

Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
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98 West 28th Street, Bayonne, N.J. 07002

“**Quo Vadis?**” is a Latin phrase meaning “Where are you going?” It refers to a Christian tradition regarding St. Peter. According to the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, Peter is fleeing from likely crucifixion in Rome, and along the road outside the city, he encounters the risen Jesus. Peter asks Jesus “Quo vadis?” Jesus replies “Romam vado iterum crucifigi” (“I am going to Rome to be crucified again”). St. Peter thereby gains the fortitude to return to the city, to eventually be martyred by being crucified upside-down. The phrase also occurs a few times in the Latin *Vulgate* translation of the *Holy Bible*, notably in John 13:36 when Peter asks Jesus the same question, to which He responds, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me.” The Church of Domine Quo Vadis in Rome is built where, according to tradition, the meeting between St. Peter and the risen Jesus Christ took place.

This parish newsletter is called **Quo Vadis** for a reason: to ask the question of where *you* are going in life. Is your life’s journey leading you towards Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? St. Peter, at a pivotal moment in his life, when he understandably felt like running away, found the courage to go where Jesus Christ would have him go. Where are *you* going? Will *you* follow Jesus Christ?

Rector’s Message

On March 7th we begin the penitential season of Lent, in which we confess our sins and repent of them thereof by prayer, fasting, and charitable works. Because of the subdued nature of the penitential season, the Divine Liturgy, being a joyful, triumphant service, is celebrated only on Saturdays and Sundays; however, so that we may not be deprived long of the privilege of partaking of the Holy Eucharist, at a time when we most need its spiritual fortification, it is permitted to distribute Communion on certain days at Vespers, using “presanctified gifts.” Such a Vesper service at which the faithful may receive Communion is called the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, also known as the Liturgy of St. Gregory the Dialogist, because the ritual of it was written down by the Roman Pope, St. Gregory the Great (more commonly known in the East as St. Gregory the Dialogist). It is a shortened form of the Divine Liturgy, without the consecration of the Holy Gifts (i.e., without a Eucharistic Canon). A host consecrated at a previous Divine Liturgy is used for Holy Communion instead.

The Presanctified Liturgy is celebrated on those days of Lent when the contrition proper to the season does not allow the triumphal gladness conveyed by the full Divine Liturgy, yet the memories of the day demand the comfort of the Holy Sacrament. Such days are the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, the first three days of Holy Week, and all the days during Lent on which fall the feast of a saint in whose honor the “polyeleion” is prescribed. At this Liturgy the Holy Gifts are not consecrated, but the faithful partake of gifts at Holy Communion that have been consecrated at the preceding full Divine Liturgy, which are preserved in an ark on the altar. Therefore, the Presanctified Liturgy consists only in the bringing of the Holy Gifts, the preparation for Holy Communion, the act of Holy Communion and the thanksgiving for Holy Communion. This service is combined with that of Vespers only; as catechumens may be present at Vespers, before the Holy Gifts are transferred to the altar, the catechumens are bid to depart.

The Presanctified Liturgy is attested as an approved tradition in the Eastern Church by Canon 32 of the Quinisext Council in Trullo¹ (AD 692). It was formerly celebrated on most weekdays in Lent in medieval Byzantium; but today it takes place ordinarily only on Wednesdays and Fridays. In the Roman Church its celebration is restricted solely to Good Friday. The custom of celebrated a Presanctified Liturgy first appears in fifth-century Gaul (modern France), and its rite is described in the Gelasian Sacramentary (the oldest known Roman sacramentary in which the feasts are arranged according to the ecclesiastical year), which circulated widely in Gaul (the oldest surviving copy dates from the eighth century). In the Roman Rite, the ciborium² containing the hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday are brought to the high altar, and after the Lord's Prayer and a pre-communion prayer, the priest communicates himself and the people. In the reform of the Holy Week liturgy of 1955, the word "presanctified" was dropped from the official documents in the Roman Catholic Church.

Let us look forward, in eager anticipation, to the spiritual fortification and radiance, even if less than the triumphal glory of Divine Liturgy, that we receive in the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Let us appreciate, too, the wisdom of the Church, which recognized our need for some and light and joy within the penitential "darkness" and somberness of the Great Fast of Lent.

