

Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
Vol. 8, Number 7: March 2021

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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 hours spent closest to Paradise are the hours spent in church together with all our brethren when we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, when we sing, and when we receive Holy Communion.”
— St. Porphyrius the Athonite (1906-1991)

The 2021 St. Tikhon’s Wall Calendar has the above quote as its quote for the month. Let us reflect on its meaning. The Divine Liturgy begins with the acclamation: “*Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*”; i.e., an acclamation of the Kingdom of God, brought into being by the Kingdom bringer himself, Christ and represented by the Priest “*in persona Christi*.”¹ The Kingdom of God, which is Paradise, is at Hand! The Liturgy is the feast of the Kingdom, an inauguration of things to come, but also present and active here and now. The powers of Heaven invisibly worship with us. This is but a taste of the reality of the Church’s Liturgy, but how often do we regard attending church as little more than fulfilling a duty or, even worse, as if we are attending a performance. Is it just something you do to fulfill an obligation and endure impatiently? The word “Liturgy” means “the people’s work” ... it’s faith in action, word, song, prostrations, incensing, bowing and making the sign of the Cross, and so forth. You are participating in the most significant encounter with the Eucharistic Risen Lord, the source and the summit of our life!

The truth is Liturgy is life-giving and beautiful, yet so often we are spiritually blinded by our sin and attachment to worldly concerns. Church is boring when it’s just about sitting through something we don’t understand or care to understand. To the outsider, it may appear to be a set of strange and hollow

¹ *In persona Christi* is a Latin phrase meaning “in the person of Christ,” an important concept in Christian liturgical tradition. A priest is *in persona Christi* because he acts as Christ in pronouncing the words that comprise part of a sacramental rite. For example, in the Divine Liturgy, the Words of Institution, by which the bread becomes the Body of Christ and the wine becomes the Precious Blood. Furthermore, the priest and bishop act “in the person of Christ the head” (*in persona Christi capitis*) in their leadership of the Church.

customs; something from the past like visiting a museum about an ancient tribe with quirky habits. Yet the Divine Liturgy, in particular, is the very thing that brings salvation from death and healing. It is the hospital for the sick. It is something to be lived. We are called to immerse ourselves in the Liturgy which is the very life of the Church, the life of the community; to become Church, the very Body of Christ present with us. Orthodox worship is ancient, and yet very relevant. It may seem foreign to the modern world, but it's as timeless as ever because people really haven't changed. Fashion, music, technology may have changed, but human nature hasn't. We need God as much as our ancestors did. Everything in the Liturgy, every act, every phase has been designed to draw us into the mysteries, to worship in communion with our brothers and sisters in the faith in the presence of Christ our King.

In the Divine Liturgy we give creation a voice and we offer it back to God in the form of bread, wine which symbolizes the entire created order. We are in the presence of God and his Saints. *"What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me? I will take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the lord ..."* (Psalm 115 12-13). Every service is a chance to encounter the risen Lord and to be transformed. We are offered up, not just the bread and wine in Divine Liturgy. We are the outward, living sign of the Kingdom of God when we participate in this most public action of the Christian community in relationship with the Holy Trinity. In Orthodox Christian worship, the prayers of the celebrants are sealed and affirmed with "Amen," Hebrew for "let it be so." Without the "Amen" acknowledged by the members of the Body of Christ present in the church, the Divine Liturgy cannot continue. At least one person must be present in addition to the priest or bishop for Divine Liturgy to be given. In the liturgy we praise God in song, word, the smells and the bells, the beautiful icons, we bow and we make the sign of the cross.

The church day and year has a cycle, it's not just about Divine Liturgy; there is the liturgy of the hours, matins, vespers, and compline, to name some of the most consequential ones. There is a daily cycle as the sun moves across the world from east to west. In Matins we give praise to God who reveals himself to us just as the sun rises to overtake the darkness of night and to nourish the world. In the evening, Vespers is celebrated, usually as the sun sets, where we reflect upon the true source of light, Christ the Son of God and the Son of Righteousness whose love for us will never set. We must strive to see the deep reality and mystery present in the life of the Church, seen and unseen by our human eyes. The earthly Liturgy as a manifestation in time of the heavenly offering and is therefore heaven on earth. The Church is an earthly Heaven, a showing forth of the eternal offering in Heaven here and now.

