

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

S. Peter & Paul Cantor: Mr. Paul Konkus      St. Mary's Cantor: Dr. Peter Yasenchak

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**CONFESSIONS** : SS. Peter & Paul Sunday One half hour prior to Divine Liturgy and Daily  
prior to Divine Liturgy. Saturday 1pm to 2pm

St. Mary's Saturday 3:00 PM

**SICK CALLS** : As scheduled, or anytime in case of an emergency. If anyone is homebound or  
hospitalized, please call the rectory 570-544-2074

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Bulletins are sponsored by

Mahal-Ritzel Funeral Home

Minersville, PA 5445111

Mark J. Mahal, Funeral Director

*Our Exodus, Our Passover*

We have been released not from physical but from spiritual bondage. We have been freed not from earthly labor but from worldly defilement. Our flight has not been from Egyptian taskmasters, nor from a godless and savage tyrant who is nonetheless a human being like ourselves, but from wicked and unclean demons who urge us to sin and from their commander, who is Satan himself.

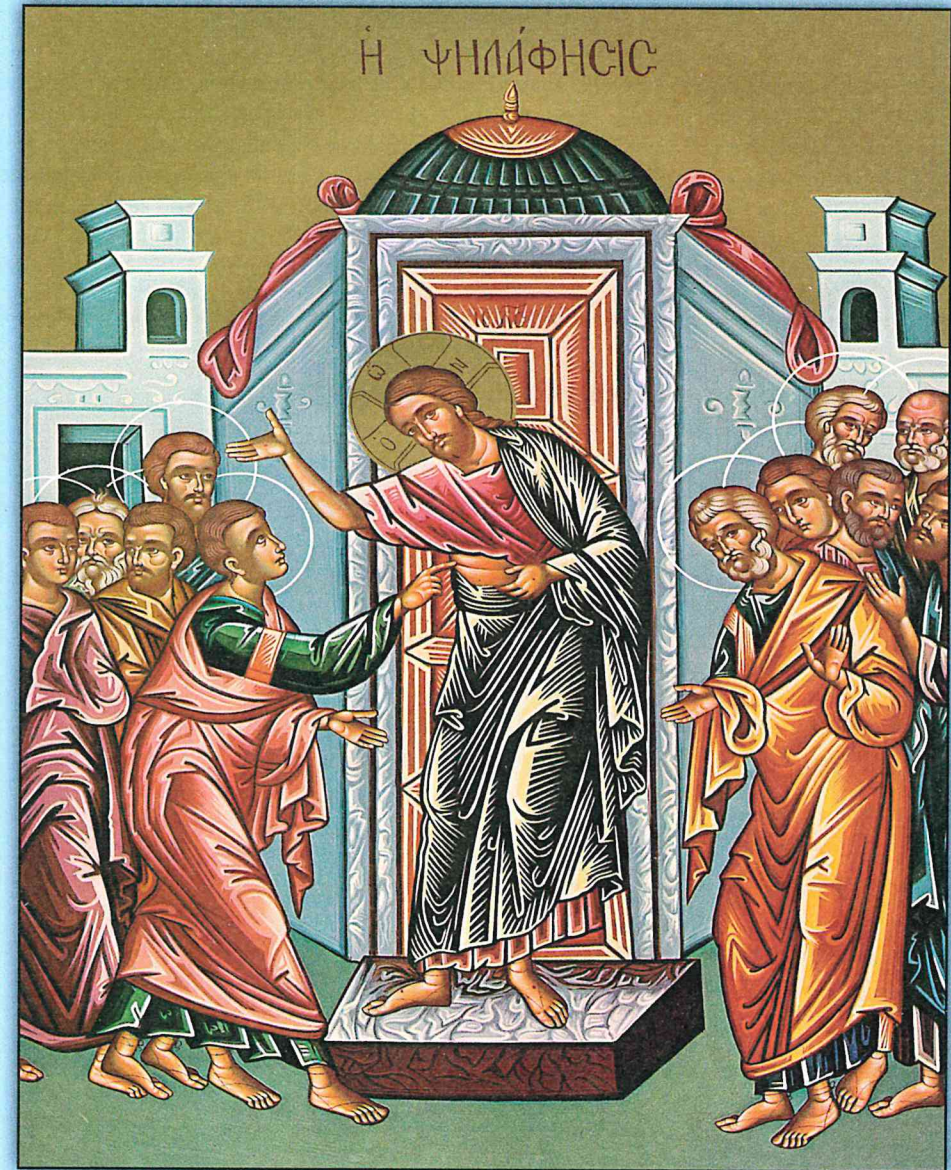
We have passed through the sea of this present life with its pleasures and idle distractions. We have eaten spiritual manna, the bread from heaven which gives life to the world. We have drunk water from the rock, for we have found our delight in the spiritual stream flowing from Christ. By the grace of holy baptism we have crossed the Jordan and entered the land promised to the saints and worthy of them, the land the Savior himself

