

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)

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Love One Another

"I give you a new commandment," said Jesus, "love one another." ... He showed the newness of His command and how far the love He enjoined surpassed the old conception of mutual love by going on immediately to add: "Love one another as I have loved you." To understand the full force of these words, we have to consider how Christ loved us. Then it will be easy to see what is new and different in the commandment we are now given.

Do you not see what is new in Christ's love for us? The law commanded people to love their brothers and sisters as they love themselves, but our Lord Jesus Christ loved us more than Himself. He who was one in nature with God the Father and His equal would not have descended to our lowly estate, nor endured in His flesh such a bitter death for us, nor submitted to the blows given Him by His enemies, to the shame, the derision, and all the other sufferings that could not possibly be enumerated. Nor, being rich, would He have become poor, had He not loved us far

more than Himself. It was indeed something new for love to go as far as that!

Christ commands us to love as He did, putting neither reputation, nor wealth, nor anything whatever before love of our brothers and sisters. If need be we must even be prepared to face death for our neighbor's salvation as did our Savior's blessed disciples and those who followed in their footsteps. To them the salvation of others mattered more than their own lives, and they were ready to do anything or to suffer anything to save souls that were perishing.

The Savior urged us to practice this love that transcends the law as the foundation of true devotion to God. He knew that only in this way could we become pleasing in God's eyes, and that it was by seeking the beauty of the love implanted in us by Himself that we should attain to the highest blessings.

St. Cyril of Alexandria

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SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL



Icon of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

**Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council
Festal Tone**

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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May 21 – May 27, 2023

Vigil of Sunday (at St. Mary)

Saturday 4:00 p.m. **+ Francis Steranko** req. by Kathy & Gary Wapinski
Sunday 9:00 a.m. **Health and Blessings of the Parishioners**
(Livestream)

Monday 9:00 a.m. No Divine Liturgy Today
Tuesday 9:00 a.m. **H&B Elizabeth Cremo & Family** req. by Paul Joseph Cremo
Wednesday 9:00 a.m. **H&B Susan & Steve Samargis** req. by Family
Thursday 9:00 a.m. **H&B Leona & Greg Schenck** req. by Paul Joseph Cremo
Friday 9:00 a.m. **+Helen Platko** req. by Ethel Dallago
Saturday 9:00 a.m. **+All Souls**

Vigil of Sunday (at St. Mary)

Saturday 4:00 p.m. **+Steve Pereborski** req. by Susie Koslosky

Next Sunday 9:00 a.m. **H&B Parishioners**
(Livestream)

Epistle Readers: 5/7 – Ellen Sinkovich; 5/14 – Marie Wanchick; 5/18 – Dolores Kramer; 5/21 – Gail Burgess; 5/28 – Paulette Murphy.

Candle in front of the Mother of God is Offered for The Blessed Mother's Protection by Donna Hashin

According to our Byzantine Catholic Tradition we do not kneel at any Divine Service from the Great Feast of Pascha, the **Resurrection of Jesus Christ**, until the feast of **Pentecost** when the prayers of kneeling are taken.

Eternal life is true knowledge if the Trinity. Theodore of Mopsuestia: The cause of eternal life is steadfast faith, and to believe in one God, and to not attribute to others the title of God but to believe not only in the Father but also in the Son who was incarnated for us and was sent for the salvation of humankind. This doctrine expels the lie of the polytheistic error. It admits only one God while also surpassing the Jewish belief—inasmuch as the Jews worship only the Father. They surely do not understand that from the Father, by means of an unspoken word, his Son was born. It also teaches Christians to worship both the God begotten from the Father and the Spirit that is provided from the Father through the Son and is in its own existence consubstantial with the Father and the Son—the very one who is perfect life and the cause of eternal life. Commentary on John, fragment 132.17.3.

We will contemplate the "I am". Augustine: What he said to his servant Moses, "I am that I am,"... this is what we shall contemplate when we live in eternity. On the Trinity 1.8.17
Eternity will be ours when faith sees. Augustine: We are distanced from eternity to the extent that we are changeable. But eternal life is promised to us through the truth. Our faith, however, stands as far apart from the clear knowledge of the truth as mortality does from eternity. At the present we put faith in things done in time on our account, and by that faith itself we are cleansed. In this way, when we have come to sight, as truth follows faith, so eternity may follow on mortality. Our faith will become truth, then, when we have attained to that which is promised to us who believe. And that which is promised to us is eternal life. And the Truth—not that which shall come to be according to how our faith shall be, but that truth that always exists because eternity is in it—the Truth then has said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." When our faith sees and comes to be truth, then eternity shall possess our now changed mortality. On the Trinity 4.18.24.

