

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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Served by: Very Reverend Gregory J. Noga, Pastor

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

**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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Mark J. Mahal- Funeral Director

*“As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.” (Mark 2:19)*

This evening, Forgiveness Vespers begins the Great Fast. Texts from the propers of Vespers include the following:

Entering into the arena of the Holy Fast, let us make every effort to humble our flesh by abstinence; in prayer and with tears let us seek the Lord our Savior, and, that we might turn away from our evil deeds, let us say to Him: we have sinned against You, O Christ our King, save us as You saved the Ninevites of old, and in Your goodness, grant us a share in the kingdom of heaven.

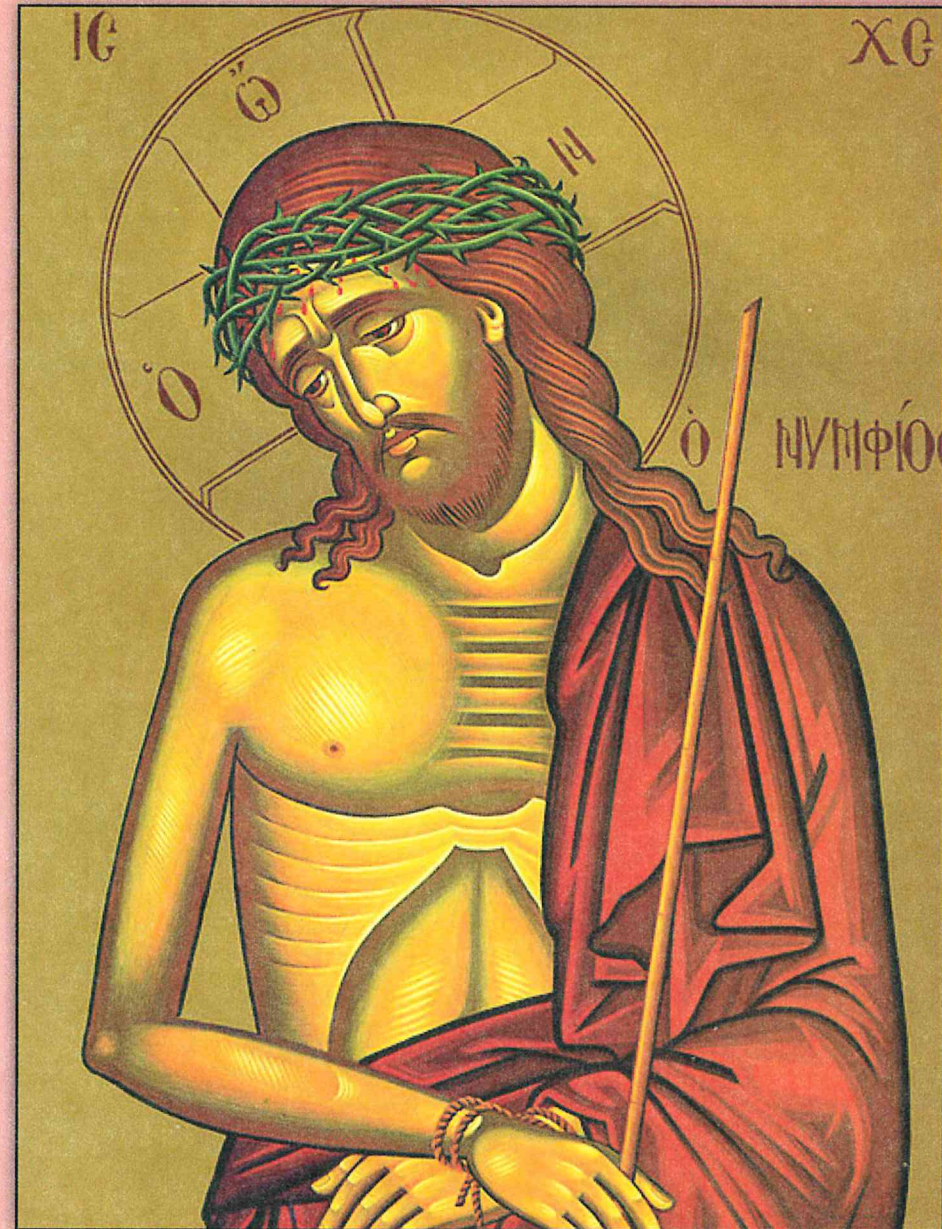
When I see my deeds that deserve such punishment, I am without hope, O Lord; for I have disobeyed Your holy commandments, and I have led a foolish

