

Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
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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

Our church’s patron saints are the Apostles Peter and Paul and the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29) is the patronal feast of the parish. According to Orthodox tradition, a parish’s patronal feast is second only to Pascha in its importance to the life of the parish. Let us reflect on this for a moment.

The patron saint(s), and the patronal feast, are important. After all, we sing the troparion of the Apostles Peter and Paul at almost every Divine Liturgy. We commemorate the Apostles Peter and Paul at the dismissal of every service. The name of Ss. Peter and Paul is attached to our very identity, and is the name, the saints are the patrons, chosen by our parish’s founders. Yet, I must ask you, how have you observed the importance of our patronal feast? We should be celebrating our patronal feast day with great solemnity; at very least, Divine Liturgy should be well attended on that day, regardless of the day of the week on which it falls. Sadly, it has too long been the case that the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul has not been treated with the solemnity it deserves from us.

If being an Orthodox Christian means being a Christian whose faith and worship are correct, which is the meaning of “Orthodoxy,” then that means keeping our traditions. It means keeping the deposit of faith handed down to us by the apostles and church fathers. I ask each and every one of you to give serious thought to the ways, some major and some minor, in which we have allowed our traditions to erode. I am not suggesting that the Orthodox Church is, or ought to be, some fossilized relic from a bygone era of the past utterly impervious to any change whatsoever. Rather, I am suggesting that when we disregard what has always been considered important in the past, then something is seriously wrong.

Now is the time for us to guard and preserve all that is important, and to shake ourselves out of our complacency. The vitality of our parish life depends more on our will than on our numbers. Let us, at least, start with observing our patronal feast day as something important to us. This year, with it being on a Saturday, there ought to be no excuse (work, school, etc.) other than infirmity for failing to attend. I pray that everyone will reflect on what Ss. Peter and Paul mean to us, and show good faith and effort in attending the festal Divine Liturgy.

Parish Council President's Message

Dear parishioners and friends:

As we enter the month of June, we come upon the second fast of the calendar year—the Ss. Peter & Paul Fast, starting on June 24, 2019 and lasting until Ss. Peter & Paul Day (June 29th), mere five days this year. Please make every effort to attend church services during this time, and let us celebrate our patronal feast of Ss. Peter and Paul as a parish family.

I would also like to take this opportunity and wish every father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and godfather a Happy Father's Day on June 16th, which falls on the great feast of Pentecost this year! As you know, Pentecost (also known as Trinity Sunday) is the "birthday" of the Holy Church, so how nice it would be to celebrate Father's Day at the same time as we celebrate our Mother Church's foundation by attending Divine Liturgy on that day!

Yours in Christ,
Reader Stephen Wasilewski

Lives of the Saints

St. Justin the Philosopher, Martyr – commemorated on June 1st

St. Justin was born around A.D. 100 at Flavia Neapolis (today Nablus) in Samaria into a pagan family, and defined himself as a Gentile. His grandfather, Bacchius, had a Greek name, while his father, Priscus, bore a Latin name, which has led to speculations that his ancestors may have settled in Neapolis soon after its establishment or that they were descended from a Roman "diplomatic" community that had been sent there. In the opening of the *Dialogue*, Justin describes his early education, stating that his initial studies left him unsatisfied due to their failure to provide a belief system that would afford theological and metaphysical inspiration to their young pupil. He says he tried first the school of a Stoic philosopher, who was unable to explain God's being to him. He then attended an Aristotelian philosopher but was put off because the philosopher was too eager for his fee. Then he went to hear a Pythagorean philosopher who demanded that he first learn music, astronomy, and geometry, which he did not wish to do. Subsequently, he adopted Platonism after encountering a Platonist thinker who had recently settled in his city.

And the perception of immaterial things quite overpowered me, and the contemplation of ideas furnished my mind with wings, so that in a little while I supposed that I had become wise; and such was my stupidity, I expected forthwith to look upon God, for this is the end of Plato's philosophy.

