

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 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

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

On the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we celebrate the miracle of the incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God. This is an astonishing event in the history of salvation, for He, through whom all things were created, condescended to enter into His own creation. Through the incarnation, the invisible has become visible, and God communicates Himself in the fullest manner possible by coming into the world and dwelling among us, and we have seen His glory.

With the incarnation, the light of God shone into a world darkened by sin, so that the world would be reclaimed from its captivity to sin. The Son of God assumed human nature, being like us in every way except for sin, and by so doing, brought healing to human nature from the wound of original sin.

Our Lord Jesus Christ offered to us nothing less than the forgiveness of God, freely given, and so, with Him, we have received grace and truth. We receive grace, because grace is the gift of God’s favor, and joining together God and mankind, Jesus Christ reconciles us to God, so that we may know God as our Father and live in fellowship with Him. We receive truth, for not only are we taught the truth by Jesus Christ’s words, but He is, Himself, the Word of God made flesh, in whom the truth of God is manifested before the world. So, grace and truth enter into the world with the coming of Jesus Christ, as the saving gifts of God.

Let us be mindful, therefore, of the true meaning of Christmas, which is nothing less than the gift of Christ Himself, a gift more precious than any other, for in Him we receive God Himself as a gift, and the goodness of that gift offers salvation to all mankind. May all of you receive the gift of faith this Christmas, and give to our Lord Jesus Christ the gift of your adoration. To all of you, may the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, dwell in your hearts today and forever.

Parish Council President's Message

Dear parishioners and friends:

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Soon it will be Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords and Prince of Peace! This is a time of peace on earth, and good will among men, and I wish for everyone in our parish to find the peace of mind that comes from having good will towards all, and ill will towards none. One way we can discover the peace of Christ is by attending the Christmas services offered in our church – the Vigil on Christmas Eve and the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day, and on the second and third days of Christmas.

Let me appeal to you that our church truly needs your support. Not long ago we had a full church because of a Parastas scheduled after Divine Liturgy that particular Sunday. Wouldn't it be nice to see our church as full for Christmas Liturgy? And please remember your "Christmas Flowers" and "Christmas" offering envelopes. Thank you for your support, and "Merry Christmas" to you all!

Yours in Christ,

Robert Pierce, Vice-President of the Parish Council

Lives of the Saints

St. Viviana of Rome, Virgin-Martyr – commemorated on December 2nd

St. Viviana (also: Vibiana, Vivian, or Bibiana) is a Roman Virgin-Martyr. The earliest mention of authentic historical authority occurs in the *Liber Pontificalis*, where the biography of Pope Simplicius (468–483) states that this pope "consecrated a basilica of the holy martyr Viviana, which contained her body, near the 'palatium Licinianum'" (ed. Duchesne, I, 249). She should not be confused with St. Vibiana (of the third century), who is the patroness of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Viviana was the daughter of a former prefect, Flavianus, who was banished by Julian the Apostate. His wife Dafrosa, and two daughters, Demetria and Viviana, were also persecuted by Julian. Dafrosa and Demetria died a natural death and were buried by Viviana in their own house; but Viviana was tortured and died as a result of her sufferings. Two days after her death a priest named John buried Viviana near her mother and sister in her home, the house being later transformed into a church. It is evident that the legend seeks to explain in this way the origin of the church and the presence in it of the bodies of the above-mentioned confessors.

An alternate account says that in the year 363, Emperor Julian the Apostate made Apronianus Governor of Rome. Viviana suffered in the persecution started by him. She was the daughter of Christians, Flavianus, a Roman knight, and Dafrosa, his wife. Flavianus was tortured and sent into exile, where he died of his wounds. Dafrosa was beheaded, and their two daughters, Viviana and Demetria, were stripped of their possessions and left to suffer poverty. However, they remained in their house, spending their time in fasting and prayer. Apronianus, seeing that hunger and want had no effect upon them, summoned them. Demetria, after confessing her faith, fell dead at the feet of the tyrant. Viviana was reserved for greater sufferings. She was placed in the hands of a wicked woman called Rufina, who in vain endeavored to seduce her. She used blows as well as persuasion, but the Christian virgin remained faithful. Enraged at the constancy of this saintly virgin, Apronianus ordered her to be tied to a pillar and beaten with scourges, laden with lead plummets, until she died. The saint endured the torments with joy, and died under the blows inflicted by the hands of the executioner. Her body was then put in the open air to be torn apart by wild animals, yet none would touch it. After two days she was buried.

