

Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
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“**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

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

We have entered the season of Advent again, when we prepare to celebrate the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word “advent” derives from the Latin word meaning “coming,” and so we call the forty days preceding the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the season of His “coming” into the world.

At a time when the days of the year are shortening, and night is falling earlier, we prepare, like the virgins for our Bridegroom (Matthew 25:1-13), for the Light coming into the world. The Light is Christ, who shines into the darkness to dispel the “darkness” of ignorance and sin. Will we be like the wise virgins who were prepared, or like those foolish ones who were unprepared?

We prepare for His coming by prayer and fasting. We pray for the Light to illumine us, and that we will not be spiritually blind to the Light. We pray to have our blindness lifted, like that of the Blind Man (John 9:1-38), rather than clinging to the darkness like the stubborn scribes and Pharisees. We pray that we might walk in the Light, that the true Light coming into

the world will inspire us to walk in faith and righteousness. “O Christ God, grant us Thy grace that we may not remain spiritually lame, that we not remain paralyzed with a petrified heart and a darkened mind, but that we might, like the Paralytic (John 5:1-15), get up and stride with greater love for Thee!”

And let us fast, for we know that by fasting we pray with our bodies. We fast because we are creatures of body and soul, and so the soul’s movement of prayer is coordinated with the body’s discipline of fasting—thereby offering the whole of ourselves in prayer.

St. John the Baptist showed us the way. He went out into the wilderness, to live by fasting, in order to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. Therefore, during Advent, we are all “latter-day Johns,” fasting and praying so as to prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our preparation in Advent is a symbolic journey, wherein we metaphorically become like the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12), walking the long path to come to our spiritual Bethlehem, when we may liturgically bear our gifts, and offer our adoration, to the newly-born Lord!

So, come, let us adore Him, Christ our Lord, and worship Him, with the shepherds and the angels (Luke 2:8-20). Let us open our souls to the Light of Christ, so that we may sing, together with our all-holy Mother, the Virgin Mary: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:47).

And so, as the lengthening day commences on Christmas, let us increase our spiritual light, so that it may shine among men. Let us follow the counsel of St. Seraphim of Sarov, who told us to acquire the spirit of peace, from our Prince of Peace, so that a thousand souls around us may be saved!

May all of you have a Merry Christmas, and may the bounteous joy, in the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of the world, be with you always! Christos Razhdajetsja! Slavitje Jeho!

Parish Council President’s Message

Dear parishioners and friends,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

I would like to thank everyone who made the first annual Slavic Oktoberfest possible, and I am pleased to report that we made a profit of \$1940. And it was indeed a very enjoyable event with good food and fellowship! Fundraisers such as this are vital to our church’s financial future and we are planning at least three distinct fundraising events in 2015.

The Christmas season is upon us and we will start decorating the church with Christmas flowers and pine. In your packet of envelopes is the “Christmas Flowers” envelope—I ask that you please donate generously this year. I also encourage you to bring somebody to church on Christmas who might not otherwise have attended a worship service. Thank you in advance for your continued support and a “Merry Christmas” to all of you and your families!

Yours in Christ,
Reader Stephen Wasilewski

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

Redeemer of nations, come; reveal yourself in virgin birth, the birth which all ages adore, a wondrous birth, befitting God. From human will you do not spring, but from the Spirit of our God; O Word of God, come; take our flesh and grow as a child in Mary's womb. You came forth from the eternal God, and returned to that same source. You suffered death and harrowed hell, and reigned once more from God's high throne. With God the Father you are one, and one with us in human flesh. Oh, fill our weak and dying frame with godly strength which never fails. Your cradle shines with glory's light; its splendor pierces all our gloom. Our faith reflects those radiant beams; no night shall overcome it now. All praise, O unbegotten God, all praise to you, eternal Word, all praise life-giving Spirit, praise, all glory to our God Triune.

St. Ambrose of Milan, "Veni redemptor gentium" (sung at Vespers during Advent in some Western liturgical traditions)

Lives of the Saints

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan and Doctor of the Church – commemorated on December 7th

St. Ambrose was born in Gaul (France), where his father exercised the office of Prefect of the Praetorium, about the year AD 340. His father died while he was still an infant, and with his mother he came to Rome, where he received a good education, learned the Greek language, and became a noted poet and orator. Later he moved to Milan with his brother, Probus, Praetorian Prefect for Italy, who appointed Ambrose the Governor of Liguria and Aemilia. His virtues in this office, and the voice of a child who proclaimed him Bishop, marked him out to the people of Milan as their Bishop on the vacancy of the See—a dignity that he reluctantly accepted. As he was then only a catechumen, he received the Sacrament of Baptism, after which he was quickly ordained and consecrated Bishop in 374, at the age of thirty-four.

