

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

When the Most Pure Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ was taken down from the Cross and carried to the tomb, the Cross on which He died was thrown into a ditch or a well, and covered with stones and earth, so that the disciples of the Crucified Redeemer might not find it.

Almost 300 years later, in AD 312, St. Constantine the Great, who was not yet a Christian, was battling the usurper Maxentius for the throne of the Roman Empire. On the eve of the decisive battle, St. Constantine prayed to the God of the Christians, that is, to the God of his mother, St. Helena, to aid him in his struggle. In answer to his prayer, a luminous cross appeared in the sky bearing the inscription: “In This Sign, Thou Wilt Conquer.” In gratitude for victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge on October 28, 312, St. Constantine had the Sign of the Cross placed on his army’s standards and his soldiers’ shields.

Then, in AD 326, St. Helena went to Jerusalem on a mission to find the site of the Crucifixion, where her son planned to construct the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher. The empress dowager located the site beneath a temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Venus. The pagan temple was torn down and excavations began, whereupon three crosses were uncovered. The True Cross of Christ was identified, and was elevated by the Archbishop of Jerusalem, St. Macarius, while the crowds chanted “Lord, have mercy!” In Orthodox tradition, the date of this event was September 14th (though according to some sources, the date was May 3rd). In any event, the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher was then built over the site of the excavations, where it stands to this day. With the Cross were also found the Holy Nails, which St. Helena took with her back to Constantinople (the *titulus*¹ she brought back to Rome).

¹ The *titulus* (Latin: “title panel”) of the True Cross is a piece of wood kept in the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome (the basilica built in 326 to house the relics St. Helena brought back to Rome from the Holy Land. Its floor was covered with soil from Jerusalem, thus acquiring the title “in Hierusalem”; it is not dedicated to the Holy Cross which is in Jerusalem, but the Basilica itself is “in Jerusalem” in the sense that a “piece of Jerusalem” was moved to Rome for its foundation).

In AD 614, the Persian King Chosroes II invaded Syria and Palestine, took and sacked Jerusalem, and carried off to Persia the great treasures of the Holy City, including the True Cross. This was a devastating blow to all Christendom. Later, in 627, the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius, personally headed a large army into Persia and forced the Persians to sue for peace in 628, bringing a war of twenty-six years duration to an end. The Persians were compelled to return the True Cross, which Heraclius brought first to Constantinople in 629. The ceremonial parade went toward the Hagia Sophia. There, the True Cross was slowly raised up until it vertically towered over the high altar. This event took place on September 14th, and may be the origin of the feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross on that date. To many, this was a sign that a new golden age was about to begin for the Byzantine Empire.² The triumphal raising of the True Cross in the Hagia Sophia was a crowning moment in his achievements. Had Emperor Heraclius died then, he would have been recorded in history, in the words of the historian Norman Davies, as "the greatest Roman general since Julius Caesar."³

Sixth months later, Heraclius restored the True Cross to Jerusalem on March 21, 630. When the Emperor reached the city gate that led to Calvary, he laid aside every robe and insignia of royalty and, barefoot and vested in sackcloth, piously carried the Cross up the hill of Calvary himself, and restored it to its proper place in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher.

"O God, Who on this day gladdened us by the feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, grant, we beseech Thee, that we who on earth acknowledge this mystery, may deserve to enjoy the rewards of its redemption in Heaven. Amen."

Parish Council President's Message

GREETINGS, PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS OF SS. PETER AND PAUL CHURCH:

WE, AS CHRISTIANS, WHOSE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST PROVIDES US AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ETERNAL LIFE AFTER DEATH, THROUGH OUR FAITH IN CHRIST, CAN PETITION THE LORD WITH PRAYER EITHER IN WORD OR THOUGHT. TO PRAY IS TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH GOD FOR ONE OF THREE REASONS: TO OFFER THANKSGIVING; TO ASK FOR SOMETHING, OR PETITIONARY PRAYER; AND ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS, OR PENITENTIAL PRAYER.

THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE BIBLE, FROM MOSES TO JESUS CHRIST, PRAYER IS USED TO COMMUNICATE WITH GOD. IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 4:21-24, "*WOMAN, JESUS REPLIED, BELIEVE ME A TIME IS COMING WHEN YOU WILL WORSHIP THE FATHER NEITHER ON THIS MOUNTAIN NOR IN JERUSALEM. YOU SAMARITANS WORSHIP WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW, WE WORSHIP WHAT WE DO KNOW, FOR SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS. YET A TIME IS COMING AND HAS NOW COME WHEN TRUE WORSHIPERS WILL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, FOR THEY ARE THE KIND OF WORSHIPERS THE FATHER SEEKS.*" WHAT CHRIST IS TELLING THE SAMARITIAN WOMAN, PHOTINA, SHE HAS TO KNOW WHO THE SPIRIT IS, AND HOW TO PRAY TO THE SPIRIT IN TRUTH.

JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, EXPLAINS TO HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO PRAY IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL 6:9-13, "*THIS, THEN IS HOW YOU SHOULD PRAY: OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME. YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AND WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.*" NOW, WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER, THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN WORLD CAN WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. FOR GOD IS SPIRIT AND THE LORD'S PRAYER IS TRUTH. THIS IS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF HOW WE SHOULD PRAY WITH CONVICTION OF FAITH, AND WITH HUMILITY.

² Unfortunately, that was not to be so. The devastating impact of the lengthy war of 602–628, along with the cumulative effects of a century of almost continuous Byzantine-Persian conflict, left both empires crippled. Neither empire was given much chance to recover, as within a few years they were struck by the onslaught of the Arabs, newly united by Islam, described by a prominent historian as a "human tsunami." Byzantine Empire's recently regained eastern and southern provinces of Syria, Armenia, Egypt, and North Africa were lost, reducing the empire to a territorial core consisting of Anatolia and a scatter of islands and footholds in the Balkans and Italy, i.e. a cutting the empire's territorial extent by about half. Persia's fate, however, was even worse: it was completely overrun and conquered by the Arabs, with the last Sassanid emperor perishing in 651.

³ Instead, Heraclius lived through the Arab invasions, losing battle after battle against their onslaught and tarnishing his reputation for victory. Lord John Julius Norwich succinctly described Emperor Heraclius as having "lived too long."

WE SHOULD NOT USE PRAYER AS A FIRE EXTINGUISHER, WHEN THERE IS A CRISIS, AND WE RUSH TO THE CHURCH FOR PRAYERFUL ASSISTANCE. IT IS NOT RELUCTANTLY HOPING GOD WILL HEAR AND ANSWER OUR PRAYER—SUCH IS NOT FAITH, IT'S WISHFUL THINKING. PRAYER IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO REFLECT ON WHAT WE NEED FROM GOD. IN THE END, GOD KNOWS WHAT WE NEED AND DESIRE. BUT BY EXPRESSING THOSE NEEDS AND DESIRES TO GOD IN PRAYER, IT MAKES US MORE SELF-AWARE OF JUST HOW DEPENDENT UPON GOD'S GRACE WE REALLY ARE.

LET US NOT FORGET WHAT MATTHEW TOLD US IN HIS GOSPEL, 7:7-8, "ASK AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU, SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND, KNOCK AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED TO YOU. FOR EVERYONE WHO ASKS RECEIVES; THE ONE WHO SEEKS FINDS; AND TO THE ONE WHO KNOCKS, THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED."⁴

WITH FAITH IN CHRIST,
ROBERT PIERCE

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

"Thus, the immaculate fruition issuing forth from the womb occurred from an infertile mother, and then the parents, in the first blossoming of her growth brought her to the temple and dedicated her to God. The priest, then making the order of services, beheld the face of the girl and of those in front of and behind, and he became gladdened and joyful, seeing as it were the actual fulfillment of the Divine promise. He consecrated her to God, as a reverential gift and propitious sacrifice and, as a great treasury unto salvation, he led her within the very innermost parts of the temple. Here the Maiden walked in the upright ways of the Lord, as in bridal chambers, partaking of heavenly food until the time of betrothal, which was preordained before all the ages by Him Who, by His inscrutable mercy, was born from her, and by Him Who before all creation and time and expanse Divinely begat Him . . ."

— St. Andrew of Crete, Homily on the Nativity of the Theotokos

Lives of the Saints

St. Cassia the Hymnographer – commemorated on September 7th

St. Cassia the Hymnographer was a Byzantine abbess, poet, composer, and hymnographer. She is one of the first medieval composers whose scores are both extant and able to be interpreted by modern scholars and musicians. Approximately fifty of her hymns are extant and twenty-three are included in Orthodox Church liturgical books. The exact number is difficult to assess, as many hymns are ascribed to different authors in different manuscripts and are often identified as anonymous. Additionally, some 789 of her non-liturgical verses survive. Many are epigrams or aphorisms called "gnomic verse," for example, "I hate the rich man moaning as if he were poor."

