

Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
Vol. 8, Number 6: February 2021

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98 West 28th Street, Bayonne, N.J. 07002

“**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 February 2nd, we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple. You may wonder why the altar coverings and vestments for this feast are blue rather than white. The reason is that this feast is also known as the Purification of the Virgin Mary, and is thus considered a Marian feast. This is made clear by the festal troparion: “Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, for from thee hath arisen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ Our God, Who doth give light to those in darkness. Do thou, also, O Righteous Elder, be glad of heart, who receiveth in thine arms Christ, Who hath set free our souls, and hath bestowed upon us resurrection.”

The feast commemorates the event of the Virgin Mary’s bringing of our infant Savior, on his fortieth day, to the Temple, along with an offering of two turtledoves. According to the Old Testament Law, the first-born son is dedicated to God and presented at the Temple on his fortieth day. The offering of turtledoves was made as a vicarious substitution for the child. For the same reason, in Christian tradition, a newborn child would conventionally be baptized on the fortieth day, and the child’s mother would be purified (i.e., “churched”).

The old priest, Simeon, received our infant Lord and, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, exclaimed that the child was indeed the Savior of the world, the Light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel. The Righteous Simeon also foretold that a ‘sword’ would pierce the Virgin Mary’s soul, meaning that she would witness her Son’s agony and death on the Cross.

Both the troparion, in the words “Sun of Righteousness . . . Who doth give light to those in darkness,” and the prayer of St. Simeon, in the words “a Light to enlighten the Gentiles,” explain the custom of blessing candles on this feast, which is also customarily called “Candlemas.” The feast falls on midwinter’s day, when we are halfway through the winter’s darkness and anticipate the new life of

Spring, which is coming soon. Darkness is dispelled, the days grow longer, and soon it will be warmer, and be time for the sowing of seed. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the “Sun of Righteousness” as He is called in the troparion (as also in the troparion of His Nativity); that is, He is the Light Who came to vanquish the world’s darkness. And so, we bless candles, the lights which dispel the darkness of night—lights which also symbolically represent the Light of Christ.

Let us, like the Righteous Simeon, wait prayerfully, and with faith, for Christ to come into our lives, and to dispel the ‘darkness’ of sin from our souls. Let us, like the Holy Virgin, be purified by bearing Christ in our hearts, as she bore Him in her arms, so that our love of Christ will ‘pierce’ us with the holy ‘wounds’ of divine love. Instead of turtledoves, let us offer ourselves to Christ, by committing ourselves to living in the grace and glory of Christ, which is none other than the Light that illumines the universe!

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

“As the fullness of grace flowed from Christ on to his Mother, so it was becoming that the mother should be like her Son in humility.”

— Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 37, a. 4

Lives of the Saints

St. Walpurga – commemorated on February 25th

St. Walpurga or Walburga (c. 710–777/779) was an Anglo-Saxon missionary to the Frankish Empire. She was born in the county of Devon, England, into a local aristocratic family, the daughter of St. Richard the Pilgrim, a king of the West Saxons, and St. Wuna of Wessex, and had two brothers, Ss. Willibald and Winibald.

In 721 St. Richard set out on a pilgrimage to Rome with his two sons. Before leaving he entrusted Walpurga, then 11 years old, to the abbess of the double monastery at Wimborne Abbey in Dorset. She had been there but a year, when she received word that her father had died at Lucca. After seeing to their father's burial in the Basilica of San Frediano, her brothers completed the pilgrimage to Rome, where they both became seriously ill. After recovering, Winibald, who was not of a particularly strong constitution, remained at Rome to pursue further studies, while Willibald set out for the Holy Land.

After about seven years of traveling, Willibald returned to Italy and became a monk at the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino. In 730, Winibald returned to England and engaged a third brother and several amongst his kindred and acquaintance to accompany him in his journey back to Rome to begin a monastic life there. During this time St. Walpurga remained at Wimborne where she was educated; and in the course of time became a nun. The nuns of Wimborne were skilled at copying and ornamenting manuscripts; and celebrated for *Opus Anglicanum*, a fine needlework utilizing gold and silver threads on rich velvet or linen, often decorated with jewels and pearls. Such English embroidery was in great demand across Europe. She spent twenty-six years as a member of the community.