After giving his fortune to the Church and the poor, he applied himself to study the Scriptures and ecclesiastical writers, placing himself under the instruction of Simplicianus, a priest of the Church of Rome, who succeeded him in the Archbishopric of Milan. His warfare against the Arians was such that by 383 very few still professed that heresy in his diocese. In 381 he held a Council at Milan against the heresy of Apollinarius, and assisted at that of Aquileia; in the following year, he assisted at one held in Rome by Pope Damasus. When Maximus assumed the purple in Gaul, St. Ambrose was sent there, and he succeeded in concluding a treaty with the self-proclaimed Emperor. But a second embassy, in 387, was not successful; Maximus invaded Italy and was defeated by the Emperor Theodosius. St. Ambrose at a later date had occasion to reprehend Theodosius most severely, thereby securing the penitence of the Emperor.

Besides having authored several important theological texts, St. Ambrose was responsible for the introduction of metrical and isosyllabic hymnody to the Western Church. He himself composed several hymns, such as *Veni redemptor gentium*, which passed into use in the daily office of the early Middle Ages.

St. Ambrose had the satisfaction of witnessing the conversion of the great intellectual, St. Augustine, whom he baptized in 387. One of his last actions was the ordination of St. Honoratus, Bishop of Vercelli. After a life of labor and prayer the holy Bishop of Milan died in 397.

Modern Theological Classics

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, having given authority to the disciples “to observe all things which I have commanded you to do,” also promised to be with them “until the end of the world” (Mt. 28:20). Indeed, Jesus Christ is forever with the Church, for He is the King of His kingdom (Jn. 18:36). He is the foundation of His Church (1 Cor. 3:11), He is the founder of His Church (Mt. 16:18), He is the Head of His Church (Eph. 1:22, 4:15). He is the eternal high priest, “holy, undefiled, higher than the heavens,” who offered Himself once and for all, for the sins of the people (Heb. 7:26-27). He is the possessor of the key to His kingdom (Rev. 3:7), He is the God of the living, “for all live unto Him” (Lk. 20:38), He is the Great or Chief Shepherd of His flock (Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Thus the divine origin, the divine nature and the divine life of the Church are rooted in Jesus Christ and in His Kingdom.

Jesus Christ is the head and the savior of the body, the Church, He is one with the Church, as “flesh and bones” (Eph. 5:23-30), living in one Spirit with her (1 Cor. 6:17). He is the sanctifier of the Church through the Holy Spirit, which He sent upon the apostles to be in the Church forever, bearing His spiritual gifts (Jn. 14:16-17; Gal. 5:22). Divine life flows from Him as head of the Church, to animate, increase and fulfill the body (Col. 2:19).

For the faithful the goal of life in the Church is to attain unity of faith, to “come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect manhood, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). In order to achieve this goal, Jesus Christ Himself gave the means through which to attain salvation. He entrusted to the Church His divine teaching, and He gave authority to the apostles to teach, baptize, and to do all that is necessary for others to obtain salvation (Mt. 28:16-20; Eph. 4:11-13). He Himself established the sacrament of the Eucharist (Lk. 22:19), He granted the apostles authority to “bind and loose” (Jn. 20:22-23), to baptize (Mt. 28:19), and to “feed” the Church (Acts 20:28; Jn. 21:15-17), in order that she “grow into the House of God by the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

As the “builders of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4:1), the apostles were to judge the Church (1 Tim. 5:21-22), to keep order (1 Tim. 3:15; Titus 1:5), and to teach sound doctrine (Titus 2:1).

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself invisibly holds the rudder of the Church in His hands, animating the Church by His Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9). He is the source of new, divine Life, for He is the “way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6). He promised to found His Church (Mt. 16:18), which He acquired with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

The inseparable unity of Jesus Christ with His Body, the Church, is explained by Vladimir Soloviev in this way:

If Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life, who eternally and essentially belongs to the Church, then He belongs to her precisely as the way, the truth and the life. Apostolic succession of the hierarchy, which has its foundation in Christ, is the way by which the divine power of Christ is spread, thereby animating the whole body of the Church. The divine dogma that confesses Jesus Christ to be perfect God and perfect Man is the truth. And the holy sacraments are the foundation and principle of divine life within us. Thus, in the Church’s hierarchy Christ Himself is present as the way. In the confession of faith He is present as the truth. And in the sacraments, He becomes the source of Life. The unity of these three corresponds to the Kingdom of God, whose ruler is our Lord Jesus Christ (V. Soloviev, *Dukhovnye osnovy zhizni*, 108).

In perfect unity with her head, Jesus Christ, the earthly Church exists in the world with a definite, visible structure and organization, including the hierarchy, the holy sacraments, and all other external forms of life. She is invisibly ruled, animated, sanctified and blessed by her true head, through the divine power and life of the Holy Spirit. Thus the true life of the Church and its essential qualities are rooted in and defined by the divine nature and divine life of Jesus Christ, who is her head and savior.

