

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

On March 25th we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation. The feast commemorates the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, in which he announced to her the glad tidings that she had found favor with God and that she shall conceive in her womb, and bring forth, a Son called Jesus. Thus she is the most blessed of women, in that the Lord is with her, filling her with grace. How was this miracle of a virginal conception accomplished? The Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, so that the Son of God would be born of her—for with God nothing shall be impossible (Luke 1:37). The Virgin Mary voluntarily submitted to the will of God and freely accepted the gift of God’s blessing, responding: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38).

Such was the Virgin Mary’s faith in God, that she submitted to the divine will, and so she became the grace-filled vessel from which our salvation would come forth. She believed in God, and in His word, and that with God nothing is impossible. She responded to God’s grace with voluntary obedience, and by so doing, overturned the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Just as sin entered the world by the disobedience of the first man and woman, so grace entered the world by the obedience of her who is most blessed and most pure, the Ever-Virgin Mary. Thus the world was redeemed from the tragedy of its fallen condition.

Dear brethren, as disciples of Christ, we too are called to live by the same courage of faith that is so richly manifested in the Virgin Mary. May her obedience to the will of God inspire our obedience to His holy will. Let us believe, with all our mind and all our soul, that if God is with us, then nothing is impossible. We can be saved—and with us, all of the mankind and the whole of the cosmos—if we demonstrate the same trust in God that is exemplified in the Virgin Mary. Let us respond to God’s grace that is freely offered to us through the Church, with voluntary submission, so that it may be unto us according to God’s word. May all of you open yourselves freely to God’s grace, so that by grace you may all enter the Kingdom of your Lord.

Parish Council President's Message

Dear parishioners and friends,

Over the course of my tenure as parish council president, there have been many times that we could have replaced items in our church instead of refurbishing them. The holy water font that was constructed and donated by Ted Benda many years ago was not functional anymore because of wear and tear. We were inserting a pot within the font to preserve the memory of it. This past year Robert Pierce generously donated his time and effort to cap the non-workable valves and replace them with a functional spigot so we could use the entire font again. The font was then cleaned thoroughly for its use on Holy Theophany. I'd like to thank both Robert Pierce and Kenny Bianchini for cleaning the font and preparing it for its use.

Sadly, many of us have been to funerals at our church over the years. The one thing, I always remember, is the two brass candle stands that stand at the head and foot of the casket. Over time, these stands have become non-functional. Recently, Robert Pierce came up with a plan to preserve these candle stands and they have been refurbished. We will be using the bees wax candles in them and they will be visible to the eye. Thank you again Robert for your time and effort. You saved our parish a lot of money. If anyone would like to donate the gold candle followers, please let me know. The cost is \$100 for a set of 2. Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours in Christ,
Reader Stephen Wasilewski

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

An angel speaks with a virgin, because a woman spoke to a serpent. "In the sixth month" [ed. of the Jewish calendar], as it is written, "The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin betrothed to a man." Gabriel was sent with the message of universal salvation. Gabriel was sent, bringing the writ of the recall of Adam. Gabriel was sent to the Virgin, that the dishonor of womanhood might be transformed into honor. Gabriel was sent, as is worthy, to rejoice at the pure chamber of the Bridegroom. Gabriel was sent, and the Creator is betrothed to His creation. Gabriel was sent to the spiritual palace of the King of the Angels. Gabriel was sent to a virgin, who though betrothed to Joseph, will bear the Son. The bodiless servant was sent to the spotless Virgin. Sin was sent free towards corruption by the inviolate one. The lamp was sent to tell of the Sun of Righteousness. The morning star precedes the light of day. Gabriel was sent to relate of Him who is in the bosom of the Father, and in the arms of His Mother. Gabriel was sent to show Him Who is on the throne and in the cave. The soldier was sent to cry out the mystery of the King. We know this is a mystery through faith, not one that can be studied in various ways. We venerate the mystery, not a joining together. We theologize a mystery, not a study. We confess a mystery, we do not count it. "In the sixth month, Gabriel went to a virgin..."

