

Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
Vol. 3, Number 6: February 2016

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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

In the Great Litany, we hear the petition “For the peace of the whole world, for the good estate of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all men, let us pray to the Lord.” We pray for all men, throughout the whole world, to find peace and unity in the “good estate” of the Holy Church of God, in “one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church,” as we confess in our Symbol of Faith. Yet, as we are well aware, Christians today are not united, on account of divisions caused by past heresies and schisms, in the unity of the holy churches of God for which we pray, and so our prayer, reflecting on this unhappy state of affairs, is that all men throughout the world can find unity once again in the “good estate” of the Holy Church.

Today, there is much controversy over the participation of the local Orthodox Churches in the organizations and activities of the ecumenical movement as a way of witnessing to our separated Christian brethren and inviting them to that unity for which we pray. Some Orthodox, in fact, consider ecumenism to be a new “pan-heresy” (a union of all heresies), against which there is need of a new *anathema* (a formal ecclesiastical denunciation involving excommunication).

On March 11, 1969 the Great Council of Bishops of our Metropolia, under the presidency of Metropolitan Ireney (of blessed memory), issued an encyclical that set forth an Orthodox understanding of the boundaries within which Orthodox might take part in the work of ecumenism. The encyclical rightly noted that the Orthodox Church has always prayed for the union of all men, in accordance with the Scripture: “That they may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that

they may also be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 17:21). It is the Church’s conviction that our Lord Jesus Christ desires that all who believe in Him become one body and bear testimony to Him through visible unity in faith, love, and life. Any movement inspired by sincere sorrow over existing divisions among Christians, and by an equally sincere search to overcome those divisions, is a good and positive development.

The basic goal, therefore, must be the unity of all Christians in one, single body of grace. And that unity is founded, above all, on the unity of faith, on the unanimous acceptance of the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition by all, precisely *as they are wholly and integrally preserved by the Church* [emphasis added]. This can only be accomplished by a courageous witness to the Truth, which alone can unite us all, as well as in the common search to make that Truth evident to all. We call ourselves and all others to that Divine Truth, not because it is “ours,” but because the Church is founded on it and she has as her mission the proclamation of it to all men, in order that all might be saved. It is only in this way that the Orthodox Church participates in the ecumenical movement.

But in the ecumenical movement there has always existed an understanding of unity that differs radically from that held by the Orthodox Church. Many ecumenists hold agreement in faith and doctrine to be of virtually no importance, believing instead that the doctrinal teachings of the Church are “relative” and therefore not obligatory for all. Unity is seen as already existing [invisibly], and nothing remains to be done except to express and strengthen it through ecumenical services and activities of all kinds. Such an approach is *totally incompatible with the Orthodox concept of ecumenism* [emphasis added].

Even back in 1969 our bishops acknowledged that the latter approach was already the “more popular,” and they were certainly prescient in their judgment. Today, in spite of our good faith efforts at witnessing the Truth within the context of ecumenical meetings, our non-Orthodox separated brethren are more distant from that Divine Truth than ever. Not only has there been no progress in resolving the historical differences separating them from us, but even articles of faith that had previously been accepted by virtually all (such as the virginal birth of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ, the full divinity of Christ, etc.) have been openly doubted by many leading prelates and theologians amongst those Christians separated from us. Indeed, today there is not even unanimous agreement over what constitutes a moral way of life! So far as restoring all men to unity of faith is concerned, ecumenism has proven an abject failure.

