

Quo Vadis

The monthly newsletter of Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J.
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Editor: V. Rev. W. Sophrony Royer, Ph.D.

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

Summer is shortly coming to an end; people are returning from vacations, children and college students are returning to school. In other words, after the leisure time and recreation of summer, the month of September marks the commencement of another year of everyday life, until the “sun and fun” of summer comes again. So, in terms of our way of life, September in the same sense is the beginning of another “year.” This phenomenon that we experience in our everyday lives is the official position of the Church, in that the Church’s liturgical year begins on September 1st. And it seems fitting to me that the first great feast of the liturgical year is that of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary (September 8th), inasmuch as the nativity of the Virgin Mary is the first of the sequence of events, commemorated in the Church’s twelve great feasts, in which God’s plan for our salvation unfolds.

The Nativity of the Virgin Mary manifests the marvelous mystery of God’s ways in the wonder of the barren womb becoming fruitful; i.e., that the Virgin Mary’s mother, St. Anne, was well beyond child-bearing age, but by the dispensation of the grace of God, she gave birth to her all-holy daughter, the Virgin Mary. The story is told in the apocryphal book, the *Protevangelium of St. James*, in which the childlessness of Ss. Joachim and Anne was a public reproach to them. St. Joachim retired to the desert for forty days to fast and pray, while St. Anne (whose Hebrew name, Hannah, signifies “grace”) “mourned the two mournings and lamented the two lamentations.” As St. Anne sat prayer beneath a laurel bush, an angel appeared and said to her: “Anne, the Lord hath heard thy prayer, and thou shalt conceive and bring forth, and thy seed shall be spoken of in all the world.” St. Anne replied: “As the Lord my God lives, if I beget either male or female, I will bring it as a gift to the Lord my God; and it shall minister to Him in sacred things all the days of its life.” Likewise, an angel appeared to St. Joachim, and in due time was born Mary, who was to be the mother of God. Note that this story bears a striking resemblance to that of the conception and birth of Samuel, whose mother was called Hannah or Anne (1 Samuel, chapter 1).

The feast of the Entry of the Virgin Mary into the Temple (November 21st) marks the fulfillment of St. Anne’s promise to present her child as a gift to God, and so from her youth the Virgin Mary became a maiden of the Temple, living within the precincts of the Temple. At the age of fourteen, after her husband was indicated to the High Priest by a miracle, she was betrothed to the carpenter Joseph. While still only betrothed, she was visited by the Archangel Gabriel (the Annunciation, March 25th), and the person of the Son of God became incarnate in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. This event of the Annunciation was indeed a marvel even greater than that of her own birth, a miracle of a virginal conception and birth, and after birth, the Virgin Mary still remained a

virgin! Forty days later, in accordance with the Jewish Law, she presented herself and her Child in the Temple for her ritual purification (February 2nd).

For thirty years, the Virgin Mary lived the outward life of an ordinary Jewish woman from among the common "people of the Land." And then, after those thirty years, she followed her Son from afar in His public life, from the rejoicings of the wedding of Cana to His anguish, and her desolation, on Mount Calvary, when the sword spoken of by the righteous Simeon pierced her heart. The dying Jesus "gave" her to the Apostle John (a symbolic act of giving her to all mankind), "and from that hour he took her to his own." On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on our Lady Mary when He came upon the apostles gathered together in the upper room in Jerusalem, which is the last reference to her in the Holy Scriptures. According to tradition, the rest of her earthly life was passed at Jerusalem, with short sojourns in Ephesus and other places in the company of St. John the Apostle. The Virgin Mary remained sinless all her life, and as the "second Eve" she is the spiritual mother of all mankind.

