

Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
Vol. 2, Number 1: September 2014

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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

September 1st is the Church New Year, the start of our liturgical calendar. It is also a fitting time, as we return from summer vacations and our children return to school, to take stock of our moral and spiritual progress. And the two great feasts that fall in September, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary and the Universal Exaltation of the Holy Cross, also provide examples for our life of faith.

The Nativity of the Virgin Mary (September 8th) is the first of the Church’s Marian feasts. What better time can there be to reflect on the example provided to us by our holy mother Mary than the feast of her nativity, the beginning of her holy life. The Virgin Mary, above all else, is a symbol of the exemplary Christian by the depth of her faith, made manifest in her obedience to God. She said simply, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word,” in reply to the archangel. Her life, filled with God’s grace, was all-holy, all-immaculate, and blessed, representing the triumph of grace over the fallen condition of human nature. She, who is blessed among women, is the antitype to Eve, for through Mary’s faith and obedience, the gates of paradise were reopened by the opening of her womb. She, the consecrated virgin of the

Lord, became the precious tabernacle, a living temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ! By her submission to the archangel's summons, she was exalted above the world's rich and mighty men. Therefore, as befits the Mother of God, her exaltation was consummated upon her dormition, when she was assumed, both body and soul, into heaven, and crowned as the Queen of Heaven. Such is the height attainable by a mortal human being who believes in God and submits to His holy will!

Can we, upon introspection of where we stand in relation to God, measure up to the example set by the Virgin Mary? Does our faith match the depth of hers? Are we ready to submit to the will of God upon simply hearing His word? Are we ready to open our hearts and minds to be filled by the grace of God, and thereby glorified, as was our all-holy Mother Mary? Paradise awaits us, made possible by Mary's obedience, if only we are willing, if only we have sufficient faith in God. It was Eve's disobedience, borne by a lack of faith in God, which cast Man out of paradise and plunged the world into the darkness of sin. Whose example are we prepared to follow? Shall we be faithless like Eve, or faithful, like Mary? It lies within our power to not only speak the words of our creed with our lips, but also to enliven our creed by our actions in service to God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, likewise, set the example for us by not only preaching the gospel of forgiveness and repentance, but also by sacrificing His life on the Cross for the sake of the gospel. So, on September 14th, we celebrate the Universal Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and begin the new liturgical year with a pointed reminder of what Jesus Christ did for us. He set a new example, that of sacrificial love, in expectation that all those who follow Him would likewise love one another, following that new Law of Love which is the love of God and the love of neighbor.

Again, as we begin the new liturgical year, let us reflect on our faithfulness to this Law of Love. Do we love God with all our heart, and all of our mind, and all our strength? Do we love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves? What are willing to sacrifice for the sake of love? Adam failed because he didn't love God enough to trust Him, and didn't love the world enough to content himself with being its steward rather than its master. Adam plunged headlong into sin because he was too proud to embrace self-sacrificing love and so, rather than being exalted, he was tarnished and humiliated. Whose example are we prepared to follow? Shall we emulate the hubris of Adam or the humility of Christ? Our Lord told us that if we wish to be first in the Kingdom of Heaven, we must be the servant, not the master. We must serve others, and not lord over them. We must humble and sacrifice ourselves, so that we may be uplifted by the grace of God. The man who is filled with narcissistic love of self can never be filled with grace, because he has left no room in his heart for the love of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ and His all-holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, have mapped out the guide for our salvific journey by the example of their lives. It remains for each of us to decide to follow that way, and be transfigured in Christ's glory, rather than take the detour, which disfigures our nature that is pride and sin. May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you! And may the prayers of the all-holy Virgin Mary and all the saints intercede for all of you, today and forevermore!

Parish Council President's Message

Dear parishioners and friends,

As the unofficial close of summer approaches us with Labor Day and the start of the Church New Year, there are eight weeks until our Slavic Oktoberfest fundraiser, scheduled for Sunday, October 26, 2014. Fundraisers such as this are vital to the growth and vitality of our parish, so I ask everyone to spread the word about, and bring someone to, this event. Ticket prices and further information will be made available shortly. Please keep Sunday, October 26th open on your calendars.

