

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.**

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

Palm Sunday

The hymns and prayers celebrating Christ's glorious journey into the Holy City reflect both the joy and the concern about what shall in short time occur in this City.

The introductory Vespers' hymn expresses these sentiments in these words: "Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together, and we all take up Your Cross and say; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" The Palm Sunday exclamation, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord ..." is repeated over and over and we know that it was also taken into the Liturgy's solemn hymn, "Holy, holy, holy ..."

A Palm Sunday liturgical text beautifully expresses the full dimensions of this greeting when it says, "Blessed are You, You have come and are

coming again in the name of the Lord God our Savior!" The serene sunshine of the Palm Sunday could not last long. Evening is approaching of the first day of the Holy Week. Jesus' enemies were not idle; they gather and debate how to stop any similar demonstration. He should be arrested.

The Church reminds us of this change: "As we pass from one Divine Feast to another, O faithful, let us go with haste to the reverent and saving celebration of Christ's sufferings. Let us behold Him undergo voluntary suffering for our sake, and let us sing to Him with thankfulness a fitting hymn: O Fountain of tender mercy and Haven of salvation. Lord, glory be to You!" The Great, Holy Week of Christ's Passion began.

Father Vladimir Vancik

PALM SUNDAY -- FLOWERY SUNDAY



Icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem

Volume 2021
Christ is among us!

Number 13
He is and will be!

Flowery Sunday
Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem
Festive Tone

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.

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March 28– April 3, 2021
All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

Saturday Vigil at SS Peter & Paul

4:00 p.m. + **Mary & Michael Stasko** req. by Beverly Jean Kostishak

Sunday

8:00 a.m. + **Andrew & Margaret Gerchak** req. by Estate (at St. Mary)

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

Great Monday

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

Great Tuesday

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

Great Wednesday

5:00 p.m. Confession – outside Confessor – Father Maletz

6:00 p.m. **Pres-Sanctified Liturgy of St. Gregory the Great**

7:00 p.m. Confession – outside Confessor – Father Maletz

Great Thursday

6:00 p.m. **Vespers/Divine Liturgy** commemorating the establishment of the Holy Eucharist/Holy Orders – Private Intention

Great Friday

3:00 p.m. **Vespers w/Entombment of the Holy Shroud** at St. Mary

6:00 p.m. **Vespers w/Entombment of the Holy Shroud** at SS. Peter & Paul

Great Saturday **Pascha Vigil** (at St. Mary)
5:00 p.m. **Matins of Resurrection w/Divine Liturgy**

Pascha – Resurrection of Jesus Christ – Day of Great Joy
8:00 a.m. **Matins of Resurrection w/Divine Liturgy**

Epistle Readers: Cantors Paul Konkus and Dr. Peter Yasenachak will select respective readers for Holy and Great Week Services in each parish. Those already scheduled will read this weekend.

Blessing of Paschal Foods:

St. Mary: Holy Saturday 1:00 p.m. & following Resurrection Matins/Liturgy.

SS. Peter & Paul: Holy Saturday 2:00 p.m. & following Resurrection Matins/Liturgy.

Pastoral Note: There will be No Divine Services on Great & Holy Monday and Tuesday due to a medical procedure I will have done. This comes at an odd time, but the Covid 19 kept delaying the schedule; thank you for your kind understanding.

Why did Jesus proclaim His thirst from the Cross? Simply to lay just one more plank on a sturdy bridge over which a doubter could walk. His confession of thirst is a signal for all who seek it; He is the Messiah.

His final act, then, is a warm and concerned word for the deliberately cautious: “You can trust in Me.”

Do we not all need someone in whom to trust; someone bigger than we are, more powerful, even the very Source of life itself?

Are we not tired of trusting people of this earth, like ourselves, for understanding?

Are we not tired of trusting the things of earth for strength?

Are we not sick of placing our trust in other created beings?

A drowning sailor does not call on another drowning sailor for help. A prisoner does not beg another prisoner to set him free. A pauper knows better than to beg from another pauper. He knows he needs someone who is strong and more able than he.

Jesus' message through the wine-soaked sponge is this: “I am that person. Trust Me for your salvation, for your entire life.”

The triumphant entry which we commemorate today represents all of those clear moments when humanity has expressed its strongest wishes for God to intervene, but has ;mistaken its own purposes for the heart an desire of God himself. This opening scene in the final week of Jesus serves to remind us all the way in which Jesus' entry into history was misunderstood even by those who were expecting him. The Triumphant Entry teaches us to acknowledge Jesus Christ for who He really is, not who we want him to be. We must learn today to allow God to be God!

