

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

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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

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**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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### *Knowledge of the True God Nurtures Us to Eternal Life*

Are we saying that knowledge is eternal life? Are we saying that to know the one true and living God will suffice to give us complete security for the future without need of anything else? Then how is "faith apart from works dead?" When we speak of faith, we mean the true knowledge of God and nothing else, since knowledge comes by faith. The prophet Isaiah tells us this: "If you do not believe, neither shall you understand." But he is not talking about a knowledge that consists in barren speculations, which is entirely worthless. For one of the holy disciples said, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder." What then shall we say to this? How is it that Christ speaks the truth when He says that eternal life is the knowledge of God the Father, the one true God, and with Him of the Son? I think, indeed, we must answer that the saying of the Savior is completely true. For this knowledge is life, laboring as it were in birth of the whole meaning of the mystery and

granting to us participation in the mystery of the Eucharist, whereby we are joined to the living and life-giving Word. And for this reason, I think, Paul says that the Gentiles are made fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of Christ, inasmuch as they partake in His Blessed Body and Blood. And our members may in this sense be conceived of as being members of Christ. This knowledge, then, which also brings to us the Eucharist by the Spirit, is life. For it dwells in our hearts, reshaping those who receive it into son-ship with Him and molding them into incorruption and piety toward God through life, according to the Gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, knowing that the knowledge of the one true God brings to us and promotes our union with the blessings of which we have spoken, says that it is eternal life. It is the mother and nurse of eternal life, being in its power and nature pregnant with those things that cause life and lead to life.

*St. Cyril of Alexandria*

## SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST COUNCIL



*Icon of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea*

**Sunday of the Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Council**  
**Festal 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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**May 16 May 22, 2021**  
**All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted**

- Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy (at SS Peter & Paul)  
4:00 p.m. + **Helen Hashin** req. by MM George Havrilla
- Sunday  
8:00 a.m. + **Walter Mashinly** req. by Mary Gerlak (at St. Mary)  
10:00 am **Health and Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)  
Livestreamed
- Monday  
8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy Today**
- Tuesday  
8:00 a.m. + **James Kilraine** req. by Kathy & Bart Kilraine
- Wednesday  
8:00 a.m. + **William Halcovage, Jr.** req. by MM Stanley Siminitus
- Thursday  
8:00 a.m. + **George Konkus** req. by MM Joseph Krasnitsky & Family
- Friday  
8:00 a.m. + **John Malusky** req. by MM Michael Stetz
- Saturday  
9:00 a.m. + **All-Souls Commemorations** at St. Mary
- Saturday  
4:00 p.m. **Vigil Divine Liturgy** (at SS. Peter & Paul)  
+ **Alex & Helen Suchan** req. by Family

**Epistle Readers:** 5/15 – Angela Frank; 5/16 – Jennifer Keer; 5/22 – Dolores Kramer; 5/23 – Anna Keer; 5/29 – Gail Burgess; 5/30 – Beverly Kostishak.

**Pastoral Note:** A meeting of the **Event Committee** will be held on Saturday, May 15 following the Vigil Liturgy. We will discuss preparing a calendar of events for the rest of the year so everyone can prepare their individual calendars. It is equally important to have social events as well as liturgical/religious gatherings for the good of parish life. Light refreshments will be served.

**Welcome:** On Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Deacon Stephen Suchan will concelebrate the Divine Liturgy with us as he and his family pray for the blessed repose of his mother and father. Deacon Stephen currently serves in the Ukrainian Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma, Ohio, but is fond of recalling he received his Mysteries of Initiation in our parish. Welcome back home.