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

"The only true riches are those that make us rich in virtue. Therefore, if you want to be rich, beloved, love true riches. If you aspire to the heights of real honor, strive to reach the kingdom of Heaven. If you value rank and renown, hasten to be enrolled in the heavenly court of the Angels."

— St. Gregory the Dialogist (c. 540-604)

Lives of the Saints

St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome – commemorated on March 12th

Pope Gregory I (c. 540–March 12, 604), commonly known as St. Gregory the Great, was the bishop of Rome from September 3, 590 to his death. He is known for initiating the first recorded large-scale mission from Rome, to convert the then-pagan Anglo-Saxons in England to Christianity. Gregory is also well known for his writings, which were more prolific than those of any of his predecessors as pope. The epithet St. Gregory the Dialogist has been given to him in Eastern Christianity because of his *Dialogues*.

The exact date of Gregory's birth is uncertain but is usually estimated to be around the year 540, in the city of Rome, then recently reconquered by the Eastern Roman Empire from the Ostrogoths. His

parents named him Gregorius, which according to Ælfric of Abingdon in *An Homily on the Birth-Day of S. Gregory*, "... is a Greek Name [sic], which signifies in the Latin Tongue, Vigilantius, that is in English, Watchful ..." Gregory was born into a wealthy noble Roman family with close connections to the church. His father, Gordianus, a patrician who served as a senator and for a time was the Prefect of the City of Rome, also held the position of Regionarius in the church, though nothing further is known about that position. Gregory's mother, Silvia, was well-born, and had a married sister, Pateria, in Sicily. His mother and two paternal aunts are honored by Catholic and Orthodox churches as saints. Gregory's great-great-grandfather had been Pope Felix III, the nominee of the Gothic king, Theodoric. Gregory's election to the throne of St. Peter made his family the most distinguished clerical dynasty of the period.

The family owned and resided in a *villa suburbana* on the Caelian Hill, fronting the same street (now the Via di San Gregorio) as the former palaces of the Roman emperors on the Palatine Hill opposite. The north of the street runs into the Colosseum; the south, the Circus Maximus. In Gregory's day the ancient buildings were in ruins and were privately owned. Villas covered the area. Gregory's family also owned working estates in Sicily and around Rome. Gregory later had portraits done in fresco in their former home on the Caelian and these were described 300 years later by John the Deacon. Gordianus was tall with a long face and light eyes. He wore a beard. Silvia was tall, had a round face, blue eyes and a cheerful look. They had another son whose name and fate are unknown.

Gregory was born into a period of upheaval in Italy. From 542 the so-called Plague of Justinian swept through the provinces of the empire, including Italy. The plague caused famine, panic, and sometimes rioting. In some parts of the country, over a third of the population was wiped out or destroyed, with heavy spiritual and emotional effects on the people of the Empire. Politically, although the Western Roman Empire had long since vanished in favor of the Gothic kings of Italy, during the 540s Italy was gradually retaken from the Goths by Justinian I, emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire ruling from Constantinople. As the fighting was mainly in the north, the young Gregory probably saw little of it. Totila sacked and vacated Rome in 546, destroying most of its population, but in 549 he invited those who were still alive to return to the empty and ruined streets. It is theorized that young Gregory and his parents retired during that intermission to their Sicilian estates, to return in 549. The war was over in Rome by 552, and a subsequent invasion of the Franks was defeated in 554. After that, there was peace in Italy, and appearance of restoration, except that the imperial government now resided in Constantinople.

Like most young men of his position in Roman society, Gregory was well educated, learning grammar, rhetoric, the sciences, literature, and law; he excelled in all these fields. Gregory of Tours reported that "in grammar, dialectic and rhetoric ... he was second to none ..." He wrote correct Latin but did not read or write Greek. He knew Latin authors, natural science, history, mathematics and music and had such a "fluency with imperial law" that he may have trained in it "as a preparation for a career in public life." Indeed, he became a government official, advancing quickly in rank to become, like his father, Prefect of Rome, the highest civil office in the city, when only thirty-three years old.

