

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

Website: [www.sspeterandpaulminersville.com](http://www.sspeterandpaulminersville.com)

Email: [tvrgjn@outlook.com](mailto:tvrgjn@outlook.com)

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)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Bulletins are sponsored by*

**Mahal-Ritzel Funeral Home**

Minersville, PA 544-5111

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.

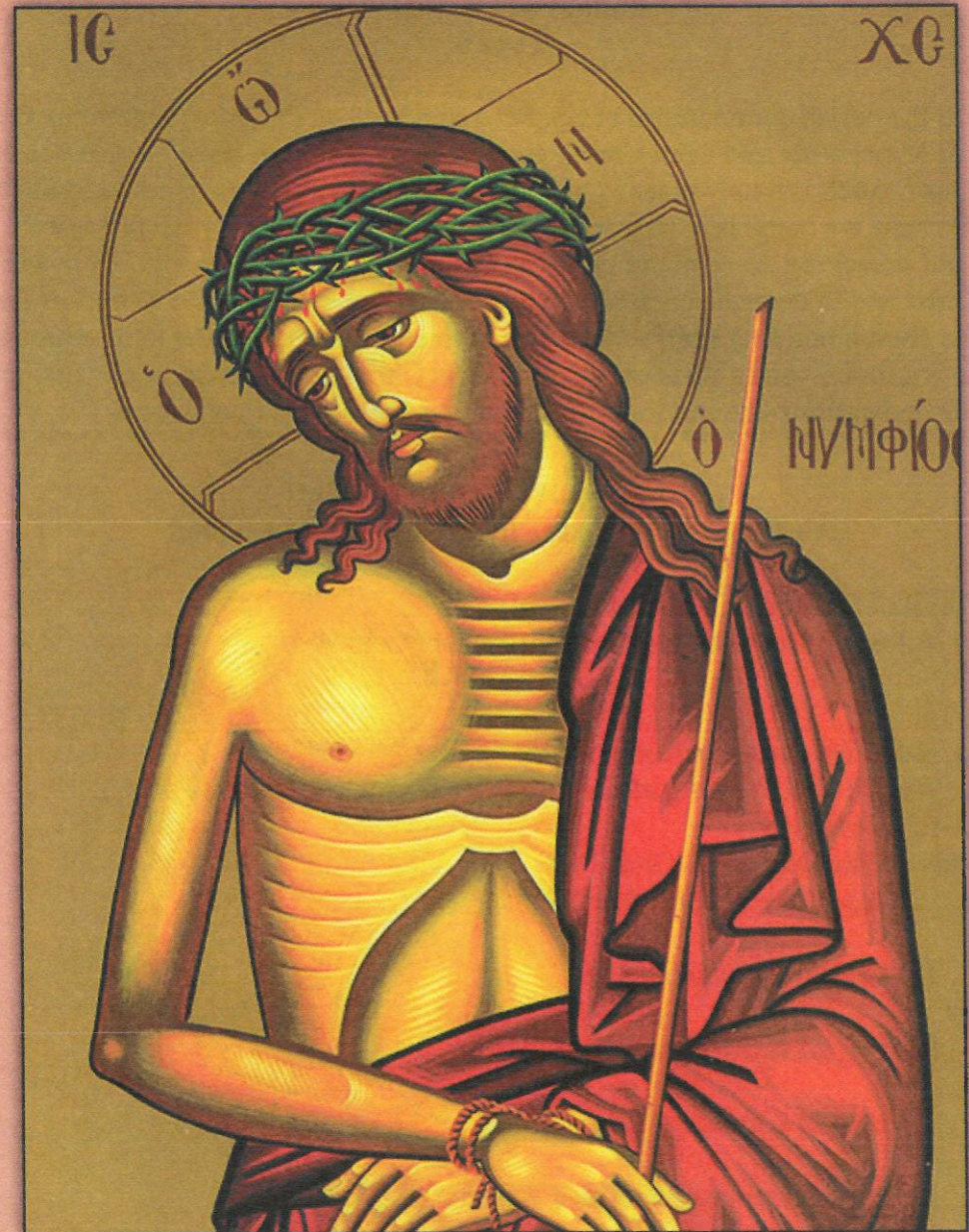
When I see my deeds that deserve such punishment, I am without hope, O Lord; for I have disobeyed Your holy commandments, and I have led a foolish

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*

**Sunday of Cheesefare  
Tone 6**

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.

