

# 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

Now that we’ve entered the summer months, it is time to reflect on our duties of worshipping God. Typically, we experience a drop in attendance at Divine Liturgy during the summer. This is mostly a case of people leaving for summer homes, who will usually attend an area church, or others being temporarily away on vacation. However, this year I am concerned that after months of the coronavirus “lockdown,” some might have become a little too comfortable with live-streaming services online. Although watching a live-streamed service, at a time when we couldn’t physically go to church, was better than nothing at all, being a spectator of a service is not the same thing as being a participant. It can be likened to watching sports on television – doing so may be enjoyable, but you are certainly not going to get the physical benefits that you would from actually playing the sport yourself! It simply isn’t the same.

The mystery of God is revealed in a New Covenant through Jesus Christ and the sacraments, which entails a direct relationship between Christ, the Church, and the members of the Church. Watching a live-streamed service isn’t going to give you access to the Blessed Sacrament, which we believe is necessary for salvation, and worship in the Christian tradition simply isn’t a spectator experience. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ<sup>1</sup> . . . it was founded by Jesus Christ as a corporate entity, whose members are one body in Christ. While that means that the Church’s members are drawn together in a spiritual unity with Christ at the head, it also, and always, means Christ’s Eucharistic Body – the “Church-Body” is thought of as a “mystically” or sacramentally signified and realized Body (just as, in Eastern Orthodox vocabulary,

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul speaks of all Christians as members of Christ, so that with Him, they form one Mystical Body (Cf. 1 Cor 12:12-31; Col 1:18; 2:18-20; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19; 4:13). St. Paul did not actually use the word “Mystical.” It was developed later to bring out the fact that this union is unique, there is no parallel to it, and that this unity of Christ’s members, with Christ and with each other, has an explicitly Eucharistic meaning.

the sacraments are called “mysteries”).<sup>2</sup> It is self-evident that you cannot become mystically (meaning “sacramentally”) one with Christ’s Body through a television or computer screen – you must be there in person!

When I was a child raised in the Roman Catholic Church, I was taught that attending Mass on Sundays and “Holy Days of Obligation” was obligatory, and failure to attend Mass when it was obligatory was a mortal sin. Although the Orthodox Church does not generally put it quite that way, the concept is nevertheless the same; i.e. we have an obligation to attend Divine Liturgy, in person, every Sunday and on every Great Feast. Missing an obligation to attend Divine Liturgy for less than honorable reasons is a grave sin. In other words, when we miss Divine Liturgy, we are derelict in our duties to God. I would gainsay that the average person, including the average “Christian,” does not generally think of missing Divine Liturgy as a sin on par with murder, theft, adultery, sacrilege, and blasphemy. But when people tell themselves that missing Divine Liturgy is anything less than a serious sin, they are simply not thinking as the Church thinks; their mindset is not one with the Church – they are ‘out of step’ with the Mystical Body of Christ.

Why does the Church think that attending Divine Liturgy is an obligation, and that failure to do so is a serious offense to God? First, we can point to the fourth of the Ten Commandments: “Keep holy the Lord’s day.” Keeping holy the Lord’s day is, in fact, a command to reserve the Lord’s day (which, for Christians, is Sunday, the “Day of Resurrection”) as a day for the worship of God, in which worship takes priority over everything else. Furthermore, the Law of God also commanded Israel to keep the high festivals specified in the Law, which for Christians would now mean keeping the feasts of the Church, and the Church, let us remember, is the “people of God,” or the “New Israel.” Note that God commands us, by Law, to worship Him on His day; it is not a “suggestion” or a “recommendation,” it is mandatory. Failure to keep this commandment is a violation of God’s Law (specifically, a commandment pertaining to our duties to God – one rather high on the list of commandments). And so such a violation is, indeed, a grave sin against God, practically a sacrilege insofar as it disregards a duty to God – in a sense, it treats our relationship with God as something unimportant, and THAT is an offense to God! So, worse than the actual missing of Divine Liturgy is the attitude that attending it is somehow optional, that worshipping God at the Divine Liturgy is anything less than an obligation. Rather, it is something we must do on every Sunday and every holy day, and it must be our top priority on every Sunday and holy day.

