

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

Given that the life of St. Nonna of Nazianzus is the featured saint’s life this month (see below), and the she was a deaconess at the same time that her husband, St. Gregory the Elder, was made bishop of Nazianzus, it seemed proper and serendipitous to explain the history, role, and meaning of the now vanished ministry of deaconesses in the Rector’s Message this month.

St. Paul's earliest mention of a woman as deacon is in his Epistle to the Romans 16:1 (AD 58) where he says: *“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is the servant of the church at Cenchrææ.”* The original Greek says: οὔσαν διάκονον (*ousan diakonon*), “being [the] [female] servant of the church at Cenchrææ.” The word “diakonon” means servant in nearly all of its thirty uses in the New Testament, but may also be used to refer to the church office of deacon. There is no scholarly consensus as to whether the phrase here denotes an official title of a permanent ministry. The term may refer to her serving in a more generic sense, without holding a church office. This is the primary meaning, and also how Paul uses the term elsewhere in the Epistle to the Romans. A reference to the qualifications required of deacons appears in St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy 3:8-13:

Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; 9 they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The verse about “the women” appears in the middle of a section that also addresses the men. However, the words regarding “the women” may refer to the wives of male deacons, or to deacons who are women. The transition from deacons generally to female deacons in particular may make sense linguistically, because the same word διάκονοι covers both men and women. To indicate the women, the Greeks would sometimes say διάκονοι γυναῖκες [“deacon women”]. This expression appears in the church legislation of Emperor Justinian I (527-565). This interpretation is followed by some early Greek Fathers such as John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia. However, this is not the phrase used here, where Paul refers simply to γυναῖκες [“women”].

Clement of Alexandria (150-215) wrote: *"But the latter [the apostles], in accordance with their ministry [διακονία], devoted themselves to preaching without any distraction, and took women with them, not as wives, but as sisters, that they might be their co-ministers [συνδιακονούς] in dealing with women in their homes. It was through them that the Lord's teaching penetrated also the women's quarters without any scandal being aroused. We also know the instructions about women deacons [διακονῶν γυναικῶν] which are given by the noble Paul in his other letter, the one to Timothy" (1 Timothy 3:11). Stromata Book 3, chap.6, 54, 3-4*

As Clement of Alexandria made mention of Paul's reference to deaconesses in 1 Timothy 3:11, so Origen of Alexandria (184-254) commented on Phoebe, the deacon that Paul mentions in Romans 16:1-2:

"This text teaches with the authority of the Apostle that even women are instituted deacons in the Church. This is the function which was exercised in the church of Cenchreae by Phoebe, who was the object of high praise and recommendation by Paul... And thus, this text teaches at the same time two things: that there are, as we have already said, women deacons in the Church, and that women, who by their good works deserve to be praised by the Apostle, ought to be accepted in the diaconate."

The Didascalia of the Apostles is the earliest document that specifically discusses the role of the male and female deacons more at length. It originated in Aramaic speaking Syria during the 3rd century, but soon spread in Greek and Latin versions. In it the author urges the bishop: *"Appoint a woman for the ministry of women. For there are homes to which you cannot send a male deacon to their women, on account of the heathen, but you may send a deaconess ... Also, in many other matters the office of a woman deacon is required."*¹ The bishop should look on the man who is a deacon as Christ and the woman who is a deacon as the Holy Spirit, denoting their prominent place in the church hierarchy. The women deacons are also mentioned in a passage of the Council of Nicaea in 325 which implies their hierarchal, consecrated or ordained status; then more clearly at the Council of Chalcedon of 451 which decreed that women should not be ordained deacons until they were forty years old. The oldest ordination rite for deaconesses is found in the fifth-century Apostolic Constitutions:

"Concerning a deaconess, I, Bartholomew, enjoin O Bishop, thou shalt lay thy hands upon her with all the Presbytery and the Deacons and the Deaconesses and thou shalt say: Eternal God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the creator of man and woman, that didst fill with the Spirit Mary and Deborah, and Anna and Huldah, that didst not disdain that thine only begotten Son should be born of a woman; Thou that in the tabernacle of witness and in the temple didst appoint women guardians of thy holy gates: Do thou now look on this thy handmaid, who is appointed unto the office of a Deaconess and grant unto her the Holy Spirit, and cleanse her from all pollution of the flesh and of the spirit, that she may worthily accomplish the work committed unto her, to thy glory and the praise of thy Christ."

