Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
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Editor: V. Rev. W. Sophrony Royer, Ph.D. 98 West 28th Street, Bayonne, N.J. 07002

"Quo Vadis?" is a Latin phrase meaning "Where are you going?" It refers to a Christian tradition regarding St. Peter. According to the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, Peter is fleeing from likely crucifixion in Rome, and along the road outside the city, he encounters the risen Jesus. Peter asks Jesus "Quo vadis?" Jesus replies "Romam vado iterum crucifigi" ("I am going to Rome to be crucified again"). St. Peter thereby gains the fortitude to return to the city, to eventually be martyred by being crucified upside-down. The phrase also occurs a few times in the Latin *Vulgate* translation of the *Holy Bible*, notably in John 13:36 when Peter asks Jesus the same question, to which He responds, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me." The Church of Domine Quo Vadis in Rome is built where, according to tradition, the meeting between St. Peter and the risen Jesus Christ took place.

This parish newsletter is called ***Quo Vadis*** for a reason: to ask the question of where *you* are going in life. Is your life's journey leading you towards Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? St. Peter, at a pivotal moment in his life, when he understandably felt like running away, found the courage to go where Jesus Christ would have him go. Where are *you* going? Will *you* follow Jesus Christ?

Rector's Message

St. Gregory of Nazianzus sums up the Eastern Christian view of Christmas in his famous statement that the Nativity of Christ "is not a festival of creation but a festival of re-creation." The birth of Christ, although a historical event, is not an end but a means to the renewal, sanctification, and recreation of the whole universe. Actually we commemorate, not so much the birth of a child, but the ultimate rebirth and transfiguration of all mankind and with it the whole world of creation. The world, held in bondage by reason of man's perversion, this is the world Christ redeemed. Christ redeemed humanity and by taking humanity to Himself He redeemed the world.

When the word of God became flesh He not only became the head of a new race; He became the Lord of a new creation. Christ in His flesh took the whole of creation to Himself that it might share anew in divinity. In Christ Jesus the universe was radically transformed; in His person the world was consecrated and sacramentalized – clay and stone, plant and animal, word and dance – our earth was redeemed, re-created. While it is true to say that Christ redeemed humanity and by humanity He redeemed the world, it is equally true to say that Christ redeems humanity and by humanity redeems the world. Objectively, men were redeemed but in another sense that was only the beginning of a new world even until now.

By the power of His Holy Spirit working in Christians the world can rise anew. By reason of the love of God made known to it in Christ Jesus our world is alive now, vibrant in our day with life and light. Creation fell by human failure; now it summons us with urgent summons to redeem it. The

whole world is one great yearning cry: creation's unceasing call for redemption. To all, Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Christos Razdajestsja! Slavite Jeho!

Lives of the Saints

St. Anastasia of Sirmium, Great-martyr – commemorated on December 22nd

St. Anastasia was a Roman by birth, who suffered for Christ during Diocletian's persecution of Christians, circa 304. Her father, Praetextatus, was a pagan and a *vir illustris*,[1] and her mother, St. Fausta of Sirmium, was a secret Christian. As a child, Anastasia's teacher was an educated and pious Christian named Chrysogonos. After the death of her mother, Praetextatus gave her in marriage to a pagan named Publius, but by feigning illness, she preserved her virginity.

Clothing herself in the garb of a beggar, and accompanied by only one servant, she visited the prisons. She fed, treated, and often ransomed captives who were suffering for their faith in Christ. When her servant told Publius about this, he beat his wife and confined her in his house. Then St. Anastasia began to correspond secretly with Chrysogonos, who told Anastasia to be patient, to cleave to the Cross of Christ, and to accept the Lord's will. He also foretold the impending death of Publius in the ocean. Publius did drown, as he was setting out for Persia with a delegation. After her husband's death, Anastasia distributed her property to the poor and suffering.

Diocletian was informed that the Christians who filled the prisons of Rome stoically endured their torments. He commanded that all of them should be put to death in a single night, and that Chrysogonos be sent to him at Aquileia. St. Anastasia followed her teacher at a distance. The Emperor interrogated Chrysogonos personally, but could not make him deny Christ. Therefore, he commanded that he be decapitated and thrown into the sea. The Holy Martyr's body and severed head were carried to shore by the waves. There by Divine Providence, the relics were found by a priest named Zoilos, who placed them in a coffer, and concealed them in his home.