Sometime afterwards, he chanced upon an old man, possibly a Syrian Christian, in the vicinity of the seashore, who engaged him in a dialogue about God and spoke of the testimony of the prophets as being more reliable than the reasoning of philosophers. Moved by the aged man's argument, Justin renounced both his former religious faith and his philosophical background, choosing instead to re-dedicate his life to the service of the Divine. His newfound convictions were only bolstered by the ascetic lives of the early Christians and the heroic example of the martyrs, whose piety convinced him of the moral and spiritual superiority of Christian doctrine. As a result, he thenceforth decided that the only option for him was to travel throughout the land, spreading the knowledge of Christianity as the "true philosophy." His conversion is commonly assumed to have taken place at Ephesus, though it may have occurred anywhere on the road from Palestine to Rome.

He then adopted the philosopher's robe himself and traveled about teaching. During the reign of Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161), he arrived in Rome and started his own school. Tatian was one of his pupils. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180), after disputing with the cynic philosopher Crescens, he was denounced by the latter to the authorities, according to Tatian (*Address to the Greeks*, 19) and Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV 16.7-8). Justin was tried, together with six companions, by Junius Rusticus, who was urban prefect from 163-167, and was beheaded. Though the precise year of his death is uncertain, it can reasonably be dated by the prefectural term of Rusticus. The *Martyrdom of Justin* preserves the court record of the trial:

The Prefect Rusticus says: Approach and sacrifice, all of you, to the gods. Justin says: No one in his right mind gives up piety for impiety. The Prefect Rusticus says: If you do not obey, you will be tortured without mercy. Justin replies: That is our desire, to be tortured for Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and so to be saved, for that will give us salvation and firm confidence at the more terrible universal tribunal of Our Lord and Savior. And all the martyrs said: Do as you wish; for we are Christians, and we do not sacrifice to idols. The Prefect Rusticus read the sentence: Those who do not wish to sacrifice to the gods and to obey the emperor will be scourged and beheaded according to the laws. The holy martyrs glorifying God betook themselves to the customary place, where they were beheaded and consummated their martyrdom confessing their Savior.

The Church of St. John the Baptist in Sacrofano, a few miles north of Rome, claims to have his relics. The Church of the Jesuits in Valletta, Malta, founded by papal decree in 1592, also boasts having his relics. In 1882 Pope Leo XIII had a Mass and an Office composed for his feast day, which he set at April 14th, one day after the date of his death as indicated in the *Martyrology of Florus*; but since this date sometimes falls within Paschaltide, the feast was moved in 1968 to June 1st, the date on which he has been celebrated in the Byzantine Rite since at least the ninth century. St. Justin was the author of eight treatises, according to St. Eusebius of Caesarea, though one of these, the *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, is now known not to have been written by him.

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

"If some should accuse us as if we held that people born before the time of Christ were not accountable to God for their actions, we shall anticipate and answer such a difficulty. We have been taught that Christ is the first-begotten of God, and we have declared him to be the Logos of which all mankind partakes. Those, therefore, who lived according to reason (logos) were really Christians, even though they were thought to be atheists, such as, among the Greeks, Socrates, Heraclitus and others like them."

— St. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 46.