We learn today our human nature because of the sinful alienation we inherited from Adam and Eve is not eternal and our divine nature is not simply mortal. We can have a part in restoring it to its original pristine beauty. All of Christ's attributes must be understood in the very same way. It was not the human nature that fed thousands. It was not simply his like humanity to which we are called to aspire after by his grace that hurried to the fig tree. Who was weary from the journey and who made the world exist by his word? What is the brightness of glory and what was pierced with iron nails? What body is beaten in the Passion and what body is eternally glorified? This much is very clear: that the beating and blows belong to the servant who is the Lord, and honor belongs always to the Lord who among us is servant pre-eminent! As a result, Christ's natures are unified in such a perfect way and their respective attributes belong to both natures. Just as the Lord received the scars of the servant, the servant is glorified with the honor of God. For this is why the cross is called the glorious emblem of our Lord of glory and why every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

The primary reason we do not derive as much spiritual benefit from this coming week is that we look at the Lord from the slanted perspective of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. We want from him what we think we need. We look at Jesus in the wrong way and forget to explore his purpose which is to be understood in another way, perhaps even in direct contrast to our own understanding and expectation. Our understanding leads us to approach the Saviour in a convoluted way and therefore leads us to fail in grasping what this celebration ought to be today.

Above all else. Christ comes among us today to witness how dearly our heavenly Father holds the world and its inhabitants in value. He offers his only-begotten Son for every one in the world who will trust in him. Christ comes among us as one of us, as man, in

order to be one with us and for us. The eternal Father gives him to us in death on the cross as surety, in order to take our sin and curse upon himself. Our heavenly Father gives his Son to us on the throne of heaven, in order to arrange for our well-being, as our representative and intercessor over all the powers of heaven. The eternal Father sent him among us to be entirely and altogether our own; yes, that is the love of God that He gives his son to us, for us, in us to lead us to eternal beatitude.

And it s nothing less than his Son himself that comes among us. This is the essence of the love of the Father, not that He gives us something, but that He gives us someone, a living person, an Intercessor, a triumphant and victorious Conqueror of death, a Saviour, a longed for Messiah, a Redeemer, his only begotten Son, not another blessing, but him in whom resides all life and blessing and renewal, the Son of God himself, second Person of the Holy Trinity, come among us once again today, on the back of donkey.



The results of pastoral work
do not depend
on the wealth of our resources,
but on the creativity of our love,
and the zeal of our credulity before Christ.



The Way Home

Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me
Psalms 119: 133.

A pious believer relates this story of her visit to a friend. She began her journey home, following the directions given her, through miles of beautiful farmland. Time lagged as she drove on and on past unmarked roads winding her way through fields of corn, thinking how beautiful it would be on the day of harvest. She began to have some doubts, however. Could her friend have made a mistake in the directions? Maybe she left out something or forgot an important turn. She almost turned to go a different way that she had a feeling might be correct. But then finally, common sense took over, and she realized she could trust the directions of her friend of many years who had moved to her new home, out of the way of familiarity for her. After all, she now lived in the area for some time, certainly the route she outlined would lead the traveler safely home. Sure enough, before long she reached the highway and headed home to familiar territory and security. The directions were perfect!

Our heavenly Father offers us direction in life. But often we doubt God's guidance or think maybe we have a better way. Sometimes we neglect to ask our heavenly Father for guidance at all.

The guidance we need comes to us through His Body and Bride, our blessed Church, through the Holy Spirit speaking to our hearts, through prayer, through situations we experience and through people God brings into our lives. God will give us directions if we sincerely ask and we can be certain that his guidance is always trustworthy. When we are burdened with sin and separation from him and from ourselves and loved ones, there is a way for correcting and overcoming the chasm we created between the Source of life and ourselves. We can reach the destination of heaven if we follow God's plan. We can travel over the road of holiness and be certain we arrive home safely.

The very first gift of grace our Lord offered the disciples as a direct result of his glorious Resurrection was to share his ability of forgiving man's sin. Living in sin is an unfamiliar place for the devout Christian. How grateful we are to the Lord for striving always to direct our life activities for our good, knowing that following his way will always bring us safely to our destiny as citizens of heaven. Certainly God's map for life is far more trustworthy than our own!

