

Quo Vadis

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

The Jewish meaning of presenting one’s first-born son in the Temple is hinted at in the Gospel lesson for the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to St. Luke the Evangelist’s explanation in today’s Gospel: “*Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord) ... to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord*” (Lk. 2:22-24).

Three times in this single sentence, St. Luke refers to “*the law*” of the Jewish people. There are three actions taking place: first, the purification of mother and child before the Lord; second, the presentation of the first-born son to the Lord; and third, the sacrifice of animals to the Lord. What are Joseph and Mary about as they take place in these Jewish rituals? They know that this child is not the fruit of their marriage, i.e., that he was conceived through the Power of the Holy Spirit. This child—they know—has not entered this world in order to overthrow legions of men, armed with sword and spear. Joseph and Mary know that this child was sent by God the Father to overthrow the legions of the devil, armed with pride, envy, lies and malice. The Law is fulfilled through Jesus Christ. The Law that brought some measure of earthly peace to Jews who followed its prescriptions is fulfilled in Jesus Christ for you and all mankind. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Virgin Mary through the Power of the Holy Spirit, was presented by Joseph and Mary in the Temple, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered, died and was buried, and on the third day rose again from the dead: not to offer you earthly peace, but to offer you life for eternity with the Triune God in Heaven.

The Righteous Joseph and the Virgin Mary presenting Jesus in the Temple seems like a simple act of worship, but it foreshadows the end of Jesus’ earthly life. They are handing over the child in their care to God the Father. Their presentation is an act of honesty and humility of admitting that this child is God the Father’s from the beginning, and they’re admitting that for them to be entrusted with this child is an honor

they don't deserve. That's where we can see a link between what Joseph and Mary were doing on the day they presented Jesus, and what human parents do on the day they bring their child to the baptismal font. Each and every child is not only a gift from God, but also belongs to God, from the day of his or her conception, all the way to the day of his or her death, unto the eternal life that God wills for each of His children. So, too, was it with Jesus. Jesus did not belong to Joseph and Mary. Jesus was not entrusted to Joseph and Mary in order for Joseph and Mary to be fulfilled. Jesus was entrusted to Joseph and Mary that they might prepare Him to fulfill the Law some thirty-three years later on Good Friday. Joseph's, and Mary's, vocations were to prepare Jesus' earthly path to Calvary. We can think here of the Old Testament story of Abraham presenting Isaac, his first-born, for sacrifice on Mount Moriah.

St. Luke the Evangelist in the festal Gospel passage foreshadows for us the share that Mary will have in the Passion of the Christ. Once Mary and Joseph have presented Jesus in the Temple, Simeon explains to Mary that *"Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed"* (Lk. 2:34-35). If you truly believe in the consolation that Jesus offers you, it's not morbid to imagine to think of your end. For us, as Christians, our ultimate end is life with the Father in Heaven. But how we prepare for our earthly end directs each of our earthly days, either towards or away from our ultimate end. So we benefit greatly if we consider all the opportunities given to us to let go of pre-conceived ideas about what earthly life is meant to be about. Jesus Christ is not the completion of our lives on earth: He completes our life only in Heaven. He is not the answer to all our questions. It's not our questions that Christ came into this world to answer; rather, He came into this world to answer for our sins. Christ didn't come into this world to fulfill our dreams, but to teach us how to dream about something worthy of dreams. Jesus Christ teaches you what life is meant for in helping you prepare to say in your old age, and on the day of your death: *"Lord, now You are letting servant depart in peace ... according to Your Word"* (Lk. 2:29).

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

"Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the one who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of his eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ ... The Mother of God, the immaculate Virgin, carried the true light in her arms and brought him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the true light as we hasten to meet him."

— St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 560-638)

Lives of the Saints

St. Kristo the Gardener, Martyr – commemorated on February 12th

St. Kristo was an Albanian, born in Përmet (in southern Albania), and lived in the early 18th century during the Ottoman rule of the Balkans. Little is known of his early life, besides that he lived as a gardener and sought out further business opportunities in Constantinople, leaving Albania behind.

In 1748 he began working in the Sultan's garden in Constantinople. This is commonly exemplified in iconography showing St. Kristo holding apples. One day he was negotiating with a Turkish customer who wished to purchase his entire stock of apples, but they were unable to agree on a price. The Turk became angry and accused St. Kristo of expressing a desire to become a Muslim. As was the custom in the Ottoman period, he was brought before the Islamic authorities, where those bearing false witness testified that he indeed declared he wanted to convert. St. Kristo persisted that he would not become a Muslim and, since he was a Christian, his testimony was not equal to that of a Muslim. He was beaten and tortured the next day, but remained steadfast in his confession of Christ.

