

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

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)

Bulletins are sponsored by

Mahal-Ritzel Funeral Home

Minersville, PA 544-5111

Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

Paradox of the Holy Cross

A hardened criminal was moved from his prison cell to solitary confinement because he deserved additional punishment. In the corner of his new cell, he saw something wedged into the corner of the room. Upon closer inspection, he discovered that it was a copy of the New Testament left there by the inmate before him. Out of curiosity, he began reading the Bible for the first time in his life and was drawn again and again to the account of our Lord's suffering and crucifixion. Our Lord suffered on the cross for the good of many. Thinking of his own present sufferings, the inmate then wondered how his own life would have been different if he had used all of his energies for good instead of evil. Then he realized that even he was among the

many for whom Jesus died on the Cross! Because of the Cross, the inmate repented and found a place for God in his life!

The Cross is the instrument of Christ's suffering and passion, however it is also the Trophy of Victory and the means by which Christ conquered death by His death. The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross places before us this most profound mystery of suffering and its undeniable paradox: that in death there is life and that in suffering there is glory. As we continue to celebrate this holy feast may we turn our own sufferings over to Jesus and ask Him for the grace to bear them with resignation to His divine will for those who bear the Cross are also sheltered by it.

SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



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

Volume 2021
Christ is among us!

Number 37
He is and will be!

Sunday before the Exaltation 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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September 12 – September 18, 2021
All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

- Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy (at SS Peter & Paul)
4:00 p.m. + **Joseph Lohin** req. by Elaine L. Kunze
- Sunday
8:00 a.m. **Demko Family** req. by Theresa Wagner (at St. Mary)
10:00 am **Health and Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)
Livestreamed
- Monday Vigil of the Exaltation
6:00 p.m. + **Veronica Sekellick** req. by Scott & Lauren Stepenosky (at SS Peter & Paul)
- Tuesday **Exaltation of the Holy Cross** (at St. Mary)
8:00 a.m. + **John Malusky** req. by MM Gene Bettinger
- Wednesday
8:00 a.m. **No Divine Liturgy Today**
- Thursday
8:00 a.m. + **Paul Platko** req. by Anna Reno Family
- Friday
8:00 a.m. + **Joseph Andrachick** req. by Staff: Tremont Nursing Home
- Saturday **Vigil Divine Liturgy** (at SS. Peter & Paul)
4:00 p.m. + **Mary Marencin** req. by Julia Legaze

Epistle Readers: 9/11 – Angela Frank; 9/12 – Jennifer Keer; 9/14 – Angela Frank; 9/18 – Dolores Kramer; 9/19 – Anna Keer; 9/25 – Marie Wanchick; 9/26 – Ellen Sinkovich; 10/1 – Beverly Kostishak.

September 19th: Ham and Halyпки Dinner. Be sure to place your order by Tuesday.

On Fridays the church is open from 12 noon until 3:00 p.m., the time that Jesus Christ hung upon the Cross in reparation for the sins of humanity, giving us the opportunity to pray privately for the courage and strength to follow in His footsteps in our daily lives.

The Mystery of Forgiveness (Confession) is also available from 2:00 until 3:00 p.m. each Friday and Saturday at 1:00 p.m. (St. Mary) and 3:00 p.m. at SS Peter & Paul

Our **Eastern Christian Formation School of Religion** will begin this month. Parents interested in registering their children for the ECF program are encouraged to do so calling our ECF Coordinator, Mr. Charles Keer at 570-988-6289 by Sunday, September 12.

What is the understanding of the Eucharist in the Orthodox Churches?

“We believe that the bread and wine of the Eucharist are the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Eucharistic celebration is not only a commemoration of the Last Supper, but also its actualization for each believer who participates in it.” (Metropolitan Hilarion at the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest, Hungary).

From the brief excerpt of the Catechesis offered by Metropolitan Hilarion of the Russian Orthodox Church, we learn that it is not just the Catholic Church that believes in the Real Presence of the Eucharist, by the Orthodox Churches as well. Because both Orthodox and Catholic Churches have the same belief it is possible, because of the Vatican Council II teaching on the Eucharist, that Orthodox Christians may, in case of necessity, partake of the Eucharist in Catholic Churches. However, because we are not in communion with each other, the Orthodox will not participate in our Eucharistic celebrations because of the great respect they have for the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and will not compromise their principles for any reason whatever. Unlike so many Catholics who are receiving the most Holy, most Pure Body and Blood of Christ in sin, as if it is their right to pick and choose what the Church teaches rather than obey the Magisterium.

