut. Members of the various branches in the District are invited to attend this annual meeting.

Jacqueline Zack, Secretary

PRINCE PRIBINA DISTRICT — Los Angeles, California

The Prince Pribina District will celebrate the Christmas season with a Slovak Mass on Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. at St. John Bosco Chapel at St. John Bosco High School, 13640 South Bellflower Boulevard, Bellflower, California. Following the liturgy, there will be a gourmet lunch with desert in the cafeteria and the tradition of St. Nicholas presenting Christmas gifts to the children.

There will be a Choir Christmas Carol practice on Sunday, December 16, 2007, at 6:00 p.m. in the Slovak American Center. Please contact your Branch officer for details.

The officers of the Prince Pribina District wish all the members of the FCSU a Blessed and Joyous Christmas.

Paul Skuben, President

MSGR. MICHAEL SHUBA DISTRICT — Toronto, Ontario

The Msgr. Michael Shuba District will hold a joint Annual Meeting with Branch 785 on Sunday, January 13, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church Hall, Mississauga, Ontario. The election of officers will take place. All members are encouraged to attend.

Milos Mitro, Regional Director

REV. JOHN MARTVON DISTRICT — Blair, Cambria, Indiana, Somerset and Bedford Counties, Pennsylvania

The Rev. John Martvon District held its Annual Meeting on October 28, 2007, in SS. Cyril and Methodius Church Hall, Graham Avenue, Windber, Pennsylvania. President Edward Surkosky opened the meeting at 2:10 p.m. District Chaplain Rev. Andrew Stanko led the opening prayer. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present. President Surkosky of host Branch 292 welcomed the delegates to Windber. The roll call was taken and one auditor was absent.

President Surkosky then introduced our honored guest, National President Andrew Rajec, who shared some highlights of his remarks on the question of mergers at the recent convention of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association. Some say a merger will not take place because of petty arguments and rivalries. President Rajec spoke on the need to merge branches who have no officers and are currently inactive and the need for the district and branches to get young members involved. He also encouraged the recommenders to contact eligible seniors for the Senior Promotion program. The society, he added, was planning more programs in the future.

The recording secretary, Joseph Rura, read the minutes from the previous meeting. They were approved on a motion by Leonard Fenimore and seconded by William Smedo. The treasurer, Lillian Stager, gave the treasurer's report. Joseph Slivosky moved to approve the treasurer's report, seconded by Joseph Pipon. Financial Secretary Stella Papson gave her report, which was approved on a motion by Joseph Pipon and seconded by Janet Mical.

Branch 23 in Johnstown held a talent show with about 50 children and adults in attendance. President Rajec was asked by Joseph Slivosky of Branch 69P if he would inquire about inactive branches in Johnstown. President Rajec told Brother Slivosky to contact him at the Home Office.

The election of officers was held. Two officers, Treasurer Lillian Stager and Financial Secretary Stella Papson who declined the nomination to their offices were thanked for their years of service. Joseph Slivosky was nominated for treasurer and Theresa Cassat for financial secretary. Thomas Pipon then moved to retain the remaining incumbent officers. The following officers will serve in 2008: Rev. Andrew Stanko, Chaplain; John Stager, Honorary Vice President; Edward Surkosky, President; Lawrence Fenimore, Vice President; Theresa Cassat, Financial Secretary; Joseph Slivosky, Treasurer; and Joseph E. Rura, Recording Secretary.

Janet Mical moved to pay the bills, seconded by John Stager. It was approved. The semiannual meeting will be held in Beaverdale, Pennsylvania hosted by Branch 372. The meeting was closed with a prayer by Father Andrew Stanko and the singing of Hej Slovaci. A delicious meal was served by Agnes Elias and Betty and Sue Pipon.

Joseph E. Rura, Recording Secretary



Francis and Mary Ann Parana

Mr. and Mrs. Francis J. Parana Celebrate 50 Years of Marriage

Francis and Mary Ann Parana Sr. of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary recently with a festive dinner of homemade Slovak food at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Greensburg. They were married August 24, 1957, in Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, Dixonville, Pennsylvania.

The anniversary couple has four children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Francis and Mary Ann have enjoyed singing and performing with the Pittsburgh Area Slovaks (PAS) ensemble.

Francis Parana is a member of Branch 181 in United, Pennsylvania.

Pittsburgh Prince of Peace Parish to Host Annual Vilija on December 15

Getting ready to make your Holiday plans? While doing that, don't forget to hold the date for Saturday, December 15, 2007. Prince of Peace Parish on Pittsburgh's South Side will host its 14th Annual Slovak Vilija- a traditional Slovak Christmas Eve Dinner. What a super way to jump start the Christmas holidays with family and friends.

This meatless meal enjoyed by Slavic families around the world and others features baked fish, mushroom soup, and assorted vegetables. Scrumptious authentic delicacies such as pirohy, bobalky and kolachy crown the menu. Christmas is a time for families, so guests are encouraged to share memories of their own family Christmas Eve traditions as each course is served.

After dinner, the Pittsburgh Slovaks, the Tri-State's oldest and favorite Slovak folk ensemble, will entertain guests with a unique presentation of folk songs, dances and carols that highlights the customs of the Christmas season in Slovak villages of long ago. The program culminates with the well-loved "Jaslickari", the retelling of Christ's birth from the point of view of the lowly shepherds.

The Prince of Peace Slovak Vilija is a once-a-year opportunity to feast on delicious Slovak foods and enjoy a moving, authentic folk presentation. Plan on a memorable experience, but don't delay. Attendance is by reservation only. Tickets are this season's best bargain too: \$15.00 for adults and \$8.00 for children under age 16. Tickets may be reserved by calling the Parish office at 412/481-8380.

Plan on joining the Prince of Peace family on Saturday, December 15, 2007, and begin your own special Christmas tradition. Doors open at 4:00 p.m. Dinner will be served according to tradition, as the first star rises (approximately 5:00 p.m.).

YOUTH ROUND-UP



District II President John Jurcenko congratulates college student Jerry Ourada. L-R District II Financial Secretary/Treasurer Art Fayta, Branch 6 President Catherine Michlik, and Jerry's parents all congratulated him as he accepted his \$100.00 college grant.

Scholarship Winner

Branch 6 in Streator, Illinois, is very proud of its member Jerry Ourada. Jerry is a 2007 FCSU Scholarship Winner and was also awarded a \$100.00 college grant from the Bishop Stefan Moyses Scholarship Fund of the Rev. John J. Spitzkovsky District. The award took place at the District's Annual Meeting on October 21, 2007. Jerry is a freshman at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. He plans to become a high school band instructor.



Barczynski Sisters Receive Girl Scout Religious Awards

Heather Lynn and Kristen Marie Barczynski, daughters of Dr. and Mrs. John L. Barczynski, were each recently presented the "I Live My Faith" Religious Award by Father Peter Murphy, the pastor of St. Alphonsus Church in Wexford, Pennsylvania, during a Mass on November 4, 2007. Both girls are Junior Girl Scouts in Troop 909, and both were also recipients of the "Family of God" Religious Award as Brownie Girl Scouts.



Kristen and Heather Barczynski, "I Live My Faith" Religious Awards Recipients

The girls are sixth grade students at Marshall Middle School, and are both on the YMCA Swim Team, in the St. Alphonsus Children's Choir, and play piano. In addition, Heather plays viola in the School Orchestra, enjoys writing and poetry, and is on the soccer team, while Kristen is in the School Choir, enjoys art and guitar, and was the Grand Prize winner in the "Doing Your Best" Poster Contest, the 2nd Place winner in the "Bus Safety" Poster Contest, and the 1st Place winner in her division in the Jednota Coloring Contest this past year.

Kristen and Heather live in Franklin Park Borough, Pennsylvania, and along with their brother, John E., are triplet fourth-generation members of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Society, Branch 567 in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

FCSU Life Single Premium Insurance Fall Special

Purchase Single Premium Whole Life Insurance coverage for your children or grandchildren now through December 31, 2007 and receive a ***FREE GIFT** to present with the certificate.

Pay one premium and have fully paid-up insurance. Issued in any amount (\$5,000 or more) subject to current FCSU Life non-medical limits. Excellent gift for children or grandchildren.



Example – Newborn Male		Example – Newborn Female	
\$5,000 paid-up insurance.....	\$290	\$5,000 paid-up insurance.....	\$250
\$10,000 paid-up insurance.....	\$580	\$10,000 paid-up insurance	\$500
Example – Age 5 Male		Example – Age 5 Female	
\$5,000 paid-up insurance	\$340	\$5,000 paid-up insurance	\$290
\$10,000 paid-up insurance	\$680	\$10,000 paid-up insurance	\$580
Example – Age 10 Male		Example – Age 10 Female	
\$5,000 paid-up insurance	\$400	\$5,000 paid-up insurance	\$340
\$10,000 paid-up insurance	\$800	\$10,000 paid-up insurance.....	\$680
Example – Age 15 Male		Example – Age 15 Female	
\$5,000 paid-up insurance	\$480	\$5,000 paid-up insurance.....	\$405
\$10,000 paid-up insurance.....	\$960	\$10,000 paid-up insurance	\$810

Contact your branch office or to learn more call the FCSU today at 1-800-533-6682

*Children 8 and under receive a stuffed Jednota Bear. Children 9-18 receive a gift card!

Cookbooks Available

The "Carpathian Cookery" cookbook, now in its 12th printing, having sold over 10,000 copies, is again available for sale. The 330-page cookbook now has a new look and features a protective plastic cover and includes sections on Christmas Customs and recipes (and Easter customs and recipes), traditional Rusyn and Slovak foods, other ethnic dishes, and many other tried and true recipes of Saint John's parishioners. It contains many paska and kolachi 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 book is \$13.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling. If ordering from Canada, please send a \$20.00 U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost. To order, send a check or money order to: Ethnic Craft Club, St. John Byzantine Catholic Church, 185 East Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401, or call 724/438-6027 for more information.