And he [the Archangel] received all the commandments like these [from the Lord]: "Come, O Angel, become a servant of this awesome mystery. Serve this hidden wonder, as an answer to fallen Adam, who will come under my compassion. Sin has made me that is fashioned in my image to grow old, and has soiled my creation, and has darkened where I created beauty. The wolf has scattered my flock. The dwelling place of Paradise has become a desert. The Tree of Life is guarded by the flaming sword, and the place of nourishment is closed. I have mercy on him who was attacked, and I wish to make war with him who fought against him [i.e. the devil]. I wish for all of the heavenly powers to know, but to you alone I impart the mystery. Go to the Virgin Mary, go to the Spiritual Gate, of which the Prophet said: "Glorious things have been said of you, O City of God." Go to my Rational Paradise. Go to the Eastern City. Go to her who is the worthy dwelling-place of the Word. Go to the second Heaven on earth. Go to the Light Cloud. Tell her of my coming, the Thunderstorm. Go to her who is my prepared holy place. Go to the Bridal Chamber of my

incarnation. Go to the pure Bridal Chamber of my nativity in the flesh. Speak to the ears of this rational Ark, to prepare the entrance of my hearing. But do not be fearsome, do not trouble the soul of the Virgin...First cry out to her with a voice of joy, and tell Mary: "Hail, O Full-of-grace," that I might have mercy on Eve, who is full-of-shame."

The Angel [Gabriel], having heard what was spoken to him, said: "Strange is this thing, surpassing every thought to speak. He who is awesome to the Cherubim, and invisible to the Seraphim, He Who is incomprehensible to all the Angelic Powers, is proclaimed to become nature!"

St. John Chrysostom, Homily on the Annunciation

Lives of the Saints

St. Gertrude of Nivelles – commemorated on March 17th

The early history of St. Gertrude's family is not well documented. The anonymous author of her *Vita* only hints at her origins: "it would be tedious to insert in this account in what line of earthly origin she was descended. For who living in Europe does not know the loftiness, the names, and the localities of her lineage?" Gertrude's father, Pepin of Landen (Pippin the Elder), a nobleman from east Francia, had been instrumental in persuading King Clothar II to crown his son, Dagobert I, as the King of Austrasia. Due to her position at the palace, Gertrude's mother, Ida of Metz, was likely acquainted with St. Amandus, the Bishop of Maastricht. When Dagobert succeeded his father and the court moved to Neustria, Pippin became mayor of the palace, and his family (including young Gertrude) moved with the king's court. Thus, Gertrude (born c. 626) became introduced to politics during her childhood in the royal court. Arnulf of Metz, Pippin's close ally, was one of several royal counselors who received ecclesiastical posts after a secular career. McNamara argues that Arnulf retired into religion at the time of Clothar's death in 628, but he kept close ties to the family by marrying his son to Gertrude's sister, St. Begga (who later became Abbess of Andenne).

One day, when Gertrude was about ten years of old, her father invited King Dagobert and some noblemen to a banquet. When on this occasion she was asked to marry the son of the Duke of Austrasia she indignantly replied that she would marry neither him nor any other man, but that Christ alone would be her bridegroom. After the death of her father in 639, her mother Ida, following the advice of St. Amandus, Bishop of Maastricht, erected a double monastery, one for men, the other for women, at Nivelles (in Belgium). She appointed her daughter Gertrude as its first abbess, while she herself lived there as a nun, assisting the young abbess by her advice. Among the numerous pilgrims that visited the monastery of Nivelles, there were the two brothers St. Follian and St. Ultan, both of whom were Irish monks and were on their way from Rome to Peronne, where their brother St. Furseus, lay buried. Gertrude and her mother gave them a tract of land called Fosse on which they built a monastery. Ultan was made superior of the new house, while Follian remained at Nivelles, instructing the monks and nuns in Holy Scripture.

After the death of Ida in 652, Gertrude entrusted the interior management of her monastery to a few pious nuns, and appointed some capable monks to attend to the outer affairs, in order that she might gain more time for the study of Holy Scripture, which she almost knew by heart. The large property left by her mother she used for building churches, monasteries and hospices. At the age of thirty-two she became so weak through her continuous abstinence from food and sleep that she found it necessary to resign her office. After taking the advice of her monks and nuns, she appointed her niece, Wulfetrude, as her successor, in December, 658. A day before her death she sent one of the monks to St. Ultan at Fosse to ask whether God had made known to him the hour of her death. The saint answered that she would die the following day during holy Mass. The prophecy was verified. She was venerated as a saint immediately after her death, and a church was erected in her honor by Agnes, the third Abbess of Nivelles.