.....

**February 27 – March 5, 2022  
All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted**

Saturday Vigil of Sunday (at SS Peter & Paul)  
4:00 p.m. + **Joseph Gerchak** req. by MM William Conshue

Sunday  
8:00 a.m. **H&B Fr. Gregory** from Parishioners (at St. Mary)  
10:00 a.m. **Health and Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)  
Livestreamed

Pure Monday – First Day of the Great Fast  
6:00 p.m. Liturgy of the pre-Sanctified Gifts

Tuesday  
8:00 a.m. **1<sup>st</sup>. Lenten Canonical Hour**

Wednesday  
6:00 p.m. **Liturgy of the pre-Sanctified Gifts**

Thursday  
8:00 a.m. **3<sup>rd</sup> Lenten Canonical Hour**

Friday  
12 Noon. **Liturgy of the pre-Sanctified Gifts** (at St. Mary)

Saturday  
4:00 p.m. Vigil of Sunday (at SS Peter & Paul)  
+**Nicholas Kostishak** req. by MM Daniel Carestia

**Epistle Readers:** 3/5 – Laura Mitchell; 3/6 – Gail Burgess; 3/12 a.m. – Ellen Sinkovich; 3/12 p.m. – Marie Wanchick; 3/13 – Jennifer Keer; 3/19 a.m. – Laura Mitchell; 3/19 p.m. – Laura Mitchell; 3/20 – Anna Keer; 3/25 – Ellen Sinkovich; 3/26 – Gail Burgess; 3/27 – Marie Wanchick; 4/2 – Gail Burgess; 4/3 – Marie Wanchick..

**Candle** in front of the Mother of God is offered for Peace in the World..Anonymous donor.

\*\*\*\*\*

Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup> is the First Day of Lent in our Byzantine Catholic Church. It is a Day of Strict Fast (no meat, eggs or dairy products are permitted) for all individuals who received Holy Communion.

**To usher in the Great Fast**, today, Sunday, February 27, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, there is a **Social** in the Dining Hall.

On the Sundays of the Holy Season of the Great Fast (Lent) Vespers will be celebrated at 5:30 p.m. followed by a Strict Lenten meal and enrichment program. The topic of discussion is the Synod on Synodality as proclaimed by Pope Francis. There are questions for discussion which we will discuss.

In this exercise Pope Francis is asking all the Faithful to tell your pastor how or what you think is important for him, the bishops and priests to know relative to your knowledge and understanding of the Faith and how you hear the Holy Spirit speaking to you.

While this sounds astounding to you, the Holy Spirit speaks to those who pray to Him for guidance and understanding of Sacred Scripture and the Magisterial teachings that govern our lives in Christ.

Included in today's bulletin is a letter from our bishop and the questionnaire to assist in this endeavor. Please give serious thought to this request of the Holy Father Pope Francis, then join together for Vespers, Lenten meal and the discussion on the Sundays of the Great Fast beginning at 5:30 p.m.

fasting. As earlier the catechumens prepared for baptism, so now all Christians earnestly strive to regain their baptismal innocence, to deepen their love of God and their relationship with Him. The sacred days are drawing near: "Now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation" 2 Corinthians 6: 2.

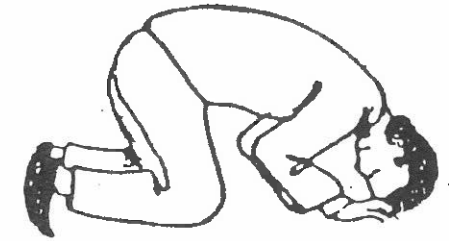
### THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

How then, do we prepare for the coming of the Holy Resurrection? We naturally think first to fasting, the linking of the food we eat and abstaining from meat and dairy products. In the early Church the ideal was to abstain from all meat and dairy products

## The Great Fast and Pascha is that time of year when the reality of Christ and our faith and hope in Him particularly confronts us.

during the entire length of the Great Fast. While many Byzantine Catholics do in fact continue to follow this practice, for many such a rigorous fast is difficult in this time and place. Hence, our bishops have mitigated the rigors of the spiritual season. We should, nevertheless, at least take the first of day of the Great Fast and especially the last day of Passion Week, Great Friday seriously by abstaining from such foods as the Church prescribes. Moreover, every Wednesday and Friday of the sacred season should be so observed. The Church encourages us to voluntarily impose upon ourselves, with the hope of intensifying our own spiritual treasure, the same rigor as the early Church assumed throughout the whole period of the Great Fast. We fast especially on Wednesdays because it is the day of the betrayal of the Lord and we wish to fortify our soul against such thinking and action in our own lives. We fast on Fridays because it is the day of our Lord's

