

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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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)

Bulletins are sponsored by
Mahal-Ritzel Funeral Home
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Celebrating Theophany Every Day

The Feast of Christ's Theophany (or Epiphany) is celebrated with great solemnity in the Byzantine Church. The word "theophany" means a divine "manifestation" or "revealing." Jesus of Nazareth - a carpenter - was revealed on the banks of the Jordan River to be the Son of God and the long-awaited Messiah - the "Christ." A voice came from the heavens that said, "This is My beloved Son, My favor rests on Him." (Matthew 3: 17)

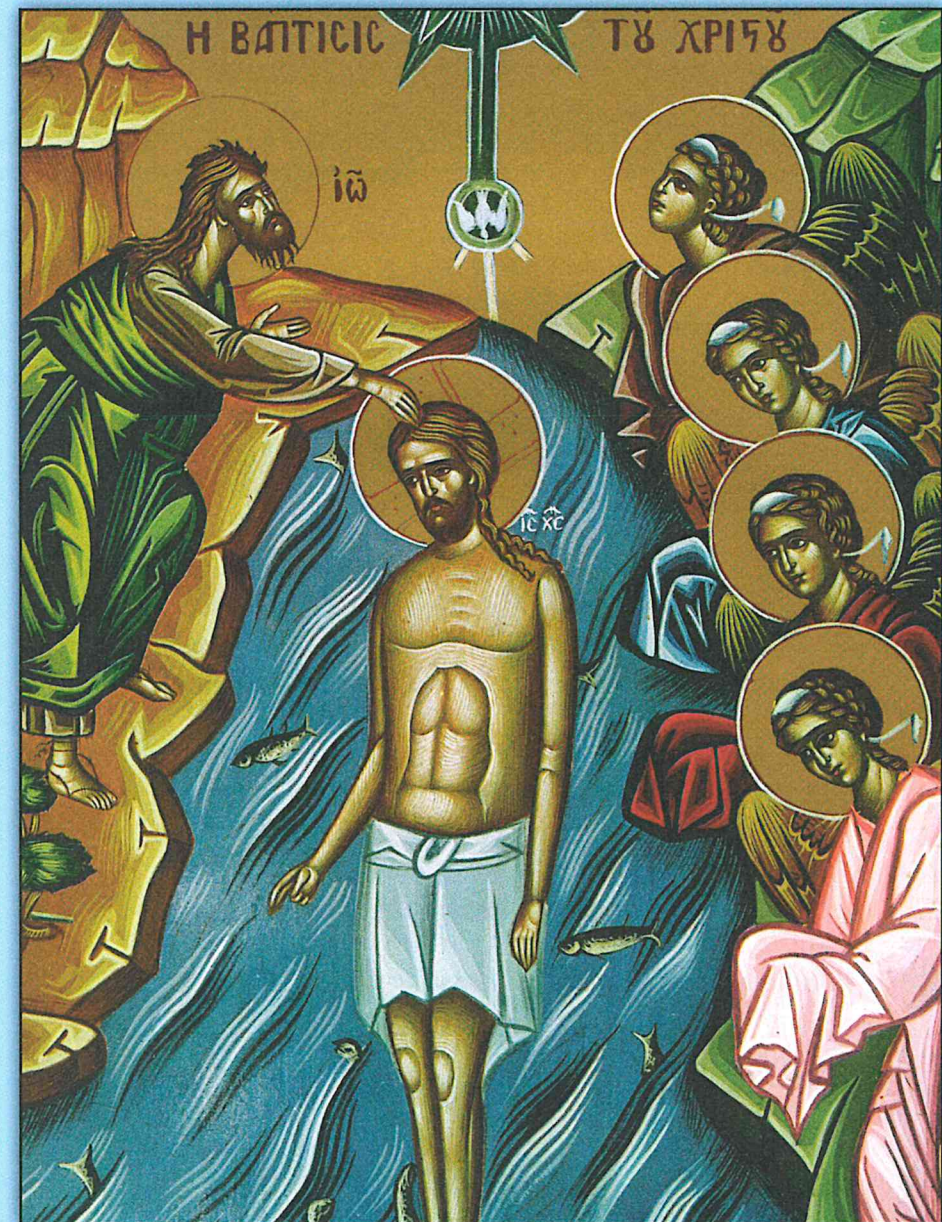
Let us imagine ourselves standing on the banks of the River Jordan. We are witnessing the baptism of Jesus at the hands of Saint John the Baptist and the revelation of Jesus as God in the flesh. What a privilege that would have been!

Yet, God is revealed to us each and every

day. God manifests Himself to us not just on the banks of the River Jordan but at the bus stop, the grocery store, and in the work place. His image is within each of us. He is in our co-workers, our spouses, our children - even in our enemies.