St. Chrysogonos appeared to Zoilos and informed him that three sisters who lived nearby, Ss. Agape, Chionia, and Irene (April 16), would soon suffer martyrdom for Christ. He told him to send St. Anastasia to them to encourage them. St. Chrysogonos foretold that Zoilos would also die on the same day. Nine days later, the words of St. Chrysogonos were fulfilled. Zoilos fell asleep in the Lord, and St. Anastasia visited the three maidens before their tortures. After these three martyrs surrendered their souls to God, she buried them.

After carrying out her teacher's request, the saint went from city to city ministering to Christian prisoners. Proficient in the medical arts of the time, she zealously cared for captives far and wide, healing their wounds and relieving their suffering. Because of her labors, Saint Anastasia was known as the "Deliverer from Potions" (*Pharmakolytria*), since by her intercessions she has healed many from the effects of potions, poisons, and other harmful substances.

She made the acquaintance of a pious young widow named Theodótē, finding in her a faithful helper. When it was learned that she was a Christian, Theodótē was brought in for questioning. Meanwhile, St. Anastasia was arrested in Illyricum. This occurred just after all the Christian captives there had been murdered in a single night by Diocletian's order. St. Anastasia went to one of the prisons, and finding no one there, she began to weep loudly. The jailers realized that she was a

[1] The title *vir illustris* ('illustrious man') is used as a formal indication of standing in late antiquity to describe the highest ranks within the senates of Rome and Constantinople. All senators had the title *vir clarissimus* ('very famous man'); but from the mid fourth century onwards, *vir illustris* and *vir spectabilis* ('admirable man', a lower rank than *illustris*) were used to distinguish holders of high office.

Christian and took her to the prefect of that district, who tried to persuade her to deny Christ by threatening her with torture. After his unsuccessful attempts to persuade Anastasia to offer sacrifice to idols, he handed her over to the pagan priest Ulpian in Rome.

The cunning pagan told St. Anastasia to choose between luxury and riches, or grievous sufferings. He set before her gold, precious stones and fine clothing, as well as fearsome instruments of torture. The crafty man was put to shame by the bride of Christ. St. Anastasia refused the riches and chose the tools of torture. But the Lord prolonged the earthly life of the saint, and Ulpian gave her three days to reconsider. Charmed by St. Anastasia's beauty, the pagan priest decided to defile her. However, when he tried to touch her he suddenly became blind. His head began to ache so severely that he screamed like a madman. He asked to be taken to a pagan temple to pray to the idols for help, but on the way he fell down and died.

St. Anastasia was set free and she and St. Theodótē devoted themselves once more to the care of imprisoned Christians. Before long, St. Theodótē and her three sons received the crown of martyrdom. Her eldest son, Euodus stood bravely before the judge and endured his beatings without protest. After much torture, they were all thrown into a red-hot oven. St. Anastasia was caught again and condemned to death by starvation. She remained in prison without food for sixty days. St. Theodótē appeared to the martyr every night and gave her courage. Seeing that hunger caused St. Anastasia no harm whatsoever, the judge sentenced her to drowning together with other prisoners. Among them was Eutychianus, who was condemned for his Christian Faith.

The prisoners were put into a boat which went out into the open sea. The soldiers bored holes in the boat and got into a galley. St. Theodótē appeared to the captives and steered the ship to shore. When they reached dry land on the island of Palmaria, 120 men believed in Christ and were baptized by Ss. Anastasia and Eutychianus. All were captured and received a martyr's crown on December 25th. St. Anastasia was stretched between four pillars and burned alive. A certain pious woman named Apollinaria buried her body, which was unharmed by the fire, in the garden outside her house.

In the fifth century, St. Anastasia's relics were transferred to Constantinople, where a church was built and dedicated to her. Later her head and one of her hands were transferred to the Monastery of St. Anastasia, near Mount Athos.[2] St. Anastasia is one of seven virgins and martyrs who, along with the Virgin Mary, are commemorated by name in the Roman Canon of the Mass. She is commemorated on December 22 in the Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Catholic Churches, and on December 25 in the Roman Catholic Church (in the second Mass on Christmas Day).

