

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

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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: 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!

The Cross, Our Victory

Have you seen the wonderful victory? Have you seen the splendid deeds of the Cross? ... Who can tell the Lord's mighty deeds? By death we were made immortal: these are the glorious deeds of the Cross.

Have you understood the victory? Have you grasped how it was wrought? Learn now, how this victory was gained without any sweat or toil of ours. No weapons of ours were stained with blood; our feet did not stand in the front line of battle; we suffered no wounds; witnessed no tumults; and yet we obtained the victory.

The battle was the Lord's, the crown is ours. Since then victory is ours, let us imitate the soldiers, and with joyful voices sing the songs of victory.

Let us praise the Lord and say, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

The Cross did all these wonderful things for us: the Cross is a war memorial erected against the demons, a sword against sin, the sword with which Christ slew the serpent.

The Cross is the Father's will, the glory of the Only-begotten, the Spirit's exultation, the beauty of the angels, the guardian of the Church. Paul glories in the Cross; it is the rampart of the saints, it is the light of the whole world.

St. John Chrysostom

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Sunday of the Holy Cross

**Third Sunday of the Great Fast
Veneration 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 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 7 – March 13, 2021
All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted**

- Saturday Vigil at SS Peter & Paul
- 4:00 p.m. + **Sharon Kostura** req. by Charles Kostura & Family
- Sunday
- 8:00 a.m. +**Todd Joseph Lutz** req. by James Lutz (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 Services Today**
- Tuesday
- 8:00 a.m. **Ninth Canonical Hour of the Great Fast**
- Wednesday
- 6:00 p.m. **Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts** at SS Peter & Paul
- Thursday
- 8:00 a.m. **Typica for the Great Fast**
- Friday
- 12 Noon **Liturgy of the Per-Sanctified Gifts** at St. Mary
- Saturday
- 9:00 a.m. +All-Souls Liturgy (at St. Mary)
- Saturday **Saturday Vigil** (at SS Peter & Paul)
- 4:00 p.m. +**Joseph Lohin** req. by Elaine Lohin Kunze

Кресту Твоему поклоняемся Владыко, и святое Воскресение Твое славим!

Epistle Readers: 3/6 – Gail Burgess; 3/7 – Jennifer Keer; 3/13 – Dolores Kramer; 3/14 – Anna Keer; 3/20 – Marie Wanchick; 3/21 – Ellen Sinkovich; 3/27 – Marie Wanchick; 3/28 – Angela Frank.

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

In the middle of Lent, the Church sets before us the Cross of Christ. On two other occasions during the year, September 14th and August 1st, the Cross is presented for our remembrance and veneration. Both these feasts link the adoration of the Cross to historic events. However, the remembrance of the Cross on the third Sunday of Lent speaks only to our faith and reverence. It is to proclaim the part played by the Cross in the history of salvation and to prepare us for the vision, still far-off, of the Cross which, on Holy Friday, will be erected on Golgotha.

During matins, towards the end of the great doxology, the priest places a cross on a tray covered with flowers and, carrying the cross above his own head, he leaves the sanctuary and the iconostas. He is preceded by lighted candles and censers. Having reached the middle of the church, he places the cross on a table. He censes it. The choir sings: 'We venerate Thy Cross, O Master, and we glorify Thy holy Resurrection'. The congregation comes to kiss the cross, which remains thus exposed in the middle of the church during the whole of the feast. The meaning of the feast is well expressed by this chant for matins:

'When, on this day, we look at the precious Cross of Christ, in faith let us adore it, let us rejoice, and embrace it ardently, beseeching our Lord, who of His own choice gave Himself to be crucified on it, to make us worthy of adoring His most precious Cross so that, free from all defilement, we may attain the day of Resurrection.'