The monks of the Monastery of St. Andrew, established by Gregory at the ancestral home on the Caelian, had a portrait of him made after his death, which John the Deacon also saw in the 9th century. He reports the picture of a man who was "rather bald" and had a "tawny" beard like his father's and a face that was intermediate in shape between his mother's and father's. The hair that he had on the sides was long and carefully curled. His nose was "thin and straight" and "slightly aquiline". "His forehead was high." He had thick, "subdivided" lips and a chin "of a comely prominence" and "beautiful hands." In the modern era, Gregory is often depicted as a man at the border, poised between the Roman and Germanic worlds, between East and West, and above all, perhaps, between the ancient and medieval epochs.

On his father's death, Gregory converted his family villa into a monastery dedicated to Andrew the Apostle (after his death it was rededicated as San Gregorio Magno al Celio). In his life of contemplation,

Gregory concluded that "in that silence of the heart, while we keep watch within through contemplation, we are as if asleep to all things that are without." Gregory had a deep respect for the monastic life and particularly the vow of poverty. Thus, when it came to light that a monk lying on his death bed had stolen three gold pieces, Gregory, as a remedial punishment, forced the monk to die alone, then threw his body and coins on a manure heap to rot with a condemnation, "Take your money with you to perdition." Gregory believed that punishment of sins can begin, even in this life before death. However, in time, after the monk's death, Gregory had 30 Masses offered for the man to assist his soul before the final judgment. He viewed being a monk as the 'ardent quest for the vision of our Creator.' His three paternal aunts were nuns renowned for their sanctity. However, after the eldest two, Trasilla and Emiliana, died after seeing a vision of their ancestor Pope Felix III, the youngest soon abandoned the religious life and married the steward of her estate. Gregory's response to this family scandal was that "many are called but few are chosen." Gregory's mother, Silvia, is herself a saint. Eventually, Pope Pelagius II ordained Gregory a deacon and solicited his help in trying to heal the schism of the Three Chapters in northern Italy. However, this schism was not healed until well after Gregory was gone.

In 579, Pelagius II chose Gregory as his *apocrisiarius* (ambassador to the imperial court in Constantinople), a post Gregory would hold until 586. Gregory was part of the Roman delegation (both lay and clerical) that arrived in Constantinople in 578 to ask the emperor for military aid against the Lombards. With the Byzantine military focused on the East, these entreaties proved unsuccessful; in 584, Pelagius II wrote to Gregory as apocrisiarius, detailing the hardships that Rome was experiencing under the Lombards and asking him to ask Emperor Maurice to send a relief force. Maurice, however, had long ago determined to limit his efforts against the Lombards to intrigue and diplomacy, pitting the Franks against them. It soon became obvious to Gregory that the Byzantine emperors were unlikely to send such a force, given their more immediate difficulties with the Persians in the East and the Avars and Slavs to the North. If Gregory's principal task was to plead Rome's cause before the emperor, there seems to have been little left for him to do once imperial policy toward Italy became evident. Although the writings of John the Deacon claim that Gregory "labored diligently for the relief of Italy," there is no evidence that his tenure accomplished much towards any of the objectives of Pelagius II.

Gregory's theological disputes with Patriarch Eutychius would leave a "bitter taste for the theological speculation of the East" with Gregory that continued to influence him well into his own papacy. In Constantinople, Gregory took issue with the aged Patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople, who had recently published a treatise, now lost, on the General Resurrection. Eutychius maintained that the resurrected body "will be more subtle than air, and no longer palpable." Gregory opposed with the palpability of the risen Christ in Luke 24:39 ("Palpate et videte, quia spiritus carnem et ossa non-habet, sicut me videtis habere, " or "touch me, and look; a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see that I have.>"). As the dispute could not be settled, the Byzantine emperor, Tiberius II, undertook to arbitrate. He decided in favor of palpability and ordered Eutychius' book to be burned. Shortly after both Gregory and Eutychius became ill; Gregory recovered, but Eutychius died on April 5, 582, at age 70. On his deathbed Eutychius recanted impalpability and Gregory dropped the matter. Gregory left Constantinople for Rome in 585, returning to his monastery on the Caelian Hill. Gregory was elected by acclamation to succeed Pelagius II in 590, when the latter died of the plague spreading through the city. Gregory was approved by an Imperial *iussio* from Constantinople the following September (as was the norm during the Byzantine Papacy).