17:3b The Only True God

Christ asserts his deity. Novatian: If Christ is only a man, why did he lay down for us such a rule of faith as to say, "But this is life eternal, that they may know you the one and true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent"? If he had not wanted himself to be understood also as God, why did he add, "And Jesus Christ whom you have sent" unless it is because he wanted to be accepted as also God? Because, if he had not wanted himself to be understood as God, he would have added "and the man Jesus Christ whom you have sent." But as it is, neither Christ added this nor did he hand down to us that he is only man. Rather, he joined [himself] to God so that he might also by this union be understood as God, as indeed he is. On the Trinity 16.

One Body

St. John Chrysostom, who was Patriarch of Constantinople, was Syrian born in 344 A.D. Hear what this most famous theologian has to say about the responsibility of lay believers: "...the laity should become responsible and understand that all of us are one body, each differing from the other only to the extent of function; and they should not throw all responsibility on to the priests. But the people themselves, because they are one body, must be just as concerned for the whole Church as priests are. For this builds up for us greater security and increased dedication to virtue." Every faithful communicant of our parish should practice self-examination: "Am I, in the sight of God, bearing my fair share of the responsibilities in our parish?"

True Humor

The devoted priest of Christ knocked on the door again and again, figuring that perhaps the people he needed to visit must be home because he could hear their television set blaring inside. Finally, he stuck his calling card in the door after writing Revelation 3: 20 on the back. The verse says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone will open, I will come in." The next Sunday after the Divine Liturgy, the woman in the family he intended to visit, handed him her own card with a note that said, "I heard your voice and was naked, so I hid myself" Genesis 3: 10.



"Let us be buried with Christ by baptism to rise with Him; let us go down with him to be raised with Him; and let us rise with Him to be glorified with Him."

St. Gregory Nazianzus, *Oration on Holy Baptism* #40. 9.

Through baptism the Christian "puts on Christ." At our Lord's baptism in the Jordan He anticipates His own death and resurrection. Christians must similarly empty themselves and go down into the water to be reborn of water and the Spirit.

The baptism of Jesus illustrates Jesus' ministry as the Suffering Servant of Yahweh.

The Servant is a theme found in the prophet Isaiah. While many expected the Messiah to be great and powerful, Isaiah foretold of a Messiah who would come in humility ("a bruised reed he shall not break") and suffer and die to save the people.

The theme of suffering and self-emptying has been dominant in the Church of Kievan Rus'. As Father Panchak, who presented the retreat to the members of the 1996 Lviv Sobor said, "We do not have a Pantocrator in royal robes. We have a pantocrator in tattered clothing." Christ emptied Himself to become one of us in order to raise us up. While it is the Eastern tradition to depict Christ in royal robes in iconography, the theology of the Kievan Church has been to emphasize kenosis (self-emptying.)

"Praise the Lord!

For it is good to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious, and a song of praise
is seemly.

The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.
He heals the brokenhearted and
binds up all their wounds.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
For his steadfast love endures for ever!"

Psalms 147 & 136

Troubles and Turns

May the God of all grace...perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you
1 Peter 5: 10.

Where we turn when we are in trouble most certainly reveals the content of our character. Think about it. What does it tell us about young children, whose trouble turns them toward gangs or guns or drugs or seduction to sexual experience? What do we learn about adults whose difficulties direct and push them toward alcohol or illicit relationships, or the bizarre teachings of a cult? What can we deduce when we see ordinary difficulties in life pushing people into areas which are opposed to our Creator God? What are we to think when catastrophes enter a person's life and they run a way from the God who made them?

What does it tell us about ourselves? Where do we turn when we have trouble in a relationship? When we are not able to cope, to whom do we go? Does it occur to us to turn to God's revelation in Scripture? Do we know we can consult with our parish priest to determine the teaching and response of the Church, the Bride of Christ, in our problems? Do we seek the prayer of believers for conviction and guidance? Do we ourselves pray for direction? And where do we look for help when we are struggling with sin? Do we literally run to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Master of all, for forgiveness? Do we uncover the teaching of the Church and the revelation of God for foolproof help? Or do we approach the dark recesses of life for self-preservation that always leads to destruction?