The real challenge of Christian discipleship is to endeavor to see the image of Christ in all people and to allow them to see that same Godly image within us. The celebration of the Great Feast of Theophany is not a one-day occasion commemorating an event that took place some two thousand years ago. Rather, it is living, day-to-day, the conviction that God is within each human being, and that each human being ought to be treated as though he or she is the living image of Christ.

SUNDAY BEFORE THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD



Icon of the Theophany of Our Lord -- January 6th

Sunday before Theophany
Tone 8

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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January 5– January 11, AD2025

Vigil of Sunday		
Saturday	4:00 p.m.	H&B Paul Gretskey req. by Cheryl Mason *
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Health and Blessing of the Parishioners* (Livestream)
	6:00 p.m.	Vespers w/the Great Sanctification of Water*
Monday	9:00 a.m.	+Demko & +Hnatishion Families req. by Theresa Wagner*
	6:00 p.m.	Health and Blessings of the Parishioneres*
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	+Peter Verbosh & Family req. by Irene Verbosh Dialago*
Thursday	9:00 a.m.	H&B Fr. John A. Hutta*
Friday	9:00 a.m.	+Metro Cremo req. by Elizabeth Cremo *
Saturday	4:00 p.m.	+Nancy Reich req. by Cheryl Mason*

*St. Mary
*SS Peter & Paul

Epistle Readers: 1/1 – Dolores Kramer; 1/5 – Gail Burgess; 1/6 – Laura Mitchell; 1/12 – Anna Keer; 1/19 – Ellen Sinkovich. 2/2 - Paulette Murphy; 2/9 – Jennifer Keer.

Candles Request:
Sunday Before Theophany
Patristic Commentary

Ver. 1: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Jerome, in Prolog: Mark the Evangelist, ~~who served~~ the priesthood in Israel, according to the flesh a Levite, having been converted to the Lord, wrote his Gospel in Italy, shewing in it how even his family benefited Christ. For commencing his Gospel with the voice of the prophetic cry, he shews the order of the election of Levi, declaring that John the son of Zachariah was sent forth by the voice of an angel, and saying, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Pseudo-Jerome: The Greek word 'Evangelium' means good tidings, in Latin it is explained, 'bona annuntiatio,' or, the good news; these terms properly belong to the kingdom of God and to the remission of sins; for the Gospel is that by which comes the redemption of the faithful and the beatitude of the saints.

But the four Gospels are one, and one Gospel in four. In Hebrew, His name is Jesus, in Greek, Soter, in Latin, Salvator; but men say Christus in Greek, Messias in Hebrew, Unctus in Latin, that is, King and Priest.

Bede, in Marc., i, 1: The beginning of this Gospel should be compared with that of Matthew, in which it is said, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." But here He is called "the Son of God."

Now from both we must understand one Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, and of man. And fitly the first Evangelist names Him "Son of man," the second, "Son of [p. 6] God," that from less things our sense may by degrees mount up to greater, and by faith and the sacraments of the human nature assumed, rise to the acknowledgment of His divine eternity.

Fitly also did He, who was about to describe His human generation, begin with a son of man, namely, David or Abraham. Fitly again, he who was beginning his book with the first preaching of the Gospel, chose rather to call Jesus Christ, "the Son of God;" for it belonged to the human nature to take upon Him the reality of our flesh, of the race of the patriarchs, and it was the work of Divine power to preach the Gospel to the world.

Did You Know That ...

- ...it is never too late to make a fresh start with God?
- ...there is little more that man takes more pains about than in making himself unhappy?
- ...he who pursues two rabbits at once, does not catch one and lets the other go?
- ...Christ is our reason for living and for giving?
- ...without the light of God's Spirit, we would be in the dark about God's Word?
- ...ther are no fools so troublesome as those who are gifted with wit?
- ...while it is ill mannered to silence a fool, it is plain cruelty to permit him go on?
- ...a brother may not be a friend, but a friend is always a brother?
- ...it is better to be poor and walk by faith than to be rich and walk by sight?
- ...it is not how much you say but how much you care that brings the most comfort?
- ...the same man cannot be both friend and flatterer?
- ...a true friend is the best possession?
- ...to give your life stability, hold to God's word?
- ...remembering that Jesus died for us helps us remember to live for Him?
- ...if Christ lives in your heart, you have a living hope?
- ...if we keep conscience clear, we never have to fear?
- ...the weak man does not possess wealth; it possesses him?
- ...jealousy and happiness never saw each other?
- ...virtue and happiness are mother and daughter?



The Nativity Of Our Lord

"I see him, though not now; I behold him, though not near; A star shall advance from Jacob and a staff shall rise from Israel..." Numbers 24: 17.