In 737, St. Walpurga's maternal uncle, St. Boniface,¹ was in Rome and recruited his nephews to assist him in his religious work in Germany. Winnebald arrived in Thuringia on November 30, 740, and

¹ St. Boniface (c. 675– June 5, 754), born Winfrid, was a leading figure in the Anglo-Saxon mission to the Germanic parts of the Frankish Empire during the 8th century. He organized significant foundations of the Church in Germany and was made archbishop of Mainz by Pope Gregory III. He was martyred in Frisia in 754, along with 52 others, and his remains were returned to Fulda, where they rest in a sarcophagus which became a site of pilgrimage. St. Boniface's life and death as well as his work became widely known, there being a wealth of material available—a number of vitae (especially *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldi*), legal documents, possibly some sermons, and above all his correspondence. He is the patron saint of Germany; known as the "Apostle of the Germans," he is still strongly venerated in Germany. He is also patron saint of Devon County, England (where he was born). His feast day is June 5th.

after being ordained a priest, was placed in charge of seven churches. Willibald, upon arriving at Eichstätt, was ordained by Boniface on July 22, 741 and began missionary work in the area. St. Walpurga then travelled with her brothers, Willibald and Winibald, to Francia (now Württemberg and Franconia) to assist St. Boniface in evangelizing the still-pagan Germans. Because of her rigorous training, she was able to write her brother Winibald's vita and an account in Latin of his travels in Palestine. As a result, she is often called the first female author in both England and Germany. Walpurga became a nun in the double monastery of Heidenheim am Hahnenkamm, which was founded by Willibald. He appointed her as his successor and following his death in 751, St. Walpurga became the abbess of the monastery. Upon Winibald's death in 760 she also succeeded him as superior of the Heidenheim monastery.

St. Walpurga died on February 25, 777 or 779 (the records are unclear) and was buried at Heidenheim, Franconia; February 25th is the day of her feast in the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran Churches. In 870, St. Walpurga's remains were transferred to Eichstätt, Bavaria, and in Bavaria, Sweden, and Finland her feast day is celebrated on the date of the transfer of her relics and of her canonization by Pope Adrian II in 870, May 1st. Saint Walpurgis Night (or "Sankt Walpurgisnacht")² is the name for the eve of her canonization, which coincides with May Day, and is celebrated in continental folklore with dancing. At Eichstätt, her bones were placed in a rocky niche, which allegedly began to exude a miraculously therapeutic oil, which drew pilgrims to her shrine. The earliest representation of St. Walpurga is in the early eleventh-century *Hitda Codex*, made in Cologne, and depicts her holding stylized stalks of grain. St. Walpurga is the patroness of Eichstätt and Weilburg, Germany; Oudenarde, Veurne, and Antwerp, Belgium; and Zutphen, Netherlands; and she is invoked as special patroness against hydrophobia, in storms, and also by sailors.

St. Walburga's Abbey is located at Eichstätt, Bavaria. A second Benedictine Abbey of St. Walburga is located in Virginia Dale, Colorado, near the Wyoming border. This abbey is home to approximately 20 contemplative Roman Catholic nuns and also has a retreat center. St. Walburga Monastery in Covington, Kentucky is a community of Benedictine nuns who arrived in northern Kentucky in 1859. Their early teaching efforts later resulted in the establishment and development of Villa Madonna Academy and Thomas More University. Another St. Walburga Monastery, in Elizabeth, New Jersey, is a community of Benedictine nuns which operates the Benedictine Academy, an all-girls college preparatory high school. The Church of St. Walburge, a Catholic church in Preston, Lancashire, England, is a church famous for its spire. At 309 feet, the spire is the tallest of any parish church in England, with only the spires of Salisbury and Norwich Cathedrals reaching higher.



