

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

Saints Peter & Paul Rectory: (570) 544-2074

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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)

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The Good News Within Our Heart

Once, a famous violinist came out on the stage and made the unfortunate discovery that there was something wrong with his violin. He looked for a second and then saw that it was not his famous and valuable one. He felt paralyzed for a moment, then turned to his audience and told them, "Ladies and gentlemen: I will show you that the music is not in the instrument but in the heart."

He played as he had never played before and the music poured forth until the audience was overcome with enthusiasm and the applause almost lifted the roof off the building. Indeed, the man had revealed to them that the music was not in the machine but in his own heart.

Today, the joy of the Resurrection is still

within our hearts. And, we must take to heart the words that Our Lord spoke to His disciples when He appeared to them after His resurrection: "As the Father sent Me, so I send you ..." (John 20:21) Indeed, the Lord Himself sends us, like the apostles, to proclaim to the world that "He is risen!"

We proclaim Our Lord's resurrection not just in hymns and inspired songs, but by the very manner in which we live our lives. "Get rid of all bitterness, all anger, harsh words, slander and malice of every kind," says Saint Paul. "In place of these, be kind to one another, compassionate and forgiving, just as God has forgiven you in Christ!" (Ephesians 4:32) May the joy of the resurrection remain within our hearts every day of the year!

SUNDAY OF SAINT THOMAS



Icon of Christ and Saint Thomas

Sunday of Saint Thomas
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 24 – April 30, 2022

All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

Saturday Vigil of Sunday (at SS Peter & Paul)

4:00 p. m. +**Joseph Lohin** req. by Elaine Lohin Kunze

Sunday

8:00 a.m. +**John Laychock** req. by Betty & Josie Scalla (at St. Mary)

10:00 a.m. **Health & Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)
livestreamed

Tuesday

8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy**

Wednesday

8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy**

Thursday

8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy**

Friday

8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy**

Saturday Vigil of Sunday (at SS Peter & Paul)

4:00 p.m. **H&B Fr. Yuriy & Kateryna Oros** req. by Anna Jane Petty

Father Gregory will attend **The Annual Presbyteral Days** being conducted this week and therefore No Divine Liturgies will be celebrated. Father Mark Fesniak, pastor of St. Nicholas Ukrainian Church (570-544-4581) will cover any emergency.

Epistle Readers: 4/23 – Gail Burgess; 4/24 – Dolores Kramer 4/30 Marie Wanchick; – Laura Mitchell; 5/1 – Ellen Sinkovich; 5/7 – Paulette Murphy; 5/8 – Beverly Kostishak; 5/14 – Laura Mitchell; 5/15 – Jennifer Keer; 5/21 – Gail Burgess; 5/22 – Judy Kostura; 5/26 – Ellen Sinkovich; 5/28 – Dolores Kramer; 5/29 – Paulette Murphy. (If you cannot be present for any time, kindly contact another reader to cover for you).

Candle Offering:

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20:19b Peace Be With You

The spirit breathes tranquility. Maximus the confessor: Through his greeting of peace he breathes on them and bestows tranquility as well as a sharing in the Holy Spirit. chapters on knowledge 2.46. The Peace of Christ, Cyril of Alexandria: When Christ greeted his holy disciples with the words "peace be with you," by peace he meant himself, for Christ's presence always brings tranquility of soul. This is the grace Paul desired for believers when he wrote, "The peace of Christ which passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds."¹⁷ The peace of Christ which passes all understanding is in fact the Spirit of Christ, who fills those who share in him with every blessing, commentary on the gospel of John 12.1.

THOMAS SUNDAY

Gleanings from the Holy Fathers:

Divine compassion brought it about in a wonderful way that when the doubting disciple touched the wounds in his Master's body, he cured the wounds of our unbelief. Thomas' unbelief was of more advantage to our faith than the faith of the believing disciples because when he was led back to faith by touching Jesus, our minds were relieved of all doubt and made firm in faith. And so after His resurrection Jesus allowed His disciples to doubt. But He did not desert him in his doubt. It is much the same as when before His birth He desired that Mary have a husband, who had not yet married her. The disciple who doubted and touched became a witness to the truth of the resurrection in just the same way as the husband of His mother had been the guardian of her perfect virginity. *St. Gregory the Great, Forty Gospel Homilies*

Did You Know That ...