The towns of Geertruidenberg, Breda, and Bergen-op-Zoom in North Brabant (in southern Holland) honor her as patron. She is also patron of travelers and of cats, and has been invoked against fever, rats, and

mice. There is a legend that one day she sent some of her subjects to a distant country, promising that no misfortune would befall them on the journey. When they were on the ocean, a large sea-monster threatened to capsize their ship, but disappeared upon the invocation of St. Gertrude. In memory of this occurrence travelers during the Middle Ages drank the so-called "Sinte Geerts Minne" or "Gertrudenminte" before setting out on their journey. St. Gertrude is generally represented as an abbess, with rats and mice at her feet or running up her cloak or pastoral staff. The first miracle attributed of Gertrude in the *Vita Sanctae Geretrudis* takes place at the altar of Hieromartyr Sixtus II, Pope of Rome (257-258) as St. Gertrude was standing in prayer. "She saw descending above her a flaming pellucid sphere such that the whole basilica was illuminated by its brightness." The vision persisted for about half an hour and later was revealed to some of the sisters at the monastery. The anonymous author of the *Vita Sanctae Geretrudis* believes that this vision represents a "visitation of the True Light."

"Le Tour Sainte-Gertrude" is an annual procession around Nivelles on the Sunday after the feast of St. Michael (September 29th on the General Roman Calendar). The abbesses and the canons used to regularly make a long journey outside the walls of the Abbey at Vespers in emulation of St. Gertrude—to meet the farmers, the poor and the sick. Many of the pilgrims participate in costume, as they accompany a cart bearing a reliquary containing Gertrude's relics. In May 2004, the "Saint Gertrude Tour" was proclaimed an "Oral and Intangible Heritage Masterpiece of the French-speaking Belgian Community." St. Gertrude's feast day is March 17th, the day of her repose.

Modern Theological Classics

SALVATION

What is salvation, which is so much talked about but can be interpreted in so many different ways? Let us start with the words of the Apostle: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Sin, as violation of God's will, separates man from God, from His glory, and thus brings its own punishment. God accepts the fallen man, however, for he was ransomed not "with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Nevertheless, acceptance and redemption do not imply a general absolution granted to all mankind, but rather an opportunity given to each person individually to ask for mercy and receive forgiveness for his sin. This is in conformity with the gift of free will given to man.

The part played by man's free will in salvation was shown at Calvary in the different fates of the two evildoers who were crucified with Christ. One of them, the Gospel tells us, "railed at him." The other one repented of his sins and prayed: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." In answer he was promised: "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk. 23:39-43). Christ's death brought forgiveness and acceptance to the malefactor who repented. The different fates of the crucified evildoers and the decisive role of repentance in man's salvation are indicated in the form of a cross known in Karelia: one end of the slanting bar points upwards, to Paradise, and the other downwards, to perdition.¹

In the service for Friday of Holy Week, between Gospel readings about the passion of Christ, a hymn is sung which is listened to with special devotion:

The wise thief Thou didst make worthy of Paradise in a single moment, O Lord; enlighten me also, through the wood of Thy Cross, and save me.

The evildoer hanging on the cross repented at the last moment, and what remained unfinished after his conversion was completed by Christ's redemptive death. But in the case of those who remain in this life, repentance must be followed by amendment of their ways. Following his very first sermon, St. Peter's

¹ The author's explanation of the meaning of this cross in Karelia (a region of southeastern Finland along Lake Ladoga) is, of course, that of a three-barred cross so universally associated with Russian Orthodoxy.

listeners asked, "What shall we do?" "Repent," St. Peter replied, "and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38). This happens all the time. In Holy Baptism a man is born anew "of water and the Spirit." This is followed by walking "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4) towards the given goal to "be holy yourselves in all your conduct" (1 Pet. 1:15).

Although sin has corrupted human nature, man still bears within him the image of God, albeit tarnished by sin. In becoming man, Christ "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:5-8). He became like us men in order to make us, in turn, "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). Thus Christ became our Savior not only because "upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole" (Isa. 53:5) but also because "His divine power granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). In other words, Christ does not only offer us the forgiveness of our sins, but He also gives His Divine power for our use and for our development so that we might not be "ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:8).