As a reminder, the "Building Fund" will be used for repair projects around the church. We ask that you continue to give generously each month toward this fund so that we can be prepared for future projects and unforeseen maintenance issues in our church. Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours in Christ,
Stephen Wasilewski

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

There is no one, O Most Holy Mary, who can know God except through thee; no one who can be saved or redeemed but through thee, O Mother of God; no one who can be delivered from dangers but through thee, O Virgin Mother; no one who obtains mercy but through thee, O Filled-With-All Grace!

St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, quoted by Cardinal Alphonsus de Liguori in "The Glories of Mary."

Lives of the Saints

St. Wenceslaus, Duke of Bohemia – commemorated on September 28th

The father of St. Wenceslaus, Duke Vratislaus of Bohemia, was a Christian, but his mother, Drahomira, a pagan, was a wicked and cruel woman. Fortunately for St. Wenceslaus, he was educated under the care of his saintly grandmother, St. Ludmila, with whose efforts he fully corresponded. At Budweis, about sixty miles from Prague, he went to a college where he made great progress in learning. His father died while he was still young, and Drahomira, seizing the reins of government and assuming the title of Regent, gave vent to her hatred of Christianity by a cruel persecution.

At the advice of his grandmother, St. Wenceslaus finally took the government into his own hands and exiled his mother; but a group of rebellious nobles now plotted with his younger brother, Boleslaus. The latter, who had been under the influence of his mother, had acquired her

hatred of the Christian religion. On the other hand, the pious St. Wenceslaus led a life of a saint in the midst of his court, particularly distinguishing himself by his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

His piety and his severity against the oppressions of the nobility caused some to join the faction of his mother and brother. Being treacherously invited to the court of Boleslaus after the festivities in honor of Ss. Cosmas and Damian, he went at midnight to pray in the church. The assassins followed him there and the mortal blow was given him by his own brother, Boleslaus. His martyrdom took place on September 28, 935.

Modern Theological Classics

In the writings of the holy apostles, and especially in the epistles of St. Paul, we find many images depicting the divine origin and the divine nature of the Church, images that were taken from family life, from building or from agriculture. The apostle Paul reveals the essence of the Church as the one undivided, divine-human Body of Christ. This Body comprises not only all those believers who live on earth and those who are departed. It also embraces the saints, the angelic hosts, and all past and future generations (Eph. 1:21-23; 4:4-7, 11-12; 5:23, 32; Heb. 12:22-24). Furthermore, in the apostolic writings we see that Jesus is not only the founder of the Church; He is also the head of his body—the Church—which possesses the whole fullness of Christ.

The epistles speak of the “Church of God” (1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 15:9) as the “holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21), the “dwelling place of God in the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 2:22). The Church is “the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17), and the members of that house constitute “the temple of the living God, [and] as God said, I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. 6:16). “Do you not know,” the apostle asks rhetorically, “that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?” (1 Cor. 6:19). Christians become temples of God, because God enters into them with His divine power. He abides in them, just as He abides in His house: “I have sanctified the house which you have built to put my name there forever. And my eyes and my heart shall be there always” (1 Kgs. 9:3).

Thus the essence of the house or temple of God lies in the special presence of God, with His divine power and life. When He blesses the temple of Solomon, God explains this to us: “I will abide in the midst of the children of Israel” (1 Kgs. 6:13). The Church, consisting of the “elect,” and “incorruptible inheritance,” “the people of God” and His “chosen flock” (1 Pet. 1:2-4; 2:10; 5:3-4), is the new house of Israel, founded upon a new covenant (Heb. 8:8). Thus the Church, founded by Jesus Christ (Mt. 16:18) is the temple or house of God, in which our redeemer and savior lies and through which He acts in the world for our salvation through the Holy Spirit.

The first letter to Timothy (3:15) describes how one ought to behave “in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth.” St. Theophan the Recluse comments on this passage:

The Church possesses the living God, being animated by Him through living unity. She truly Experiences His presence, and therefore the Church is His House. God created for Himself a House of human souls, by calling, purifying and sanctifying them. Fulfilling all things in Himself, He unites all in an oneness of life: those yet living and those who have departed are embraced in a single living unity. The Church is the pillar and foundation of Truth, for it is the Church of the living God, who is the Truth itself. Therefore, everything in the Church is of Truth: true confession of faith, true sacraments, true gifts of grace, true divine life imparted to those who live by God, true divine miracles and power; all becomes Truth within the Church.

