

# Quo Vadis

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

98 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street, Bayonne, N.J. 07002

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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

Next month is the 100th anniversary of the Fourth All-American Sobor, held in Detroit, Michigan on April 2-4, 1924. The background of this historic American church council was a crisis occasioned by an alleged patriarchal *ukaz* that had appeared in the Russian-language press relieving Metropolitan Platon, whose election as “Metropolitan of All America and Canada” by the Third All-American Sobor in 1922 had been confirmed by Patriarch Tikhon, of his position on account of his “counter-revolution directed against the Soviet state.” According to the decree itself, it was to have no validity until announced personally to Metropolitan Platon by the hierarch appointed to succeed him (an inconceivable scenario at that time). It was suspected that this decree was either a forgery or that it had been issued under duress (it was, in fact, eventually proven to be a forgery). The resulting situation, therefore, was one of chaos and instability.

Metropolitan Platon’s election at the previous Sobor was resoundingly reconfirmed in the Sobor’s first session. Due to great respect for his leadership skills, his primacy was deemed essential for the Church’s survival. Sensing increasing difficulties in communication with the Russian Church as evidenced by the conflicting information being received, the Fourth All-American Sobor declared the North American Church to be “temporarily self-governing” until such time as normal and regular relations could be reestablished with the Mother Church in Russia.

The council also requested Metropolitan Platon to draft a governing statute for the American Church, based on the Statute adopted by the Moscow Council of 1917-1918. Although this statute would take thirty years to complete, the groundwork was laid by this council for the administrative structure by which the Orthodox Church in America is still governed today through her Statute, which is a somewhat revised version of the document which was initially broached at the Fourth All-American Sobor. In fact, today the Orthodox Church in America is the only Orthodox church to have fully implemented the reforms of the historic Moscow Council!

The Fourth All-American Sobor's decisions proved an important step toward the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America. In taking the steps necessary to maintain freedom of action and an ecclesiastical existence that he deemed appropriate in the North American context, given the Russian Church's tenuous situation under totalitarian rule, the Fourth All-American Sobor, while declaring the American Church "temporarily self-governing" had, in fact, assumed *de facto* autocephaly. Henceforth, starting from its reconfirming Metropolitan Platon's election, every primate of the American Church was elected without confirmation from an external higher authority. Furthermore, by drafting and adopting its own governing statute, and by consecrating its own chrism, the American Church now possessed all the attributes of an autocephalous church. The only thing it lacked was recognition as such from its Mother Church, and that came on April 10, 1970.

Therefore, on this occasion of the centennial of Fourth All-American Sobor, let us recognize of its importance as a milestone in the maturation of Orthodoxy in America and let us celebrate it as constituting the beginning, in practice, of autocephalous church life in the Orthodox Church in America.

## Excerpt from the Church Fathers

*"Him whom the heavens cannot contain, the womb of one woman bore. She ruled our Ruler; she carried Him in whom we are; she gave milk to our Bread."*

— St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430).

## Lives of the Saints

*Ss. Chrysanthus and Daria, Martyrs – commemorated on March 19th*

Saints Chrysanthus and Daria were a Christian married couple martyred in Rome in AD 283. Their names appear in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*<sup>1</sup> and a church in their honor was built over their grave in Rome. According to the *Acts of Ss. Chrysanthus and Daria*, which exists in both Greek and Latin versions, Chrysanthus was the only son of an Egyptian patrician, named Polemius, who lived in the reign of Emperor Numerian. His father moved from Alexandria to Rome, and Chrysanthus was educated in the finest manner of the era. Disenchanted with the excess in the Roman world, he began reading the *Acts of the Apostles*. He was then baptized and educated in the Christian faith by a priest named Carpophorus. His father was unhappy with Chrysanthus' conversion, and attempted to inculcate secular ways into his son by arranging a marriage to Daria, a Roman priestess of Minerva, or as other accounts state, a Vestal Virgin. Chrysanthus managed to convert his wife, and the couple agreed to lead celibate lives. They went on to convert a number of Romans.

When this was made known to the tribune Claudius, Chrysanthus was arrested and tortured. Chrysanthus' faith and fortitude under torture were so impressive to Claudius that he and his wife, Hilaria, their two sons Maurus and Jason, and seventy of his soldiers became Christians. For this betrayal, the Emperor had Claudius drowned, his sons beheaded, and his wife hanged at the gallows. The legend states that Daria was forced to live as a prostitute, as virgins could not be executed, but her chastity was defended by a lioness. She was brought before the Emperor Numerian and he ordered her death. There are many variations to the means, from execution by stoning, while others say she was beheaded, and yet others claim she was buried alive in a deep pit beside her husband. It appears the last torment was chosen for Daria, as it was the execution method reserved for unchaste Vestal Virgins. They were entombed in a sand pit near the Via Salaria Nova, the Roman Catacombs. The *Acts of Ss. Chrysanthus and Daria* state that on the

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<sup>1</sup> An ancient martyrology or list of Christian martyrs in calendar order, one of the most used and influential of the Middle Ages, attributed to St. Jerome. It is the oldest surviving general or "universal" martyrology, and the precursor of all later Western martyrologies.

anniversary of their deaths, a large number of Christians had gathered at their underground crypt to pay their respects when Roman persecutors surprised them, filled the crypt with stones and buried them all alive, including Diodorus, a priest, and Marianus, a deacon.