Gregory was more inclined to remain retired into the monastic lifestyle of contemplation. In texts of all genres, especially those produced in his first year as pope, Gregory bemoaned the burden of office and mourned the loss of the undisturbed life of prayer he had once enjoyed as a monk. When he became pope in 590, among his first acts was writing a series of letters disavowing any ambition to the throne of Peter and praising the contemplative life of the monks. At that time, for various reasons, the Holy See had not exerted effective leadership in the West since the pontificate of Gelasius I. The episcopacy in Gaul was

drawn from the great territorial families, and identified with them: the parochial horizon of Gregory's contemporary, Gregory of Tours, may be considered typical; in Visigothic Spain the bishops had little contact with Rome; in Italy the territories which had de facto fallen under the administration of the papacy were beset by the violent Lombard dukes and the rivalry of the Byzantines in the Exarchate of Ravenna and in the South.

Pope Gregory had strong convictions on missions: "Almighty God places good men in authority that He may impart through them the gifts of His mercy to their subjects. And this we find to be the case with the British over whom you have been appointed to rule, that through the blessings bestowed on you the blessings of heaven might be bestowed on your people also." He is credited with re-energizing the Church's missionary work among the non-Christian peoples of northern Europe. He is most famous for sending a mission, often called the Gregorian mission, under Augustine of Canterbury, prior of Saint Andrew's, where he had perhaps succeeded Gregory, to evangelize the pagan Anglo-Saxons of England. It seems that the pope had never forgotten the English slaves whom he had once seen in the Roman Forum. The mission was successful, and it was from England that missionaries later set out for the Netherlands and Germany. The preaching of non-heretical Christian faith and the elimination of all deviations from it was a key element in Gregory's worldview, and it constituted one of the major continuing policies of his pontificate. Pope Gregory the Great urged his followers on the value of bathing as a bodily need. " In his official documents, Gregory was the first to make extensive use of the term "Servant of the Servants of God" (*servus servorum Dei*) as a papal title, thus initiating a practice that was to be followed by most subsequent popes.

The Church had a practice from early times of passing on a large portion of the donations it received from its members as alms. As pope, Gregory did his utmost to encourage that high standard among church personnel. Gregory is known for his extensive administrative system of charitable relief of the poor at Rome. The poor were predominantly refugees from the incursions of the Lombards. The philosophy under which he devised this system is that the wealth belonged to the poor and the church was only its steward. He received lavish donations from the wealthy families of Rome, who, following his own example, were eager, by doing so, to expiate their sins. He gave alms equally as lavishly both individually and en masse. He wrote in letters: "I have frequently charged you ... to act as my representative ... to relieve the poor in their distress" and "... I hold the office of steward to the property of the poor" In St. Gregory's time, the Church in Rome received donations of many different kinds: consumables such as food and clothing; investment property: real estate and works of art; and capital goods, or revenue-generating property, such as the Sicilian *latifundia*, or agricultural estates. The Church already had a system for circulating the consumables to the poor: associated with each of the main city churches was a *diaconium* or office of the deacon. He was given a building from which the poor could apply for assistance at any time.

The circumstances in which Gregory became pope in 590 were of ruination. The Lombards held the greater part of Italy. Their depredations had brought the economy to a standstill. They camped nearly at the gates of Rome. The city itself was crowded with refugees from all walks of life, who lived in the streets and had few of the necessities of life. The seat of government was far from Rome in Constantinople and appeared unable to undertake the relief of Italy. Pope Pelagius II had sent emissaries, including St. Gregory, asking for assistance, to no avail.