### WHY DO WE MAKE PROSTRATIONS?



It is the whole man, body and soul who praises God or falls to sin. We cannot separate spirit from the body. Since it is the whole person who falls away from God, the whole person is to be restored to union with Him. The body is holy, so much so that our God has become flesh in Jesus Christ and we must recognize and maintain that holiness and sanctity. Salvation and repentance are not contempt for the body, but restoration if man is to reach his real purpose, to express the life of the Holy Spirit within the soul. If the body is the temple of the priceless soul, it too must be brought in subjection to the virtue of our God. It must be subjected to the Godly will of the soul and strengthened so it does not lend itself to being an instrument of sin and separation from God. The effort of the Great Fast is a fight for the body, not against it. Therefore, the entire and whole person repents, body and soul. Prostrations are the body-language of adoration, humility, submission and obedience.

## GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST

### POSITIVE VERSES

God has created me to do Him some definite service;  
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.  
I have my mission...I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.  
He has not created me for naught. I shall do good. I shall do His work.  
I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it--  
If I do but keep His commandments.  
Therefore, I will trust Him.  
Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.  
If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;  
If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.  
He does nothing in vain, He knows what He is about.

# NOAH

While all the rest of the world laughed, ridiculed, and played, Noah with single mindedness, hammered away on his ark with his sons. Because a promise was made to him.

## ALONE, NOAH LISTENED

As a result, the Blessed Apostle Peter tells us, eight people were saved from the flood, along with all the earth's plant and animal life. But all that was just a prelude: Noah is a mystical giant of the Old Covenant, not for the boat that he built, but for the promise God made to him and through him.

## ALONE, NOAH HEARD OUR GOD

It is not that a prelude is unimportant, but it proved that Noah heard and believed our Heavenly Father. Because of his faith, God made him the gift of His promise and His friendship, and gave to Noah, as He had given to Adam, the renewed good green earth as a pledge of His eternal love.

## ALONE, NOAH SHAPED THE ARK

This period of the Great Fast is a prelude too, to the overwhelming flood waters of the Resurrection. We begin here and now to hammer away at the sinfulness in our lives, responding anew to the call of our God, separating ourselves from the whole world of sin.

## BUT NOT ALONE WAS NOAH SAVED

Just like our Saviour in the desert wilderness, we have been left high and dry. The waters of St. John the Baptist's baptism have dried up as he languishes in prison. But Jesus hears in the distance the hammering of Great Friday. The ark of the covenant promise is a building. Let us go with Him through the flood of pain and suffering into the new kingdom He calls us to by the waters of baptism. Let us persevere to the very end in fasting and prayer and penance along with repentance. Let us make ourselves ready in body and soul to partake of the glory of His glorious Resurrection. Let us align ourselves with the blessed on this coming feast. Let us not be found wanting in virtue and holiness.

# EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GREAT FAST

For true believers, the Great Fast is a period of prayer and fasting which prepares for the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord. Our spiritual preparation must be thorough and intensive, for the Resurrection of Christ is the very source of our salvation and the foundation of the entire life of Christ's Church. "If Christ is not risen," writes St. Paul, "then our faith is in vain" 1 Corinthians 15: 17.

## FROM PAST TO PRESENT

The history and liturgical evolution of the season of the Great Fast is a complex and long story. From the earliest days of the existence of the Church, it was customary to observe a short period of fasting before the annual celebration of the Christian Passover. By the end of the fourth century, the Great Fast evolved into a period of final preparation for the catechumens, newly converted Christians, who would be baptized during the Resurrection Liturgy. During this fast season, the catechumens were given intensive instruction by the bishop or his designate in the Scripture, the life and teaching of Christ, and the doctrines of the Church. Thus instructed and fortified by prayer and fasting, on the night of the Resurrection, they were baptized, "...buried and raised to newness of life in Christ" Romans 6: 4, and they received the Holy Eucharist for the first time. The new Christians then went into the world to live in the holiness and innocence of their baptism, the new life they had acquired in Jesus Christ. They were inspired by the glory of Christ's Resurrection and wanted to be worthy of it. "For my eyes have witnessed your salvation, displayed for all people to see..." Luke 2: 30.