So, as we go through the stages of gradually reopening our society, and our church, from the social distancing strictures necessitated by a global epidemic, let us remember our duties to God, and render unto Him our thanksgiving for the blessings that He routinely bestows on us! Perhaps it may have taken the isolation of the coronavirus lockdown for us to really appreciate the blessings that we normally take for granted, and so let us now be cognizant of God’s importance in our lives, and the importance of our worship of Him in the manner that He has prescribed. Let us realize that the church closing of the past three months was due to an exceptional circumstance. We must not let the forms of “distance worship” that we had to resort to, because it was better than nothing at all, somehow become the “new norm” after the global epidemic is over. I look forward to when we can have a full church again, once life returns to normal – that we can come together for services with a renewed commitment to fulfilling our duties to God just as He intended them.

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<sup>2</sup> [Greek] μυστήριον (*mystērion*), [Latin] *sacramentum*: Mk.4:11, Rom.11:25, Rom.16:25, 1 Cor. 2:11, 1 Cor.4:1, 1 Cor.13:2, 1 Cor. 14:2, 1 Cor.15:51, Eph.1:9, Eph.6:19, Col. 1:26, Col. 2:2, 2 Thess.2:7, 1 Tim.2:7, 1 Tim.3:9, Rev.17:5; something hidden or secret, a mystery, a secret, a secret revealed, some work or purpose of God. St. Augustine described a sacrament as an outward and visible sign on an inward and invisible grace. Like the ancient Roman military *sacramentum* (an oath of allegiance, with the receiving of a mark, such as a tattoo or a brand, and a new name), a *sacramentum* was seen a sign of initiation into the Christian community through Baptism and the Eucharist.

## Parish Council President's Message

Greetings to our parishioners and friends:

On July 22nd, we observe the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene, one of the holy myrrh-bearers, and deemed "Equal-to-the Apostles" in the Orthodox Church. She was from the Galilean town of Magdala, and she is mentioned in all four of the canonical gospels of the New Testament.

As Jesus traveled about the towns and villages of Galilee proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God, some women were cured of evil spirits and diseases, including Mary Magdalene, from whom He cast out seven demons (Luke 8:1-2). She then became an ardent disciple of Jesus Christ, one of the few who stood by the Cross, along with Jesus's mother, the Virgin Mary, His mother's "sister," Mary, the wife of Clopas<sup>3</sup> (John 19:25). After Jesus was taken down from the Cross, wrapped in fine linen, and laid in a tomb hewn out of the rock, with a heavy stone placed against the door, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, observed where he was laid and were overcome with grief (Mark 15:45-47).

On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb before dawn in order to anoint the body with spices, and found that the stone had been taken away. Entering the tomb, and finding it empty, she ran to Peter and John, telling them "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid Him" (John 20:2). Peter and John then ran to the tomb; that John reached the tomb first is interpreted as indicating his lofty faith, full of understanding, being the first disciple to believe in the Resurrection of Christ. That Peter, however, enters the tomb, shows that he is more direct and bold; inside the tomb, he saw the linens neatly folded in one place, indicating that it was not thieves who took the Lord's body, for thieves would not have taken the time to fold them.

After Peter and John left the tomb, Mary Magdalene stood outside weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb, and saw two angels in white apparel sitting, who asked why she was weeping. Her reply is the same as she had told Peter: "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him" (John 20:13). Her having remained at the tomb reveals the depth of her unwavering faith ... she wants to stay and search for her Lord! Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but didn't recognize Him. He asked her why she was weeping, and whom she was seeking? Taking Him to be the gardener, she says: "Tell me where you have laid him, and I will take Him away" (John 20:15). When Jesus says her name, then she recognizes Him, calling Him Rabboni ("Master"). He then said unto her: "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (John 20:17). Then Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and told them what He had spoken to her (John 20:18).