According to the apostle Paul, the Church is the building of God (1 Cor. 3:9), the “dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22), built on the stone which the builders rejected, but which has become the cornerstone (Mt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:17). Our Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only true foundation of the Church: “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). Jesus Christ is Himself the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). Every member enters the Church to become a “living stone” (1 Pet. 2:5) that contributes to the building up of the temple of God, whose founder and foundation is Jesus Christ, the first cause and divine origin of the Church.

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Church in a very particular way, for as her Redeemer He gave himself on the cross to purchase the Church “with His own blood” (Acts 20:28), to reconcile man with God by His death, that man might thereby receive salvation and atonement (Rom. 5:10, 11). As the cornerstone and foundation of the one holy catholic Church, fully actualized in every local church community, Jesus Christ fills the Church with His divine power and strength, that she might grow into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21).

According to the apostles, members of the Church of Christ are the “people of God,” the offspring of the woman of the Apocalypse “who keep the commandments of God” (Rev. 12:17). They are a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” who proclaim the promise of Him who called them “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9-10). They constitute “the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17), whose members, according to St. Paul, are “no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,” build together for a “dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).

Thus the Church, the gathering together of the people into a single reality, is by its character, its goal, and its relations to God, absolutely different from any human, earthly society. For being “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,” Christians who live as members of the earthly Church belong already to the heavenly realm as members of the “kingdom of [God’s] beloved Son” (Col. 1:13) and constitute a “holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21).

On earth the Church possesses no permanent city in which to dwell, but she seeks “one to come” (Heb. 13:14). Through Jesus Christ, the second Adam and bearer of new, divine life (1 Cor. 15:45), both the living and the departed members of the Church are already citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem. It is there that the divine-human nature of the Church is most perfectly revealed: “Come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an

innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus who is the mediator of the New Covenant" (Heb. 12:22-24). Truly this is a magnificent vision of the divine-human nature of the one catholic Church: the Church is the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, headed by God who is judge of all. The Church consists of all the firstborn, united in heaven with the souls of the righteous made perfect. It is into such a city that believers enter who seek the eternal building of God in heaven (2 Cor. 5:1; Col. 3:2-3). Thus the Christian is at once a citizen of the one earthly Church and the one heavenly Church of Christ, a member of the Lord's undivided body (Eph. 4:4-6).

St. Augustine ("Psalm 90, Sermon Two") confirms this apostolic witness when he speaks of the Church which is the body of Christ: "not simply the Church that is this particular place, but both the Church that is here and the Church which extends over the whole earth; not simply the Church that is living today, but the whole race of saints, from Abel down to all those who will ever be born and will believe in Christ until the end of the world, for all belong to one City. This City is the Body of Christ: the Whole Christ, Christ united with the Church."

Archbishop Gregory Afonsky, Christ and the Church, pp. 53-57. To be continued.

Our Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

The Carpatho-Rusyns Since the Fall of Communism

The Carpatho-Rusyns, like every other people in Central and Eastern Europe, were profoundly influenced by the reforms that began in the Soviet Union upon Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power in 1985. The first changes took place among the Lemko-Rusyns of Poland, who as early as 1983 began insisting that they belonged to a distinct nationality, neither Ukrainian nor Polish, but Rusyn. But the Carpatho-Rusyn cultural revival truly got underway only after the fall of Communism in 1989. In the crucial years of 1989-1991, new organizations promoting the idea of the a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn nationality were established in all of the countries where Rusyns live except Romania: the "Society of Carpatho-Rusyns" in Ukraine, the "Rusyn Renaissance Society" in Slovakia, the "Lemko Association" in Poland, the "Society of Friends of Subcarpathian Rus" in the Czech Republic, the "Rusyn Cultural Society" in Yugoslavia, and the "Organization of Rusyns" in Hungary. In 1991 these organizations formed the World Congress of Rusyns, which meets periodically to formulate common goals for the Rusyn nation. Moreover, for the first time since the Second World War, Rusyn-language newspapers and magazines began being published in Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Ukraine.