In his inspired writing, St. Peter does not want us to wonder where we can turn when trouble and adverse circumstance visits us. We need to look *up* to the God of all grace, look *back* and remember He initially invited and called us, and look *ahead* to recognize the coming glory as well as look *within* to see how our heavenly Father is equipping us through our difficulties as well as *strengthening* us to achieve our rightful destiny in his sight.

Is there trouble on your horizon? Turn to the only solution, to the God who loves you unconditionally, for help. When we embark on trouble, trials and temptations, we should never be discouraged, but be eager to take ourselves to the Lord in prayer. Life's challenges are designed not to break us, but to advance us forward and upward toward God!

A Jesus Nut

All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made
John 1: 3.

One day, years ago, an experienced Navy pilot was describing his complex helicopter to visitors at the base which include his parents. He told them that a small hexagonal nut held the main rotor to the mast of the helicopter.

"Guess what we call that nut?" he asked his interested guests. They could only shrug their shoulders, not having a clue. With a smile, the pilot answered his own question: "It's called a Jesus nut."

That may sound irreverent on first hearing, but here is the explanation. If that small piece of metal ever came off, the helicopter would not be able to stay in the air but would come crashing to the ground. So it is understandable why pilots in the Vietnam War gave that little, almost miniscule part the name "Jesus nut."

The writer to the Hebrews also said that Jesus, who made the world, upholds "...all things by the word of his power" Hebrews 1: 3. Because of him, we inhabit a created cosmos, not a chaotic accident. He who made all reality keeps it from collapsing. Except for man's attempts and interference, what is created by God operates by his grace.

Thus, we too, who are created in his image, also need Jesus Christ as our Saviour from sin and Lord of our every day lives. He is the one who can lift us above the degrading forces of evil in our world and keep us aloft in our pilgrimage toward heavenly salvation. Without Jesus in our lives, in the very center of them, in the rightful place where He can make a difference, we come crashing down to the reality of our separation and isolated alienation from our heavenly Father.

When you feel as if your life is crashing down around you, remember it is Jesus who alone holds all things together in your life. Devoted followers beneath his watchful eye securely dwell because that hand which bears all nature up, guards devoted children as well. For time and eternity, Jesus is all we need.

Fathers of the first Council

If you are like most people, you no doubt value your independence. You have heard a great deal of talk about "liberation" and you see people around, doing their own thing. You no doubt admire the man who gets ahead because of his own determination. And initiative is a characteristic you have learned to value greatly.

And as we read the gospels, in the tenth chapter of St. John's message to us, we come upon a description our Lord makes of himself. He describes and characterizes himself as the Good Shepherd and refers to all of us as his sheep. No wonder, then, that many are not enamored of this description of the baptized Christian vocation by the Saviour.

Being a soldier of Christ sounds exciting, a living sacrifice seems so noble and to become a bride of Christ seems so spiritual and mystical, we all conclude. "But a sheep," you begin to say, as you curl up your nose, a sheep follows without thinking and often runs away just as easily. Sheep are skittish, scared and often senseless," you conclude.

You then begin to react rather angrily. "But I don't think I want to think of myself as a sheep." But if that is the way you think it is time to forget yourself and your delusions.

Think instead of your relationship with Christ our Saviour. He calls himself a shepherd in Scripture. And if we study the bible, we come to a quick realization why we can be his faithful sheep, gathered together in this parish-flock and then realize we have many reasons to rejoice with Christ.

It is always time to think about what our relationship with Christ should be, what our relationship as priest and parishioners, shepherd and gathered flock should include.

First, sheep and shepherd share a special knowledge. Our Lord tells us that sheep recognize the shepherd's voice and respond positively to it. They follow only him. Imposters don't stand a chance to lead the sheep astray and away.