Judas



The Right Tools

Saul...put a coat of armor on (David) and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around..."I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off

1 Samuel 1;7: 38, 39.

Every would-be carpenter knows that when in the midst of a project, choosing the proper tool for the job is a serious challenge. Sometimes it is discovered later that the tool chosen is not the best one, for example, when a nail is used instead of a screw and the wood is split which means starting all over again.

Reflecting on tool choices, we remember that David was wise to choose the proper tools when he went into battle against Goliath. Saul sent him some armor, which was too big, too clumsy, and too heavy for David. David wisely chose his slingshot over the armor and a sword. The slingshot served him well in defending his flock.

As God's servants, we too make choices. When we rely on our own devices, on our own understanding and misdirected interpretation, we quickly find that the job overwhelms us. But when we step out in faith, relying on the power of our God and Creator and the grace He readily imparts to a willing and devoted soul, we come to realize there is no end to what we can accomplish.

When we encounter an opportunity for the forgiveness of sin, when we recognize the weight we carry as a burden in guilt, we do not ask the parish priest to help us remove our difficulty with the sacramental Mystery of Anointing with Oil indeed for the sick. We wish to overcome and rectify our sinful state by God's provided means. We do not want to split the wood of our own human personality because we know our Saviour has bequeathed to us the means of heavenly forgiveness in the Mystery of Confession or Reconciliation.

We must use the right tool to achieve the right end. Our God cannot be fooled and we only add to our separation by attempting to approach him on our own terms, by our own means. We cannot be doing a good thing for the wrong reason. On Holy and Great Wednesday the anointing of our frail flesh, our sick humanity is for strengthening us in avoiding and overcoming the sickness of our own limitations in falling victim to sin. It is for the strengthening of our will, our power of soul to resist separation from God. It is to cure our self-imposed resistance to the eagerly offered grace of forgiveness in the Mystery of Reconciliation!

The Entrance Into Jerusalem

For century upon succeeding century, followers of the Lord have considered with awe, silence, and renewed commitment his final days on earth. The culmination of his suffering moves us to tears and to action if we are really devout. We cherish his last words. We meditate on the hours leading up to the cross. We contemplate that rugged instrument of torture as a precious object because it measures the immeasurable. No matter how large we may imagine God's love to be, the cross shows us that his love is larger still.

During his last week among us in the flesh, Jesus taught, He argued, He cried out and He answered some questions, parried into others and challenged both enemies and friends with the never-ending truth. He stood before his accusers silently. He allowed himself to be crucified. He accepted and entered into the realm of death so He could defeat and overcome it. Those who loved him as well as they knew how buried his body and mourned.

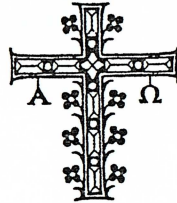
But not for long. This new week ushers in a new world. The first day turns out to be so much more than the beginning of another week – Resurrection Sunday cast a bright new light on everything. That is why the experience of Christ's Passion did not end with the moment his heart stopped beating but continues through today and into eternity.

Today we participate in the joy of the capital city's inhabitants as we sing out, *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* Mark 11: 9.

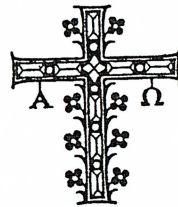
Today's triumphant entry got so many things right, but the most crucial things wrong. Jesus receives a royal welcome for shortsighted reasons. Those who cut branches and spread their coats expected a great deal from Jesus, but they did not expect enough. They wanted a king, but they needed a Saviour!

Who Is This Man...

Who hangs condemned
upon a cross of shame,
Whose eyes look down with pity
on the ones who mock his name?

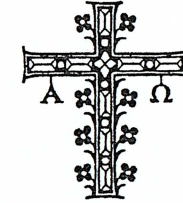


Who is this Man from Nazareth;
is He not Joseph's son?
Why must He die a criminal;
what evil has He done?

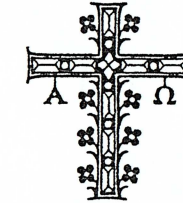


Who is this Man who rode
into Jerusalem a king?
They say that all the countryside
could hear the praises ring.

Who is this Man they label as
"the King of the Jews"
and yet proceed to torture
with the cruelest of abuse?



Who is this Man who asks God
to forgive us of our sin,
who even dares to say that
in three days He will rise again?



Who is this Man called Jesus?
He is all He claimed to be.
He is our

*Lord, Saviour,
Redeemer.*

And He is everything to me!