YOUTH ROUND-UP

Steve Karlsen Places in C.A.T. Ski Time Trials

Steve Karlsen, a member of Branch 780 in Saginaw, Michigan, placed second in the Classic All Terrain Ski (C.A.T. ski) qualifying race held September 2, 2007. Steve's time was 11 minutes and 52 seconds. The racecourse was hilly and had many turns and best of all, it was freshly mowed and in perfect condition for C.A.T. skiing. There were seven men and one woman in the 2.3-kilometer race. All contestants beat the time necessary to qualify for the C.A.T. Ski World Cup held in Stevens, Wisconsin.

Steve Karlsen is the grandson of Louis and Agnes Sapak who were among the founders of Branch 780 in Saginaw, Michigan in 1926. The family has been active in Branch 780 for many years.

From the desk of the Executive Secretary – Visit our web site! www.fcsu.com

Exciting News – The Jednota Newspaper (English and Slovak sections) is now on our web page and for your convenience 4 back issues and the current issue are maintained on the web page at all times. If you missed an article or looking for a recipe you need only to go to the web site Branch and District Officers announcements are now on the web page and listings of all activities for the various regions.

If you are looking for forms or applications you may find those also on the web site.

We encourage our branch and district officers to use this means of keeping in touch with their branch members and announcing events. The email address is fcsu@aol.com if you wish to send your information to the home office.

We will continue to update the web page, please check for announcements such as our special 2% bonus now being offered through our annuity program, special offers on our insurance products, trips to Slovakia, and our Alaskan Cruise Membership Meet.

WEB SITE – www.fcsu.com

Centennial of the Cernova Massacre Recalls Legacy of Msgr. Andrew Hlinka

By Daniel F. Tanzone

A host of civic and religious dignitaries gathered in the picturesque village of Cernova, outside Ruzomberok, Slovakia on October 27 to recall the centennial of a sad event in Slovak history. Known as the "Cernova Massacre," the event recalled the brutal killing of innocent men and women of the village on October 27, 1907. The event recalled the long journey of Slovak emancipation from Magyar domination.

The noted political and spiritual leader, Msgr. Andrew Hlinka was born in Cernova. For years he wished to build a church in his native village, then part of the Ruzomberok parish where he served as pastor in the early years of the 20th century. With a church of their own, the people there would not have to travel the distance to Ruzomberok to fulfill their religious duties. Under Hlinka's leadership, the people raised the money for the new church without any government or diocesan support. Naturally, the people wanted their pastor and native son, Msgr. Hlinka to be present for the church's dedication. The bishop however, had other plans. Although Hlinka had been a priest in good standing, the Bishop of Spis at the time, Alexander Parvy had suspended Msgr. Hlinka for inciting anti-Magyar sentiment. Parvy was supported by the government of Alexander Wekerle who viewed Hlinka as a dangerous threat to their hegemony. The Slovaks often referred to Bishop Parvy as "Alexander the Terrible." Hlinka was thus not able to be present for the dedication of the church in Cernova. Hlinka eventually defended his case in Rome against Parvy's action and was eventually exonerated. The people pleaded with Bishop Parvy to delay the dedication until her beloved Hlinka could be present. Unmoved, Parvy decided that the new church would be dedicated on October 27, 1907. He himself decided not to attend and instead sent a priest along with local Magyar magistrate accompanied by elements of the Magyar police and army to bless the new church dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary.

Upon the arrival of the priest, magistrate and their entourage, the villagers gathered at the entrance to Cernova to block them. Several villagers blocked their passage, seized their horses and shouted again for a postponement of the dedication. In a fit of anger at having his authority flouted by what he called "a rabble mob," the Magyar magistrate ordered the gendarmes to open fire on the Cernovans. The Hungarian sanitized version said the villagers hurled stones at the procession. Thanks to the efforts of the noted Robert Seton Watson, a British student of Hungarian affairs, the true account of the event eventually was publicized in the English press. He described the tragic scene as follows: "Without the preliminary warning to the crowd to disperse, the gendarmes began to fire upon the peasants... The commander of the gendarmes appears to have ordered one of his men to fire on anyone whom he saw lifting stones, and hence the first victim was a woman, shot through the breast at a distance of two paces. The other gendarmes followed suit, firing indiscriminately into the crowd, packed together as it was in a narrow

roadway, and some are said to have reloaded and discharged again. Nine persons were killed on the spot, including two women; three more succumbed to their wounds in the course of the day; twelve more were seriously wounded, and three of their number subsequently died. Among the slain was a woman far advanced with child, who in her dying agony gave birth to an infant. The number of persons slightly wounded is said to have exceeded sixty. ... A total of 36 years and six months imprisonment was imposed on these unhappy peasants for acting as every self-respecting man or woman would have acted in their position."

The above story as revealed by Seton Watson, who was a respected British historian and journalist, exposed some of the racial problems, which the Slovaks and other minorities in Hungary had to endure. The event at Cernova became like the shot heard around the world and sparked the interest of impartial European and American scholars who then became champions of the Slovak cause against Magyar domination. This event placed Msgr. Andrew Hlinka in the vanguard of the fight of the Slovaks for emancipation from the tyranny of the Hungarian government. After Cernova, Hlinka became identified with every important incident in Slovak political life. Sadly, after championing Slovak rights in old Hungary, Hlinka found himself defending Slovak rights within the new Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, he never lived to see the desired autonomy for Slovakia within Czechoslovakia or its eventual independence. He visited the United States in 1926 to participate in the International Eucharistic Congress in Chicago. He remained in America for more than three months where he had the opportunity to visit many Slovak Catholic parishes and the home offices of the Slovak fraternal. He gave lectures and encouraged American Slovaks to remain close to their brethren at home. He departed for Slovakia from New York on October 13, 1926, never to return to the United States. He died in 1938.

The centennial observance at Cernova on October 27 attracted an impressive crowd from across Slovakia. The delegation of political leaders was headed by Slovak President Ivan Gasparovic along with the Speaker and members of the Slovak parliament. A special memorial liturgy was celebrated in the church in Cernova. Principal celebrant was the Most Rev. Jan Sokol, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bratislava-Trnava. Homilist at the liturgy was the Most Rev. Frantisek Tondra, the current Bishop of Spis and president of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Slovakia. A delegation representing the American Slovak community was present at the liturgy and civic ceremony. Among those in attendance were Nina Holy, national secretary-treasurer of the Slovak League of America, her husband John A. Holy, the League's honorary national secretary-treasurer, and Andrew F. Hudak, director of the Slovak Institute at St. Andrew-Svorad Abbey in Cleveland.

The centennial observance of the Cernova Massacre was a sad reminder of the history of one nation against another. It recalls the domination of a larger nation against a

smaller nation. It chronicles the plight of the Slovaks in old Hungary. However, the event at Cernova gave rise to support from the west, which eventually led to the emancipation of the Slovaks from Hungary. It inspired our President Woodrow Wilson and his desire to see the smaller nations of Europe attain their right of self-determination. Following the First World War, President Wilson gave full support to the creation of the first Czechoslovakia in 1919.

In retrospect, it serves no purpose to

hide the truth of brutality, whether it be a century ago of Hungarians against Slovaks or Turks against Armenians. History is always a good teacher. Hopefully, we learn from the mistakes of the past so that they may not be repeated in our contemporary lives. Considering the present world situation, we often wonder!

(Daniel F. Tanzone of Yonkers, N.Y. serves as president of the Slovak League of America, a civic and cultural federation of Americans of Slovak ancestry)



**A.J. Seida
1st Place**



**Alexandrea Swearengin
2nd Place**



**Alexander Fayta
3rd Place**



**Amber Miller
Honorable Mention**



**John Munoz
Honorable Mention**



**Chelsea Fayta
Honorable Mention**



**Crystal Munoz
Honorable Mention**



**Trisha Mota
Honorable Mention**

Rev. John J. Spitkovsky District Holds First Christmas Ornament Contest

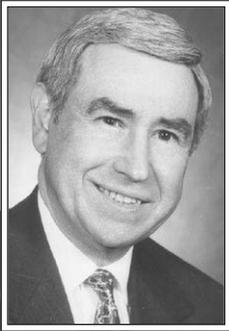
The Rev. John J. Spitkovsky District held a "Created a Christmas Ornament" contest for young adults ages 12 through 18. We had 8 entries and awarded prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places and honorable mention. We wish to thank all of our young branch members for their participation and their creative ornaments. We congratulated our winners and displayed their ornaments at our District meeting on October 21, 2007. Their ornaments will be placed on the Republic of Slovakia Christmas Tree at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, Illinois. The exhibit opens November 18, 2007 and will run through January 10, 2008. We invite you to see our tree.

The winners were: First Place-A.J. Seida, Branch 706; Second Place-Alexandrea Swearengin, Branch 706; and Third Place-Alexander Fayta, Branch 706. The following received Honorable Mention: Amber Miller, Branch 706; Crystal Munoz, Branch 493; John Munoz, Branch 493; Chelsea Fayta, Branch 706; and Trisha Mota, Branch 493.

Congratulations to all.

Barbara Fayta, Chairperson

MONEY MANAGEMENT & TAX TIPS



By Joseph T. Senko

*Certified Public Accountant
Certified Financial Planner
Personal Financial Specialist
(AICPA)*



Savings Strategies for Every Stage in Your Life

Some habits- like saving money-are good. Most people would admit that saving money is important to their financial well-being, but many lack the discipline or know-how to sock away the money they need. No matter what stage of life you are in, there are savings strategies that can work for you.

Set savings goals. The standard is to try to save 10 to 15 percent of your income. If that's too much, start with a lower goal-say 5 or 6 percent- then work your way up. Once you get into the habit of saving, it becomes easier to increase the percentage.

You are more likely to follow through on savings goals if you write them down. Classify your goals into short-term goals-like building an emergency fund; medium-term goals, such as saving for a down payment on a home; and long-term goals, like providing for a secure retirement.

The best strategy, of course, is to allocate your savings across all three goals. Too often we have a tendency to put off saving for long-term goals, but the reality is that the sooner you start, the better your chance of reaching them.

