

Quo Vadis

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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

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Leaving the penitential season of Great Lent behind, we now enter into the bright and glorious Paschal season. We now celebrate the new life promised to us by the holy resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time, as we witness the blossoming of new life that marks springtime, we also remember those in the graves to whom the Risen Christ bestows life. On the first weekend following the bright day of Pascha, we go to the cemeteries to sing the Paschal troparion, announcing to the faithful departed the glad tidings that Christ is risen. And this message is indeed a “gospel,” that is, the good news that sin and death is overthrown because Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death.

Our faith in the Risen Christ proclaims to the world that God’s will is done – that the chains which held mankind captive to sin are now finally broken, once and for all. The freedom given to us in this new and redeemed life has rendered us able to be free to freely serve Christ. This is nothing less than the freedom to be righteous, for by this freedom we are reconciled to God and are restored to a right relationship with God, which is righteousness. Righteousness is what the grace of Christ offers to us. Furthermore, it is the gift of righteousness that counts for the salvation of those in the tombs, who have departed this world with faith in Christ. Seeing as this faith is nothing less than the conviction that in Christ’s righteousness we, too, are made righteous, and in Christ’s resurrection we, too, shall live again with an abundance of life that is being alive in Christ.

To all of you, “be alive in Christ,” go to the graves of the faithful departed and proclaim with joy that “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life!”

Parish Council President’s Message

Dear parishioners and friends,

Soon we will be celebrating the Great Feast of Feasts, Bright and Holy Pascha! The Parish Council encourages everybody to attend and participate in as many of the divine services for Holy Week and Bright Week as possible. The Parish

Council thanks, in advance, Fr. Sophrony, Emily, and the choir members for their tireless service in conducting and signing the divine services in this most holy season.

The blessing of Easter baskets on Holy Saturday will be at 4:00 PM in the church hall, and the Carpathian Club invites all our parishioners and guests to a Paschal Repast in the club's hall after Divine Liturgy on Easter Sunday. Three weeks after Easter Sunday is the first of our fundraising events for this year, the Pasta & Meatball Dinner on May 6, 2018. Ticket sales will begin soon, at \$20/ticket, and we are eagerly anticipating the fellowship we will share at a good meal featuring Fr. Sophrony's homemade meatballs and sauce.

Together with Fr. Sophrony and the Parish Council, I wish all of you a joyous and spiritually uplifting celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

Yours in Christ,
Reader Stephen Wasilewski

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

The whole of the Easter mystery, dearly-beloved, has been brought before us in the Gospel narrative, and the ears of the mind have been so reached through the ear of flesh that none of you can fail to have a picture of the events: for the text of the Divinely-inspired story has clearly shown the treachery of the Lord Jesus Christ's betrayal, the judgment by which He was condemned, the barbarity of His crucifixion, and glory of His resurrection ... the cross of Christ, which was set up for the salvation of mortals, is both a mystery and an example: a sacrament where by the Divine power takes effect, an example whereby man's devotion is excited: for to those who are rescued from the prisoner's yoke Redemption further procures the power of following the way of the cross by imitation. For if the world's wisdom so prides itself in its error that everyone follows the opinions and habits and whole manner of life of him whom he has chosen as his leader, how shall we share in the name of Christ save by being inseparably united to Him, Who is, as He Himself asserted, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6)?" the Way that is of holy living, the Truth of Divine doctrine, and the Life of eternal happiness.

If we unhesitatingly believe with the heart what we profess with the mouth, in Christ we are crucified, we are dead, we are buried; on the very third day, too, we are raised. Hence the Apostle says, "If you have risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting on God's right hand: set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. For when Christ, your life, shall have appeared, then shall you also appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:1-4)." But that the hearts of the faithful may know that they have that whereby to spurn the lusts of the world and be lifted to the wisdom that is above, the Lord promises us His presence, saying, "Lo! I am with you all the days, even till the end of the age (Matthew 28:20)." For not in vain had the Holy Ghost said by Isaiah: "Behold! A virgin shall conceive and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us." Jesus, therefore, fulfils the proper meaning of His name, and in ascending into the heavens does not forsake His adopted brethren, though "He sits at the right hand of the Father," yet dwells in the whole body, and Himself from above strengthens them for patient waiting while He summons them upwards to His glory.

