

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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 Yasenachak

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**CONFESSIONS:** SS. Peter & Paul: Saturday 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. and Sunday 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. prior to Divine Liturgy and Daily prior to Divine Liturgy

St. Mary's: Saturday 5:00 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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Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

When Christ says to him, "If you would enter life, keep the commandments," the man expects Him to add immediately, "my commandments." "Which ones?" he asks. He was quite deceived in his expectation. For Christ did not answer him as he expected but simply pointed him to the law.

Christ is the perfection. For the beginning of good is to act justly, He says. Just action then is shown by the law, but goodness is shown by Christ. The law taught us to repay those who wish to harm us, as in "eye for eye, tooth for tooth."

This is not because the law is perfection, for "no one is justified by the law," as it is written, but because the life lived according to law is a kind of introduction to the eternal life, briefly acquainting trainees to the things above. "For the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ."

But Christ taught us to let go such balanced vengeance with a view to the greater good, teaching that "if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well."

St. Cyril of Alexandria

The law is the starting point for social justice.

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Icon of the Prophet Samuel -- August 20th



**12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Tone 3**

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.

**August 20– August 26, 2023**

Vigil of Sunday (at St. Mary)

Saturday 6:00 p.m. + **Bertha Petrishko** req. by Carol & Leonard Hamera  
Sunday 9:00 a.m. **Health and Blessings of the Parishioners** (livestreamed)

Monday 9:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy Today**  
Tuesday 9:00 a.m. +**Jeanette Lohin** req. by Paul Lohin family  
Wednesday 9:00 a.m. **H&B Dimitri & Terri Cremo** req. by Paul Joseph Cremo  
Thursday 9:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy Today**  
Friday 9:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy Today**

Vigil of Sunday (at St. Mary)

Saturday 4:00 p.m. +**Joseph & +Julia Gera** req by Joseph & Cheryl Gera

Next Sunday 9:00 a.m. **H&B Parishioners** (livestreamed)

**Epistle Readers:** 8/6 – Marie Wanchick; 8/13 – Paulette Murphy; 8/15 – Judy Kostura; 8/20 – Gail Burgess; 8/27 – Laura Mitchell; 8/29 – Marie Wanchick; 9/3 – Dolores Kramer.

**Candle Offering:** The candles are burning in front of the Icons of the Theotokos and Christ and the Sacramental Table for:

**Breakfast with Father:**

Our next breakfast will be on September 10, 2023 following the Divine Liturgy. All are welcome to attend.

**Historic Gathering of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America  
You are invited to Participate!**

Metropolitan Archbishop William, Bishop Kurt, and the Council of Hierarchs of the Byzantine Catholic Church invite YOU to attend the "Metropolitan Assembly" at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, New Jersey, on Friday, November 3 through Sunday, November 5, 2023! The theme of the Assembly is to "learn about our past and to prepare for our future!" Guest speakers include Dr. Paul Magosci, noted Author and Historian; Bishop Nil Lushchak of the Eparchy of Mukachevo; Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York; as well as other clergy and lay leaders. The Assembly includes lectures, discussions, fellowship, and a gala dinner with folk music and dancing. The fee includes meals, breaks, presentations, materials, and the gala on Saturday evening. The Assembly cost is \$250 for individuals and \$400 for couples. The Maria Theresa Foundation will underwrite the registration fees of individuals and couples between 18 and 35. For more information, contact the Assembly coordinators, Fr. Ed Cimbala, at 212-677-0516 or Fr. Yuriy Oros at 609-394-5004. The assembly website is <https://www.byzantineassembly2023.org/> and the email is [byzantineassembly2023@gmail.com](mailto:byzantineassembly2023@gmail.com). Hope to see YOU there!

**WHAT MUST I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?** CHRYSOSTOM: And, behold, one came and said to him, "Good Master, what deed must I do to inherit eternal life?" Some criticize this young man as dissembling and wicked, approaching Jesus to put him to the test. I would not hesitate to say that he is avaricious and greedy since Christ also showed him up as such. Yet I would by no means call him a dissembler, because it is not safe to venture on things uncertain and especially in a case of blame. Such is also true because Mark has taken away the suspicion of dissembling. For Mark says, "A man ran up and kneeling before him asked him" and "Jesus looking upon him loved him." The tyranny of money is a powerful thing, as is clear here. Though we are practiced in the other virtues, avarice brings the others to ruin. THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 63.1.



## HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN

As the Creed continues, we make a connecting statement between our faith in Christ as truly God, one in essence with the Father, and as truly man, one in essence with us as to human nature. This is described in terms of descending. We see once again the dependence of the Creed on the insights of the Gospel of St. John the Theologian.