St. Walburga Monastery, Elizabeth, New Jersey

² Saint Walpurgis Night (from the German Sankt Walpurgisnacht), also known as Saint Walpurga's Eve (alternatively spelled Saint Walburga's Eve), is celebrated on the night of April 30th and the day of May 1st. This feast commemorates the canonization of St. Walpurga and the movement of her relics to Eichstätt, both of which occurred on May 1, 870. St. Walpurga was hailed by the Christians of Germany for battling "pest, rabies and whooping cough, as well as against witchcraft." Christians prayed to God through the intercession of St. Walpurga in order to protect themselves from witchcraft, as St. Walpurga was successful in converting the local populace to Christianity. In parts of Christendom, people continue to light bonfires on Saint Walpurga's Eve in order to ward off evil spirits and witches. Others have historically made Christian pilgrimages to St. Walburga's tomb in Eichstätt, often obtaining vials of St. Walburga's oil. Local variants of Saint Walpurgis Night are observed throughout Northern and Central Europe in Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In Denmark and Norway, the tradition with bonfires to ward off the witches is observed on Saint John's Eve (June 23rd).

Modern Theological Classics

VII. Suffering

The world is continuously passing away, and we long for something that is immutable. But perhaps even more than by this passing away, we feel baffled by the mystery of Suffering. Is it necessary? It surrounds us on all sides, we meet it at every step. We are simply intruded upon, by the news, the impression of suffering rushing upon us from every quarter, e.g. out of the daily newspaper; with so many persons burnt alive; so many drowned; so many dashed to pieces in an air crash. We are really at a loss, how do understand the meaning of all that, how to accept it, how to be reconciled with this course of life, this order of the universe, where such things can and do happen continuously. We feel we cannot agree with that, we are filled with horror, we are struck dumb, we are full of an internal protest. We are overwhelmed by those images of people being butchered, being imprisoned in concentration camps against all human rights, submitted to most cruel, cynical and refined tortures, both physical and mental, all those unspeakable horrors taking place at our lifetimes, at a distance of miles from these scenes of slaughter. How can we remain indifferent to all that?

People in Europe are not even separated by thousands of miles from these scenes of slaughter. Many among them have personally passed through such experience, having watched it from near or having escaped a similar fate by sheer miracle. Human bodies carbonized and unrecognizable, towns and villages burned out and destroyed; millions of human lives crippled and maimed; the fruits of many centuries of human labor and culture brutally annihilated; recklessness and ferocity of tyrants and conquerors reigning and thriving — all this as a part not only of a recent and still fresh historical past; not only of a terrible yesterday, but also of the present-day world situation [*editor's note: the reader should understand the author is referencing the Second World War and the "Cold War"*]. How to understand all this? And then the groans and the death-rattle in all our hospitals through all the centuries, and the torments of those who by an incurable disease are doomed to a painful death — how to explain this also, how to imagine that God has willed it, that God has agreed to that?

Our hearts are faltering with pity, are wincing under the thought of those torments suffered by others. But are we more compassionate than God? How then can He allow such things to happen? This is the most troubling question which can be put to our religious conscience. Let us try to realize the full scope of this problem and to feel the acuity of the point and to seek an answer. A plausible and smooth theoretical explanation can sometimes prove quite inadequate to quench the trouble of the heart, to satisfy its desire, its craving for peace and for justice. I think, only the *manifestation of a Higher Reality* might prove to be adequate, to be able to cope with the problem, to give a satisfying answer, if answer there be. Only a contact with God, an encounter with God, Christianity says: an encounter with the Suffering God.

The Christian message is the message of the Suffering God; or rather more than that: His *really having come* to share our sufferings unto the depths of death, and that on the Cross. This sheds a new light on the whole question, and not only this question, but on the whole reality of the world's life. There is no explanation coming first, there is this fact coming first: He is sharing our sufferings. He is hallowing our sufferings — by His Presence, by His participation therein. No explanation, but a new revelation. Something totally new, astonishing, incomprehensible, taking us totally aback, paradoxical and unexpected, and — true. And here lies the answer, not the theoretical answer — I mean, in first place — but the practical, the real solution of the problem. His death and His suffering on the Cross are the real solution of the problem. God proves Himself the One of boundless, unthinkable, unfathomable and active mercy, of selfless, self-sacrificing condescension. He is not only compassionate, much more: the Son of God dies for our sake, in order to save us and to hallow our dying and our suffering.

