

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

Saints Peter & Paul Rectory: (570) 544-2074

Website: www.sspeterandpaulminersville.com

Email: tvrgjn@outlook.com

Served by: Very Reverend Gregory J. Noga, Pastor

SS. Peter & Paul Cantor: Mr. Paul Konkus St. Mary Cantor: Dr. Peter Yasenchak

CONFESSIONS: Sts. Peter & Paul: Saturday 2:45-3:30 PM, Sunday 8:00-8:30 AM,

St. Mary's: Saturday 1:00 – 1:30 PM

SICK CALLS: As scheduled, or anytime in case of an emergency. If anyone is homebound or hospitalized, please call the rectory (544-2074) IMMEDIATELY.

Bulletins are sponsored by

Mahal-Ritzel Funeral Home

Minersville, PA 544-5111

Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

Our parish is grateful for their support – May the Lord bless their efforts!

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/EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD



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

Sunday before Theophany
Tone 6

Welcome to the parish communities of SS. Peter and Paul and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Churches of Minersville and Saint Clair, 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 3 - January 9, 2021
All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

Saturday Vigil at SS Peter & Paul

4:00 p.m. + **John Koslosky** req. by Anna Adley, Joseph & Linda Kafora

Sunday

8:00 a.m. +**Demko Family** req. by daughters Theresa & Janice (at St. Mary)

10:00 a.m. **Health and Blessings of the Parishioners** (at SS Peter & Paul)
livestreamed

Monday

8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy Today**

Tuesday Vigil Liturgy of **Theophany** at St. Mary

4:00 p.m. +**Ronald Sitka** req. by John & Terry Ammon

Wednesday **Theophany** at SS Peter & Paul (livestreamed)

9:00 a.m. **Health and Blessings of the Parishioners**

Thursday

8:00 a.m. +**Anna Lutz** req. by James Lutz

Friday

8:00 a.m. +**Joseph Lohin** req by daughter Elaine L. Kunze

Saturday **Saturday after Theophany** (at SS Peter & Paul)

4:00 p.m. +**Helen Hashin** req. by Frank, Vivian & Sophie Gogno

Epistle Readers: 1/3 – Beverly Kostishak; 1/6 – Marie Wanchick; 1/9 – Angela Frank.; 1/10 – Jennifer Keer; 1/16 – Dolores Kramer; 1/17 – Ellen Sinkovich; 1/23 – Gail Burgess; 1/24 – Anna Keer; 1/29 – Marie Wanchick; 1/30 – Dolores Kramer.

Announcement: I am pleased to make public that Hillcrest Hall has been sold to Holy Family Parish of Minersville. The closing was on December 30, 2020.

When Father Kapisinsky, was assigned as pastor in 1940, he envisioned building a school and Hillcrest Hall was his answer to earn the capital to build and sustain that vision, and through the ensuing years it did. I have listened to a number of stories of the glory years of Hillcrest and am deeply impressed by the vitality and dedication of the many volunteers who held dinners, dances, wedding banquets and other events. The Hall not only raised monies for the school it provided social and spiritual cohesion to the parochial family.

When I was assigned to our parish, I was told by a few in the larger community, when I introduced myself as the pastor of SS. Peter & Paul Church, "Oh, you belong to the rich church." I was taken aback thinking to myself, if you only knew!

Now that that chapter is behind us, a new vision has to be implemented. When I was approached by two individuals asking if we had space to accommodate the Minersville Food Bank, I agreed to give them space in our now defunct school. I would like to expand on that ministry to the poor and disadvantaged in our community to become better known as the Church that Cares. Pope Francis wants the Universal Church to become a "poor church for the poor." I want our church to extend the love we have for each other to others, to look outwards, not inwards.

Will you good people take ownership of this vision with the same vitality and dedication of those who came before us, built Hillcrest Hall to build and sustain the school? Will you generously give of your love to others? I hope we can build a better future for us, with God's promise of sustaining us in our efforts, and for others.

I am entrusting our parish to our Patron Saints Peter and Paul, Pillars of the Church, to guide and protect us as we begin a new chapter in the parishes' life.

In Christ,
Fr. Gregory

God's Will

Believers very well know that nothing which is not God's will can come into the life of one who trusts and obeys our heavenly Father. Even our Lord affirms this assertion in His own trying circumstances. "You would have no power at all against me if it were not given you from above" John 19: 11. This fact is enough to make our life one of ceaseless thanksgiving and joy. For God's will is the one hopeful, glad, and glorious thing in the world. And it is working in His omnipotence for us all the time with nothing to prevent it if we submit to it and firmly and seriously believe in His grace ever present in us.

A saint who was passing through deep waters of affliction, wrote to a friend: "Is it not a glorious thing to know that, no difference how unjust a thing may be, or how absolutely it may seem to be from the devil, by the time it reaches us it is God's will for us, and will work for good in us? For all things work together for good to us who love God. And even in the betrayal, Christ said, "The cup which my Father gave me, shall I not drink it" John 13: 11? We do live charmed lives if we are living in the center of God's will for us. All the attacks that the devil, through others' sins, can hurl against us are not only powerless to harm us, but are turned into blessings on the way.