Take Advantage of compounding. Most savings accounts, CDs, and money market accounts pay compound interest, which is the interest that you earn on the interest that the financial institution has paid and added to the amount you deposited. So, in effect, you're earning interest on your interest.

You may be surprised to learn how quickly you can double your money through compounding. You can use the "Rule of 72" to find out. Just divide the interest rate your money is earning into 72. For example, if you want to know how long it will take to double money earning 6 percent interest, divide 6 into 72, and you'll learn that it will take 12 years for your money to double.

Spend less, save more. The flip side of saving more is, of course,, spending less. The sooner you start spending less, the more you will be able to save. Prepare a budget, shop for bargains, compare price on big-ticket purchases, eat out less, and keep your car longer. These are but a few of the hundreds of ways to save money.

Pay yourself first. Many people pay the bills, spend at whim, then save whatever is left over. The problem with this strategy is that there's never anything left over. The way around this is to pay yourself first. The easiest way to do this is to automate the process. Use your company's payroll deduction plan, if available, and arrange for a fixed amount to be taken out of your paycheck and sent directly to your savings account or money market account. What you don't see, you don't spend.

Pay off high-interest credit card debt. Getting ahead is difficult when you're paying 17 or 18 percent interest a year on thousands of dollars in credit card debt. A good strategy is to shift that debt to a lower-interest rate loan, such as a home equity loan or line of credit. Your interest costs will go down, and you'll be able to pay off the debt faster. Just be sure to set up a payment plan you can afford, since a home equity loan puts your home at risk. If a home equity line of credit is not available, look at a retirement plan loan if available. Rates on these loans are generally much less than credit card rates. This will, however, slow down the growth of your retirement account.

Try to pay for everything by cash, check, or debit card, all of which require you to have the money before you spend it. Keep one credit card for emergencies only.

Max out your retirement savings. One of the best ways to save is through your employer's retirement plan. When you contribute to a 401 (k) or other tax-deferred retirement plan, your contribution is made with pre-tax dollars, and the money in your account grows tax-deferred until it's withdrawn at retirement. If your employer matches your contribution, that's like getting free money. Always try to contribute the maximum allowed. If you don't have a retirement plan at work, open a traditional or Roth IRA which offers various benefits. Consider a nondeductible IRA as well if your income exceeds the Roth IRA limits. This allows earnings to grow tax-deferred. Beginning in 2010, though, you will be able to roll over a nondeductible IRA into a Roth without income limits. Starting now will get this balance up to a meaningful amount.

College Savings. If you have children, consider a 529 or Coverdell account that allows for tax-free savings for college. Do not let this eliminate your retirement savings, though. Save for both at the same time, regardless of the amounts. If you wait until after college education is paid for to address retirement, you will be starting too late.

Bank any and all windfalls. Whether you receive an income tax refund, a bonus, or a mail-in rebate, don't spend it. Deposit the money in the bank or in an investment account and watch it grow.

Get Educated. Take the time to learn how you can effectively manage your personal finances. A good place to start is to visit the AICPA's 360 Degrees of Financial Literacy Web site at www.360financialliteracy.org.

From the Office of the Vice President Seminars

Would you like to see your branch increase membership? If so... it is imperative that every branch have recommenders to sell our insurance and annuity products.

In order to qualify for your branch's \$4.00 per member stipend for 2007, you must meet certain requirements- one of them being- produce at least one (1) new contract in the previous year. Branches with two hundred fifty (250) or more members must produce at least two (2) new contracts.

It's not hard to do. Our insurance and annuity portfolio is great and our commissions are just as good. All we need are member to sign up their family, friends, neighbors, church and club members. You also have a perfect source for insurance...your current client file, which is your branch membership roster.

Right now the vast majority of branch members have an orphan policy. By that we mean, after the member bought an insurance policy, they never heard from the branch recommender again.

Your branch roster is a valuable source. You have to service your members. Your member's personal circumstances are changing all the time. So, too, is his or her's insurance needs.

If you are unsure about insurance premiums or our annuity plans and you would like me to give an informal seminar at one of your annual or semiannual branch or district meetings---call the Home Office at 1-800-533-6682, and give Karen your name, branch number, phone number and the best time of the day to return your call. After that, we can decide on a date and place to hold the training session.

Our society has high quality, competitive and affordable insurance products as well as attractive rates on our IRA/Annuities, but very few members know how to sell them. This is the reason the Membership and Marketing Committee is having seminars. We have to educate ourselves by attending them. The knowledge we gain will become a practical sales tool. The more we know about our products, the more confident and the more effective we'll become as proposers.

Hope to see you at the next seminar.



Andrew R. Harcar, Sr.

Until then...

*Good Luck and God Bless,
Andrew R. Harcar, Sr.
National Vice President
Chairman, Membership and
Marketing Committee*

Coming Events

DECEMBER

- 2 – The Pittsburgh District's Annual Meeting at 1:00 p.m. in Holy Trinity Parish Hall, 529 Grant Avenue Extension, West Mifflin, Pennsylvania.
- 9 – The Rev. Matthew Jankola District's Annual Meeting at 11:00 a.m. in SS. Cyril and Methodius Church Hall, 79 Church Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- 9 – The Prince Pribina District Annual Slovak Christmas Mass and Lunch at St. John Bosco High School, 13640 South Bellflower Boulevard, Bellflower, California. Mass at 11:00 a.m. followed by lunch and meeting.

JANUARY

- 13 – The Msgr. Michael Shuba District's Annual Meeting at 1:30 p.m. at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church Hall, Mississauga, Ontario.

REMINDERS

Please send all articles for publication (both English and Slovak) to Jednota Estates, 1011 Rosedale Avenue, Middletown, PA 17057.

Readers are reminded that all address changes for the JEDNOTA newspaper must be done at the Home Office in Independence, Ohio. If you have an address change, a cancellation or wish to receive the paper write to: First Catholic Slovak Union, FCSU Corporate Center, 6611 Rockside Rd., Independence, OH 44131-2398. Phone 1/800-JEDNOTA.

REMEMBER OUR DEPARTED MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Olga Novotny
Branch 635
New Brighton, Pennsylvania

Olga Novotny, 85, of New Brighton, Pennsylvania, passed away on Tuesday, October 16, 2007, at the St. Anne Home, Greensburg.

Born July 23, 1922, in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, a daughter of the late Nicholas and Anna (Paraska) Pshik, she was a member of Holy Family Roman Catholic Parish, where she was a member of the Holy Family Gold. Olga was also a member of Branch 635 of the First Catholic Slovak Union.

She was preceded on death by her husband, Michael Novotny January 15, 2003, and two brothers and five sisters.

Surviving are a son and daughter-in-law, Nicholas F. and Judith A. Novotny of Murrsville; a granddaughter and her husband, Tracy R. and Cliff Thompson of Washington Township; a grandson and his wife, Brain M. and Nichole Novotny of Allison Park; three great-grandchildren, Cameran Grace and Carson Brynn Thompson and Grant Ryan Novotny; and numerous nieces, nephews and their families and several other family members.

Friends were received at the J&J Spratt Funeral Home, New Brighton. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in Holy Family Church with the Rev. James R. Gretz as celebrant. Interment was in St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery, New Brighton.

Vincent Ciganik



Annual Christmas Concert and Dinner in Yonkers on December 9

Most Holy Trinity Parish in Yonkers, New York will host its 23rd annual Christmas Concert and Dinner on Sunday, December 9, 2007. The concert under the direction of parish music minister and our Maestro Stephen J. Knoblock will feature the choir of Most Holy Trinity along with the choir of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel on Elmsford, New York and orchestra at 3:00 p.m. in the church located in Trinity Plaza off Walnut Street.

Following the concert, a festive dinner will be enjoyed at the Polish Community Center located at 92 Waverly Street. The dinner will include the tradition of the sharing of the Oplatky along with Slovak culinary specialities. Tickets for the concert and dinner are \$35.00 per person and tables of 10 may be reserved. Admission to the concert alone is \$5.00. Reservations are necessary. For reservations call the rectory at 914/963-0720. Deadline for dinner reservations is December 2. Father Anthony J. Pleho, the pastor of the parish, extends a cordial invitation to area Jednota members to join the parish at the annual holiday event.



Christmas Craft and Bake Sale in Uniontown

The Ethnic Craft Club of St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church will hold its annual Christmas Craft and Bake Sale on Saturday, December 1, 2007, from 12:00 noon until 5:00 p.m. and on Sunday, December 2, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the upstairs hall, located at 201 East Main Street, Uniontown, Pennsylvania. The sale will feature decorations, folk crafts, baked goods, cookbooks, homemade candy, imported items and many other articles that would make fine Christmas gifts. For information call 724/438-6027.



Oplatky Available for Christmas

Oplatky are available once again through the services of the Jankola Library. They are generally sold in packages of six for \$3.00. Postage and handling are additional.

Other items related to Slovak faith and culture are available. To inquire, call 570/275-3581 or write to: Sister M. John Vianney Vranak, SS.C.M., Director, Jankola Library, Villa Sacred Heart, Danville, PA 17821.

FCSU Reintroduces Senoir Promotion Program

The Officers and Board of Directors of the First Catholic Slovak Union will introduce a number of programs in the coming months for the benefit of our membership. Back by popular demand is our Senior Promotion Program. This program will be available from October 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008.

Initial Program (Current Members)

The Senior Promotion Program is directed to all current members between the ages of 55 and 80. Each member in this age group, subject to current reasonably good health, may purchase the amount of Whole Life insurance that a \$200.00 annual premium will purchase, based on their current age. See the attached Life Insurance Chart. To help offset the cost for the first year, a special fraternal dividend equal to 50% of the first year premium, amounting to \$100, will be provided to each participating member. This means that if each member takes advantage of the Society's offer, they will not only increase their family's life insurance protection, but will receive a generous fraternal dividend.

Application

As part of the effort to encourage as many members as possible to take advantage of this offer, the normal full length application (AJ-2) will not be required for the members participating in this program. Applicants will be required to complete the much shorter (SF-1) Application. Normal underwriting will be waived except for serious illnesses, injury, or medical conditions, which required medical treatment or hospitalization in the last five years. This is not a guaranteed issue program. The FCSU may require the applicant to take a physical exam and /or provide additional medical information.

