

Saints Peter & Paul
Byzantine Catholic Church
107 South Fourth Street
Minersville, PA 17954

St. Mary's (Dormition of the Mother of God)
Byzantine Catholic Church
131 South Morris Street
Saint Clair, PA 17970

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Served by: Very Reverend Gregory J. Noga, Pastor

SS. Peter & Paul Cantor: Mr. Paul Konkus St. Mary Cantor: Dr. Peter Yasenchak

CONFESSIONS: Sts. Peter & Paul: Saturday 2:45-3:30 PM, Sunday 8:00-8:30 AM,
St. Mary's: Saturday 1:00 – 1:30 PM

SICK CALLS: As scheduled, or anytime in case of an emergency. If anyone is homebound or hospitalized, please call the rectory (544-2074) IMMEDIATELY.

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Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

Our parish is grateful for their support – May the Lord bless their efforts!

Incorruptible but Touchable

The Lord's body that made its entrance to the disciples through closed doors was the same as that which issued before the eyes of people from the Virgin's closed womb at His birth.

Is it surprising that He who was now going to live forever made His entrance through closed doors after His resurrection, who on His coming in order to die made His appearance from the unopened womb of a virgin?

But because the faith of those who beheld it wavered concerning the body they could see, He showed them at once His hands and His side, offering them the body that He brought in through the closed doors to touch.

By this action He revealed two wonderful and, according to human reason, quite contradictory things. He showed them that after His resurrection His body was both incorruptible and yet could be touched ...

By showing us that it is incorruptible, He would urge us on toward our reward, and by offering it as touchable He would dispose us toward faith.

He manifested Himself as both incorruptible and touchable to show us that His body after His resurrection was of the same nature as ours but of a different sort of glory.

St. Gregory the Great

THOMAS SUNDAY



Icon of Saint Thomas and the Lord

**Thomas Sunday
Festal Tone**

Welcome to the parish communities of SS. Peter and Paul and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Churches of Minersville and Saint Clair, Pennsylvania. We greet and welcome you to our Church. Our Church is a holy place. Our Church is where we get together in Jesus' Name. It is holy because we come here to worship, to be nourished in faith through Sacred Scripture and preaching, to open our hearts and minds to celebrate the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ and to dedicate ourselves to a life of holiness and service to the Lord and others. The church building itself reflects this faith and calls us to enter into communion with God. We invite you to share our faith in Jesus Christ, to experience our worship and to live a life dedicated to the service of God and one another in Jesus' Name.

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April 11– April 17, 2021

All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

- Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy (at SS Peter & Paul)
4:00 p.m. +**Sean Brandon Killian** req. by JoAnne, Gary & Nicole Killian
- Sunday
8:00 a.m. +**John Torola** req. by Brian & Lisa Ferro (at St. Mary)
10:00 am **Health and Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)
Livestreamed
- Monday
8:00 a.m. +**Joan A. Luchanin** req. by Marie Wanchick
- Tuesday
8:00 a.m. +**James P. Hertz** req. by MM David Kuhns
- Wednesday
8:00 a.m. +**Margaret Kostishak** req. by Barbara Kilraine
- Thursday
8:00 a.m. +**Helen Hashin** req. by John & Regina Wiyda
- Friday
8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy Today**
- Saturday **Vigil Divine Liturgy** (at SS. Peter & Paul)
4:00 p.m. +**Charles Sinko** req. by MM Frank Sabol

Epistle Readers: 4/10 – Angela Frank; 4/11 – Marie Wanchick; 4/17 – Gail Burgess; 4/18 – Jennifer Keer; 4/24 – Dolores Kramer; 4/25 – Anna Keer; 5/1 – Angela Frank.

THOMAS SUNDAY

**The Early Church Fathers on
Confession/Reconciliation**

On the evening of the first Easter Jesus gave his apostles the authority to forgive or retain sins in his name (John 20:20-23). This does not refer to the general body of believers as some claim. In Matthew 6:14-15 Jesus said: "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions." Clearly believers do not have the option of retaining any ones sins. The passage in John 20 refers to the sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession as we once called it and the Early Fathers knew it.

The Didache

Confess your sins in church, and do not go up to your prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life. . . , On the Lord's Day gather together, break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions so that your sacrifice may be pure (*Didache* 4:14,14:1 [A.D.70]).

The Letter of Barnabas

You shall judge righteously. You shall not make a schism, but you shall pacify those that contend by bringing them together. You shall confess your sins. You shall not go to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of light (*Letter of Barnabas* 19 [A.D. 74]).

Ignatius of Antioch

For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are also with the bishop. And as many as shall, in the exercise of penance, return into the unity of the Church, these, too, shall belong to God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ (*Letter to the Philadelphians* 3 [A.D. 110]).

For where there is division and wrath, God does not dwell. To all them that repent, the Lord grants forgiveness, if they turn in penitence to the unity of God, and to communion with the bishop (ibid. 8).

Irenaeus

[The Gnostic disciples of Marcus] have deluded many women. . . Their consciences have been branded as with a hot iron. Some of these women make a public confession, but others are ashamed to do this, and in silence, as if withdrawing from themselves the hope of life of God, they either apostatize entirely or hesitate between two courses (*Against Heresies* 1:22 [A.D. 189]).

Tertullian

[Regarding confession, some] flee from this work as being an exposure of themselves, or they put it off from day to day. I presume they are more mindful of modesty than of salvation, like those who contract a disease in the more shameful parts of the body and shun making themselves known to the physicians; and thus they perish along with their own bashfulness (*Repentance* 10:1 [A.D. 203]).

