

# Quo Vadis

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

Vol. 13, Number 7: March 2026

Back issues of "Quo Vadis" may be viewed at [https://sspeterandpaulbayonne.org/monthly\\_newsletters](https://sspeterandpaulbayonne.org/monthly_newsletters)

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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

On February 23rd we entered the great penitential season of Lent, the season every year in which the Church calls us to confess, repent, and atone for our sins. In this, we are guided first by our natural knowledge of justice, of knowing right from wrong, good from evil. Moral philosophy calls this rational insight into man's place in the overall order of things the Natural Law, defined as the rational creature's participation in the eternal law of God; i.e., Natural Law is an extension of God's providential ordering of all created things to their proper end. St. Paul refers to it in his Epistle to the Romans: "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law" (Rom. 2:14). The most basic formulation of what the Natural Law requires is "Do good and avoid evil."

Moreover, the Law of God is also expressed by divine revelation in the "Old Law" centered on the Ten Commandments and in the "New Law" as an internal law of the grace of the Holy Spirit working in the human soul through faith and charity. This grace is revealed in the Gospels and received in the sacraments. Natural Law and the positive law of divine revelation in the scriptures constitute the external guide to our conduct, but we also have an internal guide, in which we apply Natural Law ("do good and avoid evil") and the Ten Commandments (distilled by Our Lord to the twofold law of "love God and love your neighbor") to our particular, individual situation: Conscience, the judgment of reason about what should be done here and now.

These foundations of Christian moral and spiritual life are completed in conjunction with the five commandments of the Church. They are: (1) Keep Sundays and the Church's Great Feasts holy by

attending the Divine Liturgy; (2) Receive the Eucharist at least once a year at Easter; (3) Confess one's sins in the sacrament of Penance at least once a year (usually during Lent); (4) Abstain from meat on Wednesdays, Fridays, and other days of abstinence; (5) Fast during Lent and other fast days of the year. The five commandments of the Church are strictures about what we ought to be doing all year long, but it occurs to me that they offer very good guidance of what we strive to achieve during Lent.

The penitential works we are specifically called upon to do during Lent are prayer, fasting, and charity. On Prayer: Not only are we called upon to be more consistent in our personal rule of prayer, but our corporate rule of prayer in the public worship services of the Church more than doubles during Lent. We are called upon to attend as many of these services as possible, to meet our annual obligation of the sacrament of Penance, and to receive the Eucharist at Easter, and ideally to do so at every Divine Liturgy, and the Presanctified Liturgies offered during Lent. And we ought to diligently pray for the faithful departed on the Memorial Saturdays—to keep faith with our pledge to them to keep their memory eternal!

On Fasting: Yes, the Orthodox Church's fasting practice is rigorous (see this month's FAQs below), inspired as it is by monastic practice; but it offers a lofty ideal that we should strive to attain as best we can, conditioned by our age and state of health. On Charity: the English word "charity" is derived from the Latin "caritas," which means "love." But it is specifically the type of love designated in the New Testament by the Greek word "agape," a selfless, sacrificing, and unconditional love characterized by goodwill, benevolence, and a commitment to the well-being of others—it is the highest form of love exemplified by the love of God for mankind: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

How can we show such *divine* charity? We do so by the rite with which we Orthodox start Lent, on the last of the preparatory Sundays, by forgiveness. And we follow through by works of love—kindness towards others, magnanimity and generosity, caring for the needs of others, even those who are strangers to us. St. Paul explains the gift of charity more extensively in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends . . . So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:4-8, 13).

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this Lent I would like to give you this pastoral counsel: to know and to keep the five commandments of the Church with the same fidelity and seriousness as the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments issue from the Scriptures, but the commandments of the Church issue from an equally high authority—the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, divinely instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

## Lives of the Saints

*St. Eudocia of Heliopolis, Nun-martyr – commemorated on March 1*

St. Eudocia was a Samaritan woman living in Heliopolis of Phoenicia (present-day Baalbek, Lebanon). She was very beautiful, and garnered her wealth by attracting wealthy lovers. Her soul was deadened and her heart hardened. Eudocia awoke one night at midnight and heard singing from the house of a Christian woman next to hers. A monk was reading from a book which described the Last Judgment, the punishment of sinners, and the reward of the righteous. The grace of God touched Eudocia's heart, and she grieved because of her great wealth and for her sinful life.