In their 1969 encyclical, our Great Council of Bishops recognized the possible future danger, and for that reason joint participation in liturgical prayer and the sacraments was clearly and expressly forbidden, for such would imply a unity which in reality does not exist – *“such a concelebration is a self-deception and the deception of others, for it leads both Orthodox and non-Orthodox to the erroneous belief that the Orthodox Church acknowledges something which in fact she does not . . . in general, any source of possible misunderstanding and misinterpretation must be avoided.”* These rules recognize that genuine love is incompatible with hypocrisy, self-deceit and the deception of others . . . the replacement of reality by fiction is no act of love. *“No superficial sharing in externals and ceremonials can bring us closer to real unity for it obscures and betrays the sacred essence of unity.”*

In their 1969 encyclical, our bishops still maintained the hope that Truth would prevail over falsehood, that the Orthodox Church could successfully witness to the Truth within the context of ecumenical involvement, and that the ecumenical movement could realize its potential to be a force for good. But they also foresaw the dangers, already present at the time that threatened to turn ecumenism into a “pan-heresy,” against which the Church would need to be “walled off” for her own protection. Unfortunately, the dangers have only increased with time, to the point that involvement

in ecumenical activities could result in a straying from the Truth, into accepting joint statements that are meaningless, or worse than meaningless, just for the sake of “getting along.”

We are now at a critical time of reappraisal in our involvement in the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies and activities. If the ecumenical movement, like a barren tree, has failed to yield good fruit, then perhaps it deserves to wither. Indeed, we must ask whether it has yielded a greater evil, the pandemic of modernism and relativism that has so trivialized, like a latter-day “Pontius Pilate,” the very existence of Truth. We can only find the union of all men for which we pray in the Truth, and our proclamation of Truth to the whole world is our gift of love, by which we commend ourselves and each other to Christ our God. Today, when Christianity is under assault from so many directions, we must find our unity, but the danger that a false ecumenism represents is the substitution of a deception, of a fiction, for *real* unity, the unity that is *visibly* one in faith and love – such a substitution is a danger we cannot afford because it is a distraction from the harder, and meaningful, work of actually resolving our differences. So, let us continue to pray for the union of all men, and find a better way of bearing witness to the truth of our faith in Jesus Christ, and so accomplish the Church’s mission of bringing all men into the unity of faith, love, and life that is the Body of Christ – the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Let us realize that true love for our fellow men impels us to courageously proclaim the Truth, so that all may be saved.

Parish Council President’s Message

Dear parishioners and friends,

Every February, Americans celebrate two events—the Super Bowl and Valentine’s Day. This year both events happen to fall on consecutive Sundays, February 7th and 14th. These events are celebrated by people regardless of denomination and are becoming more popular each year. In 2015, a record 114.4 million people watched the Super Bowl, and a record \$18.9 billion in retail spending was spent for Valentine’s Day. Records are being broken around these two “holidays,” yet nationally there is a progressive decline in church attendance, also regardless of denomination.

Our churches see their highest attendance numbers on the high holy days of Christmas and Pascha. But let’s remember that *every* Sunday is “Pascha”—a celebration of Christ’s Resurrection, and at *every* Divine Liturgy we’re offered the holy gifts of *same* Body and Blood of Christ that was born in the manger, and crucified on the Cross, and rose from the dead on the third day. I look forward to seeing everyone in church on Sundays, and please remember that without God *nothing* is possible.

Yours in Christ,
Reader Stephen Wasilewski

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

If you diligently examine the words of the law, you will find indeed that the mother of God as she is free from all connection with man, so is she exempt from any obligation of the law. For not every woman who brings forth, but she who has received seed and brought forth, is pronounced unclean, and by the ordinances of the law is taught that she must be cleansed, in order to distinguish probably from her who though a virgin has conceived and brought forth. But that we might be loosed from the bonds of the law, as did Christ, so also Mary submitted herself of her own will to the law.

St. Theophylact, quoted in Thomas Aquinas’ Catena Aurea (for Luke 2:22ff.)

Lives of the Saints

St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna & Martyr – commemorated on February 23rd

On Feb. 23, the Church remembers the life and martyrdom of St. Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle and Evangelist St. John the Theologian. Polycarp is celebrated on the same date by both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians.