Jesus teaches Nicodemus, "No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has coed down from heaven, the Son of Man" John 3: 13. One might dare say that there is a further connection in this affirmation with the living presence of Jesus among us today. For in the same gospel, Jesus tells us, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the world" John 6: 51.

Jesus is truly the man from heaven, the human being for our salvation, the bread of the Eucharistic mystery, as the priest prays in the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy: "God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, that whoever believes in him might not perish but have eternal life" John 3: 16.

The new creation story at the beginning of St. John's gospel does not use the terminology of descending, but speaks again of the eternal God entering the world and assuming our flesh for our sake, "He came to what is his own...and the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us and we saw his glory" John 11 - 15.

Speaking of Christ coming down or descending, might be more difficult for those who are trained in modern science and its methodology where we know heaven is not "up there." It is said of one of the astronauts of the Communist Soviet Union that he went into space and did not see God there. However, Yuri Gagarin, who just recently died, was said to actually have been a believer and that these words were put into his mouth by the atheistic authorities.

Still, many people today dismiss faith as something belonging to the past, to the immature phase of human history. We know now with certainty there is no "up" or "down" in the universe and that heaven is not "up there." Yet, was true faith ever so simplistic? Even the ancients knew that up and down were mere metaphors and



### A SWEET LESSON IN HUMANITY

YEARS AGO, A 10-YEAR-OLD BOY APPROACHED the counter of a soda shop and climbed on to a stool. "What does an ice cream sundae cost?" he asked the waitress.

"Fifty cents," she answered.

The youngster reached deep in his pockets and pulled out an assortment of change, counting it carefully as the waitress grew impatient. She had "bigger" customers to wait on.

"Well, how much would just *plain* ice cream be?" the boy asked.

The waitress responded with noticeable irritation in her voice, "Thirty-five cents."

Again, the boy slowly counted his money. "May I have some plain ice cream in a dish then, please?" He gave the waitress the correct amount, and she brought him the ice cream.

Later, the waitress returned to clear the boy's dish and when she picked it up, she felt a lump in her throat. There on the counter the boy had left two nickels and five pennies. She realized that he had had enough money for the sundae, but sacrificed it so that he could leave her a tip.

that God is "present everywhere and fills all things," as our hymn to the Holy Spirit proclaims and enunciates.

The up and down of our earthly lives is a natural metaphor. When we die, our bodies are placed into the ground, so it would be natural to see the place of the dead, or even hell as being under the earth. When we gaze into the sky, we see the grandeur and majesty of creation as the poet writes, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God."

As human beings with intelligence and a mind and soul, we can see the depths of the universe, "up" as far as it can go, billions of light years and profess, "I believe in one God, Creator of heaven and earth." It is this very Creator that has come to dwell among us, or as St. John said literally, "tabernacled" or "pitched his tent among us."

We can proclaim in faith that "He came down from heaven" without being scientific simpletons, because the affirmation is not one of physical direction. In fact, it points to an even deeper spiritual reality, to the condescension of God our heavenly Father. This was one of the key insights of the Pauline letters. In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul describes the humiliation of the incarnation of God, lowering himself to become a human being: "Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness, and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross" Philippians 3: 6, 7.

Because He "lowered" himself in humility, an act of supreme love, the Father then "exalted" Philippians 2: 9, him above all creation. This condescension of humiliation is the cornerstone of Christian spirituality. It is the basis of the concept of *kenosis*, the Greek word for "emptying" which the Word of God did for our sake and for our salvation.

This epistle is read on feasts of the Mother of God, who had the central role in the mystery of the Incarnation, as is quoted in the Anaphora of St. Basil the Great. We sing of this in the first verse of the vespers for the feast of the Nativity of our Lord, "Behold, the image of the Father and his unchangeable eternity has taken the form of a servant." The passage from Philippians is continued in the acclamation of the people prior to Holy Communion: "One is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of the Father" Philippians 2: 11.

The Greek word for this mystery is *sugkatabasis*, which means literally, "to go down together with," that is, God comes to dwell among us.

St. Athanasius, fighting for the faith against Arius, and one of the authors of the Creed at the Council of Nicea, uses this word against the heretic: "He is then the only-begotten according to his birth from the Father, the first-born according to his condescension into creation."

Unfortunately, "condescension" has acquired a negative meaning in English of being patronizing and looking down upon others, and is often confused with "condensation." Therefore it is frequently translated as "humiliation" or "humility."

Our proclamation in the Creed is important for our spiritual lives. As St. Paul tells us, in the same passage from Philippians where he speaks of the humility of God, in taking assuming human nature, he says we must "have among" ourselves "the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus" Philippians 2: 5. Here he follows exactly the teaching of the Master who tells his disciples, "...whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all" Mark 10: 43.

The same Lord, then, washed the feet of his disciples at the Mystical Supper, teaching them "If I, therefore the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do" John 13: 14, 15.

