

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
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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

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)

Bulletins are sponsored by

Mahal-Ritzel Funeral Home

Minersville, PA 544-5111

Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

Misplaced Expectations

A young boy returned from his first major league baseball game very disappointed. Even though his favorite team won the game, the young boy said to his grandfather, "I'll never go to another game again!" "Why not," his grandfather asked, "your team won the game -why are you disappointed?" The boy answered, "I wanted my favorite player to hit a home run to where I was sitting and I wanted to catch the ball and I wanted to get it autographed after the game!" "I've been hoping for that all my life, too," said his grandfather with a smile.

Quite often, the disappointment that we feel towards a person or about a situation or circumstance is due to the fact that our expectations of that person or about that situation are misplaced, misguided, or misunderstood. We see an example of this in today's Gospel reading about our

Lord's entrance into Jerusalem.

Many of the same people who enthusiastically greeted Jesus when He entered into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday would just as passionately demand His crucifixion only a few days later. Why? It is because their expectations of Him were misplaced. That is, many people presumed that the long-awaited Messiah would be a great military leader or a political revolutionary who would lead them out of Roman subjugation and into independence. They did not consider the possibility of a Messiah who would conquer not armies, but death itself.

What do we expect from God? Like the little boy at the baseball game, are we disappointed when we don't get what we want? Let us recall that the Lord knows what we need even before we ask or are aware of it!

THE ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM PALM SUNDAY



Icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem

Volume 2022
Christ is among us!

Number 14
He is and will be!

**Sunday of the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
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.

April 10 – April 16, 2022

All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

Saturday Vigil of Sunday (at SS Peter & Paul)
4:00 p. m. + **Michael Kovich** req. by Marie Wanchick

Sunday
8:00 a.m. +**Verbosh Family** req. by Irene Verbosh Dallago (at St. Mary)
10:00 a.m. **Health and Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)
Livestreamed

Great Monday
6:00 p.m. **Liturgy of St. Gregory the Great**
Great Tuesday
6:00 p.m. **Liturgy of St. Gregory the Great**
Great Wednesday
6:00 p.m. **Liturgy of St. Gregory the Great w/ Holy Anointing**
Great Thursday
6:00 p.m. **Vespers w/Liturgy of St. Basil the Great**
+**John & +Sue Petty** req. by Anna Jane Petty

Great & Holy Friday
3:00 p.m. **Vespers w/Burial** (at St. Mary)
6:00 p.m. **Vespers w/Burial** (at SS. Peter & Paul)
Great and Holy Saturday (at SS Peter & Paul)
9:00 a.m. **Deceased of the Noga & Ammon Families**

Saturday **Great & Holy Pascha** (at SS Peter & Paul)
5:00 p.m. **Health & Blessing of the Parishioners**

Great & Holy Pascha
Sunday
8:00 a.m. **Matins of Resurrection w/Liturgy of St. John** (at St. Mary)
H&B Parishioners
Solemn Blessing of Paschal Foods

Epistle Readers: 4/2 – Gail Burgess; 4/3 – Dolores Kramer 4/9 AM Marie Wanchick; PM – Laura Mitchell; 4/10 – Ellen Sinkovich; 4/11 – Ellen Sinkovich/Dolores Kramer; 4/12 – Marie Wanchick/Judy Kostura; 4/13 – Laura Mitchell/Gail Burgess; 4/14 – Jennifer Keer/Anna Keer; 4/15 – Gail Burgess/Judy Kostura; 4/16 – Ellen Sinkovich. (If you cannot be present for any time, kindly contact another reader to cover for you).

Mystery of Forgiveness at SS. Peter & Paul
Great Wednesday following Divine Services
Great Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 12 Noon

Blessing of Paschal Foods at SS. Peter & Paul
Great Saturday 1:00 p.m. (Simple Blessing)
Solemn Blessing after Resurrection Matins/Liturgy

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We have fought the good fight of the Great Fast to arrive at the most solemn celebration of our Liturgical life, viz., the Life, Death and Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the One promised after the Fall Who would redeem mankind.