Two types of monastic women were typically ordained to the diaconate in the early and middle Byzantine period: abbesses and nuns with liturgical functions, as well as the wives of men who were being raised to the episcopacy. There was a strong association of deacons who were women with abbesses starting in the late fourth century or early fifth century in the East, and it occurred in the medieval period in the Latin as well as the Byzantine Church. Principally, these women lived in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, where the office of deaconess was most often found. There is literary evidence of a diaconate including women, particularly in Constantinople, and archaeological evidence of deaconesses in a number of other areas in the Empire, particularly Asia Minor.

One example of a woman from Constantinople being a deacon during the post-Constantinian period was Olympias, a well-educated woman and one of the closest friends and supporters of St. John Chrysostom, who after being widowed devoted her life to the church and was ordained a deacon. She supported the church with gifts of land and her wealth which was typical during this period. Women who are deacons are often mistaken as being only widows or wives of deacons; and it is sometimes described that they came out of an order of widows. Minor church offices developed about the same time as the diaconate in response to the needs of growing churches.

¹ This is an important qualification, as several New Testament passages are clear that under no circumstances are women to have rule or authority over men, particularly in the church. Cf. Eph. 5:22-24, Col. 3:18, 1 Tim. 3:4-5, 1 Cor. 11:3, 11-14, and 1 Pet. 3:1. The basic order is that the church is the extension of the home; in the home the father rules, in the church the elder (presbyter) rules. In the home the husband is the head of the wife; in the Universal (Catholic) Church Christ is the Head of the Church, in the Local Church the man is the head of the woman. Finally, as a general rule, in the home children obey their parents (Eph. 6:1), in church members "obey them that have the rule over you" (Heb. 13:17), meaning, again, the elders (*presbyteroi*).

Widows, however, were elderly women of the congregation in need of economic help and social support due to their situation. This concept is mentioned in the first Acts 6:1 and 9:39–41 and 1 Timothy 5. These widows had no specific duties compared to that of the deacons. In the Apostolic Constitutions women who were deacons were recognized as having power over the widows in the church. The widows were cautioned to obey “women deacons with piety, reverence and fear.” During the first four centuries of the Church, widows were recognized members of the Church who shared some functions similar to those of a deaconess; yet did not share the same responsibilities or importance.

In the Byzantine Church women who were deacons had both liturgical and pastoral functions within the church. These women also ministered to other women in a variety of ways, including instructing catechumens, assisting with women’s baptisms and welcoming women into the church services. They also mediated between members of the church, and they cared for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the imprisoned and the persecuted. They were sent to women who were housebound due to illness or childbirth. They performed the important sacramental duty of conducting the physical anointing and baptism of women. Ordination to the diaconate was also appropriate for those responsible for the women’s choir, a liturgical duty. Evidence in the “Vita Sanctae Macrinae” (“Life of St. Macrina”) shows that Lampadia was responsible for the women's choir.

After the fourth century the role of women as deacons changed somewhat in the West. It appeared that the amount of involvement with the community and the focus on individual spirituality did not allow any deacon who was a woman to define her own office. During the rule of Constantine (312-337), as Christianity became more institutionalized, leadership roles for women decreased. It was during the fifth and sixth centuries in the western part of the Roman Empire that the role of deaconesses became less favorable. The councils of Orange in 441 and Orléans in 533 directly targeted the role of the deaconesses, forbidding their ordination. By at least the ninth or tenth century, nuns were the only women ordained as deacons. Evidence of diaconal ordination of women in the West is less conclusive from the ninth to the early twelfth centuries than for previous eras, although it does exist and certain ceremonials were retained in liturgy books to modern times.