Archbishop Gregory Afonsky, Christ and the Church, pp. 65-67. To be continued.

Our Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

Carpatho-Rusyn Literature

A new period of oppression ensued following the *Ausgleich* of 1867, with the implementation of government-inspired denationalization of ethnic minorities and mandatory Magyarization programs. The Hungarian government's policy provoked some cultural activists to look to Russia as a fraternal culture; hence, Subcarpathian literature in the second half of the nineteenth century was, in theme and in language, characterized by resistance to Magyarization. Most Subcarpathian writers chose to use a literary language based on Russian, rather than any of their own Subcarpathian dialects, believing that the use of the language of the powerful empire to the east would help keep cultural specificity and serve as a defense against national assimilation. The Russian-based literary language used by Rusyn writers came to be known as the "traditional Carpatho-Rusyn language." It contained a range of transitional forms, with deviations in grammar and spelling, as well as admixtures of dialecticisms and neighboring languages. Because of its inconsistencies, it was disparaged by critics as mere jargon. While this development failed to create an authentic Rusyn literature that would satisfy nineteenth century purist standards, it did recognize the potential of intersecting languages; put another way, the very essence of Rusyn literature lies in its ability to straddle discourses.

The major writers honored as the second generation of Rusyn "awakeners" included Alexander Mytrak, Anatolius Kralytsky, Ivan Silvai, Eugenius Fencik, and Julius Stavrovsky-Popradov. Like Dukhnovych and Pavlovych, all were Uniate priests who favored an emotional, didactic lyricism, as well as some prose realism. Still struggling to create a national identity and to achieve social development and educational progress, Rusyn literature continued to stress social over aesthetic values. Its major themes—Carpathian nature, Rusyn history, social injustice, love for the Rusyn people, and indignation directed at the denationalized and increasingly marginalized intelligentsia—are expressed in somber tones that reflect the oppressive and pessimistic political atmosphere of the time. By the turn of the twentieth century a group of younger writers, including Augustin Voloshyn, George Zhatkovych, and Ivan Vasko, began to treat themes from Subcarpathian village life in their native dialects.

After Subcarpathian Rus' became part of Czechoslovakia in 1919, Rusyn literature enjoyed a renaissance. For the subsequent two decades, the Rusyn intelligentsia was for the first time left to work out its own cultural identity in relative freedom. The effects of centuries of colonial domination, however, quickly became apparent in the internal disputes over the appropriate cultural and national orientation. Russophiles, Rusynophiles, and Ukrainophiles debated issues of national identity and language as they sought to find the best defense against

denationalization. While all sides looked to local tradition and expressed a sense of Rusyn patriotism, the body of literature they produced was diverse in language and content. Basil Grendzha-Donsky was the first Subcarpathian author to use literary Ukrainian. His lyric poetry and novels of social protest celebrated the heroic Rusyn past and lamented the misery of the still downtrodden Rusyn people. Julius Borshosh-Kumiansky and Sebastian Sabol also believed that Rusyns were part of the Ukrainian nationality and that, therefore, they could best survive by adapting to Ukrainian culture. By contrast, Russophile poets such as Andrew Karablesh, Michael Popovych, Basil Dobrosh, and Andrew Patrus-Karpatsky sought psychological security for the Rusyn people by stressing their cultural connection to Russia. Using literary Russian, these authors expressed similar themes as the Ukrainophiles, but appealed to the concept of a common Russian culture for identification and support. Russian-language authors were most prolific after the Hungarian regime returned to Subcarpathian Rus' during the Second World War. During those years writers such as Emilian Baletsky, Ivan Kercha, George Hoida, Basil Sochka-Borzhavyn, and Dymytri Vakarov invoked the eastward-looking Slavophile sentiments of earlier Rusyn writers and opposed Ukrainophile tendencies with appeals to Slavic brotherhood.

After the establishment of the Soviet regime in Subcarpathian Rus' (renamed the Transcarpathian oblast) in 1945, Ukrainian was declared the only acceptable literary language and many Russian-language Rusyn writers adopted the new linguistic medium. During the Stalinist years, and again in the 1970s, Subcarpathian writers who tried to adapt to the obligatory optimism required by Socialist Realism overlaid their traditional themes with Soviet clichés. All national feeling and loyalties were replaced by Communist ideals. In their historic novels and short stories, the Rusyn past was rewritten and a reality was created consistent with the imposed political ideology. Ideological injunctions were in the long run more damaging to the integrity of Rusyn literature than any restrictions on language.