In 2011 a scientific investigation of the bodies, conducted by a group of scholars coordinated by Ezio Fulcheri, paleopathologist at the University of Genoa, highlighted the compatibility of the finds with the story handed down by tradition. Radiocarbon dating reveals that the remains of the two young people, a male between the age of 17 and 18 and a female between 20 and 25, dating to between AD 80 and 340. A high concentration of lead was found in the bones, a sign of their wealthy background as only the rich had running water in the houses, conducted through lead pipes. None of the bodies showed signs of violence or illness, so the cause of death would be compatible with suffocation.

At least three places claim to possess the remains of Ss. Chrysanthus and Daria. In the ninth century, their reputed remains were brought to Prüm in modern-day Rhineland-Palatinate, and these relics are presently in the Church of Ss. Chrysanthus and Daria, Bad Münstereifel, Germany. In 1011, Pope Sergius IV gave the reputed bodies of Ss. Chrysanthus and Daria to Fulk III, Count of Anjou, upon his return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Fulk gave them to the monastery of Beaulieu-lès-Loches, which he had recently established. The Cathedral of Reggio Emilia in northern Italy also contains relics reputed to be those of Ss. Chrysanthus and Daria. Their feast day is March 19 in the Eastern Orthodox Church, and October 25 in the Roman Catholic Church.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*What is the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception? What is the Eastern Orthodox Church's stance on it?*

Last month's FAQs referred to the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, so this month's FAQs is a follow-up. The Immaculate Conception is a Roman Catholic Marian dogma stating that the Virgin Mary was free of original sin from the moment of her conception. Debated since the Middle Ages, it was not defined as a dogma until December 8, 1854, in Pope Pius IX's papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus*.

St. Anne, the mother of Mary, first appears in the 2nd-century apocryphal *Protoevangelium of St. James*, and the author crafted his story by drawing on Greek tales of the childhood of heroes and on the Old Testament story of Hannah (hence the name Anna/Anne), the mother of the biblical Samuel. Anne and her husband, Joachim, are infertile, but God hears their prayers and Mary is conceived. Within the *Protoevangelium of St. James*, the conception occurs without sexual intercourse between Anne and Joachim, which fits well with the *Protoevangelium of St. James'* persistent emphasis on the Virgin Mary's sacred purity, but the story does not advance the idea of an immaculate conception.

Several Church Fathers can be cited in support of the dogma. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Cyril of Jerusalem developed the idea of the Virgin Mary as the New Eve, drawing comparison to Eve, while yet immaculate and incorrupt — that is to say, not subject to original sin, and Ephrem the Syrian said she was as innocent as Eve before the Fall. Ambrose asserted the Virgin Mary's incorruptibility, attributing her virginity to grace and immunity from sin. Augustine upheld that Mary had no personal sin, but he did not clearly affirm that she was free from original sin. On the other hand, Origen of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Hilary of Poitiers held that Mary had "imperfections." Significantly, John of Damascus extended the supernatural influence of God to the Virgin Mary's parents, claiming that they were purified by the Holy Spirit during her generation. According to him, even the material of Virgin Mary's origin was deemed pure and holy. This perspective, which emphasized an immaculate active generation and the sanctity of the *conceptio carnis*, found resonance among certain Western theologians.

The idea that the Virgin Mary was free from sin was generally widespread, but original sin raised the question of whether she was also free of the sin passed down from Adam. The question became acute when the feast of her conception began to be celebrated in England in the 11th century, as opponents of the feast of Mary's conception brought forth the objection that as sexual intercourse is sinful, to celebrate Mary's conception was to celebrate a sinful event. The feast of Mary's conception originated in the Eastern Church in the 7th century, reached England in the 11th century, and from there spread to the rest of the West.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was supported by the English scholar Eadmer (c. 1060-1126) and opposed by Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), who objected that if Mary were free of original sin at her conception then she would have no need of redemption, making Christ's saving redemption superfluous. This objection was answered by Duns Scotus (1264–1308), who developed the idea of preservative redemption as being a more perfect one: to have been preserved free from original sin was a greater grace than to be set free from sin. Therefore, the doctrine caused a virtual civil war between the Franciscan and Dominican orders. Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373) told how Mary herself had revealed to her that Anne and Joachim conceived their daughter through a sexual union which was sinless because it was pure and free of sexual lust.

