

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

Email: 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

Healing the Blind

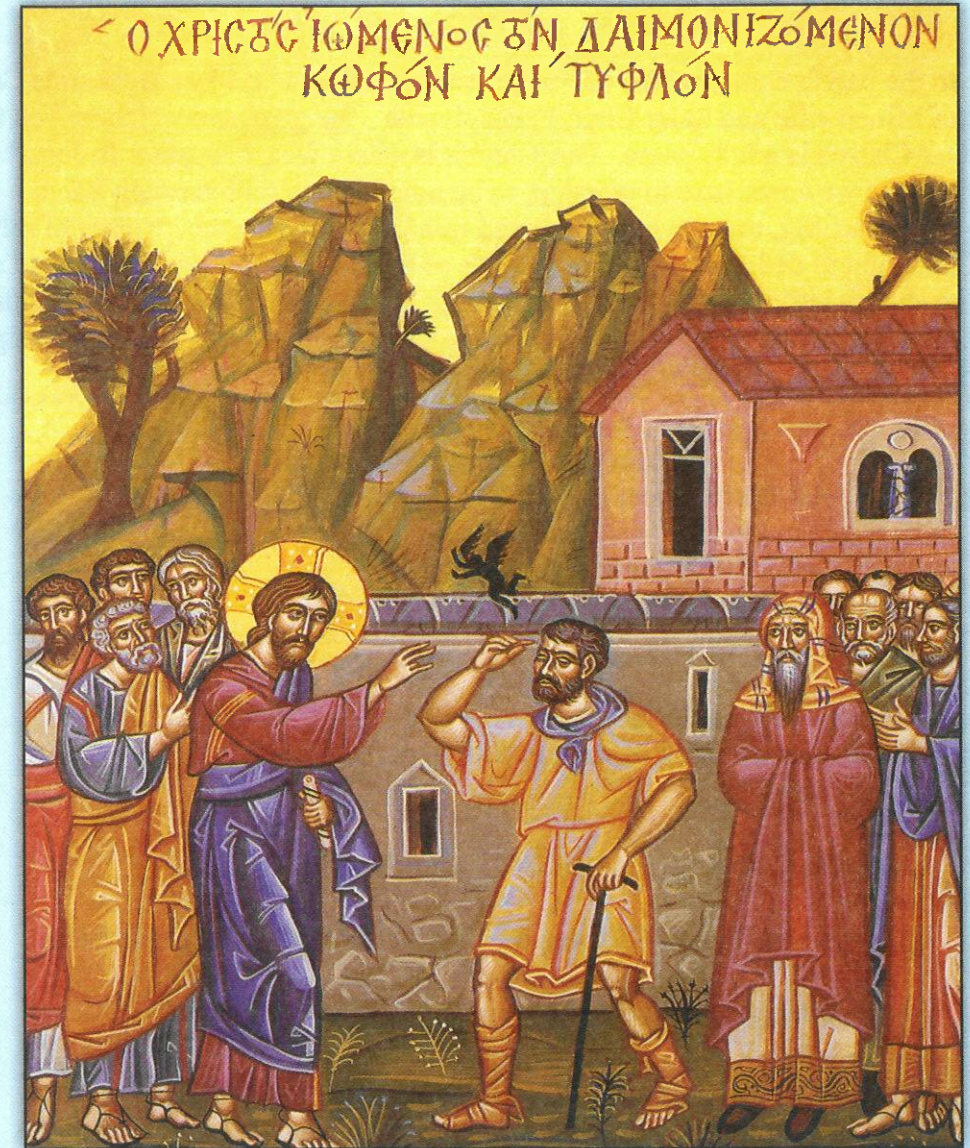
As Jesus is approaching Jericho with his followers, a blind beggar (named Bartimeus in St. Mark) calls out: 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' and persists even though the crowd tries to silence him. Jesus has them bring the man to him and asks what he wants; he asks to be able to see again. Jesus tells him that his faith has cured him; he immediately regains his sight and follows Jesus.

Apart from telling a miracle story that shows the power of Jesus, the author of the Gospel uses this story to advance a clearly theological purpose. It shows a character who understands who Jesus is and the proper way to respond to him - with faith. The use of the title, 'Son of David' serves to identify Jesus as the Messiah. It was also a reference to Jesus' kingly authority, which the Jews would have seen as placing him

at odds with Caesar. The emperor was the perceived proper referent of the call of *kyrie eleison*, as he would have been referred to as *kyrios* in Greek ('lord' in English).

