

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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Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

Glory to You, Lover of Mankind

Master of all, alone without sin, for me the unworthy sinner were given over to death, death on a Cross, that you might free the sinner's soul from the bonds of sins. And what shall I give you in return for this, Master?

Glory to you, Lover of mankind! Glory to you, O Merciful! Glory to you, O Long-suffering! Glory to you, who pardon every fault! Glory to you, who came down to save our souls! Glory to you, incarnate in the Virgin's womb! Glory to you, who were bound! Glory to you, who were scourged! Glory to you, who were crucified! Glory to you, who were buried! Glory to you, who were raised! Glory to you, who were proclaimed! Glory to you, who were believed! Glory to you, who were taken up! Glory to you, who were enthroned with great glory at the Father's right hand, and are coming

again with the glory of the Father and the holy Angels to judge every soul that has despised your holy sufferings in that dread and fearful hour, when the powers of heaven will be shaken; when Angels, Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim will come all together with fear and trembling before your glory; when all the foundations of the earth will tremble, and everything that has breath will shudder at your great and unendurable glory.

In that hour your hand will hide me under its wings and my soul be delivered from the fearful fire, the gnashing of teeth, the outer darkness and unending weeping, that blessing you, I may say, Glory to the One, who wished to save the sinner through the many acts of pity of His compassion.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



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

16th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Birth of the Theotokos
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.

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September 8 – September 14, AD2024

Vigil of Sunday

Saturday	4:00 p.m.	+Anna Benzulak req. by GCU Lodge #63 *
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Health and Blessing of the Parishioners*
Monday	9:00 a.m.	+John Luchanin req. by Eileen Dunchick*
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	No Divine Liturgy Today
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	+Mary Kovich req. by Marie Wanchick *
Thursday	9:00 a.m.	+John Lohin req. by Llane Lohin Kunze*
Friday	9:00 a.m.	+Charles Sinko req. by Francis Krus *
		Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Holy Day)
Saturday	9:00 a.m.	H&B Parishioners*
Saturday	4:00 p.m.	+Andrew & +Margaret Gershack * req. by Estate

*St. Mary

*SS Peter & Paul

Epistle Readers: 8/25 – Paulette Murphy; 8/29 – Marie Wanchick; 9/1 – Laura Mitchell; 9/8 – Jennifer Keer; 9/14 – Gail Burgess; 9/15 – Dolores Kramer; 9/22 – Ellen Sinkovich; 9/30 – Judy Kostura; 10/1 – Beverly Kostishak.

Breakfast with Father: Today, Sunday, September 8, 2024 we resume our monthly gathering “munching and learning” about Sacred Scripture and Liturgy following the Divine Liturgy.

The theme for this year's Catechetical Year is: **We Are Stewards of God's Creation**

REFLECTION on the Nativity of the Theotokos

St. Dionysius the Areopagite writes of the immeasurable joy, the outer and inner radiance, and the indescribable fragrance that he sensed in the presence of the Holy Theotokos when he visited her in Jerusalem. In his zeal, he says that if he had not known the One True God, he would have recognized her, the Holy Virgin Mary, as God. The Holy Virgin made such a powerful and unique impression on men during her earthly life-and she received an incomparably greater power and glory after her physical death when, by the will of God, she was exalted above the heavenly hosts. Her power comes from her ceaseless prayer for the faithful, for all those who turn to her for help. When St. John of Novgorod and his people prayed to her for help against a hostile army, he understood that she was simultaneously praying to the Lord with tears in their behalf, and Novgorod was miraculously saved. As she was compassionate toward her crucified Son, so the Holy Most-pure One is also compassionate toward all those in need, and who turn to her for help. It could be said that the entire earth is covered by the miracles of her mercy. Even today, there lives in Belgrade a café owner (C. J.), who was born in the village of Labuni te (Macedonia) outside Struga. His mother brought him blind to the Monastery of Kali to, where, after the priest prayed over him before the icon of the Holy Theotokos, he received his sight. The first monk at Pochaev saw a fiery pillar extending from earth to heaven, and in that flaming pillar he saw the Holy Theotokos. She was standing on a rock. On the spot where she stood, a spring of healing water sprang forth: even today, it heals many of the sick.