In the aftermath of the Revolutions of 1989, the vast majority of Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe found themselves living in new countries. The dismemberment of Yugoslavia began in the summer of 1991, with Carpatho-Rusyns now living in two countries, Croatia (which includes Slavonia) and Serbia (which includes Vojvodina). The Carpatho-Rusyns of Slavonia, in particular, suffered greatly, as they were in the war zone between Croatia and Serbia. At the end of 1991, when the Soviet Union finally collapsed, the Carpatho-Rusyns of Transcarpathia voted overwhelmingly in favor of regional autonomy within an independent Ukraine. Finally, in

January 1993 Czechoslovakia broke up, so that the Carpatho-Rusyns of the Presov region came to live in an independent Slovakia. Today, the governments of Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Serbia, and Romania recognize Carpatho-Rusyns as a national minority. Regrettably, to date the government of Ukraine refuses to recognize the Carpatho-Rusyns as a distinct people; indeed, Ukrainian leaders have categorically stated that “there cannot, and should not, be a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn nationality.” Pro-Ukrainian Rusyns, that is, those who have accepted a Ukrainian self-identity, believe that Rusyns are merely a regional variant or “branch” of the Ukrainian nationality.*

Nevertheless, in December 1991, at the same time that the citizens of Ukraine voted in a referendum for their independence, seventy-eight percent of the inhabitants of Transcarpathia voted in favor of the autonomy of their province. To date, neither Ukraine’s government nor its parliament has implemented the promised autonomy voted on by over three-fourths of Transcarpathia’s population in a legal vote. It is possible that, as a Russian majority in the Odessa oblast voted similarly, that the Ukrainian government, fearing secession, has refused to honor either referendum. In May 1993 a “Provisional Government of the Republic of Subcarpathian Rus” was formed in Uzhgorod in an attempt to pressure the Ukrainian government into fulfilling the results of the December 1991 referendum. Unfortunately, to Ukrainian nationalists a pro-Rusyn movement is taken to mean “anti-Ukrainian,” with the very existence of the Rusyn movement in Transcarpathia accused of “acting to defend the interests of the Russian Empire in the Carpathian Mountains” (Oleksa Myshanych, “Political Ruthenianism: A Ukrainian Problem,” *The Ukrainian Quarterly*, Fall 1997). In 2006, the UN Committee on liquidation of racial discrimination urged the Ukrainian government to recognize the Rusyns as a national minority, to no effect. In March 2007, the Zakarpattia Oblast regional council officially recognized Rusyns as an ethnic minority at the oblast level and petitioned Ukraine’s central government to recognize the Rusyns as such at the state level, again to no effect.

A far more positive development took place in Hungary, which currently has Europe’s most progressive laws concerning the status of national minorities. In 1994 a Rusyn minority self-government was created, with full representation as a “national community” in Hungary’s parliament; indeed, the Rusyns were the first of nine such communities to be so recognized. In general, the Rusyn national movement is much stronger among Rusyns outside of Ukraine. Rusyn self-identity is rising in Slovakia, where more than twice as many people identified themselves as “Rusyn” than as “Ukrainian” in the 2001 Census. Rusyn identity has historically been strong among the Pannonian Rusyns of Serbia and Croatia, who have always considered themselves “Rusyn.”

* DNA tests have proven that the Carpatho-Rusyns are a distinct Slavic people; i.e. there are sufficient genetic differences to conclusively establish that the Carpatho-Rusyns are not a mere variant or “branch” of the Ukrainian nationality. Rusyns have the highest frequency of Haplogroup I (mtDNA) of any European population and Haplogroup M also reaches its regional peak among the Rusyns. Analysis of population genetics shows statistical differences between Rusyns and other Slavic and European populations.

This segment was the result of original research by V. Rev. W. Sophrony Royer, Ph.D.