The Church has the power of forgiving sins. This I acknowledge and adjudge (ibid. 21).

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Sunday of Saint Thomas

Though the grave had been sealed, from the grave You arose, O Christ our God, our Life, and though the door had been locked, You appeared among the disciples, O Resurrection of all, thus You restored for us an upright spirit according to Your great mercy Troparion, Sunday of St. Thomas.

Thomas placed his own restless hand into Your life-giving side, O Christ God, and since You entered although the doors were locked, he cried out to You with the other apostles: "You are my Lord and my God!" Kontakion, Sunday of St. Thomas.

Great is the Lord and mighty in power: to His wisdom there is no end Prokimenon, Sunday of St. Thomas.

When the doors were closed and the disciples were gathered together, You suddenly appeared in their midst, O Jesus our Almighty God. You granted them peace and filled them with the Holy Spirit; You commanded them to wait and not depart from Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. Therefore, we cry out to You, O Lord: Glory to You, our Light, our Resurrection, and our Peace Vesper Hymn, Sunday of St. Thomas.

Even though the doors were closed, You came to Your disciples, O Christ, and Thomas called the Twin, was not with them. Therefore, he did not believe what they told him. You did not deem him unworthy for his lack of faith, but in Your goodness, You confirmed his faith by showing him Your pure side and the wounds in Your hands and feet. He touched them, and when he saw You, he confessed You to be neither an abstract God nor merely human; and he cried out: My Lord and My God, glory to You! Vesper Hymn, Sunday of St. Thomas.

On the eighth day the Saviour came to the doubting disciples. He granted them peace and said to Thomas: O Apostle, come and touch My hands which were pierced by nails. How wonderful is this doubt of Thomas! It brought the hearts of believers to the knowledge of God. Therefore, he cried out with fear: My Lord and my God, glory to You! Vesper Hymn, Sunday of St. Thomas.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, even though he dies, will live

John 11: 25.

It is no wonder that our Lord is named after so many good things in the gospel narratives. If we look at the names by which the Son of God is called, we understand how many of these good things He is for us. One good thing is life and Jesus describes Himself as LIFE. Another good thing is the light of the world when it is true light that enlightens seekers after salvation. And the Son of God is called to be all these things. Another good thing, in addition to life and light is truth. A fourth is the way that leads to truth. Our Saviour teaches us that He is all these things when He insists, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life."

How exhilarating it is that our Lord shook off the earth and mortality in His human nature, to rise again! And it is we who have obtained this benefit from the Lord that He is the resurrection at the time of the death of Lazarus. He says, "I am the resurrection." The door through which one enters into the greatest joy is also good, so our Lord insists for us, "I am the door." We must not neglect mentioning the Word who is God after the Father of all. Happy are those who accept these truths from the Saviour and receive them from those who announce God's blessings.

So we see that in Christ there is no sunset; there are only sunrises. He is the "bright morning star" not the evening star. He heralds the dawn's brightness, not the dark. He does not conduct funerals, because He is resurrection, for Himself and for all of us who are faithful to Him. Because of Him we rise as well. He is the source of our resurrection. He resurrects continually our mind, our body, our spirit, our hopes, our outlook, our everything. In Him we are victorious even now.

We salute the resurrection in which He triumphs. We believe in the resurrection because He obtained it for us. We already know resurrection joy because each time we sin, each time we fall and receive forgiveness in the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation, we rise from spiritual death to life-imparting resurrection.

Thus, our experience as followers of Christ is different from that of Thomas. As believers we already know resurrection from the captivity of sin. History is replete with those who have delusions of grandeur about themselves. Some have even been willing to die for their cause. But like all men, they were defeated by death. As we dig up their graves, we find the remains of their bodies. But that is precisely what makes Christ so unique. He predicted His death, His burial and that after three would come out of the grave victorious over death.


Authentic believers do not need what Thomas wanted. Through His death we are redeemed and through His Blood our sin is washed away. Christ's resurrection validates what He did on the cross. Resurrection for the believer is the sweetest word human ears can hear.

Four hundred years before Christ, the Greek philosopher Socrates lay dying from poison. He was considered the wisest teacher in the world, but when his friends asked, "Shall we live again?" he could only answer, "I hope so, but no man knows for sure."



In the Book of Job, another man asks the same question "If a man dies, shall he live again" Job 14:14? It is an age old question and haunts many people and tests every religious persuasion – the most crucial question of the ages. St. Paul reminds us that some live all their lives in bondage to the fear of death. "...Jesus likewise had a full share in ours, that by his death he might rob the devil, the prince of death, of his power and free those who through fear of death had been slaves their whole life long" Hebrews 2:14,15.

Thomas was apparently one of those who thought that way. He was looking for contrary proof. Without some assurance of life after death, death becomes a terrifying proposition. So today is proof of why we can celebrate the resurrection because it answers the age old question once and for all. The resurrection takes us out of the realm of mere speculative thinking into actual experience. Today we are shown there is life beyond this life!





DOUBTING THOMAS

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

ABSENT	DOUBTING	HIS SIDE	PERSIST
JESUS	PROBING	BELIEVER	UNBELIEF
DISCIPLES	NAIL PRINTS	EXAMINE	BLEST
SEEN	HANDS	LOCKED DOORS	SIGN
THE LORD	FINGERS	THOMAS	ROOM