Each year we celebrate these most solemn days to remind us that in following the liturgical life of the Church, the true Church bequeathed us by Jesus the Christ, we experience here on earth a foretaste of Heaven for all who believe. Where else can we partake of True Food and True Drink that offers eternal life? No where else but here in our thrice-blessed Byzantine Catholic Church under the Patronage of the Pillars of The Church, SS. Peter and Paul.

May the Holy Spirit guide you to blessed experience of the Mystery of our Salvation.

less drastic or dramatic methods. Regardless, surrendering or submitting to God's will is never just a one-time event. St. Paul said, "I die daily" 1 Corinthians 15: 31. There is the moment of surrender and there is the practice of surrender which is moment-by-moment, on-going and life-long. The problem with a living sacrifice is that it can crawl off the altar, so you have to re-surrender your life countless times a day. You must make it a daily habit. Jesus reminds us, "Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day and follow in my steps" Luke 9: 23.

Your baptismal decision to live a totally committed life will be continually tested. Sometimes it will mean doing inconvenient, unpopular, costly, or seemingly impossible tasks. It will often mean doing the opposite of what you feel like doing. One great believer signed a written contract with Christ. He wrote "From this day forward, I am a slave of Jesus Christ." He then signed it and lives it.

Have you thought about living your initiatory covenant with Christ, have you signed a contract like that with God? You may not be aware, but that is what the fulfillment of your baptism expects.

Or are you still arguing and struggling with God over His right to do with your life as He pleases? "You are now under grace, not under the law" Romans 6: 14.



**MORE HONORABLE THAN THE
CHERUBIN AND BEYOND COMPARE
MORE GLORIOUS THAN THE SER-
PHIN, WHO A VIRGIN GAVE BIRTH
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NIFY.**

THE DIVINE LITURGY - COMMEMORATIONS OF
ST JOHN CRYEOSTOM

The Heart Of Worship

***Rather, offer yourselves to God as men who have come back from the dead to life,
your bodies to God as weapons for justice***

Romans 6: 13

The heart of worship is surrender.

Surrender is an unpopular word, disliked almost as much as the word *submission*. It implies losing and no one wants to be a loser. Surrender evokes the unpleasant images of admitting defeat in battle, forfeiting a game, or yielding to a stronger opponent. The word is almost always used in a negative context. Captured criminals *surrender* to authorities.

In today's competitive culture, we are taught to never give up and never give in, so we don't hear much about surrendering. If winning is everything, surrendering is unthinkable. We would rather talk about winning, succeeding, overcoming and conquering than yielding, submitting, obeying, and surrendering. But surrendering to God is the heart of worship. It is the natural response to God's amazing love and mercy. We give ourselves to Him, not out of fear, or duty, but simply in responsive love "...because he first loved us" 1 John 4: 9.

After spending innumerable chapters of the book of Romans explaining God's incredible grace to us, St. Paul urges us to fully surrender our lives to God in worship: "I beg you, through the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds that you may offer what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect" Romans 12: 1, 2.

True worship occurs when you bring pleasure to God, happens when you give yourself completely to God without reservation. Notice the first and near the last words of the cited verse are a repetition, the same: *offer*. Offering yourself to God is what worship is all about. The act of personal surrender is called many things: consecration, making Jesus your Lord; taking up your cross, dying to self, yielding to the Holy Spirit, submitting to God's will.

What matters is that you do it, that you live it, not what you call it. God wants your life, all of it. He gave you all of it, not half of it; so He desires a whole return. Ninety five per cent is not enough.

There are three barriers that block our total surrender to God: fear, pride and confusion. We do not realize how much God loves us; we want to control our own lives and we most of all, misunderstand the meaning of surrender.