Her feast day is December 2nd in both Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, and she is the patron saint of epilepsy, hangovers, headaches, mental illness, torture victims, and single laywomen. Her body rests in the Basilica of St. Viviana, a small Baroque style, Roman Catholic church in Rome. The basilica was erected in 467 in the pontificate of Pope Simplicius and was restored in 1224 by Pope Honorius III. The columns lining the nave are from the original fifth-century church. The present façade, commissioned by Pope Urban VIII, was designed and built in 1624-1626 by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), who also produced a sculpture of St. Viviana holding the palm leaf of martyrs. The frescoes on the walls were painted by Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669) and Agostino Ciampelli (1565-1630). The bodies of St. Viviana, her mother Dafrosa, and her sister Demetria, were found inside a fourth-century sarcophagus, and now rest inside an alabaster urn under the major altar. The column just inside the church is said to be the one to which Viviana was strapped.

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

“Behold on Christmas a new and wondrous reality. The angels sing and the archangels blend their voices in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt Christ’s glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth and man in heaven. He Who is above now for our redemption dwells here below, and we who are lowly are by divine mercy raised up. Bethlehem this day resembles heaven, hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices. Ask not how. For where God wills, nature yields. For He willed. He had the power. He descended. He redeemed. All things move in obedience to God. This day He Who is born and He Who is becomes what He is not. He is God become man, yet not departing from His Godhead.”

– St. John Chrysostom (349-404)

Modern Theological Classics

I. The Principles of Religious Concern

Let us dwell now on the question of proofs. What are the proofs of the Reality which stands behind our Truth, the proofs of the reality of God? We have already said there are no external, compulsory proofs. There seem to be so many proofs – through the contemplation of the structure of the Universe (the “cosmological”), through the analysis of the idea of God and the meditation thereon (the “ontological”), through listening to the heart for something Infinite and Transcending (the “psychological” one). But are they sufficient proofs? They are arguments showing the plausibility of Faith, the possibility, yes, if you like, the probability, the likelihood of the existence of God, but no more. They all become a real proof only when they signify one thing, which is the only decisive and exhaustive proof: when God *proves Himself*; proves His reality by ... meeting the soul. He can meet her in the beauty and the amazing and overwhelming grandeur of the universe of the world. He can meet her in the voice of my conscience, and in the craving of my heart for the Infinite – for an infinite Rest, and infinite Satisfaction. He can meet her everywhere: in sorrow and joy; in the happiness of family-life, and the cozy warmth of the home; but also in a lonely desert; in search after Truth, and in the vision of Transcendent Beauty, inspiring the great artists. He can meet her, and be met by her – in first place – in the fellow-man, in our active loving compassion for the fellow-man: “Inasmuch you did it to one of these My brethren even the least, you did it to Me.”

But all those different experiences of God, of God’s reality, mean – in truth – only one thing, that God proves Himself, gives proof of Himself by meeting the soul. Thus, the word of the psalmist is being realized: “Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand on me” (139:3). These are striking examples of those encounters with God. God can reveal Himself in the soul even though even through a bare tree. There is a beautiful story of a young French village-boy who became a novice in a Carmelite monastery in the 17th century. He was for kitchen work and gardening. Once in November on the high-

road that ran past the monastery, he saw a tree naturally deprived of its leaves. But suddenly the thought presented itself to his mind, that in spring the tree will again be covered with leaves and blossoms, and sap will run through its branches, and he was struck by a sudden vision of the overwhelming power and majesty of God. He was so deeply shaken and moved in his heart, that from that moment he became a new man – of deepest religious insight and of a burning love for God, a man who was permeated by the sense of God's presence.¹

To Jacob Böhme after his conversion, the “whole external world with its substance, is a covering of the spiritual world,”² he feels the presence of God in all creatures, even in herb and grasses.³ But especially convincing and the most deeply moving of all these encounters with God in the world which surrounds us – as we have already said – our encounters with God through and in the fellow-man. When one has known what it is to be in deep silence, alone, seeing no holy ground, and suddenly a helping hand stretches towards you and a friendly voice speaks comfort and love to you, surely one feels in such moment, that God has spoken, that God is near, that He has revealed Himself through the intermediary of the helping, loving fellow-creature. But it is even more moving to be given the immense privilege of suddenly becoming the channel, this bringer, this living representative of God's active, helping love in relation to the fellow-man. The one who helps is sometimes even more innerly shaken overwhelmed than the one who receives the benefaction. “Who am I, O Lord, that Thou dost that through me?” He feels the presence of the Lord in the suffering brother. It is one of the highest and most sacred experiences in our life, something which remains, which moves us ourselves deeply, awaking not self-complacency, but deepest humility and gratitude. “O Lord, when have we seen Thee hungry, and have fed Thee, or thirsty and gave Thee drink? When have we seen Thee a stranger and have taken Thee in? Or naked and clothed Thee?” And the King shall answer and say unto them: “Verily I say unto you. Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of those least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Me.” We feel the truth of these words, we feel His presence behind and in the suffering brother, even the least of our brethren, often so uninteresting, so average-looking, so helpless, so alone, but – so near to Him, so closely connected with Him. This is the immanence of the Transcendent God.