This is all the more reason that we pray for complete union with our Churches.



Wisdom Of
The

Byzantine
Fathers

For peace in the world, let us pray to the Lord St. John Chrysostom.

It is not enough to help the poor. We must help them with generosity and without grumbling. And it is not enough to help them without grumbling. We must help them gladly and happily. When the poor are helped, there ought to be these two conditions: generosity and joy St. John Chrysostom.

Remember those, O Lord in the depths of the earth, in harsh labor, in every kind of affliction, necessity or distress St. Basil the Great.

Whatever is generously given away becomes the first fruit of the soul. It therefore becomes the soul's wealth St. Clement of Alexandria.

For seasonable weather and an abundance of the fruits of the earth, let us pray to the Lord St. John Chrysostom.

HE WAS INCARNATE

The Son of God became a human being for our sake and for our salvation. The Creed actually uses two words for this reality: He was incarnate or assumed flesh, and became man, in effect, to coin a word, en-fleshed, or en-humanized. These two terms are necessary to express the full range of our faith in what God has done for us. As human beings, we are a composite of matter and spirit, body and soul, and the Word of God took on our entire nature in both its material and spiritual dimensions.

The first term, in Greek, *sarkothenta*, that is, He was en-fleshed, stresses that God truly accepted and clothed himself in a body of human flesh and matter. Like us, God became a part of the material world, seeing light and color through bodily human eyes and experiencing the world by touch and smell and sound. We often think of ourselves as centers of being that have a body, but the deeper reality is that we are physical bodies, connected with and interdependent on created matter. In becoming incarnate, God accepts these same created limitations.

It was necessary to say this in the Creed explicitly because of the prevailing understanding of the Greek philosophy of the time. The Creed was a proclamation of faith in the age of Greek Platonism which devalued the importance of material existence. Only the spiritual was valid and valuable. To achieve perfection was to be completely spiritualized and to lose our dependence on the material universe.

The cultural prejudice against physical matter, seen as the enslavement of the true human person, led to many heresies in the early Church denying the true materiality of the mystery of the incarnation. The strongest of these was docetism which held that Jesus did not suffer physical death on the Cross, for this would be unbecoming to God and to his divine reality. His passion, then, happened only in appearance. In other words, it only seemed like He suffered. The name for this heresy is from the Greek word for "to seem," as if Jesus only seemed to take human flesh.

Docetism was already present even in New Testament times. St.

John has to warn his readers, "Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh" 2 John 7. At the end of the first century after Christ, the holy martyr St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, warned his fellow believers, "Jesus suffered truly and just as truly raised himself from the dead. He did not suffer merely in appearance, as some unbelievers say" Letter to the Smyrneans, 2.

It is no wonder, then, that the Creed of Nicea affirms in the first place that in Jesus Christ, God came truly in human flesh; He was "incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." This reality has almost always been a problem for those who want to believe, but sometimes find it difficult. We lead a physical life on this earth and then all of us are confronted with our mortality, the fact that our material bodies wear out, and that we all must die.

What happens to us after we die? Our precious faith tells us that we continue to exist, that there is "life after death," that life is changed, but not taken away. However, we are tempted to idealize this faith into a continued spiritual existence as the physical body is gone, but think we continue to live as a kind of angel or ghost.

However, in the Christian faith, there is more. The teachers of the

Church, particularly St. Maximus the Confessor, said that even after death, there is still a relationship of our soul to our body and that human destiny is not complete until there is a resurrection of the body, as we say later in the Creed, "I expect the resurrection of the dead." This is why, therefore, the Resurrection of our Lord is the very center of our faith and why the inner life of the Body of Christ testifies to the ascension of the physical body and spiritual soul of the Birthgiver of God takes place at the behest of her Son and our God.