In the Presov region, which remained part of Czechoslovakia, Fedor Lazoryk and Ivan Matsynsky, who also switched from Russian to Ukrainian, were among the first poets to relate the Rusyn experience of the post-war years. In prose, Basil Zozuliak, Fedor Ivanchov, Michael Schmayda, and others described the local problems of the Presov region Rusyns, who after 1948 were experiencing collectivization and forced change to a Ukrainian national orientation. A younger generation of prose writers, such as Basil Datsei, Stephen Hostyniak, and Michael Drobnik, used Ukrainian consistently to treat subject matter from everyday life with some satire and psychological realism. Only a few authors, mostly amateur writers living in the countryside, were allowed to publish in their native Rusyn dialect lyrical poems and stories that dealt with nature, village life, traditions, and national consciousness.

When the Communist regimes fell throughout central Europe and the Soviet Union after 1989, Rusyn writers responded quickly. Many who had previously made a career using Ukrainian now turned to some form of the Rusyn language and applied their talent and expertise to rejuvenating a Rusyn national identity. In the Presov region, where a Rusyn literary language was codified in 1995, sophisticated prose on Rusyn themes is being written by Maria Maltsovska. In addition to short stories, Stephen Sukhyi writes poetry with a postmodern flavor, ranging in theme from traditionally poetic subjects to specifically national topics, anecdotes, and comic commentary on modern life. Sukhyi's poetry achieves a balance between the local and the universal, yet it is imbued with a Rusyn spirit. In Transcarpathia, the new Rusyn literature is still characterized by linguistic diversity. Ivan Petrovsky writes poetry in a specific dialectical version

of Rusyn that deals provocatively with nationality issues and Rusyn relations with Ukraine. Basil Sochka-Borzhavyn produces literary verse in both Russian and Rusyn, while Volodymyr Fedynyshynets writes nationally conscious poetry in literary Ukrainian and more recently in Rusyn. Like their predecessors, today's writers continue the Rusyn literary tradition of hybridity as they adapt to current linguistic and political conditions.

Paraphrased from the series of articles authored by Dr. Elaine Rusinko. To be continued.

Parish News

In Memoriam

Mrs. Helen Grudinoff, age 83, of Avon Park, Florida, passed into blessed repose on October 29, 2014. Memory Eternal! Vecnaja Pamjat!

Parish Confessions

All parishioners ought to go to confession during the Nativity Fast. Fr. Sophrony will be available to hear confessions after any Vespers. Those unable to attend Vespers will need to call the Rectory at (201) 436-3244 to make an appointment.

Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council shall meet on Monday, December 15, 2014 at 7:00 PM. All Parish Council members are expected attend this meeting. Please note that starting January 2015, meetings will be held on the third **Wednesday** of the month.

Rector's Vacation

Fr. Sophrony shall be leaving for Puerto Rico the evening of December 17, 2014. He will be back early morning on December 24, 2014. A substitute priest shall say Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 21st. Emergencies should be directed to Fr. John Fencik at (201) 779-6604 while Fr. Sophrony is away.

Christmas Social

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

Blessing of Homes

A schedule for house blessings shall be printed in the January issue of *Quo Vadis*. Everyone whose house was blessed this year will be automatically included in the schedule for January 2015. If anyone else desires a house blessing, please call the Rectory at (201) 436-3244 by Jan. 1, 2015.

Schedule of Services and Events

December 5-6, 2014

6:00 PM (Fri.) – Great Vespers w. Lity
9:30 AM (Sat.) – Divine Liturgy

December 6-7, 2014

6:00 PM (Sat.) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

December 13-14, 2014

6:00 PM (Sat.) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

December 15, 2014

7:00 PM (Mon.) – Parish Council Meeting

December 17, 2014

7:30 PM (Wed.) – Carpathian Club Meeting

December 21, 2014

9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

December 24-25, 2014

4:30 PM (Wed.) – Vigil w. Lity
9:30 AM (Thu.) – Divine Liturgy

December 26, 2014

9:30 AM (Fri.) – Divine Liturgy

December 27, 2014

9:30 AM (Sat.) – Divine Liturgy

December 27-28, 2014

6:00 PM (Sat.) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

Daily Bible Readings

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

- *Sunday & Holy Day readings printed in boldface*

Special Donations

*Please note that for Special Donations in January to be acknowledged in **Quo Vadis**, it will be necessary for the donation to be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by December 14, 2014.*

December 7, 2014

Sanctuary Lamp offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Lydia Wanko (anniversary of birth). **St. Nicholas' Cross** the DeMay Family in memory of Olga DeMay (anniversary of repose). **Sacramental Bread & Wine** offered by Theodore and Valentina Benda in memory of Marianne Benda.

December 28, 2014

Seven-Day Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of June Bianchini (anniversary of birth).

Other Donations:

A new icon of the Virgin Mary "Axion Estin" was donated from a portion of the donations received in memory of Wilfred Royer. Two hundred dollars was donated by Mark Grudinoff in memory of Helen Grudinoff.