spoke of when He said: "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the land."

Therefore, in honor of a new happening a new hymn should be sung by the Lord's kingdom, that is, by those subject to Him and governed by Him. A hymn should be sung, worthy praise should be given, not only in the land of the Jews but from one end of the earth to the other; in other words, everywhere in the world. Of old God was known in Judaea and His name was great only in Israel, but now that we have been called by Christ to the knowledge of the truth and His glory fills all heaven and earth, fulfilling the prophecy of the Psalmist: "The whole earth shall be full of his glory."

*St. Cyril of Alexandria*

## THOMAS SUNDAY



*Icon of Saint Thomas and Christ*

### Thomas Sunday

Welcome to the parish communities of SS. Peter and Paul and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Churches of Minersville and Saint Clare, 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 27 – May 3, AD2025

Vigil of Sunday		
Saturday	4:00 p.m.	+Hnatishion/Demko Families req. by Theresa Wagner*
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Health and Blessings of the Parishioners*
Monday	9:00 a.m.	No Divine Liturgy Today*
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	No Divine Liturgy Today*
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	No Divine Liturgy Today*
Thursday	9:00 a.m.	No Divine Liturgy Today*
Friday	9:00 a.m.	+William & +Anna McCann req. by Marie Wanchick*
Saturday	4:00 p.m.	Private Intention*

\*St. Mary  
\*SS Peter & Paul

### Epistle Readers:

4/27 – Ellen Sinkovich; 5/4 – Paulette Murphy; 5/11 – Beverly Kostishak; 5/20 – Judy Kostura; 5/25 – Dolores Kramer; 5/29 – Marie Wanchick; 6/1 – Laura Mitchell.

### Pastor's Message:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

His Holiness, Pope Francis, the bishop of the Apostolic See of Rome and Visible Head of the One, Holy and Apostolic Church was called by our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus to one of the many mansions He spoke of as being prepared for those who loved Him. And we regret losing a bishop with a true shepherds' heart modelled after the Sacred Heart of Jesus our Lord.

It is not often that we get to witness a pope of such humility and simplicity. In my study of my patron saint, Gregory I, who led the Church in the Sixth Century, I see many similarities of the two pontiffs, viz., each had sincere interest in the welfare of souls and were prepared to suffer indignities to reach as many as they could.

You will have heard both praise and condemnations of Pope Francis, but remember none of us is perfect, only our God, One in the Holy Trinity. Therefore, we must always remember to express words that uplift our brothers and sisters in Christ, because that is what the Lord did and we cannot call ourselves followers of Jesus if we do otherwise. Yes, there is a time and place to criticize if done in Christian Charity to help an individual overcome a flaw that hampers his/her growth in love. This is the message that will most live on as the late pope's legacy—love and mercy.

For any Faith Group to reap membership, the faithful therein, sow bountifully the Word of the Gospel and it must be seen in our words, actions love for one another. Pray for the Cardinal Electors that they be guided by the Holy Spirit as they enter into conclave to elect a successor to St. Peter who will guide the Church.

## What Is The Most Frequently Used Name For Jesus?

It is *Son of Man*, which appears 82 times in the New Testament; 81 times in the gospels and just once in the book of Acts of the Apostles. The name *Son of Man* first appears in the Old Testament, in the book of Daniel as a messianic prophecy: "I saw the night visions, and, behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven" Daniel 7: 13. *Son of Man* is taken to signify the human nature He espoused by being born of the Every Virgin Mary, in contradistinction to Son of God, which refers to His divinity.