In the service before Christmas the following line occurs repeatedly in the hymns: "Christ shall be born, raising the likeness that fell of old," restoring the tarnished image of God in man to its original brightness. Thus our salvation begins when we receive forgiveness of our sins in Holy Baptism, and indeed many times again later in Confession, the sacrament of repentance or washing with tears. This is followed by new efforts, renewed through the Holy Spirit, to live in Christ as a member of His Body, the Church. The goal of this life is to try to pure in heart and so to "see God" (Mt. 5:8) in the Holy Spirit. According to a formulation by Bishop Theophan the Recluse, we are saved "by the good will of the Father through the merits of the Son by the grace of the Holy Spirit." It is peculiar to Orthodox services that nearly all of the prayers end with praise to the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

FAITH AND GOOD WORKS

There is no problem of "faith and good works" in the spirituality of the Church. The relationship between faith and good works becomes a "problem" only when justification is understood as an outward legal process between God and man. In that case people either fear that good deeds will come between the soul and Christ or, on the contrary, they regard deeds as merits in the eyes of God. In the Orthodox view deeds are not an end in themselves for the doer, but are more like a saving instrument in the transformation of man's corrupted nature into a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). Therefore Christ's gospel commandments are not law but grace and mercy. They are like medicine given for our use, without which we cannot get well. Let us think of any virtue recommended to us in the Gospel: humility, for instance. How else could we grow in humility except by really humbling ourselves in practice? A prayer from Psalm 119 is often repeated in church services: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes!"

Because of man's corrupted nature, he has no other way of showing gratitude and love towards Christ than by trying to fulfill in his life the commandments which Christ has given, which work towards his own salvation. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). The fulfillment of these commandments of Christ which are contained in the Gospels, such as prayer, fasting, serving one's neighbor, humility and refraining from condemning anyone else, can be seen as the leaves of the spiritual tree. The gifts of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, correspond to the fruits of the tree (Gal. 5:22). They are the signs of a purified heart. The wisdom and difficulty of the spiritual pilgrimage lie in the fact that the leaves must not be regarded as fruits nor yet can one imagine that one can bear fruit without leaves; one cannot acquire the gifts of the Spirit without effort. *Archbishop Paul Olmari, * The Faith We Hold, pp. 21-25.*

* Archbishop Paul Olmari (1914-1988) was Primate of the Orthodox Church of Finland, and Archbishop of Karelia and All Finland, from 1960 to 1988. The spiritual vitality and growth which he brought to the Finnish Orthodox Church made him a nationally respected religious leader and a respected voice throughout the Orthodox world.

Our Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

Carpatho-Rusyn Cuisine

Over the next year “Quo Vadis” shall feature recipes typical of the cuisine of the Carpathians, as cuisine is an integral component of culture, often persisting long after other components of culture, such as language, have been lost by the descendants of immigrants. The cuisine of the Carpatho-Rusyns is eclectic, broadly incorporating Hungarian, German, Polish, and Ukrainian influences and, notably in the southeastern region, Romanian influences as well. This month features two meatless recipes.

Lentils with Mushrooms

Ingredients:

2 cups lentil seeds • 1 onion • 150 g. dried mushrooms • Oil • Parsley • Salt

Directions:

Cook the lentil seeds in boiling salted water, leave to cool and drain. Pre soak the dried mushrooms, cook them in a small amount of salted water and remove from the saucepan. Retain the mushroom stock. Chop the mushrooms and onion and fry in oil in a skillet. Mix the fried vegetables with the lentil, add the mushroom stock and bring the mixture to the boil. The dish tastes good both hot and cold, but sprinkle with chopped parsley before serving.

Halushky (Dumplings)

Ingredients:

3 cups wheat flour • 3/4 cup cold water • 1 egg • Salt • 200-250 g. dried mushrooms • 1 large onion • Oil

Directions:

Sieve the flour into a bowl and make a hollow in the center. Put the egg and salt into the hollow and stir thoroughly while pouring in the cold water. The amount of water could be added or reduced, depending on the quality of the flour. Dry and fine (flour of poorer quality absorbs less liquid). Knead the dough, cover with piece of cloth and leave to rest. Knead the dough again until it is smooth. Similar dough is made for **varenyky** (pierogies). Divide the dough into portions and form them into balls. Place each ball on the table sprinkled with flour and roll into thumb-thick sausages. Pinch off or cut off small parts of the sausages and cook in boiling salted water. When **halushky** emerge on the surface, remove them from the saucepan with the help of a skimmer, drain and place in a deep bowl. Heat some oil in a skillet and sauté finely chopped onions and dried mushrooms. Serve **halushky** hot, strewn with mushrooms.