In the morning Eudocia hastened to call on the man whose rule of prayer she heard the previous night. This was a monk named Germanus, returning from pilgrimage to the holy places to his own monastery. Eudocia listened for a long time to the guidance of the Elder, and her soul was filled with joy and love for Christ. She asked Germanus to stay in her home for a week, during which she secluded herself in her room, and spent her time in fasting and prayer. The Elder Germanus told her to give away her wealth and to forget her previous life. Eudocia received holy Baptism from Bishop Theodotus of Heliopolis. She entered a monastery<sup>1</sup> and took upon herself very strict acts of penitence. The Lord granted forgiveness to the penitent sinner and endowed her with spiritual gifts.

After she had become the head of the monastery, the young pagan Philostrates (one of her former lovers) heard of her conversion to Christ and longed to see her again. Aflame with impious passion, he came into the monastery in the guise of a monk and began to urge Eudocia to return to Heliopolis, and resume her former life. "May God rebuke you and not allow you to leave these premises," Eudocia cried. Then the impostor fell down dead. Fearing that she had served as an accomplice to murder, the sisters intensified their prayer and besought the Lord to reveal to them His will. The Lord appeared to St. Eudocia in a vision and said: "Arise, Eudocia, and pray for the resurrection of the dead man." Through Eudocia's prayers, Philostrates revived. Having been restored to life, the pagan begged the nun to forgive him. After he was baptized, he went back to Heliopolis. From that time he never forgot the mercy of God shown him, and he started onto the way of repentance.

Some time passed, and the people of Heliopolis reported to the Roman governor, Aurelian, that St. Eudocia had taken gold and silver out of the city and concealed it at the monastery. Aurelian sent a detachment of soldiers to confiscate these supposed treasures. For three days the soldiers tried in vain to approach the walls of the monastery, but an invisible power of God guarded it. Aurelian again sent soldiers to the monastery, this time under the command of his own son. But on the very first day of the journey Aurelian's son injured his leg and soon died. Then Philostrates counseled Aurelian to write to Mother Eudocia, imploring her to revive the youth. And the Lord, in His infinite mercy, and through the prayers of St. Eudocia, restored the youth to life. Having witnessed this great miracle, Aurelian and his close associates believed in Christ and were baptized.

When persecutions against Christians intensified, they arrested St. Eudocia and brought her to the governor Diogenes (presumably Aurelian's successor) to be tortured. While torturing the saint, the military commander Diodorus received news of the sudden death of his wife Firmina. In despair he rushed to St. Eudocia with a plea to pray for his departed wife. The monastic martyr, filled with great faith, turned to God with prayer and besought Him to return Firmina to life. As eyewitnesses of the power and grace of the Lord, Diodorus and Diogenes believed in Christ and were baptized together with their families. St. Eudocia lived for a while at the house of Diodorus and enlightened the newly-illuminated Christians.

While she was staying in the house of Diodorus, the only son of a certain widow, who was working in the garden, was bitten by a snake and died. The mother wept bitterly for her dead son, and asked Diodorus to resurrect him. Learning of her grief, St. Eudocia said to Diodorus, "The time is at hand for you to show faith in the Almighty God, Who hears the prayers of penitent sinners and in His mercy grants them forgiveness." Diodorus was distressed, not considering himself worthy of such boldness before the Lord, but deferential to the saint's authority, he obeyed her. He prayed and in the

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<sup>1</sup> As this was at least 150 years before the institution of cenobitic monasticism, this "monastery" was most likely a congregation of Christian widows and virgins living communally in a private house with a chapel. Its maintenance would have been from the "daily distributions" brought by the deacons of the local diocese.

name of Christ he commanded the dead one to rise, and before the eyes of everyone present the youth revived.

