

# 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

*“The most important miracle to be sought is the union of our whole being with God—that good part which not be taken away from us by death.”*  
—St. Sophrony of Essex (1896-1993)

What does it mean to unite our whole being with God? I think as a starting point, we can refer back to the great feast we celebrate this month, Holy Theophany, and the significance of the holy mystery of Baptism. The whole life of man is a return journey to God: we came from God and must go back to Him. We begin with journey with Baptism; i.e., Baptism, our rebirth (regeneration) of “burying” everything that alienates us from God so that we can be born again in water and Spirit ... so that we can be reborn as “sons of God” by the redemptive work of the Son of God, is a beginning, not an end. a being is perfect when it attains its end; thus, the perfection of man consists in rejoining God and uniting oneself to Him, Who is our last end. Man finds in union with God all that he can desire, and this union he finds his peace: “Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee” (St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.1.1). The ultimate end of this journey is something which in Orthodoxy we call *theosis* (“deification”). The union of our whole being with God allows us to share, by grace (by a supernatural gift of God), the experience of divine life. We find our eternal happiness in union with God; and the life of heaven is this union carried to its ultimate perfection, wherein we give God the greatest glory and the greatest love (and love is by nature unitive!) which,

in turn, redounds to our eternal beatitude. Is this possible? Yes, Jesus has said so: “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him; and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him” (John 14:23). Our Lord Himself tells us in these words the condition for living united to Him: love. “He that abides in love, abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). Love is the great power which unites us to God even in this life, where, imprisoned in matter, we cannot yet enjoy the direct contact, the face-to-face vision of Him. The goal of the spiritual life is to achieve union to God by love ... to be filled in the whole of our being with God's presence! By our journey of loving God, and being loved by Him, we advance toward our last end: union with God. And this, I think, is the meaning behind the "miracle" of uniting the whole of our being with God, which even death cannot take away (indeed, it is our triumph over sin and death).

## Theological Excerpt

*“He is the Light of Truth, the Path of life, the Power and Mind, Hand and Strength of the Father. He is the Sun of Justice, Source of Blessings, Flower of God, God’s Son, Creator of the world, Life of our mortality and Death to our death. He is the Master of the virtues. He is God to us . . . By His rights as Lord, He demands wholly our hearts, tongues and heads. He wishes to be the object of our thought and understanding, our belief and reading, our fear and love . . .”*

— St. Paulinus of Nola (352-431), Poem 10, from [The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola](#)

## Lives of the Saints

*St. Paulinus of Nola, Bishop – commemorated on January 23rd*

Pontius Meropius Anicius Paulinus was born in Bordeaux, France in AD 352. He was from a notable senatorial family with estates in the France’s Aquitaine province, northern Spain, and southern Italy, and he was a kinsman of St. Melania the Elder. He was educated in Bordeaux, where his teacher, the poet Ausonius, also became his friend. At some time during his boyhood he made a visit to the shrine of St. Felix at Nola, near Naples. His normal career as a young member of the senatorial class did not last long. In 375, Emperor Gratian succeeded his father Valentinian the Great. Gratian made St. Paulinus suffect consul at Rome in 377, and in 380 appointed him governor of the southern Italian province of Campania. St. Paulinus noted the Campanians' devotion to St. Felix of Nola and built a road for pilgrims, as well as a hospice for the poor near the local shrine.

In 383 Gratian was assassinated at Lyon, France, and St. Paulinus went to Milan to attend the school of St. Ambrose. Around 384 he returned to Bordeaux and married Therasia, a Christian noblewoman from Barcelona. St. Paulinus was threatened with the false charge of having murdered his brother, the accusation being made in an attempt to confiscate his property. He was baptized by St. Delphinus, Bishop of Bordeaux. He and his wife traveled to Iberia about 390. When they lost their only child eight days after birth they decided to withdraw from the world and live a secluded religious life.

In 393 or 394, St. Paulinus was ordained a priest on Christmas Day by Lampius, Bishop of Barcelona. He initially resisted the prospect of ordination, similar to what had happened with St. Augustine of Hippo, who had been ordained against his protestations in the year 391 at the behest of a crowd cooperating with Bishop Valerius of Hippo. There is some debate as to whether the ordination was canonical, since St. Paulinus received ordination "at a leap" (*per saltum*), without

receiving minor orders first. St. Paulinus refused to remain in Barcelona, and in late spring of 395 he and his wife moved from Iberia to Nola in Campania, where he remained until his death. St. Paulinus credited his conversion to St. Felix, who was buried in Nola, and each year would write a poem in honor of him.

The great building works undertaken by St. Paulinus in 402–403 were the crowning glory and ornament of the renovated Nola. He restored and improved the ancient basilica erected in the martyr's honor. He and Therasia also rebuilt a church commemorating St. Felix, of great size and richly decorated, a monument of Christian art, with magnificent porticoes and fountains, for which a copious supply of water was brought from nearby Avella. Great crowds of pilgrims flocked to the martyr's tomb. In January 406 following the peace after the defeat of Radagaisus, St. Paulinus invited a circle of guests including St. Melania the Younger and her husband (Valerius Pinianus) and mother (Albina), and many other Christians such as the Bishop of Benevento, and where St. Melania wished to stay with all her household, though she left before 408.