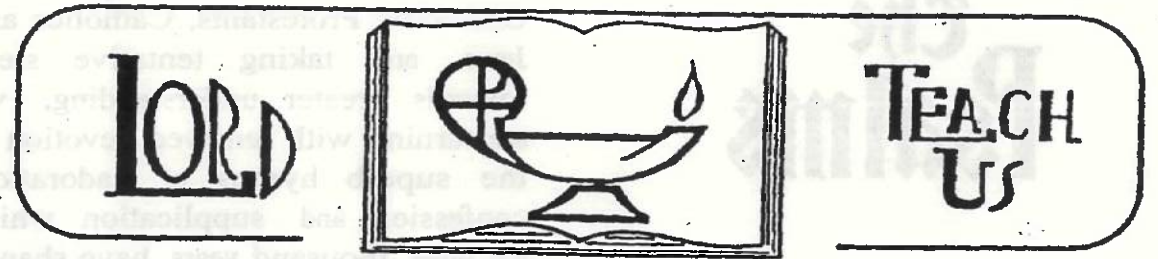
SEPTEMBER 8

"The day of the Nativity of the Mother of God is a day of universal joy, because through the Mother of God, the entire human race was renewed, and the sorrow of the first mother, Eve, was transformed into joy." - *St. John Damascene*

The birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been celebrated as a liturgical feast at least from the sixth century. Its origin can be traced to the occasion of the consecration of a church in Jerusalem just inside St. Stephen's Gate, near the Pool of Bethesda, on the traditional site of the house of Ss. Joachim and Anne. Within a few years the liturgy was celebrated in Rome, having been introduced by monks from the East, and the celebration included a procession to the Basilica of St. Mary Major.

Did You Know That ...

- ...having reached a standard of excellence, never let it rest; push yourself even higher?
- ...life is like an ever shifting kaleidoscope; a slight change and all patterns alter?
- ...the first duty of love is to listen and then correct?
- ...there can be no happiness if the things we believe in are different from the things we do?
- ...for the most part, fear is an illusion; when you share it with God, it tends to disappear?
- ...what we see depends primarily on what we look for?
- ...imagine how much easier it would be for us to love if we began with a shared definition of what Christ teaches us?
- ...education in general is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get if you don't?
- ...it is better to wear out than rust out?
- ...just as millions of snowflakes pile up to create a blanket of snow, the "thank you's" we say pile up and fall gently upon one another until, in our hearts and minds, we are adrift in gratitude?
- ...good order, according to St. Paul is the foundation of all good things?
- ...nothing makes us feel so strong as a call for our help?
- ...you should not feel entitled to anything you did not sweat and struggle for?
- ...it would be a very big book that contained all the maybes uttered in a day?
- ...the only way to live righteously is to accept every minute as an unrepeatable miracle which is exactly what it is?
- ...the only person who can make you happy is God working in you?



Surviving Financial Problems

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love you Psalms 122: 6.

The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble. And they that know your name will put their trust in you, for you, Lord have not forsaken them that seek you Psalms 9: 9, 10.

And he said to them, Take heed and beware of covetousness for a man's life consists not in an abundance of things which he possesses Luke 12: 15.

So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do to me Hebrews 13: 6.

And then he said to his disciples, Therefore I say to you, take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, neither for the body, what you shall put on. Life is more than meat, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap, neither have they storehouse nor barn, and God feeds them; how much more are you better than the birds of the air Luke 12: 22 – 24?

But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ Philippians 4: 19.

For you have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise Hebrews 10: 36.

He that trusts in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch Proverbs 11: 28.

The Psalms



In today's ecumenical age, when Orthodox, Protestants, Catholics and Jews are taking tentative steps towards greater understanding, we are turning with renewed devotion to the superb hymns of adoration, confession and supplication which for three thousand years have shaped public prayer and private meditation. These are contained in the Book of Psalms, the world's best-loved poems and prayers. In the Psalter, millions of people find a message that gives meaning to life.

The Psalms are found in any Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Orthodox Bible. They are quoted in milestone ceremonies of life, from Baptism and Chrismation to marriage and final rites. They are replete in the worship of the Byzantine Church as in no other. There is hardly anybody who does not know one or more of them by heart.