As Christianity replaced paganism as the dominant and finally the exclusive religious faith of the Roman Empire, the formal institution of the catechumenate declined and faded as the number of adult converts decreased and most Christians were baptized during infancy.

The period of the Great Fast remained well established in the tradition of the Church. The Great Fast gradually took on the characteristics of a spiritual renewal for the entire Church. In a sermon for the time, St. Ambrose of Milan said that even though Christians should abstain at all times from evil words and deeds, these forty days are set apart so that by penance we may wipe out the sins of the whole year. The Great Fast, therefore, constitutes a period of intensive purification from sin through self-denial, prayer and

Lord Jesus Christ and make no provisions for the desires of the flesh" Romans 13: 11, 12, 14.

### A BRIGHT OPPORTUNITY

The Great Fast is far more than a set of rules and negative prescriptions. It is an opportunity to grow in faith, to permit ourselves to be enveloped by the love of God and be transformed thereby into other Christs. It is a bright and opportune occasion for us to live the truly Christian life that ought to characterize our entire year.

+++ We can read the Scripture, especially the gospels everyday+++

+++We can be faithful in our morning and evening prayers+++

+++We can participate in the grace of the special services+++

+++We can benefit from the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts each week+++

+++We can make certain we worship every Sunday for the duration of the Great Fast+++

+++We can give more attention to worthily receiving the sacramental Mysteries+++

+++We should be more generous with our alms to the Church and the needy+++

Reading God's Word and partaking of the Holy Eucharist should be our real spiritual strength and food, not only during the Great Fast, but throughout our entire life time. "Taste and see how good the Lord is" which we sing in the Communion Hymn, calls upon us to verify for ourselves the promise of the Lord. The Great Fast provides us with an opportunity for positive spiritual growth in the Christian life: "Now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation" 2 Corinthians 6: 2. But if our renewal ceases after the Resurrection, we will have misunderstood the whole purpose of this season and of the Christian way of life. Fortified with prayer and repentance, we participate in a most intimate way in the Paschal Mystery – death and Resurrection of Christ – and the radiant joy of Passover becomes a vital part of our lives. The Great Fast and Passover is that time of year when the reality of Christ and our faith and hope in Him particularly confronts us. The preparation of the Great Fast leads to the Resurrection of Christ and Resurrection in Him. The brilliant splendor of Passover, gives us while on our earthly pilgrimage a foretaste of our life in the kingdom, the heavenly banquet where we will share in the happiness and peace and beauty of an eternity with our God. "Now have salvation and power come, the sign of our God and the authority of his anointed one" Revelation 12: 10.

## THE JOURNEY TO PASCHA

O Lord and Master of my life, keep from me the spirit of indifference and discouragement, lust of power and idle chatter.

Prostration

Instead, grant to me, Your servant, the spirit of wholeness of being, humility, patience and love.

Prostration

O Lord and King, grant to me the grace to be aware of my sins and not to judge my brother, for You are blessed now and ever and forever. Amen.

Prostration

*This brief check list of spiritual diseases which shape our life and interfere with our transformation as living icons of Christ can be a rich source of conversion. It is a cry from the bottom of the heart and depth of our soul, for our God alone in Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit, can replace and cure the disease with grace-filled repentance.*

### INDIFFERENCE?

This is that strange spiritual laziness and passiveness that pulls us down, that continually convinces us that no change is possible, and therefore, that no change is desirable! Every spiritual challenge gets the spoken or unspoken response: 'so what?' or 'what for?' Thus we make our life a desert. It is the root of all sin, the poison of all spiritual energy. Result?



### DISCOURAGEMENT!

or faint-heartedness, the greatest danger to the soul. Discouragement is what makes it impossible to see any good or positive, reducing everything to a negative or 'it's no good' or 'it won't work' attitude in the inner resources of

our soul. It is truly a demonic power in us because the devil is a liar. He lies to us about our God, filling our life with negatives and tailors for us a comforting tomb in which all too many of us like to dwell.

#### WHERE DOES THIS LEAD?

LUST OF POWER, when our heart of hearts is buried in laziness and the tomb of discouragement, and when we are therefore, not turned to God as the flower towards the sun, then we are turned in on ourselves. This means that everyone and everything else becomes the way for our own self-satisfaction. We see everyone and everything in terms of our own needs, wants and desires. It is our judgment alone that is important. And it may all end up in contempt or indifference for others, for their legitimate needs, and lack of interest, consideration and respect for other souls—in other words, spiritual murder.