New Members

The FCSU has adopted the theme of full family participation. As part of this promotion, persons aged 55 to 80 who are not currently a member of the First Catholic Slovak Union may elect to participate in this program and will receive a special first year allowance of \$50.00. New members will be enrolled using the normal (AJ-2) application and be subject to normal underwriting rules. This is each member's opportunity to encourage enrollment of brothers, sisters, relatives, children, friends and others who should be part of our Jednota family. Make certain to contact these individuals who should share in the benefits of fraternal membership and protection.

Please allow sufficient time for your branch proposer or secretary to contact you (up to thirty (30) days.) If contact is not made by November 2007, please contact your branch proposer, branch secretary or the Home Office at 1-800-533-6682.

In the coming months, additional programs directed to various groups of members will be introduced. Watch for announcements in future issues of our JEDNOTA.

FCSU SENIOR PROMOTION AMOUNT INSURANCE - PER \$200 ANNUAL PREMIUM WHOLE LIFT INSURANCE 2007

SCHEDULE 1			SCHEDULE 2		
AGE	MALE NON SMOKING	FEMALE NON SMOKING	AGE	MALE SMOKER	FEMALE SMOKER
55	6,498	7,927	55	4,988	6,928
56	6,175	7,413	56	4,760	6,605
57	5,922	7,145	57	4,598	6,359
58	5,677	6,885	58	4,439	6,122
59	5,438	6,627	59	4,282	5,893
60	5,204	6,380	60	4,129	5,671
61	4,979	6,135	61	3,981	5,456
62	4,762	5,898	62	3,839	5,247
63	4,554	5,666	63	3,702	5,043
64	4,353	5,438	64	3,571	4,845
65	4,157	5,216	65	3,444	4,652
66	3,958	4,999	66	3,317	4,465
67	3,784	4,788	67	3,193	4,283
68	3,604	4,581	68	3,069	4,105
69	3,428	4,379	69	2,946	3,932
70	3,257	4,182	70	2,824	3,766
71	3,091	3,990	71	2,704	3,606
72	2,933	3,804	72	2,588	3,451
73	2,780	3,622	73	2,474	3,301
74	2,632	3,445	74	2,365	3,158
75	2,490	3,275	75	2,253	3,018
76	2,352	3,109	76	2,146	2,883
77	2,221	2,948	77	2,043	2,751
78	2,095	2,791	78	1,943	2,623
79	1,975	2,638	79	1,848	2,497
80	1,866	2,577	80	1,758	2,378

From the desk of the ...

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Exciting news!!

Now you are able to receive life insurance quotes on all our products from our website!! Our website address is www.fcsu.com. To assist you with quotes, click on quotes and then follow the directions, fill in the blanks and you will immediately know the information you are seeking. All Branch Officers, Recommenders and Proposers should take advantage of this useful tool available to everyone now.

If you have any questions, please contact our Home Office at 800-533-6682.

Flexible Premium Deferred Annuity – Currently Earning 5.00% (4.879 APR)

Under the Flexible Premium Deferred Annuity, you may make periodic payments into an annuity fund that accumulates interest at, or greater than, the guaranteed rate. You can open the account with as little as \$500.00 and make additional deposits (\$25.00 minimum) as your financial situation allows. Additional deposits are not mandatory.

At the retirement age you choose, the funds accumulated in the Flexible Premium Deferred Annuity may be withdrawn using any of the FCSU's lump sum or periodic income settlement options.

Features of the Flexible Premium Deferred Annuity include:

- The FCSU guarantees your deposits will accumulate interest at no less than 3.0%.
- Your annuity continues to accumulate interest after you have stopped contributing and have begun to receive retirement income. The interest rate you receive on your annuity after settlement will never be less than 3.0%.
- Death Benefit-If you die prior to settlement, your beneficiary receives the full cash value of the annuity. If you die while receiving retirement benefits, the value of your remaining guaranteed benefits will be paid to your beneficiary.
- Withdrawal Privileges-Since annuities are meant to be long-term investments for providing retirement funds, funds withdrawn during the first six years of your contract are subject to an FCSU Early Withdrawal Charge. You may withdraw 10% of your 'beginning of the year balance' with no FCSU Early Withdrawal Charge.
- Your interest will be added to your account. You may, however, elect to have your interest paid directly to you on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually basis. This is called an Interest Option and the interest rate is slightly lower than if you left your interest to accumulate.
- Even though you may not incur an FCSU Early Withdrawal Charge, withdrawals before age 59 ½ may be subject to a federal tax penalty.
- Tax on the interest earned is deferred until the annuity funds are drawn.
- Also available in a Traditional IRA or Roth IRA (subject to IRA Guidelines)

NEW FOR 2007 HOLIDAY PARTIES

Any branch or region that holds a holiday party from November 15th to January 15th is eligible to receive \$2.00 per member for children age 10 and under who participate. To qualify, you must:

Register the event by having the host branch or district request a registration form from the Fraternal Activities Director.

234 Ilion St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15207
(412) 421-7967

Return the registration form to the Fraternal Activities Director by January 31, 2008.

2008 International Tournaments

Bowling
April 25-27
Wedgewood Lanes ~ Youngstown, Ohio

Golf
July 12-13
Tam O'Shanter ~ Canton, Ohio

Cookie Happiness

Delicious Pumpkin Raisin Bars

(NAPSA)—Spicy and gooey, Pumpkin Raisin Bars have a heartwarming appeal and just enough dash to be party fare. Whether it's tea for two or a school party, this recipe is a crowd-pleaser for youngsters and adults alike.

At this time of year, a bit of baking fills the house with a delicious aroma and feelings of welcoming. Pumpkin Raisin Bars whip up quickly in a single bowl and bake in a flat pan, saving time all around. These bars are good enough without the frosting and a simple dusting of powdered sugar, but why not go for a cream cheese frosting when it's a party?

Here's a bar-baking tip: When adding dried fruit and nuts, make sure the ingredients are fresh. If you discover your raisins have lingered in the pantry a bit too long, sprinkle raisins with water, loosely cover, microwave on high for 15 seconds or more, stir, cover and let stand for two to three minutes to plump them up, according to the experts at Sun-Maid Growers of California. Pat dry before adding them to the batter.

For more quick-baking options, visit www.sunmaid.com.



Pumpkin Raisin Bars—a spicy, gooey treat that's sure to please.

½ cup chopped nuts
½ cup Sun-Maid Natural Raisins

Frosting:

½ cup softened butter or margarine
1 (3-oz.) package softened cream cheese
2 cups powdered sugar
1 tablespoon milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Heat oven to 350° F. Grease 15"x10"x1" jelly roll pan. Combine all bar ingredients, except nuts and raisins, in a large bowl. Beat at low speed until moistened. Beat 2 minutes at medium speed. Stir in nuts and raisins. Pour into greased pan. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely. Spread cream cheese frosting over bars and store in refrigerator.

Frosting: Combine all frosting ingredients in a small bowl and beat until smooth. Spread frosting on cooled bars and refrigerate.

Makes 48 bars.

Pumpkin Raisin Bars

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cloves
1 cup oil
4 eggs
1 (15-oz.) can (2 cups) pumpkin

George Onda District to Have Stedry Vecer Dinner on December 2

The George Onda District will hold its annual Stedry Vecer (Christmas Eve Dinner) on Sunday, December 2, 2007, at the Bishop Connare Center (formerly the St. Joseph Center), Route 30, Greensburg, Pennsylvania. The evening will begin with a Mass at 4:00 p.m. in the chapel followed by a traditional Slovak Christmas Eve Dinner. After the dinner, door prizes will be awarded. The Pittsburgh Slovaks will provide entertainment with singing and a reenactment of the "Jaslickari" (Bethlehem Carolers). Please plan to attend and preserve this beautiful custom.

Tickets are \$16.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children age 16 and younger.

Reserve your tickets early (they are limited) by calling Micki Smolleck at 724/539-8326 or Barbara Mizikar at 724/423-2616 by November 26, 2007.

From the Office of the Vice President

The Membership and Marketing Committee of "FCSU Life" is offering agent contracts to anyone in the following states who has a "state department of insurance producer's license" (state license) and wishes to sell our insurance and annuity products.

Colorado	Massachusetts	New York
Connecticut	Michigan	Ohio
Florida	Minnesota	Pennsylvania
Illinois	Missouri	West Virginia
Indiana	New Jersey	Wisconsin

Please send your resume and copy of your state license to:

Andrew R. Harcar Sr
National Vice President
First Catholic Slovak Union
6611 Rockside Road
Independence, OH 44131



Katolícky fraternalistický dvojtýždenník

Jednota



ÚRADNÝ ORGÁN PRVEJ KATOLÍCKEJ SLOVENSKEJ JEDNOTY V SPOJENÝCH ŠTÁTOCH A V KANADE

Volume 116

STREDA, 28. NOVEMBER 2007

Číslo 5767

Americký veľvyslanec R. S. Vallee končí svoju misiu na Slovensku

Bratislava (TASR) – Minister Ján Kubiš usporiadal 13. novembra na Ministerstve zahraničných vecí (MZV) SR rozlúčkový obed pre mimoriadneho a splnomocneného veľvyslanca USA v Slovenskej republike Rodolpha S. Valleeho, ktorý 5. decembra 2007 ukončí svoju misiu na Slovensku. Pri tejto príležitosti Ján Kubiš ocenil viac ako dvojiročné pôsobenie veľvyslanca Valleeho v SR. Vyzdvihol predovšetkým jeho nespočetné aktivity smerujúce do regiónov Slovenska a úsilie priblížiť tak Spojené štáty širokej verejnosti. Minister pozitívne hodnotil spoluprácu najvyšších predstaviteľov a inštitúcií SR s veľvyslanectvom USA pod vedením R. Valleeho, vďaka čomu je dynamika slo-

vensko-amerických vzťahov na vysokej úrovni. SR a USA podľa neho pôsobia ako solídni strategickí partneri a tento charakter vzťahov hodlajú prehĺbovať.