In Constantinople and Jerusalem, there is sufficient historical record to indicate that the diaconate including women continued to exist as an ordained order for most of this period. In the Byzantine Church, the decline of the diaconate which included women began sometime during the iconoclastic period (eighth century) with the vanishing of the ordained order for women in the twelfth century. It is probable that the decline started in the late seventh century with the introduction into the Byzantine Church of severe liturgical restrictions on menstruating women. By the eleventh century, the Byzantine Church had developed a theology of ritual impurity associated with menstruation and childbirth. Dionysius of Alexandria and his later successor, Timothy, had similar restriction on women receiving the Eucharist or entering the church during menses. Thus, “the impurity of their menstrual periods dictated their separation from the divine and holy sanctuary.” By the end of the medieval period the role of the deacons decreased into mere preparation for priesthood, with only liturgical roles. By the twelfth century deaconesses had disappeared from the Eastern Church.

Parish Council President’s Message

Dear parishioners and friends:

August is a special month in the Orthodox Church. It starts with a 14-day fast, the second strictest fast of the year, which prepares us for the Dormition of the Virgin Mary on August 15th. Two great feasts fall in August, the Transfiguration of Our Lord (Aug. 6th) and the aforesaid Dormition (Aug. 15th). Let us strive to keep the fast with solemnity, and attend the Vespers and Divine Liturgies of the two feasts. Let us also do our part in attending all of the divine services celebrated in our church. Although our obligation for Sundays and Holy Days primarily means our attendance of Divine Liturgy; nevertheless, in Orthodox tradition proper preparation for our attendance of Divine Liturgy — particularly if we are receiving Holy Communion — includes our attendance of Great Vespers the evening before. Many times, and especially in the summer, attendance at Great Vespers has been pretty poor; therefore, I implore all our faithful parishioners not to forget about Great Vespers and other evening services, especially as these services are usually no longer than 30 minutes.

Yours in Christ,
Reader Stephen Wasilewski

Lives of the Saints

St. Nonna of Nazianzus – commemorated on August 5th

St. Nonna, the mother of St. Gregory the Theologian, was the daughter of Christians named Philotatus and Gorgonia, who raised her in Christian piety. St. Nonna was also an aunt of St. Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium. She Nonna entered into marriage with Gregory of Arianzus, who was the rich landowner of an estate in the Arianzus and Nazianzus districts. Unfortunately, the marriage caused great misery for the holy soul of St. Nonna. Her husband was a pagan, a follower of the sect of the Supremists (*Hypsistarii*), who venerated a supreme god and observed certain Jewish rituals, while at the same time worshiping fire.

St. Nonna prayed that her husband would turn to the One True God. Their son, St. Gregory the Theologian, wrote that his mother "... could not bear this, being half united to God, because he who was part of her remained apart from God. She wanted a spiritual union in addition to the bodily union. Day and night she turned to God with fasting and many tears, entreating Him to grant salvation to her husband." Through the prayers of St. Nonna, her husband had a vision in his sleep. "It seemed to my father," wrote St. Gregory, "as though he was singing the following verse of David: 'I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord' (Ps. 121/122: 1). He had never done this before, though his wife had often offered her supplications and prayers for it." The Psalm was strange to him, but along with its words, a desire also came to him to go to church. When she heard about this, St. Nonna told her husband that the vision would bring the greatest pleasure if it were fulfilled. Her husband, Gregory, went to the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea, where he made known his conversion to Christ. He was baptized, ordained presbyter, and then Bishop of Nazianzus, devoting himself totally to the Church. At the same time as his consecration as bishop, St. Nonna was made a deaconess.² With the same zeal with which she had raised her children, she now occupied herself in performing works of charity.