- ...failure is one thing that can be achieved without effort?
- ...it is difficult for a man who loses his temper to hold on to friends?
- ...many an argument is sound and only sound?
- ...nothing is dirt cheap anymore except gossip?
- ...prayer is not a last extremity, it is a first necessity?
- ...giving our earthly treasure to God is grace, not disgrace?
- ...we should have character, not be one?
- ...ideas will not keep; something must be done about them?
- ...the silver lining is always easier to find in the other fellow's cloud?
- ...in nature, we hear the very speech of God?
- ...living without faith in Christ is like living in a fog?
- ...God's law lasts longer than those who break it?
- ...it is hard to get ahead if you do not have one?
- ...a pessimist has no starter while an optimist sometimes has no brakes?
- ...gossip can appropriately be called ear pollution?
- ...when you think you get something for nothing, it is really that you have not been billed for it yet?
- ...the world is not any worse than it was a hundred years ago; it is simply that TV gives us better coverage?



IN TIME OF BEREAVEMENT

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the law. But thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

Praised be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation! He comforts us in our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble, with the same consolation we have received from him. 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4

Of this wisdom it is written: "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9

You should be pleased they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid in the resurrection of the just. Luke 14:14

Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones. Psalm 116:15

The Lord puts to death and gives life; he cast down to the nether world; he raises up again. 1 Samuel 2:6

God is a saving God for us; the Lord, my Lord, controls the passageways of death. Psalm 68:21

Death came through a man; hence the resurrection of the dead comes through a man also. Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will come to life again. 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22

But 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. Revelation 21:27

*Christ is
Risen!*

*Indeed, He
is Risen!*

For God so *loved*
the world
that He gave His only begotten Son
that whosoever believeth in Him
should not perish

but have
everlasting

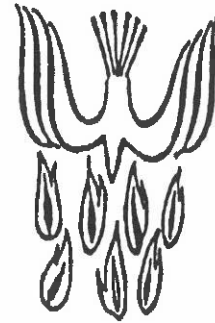
life

J O H N + 3 : 16

SCRIPTURE

TRIVIA

QUIZ



1. Who said, "He stinks!"?
2. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a.....to my path."
3. Why did God make the serpent eat dust all the days of his existence?
4. Whose army was destroyed in the Red Sea?"
5. What did Daniel predict that Nebuchadnezzar would eat?
6. Why was the name "doubting" given to St. Thomas the Apostle?
7. What Old Testament Book follows Malachi?
8. After whose death did Jesus want to be left alone?
9. Only the Father knows the hour and the day of what?
10. Who said, "Command these stones to be made bread"?
11. What does God promise to those who honor their father and mother?

ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUIZ

- 1.. Martha. (John 11: 39)
2. Light. (Psalms 119: 105)
3. For tempting Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 3: 13)
4. That of Egypt. (Exodus 14: 27)
5. Grass. (Daniel 4: 18)
6. He did not believe that Jesus rose from the dead. (John 20: 24)
7. None. This is the last book of the Old Testament.
8. That of St. John the Baptist. (Matthew 14: 1)
9. Jesus' return or the Last Judgment. (Matthew 24:36)
10. The devil. (Matthew 4: 3)
11. A long life. (Exodus 20: 12)

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

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 our 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 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.