Slovenská strana osobitne poďakovala odchádzajúcemu veľvyslanecovi za jeho dlhodobé úsilie o zaradenie SR do bezvízového programu USA. Americký diplomat poďakoval za dobrú spoluprácu a vyjadril radosť nad skutočnosťou, že mohol slúžiť ako veľvyslanec USA práve na Slovensku. Vallee konštatoval, že rád prispel k spoločnému úsiliu o zaradenie SR do bezvízového režimu USA. Ako výraz uznania za pôsobenie v SR minister Kubiš odovzdal Rodolphovi S. Valleemu Zlatú plaketu MZV SR.

Konferencia ÚSZZ o ochrane kultúrneho dedičstva

Bratislava (TASR) – Konferenciu zameranú na ochranu kultúrneho dedičstva Slovákov v zahraničí a informačné zdroje k tejto problematike zorganizoval v Bratislave 25. až 26. októbra Úrad Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí (ÚSZZ). Hlavným cieľom konferencie bolo zistiť aktuálny stav spracovania knižničných, archívnych a dokumentačných fondov, ako aj múzejných zbierok, ktoré sa dotýkajú histórie, jazyka, kultúry a spôsobu života Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí a nachádzajú sa v kultúrnych a vedeckých inštitúciách na Slovensku i v cudzine.

Získané poznatky sa využijú pri budovaní databázy informácií o kultúrnom dedičstve Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí, informoval TASR Vladimír Dobřík, riaditeľ tlačového a informačného odboru ÚSZZ. Na konferencii sa zúčastnili zástupcovia kultúrnych a vedeckých inštitúcií na Slovensku, predstavitelia a zástupcovia slovenských organizácií a inštitúcií v zahraničí, ktoré vlastnia fondy, dokumenty a zbierky týkajúce sa dejín, jazyka, kul-

túry a spôsobu života slovenských spoločností v zahraničí.

Ako vyplýva zo záverov dvojdnovej konferencie, ÚSZZ by mal do pripravovanej Koncepcie štátnej politiky starostlivosti o Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí do roku 2015 zapracovať osobitnú kapitolu týkajúcu sa záchranu a ochrany kultúrneho dedičstva Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí a vypracovať ju v spolupráci so Svetovým združením Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí a ďalšími partnermi. Slovenské spolky, organizácie a inštitúcie v zahraničí by mali venovať zvýšenú pozornosť usporiadaniu a ochrane vlastných archívov, knižničných a dokumentačných fondov.

Predstavitelia a zástupcovia krajských spolkov a organizácií na záver svojho rokovania opätovne dali do pozornosti vláde SR potrebu vybudovania Múzea zahraničných Slovákov na Slovensku, ktoré by bolo finančne a personálne primerane zabezpečené. Rovnako upriamujú pozornosť vlády SR aj na vybudovanie Pamätníka slovenského vystaľovalectva.

Nové vydanie Svätého písma

Spolok svätého Vojtecha vydal kompletne znenie katolíckej verzie Starého a Nového zákona. Nové vydanie Svätého písma má menší formát. Spolok svätého Vojtecha vychádza v ústrety tým, ktorí chcú pracovať s Božím slovom aj na cestách. Prof. Dr. Jozef Heriban z Pápežskej saleziánskej univerzity v Ríme pre toto vydanie pripravil nové úvody k jednotlivým knihám. Síce kratšie, avšak podľa najnovších poznatkov biblických vied. Kniha vychádza s náležitými poznámkami. Počet strán 1,615, viaz., 440 Sk (pre členov SSV 374 Sk), Spolok sv. Vojtecha 2007

TK KBS

Slovensko prevzalo po prvý raz predsedníctvo v Rade Európy

Strasburg (TASR) – Slovensko od 12. novembra predsedá 47-člennej Rade Európy (RE). Polročné predsedníctvo vo Výbore ministrov, ktorý je výkonným orgánom RE, prevzal od srbského ministra zahraničných vecí Vuka Jeremica šéf slovenskej diplomacie Ján Kubiš. Na mimoriadnom zasadnutí Výboru ministrov Kubiš predstavil priority slovenského predsedníctva a následne spolu so svojim srbským partnerom otvorili výstavu diel slovenských inštitutných maliarov zo srbskej Kovačice.

Hlavnými prioritami slovenského predsedníctva bude zblíženie medzinárodného spoločného občana, koordinácie činností a spolupráce RE s inými medzinárodnými organizáciami a integračnými zoskupeniami, konsolidácia systému ochrany ľudských práv RE a podpora spoločných základných hodnôt ako ľudské práva, právny štát a demokracia. Slovenské predsedníctvo sa chce tiež venovať rómskej otázke. Slovensko sa stalo v poradí 31. členom RE v roku 1993, do predsedníckeho kresla však zasadá po prvý raz. Vo Výbore ministrov bude krajinu zastupovať Kubiš, veľvyslancom SR pri RE je Emil Kuchár. V Parlamentnom zhromaždení je Slovensko zastúpené piatimi členmi a piatimi náhradníkmi, pričom šéfom slovenskej delegácie je Boris Zala.



FOTO TASR - Štefan Puškáš

Pohľad na komplex budov Rady Európy vo francúzskom Štrasburgu, kde 12. novembra 2007 slávnostne odovzdali predsedníctvo Slovenskej republike za prítomnosti generálneho tajomníka Rady Európy Terryho Davisa.

Autom z Bratislavy do Viedne už po novej diaľnici

Bratislava/Kitsee (TASR) – Diaľničný úsek A4 - Kitsee, ktorý je súčasťou rakúskej diaľnice A6, slávnostne odovzdali do užívania 19. novembra 2007. Stalo sa tak po 12 rokoch plánovania a 3 rokoch samotnej výstavby tejto 22-kilometrov dlhej cestnej komunikácie.

Pre Slovenských a rakúskych motoristov znamená otvorenie A6 dlho očakávané priame diaľničné spojenie Viedne s hlavným mestom SR Bratislavou. "Viac ako 400 pracovníkov postavilo túto cestnú komunikáciu v rekordne krátkom čase. Celkové čisté náklady na konštrukciu A6 predstavujú 154 miliónov EUR (v prepočte 5,07 miliardy SKK), čo je dokonca o 31 miliónov EUR menej, ako sme pôvodne rozpočítali," informovala TASR rakúska diaľničná spoločnosť Asfinag. Podľa nej je nová diaľnica "ekologická, bezpečná, pohodlná a technologicky vyspelá".

Na slávnostnom otvorení Autobahn A6 sa podľa Asfinagu zúčastnili slovenskí i rakúski vládni predstavitelia. Otvorenie diaľnice A6 má podľa vyjadrenia slovenského predsedu vlády Roberta Fica na 1. konferencii Národnej diaľničnej spoločnosti (NDS) "obrovský význam". V rámci programu uvedenej konferencie jej účastníci absolvovali prehladku diaľnice A6 a tiež bratislavského diaľničného tunela Sitina.

Oznámenia spolkov a okresov

Slovenská vianočná omša Okresu Princa Pribinu, Los Angeles, Kalifornia

Okres Princa Pribinu v Los Angeles, Kalifornia pozýva všetkých svojich členov a slovenskú verejnosť na slovenskú vianočnú omšu, ktorá sa bude konať v nedeľu 9. decembra 2007 o 11:00 hodine v kaplnke sv. Jána Bosku pri St. John Bosco High School, 13640 S. Bellflower Bl., Bellflower CA. 90706. Už ako to tradične býva, po svätej omši v jedálni kostola Svätý Mikuláš rozdá darčeky deťom. Pre prítomných bude pripravený chutný obed so zákuskom a občerstvením.

V nedeľu 16. decembra o 18:00 hodine pripravujeme v Slovensko-americkom centre spev vianočných kolied. O podrobnostiach podujatia sa dohovorte so svojim zástupcom Prvej Katolíckej Slovenskej Jednoty.

Funkcionári Okresu Princa Pribinu prajú všetkým členom IKSJ požehnané vianočné sviatky.

Paul Skuben, predseda

Výročná schôdza Spolku sv. Matúša číslo 45 IKSJ

Oznamujeme našim členom, že výročná schôdza Spolku sv. Matúša číslo 45 IKSJ v New Yorku bude v nedeľu 9. decembra 2007 o 12:30 hodine (po slovenskej svätej omši) v osadnej hale Slovenského kostola sv. Jána Nepomuckého na 1st Avenue 66th Street. Na programe sú správy úradníkov, finančné správy, zhodnotenie činnosti za uplynulé obdobie. Za tým budú nasledovať voľby do nového výboru, ktorý zároveň vypracuje program činnosti na ďalšie obdobie. Úctive vás žiadame o účasť na tejto výročnej členskej schôdzi.

Ďakujem a s pozdravom, brat

Jozef Juráši, predseda

Mikulášske odopoludnie v kostole sv. Jána Nepomuckého, N. Y.

Farská rada pri Slovenskom kostole sv. Jána Nepomuckého pripravuje pre svojich farníkov a slovenskú komunitu v New Yorku Mikulášske odopoludnie spojené s Mikulášskou nádielkou. Podujatie sa bude konať v nedeľu 2. decembra 2007 o 1:00 hodine odopoludnia vo veľkej hale Slovenského kostola sv. Jána Nepomuckého, 411 East 66th Str., New York. Vstupné je voľné a o občerstvenie bude postarané. Prosíme rodičov, ktorých deti by mohli spestriť program Mikulášskeho odopoludnia básničkou, spevom alebo iným vystúpením, nech zavolajú vo večerných hodinách pani Henrietu tel.: (201) 641-8922.