"She knew," wrote St. Gregory the Theologian, "one thing to be truly noble: to be pious and to know from where we have come and where we are going; and that there is one innate and trusty wealth: to use one's substance on God and on the poor, especially the impoverished kin. One woman may be distinguished for frugality, and another for piety, while she, difficult as it is to combine both qualities, excelled all others in both of them. In each she attained the height of perfection, and both were combined in her. She did not permit one duty to interfere with the other, but rather each supported the other. What time and place of prayer ever eluded her? She was drawn to this each day before anything else, and she had complete faith that her prayers would be answered. Although greatly moved by the sorrows of strangers, she never yielded to grief to the extent that she allowed any sound of woe to escape her lips before the Eucharist, or a tear to fall from her eye, or for any trace of mourning to remain on a feast day, though she repeatedly endured many sorrows. She subjected every human thing to God."

Her final years brought St. Nonna many sorrows. In 368, her youngest son, Caesarius, died, and the following year, her daughter died. St. Nonna bore these losses submitting to the will of God. In 370 Bishop Gregory, then already an old man, participated in the consecration of St. Basil the Great as Bishop of Caesarea. St. Nonna, who was somewhat younger than her husband, was also ready to enter into the next life, but through the prayers of her beloved son her time on earth was prolonged. St. Gregory, her son, wrote:

"My mother was always strong and vigorous, and free from sickness all her life, but then she became ill. Because of much distress... caused by her inability to eat, her life was in danger for many days, and no cure could be found. How then did God sustain her? He did not send down manna, as for Israel of old; He did not split open a rock, in order to provide water for the thirsty people; nor did He send food by ravens, as with Elias, nor did He feed her..., as He once fed Daniel, who felt hunger in the pit. But how? It seemed to her that I, her favorite son (not even in dreams did she prefer anyone else), had appeared to her suddenly by night with a basket of the whitest bread. Then I blessed these loaves with the Sign of the Cross, as is my custom, and I gave her to eat, and with this her strength increased."

² In this instance, it is probable that St. Nonna was made a deaconess because she was the wife of a bishop (i.e., as a title of honor). The fact that she was made a deaconess at the same time as her husband was made a bishop strongly suggests this interpretation. Furthermore, given the customs of the time (retained in the Greek Church), when her son, Gregory of Nazianzus, became a bishop, she would probably have been known as *episcopa* (the feminine form of the Greek word for bishop or overseer), a title used to honor the mother of a bishop.

St. Nonna believed in the vision. She became stronger, and more like her old self. St. Gregory visited her early the next morning, asked what sort of night she had, and if she required anything. She replied, "My son, you have fed me and now you ask about my health. I am well." At that moment her maids made signs to him that he should not contradict her, but to accept her words so that the actual truth should not upset her. In early 374, the hundred-year-old St. Gregory the Elder fell asleep in the Lord. After his death, St. Nonna hardly ever emerged from the church. Soon after his death, she died at prayer in the temple on August 5, 374. St. Nonna was a model wife and mother, a remarkable woman who devoted her life to God and the Church without neglecting her other responsibilities. Because of her spiritual, social, and domestic concerns, St. Nonna is a fitting patron for Orthodox women's organizations.

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

And in this Transfiguration the foremost object was to remove the offense of the cross from the disciple's heart, and to prevent their faith being disturbed by the humiliation of His voluntary Passion by revealing to them the excellence of His hidden dignity. But with no less foresight, the foundation was laid of the Holy Church's hope, that the whole body of Christ might realize the character of the change which it would have to receive, and that the members might promise themselves a share in that honor which had already shone forth in their Head. About which the Lord had Himself said, when He spoke of the majesty of His coming, "Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in their Father's Kingdom Matthew 13:43," while the blessed Apostle Paul bears witness to the self-same thing, and says: "for I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed in us Romans 8:18:" and again, "for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. For when Christ our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory Colossians 3:3." But to confirm the Apostles and assist them to all knowledge, still further instruction was conveyed by that miracle.

— St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, [Sermon 51](#), iii.

Modern Theological Classics

THE SANCTIFICATION OF LIFE

After discussing the *sanctification of time* we come now to the *sanctification of life* by the Church. The sanctification of life is the fundamental meaning and purpose of the *sacraments*. Therefore, we must say a few words about the notion of "sacrament" as such.