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

"Have confidence in the compassion of our Creator. Reflect well on what you are now doing, and keep before you the things you have done. Lift up your eyes to the overflowing compassion of heaven, and while He waits for you, draw near in tears to our merciful Judge. Having before your mind that He is a Just Judge, do not take your sins lightly; and having also in mind that He is compassionate, do not despair. The God-Man gives man confidence before God."

— St. Gregory the Great (540-604)

Lives of the Saints

St. Balbina of Rome, Virgin-martyr – commemorated on March 31st

The story of St. Balbina is introduced in the *Acts of Sts. Alexander and Balbina*, where it is said that she was the daughter of Quirinus, a tribune in the Roman Army. Usuardus speaks of her in his martyrology; his account of Balbina rests on the record of the martyrdom of Alexander I. Legend has it that Quirinus was ordered to hold Pope Alexander I and a man named Hermes in prison because of their Christian faith. They were held in separate prisons that were a great distance apart, and both were shackled and well-guarded. Quirinus was trying to convert Hermes back to the old gods, but promised to become a Christian if Hermes could prove that there was an afterlife. Hermes explained that Pope Alexander could make a better argument than he, and asked several times to visit his prison. At first Quirinus agreed to this, but after a while he became angry, convinced that these visits were frivolous excursions. He tightened the guard so that the two would not be able to speak with one another. That night Hermes prayed, and an angel appeared to Pope Alexander, releasing his chains and bringing him to Hermes' prison cell.

¹ A council held in 692 by the Eastern bishops to pass disciplinary canons in order to complete the work of the Fifth (AD 553) and Sixth (AD 680-681) Ecumenical Councils, hence its name "Quinisext" or "Fifth-Sixth" Council. It was held in a domed room in the imperial palace of Constantinople, the same venue as the Sixth Ecumenical Council met. Though not an "ecumenical" council in the strict sense, its authority is considered comparable to that of an "ecumenical council."

² A chalice-shaped vessel, with a lid, used to contain the sacramental body of Christ of the Holy Eucharist. It apparently came into general use in the Western Church in the Early Middle Ages.

The next morning Quirinus came to Hermes cell as usual, and he was shocked to find both men inside. His heart, now open to what the two Christians had to say, he stayed and talked with the men for a while. Hermes shared his story and told of how the Pope with the help of God had raised his son from the dead. Hearing this, Quirinus said that his daughter Balbina had a large goiter, and if the Pope could heal her, he would believe and become a Christian. The Pope asked him to bring her to prison where he was held originally. "How can she find you there, when you're here with Hermes?" Quirinus asked. "He who brought me here, will also bring me back", replied the Pope. So Quirinus quickly returned home and brought his daughter to the prison where he had originally locked up Pope Alexander. There, they found Alexander patiently waiting for them, tightly shackled in the way he had been before. Seeing this, they knelt before him in reverence.

Full of devotion, St. Balbina started to kiss the links of the chains that the Pope was attached to. But he said to her: "You shall not kiss these chains, but go out and find St. Peter's chains. Once you've found them, kiss them with devotion and you will soon be well." Knowing where St. Peter had been held before his martyrdom, Quirinus jumped up immediately and took Balbina with him, and there he found the chains. St. Balbina kissed them and was soon well. Quirinus immediately had Pope Alexander and Hermes pardoned and released. Along with his wife and daughter he was baptized by the Pope. Pope Alexander stipulated that the miracle of the chains should be celebrated from that day forward, and he built the church of the Apostle Peter, where the chains have been held ever since. The church he called "ad Vincula" ("in chains"), is today St. Peter in Chains.

Another account has Quirinus placed as the one ordered to execute Alexander and two others, Eventius, and Theodolus, who had been arrested by order of Trajan. Quirinus converted to Christianity, however, after witnessing miracles performed by these three saints, and he was baptized along with his wife, and daughter Balbina. In both accounts, Quirinus was then arrested as a Christian and martyred through decapitation on March 30, 116. He was buried in the catacomb of Praetextatus on the Via Appia. His grave was later regarded with great veneration and is referred to in the old itineraries (guides for pilgrims) of the Roman catacombs. It is not fully known what happened to St. Balbina after the death of her father, but some accounts list her as living as a virgin recluse nun until her death in A.D. 130. The general consensus is that St. Balbina was found guilty of being a Christian and sentenced to death by Emperor Hadrian. Whether she was drowned or buried alive is a matter of dispute among historians. There is one alternate account that Balbina was arrested along with her father in A.D. 116, and beheaded in the same manner. After her death, she was buried next to her father in the catacomb of Praetextatus on the Via Appia. At a later date, the bones and relics of Quirinus and Balbina were brought to the church built in her honor in the fourth century.