GOD'S PROPERTY

"Sons are heritage from the Lord; children a reward from him" Psalm 127:3. "We have a little boy at our information booth. Will the parents come and claim him?" This is an announcement that many have similarly heard while on excursion to a neighborhood shopping center. When I heard something like it only once, I prayerfully assumed the worried parents rushed to the booth to claim their child. But to whom in reality, do our children belong? By what right do we call our children our own? Parents who belong to Christ, should remember that their children also belong firstly to Christ. Not only is this made known to us in the baptismal ceremony, but Scripture is emphatic as well. They are His heritage. They are a reward and blessing from Him. When Jacob saw Esau, he openly recognized God's claim on his children. He said, "They are the children God has graciously given to your servant" (Genesis 33:5). If children are in fact God's heritage, they surely belong to Him. Parents possess children too, but only for a time as a trust from the Lord. Parents have a high responsibility of ministering to their children in their years of dependency to help them develop the talents and grace which is bestowed upon them by the Lord. As parents, it is our task to make our children aware of the grace of the Lord given them in the Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation. As parents, we must show them how to utilize this grace to grow firmly in faith commitment to Christ. This is a grave responsibility. Our God has started the growth when we presented our children to Him. It remains for us to continue building on the foundation of Christ in their lives. Just as we would not think of accepting the gift of a child from the Lord without formally returning it to Him in the sacraments of initiation, so we cannot even think of abdicating our parental responsibility and permitting our children to grow up without good example in an atmosphere of tender and abiding faith. We would be ingrates if we did otherwise.

A popular bumper sticker asks, "Do you know where your children are?" Answering that, however, involves only a matter of physical location for many non-thinking people. A far more important question is this: "What are you doing to prepare your children to serve the Lord, to be faithful believers in Christ? How God-centered is your instruction? Are you imparting your own skewed values, or those of Christ? And of course, how God-centered is your own life? In their spiritual growth today, are they far advanced along the road to holiness?" We cannot give to our offspring, blessed as they are in the sight of the Lord, what we ourselves do not possess. If we are luke-warm in our faith; if we are given to self-interpreting our faith and passing that off as the real thing to our children, we are not the kind of parents our Lord intended us to be. Children are given to us as parents to intensify our relationship with God. That is why the Scripture describes them as a blessing. If we utilize children to divide and separate us from our God, we are accepting the gift and permitting it to be abused and in the sight of the Lord we are child-abusers and God-abusers as well. Children must always be seen and recognized and respected as a further sign of our devotion to our Creator.

As parents, we must not only be grateful for the beloved children entrusted to our spiritual and physical care, but we must daily prove our Lord made a good choice when the children were given to us in the first place. We must continually ask for God's wisdom to respect their inherent right to spiritual nurture. We must continually without let-up guide and lead them in the way of eternal life. We must always make them aware of Christ Whose love for them endures forever. They must be able to discern in parental devotion the love of God our Father and the concern of Holy Mother the Church.

GIVE ME YOUR HAND

The focus in today's gospel narrative is on our Lord's keeping in touch, quite literally, with His own followers, even after His glorious Resurrection. He wishes to communicate Himself and His truthful reality to them. It permits His chosen followers to stay in touch with Him as well. It is a profound communication, a presence as well as a deep prayer. It is food for the faithful soul and an end to the sophistries of doubt we see so much of in today's world.

Eleven disciples were there in the group, and our Lord singled out St. Thomas. So, we see the one-to-one as well as the community dimension of our Lord's action. In order that our sacred Liturgy produce its full spiritual effect, it is necessary that believers come to it with the proper spiritual disposition because our spiritual life is more a dimension of community, a gathering together of individual believers as the Body of Christ. We do bring personal attitudes, mentalities of our own into the sacred assembly and it is vital that our spiritual life is congruent with that of our Saviour; that we are tuned in, that we are in touch as it were with Him if the liturgical life of our blessed Church is to make any spiritual impression on our individual souls. We are called upon to be one mind and one soul with the Risen Saviour. So we need the daily practice of personal prayer that we can share in the community prayer of believers assembled to glorify God in the Divine Liturgy with one heart, one soul, and one mind.

"All of us, in union with Christ, form one body" (Romans 12: 15). All of us, each of us, have to stay in union, in close touch with Christ our risen Saviour. How do we maintain a sense of the religious and spiritual dimension in our life?

Some stop at intervals to recall the presence of God. This is no easy task. The saints recommend it. But it can seem very abstract, this recollection or practice of the presence of God if we have not made an urgent practice of living it each moment of our lives to the best of our ability. The question in our time still remains: "How?"

