

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: SS. Peter & Paul: Sunday One half hour prior to Divine Liturgy and Daily prior to Divine Liturgy

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 (544-2074)

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Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

The Return of the Prodigal Son

“He arose and went to his father.” He arose from the wreckage of his conscience and body alike. He arose from the depths of hell and touched the heights of heaven. Before the heavenly Father, a child rises higher because of pardon than he fell low because of guilt.

“He arose and went to his father.” He went not by the motion of his feet but by the progress of his thought. Being afar off he had no need of an earthly journey, because he had found short cuts along the way of salvation. He who seeks the divine Father by faith soon finds Him present to himself, and has no need to seek Him by traversing roads.

“He arose and went to his father. But when he was yet a long way off.” How is he who is coming a long way off? Because he has not yet arrived. He who is coming is coming to do pen-

ance, but he has not yet arrived at grace. He is coming to his Father's house but he has not yet reached the glory of his former condition, appearance, and honor.

“But when he was yet a long way off, his father saw him.” That Father saw, he “who dwells on high; and looks down on the low things,” “and the high he knows afar off.” “His father saw him.” The father saw him, in such a way that the son could also behold his father. The father's countenance illumined the face of the approaching son in such a way that all the dark aspect was dispelled which his guilt had previously cast about it.

St. Peter Chrysologus

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



Icon of the Prodigal Son

Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Tone 6

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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February 16– February 22, AD2025

Vigil of Sunday

Saturday	4:00 p.m.	+Joseph Leshko req. by Mary Ann Lubinsky*
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Health and Blessing of the Parishioners* (Livestream)
Monday	9:00 a.m.	No Divine Liturgy Today*
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	Special Intention req. by Marie Wanchick*
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	+Michael Sinko req. by MM John Ozinak*
Thursday	9:00 a.m.	+Andrew & +Margaret Gerchak req. by Estate *
Friday	9:00 a.m.	Private Intention*
Saturday	9:00 a.m.	+All Souls w/Diptyks

Vigil Liturgy

Saturday	4:00 p.m.	+Catherine Bulino req. by Theresa Panchison*
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*St. Mary
*SS Peter & Paul

Epistle Readers: 2/2 - Paulette Murphy; 2/9 – Jennifer Keer; 2/16 – Ellen Sinkovich; 2/23 – Dolores Kramer; 3/2 – Laura Mitchell.

Pastoral Note: The Annual Wedding Jubilarian Celebration has been scheduled for Sunday, October 26. This advanced notice is given for you to put on your calendar.

THE PRODIGAL SON PARABLE IN "F" ☺

Feeling footloose and frisky, a feather-brained fellow forced his fond father to fork over the family finances. He flew far to foreign fields and frittered his fortune feasting fabulously with faithless friends. Finally facing famine and fleeced by his fellows in folly, he found himself a feed-flinger in a filthy farmyard. Fairly famished he feign would have filled his frame with the foraged foods of the fodder fragments left by the filthy farmyard creatures. 'Fooley', he said, 'My father's flunkies fare far fancier,' the frazzled fugitive found feverishly, frankly facing facts. Frustrated by failure and filled with foreboding he forthwith fled to his family. Falling at his father's feet, he floundered forlornly. 'Father, I have flunked and fruitlessly forfeited family favor.'

But the faithful father, forestalling further flinching frantically flagged the flunkies. 'Fetch forth the finest fatling and fix a feast.' But the fugitive's fault-finding frater frowned on the fickle forgiveness of the former folderol. His fury flashed.

But fussing was futile, for the far-sighted father figured, such filial fidelity is fine, but what forbids fervent festivity? The fugitive is found! "Unfurl the flags, with fanfares flaring! Let fun and frolic freely flow!" "Former failure is forgotten, folly is forsaken! And forgiveness forms the foundation for future fortitude."

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS: "He divided his means between them." The son is as impatient as the father was kind. He is weary of his father's own life. Since he cannot shorten his father's life, he works to get possession of his property. He was not content to possess his father's wealth in company with his father, and he deserved to lose the privileges of a son.

Let us make some inquiries. What reason brought the son to such actions? What bold prospect raised his spirits to make so startling a re-request? What reason did he have? Clearly the Father in heaven cannot be bounded by any limit, or shut in by any time, or destroyed by any power of death. The son could not await his father's death to get his wealth, so he conceived the desire to get his pleasure from the generosity of his father while he was still alive. The father's bounty proved that the insult lay in his request.

Did You Know That ...

...worship is not being made to feel good, but to glorify and exalt our Creator God?

...it is simple to build a happy life if God is the purpose for your existence?

...the believer always looks at what is left, never at what has been lost?

...there is joy to be found in nature, and not only on sunny days?

...there are two kinds of gratitude; the sudden kind we feel for what we take, and the larger kind we feel for what we give?

...the highest appreciation is not to utter words of thanksgiving, but to live by them?

...interacting with fellow believers at the Divine Liturgy not only gives you new perspectives, but makes you part of the Body of Christ?

...it is better to reflect on your present blessings of which every man has many, not on your past misfortunes of which all men have some?

...it is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones after all?

...he who is not thankful for little things, is not thankful for greater ones?

...when you look upon an icon, imagine what it would be like to know the person depicted?