## What Are The Other Names Of Jesus?

Jesus is called by 154 other names in the New Testament, including these:

The Advocate – *John 2:1*

Alpha and Omega – *Revelation 1:8, 22:13*

The Bridegroom – *John 3:29*

The Chief Shepherd – *1 Peter 5:4*

The Chosen One – *Luke 23:35*

The Eldest of Many Brothers – *Romans 8:29*

The First and the Last – *Revelation 1:17, 2:8*

Firstborn of All Creation – *Colossians 1:15*

Glory – *John 12:41*

God of Glory – *Acts 7:2*

Greater Covenant – *Hebrews 7:22*

Head of Every Man – *1 Corinthians 11:3*

Hidden Manna – *Revelation 2:17*

Hope – *1 Timothy 1:2*

Image of the Unseen God – *Colossians 1:15*

Inexpressible Gift – *2 Corinthians 9:15*

Israel's Comforting – *Luke 2:25*

King of Kings – *Revelation 17:14, 1 Timothy 6:15*

Lamb Without Spot or Stain – *1 Peter 1:19*

Last Adam – *1 Corinthians 15:45*

Light of the World – *John 8:12*



PEACE  
BE TO YOU  
ALLELUIA

Bright Week: This is the week of joy, for Christ has destroyed the kingdom of death and the power of sin, and has established the Kingdom of God. Death no longer reigns over human life, and paradise is re-opened to all, symbolized by the Royal Doors of the iconostas remaining open throughout the week. Through the power of the Spirit, all of humankind and the whole cosmos are renewed. In the ancient tradition, the newly-baptized, having entered into a new life in the hope of Resurrection, wore their white garments of joy and purity throughout the week. We do not chant for the departed during this week, for Christ has destroyed the power of death.

# Did You Know That ...

...clever sayings are as easily lost as pearls slipping from a broken string, but a kind word endures?

...great ideas need landing gear as well as wings?

...you can never do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late?

...no one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another?

...the person with a new idea is a crank until the idea succeeds?

...our purpose in life is not to get ahead of others, but to get ahead of ourselves, to outstrip ourselves, to break our own records?

...you cannot do much about the length of your life, but you can do very much about its depth and width?

...most people want meaning in their lives and it is our responsibility to show them it can be found in our church?

...if we cannot offer great goals, great objectives, profound meanings, then people will settle for shallow and trivial substitutes?

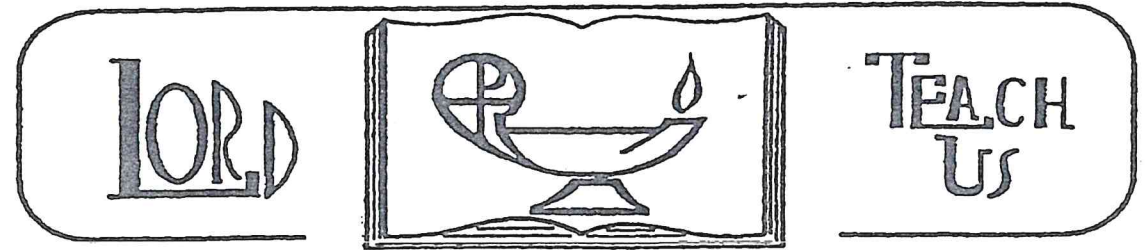
...life is like a ten speed bike; most of us have gears we never use?

...there are but two aims in life; first to get what you need; and after that to enjoy it but only the wisest of people achieve the second?

...it is all right to hold a conversation, but is wise to let go of it once in the while?

...nature has arranged it so that we can't shut our ears, but that we can easily shut our mouths?

...too often we under estimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn life around?



## Unending Happiness

*Like sheep they are herded into the nether world; death is their shepherd and the upright rule over them. Quickly their form is consumed; the nether world is their palace. But God will redeem me from the power of the nether world by receiving me* Psalms 49: 15, 16.

*Nothing deserving a curse shall be found there. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be there, and his servants shall serve him faithfully* Revelation 22: 3.

*No longer shall your sun go down, or your moon withdraw. For the Lord will be your light forever, and the days of your mourning shall be at an end* Isaiah 60: 20.

