

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

Parish Office: (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 Yasenck

\*\*\*\*\*

**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 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)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Bulletins are sponsored by*

**Mahal-Ritzel Funeral Home  
Minersville, PA 544-5111**

**Mark J. Mahal - Funeral Director**

### *Who Art in Heaven*

These words I think have a very deep meaning. They remind us of the homeland we have abandoned, of the citizenship we have lost. In the parable of the young man who left his father's house, went off the rails and was reduced to living with pigs, the Word of God shows us human wretchedness. That young man did not find his one-time happiness again until he had realized his moral degradation, had looked into his own heart and had pronounced the words of confession. These words almost agree with the Lord's Prayer, because the prodigal son says: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you." [Luke 15:21] He would not confess himself to be a sinner against heaven

if he were not convinced that the homeland he had left at the time of his going astray were not in actual fact heaven.

By this confession of his he makes himself worthy once again to stand in the presence of his father who runs towards him, embraces him, and kisses him. The conclusion is this. To return to heaven there is only one route and that is to admit one's sinfulness and seek to avoid it. To make the decision to avoid it is already to be perfecting one's likeness to God.

*St. Gregory of Nyssa  
On the Lord's Prayer*

## SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



*Icon of the Prodigal Son*



**Sunday of the Prodigal Son**  
**Tone 2**

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.

.....

**January 28 – February 3, AD2024**

Vigil of Sunday at St. Mary		
Saturday	4:00 p.m.	+ <b>George Konkus</b> req by Rose & Nick Baruka
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	<b>Health and Blessing of the Parishioners</b> (livestreamed)
Monday	9:00 a.m.	<b>No Divine Liturgy Today</b>
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	<b>Three Holy Hierarchs</b> (Simple Holy Day) + <b>Rev. Robert E Lucas</b>
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	+ <b>John Lohin</b> req. by Elaine L. Kunze
Thursday	9:00 a.m.	<b>H&amp;B Mary Dembinsky 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday</b>
Friday	9:00 a.m.	<b>Meeting of Our Lord with Simeon and Anna</b> (Holy Day) + <b>John Kovich</b> req. by Elaine L. Kunze
	4:00 p.m.	<b>H&amp;B Parishioners</b>
Saturday	9:00 a.m.	+ <b>All Souls Liturgy w/Dyptich</b>
Saturday Vigil	4:00 p.m.	+ <b>Patty Lubinsky</b> req. by Bernard Kovich
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	<b>Health &amp; Blessing of the Parishioners</b> (at SS Peter & Paul)

**Epistle Readers:** 1/1 – Jennifer Keer; 1/6 – Dolores Kramer; 1/7 – Judy Kostura; 1/14 – Jennifer Keer; 1/21 – Beverly Kostishak; 1/28 – Gail Burgess; 2/4 – Marie Wanchick.

**Candle Offering:** Icons of the Mother of God and Jesus Christ candles are offered for **Irene and Michael Pavelko** from Michael and Rose Marie Pavelko.

**Breakfast with Father**

Sunday, February 11, 2024 following the Divine Liturgy. ECF Class will participate in place of the regular class time. All are welcome to attend. Following breakfast Forgiveness Vespers will be celebrated to facilitate the beginning of the Great Fast.

**On Sunday's of the Great Fast following the Divine Liturgy we will celebrate Lenten Vespers followed by a bible study with a light lunch in the church dining hall.**

.....

**Dates to Remember:**

February 12 the **Great Fast** begins, a day of **Strict Fast**, i.e., no meat, eggs or dairy products may be consumed on that day and on March 29 Great and Good Friday.

March 31 the **Resurrection of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

.....

**Prodigal Son:**

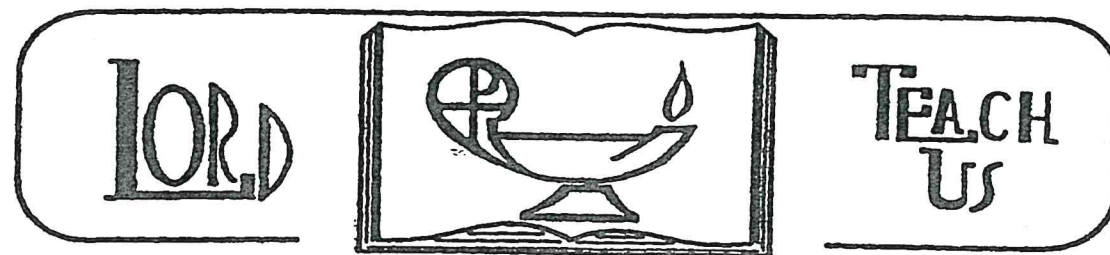
**Patristic Commentary**

AUGUSTINE. Whoever wishes to be so like to God as to ascribe his strength to Him, let him not depart from Him, but rather cleave to Him that he may preserve the likeness and image in which he was made. But if he perversely wishes to imitate God, that as God has no one by whom He is governed, so should he desire to exercise his own power as to live under no rules, what remains for him but that having lost all heat he should grow cold and senseless, and, departing from truth, vanish away.



## 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* 1 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.