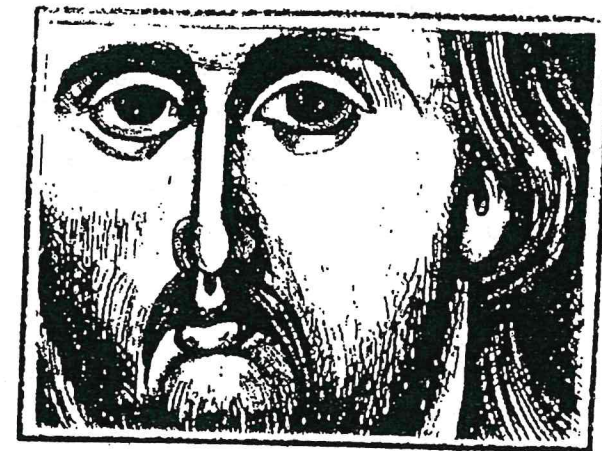
Maybe the truth is that some of us do not even have the dignity of sheep! That is why we become offended when we think of ourselves as sheep. The shepherd offers

the sheep special protection. Christ insists the Good Shepherd "lays down his life for the sheep." And then He continues, "No one can snatch them out of the shepherd's hands."

Scripture paints a picture which helps us set goals for our spiritual lives. We must come to rely on Christ like sheep rely on and trust the Good Shepherd. There is a deep closeness in the relationship between sheep and their shepherd. The Fathers who met at the first Council in Nicea in the year 325 laid down a foundation which later generations of believers continued.

Together we must be willing to follow where Christ leads us, trusting He knows what is best for us, be it a clear path or a prickly one, rock strewn, overgrown or thorny road, the sheep care not. They are interested in only one thing; to follow the Master wherever He leads. Christ is the Good Shepherd sent by our heavenly Father to lead all mankind to salvation. He describes his mission in these words: "I am come that they might have life and have it abundantly" John 10: 10.

The Good Shepherd also teaches us He comes among us as one who serves. That is the vocation and the role of each parish priest and it is mine as well. On this first Sunday of the month of June, when we pray for vocations, remember all priests, deacons and monastics in your prayers because we all follow the eternal Good Shepherd: "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me" John 10: 27.



"I have loved you with an everlasting love."
(Jeremiah 31:3)

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Angelic powers descended to your grave, and the guards fell down and appeared dead. Mary came to the grave seeking your most pure body. You conquered and despoiled the Abyss without being touched by it. You, the Giver of Life, met the Virgin, O Lord, risen from the dead; glory to You! Troparion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

You ascended in glory, O Christ, our God, and delighted the disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through this blessing, they were assured that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world Troparion, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

O Christ, God, You are above all praise, for you established our fathers O Christ our God. You delighted the disciples as lights to all on earth. You led us all to true faith through them. O most bountiful Lord, glory to you! Troparion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

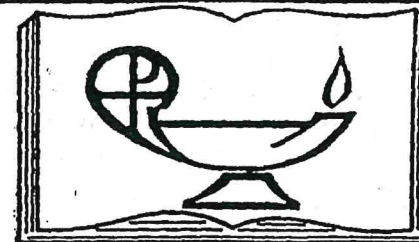
The preaching of the apostles and the decisions of the fathers have established the true faith of the Church which she wears as the garment of truth fashioned from the theology from on high; she justly governs and glorifies the great mystery of worship Kontakion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

When you fulfilled the plan of salvation for us and united all things on earth to those in heaven, Christ our God, you ascended in glory, never leaving us, but remaining ever-present. For you proclaimed to those who love you: 'I am with you, and no one else has power over you' Kontakion, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

Blessed are you, and praiseworthy, O Lord, God of our fathers; glorious forever is your name! Prokimenon, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the highest. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Communion Hymn, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

LORD



TEACH
US

Eternal Life

We would have you be clear about those who sleep in death., brothers, otherwise you might yield to grief, like those who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, God will bring forth with him from the dead those also who have fallen asleep believing in him. We say to you, as if the Lord himself had said it, that we who live, who survive, until his coming will in no way have an advantage over those who have fallen asleep. No, the Lord himself will come down from heaven at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and God's trumpet; and those who have died in Christ will rise first. Then we, the living, the survivors, will be caught up with the in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thenceforth we shall be with the Lord unceasingly. Console one another with this message 1 Thessalonians 4: 13 – 18.

And so I would say to you who are suffering, God will give you rest along with us when the Lord Jesus appears suddenly from heaven in flaming fire with his mighty angels bringing judgment on those who do not wish to know God and who refuse to accept his plan to save them through our Lord Jesus Christ. They will be punished in everlasting hell forever separated from the Lord, never to see the glory of his power 2 Thessalonians 1: 7 – 9.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting comfort and hope which we don't deserve 2 Thessalonians 2: 16.

But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as an example to show everyone how patient he is with even the worst sinners, so others will realize that they, too, can have everlasting life 1 Timothy 1: 6.