**"Father" more accurate than "God."** Cyril of Alexandria: When the Savior declares that he has made known the name of God the Father, it is the same as saying that he has shown the whole world his glory. How did he do this? By making himself known through his wonderful works. The Father is glorified in the Son as in an image and type of his own form, for the beauty of the archetype is seen in its image. The only Son then has made himself known, and he is in his essence wisdom and life, the artificer and creator of the universe. He is immortal and incorruptible, pure, blameless, merciful, holy, good. His Father is known to be like him, since he could not be different in nature from his offspring. The Father's glory is seen, as in an image and type of his own form, in the glory of the Son.... The Son made known the name of God the Father to teach us and make us fully comprehend not that he is the only God—for inspired Scripture had proclaimed that even before the coming of the Son—but that besides being truly God he is also rightly called "Father." This is so because in himself and proceeding from himself he has a Son possessed of the same eternal nature as his own; it was not in time that he became the Father of the Creator of the ages! To call God "Father" is more exact than to call him "God." The word God signifies his dignity, but the word Father points to the distinctive attribute of his person. If we say "God," we declare him to be Lord of the universe. If we call him "Father," we show the way in which he is distinct as a person, for we make known the fact that he has a Son, The Son himself gave God the name of Father, as being in some sense the more appropriate and truer appellation, when he said not "I and God" but "I and the Father are one," and also, with reference to himself, "On him has God the Father set his seal." And when he commanded his disciples to baptize all nations, he did not tell them to do this in the name of God but expressly ordained that they were to do it in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Commentary on the Gospel of John 11.7.

## Begotten, Not Made

In order to clarify our faith, the Council of Nicea reiterated again and again, in different ways, our experience that Jesus the Messiah is both God and man. Therefore, after stating with precision that He is "true God of true God," its profession of faith adds that He is not "created" but instead is "begotten." The word *begotten* is repeated and the Fathers of the Church, gathered in Council, must have seen in it a very important affirmation. The purpose of this part of the Creed was certainly to oppose directly the heresy of the Alexandrian priest Arius, who postulated that Christ was a creature made by the eternal Father. In Arius' system of thinking, Christ is certainly a higher creature than ordinary humans, preceding us in existence and participating with the Father in creation, but nevertheless, not equal to the Father.

To support his statement, Arius would point to the Gospel of St. John, where Jesus says, "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I" John 14: 28. The Council taught that Arius' understanding was not what the message meant; that it had been completely misunderstood; and that, as God, Jesus, the Son and Word of God, was one and equal God with the Father. First, we must try to understand what we are affirming in faith when we say that Jesus, the Son and Word of God, was not "made." This poses a stumbling block

for many today, because quite clearly, Jesus was human and had a place in human history. His earthly life had a beginning and an end in a particular era of time 2000 years ago.

We are accustomed today – where what is real is what we can see and hear and touch – to grasp how one person can be simultaneously two different natures. It is difficult for us to think of the man Jesus as also God, one of the Holy Trinity, one God, one Lord, one Ruler and Creator of all. This was difficult for ancient people as well, and so through the centuries this has remained what we call a mystery, a reality that we can experience, but not completely understand or comprehend.

However, it is our faith without compromise. The first Christians understood very well that if Christ is not God, then our trust in him is meaningless, and they venerate and worship only a human being who was, in fact a miserable failure. Because He is God, his death on the cross instead is of infinite value. It is in the context of his imminent arrest that Jesus taught us about himself. Here Jesus speaks at least three times of the mutual indwelling of the Father in himself. "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" John 14: 10 - 13; 17: 21.

This is so much so that when the Apostle Philip asks, "Show us the father," Jesus replies,

"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father"  
John 14: 9.

This relationship was also proclaimed by Jesus at the Feast of the Dedication, when He said, "The Father and I are one" John 10: 30. Some of the bystanders were shocked and thought this to be blasphemy, and "...picked up rocks to stone him" John 10: 11. This was the theme of John's gospel, as we see from the very first verse read for the feast of the glorious Resurrection, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" John 1: 1; and later in the same prologue, the Word is identified with Jesus, "...and the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" John 1: 14. Despite the fact that some people do not wish to accept this testimony, Jesus also speaks likewise in other gospels, "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son" Matthew 11: 27. It is here that Arius made his mistake. He applied the words, "the Father is greater than I" John 14: 28, to the eternal, mutual relationship of the Father and the Son.

As God, the Father and the Son are one, and without change. In his mission to us on earth, Jesus becomes greater when He suffers death on the Cross and rises from the dead to impart eternal life to man. Before this glorification, the Father is greater, and the Resurrection is for our good, for the fullness of our age, so that we rejoice because Jesus is going and returning to the Father (John 14: 28). The glorified, risen Lord then relates to his disciples, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" Matthew 28: 18, 19. While St. John is not engaging in the later theology of the Trinity, he is speaking about the way Christians experience Christ. They are aware of both his transcendent equality with God and of his mission on earth as a human being. Through this human being whom they were able to see and hear and touch, they were brought into union with God for, as our Lord said, "On that day, you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you" John 14: 20.