The Gospel of Matthew has two unnamed blind men, sitting by the roadside; Jesus is 'moved by compassion' and touches their eyes. 20:29-34 A version of the same story is told earlier in the narrative, when Jesus is preaching in Galilee. On this occasion, he asks the blind men if they believe he can cure them, and when they assure them they do, he commends their faith and touches their eyes, restoring their sight. He warns them to tell nobody of this, but they go and spread the news throughout the district. (Matthew 9:27-31)

THIRTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Healing the Blind Beggar -- (Luke 18:35-43)

Volume 2022
Christ is among us!

Number 3
He is and will be!

34th Sunday after Pentecost
Tone 1

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.

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January 16 – January 22, 2022
All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

Saturday Vigil of Sunday (at SS Peter & Paul)

4:00 p. m. + **Michael Popovich** req. by MM Joseph DeConcini

Sunday

8:00 a.m. + **Veronica Steranko** req. by Joseph & Lou Ann Palli (at St. Mary)

10:00 a.m. **Health and Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)

Livestreamed

Tuesday

8:00 a.m. + **Jeanette Lohin** req. by the Paul Lohin Family

Wednesday

8:00 a.m. + **Msgr. John T. Sekellick** req by Therese Bennett & Irene Gambola

Thursday

8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy Today**

Friday

8:00 a.m. + **Francis Schenck** req. by (+Metro) & Elizabeth Cremo

Saturday

4:00 p.m. Vigil of Sunday (at SS Peter & Paul)

+ **George Nicholas Hertz** req. by Betty Mae Hertz

Epistle Readers: 12/26 – Ellen Sinkovich; 12/27 – Marie Wanchick; 1/1 a.m. – Dolores Kramer; 1/1 p.m. – Laura Mitchell; 1/2 – Gail Burgess; 1/6 – Marie Wanchick; 1/8 – Beverly Kostishak; 1/9 – Jennifer Keer; 1/15 – Laura Mitchell; 1/16 – Gail Burgess; 1/22 – Dolores Kramer; 1/23 – Ellen Sinkovich; 1/29 – Marie Wanchick; 1/30 – Beverly Kostishak.

Candles in front of the Icons and on the Sacramental Table are offered for: Blessings In The New Year

The Financial Records for 2021 are completed at this time. All contributions, as of this writing, will be credited to 2022. If you have not picked up your 2022 Offering Envelopes and continue using your 2021 envelopes, please be aware they may be credited to someone else if your number has changed.

If you wish to have your **Statement of Offerings 2021**, contact the rectory office Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday. Those offerings for Father's Day, Mother's Day, Funerals, or Divine Liturgies are not included in the statements because according to the IRS those offerings were for services rendered and are not tax exempt, so they cannot be claimed when preparing your taxes.

I have been appointed the Administrator of St. John the Baptist Church, Hazleton, PA and for the time of that position will have office hours there on Thursdays. With this additional appointment I would say this is a very good time to pray "the Lord of the Harvest," for vocations to the Priesthood, male and female Monastics and for the Married & Single life.

Monthly visits to the home-bound will be made on Tuesdays and Wednesdays until further notice.

Anyone wishing to have their house blessed, kindly call me at the rectory office to schedule an appointment.

Reminder: Every Friday from 12 Noon until 3:00 p.m. the SS Peter & Paul church is open for private prayer. The Mystery of Forgiveness is offered from 2:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Come, spend some time with our Saviour each week in addition to Sunday Worship for the many blessings He provides each day.

You Were Created For God's Family

I am the vine, and you are the branches John 15: 5.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and not all the members have the same function, so too, we though many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another Romans 12: 5.

God is the one who made all things, and all things are for his glory. He wanted to have many children share his glory Hebrews 2: 10.

See how much our heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to called his children and we really are 1 John 3: 1.

God created you for His family. He made you to be part of him.