The central and decisive encounter of Humanity with God has taken place, according to Christianity, in the coming of the Lord Jesus. That is the meaning of the Gospel, of the Good Tidings: “God is with us, Emmanuel.” An inrush of God into our life, into history, into the texture of the world's life. “The Word has been made Flesh ... and we *have seen* His Glory.” The man born blind, after having been healed, said: “I believe, O Lord,” and fell upon his face and worshiped Him (John 9:38). “My Lord and My God,” says Thomas (John 20:28).

The whole Gospel story may be considered as a witness of a *Presence*, of a transcending, sanctifying, unique Presence. Even more: this is only way for a Christian to read and to understand this story, so told by the apostles and witnesses. It is the sense in which this story may have been really told and written. That is the authentic meaning of the Gospel story. The “prelude” of the Gospel according to mark, strikes this keynote: “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. As it has been written in Isaiah the prophet: Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. “This voice is one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight” (Mark 1:1-2). John the Baptist, the great prophet of repentance is but the messenger. Somebody Stronger and Greater than he comes behind him. And John is unworthy even to stoop down to unloose the latches of His shoes. That is the tone which dominates this and the other Gospels.

The whole first chapter of Mark is full of Jesus, proceeding along the shores of the sea of Galilee and saying to simple followers: “Follow Me” – and they leave all and follow Him – and healing the sick and preaching the near-ness of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is here – in Him. That is the meaning of the whole

¹ Friar Lawrence of the Resurrection, “Recueil de Divers Traités de Theologie Mystique” (Cologne, 1699), p. 46.

² Jakob Böhme, “Von uebersinnlichem Leben,” p. 42; cf. “De signatura rerum, 9,1.

³ Jakob Böhme, “Aurora,” X, 57.

story. Something has happened – of decisive, unique importance, something which kings and prophets were eager to see, but it was not given to them, and now it has been revealed, it is here. The words of Isaiah: “The Spirit of God is upon me, and therefore He has anointed me,” and now being fulfilled. “He began to say unto them: this day is this scripture fulfilled ... And all bear witness and wondered at the words of grace, which proceeded out of his mouth” (Luke 4:23). Luke specifically is full of examples of the encounter of sinners with the pardoning Lord. Of the first three Gospels, perhaps Matthew, in his eleventh chapter, gives the most condensed expression to the tone of the Presence, transcending and decisive. “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the good tidings preached unto them ... Woe to thee, Chorazim! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!” – they have not recognized, nor understood the “mighty works” which have been done in them and the Presence. “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father. Nobody knows the Son but the Father; neither know any man the Father but the Son and he in whom the Son will reveal Him. Come to Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ...”

The fifth chapter of Luke – the story of the miraculous fishing with the words of Peter: “Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man!” – is another summit in the manifestation of this sense of an overpowering Presence which permeates the Gospel. And another summit is the story of Emmaus, how the disciples recognized Him in the breaking of the bread and said on their way back to one another: “Did our heart not burn when He was speaking to us?” And then the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus and the woman who takes hold of the hem of his mantle, and the centurion who says to Him: “I am unworthy that Thou shouldst enter my house, but say one word ...” and so on – those who came to Him, sinners, simple folk, sick people, and many others, and felt His Gracious Presence. These encounters were decisive during His lifetime on earth and afterwards they became the center and essence of Christian religious experience. This subjugating Presence has converted the penitent Saul at the gates of Damascus. It is also the center of the whole struggle “Pro and Contra” – for and against the acceptance of God in the thought of one of the deepest religious writers of modern times, a thinker of an immense tension, radicalism and profundity – Dostoyevsky.

Dr. Nicholas Arseniev,⁴ “The Resurrection of Life Eternal,” pp. 12-15

Recipe of the Month

Homemade Peppermint Patties

An easy Homemade Peppermint Patties recipe with just a handful of ingredients! Copycat York Peppermint Patties but better. Simple soft, sweetened mint candy covered in chocolate for a delicious, easy peppermint patty candy. Homemade Peppermint Patties are candy made from a simple recipe of butter, powdered sugar, corn syrup and peppermint extract. Dip in dark chocolate then sprinkle with chocolate jimmies. The result? In under an hour you have an entire tray of homemade peppermint candies for your Christmas dessert course! They're perfect for parties or gifts. Customize them with different colored sprinkles, white chocolate, add coloring to the mint candy.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup softened butter
- 1/3 cup light corn syrup
- 1-2 tsp peppermint extract*
- 3 cups powdered sugar

⁴ 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.

- 2 cups dark dipping chocolate**
- chocolate jimmies (optional)

Directions:

1. Combine butter, corn syrup, extract and powdered sugar in a mixing bowl. Mix with an electric mixer for about 3 minutes, until ingredients are well combined and are holding together.