Štedrovečerná večera - Vigília v New Yorku

Farská rada pri Slovenskom kostole sv. Jána Nepomuckého v New York City pozýva svojich farníkov a slovenskú verejnosť v okolí na Štedrovečernú večeru - Vigíliu, ktorá sa bude konať v nedeľu dňa 16. decembra 2007 o 1:00 hodine odopoludnia vo veľkej hale Slovenského kostola sv. Jána Nepomuckého, 411 East 66th Str. N. Y. C. Vstupné je \$20.00 v čom je započítaná aj večera. Lístky na Vigíliu si môžete objednať na Farskom úrade kostola sv. Jána Nepomuckého, telefón: (212) 734-4613; Jozef Bilík: (718) 463-2084.

Ponuka Slovenského inštitútu v Clevelande

Slovenský inštitút, ktorý sídli v Opátstve sv. Andreja Svorada v Clevelande, OH, má na predaj nasledovné predmety: podrobnú mapu Slovenska (cena \$10.00); slovenské vianočné karty, 10 v balíčku (cena \$10.00); vianočné obľátky, 3 v balíčku (\$1.00); veľkú slovenskú zástavu (\$20.00); malú slovenskú zástavu (\$4.00). Na predaj je aj bohatý výber slovenských kníh. Ich zoznam si záujemcovia môžu vyžiadať priamo na inštitúte: Slovak Institute 10510 Buckeye Road, Cleveland, OH 44104, alebo prostredníctvom internetu na adrese: www.slovakinstitute.com

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Objednávky so šekom pošlite na adresu: Jankola Library, Sister M. John Vianney Vranak, SS.C.M., director; Villa Sacred Heart, Danville, PA 17821-1698. Tel. č. do knižnice: (570) 275-5606; do Materského domu: (570) 275-3581.

Kuriozita slovenskej histórie

Ako sa Ľudovít Štúr rozhodol pre spisovnú slovenčinu Ivan Králik

Ľudovít Štúr nesporne patrí medzi najväčších slovenských buditeľov a národovcov. Preto na nadpis tohto článku sú iste mnohí Slováci z našej generácie nepripravení. Slovenská literatúra o tejto téme veľa nehovorí a aj z politických dôvodov bola táto etapa slovenskej národnej histórie zamlčovaná, alebo ju mnohí literáti obchádzali.

Existuje však množstvo dostupnej literatúry o tom, že Ľudovít Štúr, spolu s viacerými členmi jeho skupiny učil, písal, veršoval a prednášal po česky na Evanjelickom lýceu v Bratislave - na "Ústave reči a literatúry československé", ktorý bol založený v roku 1801. Bolo to v čase, keď už od roka 1787 bola prijatá a uznávaná za spisovnú reč Bernoláková slovenčina, ktorú uviedol do národného života katolícky kňaz Anton Bernolák s jeho prívržencami.

Je známe, že Ľudovít Štúr ako profesor organizoval mládež a aj mimo školských hodín robil osvetovú činnosť v českom jazyku. V roku 1837 sa stal zástupcom počestného profesora Jiřího Palkoviča na "Katedre reči a literatúry československé" a v roku 1838 vyšiel jeho zásluhou Almanach mládeže - plody zboru učencu reči československé.

Bernolákovu slovenčinu, ktorej podstatou bolo západoslovenské nárečie, úspešne propagovalo a šírilo Slovenské učené tovaríšstvo od rieky Moravy až po východné Slovensko.

Mnohým bolo a je nejasné, ako a prečo Štúr zanechal češtinu a pridala sa k slovenčine.

Mladý Ľudovít Štúr sa stretával v Uhrovci s katolíckym kaplánom Jozefom Ščasným, ktorý bol oddaným bernolákovcom a podporovateľom slovenskej literatúry. Na katolíckej fare v Uhrovci Štúr mal možnosť čítať básnické diela Jána Hollého a iných bernolákovcov.

Sú oprávnené predpoklady, že vtedy sa Štúr preorientoval z Kollárovho všeslovanstva a čechoslovakizmu na slovenskú reč a slovenské národné pove-

domie. Zato bol z bratislavského lýcea vylúčený v roku 1844. Na protest proti tomuto rozhodnutiu odišlo z lýcea 22 študentov. Väčšina z nich prešla do lýcea v Levoči, kde sa vtedy vytváralo stredisko mlado-slovenského hnutia.

Vtedy nastal rozkol aj medzi slovenskými evanjelikmi - medzi čechizujúcimi prívržencami Jána Kollára a slovakizujúcimi prívržencami Ľudovíta Štúra.

Takáto bola skutočnosť a tieto okolnosti urýchlili vývoj, ktorý viedol k uzákoneniu spisovnej slovenčiny na podklade stredoslovenského nárečia. Ľudovít Štúr sa stal národným vodcom a symbolom odporu proti maďarizácii a národnostnému útlaku. Jeho priateľ Ščasný ostal tým oddaným skoro neznaným pracovníkom, ktorého úsilie pravdepodobne zmenilo smer národného boja v kritickej fáze slovenskej histórie na začiatku 19. storočia.

"Za tú našu slovenčinu" bolo heslo, ktoré prijala Slovenská liga v Amerike pri jej založení v roku 1907 ako hlavný bod jej programu. Dávno predtým s týmto heslom propagoval slovenčinu mladý kňaz Jozef Ščasný a toto heslo bolo motiváciou pre jeho celožitnú prácu. Kaplán Jozef Ščasný bol neskôr preložený za farára do Dražoviec pri Nitre, odkiaľ pokračoval v národnej činnosti.

Obec Dražovce si uctila Ščasného

Pri príležitosti 160. výročia príchodu farára Jozefa Ščasného do Dražoviec mu vďaka obec pripravila celonárodnú spomienku dňa 11. novembra v Kultúrnom dome. K spolupráci boli pozvané inštitúcie ako Bernoláková spoločnosť, Matica slovenská, Muzeálna spoločnosť a iné. Koordinátorkou programu bola známa odborníčka na Bernolákovu dobu, profesorka Dr. Mária Hlavatá. Bol to dôstojný a zaslužený hold oddanému národnému pracovníkovi a bojovníkovi, ktorý pomáhal stvárňovať osudy slovenského národa.

SVA

Zverejnili program budúročnej návštevy Benedikta XVI. v USA

Pápež Benedikt XVI. navštívi na budúci rok Spojené štáty americké a Organizáciu spojených národov. Od 15. do 20. apríla sa bude nachádzať vo Washingtone a New Yorku. Program pápežovej cesty zverejnil apoštolský nuncius v USA, Mons. Pietro Sambi, na úvod plenárneho zasadania Konferencie biskupov Spojených štátov amerických.

Pápež priletí do Washingtonu 15. apríla. O deň neskôr, na svoje 81 narodeniny, sa v Bielom dome stretne s prezidentom Georgeom Bushom. Popoludní navštívi tamojšiu svätyniu Nepoškvrneného počatia Panny Márie, kde sa stretne s biskupmi USA. Vo štvrtok 17. apríla bude Benedikt XVI. predsedať svätej omši na baseballovom štadióne "The Nationals". V rovnaký deň sa uskutoční stretnutie na pôde Americ-

kej katolíckej univerzity a tiež stretnutie s predstaviteľmi nekresťanských náboženstiev vo Washingtonskom centre Jána Pavla II.. V piatok 18. apríla Svätý Otec zavíta do sídla OSN v New Yorku, kde vystúpi so svojim príhovorom pred generálnym zhromaždením. Popoludní absolvuje ekumenické stretnutie. V sobotu 19. apríla, na tretie výročie svojho zvolenia na Petrov stolec, bude Benedikt XVI. sláviť liturgiu v katedrále sv. Pat-rika. Po nej sa stretne so semina-ristami. V sobotu 20. apríla predpo-ludní navštívi Svätý Otec "Ground Zero" - miesto teroristic-kých útokov z 11. septembra 2001. V rovnaký deň bude Benedikt XVI. predsedať svätej omši na baseballovom štadióne Yankees v New Yorku.

TK KBS

Nitriansky biskup Viliam Judák oslávil polstoročnicu

Nitriansky biskup Mons. Viliam Judák v piatok 9. novembra oslávil významné životné jubileum - Päťdesiat rokov. Narodil sa 9. novembra 1957 v Harvelke na Kysuciach. V rokoch 1980-1985 študoval teológiu na CMBF v Bratislave. Za kňaza bol vysvätený 16. júna 1985 v Nitre. V pastorácii ako kaplán pôsobil v Nitre a v Drietome, kde bol aj správcom farnosti do roku 1990. V tomto čase postgraduálne študoval na CMBF v Bratislave, kde získal doktorát posvätnéj teológie.

Dňa 1. septembra 1990 bol menovaný za prefekta Kňazského seminára sv. Gorazda v Nitre a 18. októbra 1991 za cirkevného sudcu. Od r. 1990 prednáša cirkevné dejiny na RKCMF UK v Bratislave a na Teologickom inštitúte v Nitre. V rokoch 1991-2005 tiež pôsobil aj na Vysokej škole pedagogickej v Nitre, na katedre etiky a katechetiky (dnes Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa). Dňa 1. júla 1993 bol menovaný za docenta Cyrilometodskej bohosloveckej fakulty UK v Bratislave. V r. 1995-1998 bol prodekanom spomínanej fakulty.

V čase od 1. júla 1996 do 1. júla 2001 zastával funkciu rektora Kňazského seminára sv. Gorazda v Nitre. Vedúcim Katedry cirkevných dejín CMBF UK v Bratislave bol r. 1997-2006. Dňa 13. decembra 1997 ho prezident Slovenskej republiky menoval za profesora v odbore "katolícka teológia". V roku 2001 bol Akademickým senátom zvolený za dekana Rímskokatolíckej cyrilometodskej bohosloveckej fakulty Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave. Funkciu zastával do r. 2004. Dňa 9. júna 2005 bol menovaný za nitrianskeho biskupa pápežom Benediktom XVI. a konsekrovaný na biskupa bol v Nitre 16. júla 2005. Od 3. októbra 2006 je podpredsedom Konferencie biskupov Slovenska.