God wants a family and He created you to be a part of it. This is God's purpose for your life, which he planned before you were born. All of His revelation to us is the story of God building a family who loves Him, honors Him and reigns with Him forever. It says, "God chose us in him before the world began, to be holy and blameless in his sight, to be full of love; he likewise predestined us through Christ Jesus to be his adopted sons – such was his will and pleasure – that all might praise the glorious favor he has bestowed on us in his beloved" Ephesians 1: 5.

Because God is love, He treasures relationships. His very nature is relational and He identifies Himself in family terms; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is God's relationship with Himself. It is the perfect pattern for relational harmony and we must study its implications.

God has always existed in loving relationship to himself, so He has never been lonely. He does not need a family but desires one, so He devised a plan to create us, bring us into His family and share in love with us all He has. This gives God great pleasure. We are taught: "He will to bring us to birth with a word spoken in truth so that we may be a kind of first fruits of his creatures" James 1: 17.

When we place our faith in Christ, God becomes our Father, we become his children, other believers become our brothers and sisters and the Church becomes our spiritual family. The family of God includes all believers in the past, the present and the future. Every human being was created by God but not everyone is a child of God. The only way to get into God's family is by being born again into it through Baptism and the grace of the Holy Spirit. You then become part of the human family with your first physical birth, but you become a communicant of God's family by your second but more important, spiritual birth. "Praised be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us new birth, a birth into hope, which draws its life from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, a birth to an imperishable, inheritance, incapable of fading or defilement, which is kept in heaven for you who are guarded with God's power through faith; a birth to a salvation which stands ready to be revealed in the last days" 1 Peter 1: 3; "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. You did not receive a spirit of slavery leading you back into fear, but a spirit of adoption through which we cry out, 'Abba!', that is, 'Father.' The Spirit himself gives witness with our spirit that we are children of God. But if we are children, we are heirs as well; heirs of God, heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so as to be glorified with him" Romans 8: 5.

The invitation to be a part of God's family is universal. "If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow in my steps" Mark 8: 34; "Then shall everyone be saved who calls upon the name of the Lord" Acts of the Apostles 2: 21; "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" Romans 10: 13; "The Lord does not delay in keeping his promise, though some consider it delay. Rather he shows you generous patience, since he wants none to perish but all to come to repentance" 2 Peter 3: 9.

The spiritual family is far more important than the physical family because it will last forever. It is in the spiritual family that salvation is achieved; the physical family cannot guarantee this. Our families on earth are wonderful gifts from God, but they are temporary and fragile, often broken by divorce, distance, growing old, and inevitably, death. On the other hand, our spiritual family, our relationship with other believers, because it is based on the unchangeable Christ, and bolstered by His unchanging grace, will continue throughout all eternity. It is a much stronger union because it is essentially spiritual, a more permanent bond

than blood relationships. Christ confirms this for us: “Who is my mother? Who is my brother? Then extending his hand toward his disciples he said, ‘There are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is brother and sister and mother to me’” Matthew 12: 48 – 50. So we cannot overemphasize the earthly, temporal, purely physical relationship to our relatives unless they too, safely belong to Christ because in eternity, they will be separated from believers. Wishful thinking will not compensate for the indifference of relatives. Whenever St. Paul the Apostle would stop to consider God’s eternal purpose for us together, he would break out into praise, “That is why I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name and I pray that he will bestow on you gifts in keeping with the riches of his glory. May he strengthen you inwardly through the working of his Spirit. May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, and may charity be the root and foundation of your life. Thus you will be able to grasp fully with the holy ones the breath and length and height and depth of Christ’s love and experience this love which surpasses all understanding, so that you may attain to the fullness of God himself” Ephesians 3: 14 – 19.

The moment you were spiritually born into God’s family, you were given astounding birthday gifts; the family name, the family likeness, family privileges, family intimate access, and the family inheritance! Does not His revelation also share with us, “You are no longer a slave, but a son! And the fact that you are a son makes you an heir by God’s design” Galatians 4: 7.