St. Eudocia returned to her monastery, where she lived in asceticism for fifty-six years. After Diogenes died the new governor was Vicentius, a fierce persecutor of Christians. Having learned of the accomplishments of the saint, he gave orders to execute her. The holy martyr was beheaded on March 1, 107.

## **Theological Excerpt**

*“Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing. Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.”*

– St. Gregory the Theologian (329-390)

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

*“Why do Orthodox fast so much?”*

To clarify, fasting doesn't mean giving up all food and water. Orthodox fasting practice, when followed strictly, means that not partaking of any animal products (i.e., no meat, dairy, eggs, etc.), nor of olive oil or wine. Fasting is one of many tools that we use to bring our bodies “under subjection” as St. Paul said (I Cor. 9:27), so that we might be pure and holy. Jesus said that when He had gone, His followers would fast. Like the early Christians, we fast so that we may learn to control our appetite for all things that are not good and holy. It is not about earning salvation, it is a tool to help us work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), enabling us to train and strengthen our wills so that they can be turned toward Christ. Specifically, we fast each Wednesday to commemorate the day when Jesus was betrayed and each Friday to commemorate His death on the cross. In addition, we fast during the entire Lenten period and the entire Advent period, as well as during certain other times during the year. We might add that Orthodox fasting practice is “maximalist,” i.e., the standard given is the ideal to which the faithful aspire to attain as best they can, and that fasting rules are only applicable to those in normal health who are over the age of seven.

## **Parish News**

### Lenten Food Drive

As a charity for Lent, our parish will collect cans of soup and other non-perishable foods for donation to a local food pantry. Donated food items may be left in the church hall from Sunday, February 15, 2026 to Sunday, March 22, 2026. Please make certain that donated items are not past the expiration date. Thank You for your donations to this charitable project.

### Orthodox Sunday Vespers

Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers will be celebrated on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 4:00 PM at St. John's Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church, 145 Broad St., Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Rt. Rev. Bishop Irinej (Dobrijevič) will be the main celebrant and homilist. See flyer on bulletin board in the church vestibule.

### Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council is meeting in the church hall on Sunday, March 15, 2026 after Divine Liturgy.

## Parish Confessions

All parishioners ought to go to confession during Great Lent. Confessions may be heard after any Friday or Saturday evening service. Those who legitimately cannot attend services on Friday or Saturday evenings may call the Rectory to make your arrangements for confession at another time.

## **Recipe of the Month**

### Vegan Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

*They are so simple, soft, chewy, moist and sweetened with delicious maple syrup, unlike refined sugars in traditional oatmeal cookies. Don't worry if you are allergic to nuts, sunbutter can easily be subbed, but keep in mind that it will leave a sunbutter taste. For the dry ingredients, use tapioca starch and oats. The tapioca is very important here, as it is what binds the cookies well since there are no eggs, as well as helps them to brown and keep moist.*

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1½ cup (8.25 oz.) old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1/3 cup (5 oz.) tapioca starch (this helps to bind the cookies and make them crispy)
- 1½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/3 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/2 cup + 1 tablespoon (6.6 oz.) pure maple syrup
- 1 cup (8.5 oz.) roasted creamy almond butter (see Note)
- 3 teaspoons (0.5 oz.) vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup (2 oz.) water
- 1/2 cup (3.2 oz.) raisins (or chocolate chips)

### **DIRECTIONS**

- (1) Preheat an oven to 350 degrees and line 2 sheet pans with parchment paper.
- (2) In a large bowl, add the oats, tapioca starch, cinnamon, baking powder and salt and whisk really well.
- (3) To the same bowl, pour in the syrup, almond butter, vanilla extract, and water. Stir until well combined. Add the raisins and stir again until it all comes together. It should be very sticky and wet.
- (4) Drop by heaping tablespoons or a heaping cookie scoop, leaving a couple of inches in between. This will yield about 27 cookies that are 2 inches wide. If you want large cookies, do about 2 tablespoons worth of dough. Do not flatten out the dough. It should be a little wet, but very sticky and hold its shape. They will spread some but puff up a lot more than they will spread. Bake the first pan on the middle rack for 9 minutes. They should be puffed up and a nice light golden color. They may seem a bit undercooked but they will finish cooking as they cool, you do not want to overbake these. Then repeat with the second. This will produce a nice moist and chewy cookie with a golden color. It is not recommend to bake any longer so they don't dry out.
- (5) Let them cool on the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer to completely cool on a rack. Store in a tight ziplock bag.