It also seems fitting that the last great feast of the liturgical year is that of the Dormition, or Assumption, of the Virgin Mary (August 15th), so that the Church's liturgical year effectively spans the life of the Virgin Mary, beginning with her entrance to this life and ending with her translation from this life. The event of the Virgin Mary's "falling asleep" is truly the consummation of all the other great mysteries by which her life was made marvelous; it is the "birthday" of her greatness and glory, and the crowning of all the virtues of her life. Having reposed from her terrestrial life, and in anticipation of the general resurrection, the Virgin Mary was assumed, body and soul, into Heaven. St. Gregory of Tours (538-594), the Gallo-Roman historian and bishop, put it thusly: *"The Apostles took up her body on a bier and placed it in a tomb; and they guarded it, expecting the Lord to come. And behold, again the Lord stood by them; and the holy body having been received, He commanded that it be taken in a cloud into paradise: where now, rejoined to the soul, [Mary] rejoices with the Lord's chosen ones ..."* This preservation from corruption and assumption to glory was a privilege due to her, who was not defiled by sin, and was ever the most holy and pure "temple" of God. She, who is "more spacious than the Heavens," is assumed into Heaven as its Queen, and entered into those joys which her Son prepared for her. All praise belongs to she who is "Full of Grace." Therefore, it is truly meet that, with the highest veneration and tenderest love, we cry out to her: "Most Holy Mother of God, save us!"

Parish Council President's Message

Dear parishioners and friends:

As the unofficial close of summer approaches, with Labor Day and the start of the Church New Year, I continue to ask everyone to attend as many services as possible. Saturday evening Vespers usually takes only thirty minutes from start to finish. We continue to run our utilities for three or four people at those services. It would be wonderful to have a crowd at those services.

The Carpathian Club is celebrating its 100th Anniversary on Saturday October 19, 2019. Tickets will be \$50 and we ask that you purchase them in advance as the event will be catered. The event will be on church grounds.

As a reminder, please continue to give generously to our church whether it is buying shopping cards, candles, special offerings, or donating through the church envelopes. Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours in Christ,
Reader Stephen Wasilewski

Lives of the Saints

St. Euphrosyne of Alexandria – commemorated on September 25th

St. Euphrosyne was the beloved only daughter of a rich nobleman of Alexandria, miraculously born in her parents' old age in answer to a monk's prayer. Her loving father, Paphnutius, desired to marry her to a wealthy youth. But having already consecrated her life to God and under pressure to break her vow, she dressed as a man and assumed the identity of "Smaragdus" ("emerald"). She then escaped to a nearby men's monastery, where she made rapid strides toward a perfected ascetic life. She was under the guidance of the abbot, who also happened to be the same monk who had prayed for her birth.

Years later, when Paphnutius appealed to the abbot for comfort in his bereavement, the abbot committed him to the care of Euphrosyne, still under the guise of Smaragdus. Paphnutius received from his own daughter, whom he had failed to recognize, helpful advice and comforting exhortation. Not until she was dying did Euphrosyne reveal herself to him as his lost daughter. After burying her, Paphnutius gave up all his worldly goods, and became a monk in the same monastery. There, he used his daughter's old cell until his own death ten years after. St. Euphrosyne lived in the fifth century.

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

"[Jesus] became man by the Virgin, in order that the disobedience which proceeded from the serpent might receive its destruction in the same manner in which it derived its origin. For Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary received faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Highest would overshadow her: wherefore also the Holy Thing begotten of her is the Son of God; and she replied, 'Be it unto me according to your word.'"

St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 100 (A.D. 160)

Modern Theological Classics

Chrismation

The Sacrament of the *Holy Chrism* (myrrhon) then is performed. It consists in the anointing of the neophyte with a precious oil blessed by the Bishop and preserved in every church on the altar. This oil signifies the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. He descended individually on each apostle on the day of Pentecost and since then He comes and abides on each man that accepts Christ and enters the Church. The priest makes the sign of the Cross on the forehead, the eyes, the nostrils, the mouth, the chest, the hands and legs of the neophyte saying each time: "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." In the West this sacrament is called *confirmation*. One could call it the *ordination of a man to membership in the Church*. In baptism he received the new life and was introduced into the realm of Incarnation, of the new *nature*. Now, he has received his own unique *personality*, personal life, to be personally a living member of the "royal priesthood" of the Church.

The sacrament of Initiation is completed by a solemn procession around the baptismal font. The priest, holding the Cross, the neophyte, in his white garment, and his sponsor, holding candles, make the "sign of a ring" while the congregation sings: "As many as have been baptized (immersed) into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!" The ring is the symbol of eternity, faithfulness, totality. What has been performed here, will have no end – life eternal begins, the communion, the friendship, of God is given forever.