2. Remove dough from bowl and break off about 2 teaspoon-sized sections. Roll into a ball and gently flatten with your hands. Put patties down on a pan lined with wax or parchment paper. Once all patties are made, place pan in the freezer for 10-15 minutes.

3. Melt chocolate in microwave for 1 minute and 20 seconds. Let sit for an additional minute in the microwave. Remove and gently stir. Remove peppermint patties from freezer. Use a fork or a dipping tool to dip each patty in the chocolate, flip to coat the other side, then tap to remove any excess. Transfer chocolate coated patties to wax paper to cool. Top with chocolate jimmies (optional).

4. Store in an airtight container or refrigerate (if preferred), though it isn't necessary. Yields 40 mints.

*Add 1 teaspoon peppermint extract, then mix until well combined. Taste dough. If you'd like them more intense, add an additional 1/2 tsp. to 1 tsp. extract. You can also use 2 drops of peppermint essential oil instead or even 2 teaspoons mint extract for a more subtle mint flavor (think Andes Mints as opposed to Starlight Mints).

**When making candy like this dipping chocolate works best. Ghirardelli Melting Wafers may be found at most grocery stores or in bulk on Amazon.com. If you really want to use chocolate chips instead, melt 1/2 tbsp. of shortening or 2 tsp. coconut oil in with the chocolate chips, to thin it out and make it easier to dip the candy.

Parish News

Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the parish council is Sunday, December 15, 2019 after Divine Liturgy.

Arts on Bergen Concert Series

The Fall 2019 season "Arts on Bergen" concert series at St. Peter's University in Jersey City, N.J. continues! The last concert, free and open to the public, is on December 6th at 7:00 PM, at the University Church of St. Aedan's. For information, call Campus Ministry Office at 201-761-7390.

Parish Confessions

All parishioners ought to go to confession during the Nativity Fast, which may be heard after any Vespers. Those unable to attend a Vespers ought to call the Rectory at (201) 436-3244 to make an appointment.

Christmas Social

The Carpathian Club invites all our parishioners and visitors to its annual Christmas Social, which shall be held after Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day in the club hall behind the church building.

Christmas Card Collection

We are collecting the front sides of Christmas cards for recycling by the nuns of Holy Transfiguration Monastery. So please bring your Christmas cards to church rather than tossing them in the trash.

Schedule of Services

November 30-December 1, 2019

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

December 5-6, 2019 (St. Nicholas)

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

December 7-8, 2019

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

December 14-15, 2019

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

December 21-22, 2019

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

December 24-25, 2019 (Christmas)

4:30 PM (Tuesday) – Vigil w. Lity
9:30 AM (Wednesday) – Divine Liturgy

December 26-27, 2019

9:30 AM (Thursday) – Divine Liturgy
9:30 AM (Friday) – Divine Liturgy

December 28-29, 2019

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

Daily Bible Readings

1. Ephesians 2:14-22; Luke 18:18-27
2. 2 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Luke 20:27-44
3. 2 Thessalonians 1:10-2:2; Luke 21:12-19
4. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Luke 21:5-7, 10-11, 20-24
5. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5; Luke 21:28-33
6. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18; Luke 21:37-22:8
7. Galatians 1:3-10; Luke 13:18-29
8. Ephesians 4:1-6; Luke 17:12-19
9. 1 Timothy 1:1-7; Mark 8:11-21
10. 1 Timothy 1:8-14; Mark 8:22-26
11. 1 Timothy 1:18-20, 2:8-15; Mark 8:30-34
12. 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Mark 9:10-16
13. 1 Timothy 4:4-8, 16; Mark 9:33-41
14. Galatians 3:8-12; Luke 14:1-11
15. Colossians 3:4-11; Luke 14:16-24

16. 1 Timothy 5:1-10; Mark 9:42-10:1
17. 1 Timothy 5:11-21; Mark 10:2-12
18. 1 Timothy 5:22-6:11; Mark 10:11-16
19. 1 Timothy 6:17-21; Mark 10:17-27
20. 2 Timothy 1:1-2, 8-18; Mark 10:23-32
21. Galatians 5:22-6:2; Luke 16:10-15
22. Heb. 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40; Matt. 1:1-25
23. 2 Timothy 2:20-26; Mark 10:46-52
24. 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4; Mark 11:11-23
25. Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 2:1-12
26. Hebrews 2:11-18; Matthew 2:13-23
27. Titus 1:15-2:10; Mark 12:1-12
28. Ephesians 1:16-23; Luke 17:3-10
29. Galatians 1:11-19; Matthew 2:13-23
30. Hebrews 3:5-11, 17-19; Mark 12:13-17
31. Hebrews 4:1-13; Mark 12:18-27

Special Donations

Please note that for Special Donations in January 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 December 15, 2019.

December 8, 2019

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

December 22, 2019

Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of June Bianchini (anniversary of birth).