The Gospel of John, as we have just seen, portrays Mary Magdalene as the first apostle, the apostle sent to the apostles. She is the first to use the standard credential formula of the apostles, "I have seen the Lord" (John 20:18), which Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 9:11 to claim apostolic status. It is on this basis that she may be called the "Apostle to the Apostles,"<sup>4</sup> as she went to Christ's apostles and announced to them what they in turn would announce to the whole world – the Good News of the Resurrection.

St. Mary Magdalene used her faith and obedience to Christ for the greater glory of God and the Holy Church. She, the woman present in the garden of the resurrection, was the first witness of "Divine

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<sup>3</sup> Mary of Clopas was actually the Virgin Mary's sister-in-law, the wife of St. Joseph's brother, Clopas (or, Cleopas). She is explicitly mentioned only in John 19:25, where she is among the women present at the crucifixion of Jesus. However, on the basis of Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40, she is also identified as one of the holy myrrh-bearers, the mother of James and Joseph (or, Joseph). Matthew 28:1 calls her "the other Mary" to distinguish her from Mary Magdalene, while Mark 16:1 uses the name "Mary, the mother of James."

<sup>4</sup> Rabanus Maurus, *De vita beatae Mariae Magdaleneae*, XXVII; St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Ioannem Evangelistam Expositio*, c. XX, L. III, 6.

Mercy,” whose tears were turned into paschal joy. Contrast this to the woman present in the garden of paradise: Eve spread death where there was life; Mary Magdalene announced life from a sepulcher, the place of death. As St. Gregory the Great underlines: “Indeed because a woman offered death to a man in Paradise, a woman announces life to the men from the tomb.”<sup>5</sup> The words our Lord addressed to her, “Do not cling to Me,” are an invitation to enter into an experience of faith that goes beyond materialistic assumptions and the human grasping after the Divine Mystery, which is not simply addressed to Mary Magdalene, but to the entire Church. It is an ecclesial moment! In closing, I would like to offer a prayer, which I will be saying on her feast day:

“O God, whose only-begotten Son entrusted Mary Magdalene before all others with announcing the great joy of the Resurrection, grant we pray that through her intercession and example we may proclaim the living Christ and come to see Him reigning in Your glory, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.”

Yours in Christ,  
Robert Pierce

## Excerpt from the Church Fathers

*“The love of husband and wife is the force that welds society together. Men will take up arms and even sacrifice their lives for the sake of this love . . . when harmony prevails, the children are raised well, the household is kept in order, and neighbors, friends, and relatives praise the result. Great benefits, both of families and states, are thus produced. When it is otherwise, however, everything is thrown into confusion and turned upside-down.”*

— St. John Chrysostom (347-407)

## Lives of the Saints

*St. Clement of Ohrid, Bishop – commemorated on July 27th*

St. Clement of Ohrid (c. 840-916) was one of the first medieval Bulgarian saints, scholar, writer and enlightener of the Slavs. He was one of the most prominent disciples of Ss. Cyril and Methodius and is often associated with the creation of the Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts. He was the founder of the Ohrid Literary School and is regarded as a patron of education and language by the South Slavic peoples. He is considered to be the first bishop of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and is the patron saint of the Republic of North Macedonia and the city of Ohrid.

The exact date of Clement’s birth is unknown. Most probably, he joined St. Methodius as a young man, later following him to the monastery on Mysian Olympus. According to his *vita* by St. Theophylact of Ohrid, Clement knew the life of Methodius like no other, which is why most scholars think he was born in the Byzantine Empire, in the territory where Methodius served during his political career, i.e. that he was a Slav from Southern Macedonia. This gives rise to some researchers to indicate the area of Thessalonica as Clement’s possible birth place. According to other historians, the area of Southern Macedonia, including the northern approach to Thessalonica, where Clement may have been born, was part of the First Bulgarian Empire at the time (most of Macedonia became part of Bulgaria in 830s and in 840s, i.e. when Clement was born). The *Short Life of St. Clement* by St. Theophylact of Ohrid testifies to his Slavic origin, calling him “the first bishop in the Bulgarian language,” while *The Ohrid Legend*, written by Demetrios Chomatenos, calls him a “Bulgarian,” who was born somewhere in Macedonia. Because of that, some scholars label him a “Bulgarian Slav,” while the historian Dimitri Obolensky calls Clement a “Slavic inhabitant of the Kingdom of Bulgaria.”