Polycarp is known to later generations primarily through the account of his martyrdom, rather than by a formal biography. However, it can be determined from that account that he was born around the year 69 AD. From the testimony he gave to his persecutors – stating he had served Christ for 86 years – it is clear that he was either raised as a Christian, or became one in his youth. Growing up among the Greek-speaking Christians of the Roman Empire, Polycarp received the teachings and recollections of individuals who had seen and known Jesus during his earthly life. This important connection – between Jesus' first disciples and apostles and their respective students – served to protect the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church against the influence of heresy during its earliest days, particularly against early attempts to deny Jesus' bodily incarnation and full humanity.

Polycarp's most significant teacher, with whom he studied personally, was St. John – whose contributions to the Bible included not only the clearest indication of Jesus' eternal divinity, but also the strongest assertions of the human nature he assumed on behalf of mankind. By contrast, certain tendencies had already emerged among the first Christians – to deny the reality of Jesus' literal suffering, death, and resurrection, regarding them as mere "symbols" of highly abstract ideas. Another Church Father of the second century, St. Irenaeus, wrote that Polycarp "was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ; but he was also, by apostles, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna." In a surviving letter that he wrote to the Philippians, he reminded that Church – which had also received the teaching of St. Paul – not to surrender their faith to the "gnostic" teachers claiming to teach a more intellectually refined gospel. "For every one who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is antichrist," he wrote – citing St. John himself – "and whosoever shall not confess the testimony of the Cross, is of the devil; and whosoever shall pervert the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts and say that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, that man is the firstborn of Satan."

"Let us therefore, without ceasing, hold fast by our hope and by the pledge of our righteousness," Polycarp taught – as he went on to explain that both hope and righteousness depended upon "Jesus Christ, who took up our sins in His own body upon the cross." With eloquence and clarity, he reminded the Philippian Church that Christ, "for our sakes, endured all things – so that we might live in him." However, Polycarp's most eloquent testimony to his faith in Jesus came not through his words, but through his martyrdom, described in another early Christian work. The Church of Smyrna, in present-day Turkey, compiled their recollections of their bishop's death at the hands of public authorities in a letter to another local church. "We have written to you, brethren, as to what relates to the martyrs, and especially to the blessed Polycarp" – who, in the words of the Christians of Smyrna, "put an end to the persecution – having, as it were, set a seal upon it by his martyrdom."

Around the year 155, Polycarp became aware that government authorities were on the lookout for him, seeking to stamp out the Church's claim of obeying a higher authority than the Emperor. He retreated to a country house and occupied himself with constant prayer, before receiving a vision of his death that prompted him to inform his friends: "I must be burned alive." He changed locations, but was betrayed by a young man who knew his whereabouts and confessed

under torture. He was captured on a Saturday evening by two public officials, who urged him to submit to the state demands. "What harm is there," one asked, "in saying, 'Caesar is Lord,' and in sacrificing to him, with the other ceremonies observed on such occasions, so as to make sure of safety?" "I shall not do as you advise me," he answered. Outraged by his response, the officials had him violently thrown from their chariot and taken to an arena for execution. Entering the stadium, the bishop – along with some of his companions, who survived to tell of it – heard a heavenly voice, saying: "Be strong, and show yourself a man, O Polycarp!" Before the crowd, the Roman proconsul demanded again that he worship the emperor. "Hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian," the bishop said. "And if you wish to learn what the doctrines of Christianity are, appoint me a day, and you shall hear them." "You threaten me with fire," he continued "which burns for an hour, and after a little is extinguished. But you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly." "But," he challenged the proconsul, "what are you waiting for? Bring forth what you will." Although the crowds clamored for Polycarp to be devoured by beasts, it was decided he should be burned alive, just as he had prophesied. He prayed aloud to God: "May I be accepted this day before you as an acceptable sacrifice -- just as you, the ever-truthful God, have foreordained, revealed beforehand to me, and now have fulfilled."