"But you Bethlehem, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel" Micah 5: 1.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came one day to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he who was born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him'" Matthew 2: 1, 2.

While they were there the days of her confinement were completed. She gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the place where the travelers lodged Luke 2: 6, 7.

The angel said to them: "You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you; tidings of great joy to be shared by the whole people. This day in David's city, a Saviour has been born to you, the Messiah and Lord. Let this be a sign to you; in a manger you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes." Luke 2: 10 - 12.

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another: 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this event which the Lord has made known to us.' They went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger; once they saw, they understood what had been told them concerning the child. Luke 2: 15 - 17.

Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, in accord with what had been told them Luke 1: 19, 20.

“I Bring You Tidings Of Great Joy”

The message of the angels was given to the shepherds and they were mightily frightened. Nature fears in the presence of God. The angelic visitor told them, “You have nothing to fear” Luke 2: 10, for man is not to fear God when God unveils the splendor of His majesty. Man is like a harp unstrung; most of the music of his soul’s strings is discordant as he wails in sorrow and anxiety because he is separated from God.

But the Son of David, the great Harpist comes down to move His fingers among the strings of our soul and to make it as beautiful as the melody of the angelic song heard on that dark and distant night above Bethlehem’s shepherd fields. This is why the shepherds were not to fear. The shepherds understood the heavenly message which is why they not only visited, but “...returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen, in accord with what had been told them” Luke 2: 20.

There was initial fear among the shepherds, then joy. First there is the fast, and then there is the feast; one must have the shadow to show and emphasize the light. If there had been no rebellion on the part of man, there would have been no freedom with Christ. The message of the feast of the Nativity of our Lord is first the fast, the preparation, then the feast. The world had first the feast, without the appropriate preparation and then it had its headache, alienation from God the Creator. The joy that Christ’s Nativity brought comes from the release from anxiety, fear, and dread, all of which are the pallbearers of our guilt. Once that Child was born, God now looks upon humanity and remembers that His Son is a man like us. As so often after a war a feud is truly ended when the opposing parties intermarry, so there is no more war between God and man because God has entered into nuptials with humanity.

If, in the depths of our soul we wish to hear the angelic message of joy, we must have prepared for it. That is precisely why our holy Church asks us to spiritually enrich ourselves so that we can accept and understand the magnanimous love of our God for us on this feast day. We are asked to fast so that our spiritual stamina is expanded and enlarged. It is only thus armed that we can enter into celebration with the angels at the coming of the Lord among us. Heaven invites us to join it in welcoming the Messiah among man. So we must utilize heavenly means as prescribed by the Church to achieve heavenly goals. The Nativity fast should have purified, elevated and prepared us to rejoice in this awesome feast as befits our Christian dignity.

NAMES

Many of us have experienced the power of a name. Parents love to repeat the name of an infant child as they look upon this wonderful gift in whose creation they have cooperated. Lovers delight in saying the name of their beloved, and the sick and dying must often be content with speaking the name of their loved ones, having no strength to say any more. We should not view these realities as mere sentimentality or signs of human limitation. Throughout the Scripture, God has highlighted the importance of names in his relationship with his creatures.

In reflecting on the importance of names in Scripture, we find that a certain name is often given to a person or changed from one name to another, in order to indicate the vocation of that person or his or her place in the work of salvation.

In the very first book of Genesis, we are told that Eve was given her name “...because she became the mother of all living” Genesis 3: 20. Abram’s name was changed to Abraham by our Creator who explained the meaning of the new name by telling him: “For I am making you the father of a host of nations” Genesis 17: 5. Thus even today in religious life, a monastic assumes a new name as a new vocation is being started, a new life about to be begun. A new identity is thus sought after, that the grace of the new vocation might strengthen and affirm the soul starting all over again.

The pact with the Chosen People was completed by God telling Abraham that his wife’s name, Sarai, would be changed to Sarah, because this changing of names signified the binding of the covenant. Whatever identity the person was born with, they were literally born anew, again, under a new name, and expected to live a new and changed life. “I will bless her and I will give you a son by her. Him also will I bless; she shall give rise to nations and rulers of peoples shall issue from him” Genesis 17: 16.

We are well aware of the great care that was taken in the naming of John the Baptist, the cousin of our Lord, who would prepare his way. John’s father had been struck mute because of his lack of belief in the message of the angel, that he and his elderly wife would bear a son. When he followed God’s command for the naming of the child at his birth, his speech was restored and he was given the gift of prophecy (confer Luke 1: 57 – 64). We are also familiar with the change which Jesus made in the name of Simon whom He called Peter, meaning “rock”, that upon his sturdy faith would the vehicle of salvation be built.