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<sup>5</sup> *XL Hom. In Evangelia, lib. II, Hom. 25.*

St. Clement participated in the mission of Ss. Cyril and Methodius to Great Moravia. In 867 or 868 he became a priest in Rome, ordained along with two other disciples of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, St. Gorazd and St. Nahum, by bishops Formosus and Gauderic. After the death of St. Cyril, St. Clement accompanied St. Methodius on his journey from Rome to Pannonia and Great Moravia (Hungary-Slovakia and the Czech Republic, respectively). After St. Methodius' death in 885, St. Clement headed the struggle against the German clergy in Great Moravia along with St. Gorazd. After spending some time imprisoned, he was expelled from Great Moravia and in 885 or 886, and reached Belgrade, then within the borders of the First Bulgarian Empire, together with St. Nahum of Preslav, St. Angelarius, and possibly St. Gorazd (according to other sources, St. Gorazd was already dead by that time). Thereafter, they went to the Bulgarian capital city, Pliska, where they were commissioned by Tsar Boris I (852-889) of Bulgaria to instruct the empire's future clergy in the Old Slavonic language.

After the adoption of Christianity in 865, religious ceremonies in Bulgaria were conducted in Greek by clergy sent from the Byzantine Empire. Fearing growing Byzantine influence and weakening of the state, Tsar Boris<sup>6</sup> viewed the adoption of the Old Slavonic language as a way to preserve the political independence and stability of Bulgaria. So, Boris made arrangements for the establishment of two literary academies where theology was to be taught in the Slavonic language. The first of the schools was to be founded in the capital, Pliska, and the second in the region of Kutmichevitsa.

According to his *vita* by St. Theophylact of Ohrid, while Nahum stayed in Pliska working on the foundation of the Pliska Literary School, Clement was commissioned by Boris I to organize the teaching of theology to future clergymen in Old Church Slavonic in the southwestern part of the Bulgarian Empire, in the region then known as Kutmichevitsa. For a period of seven years (between 886 and 893) St. Clement taught some 3,500 disciples in the Slavonic language and the Glagolitic alphabet. At that time, St. Clement translated Christian literature into Old Church Slavonic, and in this way, he and his co-workers laid the foundations of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. In 893 he was ordained archbishop of Drembica Velika. Upon his death in 916 he was buried in his monastery, St. Panteleimon's, in Ohrid. Soon after he was canonized as a saint by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The development of Old Church Slavonic literacy had the effect of preventing the assimilation of the South Slavs into neighboring Byzantine culture, which promoted the formation of a distinct Bulgarian identity in the Empire. During the first quarter of the 10th century, the ethnonym "Bulgarians" was adopted by the Slavic tribes in most of Macedonia. St. Clement's life's work played a significant role in this transformation.

St. Clement of Ohrid was one of the most prolific and important writers in Old Church Slavonic. He is credited with the *Pannonic Hagiography of Ss. Cyril and Methodius*. Clement also translated the *Flowery Triodion* (also known as the *Pentecostarion*) containing the liturgical texts sung from Easter to Pentecost, and is believed to be the author of the *Holy Service and the Life of St. Clement of Rome*, as well as of the oldest service dedicated to Ss. Cyril and Methodius. The invention of the Cyrillic alphabet is also usually ascribed to him, although the alphabet was most likely developed at the Preslav Literary School in the early 10th century. Medieval frescoes of St. Clement exist throughout the modern-day territories of North Macedonia, Greek Macedonia, and Serbia, with the vast majority being located in North Macedonia.