As we continue to journey in our earthly pilgrimage lives, the Creed is a hymn of thanksgiving, that Christ, through his incarnation, has given us eternal life in both body and soul. Of course, though St. Paul does tell us in the inspired Scripture that there will be a change. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown incorruptible...it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" 1 Corinthians 15: 42, 44.

This affirmation of our faith that Jesus was "incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary" has an even deeper and profounder dimension and is manifested in our life as believing Christians. We do have in fact, a share in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. By becoming incarnate in human flesh, He has made even material elements a source of sanctification for us. St. Paul asks us, "The bread that we break,

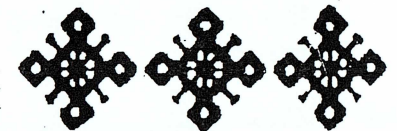
is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" 1 Corinthians 10: 16; and St. John reports the words of Jesus, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you" John 6: 53.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop who fought the docetists knew well the importance of the Eucharist, and that through the divine mystery revealed at the Mystical Supper, - the Cross and the Resurrection - it was to become God's plan of salvation for us. He wrote to the Smyrneans at the beginning of the second century, "the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father in his graciousness, raised from the dead" Smyrneans 6.

We do not participate in the mystery of the incarnation in the same way as Christ, who is God by nature and became one in essence with us through the human nature he took from the Holy Spirit and the body of his mother, the Virgin Mary. We, however, are united in our own bodies with God, one in the Trinity through the body of Christ that we receive in Communion.

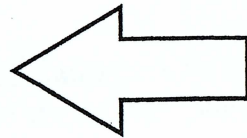
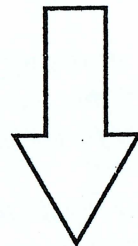
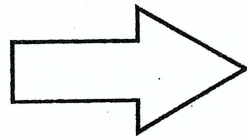
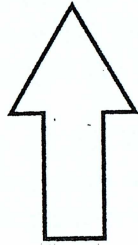
The Creed does not contain an explicit profession of the mystery of Holy Communion, because it is accomplished not only in words, but in the eating and being nourished by the flesh of Christ, and also because this reality is

expressed implicitly in the words of the Creed, "He was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." The Creed that we profess in every Divine Liturgy is no mere speculation about the nature of God and the mystery of Christ, but it is the confession with our lips from our heart and soul of the real sanctification which is taking place in the Church gathered by the Holy Spirit for worship.



Where Are You Going???

Once our God told Jonah to go to Ninevah to preach to the people there who were doing bad things. They were pagans and not enlightened by God's revelation. God wanted to change that. But Jonah did not like the idea of pagans being introduced into the circle of Chosen People, so he went in a different direction thinking God would forget about the instructions. He went in a different direction like so many of us do. That is what the arrows point out for us, teaching us the lesson that we do not decide how to save our soul because on our own we cannot do it. Only God can save us. Are you still following your own directions and being detoured?



Do You Love The World?

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son
John 3: 16.*

These words are cherished by every believer. Of course, their familiarity can dull our appreciation of their full meaning. One insightful man speaks of his appreciation and awareness of ingratitude when he received a greeting card for one feast of the Nativity of our Lord which truthfully announced, "God still loves the world!" It is a realistic reminder that God's love is always and forever fixed in the present tense which is why we greet each other, "Christ is born!" - Christ is risen!" instead of the western expression, "Christ was born!" - "Christ has risen!"

Inspired by the endless love of our heavenly Father for the world which motivated him to offer his Son for its redemption, the Church makes present and proximate the reality and truth of God's continuing concern for us and our planet. He is supremely concerned about the souls of those who inhabit our world. We are likewise called upon to love the world in which we live and see it as a world of individuals who are lost so many times and need to hear the gospel message in its purity. Our baptism calls us to be a serious and sincere living example of the life of Christ in our time and place. Christ's teaching is to be made real in today's current circumstances and lifestyle.

A mature believer recognizes the possibility of being a witness of the teaching of our Lord in the world he travels each day among neighbors, friends and fellow-workers. But he must be sensitive of soul and conscience and recognize the possibility of being an example to people as an ego trip without necessarily loving them as potential communicants of the Body and Bride of Christ.