We must not, therefore, indulge in folly amid vain pursuits, nor give way to fear in the midst of adversities. On the one side, no doubt, we are flattered by deceits, and on the other weighed down by troubles; but because "the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord," Christ's victory is assuredly ours, that what He says may be fulfilled, "Fear not, for I have overcome the world (John 16:33)." Whether, then, we fight against the ambition of the world, or against the lusts of the flesh, or against the darts of heresy, let us arm ourselves always with the Lord's Cross. Our Paschal feast will never end if we abstain from the leaven of the old wickedness (in the sincerity of truth). For amid all the changes of this life which is full of various afflictions, we ought to remember the Apostle's exhortation; whereby he instructs us, saying, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God counted it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men and found in fashion as a man. Wherefore God also exalted Him, and gave Him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things below, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11)." If, he says, you understand "the mystery of great godliness," and remember what the Only-begotten Son of God did for the salvation of mankind, "have that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus," Whose humility is not to be scorned by any of the rich, not to be thought shame of by any of the high-born. For no human happiness whatever can reach so

great a height as to reckon it a source of shame to himself that God, abiding in the form of God, thought it not unworthy of Himself to take the form of a slave.

Imitate what He wrought: love what He loved, and finding in you the Grace of God, love in Him your nature in return, since as He was not dispossessed of riches in poverty, lessened not glory in humility, lost not eternity in death, so do ye, too, treading in His footsteps, despise earthly things that you may gain heavenly: for the taking up of the cross means the slaying of lusts, the killing of vices, the turning away from vanity, and the renunciation of all error. For, though the Lord's Passover can be kept by no immodest, self-indulgent, proud, or miserly person, yet none are held so far aloof from this festival as heretics, and especially those who have wrong views on the Incarnation of the Word, either disparaging what belongs to the Godhead or treating what is of the flesh as unreal. For the Son of God is true God, having from the Father all that the Father is, with no beginning in time, subject to no sort of change, undivided from the One God, not different from the Almighty, the eternal Only-begotten of the eternal Father; so that the faithful intellect believing in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost in the same essence of the one Godhead, neither divides the Unity by suggesting degrees of dignity, nor confounds the Trinity by merging the Persons in one. But it is not enough to know the Son of God in the Father's nature only, unless we acknowledge Him in what is ours without withdrawal of what is His own. For that self-emptying, which He underwent for man's restoration, was the dispensation of compassion, not the loss of power. For, though by the eternal purpose of God there was "no other name under heaven given to men whereby they must be saved (Acts 4:12)," the Invisible made His substance visible, the Eternal temporal, the Impassible passible: not that power might sink into weakness, but that weakness might pass into indestructible power.

For which reason the very feast which by us is named Pascha, among the Hebrews is called Phase, that is Pass-over, as the evangelist attests, saying, "Before the feast of Pascha, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should pass out of this world unto the Father." But what was the nature in which He thus passed out unless it was ours, since the Father was in the Son and the Son in the Father inseparably? But because the Word and the Flesh is one Person, the Assumed is not separated from the Assuming nature, and the honor of being promoted is spoken of as accruing to Him that promotes, as the Apostle says in a passage we have already quoted, "Wherefore also God exalted Him and gave Him a name which is above every name." Where the exaltation of His assumed Manhood is no doubt spoken of, so that He in Whose sufferings the Godhead remains indivisible is likewise coeternal in the glory of the Godhead. And to share in this unspeakable gift the Lord Himself was preparing a blessed "passing over" for His faithful ones, when on the very threshold of His Passion he interceded not only for His Apostles and disciples but also for the whole Church, saying, "But not for these only I pray, but for those also who shall believe in Me through their word, that they all may be one, as You also, Father, art in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us (John 17:20-21)."