*Have no fear of the sufferings to come. The devil will indeed cast some of you into prison to put you to the test; you will be tried over a period of ten days. Remain faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life* Revelation 2: 10.

*He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away* Revelation 2: 4.

*The night shall be no more. They will need no light from lamps or the sun, for the Lord God shall give them light and they shall reign forever* Revelation 22: 5.

*No longer shall the sun be your light by day. Nor the brightness of the moon shine upon you at night. The Lord shall be your light forever, your God shall be your glory. No longer shall your sun go down, or your moon withdraw. For the Lord will be your light forever and the day of your mourning shall be at an end* Isaiah 60: 19, 20.

*I saw no temple in the city. The Lord God the Almighty is its temple, he and the Lamb. The city had no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God gave it light and its lamp was the Lamb* Revelation 21: 22, 23.

Christ spoke often of hell. When He spoke of "hell...the unquenchable fire" Mark 9: 43; Matthew 25: 31; Luke 16: 23, the Lord spoke with compassion, to warn us away from the ultimate tragedy (Mark 9: 43 – 50), this "second death" Revelation 21:8, with its permanent separation from the everlasting life in God for which we were created (Matthew 25: 31). Jesus spoke forcefully in the images used in that time of "hell, where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" Mark 9: 47, 48. In using these images our Lord called us to conversion and to warn that those who deliberately persist in malice face a horrible end.

We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love Him and serve Him. To die in deadly sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from Him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called hell.

Faith teaches that God is just and merciful, that no one is punished more harshly than he deserves. Yet the mystery of hell remains disturbing. We have every good reason to dread the possibility that persons created for eternal life could shape their wills in such a way as to forever reject God. We have as our one great consolation the recognition that Jesus, God's Son, chose to die on the cross to save us from such punishment if we are willing before death to choose Him and set aside what would separate us from Him.

Those who come to eternal life will enjoy every manner of blessing, but at the core of their joy will be the possession of God Himself. No longer shall we see Him merely by faith, but we shall see God "face to face" 1 Corinthians 13: 12. "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" 1 John 3: 2.

In describing the joys of heaven, we come to realize that according to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's baptism, provided they were not in need of purification from deadly sin when they died, or if they did need some purification, when they have been finally purified will begin a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom and celestial paradise, joined to the company of the holy angels. And those who are destined for eternal life see the divine essence intuitively and face to face with no creature acting as a medium of vision for what they see, but with the divine essence showing itself to them plainly, clearly and openly. There they are truly happy and have life and eternal rest.

The blessed union with God that brings perfect peace is far more than simply seeing or knowing God. In His gracious gift to us of life everlasting, we rejoice in God's infinite goodness. It is in expectation that we pray we will hear these words of our Lord at our own judgment, "Enter into the joy of your Master" Matthew 25: 21.

Lion of the Tribe of Judah – *Revelation 5:5*  
Living Bread – *John 6:51*  
Lord of All Men – *Acts 10:36*  
Main Cornerstone, – *Ephesians 2:20*  
The Man – *John 19:5*  
Morning Star – *2 Peter 1:19, Revelation 2:28*  
Only Son of the Father – *John 1:14*  
Perfect Copy (of God's nature) – *Hebrews 1:3*  
Power for Salvation – *Luke 1:69*  
Precious Cornerstone – *1 Peter 2:6*  
Prince of Life – *Acts 3:15*  
Radiant Light of God's Glory – *Hebrews 1:3*  
Righteous Judge – *2 Timothy 4:8*  
Rising Sun – *Luke 1:78*  
Ruler of All – *1 Timothy 6:15*  
Second Adam – *Romans 5:12-21*  
Son of the Blessed One – *Mark 14:61*  
Spiritual Rock – *1 Corinthians 10:4*  
True Vine – *John 15:1*  
The Way – *John 14:6*  
Word Was Made Flesh – *John 1:14*

When St. Thomas finally placed his hand into the wounded side of the Lord and saw His risen glory, he said in response, "My Lord and my God!" John 20: 28. This is the usual way we approach our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but God's revelation to us in Scripture has a rich diversity of descriptions and names for Him. Each of them helps us better understand Him as the Son of God, Messiah and Lord and Saviour.