In our Creed, therefore, we profess that Jesus is "begotten, not made." Likewise, in the Hymn of the Incarnation at the Second Antiphon of the Divine Liturgy, we sing of Christ, "O only-begotten Son and Word of God, who, being immortal...became man without change." We ascribe the word "begotten" to the Son because fathers "beget" children, though in the inner mystery of the Holy Trinity this "begetting", this "coming forth" is beyond our human powers of comprehension. We can affirm it only in faith.

The Son and the Spirit must come forth from the Father, because God is one and the Father is the source of God's being. This "coming forth," of the Son and the Spirit, however is not creation, and hence there is one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, equal in the light of divinity. We appropriate this revelation and only then do we reflect on it and begin to understand that if the Son is "not made," then, like the Father, He is without beginning, infinite, beyond space and time. It is only because this is so that He can be our Saviour, Redeemer and Life-Creator.

# WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

*Angelic powers descended to your grave, and the guards fell down and appeared dead. Mary came to the grave seeking your most pure body. You conquered and despoiled the Abyss without being touched by it. You, the Giver of Life, met the Virgin, O Lord, risen from the dead; glory to You! Troparion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.*

*You ascended in glory, O Christ, our God, and delighted the disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through this blessing, they were assured that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world Troparion, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.*

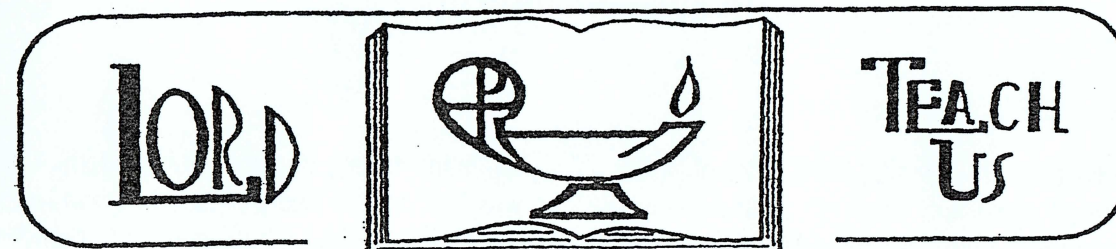
*O Christ, God, You are above all praise, for you established our fathers O Christ our God. You delighted the disciples as lights to all on earth. You led us all to true faith through them. O most bountiful Lord, glory to you! Troparion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.*

*The preaching of the apostles and the decisions of the fathers have established the true faith of the Church which she wears as the garment of truth fashioned from the theology from on high; she justly governs and glorifies the great mystery of worship Kontakion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.*

*When you fulfilled the plan of salvation for us and united all things on earth to those in heaven, Christ our God, you ascended in glory, never leaving us, but remaining ever-present. For you proclaimed to those who love you: 'I am with you, and no one else has power over you' Kontakion, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.*

*Blessed are you, and praiseworthy, O Lord, God of our fathers; glorious forever is your name! Prokimenon, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.*

*Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the highest. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Communion Hymn, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.*



## Eternal Life

*And we know that Christ, God's Son has come to help us understand and find the true God. And now we are in God because we are in Jesus Christ his Son, who is the only true God and he is eternal Life 1 John 5: 20.*

*Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless you. Wait patiently for the eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy is going to give you Jude 1: 21.*

*See! He is arriving, surrounded by clouds; and every eye shall see him, yes, and those who pierced him. And the nations will weep in sorrow and in terror when he comes. Yes! Amen! Let it be so! Revelation 1: 7.*

*Choose to love the Lord your God and to obey him and to cling to him, for he is your life and the length of your days. You will then be able to live safely in the land the Lord promised your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob Deuteronomy 30: 20.*

*I am the First and the Last, the one who died and who is now alive forevermore, who has the keys of death and hell Revelation 1: 18.*

*Yet even there in Sardis, some have not soiled their garments with the world's filth; they shall walk with me in white for they are worthy Revelation 3: 4.*

*And there will be no night there – no need for lamps or sun – for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign forever and ever Revelation 22: 5.*