So, we are eager to look to the Lord, teaching St. Thomas in today's gospel narrative. "He showed them his hands" (John 20:20). "Take your finger and examine my hands. Put your hands into my side" (John 20: 27). And all the sacramental Mysteries are signs of encounter with our God and Creator made with human hands. And so are all the sacramentals. Why?

Birds can see further than our naked eye. Dogs have a more delicate sense of smell. Fish make noises we cannot hear without electronic assistance. Many cooks seem to have no sense of taste whatsoever. But the human being, man, has no peer in the sense of touch. So the Church uses it to strengthen and confirm faith.

Look carefully and watch a pianist's or a violinist's hands, or those of a sculptor or painter. Consider the sense of touch in master craftsmen: cabinetmaker, diamond-cutter, dentist, baker, bricklayer, electronic technician, and neuro-surgeon. All sports handle a roly-poly ball well only because of a developed delicacy in the sense of touch. Then, look at the nurse's or physician's hands on a fevered brow, the firm hand-clasp of friendship, a comforting hand on a sagging shoulder, the military salute of respect, or the hands of a delighted audience applauding. Yes, the human mind and heart come out most truly and

emphatically through the hands. Homemaker, shopper, laborer, craftsman, artist, pilot, tailor, typist, scientist, orator, all of us: tie and bind our hands and we are lost!

Our daily language, too, is shot through with metaphors based on the sense of touch. In fact language is formed by the exclusion of the sense of touch in lips and tongue, jaw and throat. Some things are so vivid to us that we say we can "almost touch" them. Often we say we can or cannot "grasp" an idea or a relationship. We know the "feel" of velvet or burlap, and in faith we can imagine what it would be like to respond to Jesus the risen Saviour Who says, "Give me your hand."

We clasp our hands to pray. We make the sign of the Cross with our hands, touch our bodies as we offer and consecrate them anew to the Holy Trinity. With our hands we bless our food and call down God's blessings upon our children. We witness our priests greet each other with the kiss of peace and we grasp their hands as we reverence them because these hands bring down the very blessing of the Saviour upon us. When we are anointed at festal anointing, we are touched by the blessing of the Saviour and reinforced with His salutary grace. This holy touch remains upon us with the faint fragrance of holy oil.

Let us never "knock," but always praise whatever legitimately helps believers maintain a sense of the spiritual dimension of life. One person lights a candle. Another touches an icon with his lips for veneration and reverence. One carries a small cross about the neck and another utilizes the salutary blessing of a religious medal. All remind us of the holy touch of the Lord in our lives.

Do these practices help believers remember the presence of the Lord? Let the would-be-sophisticate sneer! Let the man of little or no faith question! But let not us believers join him in pigeon-holing all this as "excessive" or "superstitious." What would someone of like thinking say of the sacramental Mysteries themselves? Do they not touch us in a most profound way? Is such a person successful at communicating with our Heavenly Father? Or can the people who rush to the Communion line during the Divine Liturgy to be literally and spiritually touched by the Lord making the sign of the Cross upon themselves and their hearts and souls, be actually entering the kingdom of God, here and now, long before fatalistic human beings even comprehend what is transpiring?

Our sense of touch: how closely our physical body itself comes to vice or virtue with it! How close we come to expressing genuine horror, respect, love, sorrow, amazement at spiritual beauty with this blessed sense! All these our blessed Church utilizes to confirm our faith commitment to Christ!

Our Lord looks to us to affirm in our lives belief in His Resurrection which is the epitome and apex of our precious faith. As we confirm ourselves in faith response to the Saviour, we thereby grow even more in faith, devotion and charity. We enter a newer and higher dimension of relationship with Him.

And this is precisely what our Lord looked for and received from St. Thomas. "Give me your hand." Let us respond like a believer should. Let us so live that when the invitation comes to us, we be possessed of the genuine faith to respond. "Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe" (John 20: 27). May we all have the spiritual wherewithal to permit to fall not only from our lips, but from our souls as well: "My Lord and my God" (John 20: 28). Jesus then said to him: "You became a believer because you saw me. But far more blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20: 29).