The first modern Bulgarian university, Sofia University, was named after St. Clement upon its foundation in 1888. The Macedonian National and University Library, founded on November 23, 1944, also bears his name. The University in Bitola, established in 1979, is named after St. Clement, as is the Bulgarian scientific base, St. Kliment Ohridski, on Livingston Island in the South Shetland Islands of Antarctica. In November 2008, the Macedonian Orthodox Church donated part of St. Clement's relics to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as a sign of good will. In May 2018 it was announced that in the ruins of a Ravna Monastery, near the village of Ravna in Bulgaria's Varna Province, the signature of St. Clement was

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<sup>6</sup> Boris is a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church, as Tsar and Baptizer of Bulgaria, and as Equal-to-the-Apostles, with his feast day observed on May 2nd.

identified on a stone plate with a large amount of graffiti on it. The signature is dated as of April 24, 889. The finding gives reason to assume that the disciples of Ss. Cyril and Methodius were settled there at one stage, after being expelled from Great Moravia.

## Modern Theological Classics

### III. Some Problems in the History of Religions

Evolution. Is there a regular evolution in the history of man's religion, a progress, a development, an ascension from lower to higher phases? I think that evolution can be *twofold*: an ascending evolution and an evolution of decay, of deterioration. I think both kinds of evolution have taken place in the history of man. But first a remark about the word evolution. If it means a mechanical, blind development, dictated only by the laws of nature (those also conceived as mechanical) – a concept that was widely spread especially in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century – it would not be adequate to this complicated process, in which spiritual factors play a prominent, perhaps a decisive, role: freedom of Man (be it only a partial freedom), his spiritual activity and the Encounter.

From the Christian point of view there is a *plan of God* concerning the world, including the fact of Man's free choice (although this freedom may be "by and by" utterly weakened) and the redeeming and restoring Mercy of God. From this point of view there is, of course, a development, a movement onwards, but it can be as well ascending or descending: because there is the basic liberty of man, at any rate the liberty to fall or at least to yearn for ascension and salvation. And all that is included in the inscrutable redemptive Plan of the God which is – alongside with the freedom of the Creature: Man – the moving factor of the world's history and destiny. This point of view is very different from the purely "naturalistic" concept of evolution as it has been theoretically developed, e.g. in the 19th century.

The concrete question that arises here before us is therefore the following: Is there a regular and necessary ascension from lower forms to higher (parallel to the process which was considered as underlying the whole development of the realm of Nature) also in the history of human religion? That was the opinion of the philosopher Herbert Spencer, of Sir John Lubbock, of Edward B. Tylor in his celebrated book "Primitive Culture" (1870) and many, many other scientists – be they anthropologists, ethnologists or historians of religion. This conception of a regular, thorough-going movement of ascension from the lower to the higher forms of religion does not correspond to the historical, empirical data, as this has been shown already by the great ethnologist and comparative historian of religion Andrew Lang in a series of books on the threshold between the 19th and the 20th centuries. He has clearly demonstrated two series of facts. First, that there is also another line of development traceable in history of religion, a line which we may call *descending* evolution, an evolution from higher to lower forms, an evolution of distortion, of decay, of *deterioration*.

This can be shown by the following examples. There are tribes, as e.g. the Pigmies of Central Africa, the natives of Southeast Australia, of Tierra del Fuego (the southern-most tip of South America) and of some islands of the Indian Ocean that in comparison with other primitive tribes, sometimes their neighbors, are on a much lower level of material civilization – in their technical achievements, so in the tools they use, and also in their social institutions. Therefore, from the point of view of the classical theory of evolution, they are more "primitive," more backward than the tribes possessing a more advanced technical civilization. At the same time the Pigmies of Central Africa possess a much higher religious conception of a Supreme God, Master of all beings and of the human destiny and author of a moral code than most of their neighbors.