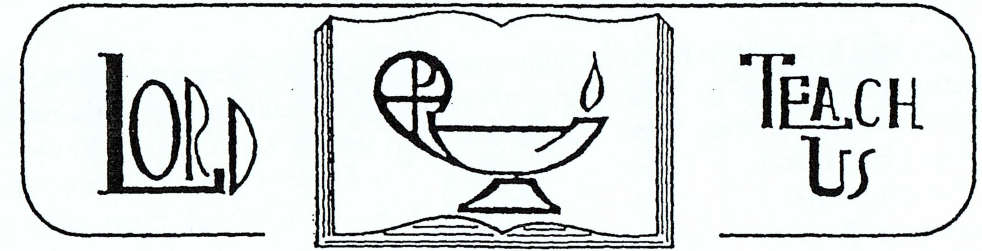
Christ had to die before He could rise from the grave. The best things of life come to us in wounding. Wheat is literally crushed before it can become the Eucharistic bread to spiritually nourish us. The same is true of grapes before they can purple our lips with His precious Blood. Incense must be cast upon the hot coals before its pleasant aroma is set free reminiscent then, of our prayer ascending before the throne of the Father. The ground must be broken with the sharp plough before it is ready to receive and warmly embrace the seed. It is many times the broken heart that renders our being most pleasing in the sight of our heavenly Father because all is removed from it that carries the stench of sin. Many times the sweetest joys of life are the fruits of our sorrow. Human nature seems to need suffering to fit it for being a blessing to the world. It was only after betraying the Lord that Peter had the eagerness to forgive other sinners. All that appears in our lives which we incorrectly judge to be punishment is many times simply a redirective effort on the part of a loving Father to teach us the error of our ways. When no other means is available to place our firm footing once again on the road to salvation, He does permit sorrow and difficulty so that we might come to our senses.

God Talk

What precisely is God's will for me? Our Lord provides us with important insight. "Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me" Mark 3:35. Certainly our God does not dramatically and specifically send angels with messages. Yet, we all hear a great deal from our God. He does speak to us within the inner recesses of our heart and conscience. It might be something we have read in a spiritual publication such as this bulletin, or even in the daily newspaper that we can relate to our lives and our circumstances which will touch a sensitive point and produce an awareness of God's will for us. It may be an encounter with another person to whom we might compare ourselves and recognize a similarity and how they successfully encountered it and overcame a defect of character. It may challenge us to seek after the grace of the Lord and make a serious endeavor to correct our shortcomings. It may be during a particular moment during the Divine Liturgy, a special message in the homily or sermon which will trigger a positive response and the working of the Holy Spirit will initiate a new beginning for us. It could be a simple innocent plaque in a craft shop which draws our attention to an important message and direction which will bring about a conversion. In some instances it might be a line in a play or a television show, or perhaps the words of a song on the radio. God does work in mysterious ways. And it could also be communicated to us from the lips of our parents or siblings. It can have the rumbling effect of producing change that is serious and long term and affects the destiny of our soul. Sometimes it is simply a casual remark someone interjects that sets us to thinking seriously and sincerely about ourselves and our status in the sight of our Creator. Often, it may be something that we may be thinking and attributing to someone else, which we finally turn around and apply to ourselves. "Why doesn't she or he use their talents for God?" might suddenly become "Why don't I utilize what God has given me to better myself?" "How can I take this situation and apply it to myself so that God is glorified by my efforts?" "Am I utilizing all the advantages our Creator has endowed me with to become what He intended?"

Even though God speaks in whispers, and it takes skill to hear and discern His voice amid the clamor of our society and all its incessant noises, amid the clatter of words flowing through our brains. This is precisely why at the end of each day we should close our eyes and shut our ears down to the computer in our head and permit God to fine tune our spiritual antennae to the right frequency. There is no question our God is speaking to us, but are we wise, avid and good listeners?

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE



When the Forerunner saw Him Who is our enlightenment, Who enlightens every man coming to be baptized, his heart rejoiced and his hand trembled. He pointed Him out to the people and said: "This is the Saviour of Israel Who delivered us from corruption!" O Christ, God, O sinless Lord, glory be to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

O Saviour, the armies of angels trembled when they saw You baptized by Your servant, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness by coming down, and when they heard the Father's voice speaking from heaven: "This One upon Whom the Forerunner lays his hands is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." O Christ God, Glory, to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

When the Jordan River received You, O Fountainhead, the Consoler came down in the form of a dove. Behold the marvel: the One Who drew the curve of heaven bows His head to the Forerunner, to the one made of clay who cries out to His Master: "Why do You order me to do things beyond my worth? It is I who need to be baptized by You!" O Christ God, O sinless One, glory be to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

O Lord, when John saw You coming to him at the Jordan River, he cried out: "How do You, O Lord, Who have no stain, come to me Your servant? In whose name shall I baptize You? In the name of the Father You possess in Yourself? In the name of the Son while You are the very Son in the flesh? In the name of the Holy Spirit Whom You grant to the faithful with the breath of Your mouth?" O God made manifest, have mercy on us! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

The waters have seen You! O Lord, when the waters saw You, they trembled, for the very Cherubim do not dare to look upon Your glory, nor can the Seraphim rest their eyes upon You. They stand in fear before You, some on guard; others glorifying Your might. Together with them, we proclaim Your praise, O merciful One and say: O God become manifest for us, have mercy on us! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

Walking In Love

A new commandment I give to you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples if you love one another John 13: 34, 35.

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you 1 Thessalonians 3: 12.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my father's commands and remain in his love John 15: 9, 10.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity Colossians 3: 12 - 14.

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends Proverbs 17: 9.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness 1 Timothy 6: 11.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves Romans 12: 9, 10.

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather serve one another in love Galatians 5: 13.