Parish News

Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council shall meet on Monday, September 15, 2014 at 7:00 PM. As this is the first parish council meeting after the summer hiatus, a period of three months in which the council has not met, there are numerous matters to be discussed at this meeting. Therefore, it is imperative that parish council members attend this meeting.

Carpathian Club Picnic

The Carpathian Club's annual picnic is scheduled for Sunday, September 21, 2014 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Ticket prices are \$16 per person for advance purchase and \$20 per person at the door. To purchase tickets in advance, please contact Stephen Wasilewski.

Carpatho-Rusyn Society (N.J. Chapter) Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society (N.J. Chapter) is 4:30 PM on Saturday, September 13, 2014 at the Wayne Public Library, 461 Valley Road, Wayne, N.J. For further information about the program, send an e-mail to crsnewjersey@gmail.com or call Dorothy Bognar at (201) 891-4151. See the flyer posted on the bulletin board in the church vestibule.

Special Donations

Please note that for Special Donations in October to be acknowledged in Quo Vadis, it will be necessary for the donation to be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by September 21, 2014.

September 14, 2014

Seven-day Altar Vigils offered by John & Helen Wanko in memory of Andrew Wanko (anniversary of repose).

St. John's Cross offered by the DeMay Family in memory of Peter DeMay (anniversary of repose).

St. Nicholas' Cross offered by the Pirniak Family in memory of Mary Pirniak (anniversary of repose).

September 21, 2014

Seven-day Altar Vigils offered by John & Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Grudinoff (anniversary of repose).

Sanctuary Lamp offered by John & Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Grudinoff (anniversary of birth).

Schedule of Services and Events

September 6-7, 2014

6:00 PM – Great Vespers
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

September 7-8, 2014

6:00 PM – Great Vespers w. Lity
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

September 13-14, 2014

6:00 PM – Great Vespers w. Lity
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

September 15, 2014

7:00 PM – Parish Council Meeting

September 17, 2014

7:30 PM – Carpathian Club Meeting

September 20-21, 2014

6:00 PM – Great Vespers & General Confession
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy
11:00 AM – Carpathian Club Picnic

September 27-28, 2014

6:00 AM – Great Vespers
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

Daily Bible Readings

1. 2 Cor. 8:7-15 & Mark 3:6-12
2. 2 Cor. 8:16-9:5 & Mark 3:13-19
3. 2 Cor. 9:12-10:7 & Mark 3:20-27
4. 2 Cor. 10:7-18 & Mark 3:28-35
5. 2 Cor. 11:5-21 & Mark 4:1-9
6. 1 Cor. 2:6-9 & Matt. 22:15-22
7. **1 Cor. 16:13-24 & Matt. 22:33-42**
8. **Phil. 2:5-11 & Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28**
9. 2 Cor. 12:20-13:2 & Mark 4:24-34
10. 2 Cor. 13:3-13 & Mark 4:35-41
11. Gal. 1:1-10, 20-2:5 & Mark 5:1-20
12. Gal. 2:6-10 & Mark 5:22-24, 35-6:1
13. 1 Cor. 4:1-5 & Matt. 23:1-12
14. **1 Cor. 1:18-24 & John 19:6-35**
15. Gal. 2:11-16 & Mark 5:24-34
16. Gal. 2:21-3:7 & Mark 6:1-7
17. Gal. 3:15-22 & Mark 6:7-13
18. Gal. 3:23-4:5 & Mark 6:30-45
19. Gal. 4:8-21 & Mark 6:45-53
20. 1 Cor. 4:17-5:5 & Matt. 24:1-13
21. **2 Cor. 4:6-15 & Matt. 22:35-46**
22. Gal. 4:28-5:10 & Luke 3:19-22
23. Gal. 5:11-21 & Luke 3:23-4:1
24. Gal. 6:2-10 & Luke 4:1-15
25. Eph. 1:1-9 & Luke 4:16-22
26. Eph. 1:7-17 & Luke 4:22-30
27. 1 Cor. 10:23-28 & Luke 4:31-36
28. **2 Cor. 6:1-10 & Luke 5:1-11**
29. Eph. 1:22-2:3 & Luke 4:37-44
30. Eph. 2:19-3:7 & Luke 5:12-16

- *Sunday & Holy Day readings printed in boldface*