The New Testament gives great emphasis to our rich “inheritance.” It tells us “My God in turn will supply your needs fully in a way worthy of his magnificent riches in Jesus Christ. All glory to our God and Father of unending ages! Amen.” Philippians 4: 19. As children of God, we share in the family fortune. Here on earth we are richly endowed with all that we need. “It is in Christ and through his blood that we have been redeemed and our sins forgiven, so immeasurably generous is God’s favor to us. God has given us the wisdom to understand fully the mystery and the plan he was pleased to decree in Christ, to be carried out in the fullness of time, namely to bring all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ’s headship” Ephesians 1: 7 – 10; “Or do you presume on God’s kindness and forbearance? Do you not know that God’s kindness is an invitation to you to repent? In spite of this, your hard and impenitent heart is storing up retribution for that day of wrath when the just judgment of God will be revealed, when he will repay every man for what he has done, eternal life to those who strive for glory, honor and immortality by patiently doing right; wrath and fury to those who selfishly disobey the truth and obey wickedness” Romans 2: 4 – 8; “...in order to make known the riches of his glory toward the vessels for mercy, which he prepared of his glory” Romans 9: 23; “How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the

knowledge of God! How inscrutable his judgments, how unsearchable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has given him anything so as to deserve return? For from him and through him and for him all things are. To him be glory forever” Romans 10: 33 – 36; “Through him the whole body grows and with the proper functioning of the members joined firmly together by each supporting ligament, builds itself up in love” Ephesians 4: 16. In eternity, it stands to reason, we will inherit even far greater spiritual riches. St. Paul points this out for us: “May he enlighten your innermost vision that you may know the great hope to which he has called you, the wealth of his glorious heritage to be distributed among the members of the church and the immeasurable scope of his power in us who believe. It is like the strength he showed in raising Christ from the dead and seating him at his right hand in heaven, high above every principality, power, virtue, and domination; every name that can be given in this age or in the age to come” Ephesians 1: 18: 21.

What exactly does our inheritance include?

First, we will get to be with God, the source of our life and entire being, forever. “He died that all of us, whether awake or asleep, together might live with him” 1 Thessalonians 5: 10.

Secondly, we will be completely transformed and changed just like Christ. “...we are God’s children now; what we shall later be has no yet come to light. We know that when it comes to light, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is” 1 John 3: 2.

Thirdly, we will be freed from all pain, death and suffering. “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 21: 4.

Fourthly, we shall be rewarded and reassigned positions of service. “Any man who gives you a drink of water, because you belong to Christ, will not, I assure you, go without his reward” Mark 9: 41; “...and in the age to come, everlasting life” Mark 10: 30; “He who plants and he who waters work to the same end. Each will receive his wages in proportion to his toil” I Corinthians 3: 8; “Do not then, surrender your confidence; it will have great reward. You need patience to do God’s will and receive what he has promised” Hebrews 10: 35; “Since you were dependable in a small matter you will be put in charge of larger affairs. Come and share your master’s joy” Matthew 25: 21.

Fifthly, we will get to share in Christ's glory. "But if we are children, we are heirs as well; heirs of God, heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so as not to be glorified with him" Romans 8: 5; "When Christ our life appears, you shall appear with him in glory" Colossians 3: 4; "If we hold out to the end, we shall also reign with him" 2 Timothy 2: 14; "To the elders, among you, I a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and sharer in the glory that is to be revealed ..." 1 Peter 5: 1.

We are reminded if we are faithful to the Lord, as communicants of His faith family, we shall be rewarded by "...a birth into hope which draws its life from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; a birth to an imperishable inheritance, incapable of fading or defilement, which is kept in heaven, for you, who are guarded with God's power through faith; a birth to salvation which stands ready to be revealed in the last days" 1 Peter 1: 3 - 5. This means our eternal inheritance is priceless, pure, permanent, and protected. No one can take it from you; it cannot be destroyed in war, by a poor economy or a natural disaster. This is an eternal inheritance, not retirement, and is what you should be looking forward to and working after. St. Paul the Apostle reminds us, "What ever you do, work at it with all your being. Do it for the Lord rather than for man, since you know full well you will receive an inheritance from him as your reward" Colossians 3: 23, 24.

BAPTISM: IDENTIFYING WITH GOD AND HIS FAMILY

Healthy families have family pride; members are not ashamed to be recognized as part of a family. Sadly, there are some who have never publicly identified themselves with their spiritual family as Jesus commanded us, by being baptized. There are plain fools who have their own interpretations about the necessity of baptism and their own interpretations and confused ideas.

For believers, baptism is not optional, to be delayed or postponed. It signifies, inclusion in God's family. It publicly announces to the world, "I am not ashamed to belong to God and be part of God's family." Our Lord insists upon its importance when He mandated it, "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" Matthew 28: 19.