In this union they who deny that in the Son of God, Himself true God, man's nature abides, assailing the health-giving mystery and shutting themselves out from the Easter festival, can have no share. For, as they dissent from the Gospel and gainsay the creed, they cannot keep it with us, because although they dare to take to themselves the Christian name, yet they are repelled by every creature who has Christ for his Head: for you rightly exult and devoutly rejoice in this sacred season as those who, admitting no falsehood into the Truth, have no doubt about Christ's Birth according to the flesh, His Passion and Death, and the Resurrection of His body: inasmuch as without any separation of the Godhead you acknowledge a Christ, Who was truly born of a Virgin's womb, truly hung on the wood of the cross, truly laid in an earthly tomb, truly raised in glory, truly set on the right hand of the Father's majesty; "whence also," as the Apostle says, "we look for a Savior our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall refashion the body of our humility to become conformed to the body of His glory (Philippians 3:20-21)." Who lives and reigns forever!

— St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, *Sermon 72*.

Lives of the Saints

St. Adalbert of Prague, Bishop and Martyr – commemorated on April 23rd

Born as Vojtěch in 956 in Libice, St. Adalbert belonged to the Slavnik clan, one of the two most powerful families in Bohemia. Bohemian priest Cosmas of Prague (1045–1125) recorded events from his life. His father was Slavnik (d. 978–981), a duke ruling a province centred at Libice. His mother, Střezislava (d. 985–987), was of the royal Přemyslid dynasty. He had five brothers: Soběslav, Spytimír, Dobroslav, Pořej, and Čáslav. Cosmas also refers to Radim (later Gaudentius) as a brother; he is believed to have been a half-brother of his father's liaison with another woman. After Vojtěch survived a grave illness in

childhood, his parents decided to dedicate him to the service of God. He was well educated, having studied for approximately ten years (970-80) in Magdeburg under the tutelage of St. Adalbert of Magdeburg. The young Vojtěch then took his tutor's name "Adalbert" at his Confirmation.

In 981 St. Adalbert of Magdeburg died, and his young protege Adalbert returned to Bohemia. Later Bishop Dietmar of Prague ordained him a priest. In 982, Bishop Dietmar died, and Adalbert, despite being under canonical age, was chosen to succeed him as Bishop of Prague. Amiable and somewhat worldly, he was not expected to trouble the secular powers by making excessive claims for the Church. Although Adalbert was from a wealthy family, he avoided comfort and luxury, and was noted for his charity and austerity. After six years of prayer and preaching, he had made little headway in evangelizing the Bohemians, who maintained deeply embedded pagan beliefs.

Adalbert opposed the participation of Christians in the slave trade and complained of polygamy and idolatry, which were common among the people. Once he started to propose reforms he was met with opposition from both the secular powers and the clergy. His family refused to support Duke Boleslaus in an unsuccessful war against Poland. Adalbert was no longer welcome and eventually forced into exile. In 990 he went to Rome. He lived as a hermit at the Benedictine monastery of St. Alexis. Five years later, Boleslaus requested that the Pope send Adalbert back to Prague, in hopes of securing his family's support. Pope John XV agreed, with the understanding that Adalbert was free to leave Prague if he continued to encounter entrenched resistance. Adalbert returned as bishop of Prague, where he was initially received with demonstrations of apparent joy. Shortly thereafter he founded a monastery in Břevnov near the City, it being the first monastery in the Czech territory.