life. Therefore, I beseech You: purify me in the waters of repentance by fasting and prayer, O Savior, full of goodness; do not reject me, O Benefactor of the Universe.

Let us begin the time of this bright fast, giving ourselves over to spiritual struggle. Let us sanctify our soul and purify our flesh. Let us not fast only from food; let us also abstain from every passion and cultivate spiritual virtues. And let us faithfully preserve in this, so that we may be worthy to see the holy passion of Christ our God and the joy of His holy Resurrection.

*Text from the Lenten Triodion,  
Sisters of Saint Basil, Uniontown, PA.*

## SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE



*Icon of Christ the Bridegroom*

**Cheese Fare Sunday**  
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.

**February 15 – February 21, AD2026**

<b>Vigil of Sunday</b>		
<b>Saturday</b>	4:00 p.m.	<b>Private Intention*</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	9:00 a.m.	<b>Health and Blessings of the Parishioners*</b>
	<b>6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Lenten Vespers for the beginning of the Great Fast</b>
<b>Monday</b>	6:00 p.m.	<b>Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts*</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	9:00 a.m.	<b>No Divine Service Today*</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	6:00 p.m.	<b>Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts*</b>
		<b>Special Intention req. by Marie Wanchick*</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	9:00 a.m.	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Lenten Hour*</b>
<b>Friday</b>	4:00 p.m.	<b>Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts*</b>
<b>Saturday Vigil</b>		
	4:00 p.m.	<b>Fr. Francis Gera req. by the Estate*</b>

\*St. Mary  
\*SS Peter & Paul

**Epistle Readers:**; 2/1 – Ellen Sinkovich; 2/2 – Dolores Kramer; 2/8 – Laura Mitchell; 2/15 – Jennifer Keer; 2/22 – Paulette Murphy; 3/1 – Gail Burgess.

**Breakfast with Father** today, February 15 following the Divine Liturgy. Two things will occur: 1) we will follow the more Western tradition and have a full breakfast menu, and 2) the instruction will include our liturgical practices which include all the penitential periods and their corresponding monastic roots.

**CHEESEFARE SUNDAY**  
*Jerome Biblical Commentary*

**Fasting (6:16-18).** Fasting is a common religious practice and can be both public and private. The sermon presupposes its legitimacy. In Mark 2:18-20 (= Matt 9:14-15) the disciples are told not to fast in Jesus' lifetime, but its subsequent legitimacy is affirmed. Jews do not have a season of fasting like Lent but have a few days of communal fasting, esp. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and the 9<sup>th</sup> of Ab. According to Did. 8:1 Jews kept private fasts on Mondays and Thursdays, whereas Christians chose Wednesdays and Fridays (the latter in memory of Jesus' suffering). Fasting was understood as humbling oneself before God (Isa 58:3-9), as strengthening prayer (Tob 12:8; 2 Chr 20:3), as related to almsgiving ("The merit of a fast is in proportion to the charity dispensed," b. Ber. 6b), as an expression of mourning (Matt 9:14-15). 16. cover their faces: There is a wordplay in Greek between the words aphanizousin, "cover:" and phanosin, "be seen:" 17. wash your face: This verse is chiasmatically constructed and seems to contradict m. Yoma 8:1, which says that you should not wash or anoint yourself on the Day of Atonement. 18. not be seen: The details are not important so long as the essential point is held, that a fast is really directed toward God, not toward human beings. It requires faith (see Moore, Judaism 2. 55-69, 257-66; TDNT 4. 924-35). 42 (a) TREASURE IN HEAVEN (6:19-21). A Q saying considerably reworked from the form preserved in Luke 12:33-34. Formally the unit consists of a negative and a positive command, followed by a proverb that justifies the commands. The whole is chiasmatically arranged in Matt. 19. treasure: A Matthean interest; cf. 13:44. In vv 19-20 the contrast is between corruptible and incorruptible treasures. This teaching should not be overly spiritualized in a Platonic, exclusively otherworldly, fashion. It is better to understand the text as referring to treasures that are already experienced in this life but continue to be valuable for eternity. Cf. m. Pe) a 1: 1: "These are things whose fruit one enjoys in this world, while the capital is laid up for one in the world to come: honoring father and mother, deeds of loving-kindness, making peace between a man and his fellow; and the study of the law leads to them all." Cf. Sir 20:30 and 41:14.

# WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

*O Guide to Wisdom, O Giver of understanding, O Instructor of the ignorant, and Helper of the poor: strengthen and enlighten my heart, O Master, Give the word to me, O Word of the Father, that I may not refrain from crying out to You: "O Merciful One, have mercy on me, a fallen one!"* Troparion, Cheesfare Sunday.

*Greed made us deserve our first nakedness; the bitterness of the fruit has brought disgrace, and we have become estranged from God. Let us now turn back in repentance; let us cleanse our senses, and may the Fast be our food. Let us strengthen our hearts with the hope of grace and not in the passing provisions of this life. For our food shall be the Lamb of God on the night of the glorious Resurrection. He is the Lamb Who offers Himself as a Victim for us, at the Mystical Supper in which the disciples take part, the Lamb Who dispels the darkness of the night, by the brightness of His holy Resurrection* Vesper hymn, Cheesefare Sunday.

*The doors of divine repentance open before us; let us enter with joy and purify our bodies. Let us fast from food as well as from our sinful desires, conducting ourselves as servants of Christ, Who calls the world to the kingdom of heaven. Let us offer this tithe of the whole year to the King of the universe, so that with love, we may contemplate His holy Resurrection* Matins hymn, First day of the Great Fast.

*O friends of God, behold the gate of repentance is beginning to open; come, let us hasten to pass through it before Christ closes it in our unworthiness. Behold the week of pruning has arrived, the announcement of Spring! It prepares us for the holy Fast by purifying our souls and bodies* Matins Hymn, First day of the Great Fast.

*Daniel the Prophet, a man greatly beloved, having seen the power of God, cried out: God is seated in judgment, and the books are opened. O my soul, if you fast, do not deceive your neighbor. If you abstain from food, do not judge others, lest you go to be burned like wax in a fire. But may Christ lead you freely to His heavenly kingdom* Vesper Hymn, Cheesefare Sunday.

## What Jesus Did NOT Do

(Jesus) when he was insulted, *didn't* revile in return" 1 Peter 2: 23.

Once a skeptic said that if Jesus really was the Son of God, His sufferings must have been easier to bear. This comment causes us to re-examine the gospel accounts. While reviewing the incredible things Jesus did and said to accomplish our great salvation, we note a goodly number of things Jesus *didn't* do that are equally vital to our salvation.

Jesus *didn't* demand His own will. "Still, let your will be done, not mine" Matthew 26: 39. He *didn't* call down legions of angels to rescue Him. "Do you not suppose I can call on my Father to provide at a moment's notice more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26: 53. He *didn't* defend Himself or threaten the accusers. "Yet when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no reply...He did not answer him on a single count, much to the procurator's surprise" Matthew 27: 12, 14. He *didn't* save Himself. "The chief priests and the scribes also joined in and jeered: 'He saved others, but he cannot save himself'" Mark 15: 31. He *didn't* come down from the cross. "Let the 'Messiah,' the 'king of Israel' come down from the cross here and now so that we can see it and believe in him" Mark 15: 32. He *didn't* stop loving or saving sinners. "I assure you, this day you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23: 43.

That fact that our Lord *could* have done these things intensified His agony and increased the temptation to use His power for His own advantage. But He *didn't*. Instead, He used His power for our benefit! "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and favor and to find help in time of need" Hebrews 4: 15, 16.