Again we see that the Creed is not only a catalog of facts about Christ, but a declaration of living faith that transforms us and inspires and changes the way we live.



## Prayer In The First Degree

**When you pray, go into your room...Matthew 6: 6.**

When we think about prayer, we might think first about praying in public as at worship during the Divine Liturgy. Sometimes, but very infrequently, due to the malaise about reality and truth, prayer is not very often offered at public events.

Our Lord, though teaches us that when we think of prayer, we should think first about private prayer which should characterize our daily living. We should view such prayer as "prayer in the first degree" because it can be the most pure, spontaneous and most effective. Try as we might, there are always elements that can slip into our public prayers and diminish them because we allow distractions to occur. Any prayer expressed in the presence of others tends to be different from what we pray when we are all alone with our Creator God.

It is encouraging to know that private prayer if it is alive and well in our lives leads us to prayer better at worship and in public. It should be the encouragement which leads us to pray always under all circumstances. It is so important that there are no barriers between ourselves and our Creator when we converse privately with him. And our God is always right there with us when we pray. He pays special attention to what we say when He hears us praying all by ourselves, for we are not trying to impress anyone; we simply open our hearts to the Lord.

The place of private prayer is the most beautiful place in the world. We ought to have a prayer corner in our homes with appropriate icons of the Lord and the Birthgiver of God along with a candle to which we can flee and hold the most important conversations in our lives.

May we earnestly cultivate the habit of going off by ourselves away from the interfering tumult of the world, perhaps to our own room if we have not yet erected a prayer corner, closing the door of interference and pray in secret to our heavenly Father that He might respond and reward us openly if it is his will.

Wisdom Of  
The



Byzantine  
Fathers

If you are pure, the Holy Spirit who lives in you will remain unrestricted and pure. He will rejoice and be glad...But when a spirit of anger tries to push itself in as well, the Holy Spirit, who is so tender, straightway feels restricted. The Lord dwells in patience, but the devil dwells in anger. When such spirits dwell in one and the same vessel with the Holy Spirit, that vessel can never contain them all. It overflows as it were. For the tender Spirit is not accustomed to live together with an evil spirit or with harshness. He departs from such a man and seeks to dwell in a place where gentleness, patience and quiet are at home Shepherd of Hermas.

God, who loved the world, gave not an adopted Son, but his own Son, his only-begotten Son. Here is personal interest, true Sonship, sincerity; not creation, or adoption, or pretense. Here is the proof of his love and affection, that He gave his own his only-begotten Son St. Hilary of Poitiers.



## Did You Know That ...

- ...some people are so busy making a living they do not have a life?
- ...God grants liberty only to those who appreciate it and are always ready to guard and defend it?
- ...there is always, always, always something to be thankful for?
- ...the best philosophy is forgive and forget?
- ...without faith nothing is possible; with it nothing is impossible?
- ...prayer is less about changing the world and more about changing ourselves?
- ...if love in our families flows strong and deep it leaves us memories to treasure and keep?
- ...since God is everywhere, we can pay in all the circumstances of our lives, even if just short signs of love?
- ...friends are the best gifts to ourselves?
- ...we can believe only one way: with all our heart?
- ...when you cannot sleep, do not count sheep, talk to the shepherd?
- ...it was a sweet and small baby and born to be king of all?
- ...all things are possible to him who believes?
- ...the sick placed in our care can be abundantly blessed because of our loving care?
- ...a teacher takes a hand, opens a mind and touches the heart?
- ...our beloved departed souls although gone from sight should be in full view of our prayers?
- ...our God does not grade on the curve?



### GOD'S PROMISES

*If you live in me, and my words stay part of you, you may ask what you will and it will be done for you. My Father is being glorified in you bearing much fruit and becoming my disciples John 15: 7.*

*Live according to what you have learned and accepted, what you have heard me say and seen me do. Then will the God of peace be with you Philippians 4: 19.*

*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and faith in me John 14: 1.*

*God, wishing to give the heirs of his promise even clearer evidence that his purpose would not change, guaranteed it by oath, so that by two things that are unchangeable in which he could not lie, we who have taken refuge in him might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope which is placed before us. Like a sure and firm anchor, that hope extends beyond the veil, through which Jesus, our forerunner, has entered on our behalf, being made high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedech Hebrews 6: 17 -19.*

*If any of you is without wisdom, let him ask it from the God who gives generously and ungrudgingly to all, and it will be given him. Yet he must ask in faith, never doubting, for the doubter is like the surf tossed and driven by the wind. A man of this sort, devious and erratic in all that he does, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord James 1: 5 - 8.*

*Bow humbly under God's mighty hand so that in due time he may lift you high. Cast all your cares on him because he cares for you 1 Peter 5: 6, 7.*