St. Cassia was born between 805 and 810 in Constantinople into a wealthy family and grew to be exceptionally beautiful and intelligent. Three Byzantine chroniclers, Pseudo-Symeon the Logothete, George the Monk, and Leo the Grammarian, claim that she was a participant in the "bridal show" (the means by which Byzantine princes and emperors sometimes chose a bride, by giving a golden apple to his choice) organized for the young bachelor Theophilus by his stepmother, Empress Dowager Euphrosyne. Smitten by Cassia's beauty, the young emperor approached her and said: "Through a woman came forth the baser things," referring to the sin and suffering coming as a result of Eve's transgression. Cassia promptly responded by saying: "And through a woman came forth the better things," referring to the hope of salvation resulting from the Incarnation of Christ through the Virgin Mary. His pride wounded by Cassia's terse rebuttal, Theophilus rejected her and chose Theodora as his wife.

When next we hear of Cassia in 843, she had founded a convent in the west of Constantinople, near the Constantinian Walls, and became its first abbess. Although many scholars attribute this to bitterness

⁴ Editor's Note: The most common interpretation of Matthew 7:7-8, which are also found in Luke 11:9-10, is that they are a return to the issue of prayer, which was discussed in the last chapter and is quite clearly addressed by the subsequent verses. In this view asking, seeking, and knocking are all metaphors for the act of prayer.

at having failed to marry Theophilus and become Empress, a letter from Theodore the Studite indicates that she had other motivations for wanting a monastic life. It had a close relationship with the nearby monastery of Studios, which was to play a central role in re-editing the Byzantine liturgical books in the ninth and tenth centuries, thus ensuring the survival of her work. However, since the monastic life was a common vocation in her day, religious zeal is as likely a motive as either depression or aspiration for artistic renown.

Emperor Theophilus was a fierce iconoclast, and any residual feelings he may have had for Cassia did not preserve her from the imperial policy of persecution for her defense of the veneration of icons. Among other things, she was subjected to scourging with a lash. In spite of this, she remained outspoken in defense of the Orthodox faith, at one point saying, "I hate silence, when it is time to speak." After the death of Theophilus in 842, his young son Michael III became Eastern Roman Emperor, with the Empress Theodora acting as Regent. Together they ended the second iconoclastic period (814-842); peace was restored to the Empire. Cassia traveled to Italy briefly, but eventually settled on the Greek Island of Kasos where she died sometime between 867 and 890. In the city of Panaghia, there is a church where Cassia's tomb may be found. The feast day of St. Cassia is celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches on September 7th. She is often depicted on the icon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy (the 1st Sunday of Great Lent), because of her strong defense of the veneration of icons.

Cassia wrote many hymns which are still used in the Byzantine liturgy to this day. Cassia became known to the great Theodore the Studite, while she was still a young girl, and he was impressed by her learning and literary style. She not only wrote spiritual poetry, but composed music to accompany it. She is regarded as an "exceptional and rare phenomenon" among composers of her day. At least twenty-three genuine hymns are ascribed to her. She is notable as one of at least two women in the Middle Byzantine period known to have written in their own names, the other being Anna Comnena.⁵

The most famous of her compositions is the eponymous "Hymn of Cassia," which is chanted each year at Matins on Holy Wednesday (in usual parish practice it is sung Tuesday evening) at the end of the aposticha. Tradition says that in his later years the Emperor Theophilus, still in love with her, wished to see her one more time before he died, so he rode to the monastery where she resided. Cassia was alone in her cell, writing her Hymn when she realized that the commotion she heard was because the imperial retinue had arrived. She was still in love with him but was now devoted to God and hid away because she did not want to let her old passion overcome her monastic vow. She left the unfinished hymn on the table. Theophilus found her cell and entered it alone. He looked for her but she was not there; she was hiding in a closet, watching him. Theophilus, overcome with sadness, cried and regretted that moment of pride when he rejected such a beautiful and intellectual woman; then he noticed the papers on the table and read them. When he had finished reading, he sat and added one line to the hymn; then he left. The line attributed to the Emperor is the line "those feet whose sound Eve heard at dusk in Paradise and hid herself for fear." Legend says that as he was leaving, he noticed Cassia in the closet but did not speak to her, out of respect for her wished privacy. Cassia emerged when the emperor was gone, read what he had written, and finished the hymn.