St. Balbina is honored as one of the 140 saints atop the colonnade of St. Peter's Square. Some of her relics were brought to Cologne Cathedral during the Middle Ages, most likely around the same time that Quirinus' body was donated in 1050 by Pope Leo IX to an abbess of Neuss named Gepa (who is called a sister of the pope). The majority of her relics are said to still be in the altar of Santa Balbina Basilica. At some point in the late 15th or early 16th century, St. Balbina's skull was removed from her body and placed inside an ornate reliquary. This reliquary now resides in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The Basilica of Santa Balbina is a basilica church in Rome, devoted to St. Balbina. It was built in the fourth century over the house of consul Lucius Fabius Cilo on the Aventine Hill, behind the Baths of Caracalla. The site should not be confused with the location of a catacomb named after her (coem. Balbinae) which lay between the Via Appia and the Via Ardeatina, not far from the little church called Domine Quo Vadis. Over this cemetery another, now lost basilica was erected in the fourth century by Pope Mark. Tradition has it that it was at this church that the Emperor Constantine bade farewell to the Pope on his departure for Constantinople. St. Balbina is commemorated by the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church on March 31st.

Modern Theological Classics

The Didache (or, The Lord's Instruction to the Gentiles through the Twelve Apostles), continued

SECOND SECTION: LITURGICAL AND SACRAMENTAL LIFE (7-10, 14)

This section gives directions affecting church rites and orders. It treats Baptism and Eucharist with the agape. The oldest Eucharistic prayers have come to light in the Didache. It refers to some traditional practices at that time, such as: 1. Baptism was practiced by immersion in a running water, i.e., in the rivers [7:1-3]. This custom was known in the Apostolic era and in the proceeding years. 2. Baptism by pouring water from a vessel or from the hand of the minister of baptism was allowed in cases of scarcity of water. Afterwards this mode was applied only to sick persons who could not leave their bed; hence called clinical baptism [the word κλινικοι from the word κλινη (bed). Clinicus designated one who was baptized on the sick bed]. 3. Fasting is necessary for candidates, the minister of Baptism, and others, for one or two days before Baptism [7:4]. In the Coptic Church this custom is still practised on the same day until Baptism takes place. 4. Weekly fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying thrice a day, without hypocrisy are necessary. 5. The necessity of regularly receiving the Holy Eucharist [9]. A Coptic translation from the fifth century, of a prayer of thanksgiving to be said over the oil of chrism (μυρον) following the Eucharistic prayers has been found in a papyrus (927) of the British Museum [10:8].

THIRD SECTION: DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS (11-15)

Mutual relations of the Christian communities: Scrutiny of wandering Christian ministers (apostles, prophets and teachers) [11]. Reception of traveling brethren [12]. Support of prophets and teachers in the community [13]. Religious life of each community (e.g., divine service on Sunday) [14]. It calls the first "the Lord's Day." The superiors of the communities (bishops, deacons) [15]. Here it mentions bishops and deacons, but no presbyter. St. Clement of Alexandria (2nd century) distinguishes the deaconate, the presbyterate, and the episcopate; but he assumes only a twofold official character, that of presbyters, and that of deacons, perhaps for the following reasons: 1. The word "presbyter" was used some times in a wide meaning to include the bishops and priests, and others in a narrow meaning to express only the priests. 2. The tradition of the church of Alexandria, from the time of evangelist Mark, down to the middle of the third century, the twelve priests elected one from amongst them to be a bishop, as their president. He considered himself as their brother. As the Didache is an Alexandrine document it expresses these feelings at that time.

