

Quo Vadis

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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

“Antisemitism is the best warning sign that we can have of a threat to liberal civilization.”
— Lord Jonathan Henry Sacks (1948-2020)

The attacks of October 7, 2023 have exposed something that has been seething under the surface for quite some time now, the rise of antisemitism in the West. In the past, it was possible to think that the anti-Zionism of some was not antisemitism, precisely because it was possible to be both Jewish and anti-Zionist. However, it was very convenient for many to claim anti-Zionism—i.e., opposition to the State of Israel—in order to cloak something else. The attacks of October 7, 2023 constitute a moment of revelation in the Biblical sense: a revealing, an unveiling, a drawing back of the curtain. Now we see things as they really are, terrifying as it may be for Jews living in much of Europe and in other Western countries. It cannot be hidden, it cannot be cloaked in phrases about “opposing Israel but not being antisemitic.” The October 7th attacks were no different from the pogroms of the past and the Nazi death squads of the Second World War. On October 7, 2023, it was Hamas moving through the villages in southern Israel, killing men, women, and children, simply because they were Jews.

One can cite a long list of statistics, of facts and figures, evidencing the rise of antisemitism in the West. It may interest some, perhaps bore many, but it suffices to note that the evidence exists and is easily accessible. It is enough to point to what happened on and after October 7, 2023 as unveiling in the most grotesque way the level of antisemitism now on display in the West. In many of our Western cities huge demonstrations took place, allegedly in support of Palestine, all after what was witnessed on October 7th. Many thousands marched in London, Berlin, New York, Sydney, where the chants of “gas the Jews,” “from the river to the sea,” and worse were heard. On university campuses, people tore down the pictures of the kidnapped and have threatened Jews. Synagogues were attacked and vandalized, and Jews were assaulted.

The events since October 7th show that the excuse of anti-Zionism is no longer possible: it has been exposed as antisemitism. “Gas the Jews” is not anti-Zionist; “from the river to the sea” is the call for the total destruction of Israel which means, in fact, the destruction of the Jewish people. Antisemitism is now the accepted prejudice in the world of academia, much of the media, and among many in the secularized West. We can clearly see now, if we had not before, the unholy marriage between the Left and Islam. It has been traditional to think that it is the extreme Right that is antisemitic, and in many cases that is still true, but parts of the Left have always been antisemitic to a greater or lesser degree, and this has “grown like kudzu” over the last few decades. “Victim culture,” anti-colonialism, anti-capitalism, and the profound hatred of Western culture are all causes of the leftist prejudice, all of which finds a perfect outlet in hatred of Israel, reviving the ancient hatred of the Jew.

We can add to the above a vapid characteristic of today’s secularized Western culture: it is simply fashionable to be anti-Israel, and even antisemitic. For a Western culture that abhors history, that does not even teach history, fashion becomes the standard of what is ‘really real’ and important. This is one of the reasons we have seen for the explosion of antisemitism on university campuses, disguised as anti-Zionism. Never underestimate the power of higher education to produce imbecility. These are what the Communists behind the Iron Curtain used to call the “useful idiots,” and there are many of them—their name is Legion.

We must also face the significant influence of not just radical Islam, but much of mainstream Islam; what we might call the attitude of the street. This is shown by citing a couple salient facts. Hamas first came to power in Gaza because it won 56% of the seats in the Palestinian parliamentary elections held on January 26, 2006. The Muslim Brotherhood affiliated candidate Mohamed Morsi won Egypt’s presidential election on June 24, 2012 with 51.73% of the vote. The sad fact is that too many Muslims “on the street,” who may not themselves be members of radical Islamist organizations, nevertheless support them. To be completely honest and absolutely transparent, it must be acknowledged that with mass immigration many of the attacks on Jews have been perpetrated by Muslims and Muslims comprise large numbers in the crowds demonstrating. The simple fact is that Islam has a serious problem with antisemitism.

To return to the quote from Lord Sacks about antisemitism as a warning sign, we all know this will not end with antisemitism: “first they come for the Saturday people and then the Sunday people.” But in this we may find a paradoxical ray of hope—the growing persecution of Christians throughout the world, and especially in the Middle East, offers a point of meeting and support between Christians and Jews. A life of faith, hope, and love between Christians and Jews is the antidote to the poison of hatred—let us now be united with our elder brothers in faith and make “never again” not a soundbite, but a reality.

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

“And dipped himself,” says [the Scripture], ‘seven times in Jordan.’ It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but it served as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: ‘Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’”

— St. Irenaeus (c. 130-202).