We who are communicants of His Body, the Church, can come to a new understanding and appreciation of our Risen Saviour by prayerfully reading and seeing how He is looked upon, approached and understood in Scripture. That is the challenge of this triumphal Resurrection feast!

# LIFE EVERLASTING

“Here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come” (Heb 13:14). All of God’s created plan and all salvation history aim at a final fulfillment. Even now the glory of Christ’s ultimate victory is at work in this world. The kingdom of God is already beginning to be manifest. It ever so surely grows. Yet it must await the final action of God that brings down the curtain on this act of Creation — our worldly existence — and opens onto life everlasting.

Our belief in everlasting life is proclaimed solemnly in the Creed and is practical evidence in the prayer of commendation in our funeral service. Following a sequence of ritual and liturgical action that witnesses the Church speaking for the last time Christ’s words of pardon and absolution to the dying Christian, a proclamation of its hope of salvation. It is a preparation and a message of the Body of Christ to Christ in preparation for the final journey, who, strengthened, hopefully with the Body and Blood of the Saviour so that heaven will readily recognize its own citizen come home.

Having prayed over the Christian physical remains, the Church in her prayers now offers gentle assurance as if to say, “Go forth Christian soul from this world... May you continue to live in peace... may your home be with the Father in Zion... may you see your Redeemer face to face...”

There is a sense in which we have made death entirely natural, although it is alien and foreign to the faithful believer. How

many of us have neatly acculturated ourselves to a “time” to be born, and a time to die” Ecclesiastes 3: 2. Our lives are measured in time. We change, we grow old and death seems appropriate after a full life. “And the dust returns to the earth as it once was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” Ecclesiastes 12: 7. But the very reality of death admits inexorable finality and gives an urgency to our lives. Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting divine grace manifested in Christ

With death comes the particular judgment of which the New Testament speaks primarily in its aspect of the final meeting with Christ in His second coming; it also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith.

Implicit in the defined teaching of the Church is the recognition that the death of an individual marks an end to this period of trial. Then we are no longer

pilgrims, for our journey is over. Christ’s judgment comes upon us. It is the constant teaching of the Church that those who die in grace and in need of no further purification have an immediate foretaste of eternal beatitude promptly after death. It is also the defined understanding of the Church that those who die in sin enter into an unending foretaste punishment which will be solemnly enunciated at the last and final judgment. Thus each person receives eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death in particular judgment.

Because the particular judgment comes before the end of the world, the Church distinguishes between it and the final or last judgment in the Resurrection of all the dead when Christ returns to claim His own and to present His kingdom to the heavenly Father.

What awaits us in the particular judgment? Perhaps the simplest way to answer this question is to reflect that all of us at the moment of our death are everything that we have made ourselves to be by our own free acceptance or free rejection of the divine call and God’s gracious gifts. In this sense we are already fashioning this judgment each day of our lives. By each free choice we make and by each decision we exercise for good or for evil, we mold out a character and fashion our preferences. We become the result of the choices and decisions we make with our free will. God will not intervene to make us something other than what we have chosen to be.

God will not force His friendship on us any more than He will violate our free will to turn us from evil choices. If in this life we choose to live without God, always thinking-first of only ourselves and rejecting the presence and love of God in our lives, are we not already declaring our ultimate preference?

God’s judgment will clearly indicate to each of us what we have made ourselves to be. What will follow in one sense is more a confirmation by Christ that an actual judgment that will perhaps catch us by surprise.

Some die in grace and in the friendship of God but burdened with some imperfections that mar the spiritual life. The Church teaches that our prayers, our alms, our sacrifices for their intention and in their name can cleanse them if it is God’s will. The wholesome tradition of offering prayers for those who have died that they might be cleansed of their sins is affirmed. “Therefore Judas Maccabeus made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin” 2 Maccabees 12: 46. All the Fathers of the Church affirm and recommend this precious practice. However, much better is the practice of the believing Christian to seek cleansing and purification in this life so that our Creator God is glorified.

Far more frightening is the possibility of eternal damnation. Hell is reality. Scripture speaks of this eternal punishment and warns us against the deliberate malice that destroys a person from within and leads to eternal death.