What happened next struck Polycarp's companions with amazement; they recorded the sight in the letter that they circulated after Polycarp's death. "As the flame blazed forth in great fury," they wrote, "we to whom it was given to witness it, beheld a great miracle." The fire did not seem to touch the bishop's body. Rather, as they described, "shaping itself into the form of an arch, it encompassed – as by a circle – the body of the martyr. And he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace." "Moreover, we perceived such a sweet odor coming from the flames – as if frankincense or some such precious spices had been burning there." The executioners perceived that Polycarp's death was not going as planned. Losing patience, they ordered him to be stabbed to death. From the resulting wound, "there came forth a dove, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished." The crowd, as the Christian witnesses recalled, were understandably amazed. "All the people marveled," they wrote, "that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect." Polycarp, they proclaimed, had been among that elect – "having in our own times been an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the Catholic Church which is in Smyrna." St. Polycarp has been venerated as a saint since his death in 155.

Modern Theological Classics

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE LAWS OF NATURE

"All things were created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things are held together"
(Colossians 1:16-17)

It seems most unfortunate, since some younger ones ordered a reconciliation of prayer with the laws of nature that govern everything. A friend of mine, who could not accept anything other than one God, but who had the mania to read everything, whatever was written against Christianity. This is here he stated his difficulty one day. The whole world is a gigantic machine, which is governed by unbending and implacable laws, succeeding each other in unshakable order and stereotyped programming. According to these laws, that are utterly unchangeable, every natural phenomenon is the result of certain physical causes, which no power can change, not even excluding the Omnipotent God, who first of all must respect the order which He Himself set. Death is the natural consequence of physiological condition, under which the body remains dried up and

crumbles. Drought, floods, earthquakes, similarly have unconquerable—although often unknown to us—reasons, in such and such flow of natural things. Only in olden times, when nature was a mystery for man could he think that its various functions depended on the peculiar desires of a Being leading or bringing in a diversified manner or according to the entreaties of his customers.

But today, when the physical sciences have delved into the activities of the laws, even to the very least of them, it is absurd for one to still believe that by prayer it is possible for man to believe in the resurrection of the dead, or to be delivered from a drought, or an earthquake, or a flood and the like. Therefore, prayer under the form of perfection is vain, unless we pray in the manner of Rousseau, who suggested when he wrote somewhere: “I speak with God penetrating all my spiritual powers with His divine essence. I am touched by His benefits. I bless Him for His gifts. But I do not pray, that is, I do not ask for anything from Him. What should I ask of Him, to change the course of things for me, and to perform miracles for me? I, who must love order above all else, which His wisdom ordered and is supported by His Providence, to wish to shake this order for me? No! Such impertinent prayers, instead of being heard, rather should be punished.”

We confess that the formulated opinion comes to remind us of a true (or a part truth), that many persons forget. Truly, prayer should not be limited exclusively to petitions, because there are other elements besides petitions that constitute its contents. The Christian should not come to consciousness of poverty and dependence will always follow him. However, he can communicate with God differently, either by thinking Him for His favors, that are granted to us each day, or by praising Him and glorifying His most laudable and glorious Name, or confessing our sins before Him and finally asking for their forgiveness. Besides these elements, that alone may exist, and again would suffice to inspire our esteem for prayer and bring us closer to God, besides, I say, these elements, about which we shall speak in the next chapter, prayer cannot but deal with our needs and take the form of petition, since we have nowhere else than to seek refuge in God. In such a situation we cannot see how a supplicatory prayer can come in conflict with the Laws of Nature.

Because, in order to come directly and examine the present problem, we have to ask: what are these laws of nature? Are they perhaps self-supporting and self-governing powers? Are they first causes, beyond which no other greater Cause exists, to rule and to govern? Or, on the contrary, are they rules completely secondary and expressive of Divine Will, on the basis of which creation will proceed on general lines? If the former, then let us sincerely confess that we do not believe in God, and that we labor to present the machine of everything of itself and moving without an Engineer. But if the laws are secondary causes, then above the laws there exists the Lawgiver God, a Foreman, who directs the separate workers according to a higher and more general goal. God cannot stand by as a passive observer of His laws, and who forbids Himself to intervene in His creation, when it becomes necessary, because finally He is not the mercenary slave of the laws, which He Himself set, according to what the English theologian Liddon said.