## NOTE

If you are allergic to nuts, sunbutter can easily be subbed in place of the almond butter, but keep in mind that it will leave a sunbutter taste. It's important to use a very smooth butter so that the batter mixes properly. If yours is stored in the refrigerator, heat it up just a bit to loosen it before measuring.

## Schedule of Services

### Feb. 28-March 1, 2026

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

### March 6-8, 2026

5:00 PM (Friday) – Memorial Presanctified  
Liturgy w. Gen. Parastas  
5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers  
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

### March 13-15, 2026

5:00 PM (Friday) – Memorial Presanctified  
Liturgy w. Gen. Parastas  
5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers  
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

### March 20-22, 2026

5:00 PM (Friday) – Memorial Presanctified  
Liturgy w. Gen. Parastas  
5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers  
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

### March 24-25, 2026 [*Holy Annunciation*]

6:00 PM (Tuesday) – Vigil w. Lity  
9:30 AM (Wednesday) – Vesperal Liturgy

### March 26-29, 2026

6:00 PM (Thursday) – Great Canon (entire)  
6:00 PM (Friday) – Akathist to Virgin Mary  
9:30 AM (Saturday) – Divine Liturgy  
5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers  
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

## Special Donations

*Special Donations may be offered at \$15 for the Altar Vigils, \$10 for the Sanctuary Lamp, and \$5 for any one of the following: 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. For acknowledgement of Special Donations in the April 2026 issue, the donation must be recorded in the Special Donations register in the church vestibule by March 22, 2026.*

### March 1, 2026

**Altar Vigils** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Albert & Vera Royer. **Sanctuary Lamp** offered by Reader Stephen Wasilewski in memory of Mary Macinsky. **St. John's Cross** offered by Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Macinsky (anniversary of repose). **Triple Candelabra** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Angela DiGiovanni.

### March 8, 2026

**St. John's Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Right Rev. Bishop John (Legky). **St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Concetta Gloria Royer (anniversary of birth).

March 15, 2026

**St. John's Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rena Robichaud (20th anniversary of repose). **St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Fr. Herman Schick.