Lives of the Saints

St. Gudula of Brussels – commemorated on January 8th

St. Gudula was the daughter of St. Amalberga of Maubeuge by her second husband, Count Witger, Duke of Lorraine. Born about 646, Gudula had two sisters, St. Ermelindis and St. Reineldis, a brother, St. Emebertus, and a half-sister, St. Pharaildis. St. Gudula was the youngest child, and shortly after her birth,

Witger decided to become a Benedictine in Lobbes Abbey and Amalberga joined the Benedictine nuns of Maubeuge Abbey. Gudula was educated in Nivelles Abbey by her godmother, St. Gertrude of Nivelles. When St. Gertrude died, St. Gudula moved back to her home at Moorsel, spending her time in good works and religious devotion. She was profuse in her alms for the poor and frequently visited the church of Moorsel, situated about two miles from her parents' house. Nothing particular is recorded of St. Gudula beyond the singular holiness of her life.

St. Gudula died at some time between 680 and 714, and was buried at Hamme in Flemish Brabant. Later her relics were removed to the church of St. Salvator in Moorsel, where the body was interred behind the altar. During the reign of Charles, Duke of Lower Lorraine (977–992), her body was transferred to St. Gaugericus' chapel in Brussels. Lambert II, Count of Leuven (d. 1054), founded a chapter in 1047 in honor of St. Gudula. Bishop Gerardus I of Cambrai (d. 1051) led the translation of her relics to the church of St. Michael in Brussels. The church later became the famous Cathedral of St. Michael and St. Gudula. Her *vita* was written by Hubert of Brabant in the eleventh century. On 6 June 1579, the collegiate church was pillaged and wrecked by the Protestant *Geuzen* ("Beggars"), and the relics of the saint were disinterred and scattered.

Along with the Archangel Michael, St. Gudula is the patron saint of Brussels, Belgium and her feast day is January 8th. The flower called *tremella deliquescens*, which bears fruit in the beginning of January, is known as *Sinte Goedele's lampken* (St. Gudula's lantern). St. Gudula is often pictured holding a lantern. She is depicted on a seal of the Church of St. Gudula of 1446 holding in her right hand a candle, and in her left a lamp, which a demon tries to extinguish. This refers to the legend that the saint went to church before cock-crow. The demon, wishing to stray her off the right way, extinguished the candle, but the saint obtained from God that her lantern should be rekindled. The skull of St. Gudula is conserved in the Catholic Church of St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is Baptism necessary for salvation? Is salvation possible outside the Church?

Baptism is entry into the Holy Church. It was commanded by our Savior, and has always been understood to be the entry of a believer into the Christian Life in the Holy Church: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* (Matthew 28:19-20).

Baptism is not only the entry for the believer into the Church; it also washes him clean of all sins prior to his holy baptism, no matter how grievous and frequent they were. Here he must remember the admonition the Lord gave to the paralytic, whom He healed of not only his physical infirmity, but of his sins also: *"Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."* (John 5:14).

We believe this because baptism is a complete rebirth, or regeneration, where the old man, with his sinful inclinations, dies, and is reborn in the Spirit. Our Lord said: *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* (John 3:5). Therefore, baptism is necessary for our salvation.

We must remember that Orthodoxy teaches that salvation is a process of becoming more like God through His deifying grace. This grace is only accessible through Christ and His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which is the Orthodox Church. Therefore, salvation outside the Church is not possible. Orthodoxy does not judge the fate of those who are not Orthodox, but leaves them to the mercy of God.

Recipe of the Month

Galette des Rois (Three Kings' Cake)

Three Kings' Cake is served on Epiphany. The season begins on the twelfth night after Christmas, January 6th, and commemorates the arrival of the three kings to see the infant Jesus (according to Western liturgical tradition). This Three Kings' Cake follows the traditional version served in Northern France. A "fève" (fava bean) is hidden inside the cake and the person whose portion contains the fève is crowned king or queen for the day (with a paper crown). The cake differs from one region to the next, with different countries taking slightly different approaches, but Parisians know it as a flat, round puff pastry cake filled with a thin layer of almond cream.

Ingredients for the Almond Cream Filling:

- 1/2 cup almond meal
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp. all-purpose flour

Ingredients for the Cake:

- 17 oz. puff pastry, thawed
- 1 dried fava bean (optional)
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 tbsp. confectioners' sugar

Directions (Almond Cream):

(1) Combine almond meal, sugar, egg, softened butter, vanilla extract, and flour in the bowl of a food processor.

(2) Blend to a smooth, creamy paste. Feel free to make this cream a few days in advance, then refrigerate in an airtight container.

Directions (Cake):

(1) Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat to 425 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

(2) Roll out 2 sheets of puff pastry and cut into 2 (11-inch) discs. Place one disc on the prepared baking sheet. Spread an even layer of almond cream, leaving a 1-inch border around the edges.

(3) If you wish to include a dried fava bean, you can do so at this point. Simply nestle it in the almond cream. Brush some of the beaten egg over the pastry border.