The music for the hymn is slow, sorrowful, and plaintive, lasting about ten to twenty minutes, depending on tempo and style of execution. It requires a very wide vocal range, and is considered one of the most demanding, if not the most demanding, pieces of solo Byzantine Chant, and cantors take great pride in delivering it well. It is also sung by choirs in unison, often underpinned by Byzantine vocal bass drone. In Greece, the faithful make a point of going to church specifically "to listen to Cassia" that evening. Among the other hymns she composed are the following: (1) the Doxasticon chanted at the Vespers Divine Liturgy on Christmas Eve; (2) numerous hymns in honor of saints found in the Menaion (fixed

⁵ Anna Comnena (1083-1153) was a Byzantine princess, philosopher, physician, hospital administrator, and historian. She was the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus and his wife Irene. She is best known her work on "The Alexiad," an account of her father's reign.

cycle of the Eastern Orthodox liturgical calendar); the Hirmoi for the Matins Canon of Great Thursday and other hymns in the Triodion (liturgical book used during Great Lent) composed by her; and (4) her longest composition is a Canon for the Departed, consisting of 32 strophes, to be chanted at a Panichida (memorial service). One might veritably say that Cassia's Canon for the Departed is to the Byzantine Rite what Thomas of Celano's "Dies Irae" Sequence in the Requiem Mass (Tridentine) is to the Roman Rite.

Modern Theological Classics

IV. Plato's Religious Message

This is one of the highest summits—or definitely the highest—of Greek religious thought. It did not come up abruptly. It was prepared: by Parmenides, by Heraclitus, and then, in first place, by the extraordinary personality and the deep moral and—let us venture the word—mystical experience of Socrates. And yet it is a *jump*, a being uplifted in a new direction, a sudden revelation of *another*, a higher Reality. That which was dimly felt and hinted at by the great Heraclitus,⁶ that what inspired the pedagogical-prophetic work of Socrates, that was now explicitly stated and contemplated by the spiritual eye. The real Reality, that which is the home and goal and the object of aspiration of the soul, the *Real World* of unpolluted Beauty, the immense Ocean of primordial Beauty ("to polu pelagos tou kalou"), unalloyed, uncontaminated by mortal dust, the Reality that is eternal, not subject either to becoming or to extinction, that neither grows nor decays, that is not beautiful from one point one view and ugly from another . . . but herself the Divine Beauty, in her simplicity and unity. To preach, to proclaim the *real Reality* ("to ontos on"), opposed to our deceitful and shadowy world, as the light of the real Sun is opposed to the illusory images (which are only shadows of shadows, reflections of reflections seen by the poor prisoners of the Dark Cave and considered by them to be the only reality—see "Republic," Book VII, this proclaiming, this opposition, this inspired witness to the real Reality and the call to lift up the mind's eye toward it—this is the ultimate purport, the soul of Plato's philosophy (which is very rich and complex, comprising many different elements and problems). But that is the chief problem among all, the main purpose: to escape from the darkness of the cave and lift up one's eye to the rays of the Sun Eternal. And Plato is full of such appeals, of such teachings, of such nostalgia. For there is the true harbor of the soul, the source and goal of her yearning, of her "hunt after that which really is" (Phaedrus 66C - "Ton tou ontos theran"). "To one who arrives there is like a nest from his travelling and the end of his journey" (Republic VII, 532E). The "flight" thither is "assimilation to God as far as possible" (Theaetetus 176B), during his life-time the soul of the wise, fleeing the sensual and following Reason "contemplates the True, the Divine and Immutable and is nourished thereby" (Phaedrus 84A).

And above all other ideas rises and thrones the Idea of the Good. It is higher than the knowledge and being, says Plato (Republic VI, 509B). But it is difficult to contemplate it (Republic VII 517C)—so great is its perfection. This is the Platonic conception of the Supreme Divine Being. Of course, it is impersonal, it is not a living and loving God, but it inspires the soul with immense desire. It is the goal and center that gives sense to life, it proves also to be the inspiring center of Plato's religious philosophy.