During these years St. Paulinus engaged in considerable epistolary dialogue with St. Jerome among others about monastic topics. St. Paulinus decided to invest his money for the poor and the church rather than rejecting it completely, in contrast to other more severe contemporary views such as St. Jerome. Therasia died between 408 and 410, and shortly afterwards St. Paulinus received episcopal ordination. Around 410, St. Paulinus was chosen Bishop of Nola, where he served for twenty years. Like a growing number of aristocrats in the late 4th and early 5th centuries who were entering the clergy rather than taking up the more usual administrative careers in the imperial service, St. Paulinus spent a great deal of his money on his chosen church, city and ritual.

St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome, recounts a popular story that alleges that when the Vandals raided Campania, a poor widow came to St. Paulinus for help when her only son had been carried off by the son-in-law of the Vandal king. Having exhausted his resources in ransoming other captives, St. Paulinus said, "Such as I have I give thee," and went to Africa to exchange places with the widow's son. There St. Paulinus was accepted in place of the widow's son and employed as gardener. After a time the king found out that his son-in-law's slave was the great Bishop of Nola. He at once set him free, granting him also the freedom of all the captive townsmen of Nola.

St. Paulinus was known for his literary accomplishments. Every year he wrote an annual hymn (*natalicium*) in honor of St. Felix for the saint's feast day, when processions of pilgrims were at their peak. In these hymns we can understand the personal relationship St. Paulinus felt between himself and St. Felix, his advocate in heaven. His poetry shares with much of the work of the early 5th century, displaying an ornateness of style popular at the time and were used as educational models. St. Paulinus' surviving letters and poems, many devoted to the feast day of St. Felix, reveal his attitudes and values, illuminate his social and spiritual relationships, and preserve vivid traces of the literary and aesthetic evolution of Latin literature under the influence of Christian ideas.

Many of St. Paulinus' letters to his contemporaries, including Ausonius and St. Sulpicius Severus in southern Gaul, St. Victricius of Rouen in northern Gaul, and St. Augustine in Africa, are preserved. Four letters from St. Paulinus to St. Augustine survive, and eight from St. Augustine to St. Paulinus. In one, St. Augustine invites St. Paulinus to visit Africa. St. Augustine often sent copies of his works to St. Paulinus, to be copied and circulated in Italy. In fact, St. Paulinus may have been indirectly responsible for St. Augustine's *Confessions*—St. Paulinus wrote to St. Alypius, Bishop of

Thagaste (a close friend of Augustine's), asking about his conversion and taking up of the ascetic life. St. Alypius' autobiographical response does not survive; St. Augustine's ostensible answer to that query is the *Confessions*. St. Paulinus also wrote five letters to St. Delphinus and six to St. Amandus of Bordeaux. His long letter to St. Sulpicius Severus describes the arrangement of his new basilica of St. Felix and its decoration. He includes a detailed description of the apse mosaic over the main altar and gives the text for a long inscription he had written to be put on the wall under the image. By explaining how he intended the visitors to understand the image over the altar, he provided rare insight into the intentions of a patron of art in the later Empire.

St. Paulinus died at Nola on June 22, 431. The following year the presbyter Uranus wrote his "On the Death of Paulinus" (*De Obitu Paulini*), an account of the death and character of St. Paulinus. His feast day in the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion is the day of his repose, June 22nd, but in the Eastern Orthodox Church he is also commemorated on January 23rd. The Oriental Orthodox commemorate him on September 8th. In Nola, his feast day on June 22nd is called the "Feast of the Lilies," and several large statues in honor of the saint, placed on towers, are carried upon the shoulders of the faithful around the city. In the United States, the descendants of Italian immigrants from Nola and neighboring Brusciano continue the tradition in Brooklyn, New York.

About AD 800 Prince Grimoald III of Benevento removed St. Paulinus's bones as relics. From the 11th century they rested at the church of St. Adalbert, now St. Bartholomew, on the island in the Tiber River in Rome. In 1908 Pope Pius X permitted them to be translated to the new cathedral at Nola, where they were reinterred on May 15, 1909. As bishop of Nola, St. Paulinus is traditionally credited with the introduction of the use of bells in church services. One form of medieval handbell was known as the *nola* and medieval steeple bells were known as *campanas* from this supposed origin.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*The rector's message in this issue mentioned "theosis." What is theosis? Why is theosis a major emphasis in the Orthodox Faith?*

Theosis is becoming like God. It is "the process of a worshiper becoming free of hamartia ("missing the mark," which is the Orthodox understanding of sin), being united with God, beginning in this life and later consummated in bodily resurrection. For Orthodox Christians, theosis (see 2 Peter 1:4) is "salvation." St. Athanasius the Great, commenting on 2 Peter 1:4, says that theosis is "becoming by grace what God is by nature." In this way theosis is about more than sanctification; it is participating in the life of God—and becoming more like him as we do.