In 590, Gregory could wait for Constantinople no longer. He organized the resources of the church into an administration for general relief. In doing so he evidenced a talent for and intuitive understanding of the principles of accounting, which was not to be invented for centuries. The church already had basic accounting documents: every expense was recorded in journals called *regesta*, "lists" of amounts, recipients and circumstances. Revenue was recorded in *polyptici*, "books." Many of these *polyptici* were ledgers recording the operating expenses of the church and the assets, the *patrimonia*. A central papal

administration, the *notarii*, under a chief, the *primicerius notariorum*, kept the ledgers and issued *brevia patrimonii*, or lists of property for which each rector was responsible.

Gregory began by aggressively requiring his churchmen to seek out and relieve needy persons and reprimanded them if they did not. In a letter to a subordinate in Sicily he wrote: "I asked you most of all to take care of the poor. And if you knew of people in poverty, you should have pointed them out ... I desire that you give the woman, Pateria, forty solidi for the children's shoes and forty bushels of grain" Soon he was replacing administrators who would not cooperate with those who would and at the same time adding more in a build-up to a great plan that he had in mind. He understood that expenses must be matched by income. To pay for his increased expenses he liquidated the investment property and paid the expenses in cash according to a budget recorded in the *polyptici*. The churchmen were paid four times a year and also personally given a golden coin for their trouble.

Money, however, was no substitute for food in a city that was on the brink of famine. Even the wealthy were going hungry in their villas. The church now owned between 1,300 and 1,800 square miles of revenue-generating farmland divided into large sections called *patrimonia*. It produced goods of all kinds, which were sold, but Gregory intervened and had the goods shipped to Rome for distribution in the *diaconia*. He gave orders to step up production, set quotas and put an administrative structure in place to carry it out. Grain, wine, cheese, meat, fish and oil began to arrive at Rome in large quantities, where it was given away for nothing as alms.

Distributions to qualified persons were monthly. However, a certain proportion of the population lived in the streets or were too ill or infirm to pick up their monthly food supply. To them Gregory sent out a small army of charitable persons, mainly monks, every morning with prepared food. It is said that he would not dine until the indigent were fed. When he did dine, he shared the family table, which he had saved (and which still exists), with twelve indigent guests. To the needy living in wealthy homes, he sent meals he had cooked with his own hands as gifts to spare them the indignity of receiving charity. These and other good deeds and charitable frame of mind completely won the hearts and minds of the Roman people. They now looked to the Papacy for government, ignoring Constantinople. The office of urban prefect went without candidates. From the time of Gregory the Great until the rise of Italian nationalism, the Papacy was the most influential presence in Italy.

John the Deacon wrote that Pope Gregory I made a general revision of the liturgy of the Pre-Tridentine Mass, "removing many things, changing a few, adding some". In letters, Gregory remarks that he moved the Pater Noster (Our Father) to immediately after the Roman Canon and immediately before the Fraction. This position is still maintained today in the Roman Liturgy. The pre-Gregorian position is evident in the Ambrosian Rite. Gregory added material to the *Hanc Igitur* of the Roman Canon and established the nine Kyries (a vestigial remnant of the litany which was originally at that place) at the beginning of Mass. He also reduced the role of deacons in the Roman Liturgy. Sacramentaries directly influenced by Gregorian reforms are referred to as *Sacramentaria Gregoriana*. Roman and other Western liturgies since this era have a number of prayers that change to reflect the feast or liturgical season; these variations are visible in the collects and prefaces as well as in the Roman Canon itself.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church and Eastern Catholic Churches, Gregory is credited as the primary influence in constructing the more penitential Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, a fully separate form of the Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite adapted to the needs of the season of Great Lent. Its Roman Rite equivalent is the Mass of the Presanctified used only on Good Friday. The Syriac Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts continues to be used in the Malankara Rite, a variant of the West Syrian Rite historically practiced in the Malankara Church of India, and now practiced by the several churches that descended from it and at some occasions in the Assyrian Church of the East. The mainstream form of Western plainchant, standardized in the late 9th century, was attributed to Pope Gregory I and so took

the name of Gregorian chant. The earliest such attribution is in John the Deacon's biography of Gregory (written in 893) and in the chant that bears his name, the Gregorian Chant.