On the contrary, God stands as the Lord of the universe. The world is the carriage, the laws are the reins, but He is the Coachman. And, just as it would be absurd for us to say that the reins, regardless of the coachman, direct the coach, thus it is absurd for us to maintain that the laws of nature rule everything without a rudder. However, God *“is working still”* (John 5:17). And no one will deprive Him of the privilege to innovate over His creation and to invent new methods and, at times, new combinations. *“All things were created, by Him and for Him, He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together”* (Colossians 1:16-17), said the walking-in-heaven Paul. Concentrate, please, on the *‘hold together’* (συνεστησεν). According to the Apostle Paul, God is not only the Λ and the Ω of creation; He is not only the source and the goal of every existence; He is not only the from eternity and uncreated Creator, but He is at the same time the *“Holder Together”* (Συνοχευς) of the universe. He is the cohesive power of all things; He is the Mystical and Ineffable attraction of

the separate creatures without whom creation would dissolve into the atoms from which it is constituted, in the same way that the beads of the rosary would scatter if the chain holding them would break. And further, it is not true that the mechanism of nature is completely unbending, and that the laws of nature are implacably inflexible. On the contrary, we observe every day that by various combinations, which the human mind introduces into the realm of nature, these laws are bent in such a way that they produce results different from what they would if left alone.

Thus, e.g. by the proper application of human intelligence and will, here lands that are bare and arid become covered by forests and transformed for the better; and those stagnant swamps, that emitted pollution into the air, were dried up and became beneficial in many ways. Furthermore, steppes were transformed into fertile fields. In a fourth place the produce was increased fourfold due to scientific methods assisting the fertile ability of the soil. A fifth part, where the ocean fore savagely into the shore, human engineering invented a way by which, not only were the ocean assaults curbed, but also the shore was calmed and beautified, changing it into a popular quay. At another time, the human intellect working ingeniously made lightning rods, and used the deadly electrical current for many useful purposes, or neutralized the harmful results of fever with quinine. Thus is how the human mind knows how to bend the laws of nature, connecting or disconnecting them for benefit to mankind. And if man can do this, who is small and finite, is it possible to think that the Infinite Mind cannot, who is manifold according to wisdom and most inventive as to method, if not, indeed, opposing or destroying the energies of the ones appointed by Him (even though He could also do this, since He is Lord of the laws), but combining them properly and producing good results for the good of those who call upon His holy Name? We, at least, are so convinced about the reasonableness of the intrusions of the Sovereign God in nature that the idea alone would seem absurd to us.

But what need of further words? The moment when the nonsense speakers are numbered by the fingers of one hand, are closed in their sunless rooms and surrounded by their worm-eaten and dusty volumes, and labor to fabricate their very elegant but vain arguments against prayer, the hundreds and thousands of living and teeming beings of humanity continue to pray to the Creator, proving by this stance that man (who is a praying being as defined by a modern theologian) bears in the depths of his soul recorded indestructible the proof of the efficaciousness of prayer. A shipwrecked person prays to the Lord of the seas and storms to calm the storm. The distressed mother with disheveled hair prays by the pillow of her dispirited daughter. The bent-over old man prays expecting of God the return of his prodigal son. The people pray by parading in great litanies that the Lord will have compassion and send rain on their farms. The sinner prays that the holy God will have mercy and change him from a vessel of infamy into a vessel of election. The entire population prays when naturally and morally a theater of miracles is wrought by the right hand of God. And humanity never, absolutely never, will be convinced that it is absurd when it asks God to intervene in nature.