The Council of Trent, held in several sessions in the 1540s, made no explicit declaration on the subject, but exempted the Virgin Mary from the universality of original sin; and also affirmed that she remained during all her life free from all stain of sin, including venial sins. By 1571 the revised Roman Breviary set out an elaborate celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December. The doctrine's popularity rose since then, until the dogma was promulgated by the bull *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854:

*"We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."*

*Ineffabilis Deus* found Biblical support for the Immaculate Conception in the Ark of Salvation (Noah's Ark), Jacob's Ladder, the Burning Bush at Sinai, the Enclosed Garden from the Song of Songs, and many more passages. The Pope's advisors in particular singled out Genesis 3:15: *"The most glorious Virgin ... was foretold by God when he said to the serpent: 'I will put enmity between you and the woman,'"* a prophecy which reached fulfilment in the figure of the Woman in the Revelation of St. John, crowned with stars and trampling the Dragon underfoot. Luke 1:28, and specifically the phrase "full of grace" by which the Archangel Gabriel greeted Mary, was another reference to her Immaculate Conception: *"she was never subject to the curse and was, together with her Son, the only partaker of perpetual benediction."* However, the Archbishop of Paris, Marie-Dominique-Auguste Sibour, warned that the Immaculate Conception "could be proved neither from the Scriptures nor from Tradition." Four years after the proclamation of the dogma, in 1858, the young Bernadette Soubirous said that Mary appeared to her at Lourdes in southern France, to announce that she was the Immaculate Conception; the Roman Catholic Church later endorsed the apparition as authentic.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is not accepted by Eastern Orthodoxy due to its differences from Roman Catholicism in the understanding of original sin, although Eastern Orthodoxy affirms the Virgin Mary's purity and preservation from sin. In 1894, when Pope Leo XIII addressed the Eastern Church in his encyclical *Praeclara gratulationis*, Ecumenical Patriarch Anthimos replied with an encyclical approved by the Constantinopolitan Synod in 1895, in which he characterized the recent dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility as "Roman novelties" and called on the Roman Church to return to the faith of the early centuries. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware comments that "the Latin dogma seems to us not so much erroneous as superfluous." According to Timothy Pavlatos, while the Virgin Mary "inherited the same fallen nature, prone to sin" as are other humans, but "she did not consent to sin through her free will."

Due to being conceived in ancestral sin, Pavlatos writes that she still needed "to be delivered by our Savior, her Son." Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko wrote "Mary is conceived by her parents as we are all conceived."

I think that Metropolitan Kallistos Ware's assessment is correct. The Eastern Orthodox Church believes that while everyone inherits the consequences of the first sin (i.e., suffering and death), original sin is not inherited guilt. However, the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary is a necessary doctrine, since Jesus Christ received his perfect humanity from his mother. The phrase "full of grace" indicates that, having found favor from God, in concord with her own free will, the Virgin Mary was preserved by grace from all personal sin throughout her entire life, rendering her "all-pure" or "immaculate."<sup>2</sup> This should be sufficient—to push beyond the mysteries of grace into speculating on possibly supernatural conditions of Mary's conception is unnecessary, or as Metropolitan Kallistos Ware put it, "superfluous." Eastern Orthodoxy's position on original sin entailed that it never became involved in the later developments that took place in the Roman Catholicism, including the Immaculate Conception, as such would have indeed been superfluous.

## Recipe of the Month

### Shrimp Fried Rice

*Who loves fried rice and seafood? If this is you, you're going to love the flavors of this recipe. It's not only fast and easy to make, but it's ready to enjoy in just 10 minutes! So forget sitting around and ordering takeout—just make it at home yourself.*

#### **Ingredients:**

- Shrimp: Choose whatever size shrimp that you want. Medium shrimp tend to work best. Use shrimp already deveined and cleaned to save time and effort.
- Corn: You can use fresh corn or frozen corn.
- Peas and Carrots: Save yourself even more prep time and use a pack of frozen peas and carrots.
- Rice: Should be cooked in advance. Jasmine rice or Basmati rice are recommended as they offer a nice texture with the shrimp and vegetables. Since we are using cooked rice, you basically can use any rice type you like: white, parboiled, brown, etc. This recipe is a great way to use leftover rice instead of just reheating or throwing it away.
- Soy Sauce: This is what adds a lot of that saltiness to the fried rice and gives it a golden coloring.
- 1 Egg
- 2 Garlic Cloves, Black Pepper, Salt
- 3 tablespoons chopped Green Onion
- Olive Oil and Sesame Oil

#### **Directions:**

- (1) Gather up the list of ingredients before starting.
- (2) Add two tablespoons of olive oil into a pot.
- (3) Add ½ teaspoon of sesame oil.
- (4) Add the shrimp into the pot and sauté until the thickest part of the shrimp is opaque, then remove the shrimp from the pot.
- (5) Add the frozen peas and carrots, two garlic cloves, and ½ cup of frozen corn.
- (6) Crack an egg and add it to the pot. Mix all the ingredients together using a wooden spoon until the egg is cooked.
- (7) Add the cooked shrimp back into the pot.