Modern Theological Classics

The Coming of Christ

Within the framework of Pascha and the fifty-two Sundays—the fifty-two “Paschas”—within the fundamental paschal joy, the Church fills the natural time of the year with certain special *commemorations*, whose cycle begins in the fall. The first great theme of the year is the *coming of Christ* into the world. We shall call this the cycle of *Christmas and Epiphany*. It begins forty days before Christmas with “Advent” or Christmas Lent. The coming of Christ is the beginning of Christianity. Who are the Christians? Those who know that Christ has come and who expect His return. What then gives meaning to a particular day, to the *today* we live in? Is it not simply one day out of a long sequence of days that each one of us has to live through? Yet, for me, as a Christian, its new and deep meaning comes from the past. It is a day related to Christ’s coming into the world, a day *after* His coming. And thus a Christian is the one who, first of all, *remembers*. He can forget Christ; he can wake up in the morning and think only of the petty concerns of that particular day. Yet, on a deeper level, even those minor concerns become a very different experience if he remembers that he is not simply John Smith who has to do this or that, but the one to whom Christ has come, whose life Christ has assumed and has given new meaning. “Today,” however, has a second meaning, because it is also a day *before* Christ’s return. Thus I am always living between the two comings of Christ: the one is in the past, the other in the future. And finally, the meaning of *today* comes to me from the words of Christ, who says that He is *always* with me. “And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt. 27:20). Past, present, future—we see that the time in which we live is not only the time of the calendar, but the time that is shaped from inside and transformed by faith, by Christian experience. It is related to the coming of Christ in the past, to His coming in the future, and to His presence now. It is a time radically different from that of a person whose only concern in life is to mow his lawn, to have money in the bank, and then to trade in his Chevy for a Cadillac and the Cadillac for something else, and finally to the saying “Well, I had all this and nothing has meaning.” It is sad, it is tragically sad, not to know that the past, the present and the future have been given by Christ a new and joyful meaning.

We see now why the first theme of the liturgical year is the coming of Christ. But Christmas should not be reduced, as is done in our time, to a sentimental story about the baby in the manger, that sweet little Jesus. What happened in Bethlehem was God Himself coming to man. It was the participation of man in this coming, the

meeting of Christ by Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men, all truly representing the world. It was the participation of the entire nature in this. It was, it forever remains, a tremendous and glorious mystery: into this world (and this is a specific content of the Christian faith) God Himself has entered. The God in whom we believe is not a god somewhere “out there” nobody knows where, but the God who has taken upon Himself to enter into our time, to be one of us, to be the Emmanuel, the God with us. Hence, the second feast of the cycle *Epiphany*, which means *Manifestation*, in that Christ *manifested* Himself to man, to the world, to the entire Creation. When He entered the water of the Jordan, He made it and the whole of nature part of His Incarnation. And at the same time, He received the *baptism of repentance*, identifying Himself with us sinful men. For He does not come to us only in order to reveal God, He comes to us to take upon Himself all the sins and tragedies of this world, to become not only God for us, but also *man to God*. This means someone who will suffer, someone who will know all the frustrations and tragedy of human existence, and from inside transform them into joy. On Epiphany, the second theme of the liturgical year, we see Christ as the Lamb of God, and John the Baptist pointing to Him saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

The feasts of Christmas and Epiphany reveal to us the cosmic dimension of Christian faith. Both involve more than man, more than the “I/God” relationship. This is important because our time is that of acute individualism and selfishness, even in religion. No longer do we understand that before saving us as persons, as individuals, God restores creation. God, we are told, “so loved the world that He gave His only Son” (John 3:16). The world is the *cosmos*, the beautiful “wholeness” which He has created and which proclaims His glory and reveals Him to man. In Christmas and Epiphany, not only the relationship between me and my Lord is revealed, but the whole world is revealed as God’s world. Christ descends into the water; He manifests Himself to the whole creation. And this means that our vocation as men and as members of the Church is not to preach simply individual salvation. “Go to confession, go to communion, be a good girl, be a good boy, and you will save your life.” Christians must remember that they, on behalf of the whole creation, offer it in each Divine Liturgy to God; they reveal that God has loved the world and wants the world again to be the means for man’s communion with Him. This is the real theme of Christmas and Epiphany.

The Transfiguration

Almost at the end of the liturgical year, in August, we have the feast of Christ’s Transfiguration. This is another of the fundamental commemorations. Unfortunately, since it usually falls on a weekday, not many people celebrate it. Yet for the comprehension of the Orthodox faith it has a unique importance. Christ took His disciples and went up on the mount, and there His face appeared shining. His vestments became white as snow, and one of the disciples said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” This was the fulfillment of all human desires, the moment of supreme happiness. For nothing in this world can satisfy us save God. His glory, His light, His truth, His kingdom. Again, Christianity is joy; such is the meaning of Transfiguration. It is not a book of precepts: on Monday do this, on Tuesday do that. God has given us not a set of prescriptions and regulations, but *Himself*, and this means Life, Love, and Transfiguration. He has given us the power of going with Him to Mount Tabor; and of tasting there that which he has prepared for us.