St. Gregory is commonly credited with founding the medieval papacy and many have attributed the beginning of medieval spirituality to him. Gregory is the only pope between the fifth and the eleventh centuries whose correspondence and writings have survived enough to form a comprehensive corpus. Some of his writings are: Commentary on Job, Commentary on 1 Kings, The Rule of Pastors, the Dialogues, The Life and Miracles of Saint Benedict, Sermons (including the Twenty-two Homilies on Ezekiel, Forty Homilies on the Gospels, and Exposition on the Song of Songs), and 854 letters.

St. Gregory was declared a saint immediately after his death by "popular acclamation." The current General Roman Calendar, revised in 1969, celebrates his feast on September 3rd. Before that, it assigned his feast day to March 12th, the day of his death in 604. Following the imposition of Pope John XXIII's Code of Rubrics in 1961, celebration of St. Gregory's feast day was made practically impossible, as John XXIII's reforms forbade the full observance of most feasts during Lent, during which March 12th invariably falls in Western Christianity. For this reason, St. Gregory's feast day was moved to September 3rd, the day of his episcopal consecration in 590, as part of the liturgical reforms of Pope Paul VI.

The Eastern Orthodox Church and the Eastern Catholic Churches following the Byzantine Rite commemorate St. Gregory on March 12th, which is usually during Great Lent (this year is one of the few exceptions), the only time when the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, which names Saint Gregory as its author, is used. Other churches that also honor St. Gregory are the Church of England and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, on September 3rd, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church U.S.A., and the Anglican Church of Canada, on March 12th. A traditional procession is held in Żejtun, Malta, in honor of St. Gregory on Easter Wednesday, which most often falls in April, the range of possible dates being March 25th to April 28th.

The relics of St. Gregory are enshrined in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. In Britain, appreciation for Gregory remained strong even after his death, with him being called *Gregorius noster* ("our Gregory") by the British. It was in Britain, at a monastery in Whitby, that the first full-length life of Gregory was written, c. 713, by a monk or, possibly, a nun. The first vita of Gregory written in Italy was not produced until John the Deacon in the 9th century. The namesake church of San Gregorio al Celio in Rome, which is part of a monastery of monks of the Camaldolese branch of the Benedictine Order, is his principal shrine. One of the three oratories annexed, the oratory of St. Silvia, is said to lie over the tomb of Gregory's mother. In England, St. Gregory, along with St. Augustine of Canterbury, is revered as the apostle of the land and the source of the nation's conversion. Italian composer Ottorino Respighi composed a piece named St. Gregory the Great (San Gregorio Magno) that features as the fourth and final part of his Church Windows (Vetrata di Chiesa) works, written in 1925.

Modern Theological Classics

VII. Suffering

We often cannot (and we need not) understand the ways of God. We are often deeply struck down by the burden of woe and sorrow, which has fallen upon us. But already in the Old Testament, Job has felt rightly where the solution of our painful bewilderment lies. No explanations are given in the Book of Job of the woes and catastrophes which have struck him down with the permission of God. The only answer given in the book to the cries and dramatic questions of Job is the Divine Reality, is the manifestation and *Presence* of God. No other answer can be given to us. But in the Christian revelation the Divine Reality has become incomparably more manifested and the Presence has drawn nearer and is more comforting and

more adequate to our needs: it is *the Presence of the Suffering God*, it is the Only-begotten Son of God who has become—in a most real and perfect way—our brother and has entered the abyss of our suffering.

You remember how Dostoyevsky is seized with horror in contemplating the picture of general suffering throughout the world; but especially the picture of the suffering of the innocent, in first place that of little children, baffles him. If this is the price which has to be paid for the future human harmony, then *we cannot accept this harmony*, we cannot afford to pay the price, says Ivan Karamazov. The only answer that the other brother, Alyosha (representing Dostoyevsky's own faith and attitude) can give is the image of the Crucified. He can perform all, He can reconcile us, for He has measured the depth of our afflictions, of our loneliness, of our pain. Through Him, through His death on the Cross, the ways of God are justified. God is justified in His creation of the world. For here, in this suffering, the ultimate sense, the ultimate background of all life has become apparent: the boundless love of God, as the essential, the primordial and final meaning, also of suffering. For now suffering means the most intimate union with Him, even in pain and death. And that means: Life Eternal.