Can I trust God? Trust is an essential ingredient to surrender. You will not surrender to God unless you totally trust Him, but you cannot trust Him until you know Him better. Fear keeps us from surrendering, but “perfect love casts out all fear” 1 John 4: 18. The more you realize how much God loves you, the easier surrender to His will becomes.

How do you know God loves you? He provides many evidences:

God confirms He loves you. “Because you are precious in my eyes and because I love you...” Isaiah 43: 4.

You are never out of His sight. “My journeys and my rest you scrutinize, with all my ways you are familiar” Psalms 139: 3.

He cares about every detail of your life. “As for you, every hair of your head has been counted, so do not be afraid of anything” Matthew 10: 30.

He gave you the capacity to enjoy all kinds of fulfilling pleasure. “Tell those who are rich in this world’s goods not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth. Let them trust in God who provides us richly with all things for our use” 1 Timothy 6: 17.

He has good plans for your life. “For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe, plans to give a future full of hope” Jeremiah 29: 11.

When you repent and seek forgiveness, He forgives you. “For you, O Lord are good and forgiving, abounding in kindness to all who call upon you” Psalms 86: 5.

or wealthy, but because she was totally surrendered to Him. When the angel explained God’s improbable plan, she calmly responded, “I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say” Luke 1: 38. Nothing is more powerful than a submitted and surrendered life in the hands of God. “Therefore submit to God; resist the devil and he will take flight” James 4: 7.

The best way to live. Everybody eventually surrenders or submits to someone or something. If not to God, you will surrender to the opinions or expectations of others, to money, to resentment, to fear, or to your own pride, lusts or ego. You were designed to worship God and if you fail to worship Him, you will create other things, idols, to which your life is surrendered. You are free to choose what you submit to, but are not freed from the consequences of your choices. If you do not surrender to Christ, you submit to chaos. If we do not wholeheartedly serve the Lord, to your detriment you serve the devil.

Submitting to God’s will is not the *best* way to live; it is the *only* way to live. Nothing else works. All other approaches lead to frustration, disappointment and self-destruction. “I beg you, through the mercy of God, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship” Romans 12: 1; “This being so, we make it our aim to please him whether we are with him or away from him” 2 Corinthians 5: 9. Surrendering your life is not a foolish emotional impulse, but a rational intelligent act; the most responsible and sensible thing you can do with your life is to associate and live it with its Creator and Saviour.

That is why St. Paul said, “So we make it our goal to please him” 2 Corinthians 5: 9. The wisest moments in the life of any man are those when you say yes to God. Sometimes it takes years, but eventually you discover that the greatest hindrance to God’s blessings in your life is not others, it is yourself, your self-will, stubborn pride, and personal ambition. You cannot fulfill God’s purposes for your life while focusing on your own plans. If God is going to do his deepest and most profound work in you, it will begin with this. So give it all to God: your past regrets, your present problems, your future ambitions, your fears, dreams, weaknesses, habits, hurts and hang-ups. Put Jesus Christ in the driver’s seat of your life and take your hands off the steering wheel. Do not be afraid, nothing under His control can ever be out of control.

Mastered by Christ, you can handle anything by His grace. You will be likened to St. Paul: “In him who is the source of my strength I have strength for everything” Philippians 4: 13. St. Paul’s momentous moment occurred on the road to Damascus after he was knocked down from his horse by a blinding light. For others, God gets our attention with

Submission to the will of God is a demanding exalted privilege. In our case it is intense warfare and struggle against our self-centered nature.

The blessing of surrender. God's revelation to us in Scripture is crystal clear about how you benefit when you fully surrender your life to God.

First, you experience an astounding peace: "Come to terms with him to be at peace. In this shall good come to you: receive instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored" Job 22: 21 – 23.