The discovery of another—of the primordial, the only really Real—the Spiritual Reality, of the *Divine as utterly different from the world*—that is the great feat of Plato's philosophy. A source of new spiritual insight entered through him into the Ancient World. Of Plato's philosophy we can with special ground use these words, dear to many apologists—"Praeparatio evangelica" in two senses: it proclaims the Divine Reality and shows at the same time the abyss between it and us. And this, this sense of the abyss separating the two worlds, forms one of the chiefest [sic.] and most central problems of Plato's philosophy. This makes it so full of tension, yes—even of dramatic tension.

⁶ "To sophon esti to ton panton kehorismenon" ("the Wise [i.e. the True Divine Reality of the Logos] is that which is separated from all things.")

There is a *duality* in Plato's approach to this our world, this cosmos, and to its relation to the upper world of immutable, immortal Ideas. Sometimes this our world is considered a true reflection of the higher one and there it is spoken of in tones of highest praise and admiration. So, in the "Timaeus" our world is even called "a second god" ("deuterios theos") and to vilify it is said to be something unsuitable, unlawful, impious ("ou themis estin"). Here the Hellenic strain in the mind of Plato, the Hellenic inheritance is felt very strongly. He loves and admires the harmony and balance and beauty of the cosmos, as we have seen it already in the philosophy of Heraclitus, as we shall meet it later in the philosophy of the Stoics, but also in later Platonists, Neopythagoreans, and Neoplatonists. This sense of harmony and balanced order and beauty in the world is a basic and deeply rooted part of the Greek outlook. And the love of Beauty, of earthly Beauty, that permeates his pages, the charming setting of his dialogues, the charming forwardness of his Athenian boys, making Socrates "prisoner" (so in the "Republic") until he answers all the questions, and leading thus into the most arduous and difficult discussions on the sense of human affairs and human life, the physical vividness of the dialogues, the atmosphere of earnestness and radicalism in the search of truth, and of youthful grace that is exhaled by those boys of Athens—all that shows how deeply Plato is rooted in this brilliant world of Greek culture and how he delights therein.

But, on the other hand, Plato feels this world and its way of life is deceitful, unreal and full of wickedness, fundamentally opposed in its mutability, instability and injustice to the world of Divine Immutable Truth. It is sufficient to read the description of the true philosopher in his "Theaetetus": he has "never from his youth known his way to the people's meeting-places, he does not know where the Court is or the Council or any political assembly, he lives in the City only with his body, but his mind is inquiring into the nature of things (Theaetetus 173-174; cf. Gorgias 526). Plato has been one of those who were most struck and morally wounded by this great moral tragedy of Athens: the condemnation to death "by the regular Athenian people's court in regular proceeding," of his beloved teacher, the just among the just, the seeker and proclaimer of Truth—Socrates. The leading Greek city, the greatest center of Greek culture condemned to death the man of whom this city ought to have been proud, its faithful and greatest son, its leader on the way to virtue and truth, the man who untiringly endeavored to wake in its citizens the sense of moral duty and moral responsibility. After that what was human justice worth? The Court of the noblest city in Greece condemned to death its noblest son. After that it becomes clear that no real justice is to be expected on earth. After that the highest civic and democratic slogans and institutions are only a lie and a deceit. Therefore, there is no place here on earth, in those earthly states and cities, in those institutions, democracies or tyrannies or monarchies, for a seeking of Truth. And, moreover, all things pass, are in perpetual flow. Plato was well aware thereof, as having also listened to a disciple of Heraclitus—Cratylus. And what are worth things that pass? The Wise is in quest of those things *that remain forever*.

Dr. Nicholas Arseniev,⁷ *"The Revelation of Life Eternal,"* pp. 49-51

Recipe of the Month

Sicilian-Style Swordfish

The Sicilian people have a special relationship with swordfish, and grilling it is the traditional and preferred way of preparing it, using ingredients that link Sicilian cooking more profoundly to Greece and North Africa than to any part of Italy north of Naples. Sicily was founded as a colony of Greater Greece, and was called Trinacria because the island resembles a triangle. Long after such glory days, and according to Sicilians long

⁷ 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.

after the Romans had stolen anything worth stealing, the island succumbed to the rule of the Saracens, and after them, the Normans, the Catalans, and the Spaniards. The bottom line: if your Sicilian food tastes just like your Italian food, then you're probably doing it wrong. Sicilian flavors pop off the plate thanks to citrus, brought by the Saracens from Africa to Sicily and Spain.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons table salt
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground pepper (to taste)
- 2 pounds swordfish steaks, cut 1/2 inch thick

Directions:

1. Light a grill or preheat the broiler. In a small bowl, mix the lemon juice with the salt until the salt dissolves. Stir in the oregano. Slowly whisk in the olive oil and season generously with pepper.
2. Grill the swordfish steaks over high heat (as close to the heat as possible), turning once, until cooked through, 6 to 7 minutes. Transfer the fish to a platter. Prick each fish steak in several places with a fork to allow the sauce to penetrate. Using a spoon, beat the sauce, then drizzle it over the fish. Serve at once.