Two days before his death, an outstanding doctor and great scientist, who knew human nature more than anyone in its earthly and spiritual aspect, left the following resplendent witness to prayer: "They say that prayer is of no value! Prayer is stronger than medical science. Prayer is all-powerful. Prayer is the cornerstone of love. Oh, pray, please pray for me forever."

*Fr. Constantine Callinikos, The Prayer, pp. 19-22. **To be continued.***

Our Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

Carpatho-Rusyns in America: Part III

For eight years, the Greek Catholics in the United States waited in eager expectation for the appointment of a new bishop. Finally, Rome acted. On March 8, 1924, the Holy See of Rome unexpectedly announced the establishment of two exarchates for Greek Catholics in the United States. Simultaneously with this action, the Holy See appointed Father Basil Takach to be the Bishop of all Greek Catholics in the United States who were of Carpatho-Rusyn, Hungarian, Slovak and Croatian descent while Father Constantine Bohachevsky was named bishop of all Greek Catholics of Ukrainian descent. The Holy See's appointment of Father Takach as bishop put an end to more than thirty years of ecclesiastical disputes, foreign interventions and intrigues, and assorted ethnic rivalries.

Basil Takach was born in a small village in Maramaros County, Hungary on October 27, 1879. Following the example of his father and his uncle, young Basil entered the Užgorod Seminary and was ordained to the priesthood in December 14, 1902. After nine years of service as a parish priest, Bishop Julius Firczak appointed Father Takach as the controller of the Eparchial bank and executive officer of its printing society. In addition to these weighty responsibilities, Father Takach was named the superior of the "Alumneum," the Eparchy's boarding school. After World War I, Father Takach assumed even a more prominent role in the affairs of the Eparchy: spiritual director of the seminary, professor of religion at the Eparchial teacher's college, member of the matrimonial tribunal and diocesan consultor. It was in the midst of performing these important duties that Father Takach received the news of his selection as the new bishop for the newly established Greek Catholic exarchate in America.

Father Takach was consecrated as a bishop in Rome on Pentecost Sunday, June 15, 1924. On August 13, 1924, a huge and enthusiastic throng crowded onto the pier of New York Harbor to greet the new bishop. After leading a service of thanksgiving at St. Mary's Greek Catholic Church in New York and being welcomed at a banquet at New York's Pennsylvania Hotel, Bishop Takach set about the arduous task of organizing the new Exarchate and giving much needed leadership to his new flock. One of the initial decisions confronting Bishop Takach was the location of a permanent episcopal seat and residence. In the papal bull appointing Father Takach as bishop, it was expressly stated that the episcopal seat of the new Greek Catholic Exarchate would be New York City. New York, however, was not an acceptable location because it had a much smaller Carpatho-Rusyn population than other regions of the country. Thus, Bishop Takach established temporary residences, first in Trenton, New Jersey and later in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, which he found to be more suitable locations. Shortly after his arrival in Uniontown, representatives from St. John the Baptist Greek Catholic Church in Munhall, Pennsylvania, a "steel town" suburb of Pittsburgh, presented Bishop Takach with a written proposal offering land and financial assistance if he would establish his residence and episcopal seat at the parish. Given the parish's close proximity to the main offices of the Greek Catholic Union, the oldest and largest fraternal organization serving the Greek Catholic community, the bishop gladly accepted the generous offer and made St. John's the cathedral of the newly established Greek Catholic Exarchate. In December 1925, the bishop's residence and chancery, described as "one of the finest in Western Pennsylvania," at long last were completed. In February 1926, Bishop Takach moved to Munhall and officially took up residence.