What is the Church? The Church is the reflection in this world of the light seen by the disciples on Mount Tabor. Ask our old people. They would never understand what it means that they *must* go to church, for to go to church is joy for them, and when they cannot go to church, they are unhappy. While we ask “How much?” and “How long?” they would give everything they have for the opportunity to be in church. The church, for them, is not a place where we fulfill our religious obligations, but the place where we find our real *home*, where joy and light are given to us. Thus, in the liturgy of the year, all the dimensions of Christianity—the individual, the social, and the cosmical—are revealed and given to us. Our Christian life is revealed as climbing up that mountain, following Christ. Sometimes it is very hot, sometimes very cold. Sometimes we become tired of the effort, and put it aside, and seem to forget all about it. Yet if there is meaning in Christian life, it lies precisely in always following Christ to Mount Tabor, so that at the end we can say, “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” Then Christ reveals to us, as St. Paul said, “... what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). Note: not merely for those who follow His prescriptions, but for those who *love Him*. And to love Him means the desire to follow Him, in spite of difficulties, to want the joy of being in Christ.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann,¹ *Liturgy and Life*, pp. 79-83

¹ 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

Butternut Squash, Carrot, Sweet Potato & Pumpkin Soup

This month's recipe is contributed by a Ss. Peter & Paul's parishioner, Dr. Andrea Bacsik. It is a delightfully creamy and slightly sweet soup, yet it has no cream or added sugar. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 Large onion, chopped
- 2 Stalks celery, chopped
- 2 Cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 Carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 Packages precut butternut squash
- 1 Sweet potato, chopped
- 1 15 oz, Canned pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
- 8 Cups vegetable broth (reduced sodium is best)
- ¼ Teaspoon ground thyme (optional)
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Salt to taste

Note: the recipe can be made with any, some, or all of the orange colored ingredients to suit personal preference.

Directions:

1. Heat butter and olive oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until butter melts. Add onion and celery, stir occasionally until softened, 4 to 6 minutes. Add garlic and thyme, stir 10 seconds.
2. Add carrots, butternut squash, pumpkin and sweet potato, and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce to simmer and cook until all veggies are tender, about 30 minutes.
3. Add black pepper (and salt to taste).
4. Use immersion blender and blend until smooth, or place batches in blender and blend until smooth. If too thick, add water or broth.

Parish News

Summer Schedule

This year's summer schedule of morning services starting at 9:00 AM will begin on Ascension Thursday, June 6, 2019 and will last until Labor Day weekend.

Pasta & Meatball Dinner

A Pasta & Meatball Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, June 2, 2019 at 11:30 AM. The menu consists of salad, Italian bread, spaghetti and meatballs, wine, coffee or tea, and dessert. Tickets are \$25 per person; for information and tickets, contact Marge Kovach at (732) 815-9765.

Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council is Monday, June 17, 2019 at 7:00 PM.

Parish Council Conference

This year's parish council conference for the N.J. Deanery is scheduled for Saturday, June 1, 2019 at Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in South River, N.J., 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM (lunch is included). Attendance is open to anyone – you do not have to be a parish council member, though parish council members in particular ought to attend. This year's theme is "Discipleship through Stewardship."