Ako historik sa zaoberá obdobím kresťanského staroveku a stredoveku so zreteľom na slovenské cirkevné dejiny. Je autorom viacerých monografií z oblasti cirkevných dejín, mnohých kníh, článkov a publikácií. Ovláda nemecký a taliansky jazyk. Pápež Benedikt XVI. ho 9. júna 2005 menoval za biskupa Nitrianskej diecézy.

TK KBS



Biskup Viliam Judák

Svätý Mikuláš vo svete

Dňa 6. decembra si pripomíname sv. Mikuláša

Svätý Mikuláš patrí medzi najobľúbenejších svätcov. Obľúbený je najmä u detí, ktoré nielen na Slovensku 6. decembra očakávajú od neho množstvo sladkých darčiekov vo svojich vyleštených čižmičkách, alebo topánočkách, pripravených pod oknami počas večera predchádzajúceho dňa.

O sv. Mikulášovi je známych viac legiend o obdarovávaní ako o jeho skutočnom živote. Narodil sa niekedy okolo roku 270 na južnom pobreží Malej Ázie, pravdepodobne v Patare. Mesto bolo vtedy súčasťou Východorímskej ríše. Neskôr, najmä po zániku Západorímskej ríše roku 476 bola Východorímska ríša známa aj pod názvom Byzantská. Sv. Mikuláš mal pravdepodobne grécky pôvod alebo pochádzal z grécky hovoriacej rodiny. Už v mladosti sa stal povestným svojou dobročinnosťou, ktorá ešte vzrástla, keď sa stal biskupom v Myre - v dnešnej Dembre na juhu Turecka.

Jeho povest' divotvorcu spôsobila, že sa stal viacnásobným patrónom. Za svojho ochrancu ho pokladá pravoslávne Rusko, ktoré prijalo kresťanstvo až v 10. storočí. Mnohé, najmä európske mestá nesú jeho meno, napr. St. Nikolas v Anglicku či Liptovský, Plavecký alebo Borský Mikuláš na Slovensku. Svätý Mikuláš bol vďaka legiendám patrónom, kupcov, majiteľov záložní, námorníkov, lekárnikov či voňavkárov.

Svätý Mikuláš pravdepodobne zomrel v pokročilom veku (približne dátum úmrtia je 6. december r. 345-351). Pochovali ho v myrskom kostole, kde boli jeho telesné pozostatky uložené až do roku 1087. Keď Myru obsadili vyznávači islamského náboženstva, tak sa podarilo Mikulášove ostatky preniesť do talianskeho prístavného mesta Bari v Apúlii, kde žilo veľa gréckych prisťahovalcov. Tam preto postavili nový kostol zasvätený Mikulášovi. Inak viacero kostolov na celom svete je zasvätených sv. Mikulášovi a jeho patrocinium patrí medzi najčastejšie. Kult sv. Mikuláša bol od 6. storočia známy v Byzantskej ríši, od 9. storočia v Taliansku, a od 11. storočia v Nemecku, Francúzsku a Anglicku.

Slobodné dievčatá si ho vybrali za prosebníka, aby sa šťastne vydali. Ich orodovníkom sa asi stal na základe najznámejšieho príbehu z jeho života. Podľa tradície mal istý boháč tri dcéry. Keď schudobnel a jeho rodina trpela hladom, rozhodol sa, že z dievčať urobí neviestky. Dozvedel sa o tom sv. Mikuláš, zabalil do kusa látky zlato a vhodil ho do mužovho domu. To zopakoval trikrát, až kým im nezabezpečil toľko peňazí, že sa všetky tri dcéry mohli čestne a šťastne vydať. Na základe legendy o troch chudobných dievčatách sa zrejme odvodzuje ľudový zvyk v niektorých krajinách obdarúvať sa na sviatok tohto svätca drobnými darčekom.

Svätomikulášska tradícia vychádza aj z jeho zasvätenej ochrany nad deťmi. Zvyk obdarúvať deti sa rozmohol najmä v Holandsku a odtiaľ sa rozšíril do Anglicka, Nemecka, Severnej Ameriky, kde k nemu prisťahovalci pripojili škandinávске ľudové tradície o škriatkovi respektíve čarodejníkovi, ktorý zlé deti trestá a dobré odmieňa darčekom. Mikulášska tradícia sa na celom svete spája s jeho obdarovávaním nielen 6. decembra na sv. Mikuláša, ale aj na Vianoce.

Zvyk obdarovávaní detí 6. decembra sa rozšíril predovšetkým v stredo-európskych slovanských krajinách. V ľudových predstavách je známy ako bielovlasý deduško s veľkou bradou. Iných krajinách zase dobrý škriatok - trpaslík podobného výzoru.

V ostatných krajinách s dominujúcim kresťanským náboženstvom je mikulášska tradícia predovšetkým spojená so samotnými Vianocami. V Amerike a najmä v ďalších anglicky hovoriacich krajinách vítajú Santa Clausa, pre fínske deti je to Joulupukki, vo Francúzsku poznajú Pére Noëla a v Rusku deda Mráza. Práve aj fínske Laponsko sa v legiendách považuje za súčasný domov Sv. Mikuláša, kde sú adresované listy detí z celého sveta s priáním darčeka na vianočné sviatky. Práve odtiaľ, na záprahu ťahanom sobmi, začína rozvážať darčeka po celom svete.

Drahošlav Hulínek, TASR

V Nitre otvorili výstavu eurových mincí

Nitra (TASR) Návrhy slovenských strán eurových mincí približuje výstava, ktorú sprístupnili 15. novembra v priestoroch Synagogy v Nitre. Podujatie pripravila Národná banka Slovenska v spolupráci so samosprávou Nitry v rámci prezentačného projektu približujúceho slovenskej verejnosti spoločnú menu Európskej únie. Expozícia je určená predovšetkým širokej verejnosti, ale súbor mincí uspokojí aj zvedavosť numizmatikov, historikov, pedagógov a ďalších odborníkov, zaujímavých sa o budúce platidlá na Slovensku. Popri základných informáciách o Európskej únii a štátoch, v ktorých sa už spoločná mena používa, predstavuje výstava aj nerealizované návrhy na eurové mince od slovenských výtvarníkov. Výstava potrvá do 13. januára 2008.

Slovenský vianočný stromček v Chicagu

V Museum of Science and Industry na 57th Street a South Lake Shore Drive v Chicagu, Illinois je aj tento rok v rámci programu "Christmas Around the World" vystavených 48 vianočných stromčekov z rôznych krajín. Medzi nimi je vyzdobený aj slovenský vianočný stromček ručne vyrobenými ozdobami zo Slovenska. Pri stromčeku je aj slovenská vianočná výstava.

Vianočné ornamenty na tento cieľ už viaceré rokov zbiera a opatruje Okres Rev. Jána Spítkovského IKSJ. Záujemcovia si výstavu stromčekov môžu pozrieť od 16. novembra do 6. januára 2008. Telefónne číslo do múzea:

(773)684-1414;

www.msichicago.org.

Robert Ťapák Magruder



Slovenský vianočný stromček

75. výročie založenia Spoločnosti M. R. Štefánika

Trenčín (TASR) – Oslavy 75. výročia založenia Spoločnosti Milana Rastislava Štefánika v Trenčíne sa začali 7. novembra jej slávnostným zasadnutím za prítomnosti predsedu Trenčianskeho samosprávneho kraja Pavla Sedláčka. "Rodák z nášho kraja Milan Rastislav Štefánik patrí medzi najvýznamnejšie osobnosti novodobých dejín Slovákov. Svojou obetavou a húževnatou prácou významnou mierou prispel k zviditeľneniu Slovákov nielen v rodine európskych národov, ale aj v širšom svetovom meradle," povedal Pavol Sedláček. Uviedol ho ako príklad človeka, ktorý dokázal svojím talentom, osobnou ctížiadosťou, vlastnou pracovitosťou pre svoju vlasť veľa záslužného vykonať. "Úctu a vďaka už v minulosti prejavovali tejto osobnosti

mnohí Štefánikovi súčasníci, významné osobnosti slovenského politického a spoločenského života vo vtedajšom československom štáte. Svedectvom tohto úsilia je Štefánikova spoločnosť, ktorá v tomto roku oslavuje 75. výročia svojej existencie," dodal Sedláček. Neboli to len ľudia združení v tejto spoločnosti, ktorí udržiavali plameň Štefánikovho odkazu. Sú to aj hmotné pamätníky, parky, ulice, ktorým bolo prepožičané meno slávneho rodáka k večnej úcte. Publikácia Iva Velikého Štefánikovske atribúty v Trenčíne je stručnou, často i pohnutou históriou práve tých objektov, ktorých existencia bola v tých alebo oných obdobiach časovej osi spojená s menom slávneho rodáka z Košarísk, dodal Sedláček.

Krátke správy zo Slovenska

Vo Vysokých Tatrách po približne 30 rokoch pribudne nová zjazdovka. Nová lyžiarska trať by mala vyrásť na Solisku na Štrbskom Plese. Nová zjazdovka bude na západ od existujúcej lyžiarskej trate zo Soliska. Dĺžka zjazdovky by mala byť 1,300 metrov, s napojením na existujúce Esíčko 1,500 metrov. Celá trať bude technicky zasnežovaná. Nová lyžiarska trať s lanovkou by mala byť plne k dispozícii až budúcu lyžiarsku sezónu.

Budúcoročné zvyšovanie odvodov opäť obide poslancov Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky (NR SR). Hoci poslanci zarábajú mesačne cez stotisíc korún, po zdvihnutí odvodov nezplatia do Sociálnej poisťovne ani korunu navyše. Od januára 2007 sa podobne takmer úplne vyhli vyšším daniam. Aj ministerstvo financií priznáva, že o zavedení rovnakých podmienok pre bežných občanov a poslancov sa v súčasnosti neuvažuje.