Another important initial task of Bishop Takach was the establishment of canonical order and ecclesiastical discipline in the new Exarchate. To achieve this objective, the bishop made

several key decisions. First, Bishop Takach created an administrative structure for the governance of the Exarchate. Father Theophilus Zhatkovich of Trauger, Pennsylvania was named the first Chancellor of the Exarchate. A six member board of consultors also was created. The first Board of Consultors included: Father Gabriel Martyak of Landsford, Pennsylvania, Father Valentine Gorzo of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, Father Victor Mirossay of Cleveland, Ohio, Father Nicholas Chohey of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, Father Joseph Hanulya of Cleveland, Ohio and Father Victor Kovaliczky of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Bishop Takach also undertook a strenuous parish visitation program for the dual purposes of meeting the faithful and creating regional governing districts or deaneries for the Exarchate. Starting with St. John the Baptist Church in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, where he blessed a newly erected parochial school, the bishop visited sixty parishes in various parts of the country in a period of about five months. Based upon the recommendations of the board of consultors and the geographic locations of the parishes, Bishop Takach divided the Exarchate into thirteen deaneries having the following seats: New York City, Jersey City, Philadelphia, Scranton, Hazleton, Johnstown, Punxsutawney, Pittsburgh, Homestead, Uniontown, Youngstown, Cleveland, and Chicago. Simultaneously with the creation of the administrative structure for the new Exarchate, Bishop Takach ordered the clergy to take a much needed census of all of the parishes. The results of this census showed that the new Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate consisted of almost 300,000 faithful organized into 155 parishes and mission churches served by 129 priests.

From the start of his episcopacy, Bishop Takach was motivated by a burning desire to elevate, spiritually enrich and unify the faithful. Under the bishop's leadership, various religious organizations such as the Altar Society, the Sodality and the Rosary Society were introduced and promoted among the parishes of the Exarchate. In addition, in conjunction with the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, the bishop instituted an annual pilgrimage in honor of the Most Holy Mother of God, first at the St. Nicholas Orphanage in Elmhurst and later at the Sisters' newly established mother house at Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown. This annual Labor Day event quickly became a popular event among the faithful of the Exarchate and brought together thousands of worshipers from throughout the United States. Bishop Takach clearly recognized the vital importance of a Catholic press. With the support and financial generosity of the United Societies, one of the Greek Catholic fraternal organizations, numerous forms of religious and devotional materials were printed and disseminated. Additionally, the support of the United Societies enabled the Exarchate to begin the publication of a monthly religious magazine called the Queen of Heaven ("Nebesnaja Caroca"). To spread knowledge of the Byzantine Rite among American Catholics, a monthly called "*The Chrysostom*" and a weekly entitled "*The Eastern Observer*" was published with the moral and financial assistance of the bishop.

Bishop Takach took special interest in the Sisters of St. Basil the Great. Viewing the teaching ministry of the sisters as crucial to the future growth and development of the Greek Catholic Church in America, Bishop Takach wholeheartedly supported all their efforts and activities. During Bishop Takach's episcopate, the Sisters of St. Basil established and staffed ten parochial schools and six catechetical schools throughout the Exarchate. Unfortunately, the administration of Bishop Takach as the first bishop of the Greek Catholic Exarchate of Pittsburgh was not without controversy or conflict. In 1929, the Holy See issued a decree known as *Cum Data Fuerit*. In this decree, the Holy See reiterated its previous position that the Greek Catholic clergy in America must be celibate. Bishop Takach vehemently opposed the new decree and used all possible means to persuade the Holy See to reverse its decision. When the Holy See rebuffed all appeals, Bishop Takach insisted that the celibacy decree must be obeyed, whereupon there arose great conflict within the exarchate. Many parishes were drawn into the conflict and numerous legal battles for control of church properties ensued. Regrettably, the conflict produced a schism within the

Exarchate and lead to the formation of an Independent Greek Catholic Church.¹ Nevertheless, the Greek Catholic Exarchate regained its momentum and continued to grow and establish new parishes under Bishop Basil Takach's leadership.

Bishop Basil Takach's pioneering twenty-four year tenure of service as the first bishop of the Greek Catholic Exarchate of Pittsburgh ended with his death on May 13, 1948. He was sixty-nine years of age at the time of his repose. After a solemn Hierarchical Requiem Liturgy at St. John's Cathedral attended by seven bishops, three abbots, more than one hundred and eighty priests and numerous civic, fraternal and cultural leaders, the bishop was buried in Calvary Cemetery at Mount St. Macrina.