Similar things can be said of some Australian tribes. In the "Bora" or Australian Mysteries, in knowledge of "The Maker" and his commandments, is imparted His precepts: (1) To obey the old; (2) To share all with one's friends; (3) To live in peace with one's friends; (4) Not interfere with girls or married

women; (5) To obey the food restrictions. The supreme God of the Kurnai of Australia who have very elaborated "mysteries" is called MUNGUN NGAVER, "Our Father." Of the god of the Andaman Islanders "Puluga" we are informed: he is "like fire," but invisible. He was never born and is immortal. By him were all beings created, except the powers of evil. He knows even the thoughts of the heart. He is angered by *yubda*—sin, or wrongdoing, that is falsehood, theft, grave assault, murder, adultery, bad carving of meat and (as a crime of witchcraft) by burning wax. "To those in pain or distress he is pitiful and sometimes deigns to afford relief." He is "Judge of Souls . . ."

It seems that some of these and similar tribes have been pushed back to the center of the big continent or to the wild inhospitable islands by their more advanced and enterprising neighbors. But this helped them to preserve their *higher religious faith* that, as it seems in these cases, stood not at the end, but at the beginning of the religious evolution which in many cases seems to be an *evolution of descent, of religious deterioration*. For those cases can be multiplied. To compile and systematize the immense number of such data has been the life-work of the great scholar, anthropologist, ethnologist, and historian of religion, the editor of the review "Anthropos," Professor of the University of Vienna and University of Fribourg (in Switzerland), Father Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954), in his gigantic work "Der Ursprung der Gottesidee" ("The Origin of the Idea of God") in 12 volumes (1912-1955). We need not totally share the thesis of Father W. Schmidt that a primordial monotheistic conception can be *proved* in all cases as the underlying base or rather starting point of all subsequent religious developments. It is sufficient that Professor W. Schmidt has shown that the monotheistic conception is in many cases very old among very primitive tribes and not necessarily the result of a later development. On the contrary, there are definite signs that in history of religion we have to reckon – at any rate in many cases – with a primitive monotheistic belief, or a belief approaching monotheism, and therefore with a strong line of *descending evolution* (i.e. of distortion and deterioration) alongside with other lines of *ascending* religious development (as, e.g. in Greek philosophy from the beginnings to Socrates and Plato or in the religious experience of the Old Testament).

From a Christian point of view this is easy to understand: we have to reckon, as it was said already, with human *freedom* (very weakened though it be through the fallen condition of man) and human *frailty* (sin) and with another – and the most important factor – with God, with the Divine Reality that enters in contact with man and that can be apprehended by man, be it only in glimpses, in a very imperfect man, whom he loses his better self and becomes submerged by floods of errors and gross superstitions. Here rises for a Christian the great fact of Historical Revelation, of *God's saving initiative*, of God's pedagogical and educative plan for man, of the possibility of the spiritual growth of man and of his progressive ascension to higher levels. It is not an impersonal mechanical evolution though: there is human freedom, the fact of a *quest* and the freedom of a *response* to God on the human side and the possibility of an encounter with the Divine and – more than that – of being laid hand upon by the Loving and Merciful God. This renders possible what we may call *leaps* in the field of moral and religious life, unexpected *creative changes* that are very different from a determinist evolution dictated by external unchangeable laws (as proclaimed by older evolutionist theories).

Another example of a *descending* evolution in history of religion has been closely studied by the great Germanic-Baltic Indologist (formerly professor of the University of Dorpat, later member of the Vienna Academy of Science) Leopold von Schroeder, in his book "Urarische Religion" ("Primitive Aryan Religion," 1914). By the analysis of the Rig-Veda hymns he comes to the conclusion that the dominant divinities of this collection – Indra (out of the 1,028 hymns of the Rig-Veda, 250 are dedicated to him), Agni (Fire, with 200 hymns) and Soma (the personification of a holy beverage from the intoxicating juice of the plant "ascelpias acida," 114 hymns) represent a lower religious conception and a later one (this can be proved by the comparison with other Aryan religions) than the image of the heavenly god Varuna, Promoter and Keeper of Right (his name is related to the Greek Ouranos). Indra, the warlike and terrible giant whose forces are doubled when he is intoxicated with the Soma juice (he himself is boasting of it in a hymn) and who smashes then with his clubs the skulls of the hostile demons, appealed more to the