Imprisoned for two years and repeatedly tortured to renounce Christianity, St. Kristo continued to hold onto his Christian faith. A Greek monk by the name of Caesarius Dapontes visited him while he was in Ottoman custody, bringing him food. Kristo rejected the food, stating "Why should I eat? I do not expect to live, so I may as well die hungering and thirsting for Christ." St. Kristo was then sentenced to be beheaded for apostasy for refusing to follow through with his alleged conversion to Islam. In order to have money to provide for his memorial service, Kristo asked Dapontes to sell a metal file he had. St. Kristo was beheaded on February 12, 1748. He was then canonized as a "new-martyr" and is commemorated by the Eastern Orthodox Church on the date of his martyrdom.

Modern Theological Classics

Papias of Hierapolis

We are introduced to Papias (born between 60 and 70 A.D.), his writings, and thoughts, mainly through the writings of St. Irenaeus and Eusebius. Eusebius states that Papias is the disciple of St. John the Beloved (the Evangelist), and the colleague of St. Polycarp the bishop of Smyrna. He was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia in Asia Minor.

EXPLANATIONS OF THE SAYINGS OF THE LORD (*logion kuriakon exegeais*)

St. Irenaeus, who was his contemporary, stated that he wrote five books. St. Irenaeus praised his works in this field as a connection to the Apostolic era. This work was discovered only during the fourteenth century if not later, but so far, a full copy was never found. In them he deals with the origin of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, and of the witnesses on whom he depends. St. Irenaeus believes Papias to have been a disciple of St. John. Eusebius in his *Chronicle* agrees with St. Irenaeus, but in his *Church History* adopts another opinion, and asserts that he was the disciple of the disciple of the Presbyter John, but Eusebius is probably wrong in his conclusion.

Eusebius believed Papias to have been a man of very few talents. He ridiculed him, firstly, because he defended the belief in the millennium (the theory of a thousand years after the general resurrection when Christ will reign on earth), and secondly, because he showed very little critical judgment in the selection and interpretation of his sources. Eusebius informs us that, "he was a man of very little intelligence, as is clear from his books." The fragments collected by Eusebius, and others quoted by Apollinaris, are all we have of the work of Papias.

THE MILLENNIUM

The elders who saw John the disciple of the Lord, remembered that they had heard from him how the Lord taught in regard to those times, and said: "The days will come in which vines shall grow, having each ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in every one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on cluster ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when anyone of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, "I am a better cluster, take me, bless the Lord through me." In like manner, [He said] that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear would have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds of clear, pure, and fine flour; and that apples, seeds, and grass would be produced in similar proportions. All animals, feeding on the productions of the earth, would become peaceable, and harmonious, and in perfect subjection to man."

Testimony is given to these things in writing by Papias, an ancient man, who was a hearer of John and a friend of Polycarp, in the fourth of his five books. He added, saying, "Now these things are credible to believers", and Judas the traitor not believing asked, "How shall such growths be accomplished by the Lord?"

the Lord replied, "They shall see who shall come to them." These, then, are the times mentioned by the prophet Isaiah: "And the wolf shall lie down with the lamb," etc. (Isa. 11:6 ff)."

PAPIAS AND THE CHURCH TRADITION

J. Quasten says: But the work, as much as we possess of it, is important in spite of these defects, since it contains what is of great value to us, the oral teachings of the Apostles' disciples. Papias in his preface sums up his work as thus: *"And I shall not hesitate to give you all the interpretations that I have learnt and remember well, for of their truth I am confident. For unlike many, I did not take pleasure in those who have so very much to say, but in those who teach the truth. And again, if anyone ever came who had been a follower of the presbyters, I inquired into the words of the presbyters, whether Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord said. For I did not think that information from books would help me so much as the utterances of a living and surviving voice."*

From this quotation it is clear that the utterances of the Lord, which Papias undertook to explain, were drawn, not only from the written gospels before him, but also from oral tradition. His work therefore was not merely a commentary on the gospels, even though he took the majority of the passages from the gospel narratives.

Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty,¹ "The Apostolic Fathers," pp. 136-138.

Recipe of the Month

Spicy Calabrian Pot Roast

Whole orange segments and freshly squeezed orange juice and zest give this hearty winter braise a burst of fresh citrus flavor. Creamy sweet potatoes and celery root along with tender beef chuck fill out this satisfyingly hearty meal. It is the combination of the citrus flavor with spicy chiles that makes this dish typically Calabrian.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup olive oil, divided
- 1 (4-pound) boneless chuck roast, trimmed
- 4 teaspoons salt, plus more to taste
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, plus more to taste
- 2 oranges, divided
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cups unsalted beef stock or water
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled plum tomatoes, crushed
- 3 whole Calabrian chiles in oil, divided
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 pound celery root, turnips, or rutabagas, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup packed chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Crusty bread, for serving

¹ Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty (b. 3/16/1937) is a Coptic Orthodox priest, theologian, and prolific writer, based at the famous Church of St. George in Sporting, Alexandria, Egypt. His theological, spiritual, liturgical, and historical books are characterized by an abundance of biblical and patristic references. He composed a complete set of patristic commentaries that cover the entire Old and New Testaments, and he has authored many books about the lives of the Early Church Fathers and Martyrs that reveal how they led their lives as a "living Bible" and as role models for all Christians. In the 1960's he began publishing his books and booklets in Arabic, and many of them have since been translated into English.