Although we limit the term "sacrament" to seven specific liturgical acts, we can say that in the Orthodox Church, the whole approach to life is *sacramental*. What does this mean? Sacrament is an act which *transforms*. For transformation is the real purpose of God in His Saving Acts. God not only saves us in Christ, not only forgives our sins; He also transforms our life. It is in the Feast of Transfiguration that we find the ultimate meaning of the Orthodox idea of salvation. When we say "salvation" we often have the tendency to use the word in the sense of salvation *from* something. And such is certainly the first meaning of the word: it is salvation *from* sin, *from* death, *from* enslavement to this world. But in Christ a second meaning is revealed, which is that of transfiguration and transformation. Christ came to give a new meaning, a new destination to our life. As one of the Fathers of the Church said: "God became man so that man might become God." This is the Orthodox doctrine of *deification*, of becoming divine by grace. And the experience of holiness in the Church, of those men whom we call saints, is an experience precisely of such inner transformation. The ultimate destiny of all that exists is summed up in the words of the Liturgy of St. Basil: "that Christ might fill all things with Himself." These words are the starting point for the proper understanding of the sacraments. Sacraments are those acts of the Church by which she transforms our life. It is in this perspective that we shall speak of each one of them.

We shall divide the sacraments into the following groups. First, the two sacraments that can be called *sacraments of initiation*, i.e. those by which we begin our Christian life: *Baptism* and *Chrismation*. Next, the sacraments which in patristic terminology is defined as the "sacrament of all sacraments," in which all Christian life finds its fulfillment: the *Divine Liturgy*, or the sacrament of the *Holy Eucharist*. These three sacraments shape our life in the Church. Baptism integrates us in the Church, Chrismation gives us the gifts necessary for life in the Church, and the Eucharist fulfills our membership in the people of God. Then we have the two *sacraments of healing*. Unfortunately man does not keep in all its purity the new life which he receives in Baptism; he falls always

from it, he remains open to sin even after he has been given the white robe of incorruption, and thus he has to be restored again and again to the state he has received from Christ. The first sacrament of healing is the sacrament of *Holy Oil*, which deals with the physical weaknesses of man. The second is that of repentance and forgiveness: the sacrament of *Penance*. Spiritual transformation and physical healing – such is the purpose of these two sacraments. Next, the sacrament of *Holy Matrimony*, which indicates that the Church gives special attention of the family, to the man within the family, to human love, to procreation, to the basic unit of man's life in society. And, finally, the seventh sacrament, *Holy Orders*, which supplies the Church with bishops, priests, and deacons, without which divinely established ministry the Church could not fulfill herself as the Body of Christ.

Spirit and Matter

Now we must try to understand why we speak about the sacraments as the *sanctification of life*. Baptism in Greek means immersion in water, and from the very beginning water was the element of the sacrament. "Unless," Christ says, "one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Thus, the first question we must answer is "*why water?*" Why, in other words, does the Christian life and the Church itself depend on matter? And yet this material element is present in almost all sacraments: water in Baptism, a precious myrrh in Chrismation, oil in the sacrament of healing. Christ heals the blind man by means of matter. And when we read the Gospel and the Bible with open eyes, and grasp the attitude towards matter revealed in them, we understand also that the radical opposition of the spiritual to the material, an opposition permeating modern Christianity, is not Biblical. God created matter as well as spirit. God has created the entire world, and every ounce of matter belongs to Him. And we know from the Bible that all that He created is good. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). Therefore, a certain tendency in religion which "despises" material things, reducing religion to that alone which is "spiritual," is wrong, non-Christian. Many tragedies in our Christian life, social and individual, would find their solution if we remembered that God did not create spirit alone, but the truly wonderful combination of spirit and matter which is our world. The real perspective, the real purpose for the world, is that all matter be *spiritualized*, i.e. acquire a spiritual meaning, and all that which is spiritual be *incarnate*. The pattern of Divine Salvation is God becoming Man: "And the Word became Flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). God Himself assumes material existence in order to bring matter to God. And thus, the real sin is not that man has become "material," for he was created as spirit *and* matter from the very beginning, but that he forgot and betrayed the real meaning of the relationship between "spirit" and "matter." It is by dividing them one from another that man became the slave of matter instead of being its master, instead of bringing it to God permeated with spirit. This is why our sacraments are spiritual and material, with oil and water, bread and wine, as their "means." This is why, furthermore, sacraments reveal to us how we should live in the world and what is our Christian life.