(4) Place second puff pastry disc on top of filling, and crimp edges with a fork to seal the cake.

(5) Using a sharp knife, score a decorative pattern into the top layer of pastry without cutting through to the almond filling. Brush galette with the remaining beaten egg (this will create a golden crust).

(6) Bake cake for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and dust cake with confectioners' sugar.

(7) Return to oven and bake until the puff pastry becomes a deep golden brown, 10 to 12 minutes more. Allow cake to cool for 20 minutes before serving.

Schedule of Services

January 1, 2024 [*St. Basil/Our Lord's Circumcision*]

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

January 5-6, 2024 [*Holy Theophany*]

6:00 PM (Friday) – Vigil w. Lity

9:30 AM (Saturday) – Divine Liturgy

January 6-7, 2024

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

January 14, 2024

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

January 20-21, 2024

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

January 27-28, 2024

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

Daily Bible Readings

1. Colossians 2:8-12; Luke 2:20-21,40-52
2. Hebrews 12:25-26, 13:22-25; Luke 14:25-35
3. James 1:1-18; Luke 15:1-10
4. James 1:19-27; Luke 16:1-9
5. James 2:1-13; Luke 16:15-18, 17:1-4
6. Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7; Matthew 3:13-17
7. Ephesians 4:7-13; Matthew 4:12-17
8. James 2:14-26; Luke 17:20-25
9. James 3:1-10; Luke 17:26-37
10. James 3:11-4:6; Luke 18:15-17, 26-30
11. James 4:7-5:9; Luke 18:31-34
12. 1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12, 2:6-10; Luke 19:12-28
13. 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23; Luke 10:19-21
14. Ephesians 6:10-17; Luke 18:35-43
15. 2 Timothy 2:20-26; Luke 19:37-44
16. 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4; Luke 19:45-48
17. 2 Timothy 4:9-22; Luke 20:1-8
18. Titus 1:5-2:1; Luke 20:9-18
19. Titus 1:15-2:10; Luke 20:19-26
20. Ephesians 1:16-23; Luke 12:32-40
21. Colossians 1:12-18; Matthew 22:1-14
22. Hebrews 3:5-11, 17-19; Luke 20:27-44
23. Hebrews 4:1-13; Luke 21:12-19
24. Hebrews 5:11-6:8; Luke 21:5-7, 10-11, 20-24
25. Hebrews 7:1-6; Luke 21:28-33
26. Hebrews 7:18-25; Luke 21:37-22:8
27. Ephesians 2:11-13; Luke 13:18-29
28. Colossians 3:4-11; Matthew 22:35-46
29. Hebrews 8:7-13; Mark 8:11-21
30. Hebrews 9:8-10, 15-23; Mark 8:22-26
31. Hebrews 10:1-18; Mark 8:30-34

Parish News

Christmas Social

We are having a “pot luck” Christmas Social in the church hall on “Old Calendar” Christmas, Sunday, January 7, 2024 after Divine Liturgy. In order to properly plan for this event, there will be a sign-up sheet in the church vestibule for indicating what you plan to bring. Cash donations for buying items such as beverages, condiments, etc. will also be welcome.

Rector's Vacation

Fr. Sophrony will be away on vacation from the evening of January 7th until early morning of January 17th. A substitute priest will celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, January 14th. In the event of an emergency during Fr. Sophrony's absence, call Fr. John Fencik at (201) 436-5549 or call the nearest available Orthodox priest.

House Blessings

Fr. Sophrony will bless homes on January 19-20, 2024. A sign-up sheet for house blessings is in the church vestibule – please sign up, or call the Rectory at 201-436-3244, by January 18, 2024.

Parish Council Meeting

Parish Council is meeting in the church hall on Sunday, January 21, 2024 after Divine Liturgy.

“Souper Bowl” Project

Our parish is collecting cans of soup and other non-perishable foods for donation to a local food pantry. A bin for placing the donated food items will remain in the church until February 11, 2024.

Special Donations

Special Donations may be offered at \$15 for the Altar Vigils, \$10 for the Sanctuary Lamp, and \$5 for any one of the following: St. John’s Cross, St. Nicholas’ Cross, and Triple Candelabra, and may be offered in memory of the departed or in honor of the living. Please note that for Special Donations in February to be acknowledged in “Quo Vadis,” the donation must be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by January 21, 2024.

January 7, 2024

Sanctuary Lamp offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Gregory Grudinoff (anniversary of birth).

January 21, 2024

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Laura Marie Royer. **St. John’s Cross** offered by the Zuber Family in memory of Tatiana Korbelak (anniversary of birth). **St. Nicholas’ Cross** offered by the Zuber Family in memory of Stephen Korbelak (anniversary of repose).

Remember to support the parish every time you shop!



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