## Daily Bible Readings

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3/1		Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2	John 1:43-51	
3/2	Isaiah 4:2-5:7	Genesis 3:21-4:7	Proverbs 3:34-4:22	
3/3	Isaiah 5:7-16	Genesis 4:8-15	Proverbs 5:1-15	
3/4	Isaiah 5:16-25	Genesis 4:16-26	Proverbs 5:15-6:3	
3/5	Isaiah 6:1-12	Genesis 5:1-24	Proverbs 6:3-20	
3/6	Isaiah 7:1-15	Genesis 5:32-6:8	Proverbs 6:20-7:1	
3/7		1 Thessalonians 4:13-17	John 5:24-30	(Departed)
3/7		Hebrews 3:12-16	Mark 1:35-44	
3/8		Hebrews 7:26-8:2	John 10:9-16	(Saint)
3/8		Hebrews 1:10-2:3	Mark 2:1-12	
3/9	Isaiah 8:13-9:7	Genesis 6:9-22	Proverbs 8:1-21	
3/9		Hebrews 12:1-10	Matthew 20:1-16	(Martyrs)
3/10	Isaiah 9:9-10:4	Genesis 7:1-15	Proverbs 8:32-9:11	
3/11	Isaiah 10:12-20	Genesis 7:6-9	Proverbs 9:12-18	
3/12	Isaiah 11:10-12:2	Genesis 7:11-8:3	Proverbs 10:1-22	
3/13	Isaiah 13:2-13	Genesis 8:4-21	Proverbs 10:31-11:12	
3/14		1 Thessalonians 4:13-17	John 5:24-30	(Departed)
3/14		Hebrews 10:32-38	Mark 2:14-17	
3/15		Hebrews 4:14-5:6	Mark 8:34-9:1	
3/16	Isaiah 14:24-32	Genesis 8:21-9:7	Proverbs 11:19-12:6	
3/17	Isaiah 25:1-9	Genesis 9:8-17	Proverbs 12:8-22	
3/18	Isaiah 26:21-27:9	Genesis 9:18-10:1	Proverbs 12:23-13:9	
3/19	Isaiah 28:14-22	Genesis 10:32-11:9	Proverbs 13:19-14:6	
3/20	Isaiah 29:13-23	Genesis 12:1-7	Proverbs 14:15-26	
3/21		1 Corinthians 15:47-57	John 5:24-30	(Departed)
3/21		Hebrews 6:9-12	Mark 7:31-37	
3/22		Ephesians 5:9-19	Matthew 4:25-5:12	(Saint)
3/22		Hebrews 6:13-20	Mark 9:17-31	
3/23	Isaiah 37:33-38:6	Genesis 13:12-18	Proverbs 14:27-15:4	
3/24	Isaiah 40:18-31	Genesis 15:1-15	Proverbs 15:7-19	
3/25	Isaiah 41:4-14	Genesis 17:1-9	Proverbs 15:20-16:9	
3/25		Hebrews 2:11-18	Luke 1:24-38	(Theotokos)
3/26	Isaiah 42:5-16	Genesis 18:20-33	Proverbs 16:17-17:17	
3/26		Hebrews 2:11-18	Luke 1:24-38	(Theotokos)
3/27	Isaiah 45:11-17	Genesis 22:1-18	Proverbs 17:17-18:5	
3/28		Hebrews 9:1-7	Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28	(Theotokos)
3/28		Hebrews 9:24-28	Mark 8:27-31	
3/29		Galatians 3:23-29	Luke 7:36-50	(Saint)
3/29		Hebrews 9:11-14	Mark 10:32-45	
3/30	Isaiah 48:17-49:4	Genesis 27:1-41	Proverbs 19:16-25	
3/31	Isaiah 49:6-10	Genesis 31:3-16	Proverbs 21:3-21	
3/31		Hebrews 7:26-8:2	John 10:9-16	(St. Innocent)

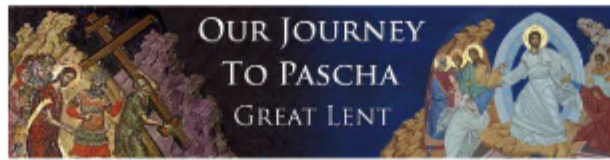
Remember to support the parish every time you shop!



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

# NEW JERSEY DEANERY

## 2026 LENTEN MISSION SERVICE SCHEDULE



**Sunday, March 8, 5:00pm**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent - St. Gregory Palamas**  
Holy Spirit Church  
102 Rte 284, Wantage NJ

**Sunday, March 15, 5:00pm**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent - The Precious and Life-giving Cross**  
St. Vladimir Church  
812 Grand Street, Trenton, NJ

**Sunday, March 22, 5:00pm**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent – St. John Climacus**  
Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church  
35 Orange Ave., Clifton, NJ  
*Main Celebrant: Archbishop MICHAEL*

**Sunday, March 29, 5:00pm**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent – St. Mary of Egypt**  
Saints Peter and Paul Church  
76 Whitehead Ave., South River, NJ

**Wednesday, April 15, 6:30pm**

**Bright Wednesday**  
Christ the Saviour Church  
365 Paramus Road, Paramus, NJ  
*Main Celebrant: Archbishop MICHAEL*

All services are followed by refreshments and fellowship.

Collections at all services will support the activities of the Deanery.  
Kindly make checks payable to "New Jersey Deanery"