BAPTISM AND CHRISMATION

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). Baptism is the sacrament for our new birth in Christ, of our integration into the new humanity. The natural man, although created by God, has sinned, has lost his sonship, the direct knowledge of, and communion with, God. In Christ, man has been restored to his "pristine beauty." Christ lived a perfect human life: that of total dedication to God, of total submission, of absolute love. He accepted death, but on the third day He rose again from the dead, for His life was stronger than death. In Him, God has united Himself to man, and to all those who believe in Him, as the Son of God, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, He grants this *new life*, the grace of regeneration. As a visible sign and means of the gift of transformation, He instituted the sacrament of Baptism to be the foundation of a new society, a new People – the Church. In Baptism we receive, therefore, the power of the new life, which makes us members of the Church. All this is expressed in the liturgy of initiation, which consists of three parts: Preparation (Catechumenate), Baptism and Chrismation.

Preparation

In the early Church a man who confessed his faith in Christ and expressed the desire to join the Church was first made a *catechumen* (the one who *hears*, i.e. is taught, receives instruction). He was given instruction in the teachings of the Church (Bible and Creed), in the meaning of its worship and in its law of life (ethics). He attended the teaching part of the liturgy (cf. "Liturgy of the Catechumens") but was excluded from the sacramental part ("Catechumens depart ..."). Meanwhile the whole Church was praying for him (cf. prayers and litanies for the catechumens). Today, since the great majority of baptisms are performed on children, this preparation for baptism has remained only in the form of a short pre-baptismal service. It includes:

(1) Three prayers of *exorcism*, which means expelling evil spirits. The Church teaches that man has become the slave of Satan and of his angels, who have spiritually polluted the whole world. Christ came to destroy their power and His first act was always to expel the evil spirits. The Church has His power of liberating men from this slavery, and her first action is also to free the new child of God from the tyranny of Satan (Cf. text in Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church*, pp. 271-274).

(2) *The rejection and condemnation of Satan* by the new Christian. This is done today by the Godparents on behalf of the child. They face the West (which in opposition to the East is the symbol of darkness) and three times solemnly reject "Satan and all his angels and all his services." There is a constant spiritual war between God and His enemies, and a Christian begins by choosing freely his side (Cf. Hapgood, p. 274).

(3) *The acceptance of Christ*. They then turn to the East, to the Light and proclaim three times the acceptance of Christ by the child, in acceptance of Him as King (i.e. the master of the whole life) and God.

(4) *The reading of the Creed*. Still on behalf of the child, the Creed is then read, which means the acceptance of the whole faith, doctrine and life of the Church, an oath of loyalty to the Church.

(5) A short *prayer*, in which the priest asks God to admit the catechumen to the *Holy Illumination* of Baptism.

Baptism

The sacrament of Baptism proper begins with the sanctification of water. In the Bible, water is the symbol of *judgment* (cf. Flood), *cleansing*, i.e. forgiveness, and *life*. More generally it is the "first matter," the root and foundation of the world. By its use in baptism, the Church prepares, as it were, a new world for the new man, or rather a new relationship between the "matter" and man. In sin man has become totally dependent on matter (food, air), more material than spiritual. The sacrament of regeneration begins by "cleansing" matter, by making it once more a way to God. This is the general meaning of the use of *material* elements in the sacraments (water, oil, bread, wine). Christianity has a cosmic dimension because the divine purpose of man, as created by God, is to be the king of creation, to submit the whole cosmos to God. Blessed and sanctified water becomes again the instrument of God for the salvation and redemption of man. His immersion in it means: the *condemnation* to death of the sinful man in him, the judgment passed on the old Adam; then, the washing away of his sins, *divine forgiveness*; and finally, *new birth*, the gift of Christ's life to him. The order of the service includes:

(1) The solemn initial blessing: "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The sacrament of Baptism is truly the sacrament of the Kingdom for through it a man becomes a *citizen of heaven*, a companion of the Saints, partaker of the new and immortal life in the Holy Spirit.