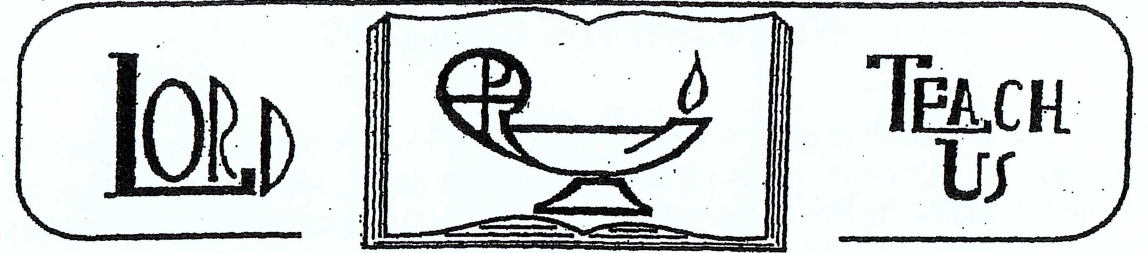
We must show that Christ is just as zealously concerned for souls today as when He lived among us on earth is the role of each believer. We are to make Christ present and viable here and now, not only in language, but in practice and upright example. We must be careful we do not go simply through the motions without actually loving those we speak to. Our witness will lack power without the force of God's overwhelming and compelling love.

To speak to the lost of the world about the love of God if we do not actually love them too, is insincere and lacks the dynamic strength of words which should ring true.

Those who love Christ have a love for the lost.

Did You Know That ...

- ...the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light?
- ...each moment, each day, each year, our God begins anew?
- ...when little kids play ball, you can count on immature grown-ups to throw a tantrum?
- ...one glaring proof of American's refusal to grow up is the behavior of parents at the sports events of their children?
- ...children's athletics used to convey the idea of a field of dreams but now it has become a field of screams?
- ...restless leg syndrome can find relief in being directed to church for prayer of thanks?
- ...although we like variety it should not manifest us at odds with God's revelation for us?
- ...there are a lots of *truths* being advanced today, but only one truth in Christ still sustains us?
- ...since God is always in our corner, the question really is, are we with him?
- ...just because someone has fancy sneakers does not mean they run faster?
- ...nobody roots for Goliath?
- ..."Yes I can" is the response our Lord wishes to hear when He invites us to run the race for salvation?
- ...the deadly distraction of sin in our lives is still not appreciated?
- ...no one can love too much?
- ...thousands of times each day we are called to judge our own behavior?
- ...the best place, the safest place to be is with our God?
- ...we should always be ready to give an answer for why we follow Christ?



Persecution of the Righteous

Bullies will vanish and scoffers will cease and all those plotting evil will be killed: the violent man who fights at the drop of a hat, the man who waits in hiding to beat up the judge who sentenced him, and the men who use any excuse to be unfair Isaiah 29: 20, 21.

I am he who comforts you and gives you all this joy. So what right have you to fear mere mortal men, who wither just like grass and disappear? And yet you have no fear of the Lord your God, your Maker; you have forgotten him, the one who spread the stars throughout the skies and made the earth. Will you be in constant dread of men's oppression, and fear their anger all day long? Isaiah 51: 12, 13.

Yes, truth is gone and anyone who tries a better life is soon attacked. The Lord saw all the evil and was displeased to find no steps taken against sin Isaiah 59: 30.

I have punished your children but it did them no good; they still will not obey me. And you yourselves have killed my prophets as a lion kills its prey Jeremiah 2: 30.

I had been as unsuspecting as a lamb or ox on the way to slaughter. I did not know that they were planning to kill me! "Let us destroy this man with all his messages," they said, "Let us kill him so that his name will be forever forgotten" Jeremiah 11: 19.

Then Jeremiah said, "What sadness is mine, O my mother; that I had died at birth. For I am hated everywhere I go. I am neither creditor soon to foreclose nor a debtor refusing to pay; yet they all curse me Jeremiah 15: 10.

Then the people said, "Come, let us get rid of Jeremiah...Let us silence him that he may speak no more against us, nor bother us again" Jeremiah 18: 18.

They scoff and mock and make my name a household joke Jeremiah 20: 8.