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THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

The Foolish Cross is the Power of God

Every action of Christ glorifies the Church, but the cross is the glory above all glory. Paul understood that well when he said: 'I will glory in nothing else but the cross of Christ.' [cf. Gal. 6:14] That a blind man should have been able to regain his sight by the pool of Siloam is certainly a marvelous fact. But what does this single episode add up to, when you think of the blind all over the world? The resurrection of Lazarus who had already been dead four days was a miraculous event, overcoming all the forces of nature. But this favor granted to him alone could not be any comfort to all those who had died through their own sin. It was a miracle- to feed the five thousand with five loaves. But what use could that be for all the ignorant people starved of truth? The glory of the cross, by contrast, has enlightened all those who were blinded by ignorance. It has set free all those who were slaves of sin. It has redeemed the whole human race. Let us glory in the cross of the Savior. 'The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.' [1 Cor. 1:18]

By St. Cyril of Jerusalem - Catecheses, 13, 1ff. (PG 33, 772)

insensitive with the kind of language or questions he proposes, or commonest of all, the hard grind of working almost incessantly to make both ends meet.

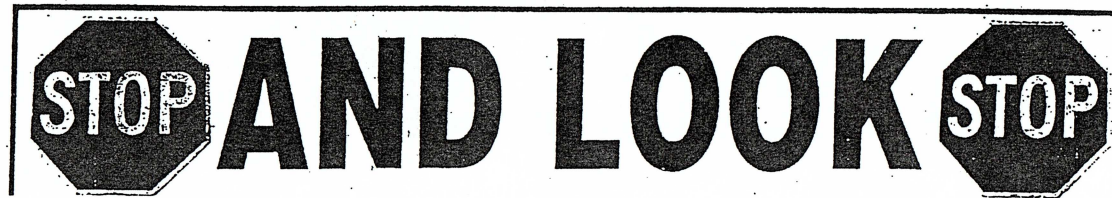
Any of these trials is an occasion for penance, if one chooses to accept it and offer the sacrifice to our God. A hair-shirt of this sort is not one we put on our selves, it is our neighbor who puts it on us. And we know he usually dresses us up in it to stay.

The old hair-shirt could be taken off, if the suffering became too great, even unbearable; the new one sticks to us like plaster. The old hair-shirt was made to measure, but the new takes our measure. The old ascetic risked losing all the benefit of his hair shirt if he became proud of the fact that he wore it. The new hair shirt is always humbling; no one can be proud of the fact that he knows a bore and must associate in business of life with him; or that his car got stuck in an hour of traffic. The older penitents were expected to take off their hair shirts on Holy and Great Saturday, but the new hair shirt outlasts the duration of every Great Fast.

The tragedy is that most modern wearers of the hair-shirt get no spiritual benefit from of it. Their trials and frustrations irritate and annoy them, making them complain, curse and swear, making them only more rebellious and more difficult. Because they do not use their trials properly, they have the pain, but miss the merit and blessing of each occasion faced in life.

Pain and sacrifice are vastly different things, but the difference lies in the will of each person and not in the degree of suffering endured. Pain is sacrifice without the love of God. Sacrifice is pain combined with love of God and offered up to him. There is an enormous difference between the woman who diets and the woman who fasts although they both lose poundage. But one does it for the sake of her body and the other for the sake of her soul with our Creator as the inspiration and final purpose. There is no material difference in the hair shirts they wear, but the real and profound formal difference is very great indeed.

To gain blessings from our inescapable hair-shirts, two basic beliefs are needed. One must first acknowledge the fact that man is a composite of body and soul, and that real effort will be required to keep the body as servant to the soul. The second essential is a belief in redemption which shows us how, by penance, we may come to repentance for our sins and past failings, and even for the faults of others as well.



Take notice that when you worship at the Divine Liturgy, you are in the actual presence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.... You have left behind the limitations of the material world.... You have entered the eternal kingdom of heaven.... You participate in the heavenly banquet as an invited guest.... You enrich yourself with heavenly enduring treasure.... You keep company with Christ our Saviour and all the glorified saints. The angels surround you as you give witness to where your heart is.