(2) The Great Litany, including petitions for the sanctification of the water and the transformation of the catechumen who will be immersed in it.

(3) The prayer of blessing of the water, proclaiming the true nature of the cosmos, as one wonderful temple of God, with one ultimate purpose: to reflect His glory and to worship Him.

(4) The anointing with the *oil of gladness* of both the water and the body of the catechumen. Oil is the Biblical symbol of *healing* (cf. the parable of the Good Samaritan), of *peace* (cf. the olive tree after the Flood) and of *joy* (oil being the source of light in the ancient world). Christ heals the sickness of man, brings him peace with God and fills him with the "peace which passes all understanding."

(5) The three *immersions* with the sacramental formula: "In the name of the Father. Amen. The Son. Amen. The Holy Spirit. Amen." The Orthodox Church insists on immersion because the Greek word "baptism" means immersion and because immersion is the adequate liturgical expression of the meaning of baptism: the regeneration of the *whole man*.

(6) Psalm 32, the joyful song of forgiveness and renovation of life ("Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven").

(7) Then the newly baptized is vested in a *white garment*, symbol of newness and purity of the life he has received in the baptismal font.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann,³ *Liturgy and Life*, pp. 90-96

³ Fr. Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983) was an influential Orthodox priest, teacher, and writer. From 1946 to 1951 he taught in Paris, and afterwards in New York. In his teachings and writings he sought to establish the close links between Christian theology and Christian liturgy. At the time of his death, he was the dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York.

Recipe of the Month

Zucchini Bread Pancakes

Summer squash varieties (like zucchini and yellow squash), which have a thin skin that doesn't require peeling, are in season in August. But zucchini can be pesky. It can be a little slippery when cooked and weepy when raw. It's hard to get it roasted or grilled to a crisp. Sure, it's a mainstay in ratatouille and it's great in an omelet. But this is a good time to get yourself reacquainted with zucchini bread. Here's a breakfast twist on zucchini bread: zucchini bread pancakes! They're plush inside with a lightly crisped edge; they smell heavenly, reheat wonderfully, take well to whole wheat flours, and require only a bare minimum of sugar; and they're relatively easy to make.

Ingredients:

- 2 large eggs
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons light brown, dark brown, or granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup buttermilk, or 2 tablespoons each of milk and plain yogurt, whisked until smooth
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups shredded zucchini (from about 9 ounces whole, or 1 1/2 medium zucchini), heaping cups are fine
- 1 cup all-purpose flour (half can seamlessly be swapped with a whole wheat flour)
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground or freshly grated nutmeg
- Butter or oil, for coating skillet

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine eggs, olive oil, sugar, buttermilk and vanilla until smooth. Stir in zucchini shreds. In a smaller bowl, whisk together flour, salt, baking soda, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir dry ingredients into zucchini batter, mixing until just combined.
2. Preheat oven to 200°F and place a tray — foil-lined if you're into doing fewer dishes later — on a middle rack.
3. Heat a large, heavy skillet over medium heat. Once hot, melt a pat of butter in pan and swirl it around until it sizzles. Scoop scant 1/4-cup dollops of batter (mine were about 3 tablespoons each) in pan so the puddles do not touch. Cook until bubbles appear on the surface, about 2 to 3 minutes. Flip pancakes and cook another minute or two, until golden underneath. Transfer pancakes to prepared pan to keep warm as well as ensure that they're all cooked through when served. Repeat with remaining batter. Serve warm.
4. May be topped with maple syrup, honey, or lightly sweetened topping (below).