Aryan conquerors who descended from the Pamir mountains into the fertile valley of the Indus: he was more like themselves. So the conception of the King of Justice Varuna was “pushed to the background” of their religion, but it was a much higher conception! We can see, e.g. from the following words addressed to Varuna:

*Sing forth a hymn, sublime and subtle, grateful to glorious Varuna the imperial ruler, Who hath struck out, like One who slays the victim, earth as a skin to spread in front of Surya [the Sun] . . . If we have sinned against the man who loves us, have ever wronged a brother, friend, or comrade, the neighbor ever with us, O Varuna, remove from us the trespass . . .*

In this case again the older conception of the Divinity was a higher one. But then there is again an ascending line in the history of the religions of India. Both lines are closely interwoven in the history of the so-called “pagan” religions, because, as we have already seen, of the yearning of man for a higher religious knowledge, but also . . . of his weakness and the fact that he easily capitulates before the surrounding atmosphere of errors and superstitions and before the lower passions of his own soul. Dr. Nicholas Arseniev,<sup>7</sup> “*The Revelation of Life Eternal*,” pp. 38-42

## Recipe of the Month

### Swedish Midsummer Layer Cake

*A countrywide tradition in Sweden is the celebration of Midsummer Eve; it's a wonderful occasion where family and friends gather in woods and open flower meadows – here they celebrate the longest day of the year by dancing, gathering flowers, picking berries and enjoying picnics, with many going on all night.*

*The traditional Midsummer foods are pickled herrings, new potatoes served in a sour cream and dill sauce with hard-boiled eggs, Swedish meatballs, gravadlax (cured salmon), Västerbottensost cheese pie, assorted breads and crispbreads. Schnapps and beer are enjoyed with these foods, and for dessert, there is only one way to end the Midsummer picnic, and that's with a slice of strawberry and cream cake, called Gräddtårta med Jordgubbar in Swedish.*

*The cake is traditionally made with a fatless sponge cake, has three layers at least, all filled with an egg-enriched cream and packed with sweet strawberries. Although confectioner's custard is the type of filling that is used in this classic Swedish cake, the recipe can be lightened a bit by using a simple Chantilly cream instead; this recipe also deviates a little by adding some fresh raspberries to the cake, as they are seasonal in the northeastern U.S. this time of year. I think most Swedes would approve, as Sweden is a nation of berry lovers!*

### Ingredients:

#### Cake

6 eggs  
1¼ cup of caster sugar  
3 oz. of warm water  
2 tsp baking powder  
1 cup of self-rising flour  
5 tbsp. of potato flour

#### Filling and Topping

1½ cup of double cream  
4 tbsp. of icing sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
2½ cups of strawberries, hulled, and cut in half (if very large)  
1 cup of fresh raspberries

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

## Directions:

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a 12" x 4" round cake tin with baking paper.
2. Whisk the eggs with the sugar until light and fluffy; mix the dry ingredients together and then gently fold them to the whisked eggs. Add the boiled water and then mix until all amalgamated, but do not over-mix. Pour the cake mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until it has risen and is golden brown. Turn out of the tin and allow to cool on a wire rack.
3. Meanwhile, make Chantilly cream by whisking the cream, icing sugar, and vanilla extract together until the cream holds firm peaks; cover it and store in the fridge until needed.
4. When the cake is cold, carefully cut it into three slices, and place one slice on a serving plate; spoon a third of the cream over the cake, then add the strawberries and raspberries.
5. Continue to layer the cake this way, ending with the top which is also decorated with cream, strawberries and raspberries.
6. Serve cut into slices with extra fruit on the side, and enjoy this utterly divine cake!