Baptism is pregnant with profound meaning. Baptism declares your faith, shares and makes you a participant in His burial and Resurrection by your personal experience. "Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Through baptism into his death we were buried with him so that just as Christ was raised from

the dead by the glory of the Father, we might too live a new life. If we have been united with him through likeness to his death, so shall we be through a like resurrection" Romans 6: 2 - 5. It symbolizes your actual death to sin and your old life and announces new life in Christ. It is a celebration of inclusion in God's family, Christ's Body, the Church, the cradle of salvation.

Baptism is a physical picture and manifestation of spiritual truth. It represents what occurs when our heavenly Father makes you a child of God and brings you into His family: "It was in one Spirit that all of us whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, were baptized into one body. All of us have been given to drink of the one Spirit. Now the body is not one member; it is many" 1 Corinthians 12: 13.

Baptism builds upon and augments the faith in Christ which alone incorporates and grafts a soul to the Body of Christ. Baptism shows that inner faith already working, already established by the example, lifestyle and mature faith of devoted parents, sponsors and loved ones of the infant being baptized. Like a wedding ring, it is a visible manifestation and reminder of an inward commitment made in heart and soul. It is an act of initiation, not something put off until maturity of some sort is reached. Is grace assists in achieving maturity of faith. Miniature faith in the soul is strengthened and affirmed. Our faith is destined to grow into a living and vibrant faith family, both physical and spiritual. It is the means by which one can "Save yourself from this generation which has gone astray" Acts of the Apostles 2: 40. Baptism calls us and invites us into the mystery of the life of the Holy Trinity. It is only in learning about, understanding and then living the love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we come to understand our own human dignity created in God's image. Baptism makes this possible.

Being included in God's family is the highest honor and greatest privilege you will ever receive. "He who consecrates and those who are consecrated have one and the same Father. Therefore he is not ashamed to call them brothers sayings...here am I and the children God has given me" Hebrews 2: 11, 13. Because Jesus makes you holy, our heavenly Father is proud of you! Whenever you feel unimportant, unloved or insecure, remember to whom you belong and let your soul rejoice!



WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

When the Forerunner saw Him Who is our enlightenment, Who enlightens every man coming to be baptized, his heart rejoiced and his hand trembled. He pointed Him out to the people and said: "This is the Saviour of Israel Who delivered us from corruption!" O Christ, God, O sinless Lord, glory be to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

O Saviour, the armies of angels trembled when they saw You baptized by Your servant, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness by coming down, and when they heard the Father's voice speaking from heaven: "This One upon Whom the Forerunner lays his hands is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." O Christ God, Glory, to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

When the Jordan River received You, O Fountainhead, the Consoler came down in the form of a dove. Behold the marvel: the One Who drew the curve of heaven bows His head to the Forerunner, to the one made of clay who cries out to His Master: "Why do You order me to do things beyond my worth? It is I who need to be baptized by You!" O Christ God, O sinless One, glory be to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

O Lord, when John saw You coming to him at the Jordan River, he cried out: "How do You, O Lord, Who have no stain, come to me Your servant? In whose name shall I baptize You? In the name of the Father You possess in Yourself? In the name of the Son while You are the very Son in the flesh? In the name of the Holy Spirit Whom You grant to the faithful with the breath of Your mouth?" O God made manifest, have mercy on us! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

The waters have seen You! O Lord, when the waters saw You, they trembled, for the very Cherubim do not dare to look upon Your glory, nor can the Seraphim rest their eyes upon You. They stand in fear before You, some on guard; others glorifying Your might. Together with them, we proclaim Your praise, O merciful One and say: O God become manifest for us, have mercy on us! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.



God Yearns For Us

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness. He is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance 2 Peter 3: 9.

O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; your faithfulness comes from me Hosea 14: 8.

Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him because he repeatedly sins and commits adultery against the Lord, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him, declares the Lord Jeremiah 3: 20.

The Lord longs to be gracious to you Isaiah 30: 18.

How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation. I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me Jeremiah 3: 19.

If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you Proverbs 1: 23.

And when I passed by you, and saw you weltering in your blood, I said to you, 'live' Ezekiel 16: 6.

Listen, I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you and you with me Revelation 3: 20.