Lightly Sweetened Topping:

Mix 1 tablespoon maple syrup to 3 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt.

** Makes 10-12 pancakes.*

Parish News

Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council is Monday, August 12, 2019 at 7:00 PM.

Rector's Vacation

Fr. Sophrony returns on August 3rd. In the event of an emergency before his return, please call Fr. John Fencik at (201) 436-5549 or (201) 779-6604.

Parish Confessions

All parishioners ought to go to confession during the Virgin Mary's Fast. Confessions may be heard after any Vespers during the month of August or call the Rectory for an appointment.

Pilgrimage to Alaska in July 2020

Archbishop Michael is heading a pilgrimage, July 15-21, 2020, to the cradle of Orthodox Christianity in America – Kodiak, Alaska! The price is \$2,525/person for double-occupancy lodging (single-occupancy supplement is \$675). A flyer is posted on the church bulletin board. To register, visit www.culturallycreativetravel.com/pilgrimage-to-alaska-2020.

Schedule of Services

August 3-4, 2019

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

August 5-6, 2019

6:00 PM (Monday) – Great Vespers w. Lity
9:00 AM (Tuesday) – Divine Liturgy

August 10-11, 2019

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

August 14-16, 2019

6:00 PM (Wednesday) – Great Vespers w. Lity
9:00 AM (Thursday) – Divine Liturgy

August 17-18, 2019

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

August 24-25, 2019

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

August 28-29, 2019

6:00 PM (Wednesday) – Great Vespers w. Lity
9:00 AM (Thursday) – Divine Liturgy

Reminder: We shall return to having all morning services at 9:30 AM starting on Sunday, September 8, 2018.

Daily Bible Readings

1. 1 Corinthians 7:24-35; Matthew 15:12-21
2. 1 Corinthians 7:35-8:7; Matthew 15:29-31
3. Romans 12:1-3; Matthew 10:37-11:1
4. Romans 15:1-7; Matthew 9:27-35
5. 1 Corinthians 9:13-18; Matthew 16:1-6
6. 2 Peter 1:10-19; Matthew 17:1-9
7. 1 Corinthians 10:12-22; Matthew 16:20-24
8. 1 Corinthians 10:28-11:7; Matthew 16:24-28
9. 1 Corinthians 11:8-22; Matthew 17:10-18
10. Romans 13:1-10; Matthew 12:30-37
11. 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 14:14-22
12. 1 Corinthians 11:31-12:6; Matthew 18:1-11
13. 1 Cor. 12:12-26; Matthew 18:18-22, 19:1-2, 13-15
14. 1 Corinthians 13:4-14:5; Matthew 20:1-16
15. Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

16. 1 Corinthians 14:26-40; Matthew 21:12-14, 17-20
17. Romans 14:6-9; Matthew 15:32-39
18. 1 Corinthians 3:9-17; Matthew 14:22-34
19. 1 Corinthians 15:12-19; Matthew 21:18-22
20. 1 Corinthians 15:29-38; Matthew 21:23-27
21. 1 Corinthians 16:4-12; Matthew 21:28-32
22. 2 Corinthians 1:1-7; Matthew 21:43-46
23. 2 Corinthians 1:12-20; Matthew 22:23-33
24. Romans 15:30-33; Matthew 17:24-18:4
25. 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; Matthew 17:14-23
26. 2 Corinthians 2:4-15; Matthew 23:13-22
27. 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:3; Matthew 23:23-28
28. 2 Corinthians 3:4-11; Matthew 23:29-39
29. 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; Matthew 24:13-28
30. 2 Corinthians 4:13-18; Matthew 24:27-33, 42-5
31. 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Matthew 19:3-12

Special Donations

Please note that for Special Donations in September 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 August 18, 2019.

August 4, 2019

St. John's Cross offered by Olga DeMay in memory of John DeMay (anniversary of birth).

August 11, 2019

Sanctuary Lamp offered by the Zuber Family in memory of Tatiana Korbela (anniversary of repose).