Parish News

Memorial Saturdays

The remaining Memorial Saturdays of the Lenten season this year are March 11 and 18. Fr. Sophrony will also say the Litany of the Departed at Divine Liturgy on St. Theodore Saturday (March 4). Given the date of the first of these Memorial Saturdays, you will need to confirm any changes to your lists of the faithful departed, if you have not already done so, as soon as possible.

Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council is meeting on Sunday, March 12, 2017 after Divine Liturgy.

Parish Confessions

All parishioners ought to go to confession during Great Lent. Confessions may be heard after any Friday evening Akathistos or any Saturday evening Vespers. Those who legitimately cannot attend services on Friday or Saturday evenings may call the Rectory to make arrangements for confession at another time.

Joint Presanctified Liturgies

Ss. Peter & Paul's and St. Mary's will be jointly celebrating the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on two Wednesday evenings this Lent, as has been our custom. St. Mary's will be the host parish on March 22, 2017 at 7:00 PM. Ss. Peter & Paul's will be the host parish on April 5, 2017 at 6:30 PM. There shall be a "potluck" Lenten supper after services.

Lenten Bible Readings

There are no weekday Liturgy readings during Great Lent, on account of there being no Liturgies (other than the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts) on weekdays during Great Lent in Orthodox liturgical tradition. Liturgy readings are appointed only for Saturdays and Sundays.

Schedule of Services

March 1-2, 2017

6:00 PM (Wed.) – Great Canon of Repentance
6:00 PM (Thu.) – Great Canon of Repentance
6:00 PM (Fri.) – Akathistos of Divine Passion

March 4-5, 2017

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

March 8, 2017

6:00 PM (Wed.) – Presanctified Liturgy

March 10, 2017

6:00 PM (Fri.) – Akathistos of Divine Passion

March 11-12, 2017

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

March 15, 2017

6:00 PM (Wed.) – Presanctified Liturgy

March 17, 2017

6:00 PM (Fri.) – Akathistos of Divine Passion

March 18-19, 2017

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

March 22, 2017

7:00 PM (Wed.) – Presanctified Liturgy @ St. Mary's

March 24-25, 2017

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

March 25-26, 2017

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

March 29, 2017

6:00 PM (Wed.) – Great Canon of Repentance

March 31, 2017

6:00 PM (Fri.) – Akathistos of the Virgin Mary

Lenten Vespers Schedule

All Lenten Mission Vespers services will begin at 5:00 PM (not 4:00 PM as in the past):

Sunday, March 12 - Holy Assumption Church, Clifton (North) / Mother of God Church, Princeton (South)

Sunday, March 19 - Holy Trinity Church, Rahway (North) / Holy Cross Church, Medford (South)

Sunday, March 26 - St. John the Baptist Church, Passaic (North) / TBA (South)

Sunday, April 2 - Holy Spirit Church, Wantage (North) / Ss. Peter & Paul Church, Manville (South)

Daily Bible Readings

4. Heb. 1:1-2 & Mark 2:23-3:5

5. Heb. 11:24-12:2 & John 1:43-51

11. Heb. 3:12-16 & Mark 1:35-44

12. Heb. 1:10-2:3 & Mark 2:1-12

18. Heb. 10:32-38 & Mark 2:14-17

19. Heb. 4:14-5:6 & Mark 8:34-9:1

25. Heb. 2:11-18 & Luke 1:24-38

26. Heb. 6:13-20 & Mark 9:17-31

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 March 19, 2017.*

March 5, 2017

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Angela DiGiovanni (anniversary of repose).

Triple Candelabra offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Albert and Vera Royer (anniversary of repose). **St. John's Cross** offered by Mary Macinsky in memory of Katharyn Yendrey (anniversary of birth).

March 12, 2017

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