In 995, the Slavniks' former rivalry with the Přemyslids, who were allied with the powerful Bohemian clan of the Vršovcis, resulted in the storming of the Slavnik town of Libice, led by the Přemyslid Boleslaus II "the Pious." During the struggle four or five of Adalbert's brothers were killed and the Zličan principality became part of the Přemyslids' estates. Adalbert unsuccessfully attempted to protect a noblewoman caught in adultery. She had fled to a convent, where she was killed. In upholding the right of sanctuary, Bishop Adalbert responded by excommunicating the murderers. Hagiographer Alban Butler suggests that the incident was orchestrated by enemies of his family. After this, Adalbert could not safely stay in Bohemia and escaped from Prague. Strachkvas was eventually appointed to be his successor. However, Strachkvas suddenly died during the liturgy at which he was to accede to his episcopal office in Prague. The cause of his death is still ambiguous. The Pope directed Adalbert to resume his see, but believing that he would not be allowed back, he requested a brief as an itinerant missionary.

Adalbert then traveled to Hungary, where he may have baptized Géza of Hungary and his son Stephen in Esztergom.¹ Then he went to Poland where he was cordially welcomed by then-Duke Boleslaus I and installed as Bishop of Gniezno. Adalbert again relinquished his diocese, namely that of Gniezno, and set out as a missionary to preach to the inhabitants near Prussia. Bolesław I, Duke (and, later, King) of Poland, sent soldiers with Adalbert on his mission to the Prussians. The Bishop and his companions, including his half-brother Radim (Gaudentius), entered Prussian territory and traveled along the coast of the Baltic Sea to Gdańsk. Success attended his efforts at first, but his imperious manner in commanding the people to abandon paganism irritated them, and at the instigation of one of the pagan priests he was martyred on April 23, 997 on the Baltic Sea coast east of Truso (currently the city of Elbląg) or near Tenkitten and Fischhausen. It is recorded that his body was bought back for its weight in gold by King Boleslaus I of Poland.

A few years after his martyrdom, Adalbert was canonized as St. Adalbert of Prague. His life was written in *Vita Sancti Adalberti Pragensis* by various authors, the earliest being traced to imperial Aachen and the Bishop of Liège, Notger von Lüttich, although it was previously assumed that the Roman monk John Canaparius wrote the first Vita in 999. Another famous biographer of St. Adalbert was St. Bruno of Querfurt who wrote a hagiography of him in 1001-4. Notably, the Přemyslid rulers of Bohemia initially refused to ransom St. Adalbert's body from the Prussians who murdered him, and therefore it was purchased by Poles. This fact may be explained by the Saint belonging to the Slavniks family which was rival to the Přemyslids. Thus St. Adalbert's bones were preserved in Gniezno, which assisted Boleslaus I of Poland in increasing Polish political and diplomatic power in Europe.

¹ This is unlikely. Although Stephen's *Greater Legend* narrates that he was baptized c. 985 by St. Adalbert of Prague, who stayed in Géza's court several times between 983 and 994, St. Adalbert's nearly contemporaneous *Legend*, written by Bruno of Querfurt, does not mention this event. Other sources, cited by Frederick Lampe's *The Established Magyar Churches*, state that Grand Prince Geza, and his son Vajk (who received the Christian name Stephen), were baptized by a Greek Rite priest from Transylvania.

According to Bohemian accounts, in 1039 the Bohemian Duke Břetislav I looted the bones of St. Adalbert from Gniezno in a raid and translated them to Prague. According to Polish accounts, however, he stole the wrong relics, namely those of St. Gaudentius, while the Poles concealed St. Adalbert's relics which remain in Gniezno. In 1127 his severed head, which was not in the original purchase according to *Roczniki Polskie*, was discovered and translated to Gniezno. In 1928, one of the arms of St. Adalbert, which Bolesław I had given to Holy Roman Emperor Otto III in 1000, was added to the bones preserved in Gniezno. Therefore, today St. Adalbert has two elaborate shrines in the Prague Cathedral and Royal Cathedral of Gniezno, each of which claims to possess his relics, but which of these bones are his authentic relics is unknown. For example, pursuant to both claims the saint has two skulls. The one in Gniezno was stolen in 1923. The massive bronze doors of Gniezno Cathedral, dating from around 1175, are decorated with eighteen reliefs of scenes from the saint's life. They are the only Romanesque ecclesiastical doors in Europe depicting a cycle illustrating the life of a saint, and are, therefore, a precious relic documenting Adalbert's martyrdom.