How do we continue in sin? IDLE CHATTER!

Speech is the very seal of the Divine Image in us because God Himself is revealed as Word. A word on our lips can save or kill, inspire or poison. It is the means of truth or the demonic lie. When it is perverted from praise, then it enforces sloth and discouragement and makes life literally hell.

#### THE SPIRITUAL ANTIDOTES?

WHOLENESS OF BEING! If sloth or laziness is the falling apart of our vision, the inability to see reality as it is, then Christ our God offers us the true scale of values by leading us back to our Eternal Father. The first fruit of holiness or wholeness is humility.

This is the victory of TRUTH in us, the internal truth to see and know ourselves as we really are, as well as seeing God's goodness and love in everything and everyone else. This is why we know that God offers grace to the humble and resists the proud because the proud are still living lies about themselves, others and God.

PATIENCE! The child of Adam being blind to himself is quick to judge, condemn, and criticize. Having only a distorted picture of things, he measures everything by likes and dislikes. He utilizes his emotions to make judgments, forgetting our God told us not to trust the judgment of our heart. Patience, however is a truly divine blessing since it is willing to wait because it can afford to look at the inner reality of people and situations which blindness cannot see. Patience reflects the divine respect for all beings, great and small.

THE CROWN OF DIVINE POWER IS LOVE. GRANT ME THE GRACE TO BE AWARE OF MY OWN SINS....There is ultimately one danger for us, pride, the source of evil and all evil is pride. It is not enough to see our mistakes, for even this can turn into pride. When we do see our own sin, and do not judge our brother, then and only then is the ultimate enemy Pride destroyed in us.

sacrificial death for our sake. Had we fasted in paradise as was requested of Adam and Eve, the death of Christ on the Cross would not have been necessary.

Why is it we fast? The Scripture and Holy Tradition tell us that fasting liberates us from the prompting of the flesh, the unruly and rebellious, the sinful instincts within which urge us to choose the creature instead of the Creator, to prefer the material and passing pleasures of life instead of the Author and Source of all good things. Fasting brings us to a realization that we do not live "by bread alone" Matthew 4: 4. Food is ultimately a passing need, our real food, both on earth and in heaven is to do the will of our heavenly Father.

Fasting, consequently, is not an end in itself. It is a means by which we deepen our love for God and build an awareness of our responsibilities as His adopted children through Baptism. "So, then, my dearly beloved, obedient as always, to my urgings, work with anxious concern to achieve your salvation..." Philippians 2: 12. Yet the Church frequently warns us that sincere repentance and change of heart must accompany our fasting efforts. "...how shall we escape if we ignore a salvation as great as ours?" Hebrews 2: 3. St. Leo, the great fifth century Bishop of Rome, tells us, "The sum total of our fasting does not consist in merely abstaining from food. In vain do we deny our body food if we do not withhold our heart from iniquity and restrain our lips, that they speak no evil." All our fasting is like the hypocrisy of the pharisees if we do not at the same time revitalize our love for God and others. "Now is the time," continues St. Leo, "when generous Christian souls forgive offenses, pay no heed to insults, and wipe out the memory of past injuries." In a similar vein, the Church's hymnology warns against any hypocritical and useless fasting:

In vain do you rejoice in not eating, o soul, for you abstain from food, but from passions you are not purified. If you have no desire for improvement, you will be despised as a lie in the eyes of God. You will be likened to evil demons who never eat!

If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.

Therefore, remain in constant striving so as to stand before the crucified Saviour, or rather, to be crucified with the One Who is crucified for your sake! Vespers, Forgiveness Sunday.

The Church admonishes and reminds us to fast not only from food, but from uncharitable thoughts, words, and deeds; from gossip and rash judgment; from hate, bitterness, jealousy, and ill-will; from cursing, swearing, using foul language, from loss of temper, from lies, cheating, and scandalous behavior. In a word, from sinful action which serves to separate us from God and our neighbor. "Take care to do all these things, for you know the time in which we are living. It is now the hour for you to wake from sleep for your salvation is closer than when we first accepted the faith. The night is far spent; the day draws near. Let us cast off the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Rather, put on the