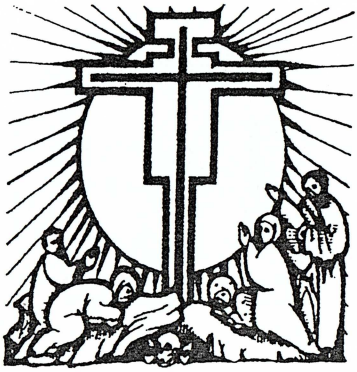
Who wouldn't want this?

Who would forsake and avoid this?

Who would exchange this for something else?

Who would decline being in heaven on earth?

*Stop, Look, Remember the words of blessed Peter:
"How good it is for us to be here" Luke 9: 33!*



The Veneration of the Cross

Immediately after the singing of the Great Doxology of Matins, the Cross of Christ is brought in solemn procession to the center of the parish church where it is enthroned on the sacramental table amid great respect and veneration. There it remains for the entire middle week of the Great Fast for the veneration and contemplation of the faithful.

The Cross was the instrument of capital punishment in the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus. Criminals were executed by being tied or nailed to the Cross. According to the Law of the Old Testament, anyone who was crucified was considered a sinner cursed by God: "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree" Deuteronomy 21: 23.

"Father Forgive them..."

The unimaginable tragedy of this world is that when Christ the Divine Son of God and Lord of Glory, "through whom the world was made," came unto "his own," He was rejected and crucified. Christ was killed because men "love darkness more than light," because they prefer their own way to the wisdom of God, because they cannot bear the truth and love of God revealed in His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Christ was crucified because He is divinely perfect; perfect as God and perfect as man. He never ceased to confront men with the truth, being truth Himself. He did it because of His love and His mercy, never ceasing to forgive those who sinned against Him and His Father as well as His human brothers. Thus even in the midst of the greatest evil ever committed on the face of the earth, the Divine Victim cries out, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do" Luke 23: 34.

Center of Existence

The very center of the Christian faith and indeed of the whole of human life is the Cross of Christ. The Cross contains and reveals to us the very essential meaning of our lives. It shows us the Truth and the Love and the love of God Himself. When the world lay in evil, sold under sin to death, the Son of God became man. And not only man, but the slave of man. And not only a slave, but accepted death. And not only death, but death on the Cross (see Philippians 2: 5 – 8).

Christ could not have done more for us; He could not have gone further for us, for there was no where else to go, damned as we were by our own desire. He became sin for us though He knew no sin. He became a curse for us, though He is the Blessed of God. He died for us so that He could also be our Resurrection and our Life.

Take Up The Cross

If we wish to be disciples of Christ, we must take up the cross and follow Him. This means first of all that we must suffer with Him in truth and in love. This means that we must experience the rejection of this world for the sake of the righteousness of God. That means that we must put into practice the very life that Christ Himself lived, the life that Christ Himself is, the life which is given to us in Christ's Spirit in the Church.

It is for this reason that the Cross of Christ is placed in the very center of our parish church in the middle of the Great Fast. It tells us of God's coming to us and of our return to Him both accomplished by Way of the Cross which is foolishness to the wise of this earth and very very scandalous to the powerful and worldly. Yet, for those who believe, it is the wisdom and the power of God Himself.

This is the teaching and explanation of St. Paul:

For Christ sent me to preach the gospel not with eloquent wisdom lest the Cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the Word of God is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the foolish I will thwart."

For since, in the wisdom of God, it pleased God through the foolishness of what we preach to save those who believe.

For the Jews demand signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a scandal, to the pagans foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is more powerful than men 1 Corinthians 1.

This is what we venerate and contemplate in the midst of the Great Fast: the Wisdom and the Power of God, Christ Crucified for our sake.

We bow down to the Cross and rejoice in its message for it tells us the truth about life. It teaches us the truth and love of God for the world He created. And it tells us what we must do to be alive for eternal life in God's never-ending kingdom.

We bow to Your Cross O Lord and we praise Your holy Resurrection.

This is the veneration song of the life-giving Cross of Christ; the Cross on which we are saved. And the Cross which we must take upon ourselves freely if we will be saved, entering into the victorious Resurrection of Christ.