Pilgrimage to Alaska in July 2020

Join Archbishop Michael and fellow pilgrims from the New York-New Jersey Diocese, July 15-21, 2020, on a very special journey to the cradle of Orthodox Christianity in North America – Kodiak, Alaska! This pilgrimage marks two milestone events in the life of our Orthodox Church in America taking place in 2020: the 50th Anniversary celebration of St. Herman of Alaska's glorification and the 50th Anniversary of the OCA's autocephaly. The summer of 2020 will be a season of Pilgrimage for the entire Orthodox Church in America, with dioceses traveling in groups on selected dates throughout June, July, and August of 2020. The combined Golden Anniversary of Autocephaly and Sainthood will be celebrated with Divine Services and special events held at Saint Herman's Seminary, at Holy Resurrection Cathedral where our venerable Father Herman is entombed, and on Spruce Island, where the great ascetic made his home for the three decades of his God-inspired ministry in Alaska. We are making this pilgrimage together with travelers from the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania and the Bulgarian Diocese of the OCA. Sign up early and save! The "early bird" price, for a non-refundable deposit of \$550 sent by June 15, 2019, is \$2,295/person for double-occupancy lodging, and an additional \$675 for single occupancy. The price increases to \$2,525/person after June 15, 2019. Visit www.culturallycreativetravel.com/pilgrimage-to-alaska-2020 in order to register online. A flyer is posted on the church bulletin board.

Schedule of Services

June 1-2, 2019

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

June 5-6, 2019

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

June 8-9, 2019

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers & Gen. Confession
9:00 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

June 15-16, 2019

9:00 AM (Saturday) – General Panichida
5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers w. Lity
9:00 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy w. Kneeling Prayers

June 22-23, 2019

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

June 28-29, 2019

5:00 PM (Friday) – Great Vespers w. Lity
9:00 AM (Saturday) – Divine Liturgy

June 29-30, 2019

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

Daily Bible Readings

1. Acts 15:35-41; John 1:10:27-28
2. Acts 16:16-34; John 9:1-38
3. Acts 17:1-5; John 11:47-57
4. Acts 17:19-28; John 12:19-36
5. Acts 18:22-28; John 12:36-47
6. Acts 1:1-12; Luke 24:36-53
7. Acts 19:1-8; John 14:1-11
8. Acts 20:7-12; John 14:10-21
9. Acts 20:16-18, 28-36; John 17:1-13
10. Acts 21:8-14; John 14:27-15:7
11. Acts 21:26-32; John 16:2-13
12. Acts 23:1-11; John 16:15-23
13. Acts 25:13-19; John 16:23-33
14. Acts 27:1-44; John 17:18-26
15. Acts 28:1-31; John 21:15-25
16. Acts 2:1-11; John 7:27-52, 8:12
17. Eph. 5:9-19; Matt. 18:10-20
18. Rom. 1:1-7, 13-17; Matt. 4:25-5:13
19. Rom. 1:18-27; Matt. 5:20-26
20. Rom. 1:28-2:9; Matt. 5:27-32
21. Rom. 2:14-29; Matt. 5:33-41
22. Rom. 1:7-12; Matt. 5:42-48
23. Heb. 11:33-12:2; Matt. 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30
24. Rom. 2:28-3:18; Matt. 6:31-34, 7:9-11
25. Rom. 4:4-12; Matt. 7:15-21
26. Rom. 4:13-25; Matt. 7:21-23
27. Rom. 5:10-16; Matt. 8:23-27
28. Rom. 5:17-6:2; Matt. 9:14-17
29. 2 Cor. 11:21-12:9; Matt. 16:13-19
30. Rom. 2:10-16; Matt. 4:18-23

Special Donations

Please note that for Special Donations in July 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 June 23, 2019.

June 2, 2019

Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Lydia Wanko (anniversary of repose). **Sanctuary Lamp, St. John's** and **St. Nicholas' Crosses**, and **Triple Candelabra** offered by Russell and Andrea Wyskanycz in memory of Andrew and Juliana Bacsik.

June 9, 2019

Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of David Grudinoff (anniversary of repose).

June 23, 2019

Sanctuary Lamp offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Anastasia Grudinoff (anniversary of birth). **St. John's Cross** offered by the Pirniak Family in memory of Anna Pirniak (anniversary of repose). **St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by the Pirniak Family in memory of Joseph Pirniak (anniversary of repose).

June 30, 2019

Sanctuary Lamp offered in honor of John Wanko by his grandchildren (Larissa, Matthew, Kenneth, John, Danielle, Lauren, Nicholas, and Lindsay) and great-grandchildren (Kiera, Mia, Leila, and Landon).