The one thousandth anniversary of St. Adalbert's martyrdom was on April 23, 1997. It was commemorated in Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Russia, and other nations. Representatives of Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Lutheran churches traveled on a pilgrimage to the saint's tomb located in Gniezno. Pope John Paul II visited the cathedral and celebrated a liturgy there in which heads of seven European nations and approximately one million faithful participated. A ten-meter cross was erected near the village of Beregovoe (formerly Tenkitten), Kaliningrad Oblast, where St. Adalbert is thought to have been martyred by the Prussians.

Modern Theological Classics

LITURGY AND EDUCATION

In the early days of the Church, when "Christians were made and not born" (Tertullian), a postulant before joining the Church had to go through a fairly long period of catechesis, i.e., preparation for the sacrament of baptism. At the beginning of the second century in Rome, for instance, catechetical instruction lasted for two years. It seemed obvious then that a person could become a member of the Church only after learning its teachings and assimilating them, truly understanding its laws of life. During the period of the missionary expansion of Christianity adult baptism remained the prevailing custom, but when this period came to its end and infant baptism became the norm, catechesis became the self-evident form of *post-baptismal* instruction of Church members. In Western churches catechesis remains an indispensable prerequisite for "Confirmation," i.e., for the sacrament of chrismation administered at the end of childhood. The Orthodox Church has maintained the traditional link between baptism and chrismation as a di-une sacrament through which a believer becomes a member of the Church. Though the various Orthodox churches have not elaborated a generally mandatory form of post-baptismal catechesis, it is generally and unanimously accepted that children should receive Christian instruction and education. This general conviction shows that the principle of transmitting the rule of faith and the rule of life to the members of the Church is an organic and essential part of Christian tradition.

But although the need for Christian education is generally accepted in principle, the same cannot be said as far as the *forms* and *methods* of Christian education are concerned. We must frankly state that confusion reigns in this field and the situation is all the more confused because the difficulty is not fully recognized, and therefore no effort is made to overcome it. This applies not only to various details, but is true of the basic problems as well. A good example is the general acceptance of "Sunday School" in the practice of the Orthodox churches in America. Sunday Schools surely are an outcome of a Protestant philosophy of education. Introducing them into the practice of the Orthodox Church should have been preceded by their critical evaluation in the light of an Orthodox conception of the purpose and principles of Christian education. Sunday Schools should have been adapted to serve these. No such question, however, was ever raised and "Sunday School" (frequently taught during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy) became an accepted pattern of our Church education without ever having been discussed. Many other examples could be cited here.

I believe that the preliminary question must be formulated as follows: Does our own Orthodox tradition show us definite ways and methods of Christian education? We certainly do not mean a mechanical restoration of methods of teaching used in a different historic epoch, but the spiritual effort of "reading Church Tradition," discovering the spirit, its eternal meaning. The Orthodox way of life consists in the creative "actualization" of Church Tradition; refusing to follow it, we consciously or unconsciously abandon Orthodoxy.

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned baptismal catechesis, because it represents the earlier record in Church Tradition of the manner in which the Church taught its members Christian doctrine and the Christian law of life. It is certainly of importance to us that this catechesis was liturgical in its character. The explanation of Scriptures, the unfolding of the meaning of the Creed (i.e. of Christian doctrine), the teaching of Christian morality – in other words, the entire content of Christian education – was transmitted in direct connection with liturgical services, partly even during the services. We find traces of such liturgical catechesis in our church services today. Thus the first part of our Divine Liturgy is still called “Liturgy of the Catechumens,” and this not merely because catechumens were allowed to attend it, but primarily because it was and still is a *teaching service*, because it is *didactic* in its very character and purpose.