FOURTH SECTION: THE PAROUSIA OF THE LORD

This section is an apocalypse apparently based on Matthew 24. It exhorts watching in preparation for the last day, which is at hand. This is the purpose of the Church life in her three aspects: the Christian behavior, the liturgical and sacramental life, and the disciplinary regulations. *Be watchful over your life; never let your lamps go out or your loins be ungirt, but keep yourselves always in readiness, for you can never be sure of the hour when our Lord may be coming. Come often together for spiritual improvement; because all the past years of your faith will be no good to you at the end, unless you have made yourselves perfect. In the last days of the world false prophets and deceivers will abound, sheep will be perverted and turn into wolves, and love will change to hate, for with the growth of lawlessness men will begin to hate their fellows and persecute them and betray them. Then the Deceiver of the World will show himself, pretending to be a Son of God and doing signs and wonders, and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will work such wickedness as there has never been since the beginning. After that, all humankind will come up for their fiery trial; multitudes of them will stumble and perish, but such as remain steadfast in the faith will be saved by the Curse. And then the signs of the truth will appear: first the sign of the opening heavens, next the sign of the trumpet's voice, and thirdly the rising of the dead - not of the dead - not of all the dead, but, as*

*it says, the Lord will come, and with him all his holy ones. And then the whole world will see the Lord as He comes riding on the clouds of heaven ...*³

NOTE

In the Early Church, some Christians tried to consider it as a book of the New Testament, but many of the Fathers emphasized that it was not canonized, such as Athanasius of Alexandria, Eusebius [of Caesarea], and Rufinus.

*Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty,*⁴ *“The Apostolic Fathers,” pp. 53-56.*

Recipe of the Month

Lemon Spaghetti with Spinach

This Sicilian recipe of lemon spaghetti with spinach is a perfect meal for busy weeknights! It’s a “one pot” meal—delicious, comforting, and 100% vegan! Yet, it is creamy and has a deep lemon flavor. The pasta is cooked in the pasta sauce, thereby giving the pasta dish a much deeper flavor! And you’ve got less dirty pots and pans this way, which is also great. Although considered more of a “summer” recipe, it makes a superb Lenten dish.

Ingredients:

- one onion
- garlic
- vegetable broth
- coconut milk
- spaghetti
- one lemon (shaved for lemon zest and squeezed for lemon juice)
- fresh spinach
- salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes

Directions:

(1) In a large pot, heat some oil and sauté the onion for 3 minutes until it becomes translucent. Then add the garlic and cook it for another minute.

(2) Add the uncooked spaghetti, the vegetable broth, the coconut milk, and the lemon juice.

(3) Stir a couple of times and gently push the spaghetti in the liquid when they’re soft enough (this might take a couple of minutes. Try not to break them when they’re still too hard). Cook for 15-18 minutes.

(4) When the spaghetti is *al dente*, stir in the spinach and the lemon zest. Cook for 2 more minutes and season with salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Enjoy!

³ Penguin Classics: *Early Christian Writings* (1968), p. 197-198.

⁴ 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.

Parish News

Parish Council Meeting

The parish council is meeting on Sunday, March 20, 2022, after Divine Liturgy.

Confessions

In-person confessions may be done without masks for those who are fully vaccinated. If you prefer to wear a mask, of course that is fine, and Fr. Sophrony will wear a mask upon request. Confessions may be heard after any Vespers; otherwise, call the Rectory at 201-436-3244 for an appointment.

Schedule of Services

March 5-6, 2022

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy w. Rite of Forgiveness

March 7-10, 2022 [*1st Week of Lent*]

6:00 PM (Monday) – Great Canon of Repentance
6:00 PM (Tuesday) – Great Canon of Repentance
6:00 PM (Wednesday) – Great Canon of Repentance
6:00 PM (Thursday) – Great Canon of Repentance

March 12-13, 2022

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

Daily Bible Readings*

1. Jude 1:1-10; Luke 22:39-42, 45-23:1
3. Jude 1:11-25; Luke 23:2-34, 44-56
5. Romans 14:19-23, 16:25-27; Matthew 6:1-13
6. Romans 13:11-14:4; Matthew 6:14-21
9. Hebrews 12:1-10; Matthew 20:1-16
12. 2 Timothy 2:1-10; John 15:17-16:2
13. Hebrews 1:1-12; Mark 2:23-3:5

March 18-20, 2022

6:00 PM (Friday) – Presanctified Liturgy w. Litany of the Departed & General Parastas
5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

March 24-25, 2022 [*Holy Annunciation*]

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

March 26-27, 2022

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

On 3/13/2022, Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers – Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, N.J., at 5 PM. Homilist is Bishop Alexis (Trader).
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19. Hebrews 3:12-16; Mark 1:35-4
20. Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Mark 2:1-12
25. Hebrews 2:11-18; Luke 1:24-38
26. Hebrews 10:32-38; Mark 2:14-17
27. Hebrews 4:14-5:6; Mark 8:34-9:1
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 Holy Annunciation on 3/25 and the feasts of saints for whom the “polyeleion” is prescribed).