There is a very profound—yea, a mysterious—saying of the Apostle Paul's in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Now I am rejoicing in my suffering, for you and I fill up that what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church" (Colossians 1:24). We hear often and much in Paul's writings of the intimate union with the suffering Lord, with the cross and the death of Christ, of the "co-crucifixion" with Christ, as of the only means to attain the "newness of life," Life Eternal. It is the chief contents of Paul's preaching, the summary of his experience and doctrine, his ideal of life: "I am crucified with Christ, but I don't live any more—Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). Or: "We always bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (II Corinthians 4:10). But here, in this passage of Colossians, something even more mysterious and startling is said: not only can we share in the suffering of Christ, but more than that—our suffering, having become part of His suffering, can become a *part of His work of salvation*, for the good of our brethren. But not ours the merit, the patience, the obedience, the redeeming force; it is His, but it can work in us and, more than that, even through us, for the benefit of others. His blessed, world-redeeming Passion working thus in us and through us.

And when we have reached this stage—of obedience and humble self-surrender to our Lord, then can we also deliver our brethren into His arms, surrender them to His guardianship, guidance, and love, knowing then what it means to find Him and to have Him, be it even in suffering. But *we cannot accept the Cross for others*, on behalf of others, we can do it only for ourselves. Some theoreticians of Christianity are sometimes too inclined to accept the cross for others. But this is impossible and impious. But, as the depths of a new life are revealed to us in the Cross, so we may guess and hope and trust, in humility and trembling—praying God for the deliverance or the strengthening of our brethren—that our brethren also will not be left alone, that our Lord will comfort them also and reveal His blissful Presence to them, even in suffering.

The ultimate sense of existence, even of suffering, dawns on us. Let us not be theoreticians, but humble and loving, patient in our own trials, tireless in our prayer and in our work for the relief of our brethren from their pains and troubles. And then we shall here again be suddenly faced with this comforting and great mystery—His Presence: "I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat. I was thirsty, and you slaked my thirst. I was a homeless stranger, and you received Me; naked, and you clothed Me. I was sick, and you visited Me. I was in jail, and you come to Me" (Matthew 25:35-36). His Presence is here—in the suffering brethren, crowning them with a new dignity.

That is the practical Christian attitude towards the problem of suffering, and it reveals hidden mysteries and depths of love ... His love! ... in us and through us and in Him. And that is the answer: His hidden and manifested love, revealed to us in glimpses—in His life, His death and resurrection, and also

in the sharing of His Cross and in the gift and grace of compassion given to us. His love, “taking hold of us,” this love, stranger than death and suffering, manifested on the Cross, is the answer. That answer is not theoretical, it is *dynamical* and creative. It transfigures suffering and life and all.

Dr. Nicholas Arseniev,² “The Revelation of Life Eternal,” pp. 68-70

Recipe of the Month

Vegetarian Black Bean Pasta

Quick and easy to make, and an ideal Lenten entrée! Possible variations are adding ground flax seeds with the tomatoes and beans, or adding nutmeg to the spinach, or using a second can of diced tomatoes. For a heartier flavor, whole wheat fettuccine is recommended.

Ingredients:

- 9 ounces uncooked fettuccine
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1¾ cups sliced baby portobello mushrooms
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (14½ ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 cups fresh baby spinach
- Salt and pepper to taste (optional)

Directions:

1. Cook fettuccine according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms; cook and stir 4-6 minutes or until tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer.
2. Stir in black beans, tomatoes, rosemary and oregano; heat through. Stir in spinach until wilted. Drain fettuccine; add to bean mixture and toss to combine.

Parish News

Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council is Sunday, March 21, 2021.

In Memoriam

Eva Hannen, sister of parishioner Margaret Cimboric, passed away on January 28, 2021 at the age of 100. Sincere sympathy to Margaret and the Cimboric Family. Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak, former Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America (1973-1988) and former OCA Representative to the Patriarchate of Moscow (1992-2001), passed away on February 5, 2021 at the age of 94. Fr. Daniel had served as an interim priest at Ss. Peter & Paul's for several months in 2008-2009. Вічна Пам'ять! Memory Eternal!

² 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.