In analyzing the universal appeal of the Psalms, it has been said that like any great poems and prayers they are more about the reader and prayer than the writer. They sing for any soul that is completely serious, whether they have a spiritual or worldly outlook. This immortal poetry in which millions upon millions have been touched by God.

Sing to the Lord

"Sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously triumphant" Exodus 15: 21.

"Sing praise to the Lord, you faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name" Psalms 30:5.

"Let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us acclaim the rock of our salvation" Psalms 95:1.

"Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all you lands. Sing to the Lord, bless his name, announce his salvation day after day" Psalms 96:1, 2.

"Sing to Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise with the harp to our God..." Psalms 147: 7.

"Sing to him/sing his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds" 1 Chronicles 16: 7.

"They sang: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his mercy endures forever" 2 Chronicles 20:21.

"We shall sing and chant' the praise of your might" Psalms 21;13.

"Exult you just in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting....Sing to him a new song..." Psalms 33:1, 3.

"O Lord open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise" Psalms 51: 17.

"You kingdoms of the earth, sing to God, chant praise to the Lord..." Psalms 68: 33.

"Sing to him, sing his praise; proclaim all his wondrous deeds" Psalms 105: 2."I

want to sing with my spirit and with my mind as well" 1 Corinthians 14: 15.

The Psalms reveal a positive code of morality, that which expresses the innermost love of God for His choicest creation. The good man loves the law of God's truth "...and meditates on his law day and night" Psalms 1: 2. Loving the law, he understands its spirit and will deal justly with others, keep his word even when inconvenient, befriend the poor, and bridle his tongue. For him, death will hold no terror: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" Psalms 23:6.

Familiar to us all are the times when "my cup overflows" Psalms 23: 5; but we also recognize ourselves in the Psalmist who contemplates his sorrow, sickness and sins, and "waters my couch with my tears" Psalms 6:7. When his agony becomes unbearable, he utters a plea for help and forgiveness which we hear at the celebration of Vespers: "Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord, Lord hear my voice. If you should mark iniquities, who shall stand" Psalms 130:1?

Although the Psalms have never ceased to work their spiritual and favorable good response either for the individual who prays them or for

the liturgical life in which they are prayed and sung, there is at present a reawakening of interest in them. New Psalm commentaries are appearing and perhaps for us, the appearance of the liturgical Psalter entirely in English which was translated from an older European Old Slavonic edition at the turn of the last century, is most encouraging. Formal choral pieces are being produced and joyfully accepted by the public. Ecumenists hope for the acceptance of a common Psalter between Christians and Jews. How excellent it would be if the Psalms could further unite us all in some form of deeper Christian unity as characterized the early Church.

The Psalms translate into simple speech the spiritual passion of the scholar and give utterance and expression, with the beauty born of truth, to the humble longing and petition of the unlettered man who authored them, and so, are a perfect reflection of every man's needs. We all know the Psalms are the perfect answer to problems in any individual life. May it please God that the Psalms now should work their power among people of differing creeds so they could return to the unity enjoyed by apostolic Christianity.

and introduced to Him, bind together the worshipping souls of four diverse faiths. The verdict of civilization is that they are the lyric poems of a believing culture. But for true believers they are much more, far more because they express the soul of an ardent believer in his intimate relationship with God.

The Psalms were originally intended to be sung as they are today in the formal worship of Orthodoxy. The word *psalm* comes from a Greek verb meaning "to twitch," as in plucking a stringed instrument; Although other instruments were used, the Psalms' ancient accompaniment - was something like a harp.

Christianity in its incipient stages bonded together in community as they sang the Psalms according to the Psalmist's own rule: "Seven times a day do I praise you" Psalms 119: 114. It was the Psalms that embellished the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the apostolic Church as their use does even today. Following the example of our Lord Who quoted the Psalms throughout His ministry, Christians made the Psalms their way of expressing joy in the good news they made their own after the Resurrection of Christ. "Is any among you suffering hardship?

Let him pray," advises St. James. "If any person is in good spirits, he should sing a hymn of praise" James 5: 13, which meant singing the Psalms.