¹ In 1937, at a meeting held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, disaffected Ruthenian Greek Catholics under the leadership of Father Orestes Chornock of Bridgeport, Connecticut decided to petition Patriarch Benjamin of Constantinople to receive the group, representing thirty-seven parishes, into the Orthodox Church and to ordain Fr. Chornock as its bishop. Constantinople approved the petition and Fr. Chornock was ordained to the episcopate at the Ecumenical Patriarchate on September 18, 1938. The new eparchy, called the "American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese," was placed under the spiritual supervision of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. This move marked the second mass "return to Orthodoxy" movement among Ruthenian Greek Catholic parishes in North America.

*Article paraphrased from various internet sources. **To be continued.***

Parish News

Chinese New Year Supper

The Bayonne Alpha "R" Club's annual Chinese New Year supper is scheduled for Saturday, January 30, 2016 after Great Vespers. Great Vespers will start at 5:00 PM instead of 6:00 PM on that date.

Carpathian Club Event

The Carpathian Club is having a Super Bowl Sunday "Social" starting at 3:30 PM on Sunday, February 7, 2016. Club members and friends are welcome – contact Stephen Wasilewski if you plan to attend.

Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council is meeting on Sunday, February 21, 2016 after Divine Liturgy.

Special Donations

*Please note that for Special Donations in March to be acknowledged in **Quo Vadis**, it is necessary for the donation to be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by February 21, 2016.*

February 7, 2016

St. John's Cross offered by Mary Macinsky in memory of John Yendrey (anniversary of repose).

February 21, 2016

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rita Richards (5th anniversary of repose).

Schedule of Services and Events

February 1-2, 2016

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

February 6-7, 2016

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

February 13-14, 2016

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

February 20-21, 2016

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

February 27-28, 2016

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

Daily Bible Readings

1. Heb. 11:17-23, 27-31; Mark 9:42-10:1
2. **Heb. 7:7-17; Luke 2:22-40**
3. James 1:1-18; Mark 10:11-16
4. James 1:19-27; Mark 10:17-27
5. James 2:1-13; Mark 10:23-32
6. Col. 1:3-6; Luke 16:10-15
7. **1 Tim. 1:15-17; Matt. 15:21-28**
8. James 2:14-26; Mark 10:46-52
9. James 3:1-10; Mark 11:11-23
10. James 3:11-4:6; Mark 11:23-26
11. James 4:7-5:9; Mark 11:27-33
12. 1 Pet. 1:1-12, 2:6-10; Mark 12:1-12
13. 1 Thess. 5:14-23; Luke 17:3-10
14. **1 Tim. 4:9-15; Luke 19:1-10**
15. 1 Pet. 2:21-3:9; Mark 12:13-17

16. 1 Pet. 3:10-22; Mark 12:18-27
17. 1 Pet. 4:1-11; Mark 12:26-37
18. 1 Pet. 4:12-5:5; Mark 12: 38-44
19. 2 Pet. 1:1-10; Mark 13:1-8
20. 2 Tim. 2:11-19; Luke 18:2-8
21. **2 Tim. 3:10-15; Luke 18:10-14**
22. 2 Pet. 1:20-2:9; Mark 13:9-13
23. 2 Pet. 2:9-22; Mark 13:14-23
24. 2 Pet. 3:1-18; Mark 13:24-31
25. 1 Jn. 1:8-2:6; Mark 13:31-14:2
26. 1 Jn. 2:7-17; Mark 14:3-9
27. 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Luke 20:46-21:4
28. **1 Cor. 6:12-20; Luke 15:11-32**
29. 1 Jn. 2:18-3:10; Mark 11:1-11

** Sunday & Holy Day readings in boldface*