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 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 20, 2022.

March 6, 2022

Altar Vigils offered by Elizabeth Zuber in memory of Frances Zuber (anniversary of birth) and Joseph Zuber (anniversary of repose). **Sanctuary Lamp** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Concetta Royer (anniversary of birth). **St. John's Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rt. Rev. Bishop John (Legky). **St. Nicholas' Cross** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Antonetta Cusano (anniversary of birth). **Triple Candelabra** offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Angela DiGiovanni (10th anniversary of repose). **Sacramental Bread** offered by Tais Fedetz for the health of her family and friends.

March 20, 2022

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rena Robichaud.



Parish Centennial

This year is our parish's the 100th anniversary. Our centennial celebration includes two special events:

(1) On September 24-25, 2022, the Miraculous Icon of St. Anna from St. Tikhon's Orthodox Monastery will visit Ss. Peter & Paul's. Commissioned by Archimandrite Athanasy (Mastalski), rector of Our Lady Joy of All Who Sorrow Church in Philadelphia, from the Mount of Olives Convent in Jerusalem in 1998, and blessed at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the icon began weeping fragrant myrrh in 2004. The icon has been kept at St. Tikhon's Monastery since 2012, and still has a wonderful heavenly fragrance, but is not currently weeping. Assistance and healings are still wrought by the Miraculous Icon of St. Anna and she continues to work wonders for those who approach with faith. The Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery, Archimandrite Sergius (Bowyer), a noted speaker, will also present a lecture that weekend.

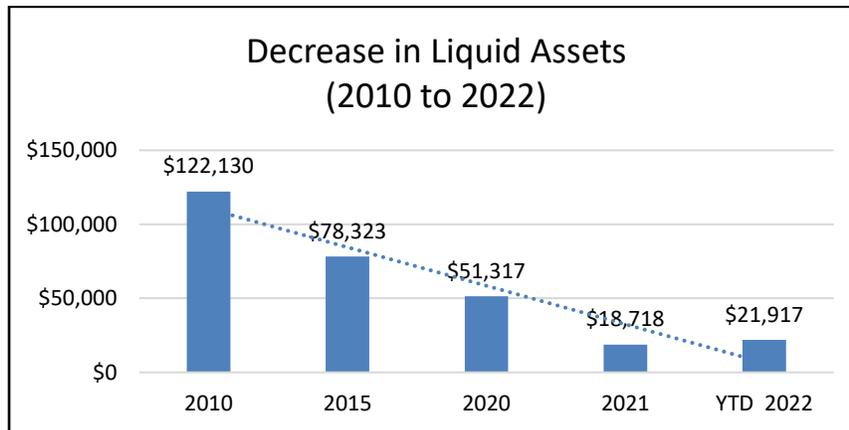
(2) On October 23, 2022, we will have the main celebration of our centennial, with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at 9:30 AM, followed by a banquet at the Knights of Columbus Hall (corner of Avenue C and West 30th Street) at 12:00 AM. His Eminence, Archbishop Michael will be present, and we are hopeful that His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon will be present as well. A commemorative anniversary book is being planned, with silver-page, full-page, half-page, and quarter-page ads being available.

Updates of our plans for the parish centennial will appear in subsequent issues of *Quo Vadis*.

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 2022	
Weekly Donations	\$ 5,269.00
Monthly Revenue (Pay It Forward Rewards, Gift Card Rebates, Interest Income, etc.)	\$1,019.00
Total Monthly Income	\$6,288.00
Salaries and Benefits	\$4,115.00
Diocesan Obligation	----
Operating Expenses	\$3,897.50
Total Monthly Expenses	\$8,012.50
Monthly Surplus (Deficit)	\$(1,724.50)
Special Donations: Christmas/Easter	\$4,375.00



NOTE: Our savings continue to cover the gap between our income and expenses. Liquid assets have decreased by 82% (approximately \$100,213) over the last 10+ years. Increase from 2019 to 2020 was entirely due to \$9,700 received through the 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!

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