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300°F. Heat 1/4 cup oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high. Season chuck roast with salt and pepper. Add chuck roast to Dutch oven, and sear, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer to a plate, and set aside.
2. Scrub 1 orange, and cut into 8 wedges; discard seeds and core, and set aside. Add onion to Dutch oven; cook over medium, stirring and scraping bottom of pan often with a wooden spoon, until onion is soft and translucent, about 8 minutes. (Add 1/4 cup water while cooking onion if too many browned bits accumulate.) Add beef stock, tomatoes, 1 chili, and orange wedges; bring to a boil. Return chuck roast and any accumulated juices to pan; bring to a simmer over high.
3. Cover and transfer to preheated oven; braise 1 hour and 30 minutes. Uncover and stir in sweet potato and celery root. Return to oven, and braise, uncovered, until meat and vegetables are tender but not falling apart, 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Remove from oven, and let rest 15 minutes. Transfer chuck roast to a work surface; shred into large pieces. Skim off fat from Dutch oven, and discard. Return shredded beef to Dutch oven.
4. While meat rests, zest remaining orange to equal 1 tablespoon zest and squeeze to yield 3 tablespoons juice. Finely chop remaining 2 chiles to equal 1 tablespoon. Stir together parsley, orange zest and juice, chopped chiles, and remaining 1/4 cup oil; season with salt and pepper to taste. Divide roast mixture evenly among bowls; top with parsley mixture. Serve with crusty bread.

Parish News

"Souper Bowl" Project

Our parish is collecting cans of soup and other non-perishable foods for donation to a local food pantry. A bin for placing the donated food items will remain in the church until February 12, 2023.

Parish Council Meeting

Parish Council is meeting in the church hall on Sunday, February 19, 2023 after Divine Liturgy.

Memorial Saturdays

February 18, 2023 is the first of the Memorial Saturdays of the year. If your list of the faithful departed needs updating, inform Fr. Sophrony by 2/12/2023.

Schedule of Services

Feb. 1-2, 2023 [Presentation of Christ]

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

February 4-5, 2023

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

February 11-12, 2023

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

February 18-19, 2023

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

February 25-26, 2023

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

February 27-28, 2023

6:00 PM (Mon.) – Great Canon of Repentance
6:00 AM (Tue.) – Great Canon of Repentance

Special Donations

Special Donations may be offered at \$10/week for the Altar Vigils, and \$5/week for any one of the following: Sanctuary Lamp, St. John's Cross, St. Nicholas' Cross, and Triple Candelabra, and may be offered in memory of the departed or in honor of the living. Please note that for Special Donations in March to be acknowledged in "Quo Vadis," the donation must be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by February 19, 2023.

February 5, 2023

St. John's Cross offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Archpriest John Udics. **St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Archimandrite Athanasy Mastalski.

February 12, 2023

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Ernest A. Royer (10th anniversary of repose). **Triple Candelabra** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rev. Thomas Sheridan, S.J.

February 19, 2023

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rita Richards.

Daily Bible Readings

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| 1. 1 Peter 4:1-11; Mark 12:28-37 | 13. 1 John 2:18-3:10; Mark 11:1-11 |
| 2. Hebrews 7:7-17; Luke 2:22-40 | 14. 1 John 3:11-20; Mark 14:10-42 |
| 3. 2 Peter 1:1-10; Mark 13:1-8 | 15. 1 John 3:21-4:6; Mark 14:43-15:1 |
| 4. 2 Timothy 2:11-19; Luke 18:2-8 | 16. 1 John 4:20-5:21; Mark 15:1-15 |
| 5. 2 Timothy 3:10-15; Luke 18:10-14 | 17. 2 John 1:1-13; Mark 15:22-25, 33-41 |
| 6. 2 Peter 1:20-2:9; Mark 13:9-13 | 18. 1 Cor. 10:23-28; Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36 |
| 7. 2 Peter 2:9-22; Mark 13:14-23 | 19. 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2; Matthew 25:31-46 |
| 8. 2 Peter 3:1-18; Mark 13:24-31 | 20. 3 John 1:1-15; Luke 19:29-40, 22:7-39 |
| 9. 1 John 1:8-2:6; Mark 13:31-14:2 | 21. Jude 1:1-10; Luke 22:39-42, 45-23:1 |
| 10. 1 John 2:7-17; Mark 14:3-9 | 23. Jude 1:11-25; Luke 23:2-34, 44-56 |
| 11. 2 Timothy 3:1-9; Luke 20:46-21:4 | 25. Romans 14:19-23, 16:25-27; Matthew 6:1-13 |
| 12. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Luke 15:11-32 | 26. Romans 13:11-14:4; Matthew 6:14-21 |

Remember to support the parish every time you shop!

ShopRite, Stop & Shop, and Acme gifts cards available for purchase in the church vestibule.