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

End of Summer Schedule

We are returning to having all morning services at 9:30 a.m. starting on Tuesday, September 8, 2020.

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.

PDF Version of "Quo Vadis"

This issue is the first of this newsletter's eighth volume. In an effort to reduce the number of paper copies being prepared, it shall be transmitted to its readership in a PDF file via email. If you've received a paper copy this month, it is because your email address is not on file. If you prefer to continue receiving paper copies, you need not do anything; we will be pleased to continue sending it to you by mail. But if you would rather receive it by email, please send your email address to me at ssppbay1922nj@outlook.com.⁸

Boycott Products of Turkey

Our readers are asked to continue boycotting products of Turkey. This may be a small act of protest that probably won't be felt, but at least it offers us a way of doing *something* in protest to the recent conversion of the Hagia Sophia into a mosque, and a way of showing our solidarity with the suffering Christians of the Middle East.

Readings about the 1915-1922 genocide of Christian Armenians, Assyrians, and Anatolian Greeks:

<https://www.armenian-genocide.org/genocide.html>

<https://www.seyfocenter.com/english/38/>

<https://hellenicresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Final-PP-2.pdf>

And the genocide of Middle Eastern Christians today:

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/38550>

Special Donations

Please note that for Special Donations in October 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 September 20, 2020.

September 13, 2020

Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Andrew Wanko (anniversary of repose).
Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Wilfred J. Royer (anniversary of repose).
St. John's and St. Nicholas' Crosses offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of, respectively, Donald Gilbert Royer and Katherine Dubik.

September 20, 2020

Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Grudinoff (anniversary of birth).
Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Anastasia Sahnichik. **Sacramental Bread** offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Grudinoff (anniversary of repose).

September 27, 2020

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Omer Joseph Royer.

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!

⁸ "Quo Vadis" may also be read online at https://www.sspeterandpaulbayonne.org/monthly_newsletters.

Schedule of Services

September 5-6, 2020

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

September 7-8, 2020

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

September 12-13, 2020

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

September 13-14, 2020

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

September 19-20, 2020

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

September 26-27, 2020

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

Daily Bible Readings

1. 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5; Mark 3:13-19
2. 2 Corinthians 9:12-10:7; Mark 3:20-27
3. 2 Corinthians 10:7-18; Mark 3:28-35
4. 2 Corinthians 11:5-21; Mark 4:1-9
5. 1 Corinthians 2:6-9; Matthew 22:15-22
6. 1 Corinthians 16:13-24; Matthew 21:33-42
7. 2 Corinthians 12:10-19; Mark 4:10-23
8. Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28
9. 2 Corinthians 13:3-14; Mark 4:35-41
10. Galatians 1:1-10, 20-2:5; Mark 5:1-20
11. Galatians 2:6-10; Mark 5:22-24, 35-6:1
12. 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 23:1-12
13. 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4; Matthew 22:1-14
14. Galatians 2:11-16; Mark 5:24-34*
15. Galatians 2:21-3:7; Mark 6:1-7

16. Galatians 3:15-22; Mark 6:7-13
17. Galatians 3:23-4:5; Mark 6:30-45
18. Galatians 4:8-21; Mark 6:45-53
19. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; John 8:21-30
20. Galatians 2:16-20; Mark 8:34-9:1
21. Galatians 4:28-5:10; Luke 3:19-22
22. Galatians 5:11-21; Luke 3:23-4:1
23. Galatians 6:2-10; Luke 4:1-15
24. Ephesians 1:1-9; Luke 4:16-22
25. Ephesians 1:7-17; Luke 4:22-30
26. 1 Corinthians 10:23-28; Luke 4:31-36
27. 2 Corinthians 6:1-10; Luke 5:1-11
28. Ephesians 1:22-2:3; Luke 4:37-44
29. Ephesians 2:19-3:7; Luke 5:12-16
30. Ephesians 3:8-21; Luke 5:33-39

* Second Readings (*for Holy Cross*): 1 Corinthians 1:18-24; John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35