Schedule of Services

March 6-7, 2021

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

March 13-14, 2021

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

March 15-18, 2021

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

March 20-21, 2021

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

March 24-25, 2021

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

March 26-28, 2021

6:00 PM (Fri.) – Akathistos of Divine Passion
& General Panichida
5:00 PM (Sat.) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sun.) – Divine Liturgy

Daily Bible Readings*

1. 1 John 2:18-3:10; Mark 11:1-11
2. 1 John 3:11-20; Mark 14:10-42
3. 1 John 3:21-4:6; Mark 14:43-15:1
4. 1 John 4:20-5:21; Mark 15:1-15
5. 2 John 1:1-13; Mark 15:22-25, 33-41
6. 1 Corinthians 10:23-28; Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36
7. 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2; Matthew 25:31-46
8. 3 John 1:1-15; Luke 19:29-40, 22:7-39
9. Jude 1:1-10; Luke 22:39-42, 45-23:1
11. Jude 1:11-25; Luke 23:2-34, 44-56
13. Romans 14:19-23, 16:25-27; Matthew 6:1-13
14. Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 6:14-21
20. Hebrews 1:1-12 Mark 2:23-3:5
21. Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2; John 1:43-51
25. Hebrews 2:11-18; Luke 1:24-38
27. Hebrews 3:12-16; Mark 1:35-44
28. Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Mark 2:1-12
31. Hebrews 7:26-8:2; John 10:9-16

* There are no weekday Liturgy readings during Great Lent, on account of there being no Liturgies (other than the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts) on weekdays during Great Lent in Eastern Orthodox liturgical tradition. Liturgy readings are appointed only for Saturdays and Sundays (except for the great feast of Annunciation on 3/25 and the feast day of St. Innocent on 3/31).

Special Donations

Please note that for Special Donations in April 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 March 21, 2021.

March 7, 2021

Altar Vigils offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Concetta Gloria Royer and Antonetta Cusano (anniversaries of birth). **Sanctuary Lamp** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rt. Rev. Bishop John Legky (anniversary of repose).

March 14, 2021

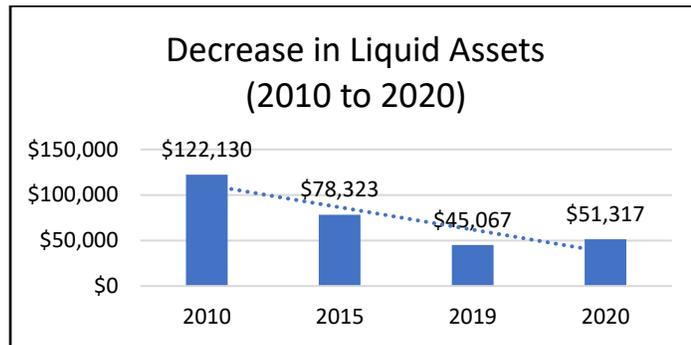
Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rena Robichaud (15th anniversary of repose).

Financial Snapshot

To provide a greater understanding of our parish finances, as of this issue we are including a financial snapshot in "Quo Vadis." The information is presented in a concise format that shows what is most relevant. Because of the timing of the newsletter, and when the financials are prepared, the information presented will be approximately two months behind.

January 2021	
Weekly Donations	\$5,592.00
Monthly Revenue (Pay It Forward Rewards, Gift Card Rebates, Interest Income, etc.)	\$848.74
Total Monthly Income	\$6,440.74
Salaries and Benefits*	\$3,915.00
Diocesan Obligation	
Operating Expenses	\$2,418.05
Total Monthly Expenses	\$6,333.05
Monthly Surplus (Deficit)	\$107.69

*Father Royer generously offered to reduce his annual salary by \$5,000 effected January 1, 2021.



NOTE: Our savings are currently covering the gap between our income and expenses. Liquid assets have decreased by 58% (approximately \$70,000) over the last 10 years. The increase from 2019 to 2020 was entirely due to \$9,700 received through the federal PPP (Payroll Protection Plan).

*The offering of time, talent, and treasure should be a free offering of love from the heart.
Thank you for your stewardship. May God bless you for your generosity.*

Remember to support the parish every time you shop!