Is this an answer? Yes, I think it is: because we are not alone, nor left alone. Even in our being left alone we have Him with us sharing our being left alone — in this cry of death-agony: “My God, My God, wherefore hast Thou forsaken Me?” Death and torments can mean that He bears company to us, can become His Presence and His Fellowship with us. A new vital center, a new spiritual — and very real — Reality. But how difficult does it usually seem to us to attain it!

There are two different approaches to the problem of Suffering from the Christian point of view, and both are necessary. Yea, more than that: they are, from the Christian point of view, most intimately connected with one another. The one approach is to be deeply struck, deeply haunted by the sufferings of the fellowmen, and even more — by the suffering of all creatures.

Isaac of Syria, the greatest perhaps among the ascetic and mystical writers of Eastern Christianity, speaks of this immense compassion which takes hold of a heart that approaches the summits of perfection. “What is a compassionate heart?” he asks, and answers: “It is a kindling of the heart for all creation — for mankind, the birds, the animals, even the enemies of truth and for all what is. And when he thinks of them or contemplates them, tears stream from his eyes because of the power of mercy which moves his heart with great compassion. And the heart feels itself touched and he cannot endure to see or hear a creature suffer any harm, even the slightest pain. And he offers then, even for those who hurt him, continuously prayers and tears, that they might be saved and strengthened. Even for those that creep in the dust does he pray — out of the immense compassion which is poured out into his heart without measure, following the example of God.”

We are taken aback; we are shaken by the suffering of our brethren. We cannot reconcile ourselves thereto. We have to help them as much as we can. Our fate in the future world will depend on the share of love shown by us to them: “Because you have done that to one of these least among My brethren, you have done it to Me.” We see the presence of the suffering Christ in our suffering brethren. And if we cannot help them by a visible external action, if we cannot alleviate their suffering with our own means, we can and we must intercede for them, implore God for them with all the strength of our heart, with all the burning of our love, as Isaac of Syria depicts it. Incessant prayer, knocking at the door of His mercy. No rest, no self-complacent relaxation, but to go on knocking, with the firm trust that He will hear, that He will save. No cost-hearted philosophy at the expense of our fellowmen, no being reconciled with the sufferings of the brethren. Crying to the Lord, imploring His mercy.

On the other hand, there are some glimpses of the general, the ultimate meaning and sense of suffering, glimpses manifested to us directly to our experience: *through our own suffering*. Unknown depths and realities are suddenly opened before us and we come to see and feel things which we never inspected before. The Son of God Himself in His agony at the garden of Gethsemane prayed to the Father, that this cup might pass from Him, but He added: “but not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” And it is only natural for us, it even the normal attitude, that we should pray God to relieve us from suffering and misfortunes and sorrow. But we are led to grace and to fell and to recognize more: the will of God, that is behind the suffering and is speaking to us, addressing us directly through it. Concerning the brethren we must continue asking God to relieve them. Here, in our own case, it is only natural that we pray God to relieve us from the evils, but more is required from us: we have to listen to the will of God speaking to us even through our sufferings — and perhaps especially strongly through our sufferings — and be ready to submit to it: “Thy will be done.” “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” And here we come near to the center of the Christian revelation, of the revealed mystery: the sense of life, the sense of the whole history is given in the voluntary suffering of the Son of God, in total submission of His will — “obedient unto death, even the death on the Cross” — to the will of the Father.

Once we have accepted our lot as coming from God and have bowed to His will, then an unexpected force which we could not imagine nor think of, can stream into us and support and comfort

us amidst horrors and pains. And then we can even come to feel the bliss of bowing to His will, yea more than that — the bliss of sharing the Passion and the Agony and the Self-Sacrifice of the Son of God. And this is not mere words only, this can and must become a *reality*, as well have many examples thereof. And this gives us its sense and meaning to our suffering: if it becomes a part of His, by our freely accepting it. Dr. Nicholas Arseniev,³ *“The Revelation of Life Eternal,”* pp. 65-68