Another example is the structure and content of our Lenten services. They cannot truly be understood unless we know that their purpose is mainly catechetical. In the early Christian Church the baptism of catechumens took place during the vigil service on the night before Easter, and Lent, therefore, was a time of intense preparation for the Sacrament of Illumination, as baptism was then often called. We can see it best in the Lenten order of Bible readings. The entire books of Genesis, Isaiah, and Proverbs are read during these weeks. Why? Because they contain the real clue to an understanding of the Scriptures as a whole, because they contain the true dimensions of the Revelation fulfilled in Jesus Christ: in Genesis – the themes of creation, fall and covenant; in Isaiah – the theme of the Messianic promise and the image of the Messiah, who takes upon Himself our life; in Proverbs – the crowning of human wisdom, experience, and knowledge with the revelation of Divine Wisdom, the Incarnate Logos. During Holy Week the reading of Exodus replaces that of Genesis, the Book of Job takes the place of Proverbs. Exodus is read because this book describes the journeying of the chosen people to the Promised Land, the “Passover” which is fulfilled when Christ the Messiah performs His Exodus to the Father (John 13:1) and becomes our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), taking us into the promised Kingdom. The Book of Job is the climax of the Old Testament revelation of the Suffering Servant, the one who conquers evil by his complete humility, love, and obedience to God. Thus all the basic themes of Christian faith and of the contents of Church doctrine are revealed in their inner coherence. The Old Testament is revealed here in its full spiritual reality, not merely as an abstract truth, but as the foundation of the New Testament; a path leading to Christ, a promise and prophecy fulfilled in Him. Yet – and this is of great importance – the truth is unfolded not only through reading and commenting on texts. It is *liturgical*: the readings are set within the context of services which reveal their true meaning.

The deep sigh of penitence which continuously resounds throughout the Lenten services, the call to repentance, to the recognition of one’s utter weakness and sinfulness, establishes in us that disposition which enables us truly to *hear* the Scriptures, to understand their real meaning. On the other hand, the structure of the services, the harmony of the reading, ritual and prayers, the entire ‘movement’ of the services, gives life to the texts, gives them that ‘pitch’ which makes them ring true. The reading of the Gospel and its explanation in the sermon are not merely an insert into the liturgy of the catechumens. We are led up to them and prepared by “coming together in the church” (1 Cor. 11:18), by the solemn blessing of the Kingdom with which the Eucharistic services begins, by the Psalms, the entry into the Sanctuary, the singing of the “Thrice Holy,” and the ascension to the High Place. These actions are not mere “symbols”; they are sacred acts through which the Church prepares herself for the *sacrament of the word of God*. During the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, the priest, after reading the Book of Genesis, takes a taper from the altar and, blessing the assembled faithful with it, says: “The light of Christ illumines all men.” This action means the gift of understanding of that which the faithful will hear, and at the same time, it points to the ultimate meaning of all the Scripture – to Jesus Christ. And then, finally, the culminating point of the liturgical Church life is the service of Holy Saturday, with the Burial of Christ, the fifteen prophecies and the white vestments replacing the dark ones at the announcement of the Resurrection. This service, if it is really understood, is a *complete catechesis* of Easter. We could multiply such examples; however, those given suffice to make it clear that ‘Liturgical catechesis’ is not just an interesting custom of the ancient Church, but the traditional method of religious education, an organic part of the very nature of the Church and of its conception of spiritual enlightenment.

Liturgical catechesis shows us first of all the main purpose, the aim of religious education as it is understood by the Church. This aim is *to bring the individual into the life of the Church*. I emphasize: It is not merely the communication of “religious knowledge,” not training a human being to become a “good person,” but the “edification” – the “building up” – of a member of the Body of Christ, a member of that new “chosen race” and “holy nation” (1 Pet. 2:9) whose mysterious life in this world began on the day of Pentecost. “And make him (or her) a reason-endowed sheep in the holy flock of Thy Christ, an honorable member of the Church,” says the baptismal prayer. Religious education is nothing else but the disclosing of that which happened to man when he was born again through water and Spirit, and was made a *member of the Church*.