As a process of transformation, theosis is brought about by the effects of catharsis (purification of mind and body) and theoria ("illumination" with the "vision" of God). According to Eastern Christian teachings, theosis is very much the purpose of human life. It is considered achievable only through synergy (or cooperation) of human activity and God's uncreated energies (or operations). According to Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos),<sup>1</sup> the primacy of theosis in Eastern Orthodoxy is directly related to the fact that Byzantine theology is based to a greater extent than Roman Catholic theology on the direct spiritual insights of the saints or mystics of the Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Vlachos, Hierotheos. *Orthodox Spirituality: A Brief Introduction* (1994).

# Recipe of the Month

## American Goulash

*Unlike its Hungarian cousin, American Goulash is all about simplicity. It's a one-pot meal that's been a classic in American homes since the early 20th century. The dish is known for its comforting blend of seasoned ground beef, tomatoes, and pasta, all simmered together for a hearty, satisfying dish. It's an affordable and filling option that has stood the test of time, beloved by families for generations.*

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 can (15 oz) tomato sauce
- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1½ cups elbow macaroni, uncooked
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Shredded cheese (optional, for garnish)
- Fresh parsley (optional, for garnish)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Start by heating 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add 1 lb. of ground beef, breaking it apart with a spoon as it browns. Once fully cooked, drain any excess fat to keep your goulash light and flavorful.
2. Add the diced onion, minced garlic, and diced green bell pepper to the pot with the beef. Sauté for 3-4 minutes until the vegetables have softened and released their fragrant aroma.
3. Pour in 1 can of tomato sauce, 1 can of diced tomatoes (with their juices), and 2 cups of beef broth. Stir everything together, ensuring the beef and veggies are evenly distributed. Season with 1 teaspoon of paprika, 1 teaspoon of Italian seasoning, and a pinch of salt and pepper.
4. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to low. Let it simmer uncovered for about 10 minutes, allowing all the rich flavors to meld together.
5. Stir in 1½ cups of uncooked elbow macaroni. Cover the pot and let the pasta cook for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally. The pasta will absorb the rich flavors of the sauce as it softens to perfection.
6. Once the pasta is tender and the goulash has thickened to your liking, give it a taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. Serve hot, topped with a sprinkle of shredded cheese and fresh parsley for a touch of freshness.

## Schedule of Services

January 1, 2025 [*Our Lord's Circumcision*]

9:30 AM (Wednesday) – Divine Liturgy

January 4-5, 2025

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

January 5-6, 2025 [*Holy Theophany*]

5:00 PM (Sunday) – Vigil w. Lity

9:30 AM (Monday) – Divine Liturgy

January 11-12, 2025

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

January 18-19, 2025

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

January 25-26, 2025

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

## Daily Bible Readings

1. Ephesians 2:4-10; Luke 18:18-27
2. 1 Thessalonians 2:20-3:8; Luke 20:27-44
3. 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:12-19
4. 1 Thess. 4:1-12; Luke 21:5-7, 10-11, 20-24
5. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8; Luke 21:28-33
6. Hebrews 13:17-21; Luke 6:17-23
7. 2 Corinthians 11:1-6; Luke 13:18-29
8. Ephesians 2:14-22; Luke 17:12-19
9. 2 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Mark 8:11-21
10. 2 Thessalonians 1:10-2:2; Mark 8:22-26
11. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Mark 8:30-34
12. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5; Mark 9:10-16
13. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18; Mark 9:33-41
14. Galatians 1:3-10; Luke 14:1-11
15. Colossians 3:4-11; Luke 14:16-24
16. 1 Timothy 1:1-7; Mark 9:42-10:1
17. 1 Timothy 1:8-14; Mark 10:2-12
18. 1 Timothy 1:18-20, 2:8-15; Mark 10:11-16
19. 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Mark 10:17-27
20. 1 Timothy 4:4-8, 16; Mark 10:23-32
21. Galatians 3:8-12; Luke 16:10-15
22. Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40; Matt. 1:1-25
23. 1 Timothy 5:1-10; Mark 10:46-52
24. 1 Timothy 5:11-21; Mark 11:11-23
25. Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 2:1-12
26. Hebrews 2:11-18; Matthew 2:13-23
27. Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60; Matthew 21:33-42
28. Galatians 5:22-6:2; Luke 17:3-10
29. Galatians 1:11-19; Matthew 2:13-23
30. 2 Timothy 2:20-26; Mark 12:13-17
31. 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4; Mark 12:18-27

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



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

## Parish News

### In Memoriam

Mrs. Eva Benda, age 91, of Bayonne, New Jersey, passed into blessed repose on November 23, 2024. Memory Eternal! Вічна Пам'ять!

### House Blessings

Fr. Sophrony will bless homes on January 11-12, 2025. 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 6, 2025.

### “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 hall until February 9, 2025.

### Parish Council Meeting

Parish Council is meeting in the church hall on Sunday, January 19, 2024 after Divine Liturgy.

## 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. For acknowledgement of Special Donations in the February issue, the donation must be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by January 19, 2025.*

### January 5, 2025

**St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by Helen Wanko in memory of Gregory Grudinoff (anniversary of birth).

### January 26, 2025

**Sanctuary Lamp** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Laura M. Royer (50th anniversary of repose).