Recipe of the Month

Good ‘Old Fashioned’ Meatloaf

Winter is a time when many people often crave “comfort foods” such as meatloaf. This month’s recipe is a contribution from a parishioner of Ss. Peter & Paul’s. This has been a “tried and true” recipe in her home for 50 years. No extra salt is needed due to sodium in ketchup and onion soup mix. Serve with mashed potatoes and a vegetable. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

1½ pounds chopped beef (80%)
1 cup bread crumbs, seasoned
1¼ cup milk
1 egg beaten
1 package Lipton onion soup mix (or Lipton onion mushroom soup mix)
¼ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon dry mustard
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce (preferably low sodium)
1 tablespoon ketchup

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients thoroughly.
2. Form into loaf shape and place on baking sheet lined with non-stick foil or parchment paper.
3. Bake 350°F for 1½ hours.

Prayer for Protection from the Corona Virus

O God Almighty, Lord of heaven and earth, and of all creation visible and invisible, in thine ineffable goodness, look down upon us, Thy people gathered in Thy Holy Name. Be our helper and defender in this day of affliction. Thou knowest our weakness. Thou hearest our cry in repentance and contrition of heart. O Lord who lovest mankind, deliver us from the impending threat of the Corona Virus. Send Thine angel to watch over us and protect us. Grant health and recovery to those suffering from this virus. Guide the hands of physicians and nurses, and preserve those who are healthy that we may continue to serve our suffering brothers and sisters in peace, that together we may glorify thy most honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

³ Dr. Nicholas Arseniev (1888-1977) was an Orthodox lay theologian, born in St. Petersburg, Russia of a prominent family whose members included several diplomats. In December 1919, he and his family came under suspicion of counter-revolution from the NKVD and was imprisoned. After release in 1920, he escaped from Russia, and became a professor at the University of Königsberg. After the Second World War, he migrated to the United States, and became professor of New Testament and Apologetics at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York. Professor Arseniev was known for his knowledge of obscure languages and research on Christian mysticism and Russian piety.

Parish News

Supermarket Gift Cards

One way in which you can easily help raise funds for the parish—at no additional cost to you—is to buy and use the gift cards for Acme, Shop-Rite, and Stop & Shop supermarkets that are available for sale in the church vestibule. Then, every time you go grocery shopping, you would be helping your parish! They also, of course, make good gifts!

Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council is Sunday, February 21, 2021 after Divine Liturgy.

Schedule of Services

February 1-2, 2021

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

February 6-7, 2021

5:00 PM (Sat.) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

February 13-14, 2021

5:00 PM (Sat.) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

February 20-21, 2021

5:00 PM (Sat.) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

February 27-28, 2021

5:00 PM (Sat.) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

During this time of crisis, please remember that the church needs your support. You may mail your contributions to the parish's mailing address of: 98 W. 28th Street, Bayonne, N.J. 07002. Thank you for your continued support of Ss. Peter & Paul's, and may God bless you for your generosity.

Daily Bible Readings

1. Hebrews 11:17-23, 27-31; Mark 9:42-10:1
2. Hebrews 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. Colossians 1:3-6; Luke 16:10-15
7. 1 Timothy 1:15-17; Matthew 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 11:22-26
11. James 4:7-5:9; Mark 11:27-33
12. 1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12, 2:6-10; Mark 12:1-12
13. 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23; Luke 17:3-10
14. 1 Timothy 4:9-15; Luke 19:1-10

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

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, 2021.

February 7, 2021

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Very Rev. Archimandrite Athanasy Mastalski (5th anniversary of repose). **St. John's Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Very Rev. Archpriest John Udics (5th anniversary of repose).

February 14, 2021

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Ernest A. Royer. **Triple Candelabra** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rev. Thomas Sheridan, S.J.

February 21, 2021

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rita Richards (10th anniversary of repose). **St. John's Cross** offered by Wasilewski Family in memory of Valentina Travis (26th anniversary of repose). **St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by the Wasilewski Family in memory of Julia Wasilewski (18th anniversary of repose).

February 28, 2021

Altar Vigils offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Albert and Vera Royer. **Triple Candelabra** Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Angela DiGiovanni. **Sanctuary Lamp** offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Macinsky (anniversary of repose).