It was the Christian singing of Psalms that alerted the Roman world to the revolutionary new force in its midst. Astonishment deepened to awe when the martyrs went to the lions joyously singing Psalms. Later, as Roman civilization crumbled and the barbarians moved in, art, culture and learning survived in monasteries established by believers in which the Psalms were customarily sung as part of the various prayer celebrations of feast days.

There is no movement of spirit that is not reflected in the Psalms as in a mirror, or as a reverberation of an echo. All sorrows, troubles, fears, doubts, hopes, pains, perplexities, stormy outbursts and depth aspirations by which the hearts of men are tossed and turned that are not depicted in the Psalms true to life.

Even the Pilgrim fathers sailed from Holland "to sing Psalms and pray..." and one of the early Puritan settlements in this nation was named in allusion to Psalm 76: 2: "In Salem

is his abode," thereby associating a part of early American history with this sacred book of prayer.

In 1787 the Constitutional Convention meeting in Philadelphia was near failure because the thirteen former independent self-viewing colonies could not agree on a form of effective national government. When the deadlock appeared too great for mere human intellect to overcome, the 81 year old Benjamin Franklin, somewhat of a free thinker himself, rose to his feet. All his life, he said, he had been convinced the Psalms were right in saying, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" Psalms 127: 1. He moved that the delegates begin the next day's meeting with a prayer offered by an invited Philadelphia clergyman. The motion carried. So dramatic was the improvement in legislative temperaments and efficiency that Congress until today still observes this long ago established precedent.

Scripture itself attributes authorship of most of its 150 Psalms to David, the shepherd boy, warrior, poet and king who established the Judean dynasty at Jerusalem around 1000 BC. But from the existence of other Psalm-like passages in the earliest

Old Testament chronicles, it has been thought that the tradition of Psalm-compiling predates David.

Confirmation of this comes now from a variety of sources particularly Ras Shamra in Syria, where archeologists have unearthed the ruins of the lost city of Ugaritic, a Bronze Age center of commerce on the caravan route between Egypt and Mesopotamia. In one room of a temple of a local pagan deity were clay tablets covered with cuneiform characters. When the markings were deciphered, they turned out to be fragments of poetry similar in style and language construction to some of the biblical Psalms, the first, non-biblical poetry antedating David's Psalms to ever be discovered. More remarkable were some direct parallels, ranging from "cup that overflows" Psalms 23 5, to the "hart that pants after running water" Psalms 42: 1. The language of these Ugaritic writings is closely related to ancient Hebrew. So God used not so praiseworthy and uplifting sources for use in glorifying His all embracing Name.

Religiously as well as ethically the Ugaritic texts cannot, of course, be compared with the Psalms. They are filled with gross and often cruel

demi-gods of antiquity. But the fact that the Psalms have marked similarities to these ancient poems and lyrics indicated rather obviously that in the Psalms man confronts his ancestors and neighbors at the beginning of his upward reach toward God in covenant.

Part of the power of the Psalms to move people comes from their simplicity. They utilize short, concrete words, familiar, everyday images: sheep and shepherds, the beasts of the field, fowl of the air, night and day, mountains, valleys, thunder and rain, the proud and the put upon. When the Psalm-singer says he thirsted for God, "...my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water" Psalms 63: 2, his meaning is clear to everyone.

But the chief appeal of the Psalms lies in their themes of life and death, good and evil, justice and mercy, all contained in the one overriding theme, the marvelous and wondrous ways of God with man. The God of the Psalms combines the deep insights of philosophy and theology with what the simplest person instinctively feels and knows to be true. He is the personal God of every individual who responds to the

invited covenant and makes himself a part of the body of believers. His love surpasses the most noble human love, even the purest: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" Psalms 27: 10. He is the source and author of hope: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear" Psalms 27:1?

The Psalms contain a theological statement of an astounding scientific truth: the biological uniqueness of man, which also implies his spiritual ascendancy over all other creation. Surveying the starry sky, a particularly awesome sight over the Middle eastern desert, the Psalmist proclaims: "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which You set in place; What is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man that you care for him" Psalms 8: 4, 5.

But just as quickly as the question arises in the mind and heart of man, just as quickly does the answer literally pour forward: "For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the work of your hands; You have put all things under his feet" Psalms 8: 6, 7.