The concept of the Church as God's people and as Body of Christ has become abstract for modern Christians. On the one hand the Church is identified with "parish," an incorporated organization with business meetings, elections, votes, property and financial policies. On the other hand, it is to the church building that we come to pray, to "fulfill our religious duty," enjoy good singing, and receive comfort and consolation. The purpose of a parish is understood as a means of assuring the material welfare of the church building and its contents; the purpose of the church as a building is the spiritual satisfaction that the parishioners gain from the beautiful church services and from the sense of having fulfilled their religious duty. But the modern Christian has forgotten, or perhaps has never known, that these aims are secondary when compared to the main goal, the edification of the Church of Christ, the growth of all in the new unity in Christ that they received in Baptism and always receive in the Holy Eucharist. "And unite all of us to one another, who become partakers of the one Bread and Cup in the communion of the Holy Spirit" (Liturgy of St. Basil the Great). "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). "Where the Church is, there is the Holy Spirit; where the Holy Spirit is, there is the Church and the fullness of grace" (St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv. Haer.* III, 24, 1).

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann,² *Liturgy and Life*, pp. 7-12.

Recipe of the Month

Syrnaya Paskha

Syrnaya Paskha is a molded cheese dessert found in Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Polish cuisine, which is traditionally served on Easter Sunday. Easter dinner just isn't complete without kulich (a sweet yeast bread similar to Italian panettone) and synaya paskha, which are placed in the Easter basket to be blessed at church by the parish priest.

Ingredients:

2 pounds (4 8-oz. packages) of cream cheese³
1 stick (1/2 cup) of butter
1/2 cup of whipping cream
3 egg yolks (boiled and sieved)
2 cups of sugar
1 teaspoon of almond extract
1 teaspoon of vanilla
Juice and zest of a lemon
Golden raisins (to decorate)

Directions:

- 1) Leave the cream cheese and butter out for a while to allow them to soften, then blend in a mixer until they are well integrated.
- 2) Add the remaining ingredients (excluding the decorations, of course) and mix thoroughly.
- 3) Place in a mold to set (or in a container) to be blessed with the other foods in your Easter basket.

Parish News

Palm Sunday Vespers

On April 1, 2018 our parish is hosting the Palm Sunday Vespers that has been traditionally sponsored by the New Jersey District of F.O.C.A. The service is scheduled to begin at 5:00 PM and a Lenten meal shall follow in our church hall. To everyone who is able to do so, please show your support and attend the service.

Easter Basket Blessing

Easter food baskets will be blessed on Holy Saturday (April 7, 2018) at 4:00 PM in the church hall.

² Fr. Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983) was an influential Orthodox priest, teacher, and writer. From 1946 to 1951 he taught in Paris, and afterwards in New York. In his teachings and writings he sought to establish the close links between Christian theology and Christian liturgy. At the time of his death, he was the dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York.

³ Traditional Russian syrnaya paskha is made with farmer's cheese, which isn't quite as creamy or spreadable.

Paschal Repast

A Paschal repast is being held at the Carpathian Club hall after Divine Liturgy on Easter Sunday. All parishioners and visitors are welcome!

Deanery Paschal Vespers

The New Jersey Deanery's annual Paschal Vespers on Bright Wednesday is at Christ the Savior Church, 365 Paramus Road, Paramus, N.J. on April 11, 2018 at 7:00 PM.

Blessing of Graves

Graves at Bay View Cemetery in Jersey City shall be blessed on Bright Saturday (April 14, 2018), starting at 10:00 AM, followed by Evergreen and Roseland cemeteries. Please call the Rectory at (201) 436-3244 to schedule appointments for grave blessings at Graceland and other cemeteries.

Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council is meeting on Sunday, April 15, 2018 after Divine Liturgy.

Special Parish Meeting

The Parish Council has scheduled a special parish meeting for the adoption of revised parish by-laws on Sunday, April 29, 2018 after Divine Liturgy. Copies of the revised parish by-laws shall be available on April 1, 2018.

Pasta & Meatball Dinner

A Pasta & Meatball Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, May 6, 2018 at 11:30 AM. The menu consists of salad, Italian bread, spaghetti and meatballs, wine, coffee or tea, and dessert. Tickets are \$20 per person; for information and tickets, contact Marge Kovach at (732) 815-9765.

In Memoriam

Mrs. Mary Macinsky, age 84, of Bayonne, New Jersey, passed into blessed repose on March 4, 2018. Memory Eternal! Vicnaja Pamjat!

Daily Bible Readings

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Phil. 4:4-9; John 12:1-18 | 18. Acts 4:13-22; John 5:17-24 |
| 5. 1 Cor. 11:23-32; Composite Gospel* | 19. Acts 4:23-31; John 5:24-30 |
| 7. Rom. 6:3-11; Matt. 28:1-20 | 20. Acts 5:1-11; John 5:30-6:2 |
| 8. Acts 1:1-8; John 1:1-17 | 21. Acts 5:21-33; John 6:14-27 |
| 9. Acts 1:12-17, 21-26; John 1:18-28 | 22. Acts 6:1-7; Mark 15:43-16:8 |
| 10. Acts 2:14-21; Luke 24:12-35 | 23. Acts 6:6-7:5, 47-60; John 4:46-54 |
| 11. Acts 2:22-36; John 1:35-51 | 24. Acts 8:5-17; John 6:27-33 |
| 12. Acts 2:38-43; John 3:1-15 | 25. Acts 8:18-25; John 6:35-39 |
| 13. Acts 3:1-8; John 2:12-22 | 26. Acts 8:26-30; John 6:40-44 |
| 14. Acts 3:11-16; John 3:22-33 | 27. Acts 8:40-9:19; John 6:48-54 |
| 15. Acts 5:12-20; John 20:19-31 | 28. Acts 9:20-31; John 15:17-16:2 |
| 16. Acts 3:19-26; John 2:1-11 | 29. Acts 9:32-42; John 5:1-15 |
| 17. Acts 4:1-10; John 3:16-21 | 30. Acts 10:1-6; John 6:56-69 |

* Matt. 26:2-20, John 13:3-17, Luke 22: 43-45, Matt. 26:40-27:2

Schedule of Services

March 31-April 1, 2018 (Palm Sunday)

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

April 4-5, 2018

7:00 PM (Wednesday) – Sacrament of Holy Unction
@ St. Mary's, 89 W. 29th St.
9:00 AM (Thursday) – Vespereal Divine Liturgy
6:00 PM (Thursday) – Matins w. Passion Gospels

April 6, 2018

3:00 PM (Friday) – Good Friday Vespers
6:00 PM (Friday) – Matins w. Procession of the Epitaphios

April 7, 2018

9:00 AM (Saturday) – Vespereal Divine Liturgy
4:00 PM (Saturday) – Blessing of Easter Baskets
11:30 PM (Saturday) – Midnight Office

April 8, 2018 (Easter Sunday)

12:00 AM (Sunday) – Paschal Matins
9:30 AM (Sunday) – Paschal Divine Liturgy

April 9, 2018 (Bright Monday)

9:30 AM (Monday) – Divine Liturgy

April 14-15, 2018

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

April 21-22, 2018

5:00 PM (Saturday) – Great Vespers

9:30 AM (Sunday) – Divine Liturgy

April 28-29, 2018

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

Special Donations

*Please note that for Special Donations in May 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 April 22, 2018.*

April 15, 2018

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

April 22, 2018

Sanctuary Lamp offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Rose Brelinisky (anniversary of birth).