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Drawing All to Himself

O the marvelous power of the cross, the glory of the passion! No tongue can fully describe it. Here we see the judgment seat of the Lord, here sentence is passed upon the world, and here the sovereignty of the Crucified is revealed.

You drew all things to Yourself, Lord, when You stretched out Your hands all the day long to a people that denied and opposed You, until at last the whole world was brought to proclaim Your majesty. You drew all things to Yourself, Lord, when all the elements combined to pronounce judgment in denouncement of that crime; when the lights of heaven were darkened and the day was turned into night; when the land was shaken by unwonted earthquakes, and all creation refused to serve those wicked people. Yes, Lord, you drew all things to Yourself. The veil of the temple was torn in two and the Holy of Holies taken away from those unworthy high priests. Figures gave way to reality, prophecy to manifestation, law to gospel. You drew all things to Yourself in order that the worship of the whole human race could be celebrated everywhere in a sacramental form which would openly fulfill what had been enacted by means of veiled symbols in that single Jewish temple.

Now that the multiplicity of animal sacrifices has ceased, the single offering of your body and blood takes the place of that diversity of victims, since you are the true Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and in Yourself you fulfill all the rites of the old law, so that as there is now a single sacrifice in place of all those victims, so there is a single kingdom formed of all the peoples of the earth.

St. Leo the Great

Sunday Before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Icon of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross -- September 14th

1SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church
107 South Fourth Stret
Minersville, PA
570-544-2074
Father Gregory J. Noga, pastor

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
131 South Morris Street
Saint Clair, PA
tvrgjn@outlook.com

Volume 2026
Christ is Among us!

Number 38
He is and will be!

Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross
Tone 7

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.

September 13– September 19, AD2026

Vigil of Sunday		
Saturday	4:00 p.m.	**+Rev. Francis T. Gera** req. by The Estate*
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	**Health and Blessings of the Parishioners**
		Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Solemn Holy Day)
Monday	6:00 p.m.	**Private Intention***
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	**Private Intention***
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	**Private Intention***
Thursday	9:00 a.m.	**No Divine Liturgy Today***
Friday	9:00 a.m.	**No Divine Liturgy Today***
Saturday	4:00 p.m.	**Private Intention***

*St. Mary
*SS Peter & Paul

Epistle Readers: 9/6 – Ellen Sinkovich; 9/8 – Dolores Kramer; 9/13 – Paulette Murphy; 9/14 – Marie Wanchick; 9/20 – Laura Mitchell; 9/27 – Jennifer Keer; 10/1 – Gail Burgess.

Synodal Group: We will meet today Sunday, September 13 immediately after the Divine Liturgy.

Pilgrimage to St. Therese at Annunciation Monastery, Sugarloaf, PA on **Saturday, September 26** beginning at 8:00 a.m. and concluding with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at 11:00 a.m.

Bible Study: **Sunday, October 4** following the Divine Liturgy.

Breakfast With Father: **Sunday, October 11** following Divine Liturgy.

IN HEAVEN AND FROM HEAVEN. AUGUSTINE: Some people, certainly, find very surprising what the Lord said in the Gospel, "Nobody has ascended into heaven, except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven." How, they ask, can the Son of man be said to have come down from heaven, when it was here that he was taken on in the Virgin's womb? People who say this are not to be rejected but instructed. I think, you see, that they are raising this question out of piety but are not yet able to understand what they are inquiring about. They do not realize, I mean, that the divinity took on the humanity in such a way as to become one person, God and man; and that the humanity was attached to the divinity in such a way that Word, soul and flesh were the one Christ. And that is why it could be said, "No one has ascended into heaven, except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven." SERMON 265B.2

Please excuse our mess while we improve our restrooms. At present the men's room cannot be used, so be sure to check the ladies' room to be sure it is vacant. And men, be sure not to make a mess!

Did You Know That ...

...our light ought be soft, steady, inviting and joyful instead of a harsh floodlight that blinds, even burns all?

...our prayer ought not be the God-show-me-a-miracle prayer of Elias but the your-will-be-done prayer of Christ?

...sacramental reconciliation ought be a regular and integral part of our spiritual life?

...worship for the believer is a genuine privilege?

...we ought to be just as careful that we cheat no one as we are that nobody cheats us?

...we ought to discern quickly what is lurking in our heart that makes us bitter?

...every believer should learn Zachary's secret of waiting in silence for an answer to prayer?

...you should not be lulled by false prophets and false visions of what life should be like?

...fear is useless; what is needed is trust in God?

...the best and easiest way to thank God for His blessings is at worship Sundays and holy days at the Divine Liturgy?

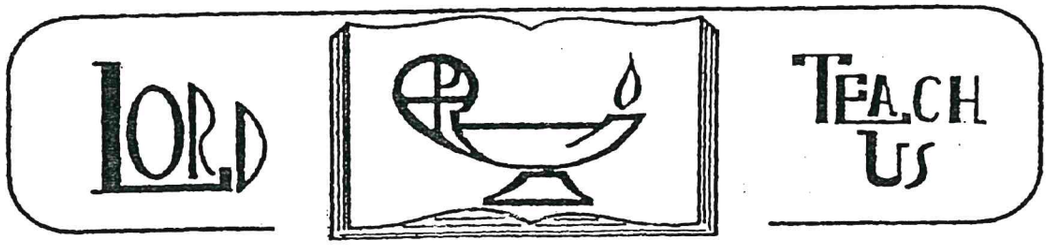
...we ought to love out of the wisdom and perspective God's grace places in our hearts?

...too often we look to the sky for lightening instead of simple signs in our heart and soul?

...the believer can know no greater joy than to regularly glorify God at worship in the Divine Liturgy when he can receive Communion and become like Christ himself?

...the only reason for going to church is because we respond to God's enduring love for us?

...our Saviour, Jesus Christ is always present in our parish church?



Honesty

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity **Proverbs 11: 3.**

He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up hi soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from his Saviour **Psalms 24: 45.**

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways, we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyman's conscience in the sight of God **2 Corinthians 4: 2.**

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ **Ephesians 4: 15.**

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place **Psalms 51: 6.**

The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him **1 John 2: 4.**

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long **Psalms 25: 5.**

For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men **2 Corinthians 8: 21.**

The Parable of the Three Trees

Once upon a mountaintop, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!"

The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on it's way to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!"

The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain. The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell. "Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest, I shall hold wonderful treasure!" The first tree said.

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters!" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven.

But the woodcutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me." He muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell. The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feedbox for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, nor with treasure. She was coated with saw dust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail to an ocean, or even a river; instead she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. "What happened?" The once tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God..."

Many many days and night passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams.

But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feedbox. "I wish I could make a cradle for him." her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and the sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful" she said.

And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through with the wind and the rain. The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hands to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel.

But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth tremble with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God's love had changed everything. It had made the third tree strong. And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

So next time you feel down because you didn't get what you want, just sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something better to give you .....

Author Unknown