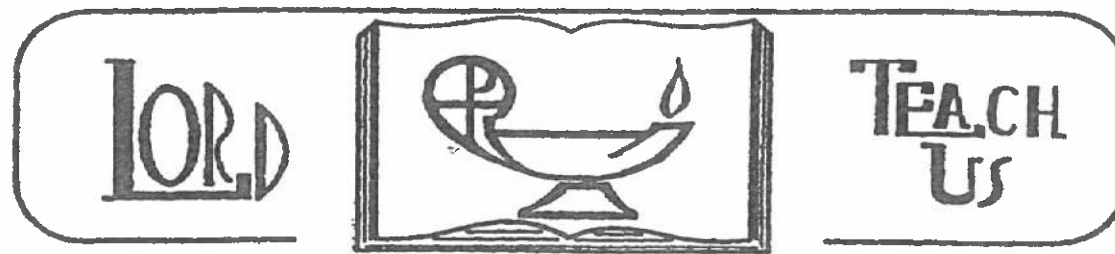
...when you think of all the people you know, who are near and dear to you, imagine how many others in the parish can become devoted friends in Christ?

...take some time to learn what it is that comforts your soul and then lean on it to make yourself happy and fulfilled?

...you will not be happy with more until you are happy with what you already have?

...a hug can heal even the deepest wound?

...listening is far more important than talking?



God's Purpose

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven
Matthew 5: 3 – 12.

The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever
John 2: 17.

Is it not to give your bread to those in need, and not let the poor who have no resting place come into your house, to put a robe on the unclothed one when you see him, and not to keep your eyes shut for fear of seeing his flesh? Then will light be shining on you like the morning, and your wounds will quickly be well; and your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will come after you. Then at the sound of your voice, the Lord will give you an answer; at your cry he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away from among you the yoke, the putting out of the finger of shame, and the evil word; and if you give your bread to those in need of it, so that the troubled one may have his desire, then you will have light in the dark, and you night will be as the full light of the sun. And the Lord will be your guide at all times; in dry places he will give you water in full measure, and will make strong your bones and you will be like a watered garden and like an ever-flowing spring
Isaiah 58: 7 – 11.

A Gentle God

...by the Spirit's power we cry to God, "Father, my Father!"
Romans 8: 15.

What kind of image do you have of our heavenly Father when you pray?

We cannot forget our God is more attentive than the
most loving parents because

He is entirely selfless and devotes all his attention to you.

God is better than the most understanding friend because

He does not judge and He does not have his own problems
to worry about or color his opinion.

He desires only our salvation and our good.

God is more gentle than the most devoted grandparent with
far greater
insight
and wisdom
and patience.

We often struggle in our relationships
looking for the perfect person
to talk to and share our lives;
yet He is with us all the time and
never leaves our side.

We only need to turn to him and acknowledge his presence.
He can and will be all we ever need!

**Lord, God, Almighty, Thank You for being my constant companion
and let me not forget to turn to you always during the day and night!**



LITURGY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Virtually all students of the Bible realize there was liturgical worship in Israel. Immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17), instructions for building the altar were set forth (Ex 20:24-26). Then comes instruction concerning keeping the Sabbath (Ex 23:10-13), the annual feasts (Ex 23:14-19), and the various offerings and furnishings in the sanctuary (Ex 25:1-40). Following this, chapters 26-30 deal with such matters as the design of the tabernacle, the altar, and the outer court, the priests' vestments and their consecration, and instructions for daily offerings.

Liturgical worship is also found in heaven, which is to be expected, since God instructed Moses to make the earthly place of worship as a "copy and shadow of the heavenly things" (Heb 8:5; see Ex 25:40). Heavenly worship is revealed in such passages as Isaiah 6:1-8, where we see the prophet caught up to heaven for the liturgy, and Revelation 4, which records the apostle John's vision of heaven's liturgy.

The key to comprehending liturgy in the New Testament is to understand the work of the High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, who inaugurates the new covenant. Christ is "a priest forever" (Heb 7:17, 21). It is unthinkable that He would be a priest but not serve liturgically: "forever" suggests He serves continually, without ceasing, in the heavenly tabernacle. Further, He is called not only a priest but a liturgist: "a Minister [Gr. *leitourgos*, lit., "liturgist") of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected" (Heb 8:2). Christian worship on earth, to be fully Christian, must mirror the worship of Christ in heaven.

Moreover, Christ is "Mediator of a better covenant" (Heb 8:6). What is that covenant? In the words of the Lord, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (1Co 11:25). Just as the blood of bulls and goats in the old covenant prefigured Christ's sacrifice to come, so the eucharistic feast brings to us the fullness of His new covenant offering, completed at the Cross and fulfilled in His Resurrection. This once-for-all offering of Himself (Heb 7:27) which He as High Priest presents at the heavenly altar is an offering in which we participate through the Divine Liturgy in the Church. This is the worship of the New Testament Church!

Given this biblical background, a number of New Testament passages take on new meaning.

1 *Acts 13:2*: "As they ministered to the Lord [lit., "as they were in the liturgy of the Lord"] and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul.'" We learn that (a) these two apostles were called by God during worship, and (b) the Holy Spirit speaks in a liturgical setting.

2 *Acts 20:7*: "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them." Communion was held each Sunday.

3 *Romans 16:16*: "Greet one another with a holy kiss." A kiss of greeting was common in this ancient culture. The "holy kiss," however, was an element of the Christian liturgy that signified the people of God were reconciled to one another, so that they might receive the Body and Blood of Christ in peace.

4 *Ephesians 5:14*: "Awake, you who sleep, / Arise from the dead, / And Christ will give you light." This is an ancient baptismal hymn, already in use by the time Ephesians was written. Other examples of creeds and hymns of New Testament times are seen in 1 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

5 *Hebrews 13:10*: "We have an altar" reveals the continuation of the altar in New Testament worship.

6 *Revelation 1:10*: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." Many scholars believe John saw his vision of Christ during the Sunday liturgy, as the Lord appeared to him "in the midst of the seven lampstands" (Rev 1:13). Lampstands would be found in the Christian sanctuary just as they were in the Hebrew temple.