NOTABLE DAYS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

HOLIDAYS AND FEASTS

Holiday = svátek, den pracovního volna

Feast = svátek, den, kdy se slaví

Name day = svátek, jmeniny

1. <u>What do people celebrate in the course of a year? What are the most important Christian feasts?</u>

In the course of a year there are many occasions for various celebrations. There are special days in personal life (christenings, birthdays, name days, weddings etc.) as well as bank (national) holidays and local feasts. Among others, **Christmas** and **Easter** belong to the popular feasts. Both of them are of pagan origin but later they became the most important Christian feasts.

2. <u>Enumerate and characterize Czech bank holidays.</u>

New Year (1 January): In 1993 the Czech Republic came into existence after splitting of Czechoslovakia.

Good Friday and Easter Sunday (in March or April): Christians remember Christ´s crucifixion (death) and resurrection (return to life). **Easter Monday** is celebrated by more people in this country: Easter yeast cakes and Easter lambs are eaten. Some boys and men enjoy going whipping in the morning- they are given coloured or decorated eggs, sweets, often also alcohol.

Workers Day (Labour Day) (1 May): It commemorates a strike in Chicago on 1 May 1886 protesting against miserable working conditions. The police attacked the strikers killing two and wounding several others. These days, Labour Day honours working people all over the world.

Liberation Day (8 May): It celebrates the end of World War II on 8 May 1945 and remembers people who fought and died for our freedom.

St. Cyril and Methodius Day (5 July). We honour the two priests who came to this territory in 863 and played an important role in our history – they brought Christianity, created Slavonic script etc.

Jan Hus Day (6 July). It commemorates Jan Hus (John Huss), a Catholic priest and the rector of Charles University. He criticized the church of that time and was burnt to death in the end.

St. Wenceslas Day (28 September). It remembers the death of Prince Wenceslas in about 935.He was murdered by his brother and soon became St. Wenceslas, patron of the Czech nation. His statue at the top of Wenceslas Square in Prague is a symbol of a free and independent republic.

Czechoslovak Independence Day (28 October). On this day in 1918, the independent Czechoslovak Republic was founded after splitting of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire (which lost in WWI.). A few weeks later TGM became the first president.

Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day (17 November). We commemorate students' demonstrations against the Nazis in 1939. Nine students were executed, many were taken to concentration camps and Czech universities were closed till the end of WWII. Fifty years later, another students' demonstration was the beginning of the "Velvet Revolution" which meant the end of the so called "socialist" era in this country.

Christmas (24 – 26 December): Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and St. Stephen's Day.

Compare Christmas in this country and in Britain. Speak about you (your family) and Christmas.