Next, you experience freedom: "When you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are the slaves of the one you obey, whether yours is the slavery of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to justice. Thanks to God, though once you were slaves of sin, you sincerely obeyed that rule of teaching which was imparted to you; freed from your sin, you became slaves of justice...Just as formerly you enslaved your bodies to impurity and licentiousness for their degradation, make them now the servants of justice for their sanctification...But now that you are freed from sin and have become slaves of God, your benefit is sanctification as you tend toward eternal life" Romans 6: 16 – 22.

Third, you experience God's powerful grace in your life. Stubborn temptations and overwhelming problems can now be defeated by Christ when you war against them by His grace. "Without me you can do nothing" John 15: 5; "...nothing shall be impossible to you" Matthew 17: 20.

As Joshua approached the greatest battle of his life, he encountered God. "Are you one of us or our enemies?" He replied 'Neither, I am the captain of the host of the Lord and I have just arrived.' Then Joshua fell prostrate to the ground in worship and said to him, 'What has my Lord to say to his servant?' The captain of the Host of the Lord replied to Joshua, 'remove you sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy.' And Joshua obeyed" Joshua 5: 13 – 15. Joshua surrendered his plans and that surrender led to stunning victory at Jericho. Victory comes through surrender to God's will. Surrendered to God, you do not have to fear or surrender to anyone else. The greatness of a man's power is in the measure of his surrender and submission to God. Victories of all sorts are then inevitable.

Those in submission to His will are the ones God uses. They are the only ones He can use because they have made themselves usable by Him. God chose the ever-Virgin Mary to be the Birthgiver of God not because she was talented or more beautiful than others,

He is lovingly patient with you. "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness" Psalms 145: 8.

God loves you infinitely more than you can even imagine. The greatest expression of this is the sacrifice of God's Son for you. "It is precisely in this that God proves His love for us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5: 8. If you wish to see how much you matter to God, look at Christ with His arms outstretched on the cross, saying, "I gladly die for you than live without you."

God is not a slave master or bully Who uses brute force to coerce us into submission. He does not try to break our will, but woos us to himself so that we might offer ourselves freely to Him. God is a Lover and Liberator in the truest sense of the words, and surrendering to Him brings freedom, not bondage. When we completely surrender ourselves to Jesus, we discover by His grace that He is not a tyrant, but a Saviour; not a boss, but a Brother- enabler, not a dictator, but a Friend.

Admitting our limitations. A second barrier to total surrender is our pride. We do not want to admit that we are just creatures and not in charge of everything. It is the ongoing misunderstanding of the temptation of old: "You will be like gods..." Genesis 3: 5. That desire - to have complete control - is the cause of so much stress in our lives. Life is a struggle, undoubtedly, but what most people don't realize is that our struggle, like that of Jacob, is really a struggle with God! We want to be God, and there is no way we are going to win that struggle.

The reason so many are still troubled of soul, still seeking, still making little forward progress in their spiritual lives is because they have not yet come to the end of themselves. We are still trying to give orders, and interfering with God's abiding grace within us. In his exhortation to fidelity in faith, St. Paul tells his disciple Timothy, "I remind you to stir into flame the grace of God bestowed when my hands were laid on you" 2 Timothy 1: 6.

We are not God and never will be. We are human beings, created in His image. It is when we try to be God that we end up most like satan, who desired the same unachievable thing. We accept our humanity intellectually, but not emotionally. When faced with our own limitations, we react with irritation, anger, resentment. We want to be taller or shorter, smarter, stronger, more talented, more beautiful and wealthier. We want to have it all and do it all and we become upset when it does not happen. We wish to do everything our way, which is an unbelievable mindset with which a believer is to be preoccupied. Then, when we notice that

God gives others characteristics we are not possessed of, we respond with envy, jealousy and self-pity.