According to tradition, St. Donatus of Zadar brought St. Anastasia's relics to Zadar, Croatia from Constantinople, when he was there with the Venetian Duke Beato. They had been ordered by Charlemagne to negotiate the border between the Byzantine Empire and the Croatian territories under the dominion of Charlemagne's Frankish Empire. Her relics lie in the Cathedral of St. Anastasia in Zadar. In 1976, part of her relics were translated from Zadar to the Cathedral Basilica of St. Demetrius, in Sremska Mitrovica (Sirmium), Serbia and are kept in a reliquary in front of the main altar. Relics of the saint are also enshrined at Benediktbeuern Abbey in Benediktbeuern, Bavaria, Germany.

Theological Excerpt

"The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is received by the Son; He is the "third" person of the Holy Trinity, for He establishes the mutuality of the Father and the Son. God ideally defines His own nature in

[2] In 2012 the relics of St. Anastasia were stolen and have not been recovered.

this begetting of His Pre-eternal Word by the Speaking Father. But the reality of this nature is experienced through the Holy Spirit. In God there is no self-definition that is not hypostatic. Therefore, the recognition of His own nature as reality is the hypostatic act of the procession of the Holy Spirit."
— Fr. Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944), The Lamb of God

Frequently Asked Questions

"What is Orthodox teaching about the incarnation of Christ?"

Together with the belief in the Holy Trinity, the doctrine of the Incarnation occupies a central position in the teaching of the Orthodox Church. According to Orthodox Faith, Jesus is much more than a pious man or a profound teacher of morality. He is the "Son of God who became the Son of Man." The doctrine of the Incarnation is an expression of the Church's experience of Christ. In Him, divinity is united with humanity without the destruction of either reality. Jesus Christ is truly God who shares in the same reality as the Father and the Spirit. Moreover, He is truly man who shares with us all that is human, except for sin.

The Church believes that, as the unique God-man, Jesus Christ has restored humanity to fellowship with God. By manifesting the Holy Trinity, by teaching the meaning of authentic human life, and by conquering the powers of sin and death through His Resurrection, Christ is the supreme expression of the love of God the Father, for His people, made present in every age and in every place by the Holy Spirit through the life of the Church. The great Fathers of the Church summarized the ministry of Christ in the bold affirmation, "God became what we are so that we may become what He is."

Recipe of the Month

Pasta With Shrimp, Oysters, and Crabmeat

This is a traditional Italian dish for Christmas Eve. If you don't care for oysters then simply omit that step or substitute it with boiled mussels or some other shellfish. Ideally, use fresh ingredients rather than dried. Serve with garlic bread.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup butter
- ½ cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1¼ cups chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 (16 ounce) package fettucine (any semolina pasta may be substituted)
- 2 (10 ounce) containers shucked small oysters, drained
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1¼ pounds peeled and deveined small shrimp
- 1 pound fresh lump crabmeat
- salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

DIRECTIONS

1. Melt 1/2 cup butter and 1/2 cup olive oil together in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the garlic, and cook until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Stir in the 1¼ cups of parsley, and cook for 1 minute more. Season with lemon juice, crushed red pepper, salt, and pepper; set aside.
2. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook for about 10 minutes or until al dente; drain.
3. Meanwhile, bring a few cups of water to a boil in a saucepan over high heat. Stir in the oysters and turn off the heat. Allow the oysters to stand for 3 minutes, then drain and set aside. Melt 1/4 cup butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil together in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in the shrimp, and cook until they turn pink and begin to firm. Add the crab meat and drained oysters; continue cooking until the shrimp have turned opaque in the center, and the crab is hot.
4. Toss the seafood with the drained pasta, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour in the sauce, and toss gently to coat. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup of chopped parsley before serving.

Special Donations

Special Donations may be offered at $15 for the Altar Vigils, $10 for the Sanctuary Lamp, and $5 for any one of the following: St. John's Cross, St. Nicholas' Cross, and Triple Candelabra, and may be offered in memory of the departed or in honor of the living. For acknowledgement of Special Donations in the January 2026 issue, the donation must be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by December 21, 2025.