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<sup>2</sup> This represents the general consensus of the Greek Fathers and Byzantine theologians. See Francis Dvornik, "The Byzantine Church and the Immaculate Conception" in Edward D. O'Connor (ed.), *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception: History and Significance* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1958), pp. 87–112.

- (8) Add a cup of cooked rice into the pot and stir well.  
 (9) Add 3 tablespoons of green onions and continue mixing.  
 (10) Add one teaspoon of black pepper and ½ teaspoon of salt. Stir.  
 Serve in a bowl or plate and enjoy!

### Variations:

- Change the protein: You can leave out the shrimp and use chicken, beef, or even tofu instead.
- Vary the seasonings: Add spices like cayenne pepper, ginger, paprika, etc. This dish is easy to change each time you make it!

## Schedule of Services

### March 3-4, 2024

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

### March 9-10, 2024

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

### March 16-17, 2024

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

### March 18-22, 2024 [*1st Week of Lent*]

6:00 PM (Monday-Thursday) – Great Canon  
 6:00 PM (Friday) – Akathist of the Divine Passion

### March 23-24, 2024

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

### March 24-25, 2024 [*Holy Annunciation*]

5:00 PM (Sunday) – Vigil w. Lity  
 9:30 AM (Monday) – Vespertal Divine Liturgy

### March 29-31, 2024

6:00 PM (Friday) – Presanctified Liturgy w.  
 Litany of the Departed & General Parastas  
 5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers  
 9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

## Daily Bible Readings

- 1 John 2:7-17; Mark 14:3-9
- 2 Timothy 3:1-9; Luke 20:46-21:4
- 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Luke 15:11-32
- 1 John 2:18-3:10; Mark 11:1-11
- 1 John 3:11-20; Mark 14:10-42
- 1 John 3:21-4:6; Mark 14:43-15:1
- 1 John 4:20-5:21; Mark 15:1-15
- 2 John 1:1-13; Mark 15:22-25, 33-41
- 1 Cor. 10:23-28; Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36
- 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2; Matthew 25:31-46
- 3 John 1:1-15; Luke 19:29-40, 22:7-39
- Jude 1:1-10; Luke 22:39-42, 45-23:1
- No Liturgy Readings*
- Jude 1:11-25; Luke 23:2-34, 44-56
- No Liturgy Readings*
- Romans 14:19-23, 16:25-27; Matthew 6:1-13
- Romans 13:11-14:4; Matthew 6:14-21
- No Liturgy Readings*
- No Liturgy Readings*
- No Liturgy Readings*
- No Liturgy Readings*
- Hebrews 1:1-12; Mark 2:23-3:5
- Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2; John 1:43-51
- Hebrews 2:11-18; Luke 1:24-38
- Hebrews 2:11-18; Luke 1:24-38
- No Liturgy Readings*
- No Liturgy Readings*
- No Liturgy Readings*
- Hebrews 3:12-16; Mark 1:35-44
- Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Mark 2:1-12

Due to the eve of Holy Annunciation falling on Orthodoxy Sunday, the New Jersey Deanery has not scheduled an Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers service for this year.

## 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 April to be acknowledged in "Quo Vadis," the donation must be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by March 24, 2024.*

March 3, 2024

**Altar Vigils** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Albert & Vera Royer. **Sanctuary Lamp** offered by Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Macinsky (anniversary of repose). **St. John's Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Concetta G. Royer (anniversary of birth). **St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Angela DiGiovanni. **Triple Candelabra** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rt. Rev. Bishop John (Legky).

March 17, 2024

**Triple Candelabra** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rena Robichaud.

## Parish News

Parish Council Meeting

Parish Council is meeting in the church hall on Sunday, March 31, 2024 after Divine Liturgy.

Memorial Saturdays

March 9, 2024 is the first of the Memorial Saturdays of the year. If your list of the faithful departed needs updating, please inform Fr. Sophrony by March 3, 2024.

In Memoriam

Mr. John Wanko, age 91, of Tinton Falls, New Jersey—a lifelong parishioner of Ss. Peter & Paul's and former national president of the R.B.O. of the U.S.A.—passed into blessed repose on February 6, 2024. Вічна Память! Memory Eternal!

Parish Confessions

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

**Remember to support the parish every time you shop!**



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