What it means to surrender. Surrendering to God is not passive resignation, or an excuse for laziness. It is not accepting the status quo. It may mean the exact opposite: sacrificing your life or suffering in order to change what needs to be changed. God often calls surrendered people to battle on His behalf. Surrendering is not for cowards or doormats. Likewise it does not mean giving up rational thinking because God would not waste the mind He gives you. God does not want robots to serve Him. Surrendering is not repressing your personality. God wants to utilize your unique giftedness. Submission to His will augments and enriches us. Rather than its being diminished, surrendering enhances it. The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become because it is He Who made us. He invented all the different people that you and I were intended to be. It is when I turn to Christ, when I give up myself to His personality, to His character, to His values, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own, because it then is beginning to slowly but inevitably become God-like.

No believer can be in opposition to, or at variance with Christ. The believer is without question, a "...member of Christ" 1 Corinthians 6: 15, and must be "...joined to the Lord" and "...one spirit with him" 1 Corinthians 6: 17. Followers of Christ are clearly possessed of "...the mind of Christ" 1 Corinthians 2: 16 and schooled "...not in words of human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, thus interpreting spiritual things in spiritual terms" 1 Corinthians 2: 13, because the "...Spirit we have received is not the world's spirit, but God's Spirit" 1 Corinthians 2: 12, since "...whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" 1 Corinthians 6: 17.

Surrendering is best demonstrated in obedience. You say "*yes, Lord*" to whatever He asks of you. To say "*no, Lord*" is to speak a contradiction which is not worthy of a believer. You cannot call Jesus your Lord when you refuse to obey Him without equivocation. After a night of failed fishing, Simon modeled surrender when Jesus told him to try again: "Master, we have worked hard all night and have not caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets" Luke 5: 5. Surrendered people obey God's word even when it does not seem to make sense.

Another aspect of fully surrendered life is trust. Abraham followed God's leading without knowing *where* it would take him. Hannah waited for God's perfect timing without knowing *when*. Mary expected a miracle without knowing *how*. Joseph trusted God's

purpose without knowing *why* circumstances happened the way they did. Each of these people were fully surrendered and submitted to God's will in their lives, unlike Adam and Eve who were bereft of trust as all it took was the appearance of a snake in the grass to beguile them.

You can appreciate being surrendered to God's will when you rely on God to work things out instead of trying to manipulate others, force your agenda, and control the situation. You let go and let God be God. You do not always have to be in charge. "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will act. He will make justice dawn for you like the light; bright as the noon day shall be your vindication. Leave it to the Lord and wait for him; do not be confused at the successful path of the man who does malicious deeds" Psalms 37: 5 – 7. Instead of trying harder, trust more. You also know you have submitted to God's will when you do not react to criticism and rush to defend yourself. Surrendered hearts show up best in relationships. You do not edge others out, you do not demand your rights, and you are not self-serving when you submit yourself to God's will.

The most difficult area to surrender today for many people is their earthly treasure, their hard-earned money. Many have thought, "I want to live for God but I also want to earn enough money to live comfortably and retire someday." Retirement is not a goal for the life submitted to God because it competes with God for the primary attention of our lives. Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and money" Mathew 6: 24 and "Wherever your treasure is, your heart will also be" Matthew 6: 21.

The awesome and supreme example of surrender to the will of the Father is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The night before His crucifixion Jesus manifestly surrendered himself to God's plan of salvation for mankind. In His prayers "He kept saying, O Father, you have the power to do all things. Take this cup away from me. But let your will be done, not mine" Mark 14: 36. Jesus did not pray, "Eternal Father, if you are able to take away this painful agony, do so." He already affirmed God can do anything! Instead He prayed, "Eternal Father, if it is in your best interest to remove this suffering, do so. But only if it fulfills your purpose, your will, that is what I want to do."

Genuine submission to the will of God says, "Father, if this problem, pain, sickness or circumstance is needed to fulfill your purpose and glory in my life, or in another's life, *don't take it away*. Grant me the strength and submission to accept and benefit from it. This level of maturity does not come easily. In Jesus' case, He agonized so much over the plan of the Father for mankind's salvation, He sweat drops of blood. Surrender is hard work.