Our Lord suffered temptation just as we all do – except that He *didn't* sin. So He knows and understands and sympathizes with our weaknesses and shortcomings. Therefore, we can approach Him freely to obtain His help in time of need.

Whatever our need, the Lord wants us to come and make full use of this privilege of approach and subsequent affirmation. Though Christ was tempted in all ways, He *didn't* sin in word, deed or thought. Now we can approach Him for strengthening grace in time of need. Alleluia!

## Springtime Of The Soul

The season of the Great Fast is a time in our lives for new life to appear. It is a time for sowing so that one day, the Day of Lord, there will be a worthwhile harvest. The Great Fast is just long enough to prepare for the Paschal Event, the mystery that changed history and each human life. It is a worthwhile time investing ourselves in self-perfection because it is a time for instruction and learning. Faith comes by hearing which certainly includes worship, reading, study, and Godly-conversation. Faith needs to know, to ask questions, to reflect on the answers with seriousness.

In the early ages of the Church, the Great Fast was a time of preparation for baptism on the day of Resurrection. If we are already baptized, it is a time to think what that covenant should mean to us. Covenant is promise. Perhaps we were too young to promise at our baptism, so our sponsors or God parents made promises for us. Should we look into that covenant and decide to renew it for ourselves? The liturgical practice of the Church provides a baptismal review and renewal on the Vigil of the Resurrection. We can make the Great Fast a time of preparation for that renewal.

The Great Fast is a time for a second baptism, the painful baptism of penance. It is the time for interior purification. In the early centuries sinners were required to do public penance during this sacred season. In a solemn penitential service they received the mourner's garb on the first day and thereupon were excluded from community services until Holy and Great Thursday. Let us consider ourselves true penitents; let us submerge ourselves in God's grace so that purification streams through us during the Great Fast.

The Great Fast is a time for listening. The Word of God is given to us in abundance. The readings from Sacred Scripture speak of the great themes of faith, conversion, and turning back to a God Who loves us and is waiting for us. We must never forget that the main task of the liturgy is not to impart instruction as much as to bestow divine life. Certainly the services of the Great Fast give us advice on spiritual renewal, but the purpose of the readings is less instructional than a demonstration of the power of transforming grace. The readings, chosen from both the Old and New Testaments, typify the action of grace and make its possibility proximate. They are regarded as parables on the grace of redemption coming to the communicants of the Church from Christ's death on the Cross.

The Great Fast, then, is the time of salvation *par excellence* not only for penitents but for the faithful as well. Through regular participation in the worship of the Holy Trinity at the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and feast days, by our participation in the grace of the Pre Sanctified Liturgies, divine life within them should be enriched and perfected. By Great and

Holy Thursday, faithful believers should be free from all sin and cleansed from guilt so as to appear in full maturity and perfection in grace on Great and Holy Saturday, fully prepared, then, to participate in and celebrate the solemnity of Christ's Resurrection. And the soul should then be able to recognize that having God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit living within him, that he constantly carries heaven around within.

The sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation was instituted by Christ and restores the soul which has forfeited God's friendship and sonship by investing it again with grace, making it holy. The soul thus once more possesses God, its First Beginning and Last End. Or, if the soul is free from deadly sin, penance increases its grace, increases its measure of the possession of God.

If the person who avails himself frequently and realistically of the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation does not advance in virtue, what is the reason? If we looked at the matter from God's perspective, we would see we have no idea of the malice of sin, even seemingly little sins. If we only had clear knowledge of the evil of sin which the saints were possessed of, we would rather suffer untold tortures than be guilty of even the least imperfection. The truth is we seek self, but true saints seek God.

What then is necessary? Simply to will an efficacious sorrow, a determined regret and a firm purpose of amendment. It is impossible for a soul who makes a constant and proper use of the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation not to advance in perfection which is conforming oneself to the image of Christ. Initially what is required is to determinedly will it and then put it into practice. Willing it cannot rely simply on its own strength; it can effectively act only through the strengthening power of God's grace, poured out in great abundance on those who seek it in this sacramental Mystery.