December 7, 2025

Altar Vigils offered by Helen Wanko in memory of Lydia Wanko (anniversary of repose). **Triple Candelabra** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rt. Rev. Bishop Anthony (Grabbe).

December 21, 2025

Altar Vigils offered by Andrea & Russell Wyskanycz in memory of Juliana Bacsik (anniversary of repose).

December 28, 2025

Altar Vigils offered by Helen Wanko in memory of June Bianchini (anniversary of birth). **Sanctuary Lamp**, **St. John's Cross**, and **St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by the Zuber Family in memory of Stephen & Tatiana Korbelak. **Triple Candelabra** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Angelo Cusano Jr.

Parish News

Confessions

All parishioners ought to go to confession during the Nativity Fast, which may be heard after any Vespers. If you are unable to attend Vespers, please call the Rectory at 201-436-3244 to make an appointment.

St. Olga's Closet

Please consider how you can help St. Olga's Closet, a new ministry to provide material support to St. Tikhon's seminarians. Informational flyers about St. Olga's Closet and the wish list are available in the church vestibule. Donated items may be left in the church hall. Thank you for your support!

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting, which was postponed, is scheduled for Sunday, December 14, 2025 after Divine Liturgy.

Christmas Social

The Carpathian Club invites all our parishioners and visitors to its annual Christmas Social, which shall be held after Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day in the club hall behind the church building.

Schedule of Services

December 6, 2025

9:30 AM (Saturday) – Divine Liturgy [*St. Nicholas*]

December 6-7, 2025

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

December 13-14, 2025

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

December 20-21, 2025

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

December 24-27, 2025 [*Christmas*]

4:30 PM (Wednesday) – Vigil w. Lity
9:30 AM (Thursday) – Divine Liturgy
9:30 AM (Friday) – Divine Liturgy
9:30 AM (Saturday) – Divine Liturgy

December 27-28, 2025

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

Daily Bible Readings

1. Colossians 1:3-6; Luke 19:37-44
2. 1 Timothy 1:15-17; Luke 19:45-48
3. 1 Timothy 1:18-20; Luke 20:1-8
4. 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Luke 20:9-18
5. 1 Timothy 4:4-8,16; Luke 20:19-26
6. Galatians 3:8-12; Luke 12-32-40
7. Ephesians 5:9-19; Luke 17:12-19
8. 1 Timothy 5:1-10; Luke 20:27-44
9. 1 Timothy 5:11-21; Luke 21:28-33
10. 1 Tim. 5:22-6:11; Luke 21:5-7,10-11,20-24
11. 1 Timothy 6:17-21; Luke 21:28-33
12. 2 Timothy 1:1-2,8-18; Luke 21:37-22:8
13. Galatians 5:22-6:2; Luke 13:18-29
14. Colossians 3:4-11; Luke 14:16-24
15. 2 Timothy 2:20-26; Mark 8:11-21
16. 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4; Mark 8:22-26
17. 2 Timothy 4:9-22; Mark 8:30-34
18. Galatians 3:8-12; Mark 9:10-16
19. Titus 1:15-2:10; Mark 9:33-41
20. Ephesians 1:16-23; Luke 14:1-11
21. Heb. 11:9-10,17-23,32-40; Matt. 1:1-25
22. Hebrews 3:5-11,17-19; Mark 9:42-10:1
23. Hebrews 4:1-13; Mark 10:2-12
24. Hebrews 1:1-12; Luke 2:1-20
25. Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 2:1-12
26. Hebrews 2:11-18; Matthew 2:13-23
27. Ephesians 2:11-13; Luke 16:10-15
28. Galatians 1:11-19; Matthew 2:13-23
29. Hebrews 8:7-13; Mark 10:46-52
30. Hebrews 9:8-10,15-23; Mark 11:11-23
31. Hebrews 10:1-18; Mark 11:22-26

Remember to support the parish every time you shop!

ShopRite, Stop & Shop, and Acme gifts cards available for purchase in the church vestibule.