Ministri vnútra členských krajín Európskej únie dali 8. novembra v Bruseli zelenú rozšíreniu schengenského priestoru o deväť nových krajín vrátane Slovenska, keď schválili záverečnú hodnotiacu správu o ich pripravenosti na vstup do Schengenu. Stať sa tak má 21. decembra, keď sa zrušia hraničné kontroly na pozemných a vodných komunikáciách, kým kontroly na letiskách prestanú existovať v marci. Definitívne sa rozšírenie Schengenu potvrdí 6. decembra na zadnutí Rady EÚ pre vnútro. Ešte predtým sa k správe vyjadri Európsky parlament, ktorý má debatu na túto tému na programe v rámci plenárneho zasadnutia. Novými členmi Schengenu sa stanú nové členské krajiny EÚ s výnimkou Rumunska, Bulharska a Cypru.

Diaľnica z Bratislavy do Košíc bude do roku 2010 dokončená s výnimkou 25-kilometrového úseku medzi Žilinou a Martinom. Ten hotový nebude. Potvrdil to oficiálny program stavania diaľnic vlády Roberta Fica, ktorého návrh práve zverejnilo ministerstvo dopravy. V najbližších týždňoch ho má odobriť vláda. Súčasne sa vôbec po prvý raz uvádza, odkedy budú musieť majitelia osobných áut platiť mýto za používanie diaľnic a rýchlostných ciest namiesto súčasných diaľničných nálepiek.

Slovenská plavkyňa Martina Moravcová triumfovala vo finále na 100 m motýlik na štvrtom podujatí Svetového pohára v krátkom bazéne v Moskve. Piešťanska rodáčka dosiahla čas 58.26 s a pripísala si na svoje konto už v poradí 105. víťazstvo v prestížnom seriáli, prvé v tejto sezóne. Vo finále motýlkarskej stovky sa predstavila aj ďalšia Slovenka Denisa Smolenová, ktorá finišovala časom 1:01 šiesta a dosiahla svoj najlepší výsledok na podujatí tohto rangu.

Slovenský filharmonický zbor vystúpil v Japonsku aj v Južnej Kórei. V oboch krajinách počas 17-dňového turné absolvoval desať koncertov. Filharmonici sa tam predstavili s dvoma programami. V prvom zazneli - Vltava (symfonická báseň z cyklu Bedřicha Smetanu Má vlast), koncert pre violončelo a orchester op. 104 a Symfónia č. 9 e mol Z nového sveta op. 95, obe od Antonína Dvořáka. Druhý program tvorili Barbier zo Sevilly (predohra k opere Gioacchina Rossiniho), Koncert pre klavír a orchester č. 1 e mol op. 11 Frederica Chopina a Symfónia č. 1 c mol op. 68 od Jahnnesa Brahmsa. Dirigentskej paličky sa na striedačku zmocnili stály hosťujúci dirigent Slovenskej filharmónie Leoš Svárovský a japonský dirigent Joji Hattori. Súbor sa vrátil do Bratislavy 6. novembra.

O súčasnej situácii a sociálnych problémoch hovorili v polovici novembra v Trnave na stretnutí premiér Robert Fico a arcibiskup Ján Sokol. Podľa vyjadrenia arcibiskupa Bratislavsko-trnavskej diecезy počas krátkeho stretnutia nebol čas hovoriť o probléme financovania cirkevných škôl, ktorého vyriešenie považuje cirkev v súčasnosti za jednu zo svojich priorit. "Bojujeme o to, aby cirkevné školstvo nebolo chápané ako súkromné, ale aby bolo postavené na úroveň verejného školstva," uviedol arcibiskup Sokol. O zmenu príslušnej legislatívy sa Konferencia biskupov Slovenska bezvýsledne domáha od júna tohto roka.

Najlepším huslistom na svete v svojej vekovej kategórii je 14-ročný Karol Daniš, žiak bratislavského Konzervatória. Daniš získal 1. cenu 1. kategórie na svetovej súťaži mladých huslistov Louisa Spohra vo Weimare, ktorá sa uskutočnila od 29. októbra do 8. novembra tohto roka. Okrem najlepšieho umiestnenia dostal Karol Daniš mimoriadnu cenu za interpretáciu virtuózskej skladby Henryka Wieniawského Variácie na originálnu tému. Karol Daniš bol od svojich piatich rokov mimoriadnym žiakom Konzervatória v Bratislave v triede prof. Štefana Gyoposa. Od školského roku 2006/2007 študuje v triede doc. Jozefa Kopelmana.

Bratislava je mestom bohatých, nielen v rámci Slovenska. Podľa kúpnej sily niektoré jej časti predbiehajú aj českú Prahu, napriek tomu, že Česko je niekoľko miest pred Slovenskom v rebríčku kúpnej sily. Kúpna sila na Slovensku podľa agentúry GFK je 4,889 eur, v Českej republike 5,625 eur. Na Slovensku sú však oveľa výraznejšie rozdiely. Slovensko sa tak v tohtoročnom rebríčku spoločnosti GFK, ktorá sleduje kúpnu silu obyvateľov európskych krajín, umiestnilo na 27. mieste zo 44 krajín. Oproti vlaňajšku si pohoršilo o dve miesta. Česká republika skončila v tomto roku na 22. mieste. Celoeurópsky priemer je 11,998 eur. Do čistých príjmov európskych domácností GFK ráta okrem platov aj penzie, podpory v nezamestnanosti či detské prídavky. Suma zahŕňa čisté príjmy, neodráža však cenovú hladinu, ktorá sa v jednotlivých krajinách líši.

Rozpočtové hospodárenie SK skončilo k 31. októbru tohto roka v prebytku 6.9 miliardy Sk. Na konci septembra bol pritom rozpočet v miernom deficite 615 miliónov Sk. Príjmy štátneho rozpočtu (SR), rozpočtované na rok 2007 v objeme 310.472 miliardy Sk, dosiahli na konci októbra 263.062 miliardy Sk. Celoročný plán tak plnili na 84.7%. Celkove výdavky SR, rozpočtované v objeme 348.858 miliardy Sk, predstavovali 256.174 miliardy Sk, alebo 73.4% z plánu na tento rok.

TASR a slovenské časopisy



FOTO TASR - Pavel Neubauer

Prezident SR Ivan Gašparovič položil vence k Pamätníku popraveným a umučeným politickým väzňom komunizmu 16. novembra 2007 počas pietnej spomienky na Ružinovskom cintoríne v Bratislave.

Požiadavky USA pre zrušenie víz SR ešte nespĺňa

Slovensko stále nespĺňa jednu zo základných požiadaviek pre zrušenie víz do Spojených štátov. Ide o počet odmietnutých žiadostí o víza, ktorý nesmie byť vyšší ako 10 percent. K 30. septembru 2007, keď sa skončil ďalší takzvaný fiškálny rok pre hodnotenie tohto kritéria, bolo Slovensko nad ním. "V tejto chvíli ešte nemáme presné číslo, neoficiálne je to však 12 percent odmietnutých žiadostí," potvrdila tlačová tajomníčka americkej ambasády na Slovensku.

Trend odmietnutých 90-dňových víz je pritom klesajúci. Na porovnanie - vlni bolo Slovensko na úrovni 16 percent odmietnutých víz, pred štyrmi-iatimi rokmi to bolo dokonca 20 až 30 percent.

Dôvody na odmietnutie žiadateľov sú pritom rôzne. Podľa šéfky konzulárneho oddelenia amerického veľvyslanectva v Bratislave Robin Haase, ambasáda odmietne víza najčastejšie vtedy, ak žiadateľ nevie dostatočne presvedčiť, že je doma dobre zabezpečený a do Spojených štátov ide len nakrátko. "Najmä sa pozeráme na dôvod cesty. Žiadatelia by mali mať predstavu, čo budú robiť v USA a vedieť to dostatočne vysvetliť," uviedla K.

Haase.

"Otázka 10 percent v novom zákone je len jednou z mnohých požiadaviek, ktoré musí krajina splniť," pripomenul Hughes. Dotiahnuť treba aj ďalšie technické podmienky ako napríklad poskytovanie informácií o cestujúcich do USA alebo ohlasovanie strát a krádeží pasov americkej vláde. Ďalšou podmienkou je aj zavedenie pasov s biometrickými údajmi, ktoré Slovensko už spĺňa. Vydávať by sa mali od nového roku. Nové pasy sú vybavené čipom, ktorý obsahuje digitálnu mapu tváre - ide o údaj, nezameniteľný rovnako ako odtlačok prsta. Ten by sa mal v pase objaviť po dohode krajín Európskej únie.

V boji za zrušenie víz si noví členovia Európskej únie - konkrétne sedem krajín vrátane Slovenska - zaplatili aj lobistickú spoločnosť Dutko Worldwide. Je to jedna z najväčších lobistických spoločností vo Washingtone. Združuje bývalých zamestnancov americkej administratívy alebo ľudí, ktorí majú blízke vzťahy v Kongrese. Spolupráca s touto spoločnosťou sa v dohľadnom čase skončí.

TASR

Gašparovič si uctil pamiatku prvého predsedu Matice slovenskej

Žiar nad Hronom (TASR) - Prezident republiky Ivan Gašparovič si 8. novembra v rámci pracovnej cesty v Žiari nad Hronom uctil pamiatku prvého predsedu Matice slovenskej (MS), biskupa Štefana Moysesu (1797-1869).

V parku, ktorý nesie meno tejto významnej osobnosti dejín slovenského národa, prezident položil k jeho pamätníku kvety a v aleji zasadil lipu. Primátor mesta Ivan Černaj pripomenul, že tradíciu vysádzať lipy založil sám biskup Moyses, ktorý v Žiari nad Hronom, vtedajšom Svätom kríži nad Hronom, pôsobil od roku 1951 až do svojej

smrti ako biskup banskobystrickej diecезy.

Gašparovič v tejto súvislosti vyzdvihol veľký význam Matice slovenskej v novodobej histórii Slovenska. Boli to podľa neho matičiari, ktorí nielen bojovali proti maďarizácii, ale podporovali aj vytvorenie prvej Československej republiky, čo zachránilo ako národ nielen Slovákov, ale aj Čechov a neskôr umožnilo aj vznik samostatnej Slovenskej republiky. Podľa neho Slováci si svoj mladý štát stále ešte budujú, a preto táto inštitúcia má aj teraz na Slovensku svoje postavenie.