## 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.

## Parish News

### Congratulations and Welcome to the Orthodox Church

We welcome Leonardo Da Silva into membership in the Holy Orthodox Church. Leonardo was received by Rite of Conversion and Sacrament of Chrismation on June 7, 2020. We also congratulate Leonardo on his recent graduation from East Side High School in Newark, New Jersey. He shall be starting at New Jersey City University in Jersey City, New Jersey as a Physics/Pre-Engineering major in the Fall 2020 Semester. May God bless and protect Leonardo, and grant him and his sponsor, Robert Pierce, many years!

### Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings remain suspended until further notice. Parish business shall be conducted by the council officers in consultation with the parish priest as needed; contact and consultation with parish council members shall be through telephone and internet only. All parish gatherings in the church hall are suspended until further notice.

### Confessions

In-person confessions may be done without masks if the priest and the penitent stand six feet apart, and the priest will hold his stole up for the absolution prayer (as opposed to putting over the penitent's head as usual), or by the wearing of facial masks by both priest and penitent. Confession is permitted by phone or video conferencing (i.e. Google Meet). Call the Rectory at 201-436-3244 for confession appointments. **General Confession is suspended until further notice.**

## Giving During This Crisis

Please continue to give as you normally would during this crisis. Even if you have not yet resumed attending church there are still bills that need to be paid. This is a time when we need for everyone who is able to give to the church, and to even consider increasing their contributions to make up for those temporarily unable to give. You may mail your contributions weekly, or monthly if you prefer, to the parish's mailing address of: 98 West 28th Street, Bayonne, New Jersey 07002. Thank you in advance for your continued support of Ss. Peter and Paul's Orthodox Church. May Our Lord Jesus Christ bless you all!

## Special Donations

*Please note that for Special Donations in August 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 July 19, 2020.*

July 19, 2020

**Sanctuary Lamp** offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Wilfred J. Royer (anniversary of birth).

July 26, 2020

**Sanctuary Lamp** offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Rose Brelinky (anniversary of repose).

## Schedule of Services

July 4-5, 2020

5:00 PM – Great Vespers  
9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

July 11-12, 2020

5:00 PM – Great Vespers  
9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

July 18-19, 2020

5:00 PM – Great Vespers  
9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

July 25-26, 2020

5:00 PM – Great Vespers  
9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

## Daily Bible Readings

1. Romans 11:2-12; Matthew 11:20-26
2. Romans 11:13-24; Matthew 11:27-30
3. Romans 11:25-36; Matthew 12:1-8
4. Romans 6:11-17; Matthew 8:14-23
5. Romans 6:18-23; Matthew 8:5-13
6. Romans 12:4-5, 15-21; Matthew 12:9-13
7. Romans 14:9-18; Matthew 12:14-16, 22-30
8. Romans 15:7-16; Matthew 12:38-45
9. Romans 15:17-29; Matthew 12:46-13:3
10. Romans 16:1-16; Matthew 13:4-9
11. Romans 8:14-21; Matthew 9:9-13
12. Romans 10:1-10; Matthew 8:28-9:1
13. Romans 16:17-24; Matthew 13:10-23.
14. 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Matthew 13:24-30
15. 1 Corinthians 2:9-3:8; Matthew 13:31-36

16. 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; Matthew 13:36-43
17. 1 Corinthians 4:5-8; Matthew 13:44-54
18. Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 9:18-26
19. Romans 12:6-14; Matthew 9:1-8
20. Romans 12:6-14; Matthew 9:1-8
21. 1 Corinthians 6:20-7:12; Matthew 14:1-13
22. 1 Corinthians 7:12-24; Matthew 14:35-15:11
23. 1 Corinthians 7:24-35; Matthew 15:12-21
24. 1 Corinthians 7:35-8:7; Matthew 15:29-31
25. Romans 12:1-3; Matthew 10:37-11:1
26. Romans 15:1-7; Matthew 9:27-35
27. 1 Corinthians 9:13-18; Matthew 16:1-6
28. 1 Corinthians 10:5-12; Matthew 16:6-12
29. 1 Corinthians 10:12-22; Matthew 16:20-2
30. 1 Corinthians 10:28-11:7; Matthew 16:24-28
31. 1 Corinthians 11:8-22; Matthew 17:10-18