In the ancient Church the sacraments of Initiation were performed on Easter night, at the solemn Paschal Vigil. And immediately after their completion the neophytes were led in procession into the church, joined the congregation, and for the first time received Holy Communion in fulfillment of their integration into the Body of Christ. The sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation were understood as *leading* to the Eucharist and Communion (cf. the prayer before Chrismation in Hagood, p. 281). Even today the services of Holy Saturday and of Easter have preserved a baptismal note (singing of "As many as have been baptized ..." for example). It would be good to restore at least this organic liturgical link between Initiation and Communion and to perform Baptism before Divine Liturgy, so that the newly baptized would be given their first Communion in the presence of the whole Church, on the same day.

In the rite as it stands today, the service is completed with the reading of the Epistle (Rom. 6:3-11), the explanation of Baptism as partaking of the death and Resurrection of Christ, and the Gospel (Matt. 28:16-20), the order to baptize and the promise of Christ to abide forever with those who believe in Him. The three final rites – the washing off of the Holy Chrism, the bowing of the head, and the cutting of hair – originally were performed on the eighth day after Baptism, after the neophytes had spent a whole week in the church receiving daily Communion and a special post-baptismal instruction. The *washing off of the Chrism* means that the visible signs must now become the very essence of life, disappear as "signs" and become *reality*; the *bowing of the head* expresses the acceptance by the neophyte of the discipline of the Church, his obedience not to the powers of this world, but to the

only Lord Jesus Christ; the *cutting of hair* indicates the spiritual character of Christian life, made of obedience, self-denial and readiness to serve God forever.

PENANCE AND HEALING

The second group of sacraments, the sacraments of Penance and Holy Oil, deal with *healing*. We know and experience every day that, in spite of our entrance into the joy and peace of the Kingdom, our life, more often than not, remains dark and sinful, and that we constantly fall from that “wholeness” which was given us in the sacraments of *Initiation*. Therefore we must be healed and reconciled to God – again and again – and God in His mercy has left with His Church the sacramental means of the healing.

The Sacrament of Penance

The purpose of the sacrament of Penance is to reconcile with God in the Church. Every sin, indeed, separates or “excommunicates” us from the new life. Every time we sin, we are no longer in Christ. Every time we sin, we betray our true nature, restored in us by Baptism and Chrismation. And it is only *repentance* that can bring us back to the state we lost, which means that the sacrament of Penance must never be understood in *magical* terms, as an absolution independent of whether I repent or not, effective in itself and by itself. On the contrary, this sacrament depends on *my* repentance. For repentance is not a mere enumeration of sins, a “juridical” transaction. It is first of all a real *crisis* within the conscience. The image of true repentance is found in the Gospel, in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The Prodigal Son remembered all that he had in his father’s home, and how must he lost, and then *he wanted* with all his being *to return*. Therefore, wrong are those who explain the sacrament of Penance as a kind of objective power. The absolution pronounced by the priest is certainly “valid,” but if there is no true repentance on the part of the sinner, it does not apply to him. What God wants from us is a “broken heart.” What God wants is a man who says, “I have received so much, I remember that white robe I received at Baptism, and I realize now how dirty it is.” Only when we are truly disgusted with sin, when we repent, i.e. want to *change*, is the absolution fulfilled – for absolution is precisely the announcement by the priest that God has accepted the penitent, has reconciled him with Himself and the Church, that the Prodigal Son has returned and is accepted by the Father. Such is the Orthodox understanding of the sacrament of Penance, different in this from the juridical, Roman idea. In Christ, God has forgiven all sins once and for all, but this forgiveness applies to *me* only when *I* desire with all my heart, when I am longing for communion with God, life with Him, for the restoration in me of that joy and peace without which nothing has any meaning, any interest for a Christian.

The Sacrament of Oil

How are we to understand that mysterious sacrament of Holy Oil? Man is a *suffering* being. Each one of us has visited a hospital. Each one of us, and especially a priest, when he enters a hospital, knows that our world, beneath its optimistic façade, is a world of pain and suffering. We often try to forget about it, to live in the world as if there were no suffering, no death in it. On the pages of our magazines we find pictures of glorious he-man and she-women, of the wonderful bodies, and the whole picture of the world is that of complete well-being. Yet everyone knows that real life is better revealed in the hospital, and that suffering is its unavoidable expression. The same man who was so young and happy and whose beauty impressed us in the photograph, is now here struggling with pain, despair, death. It is the magazine that lies, and it is the hospital that is true and real. For suffering awaits all of us sooner or later, makes all of us united in the definition of man as a *suffering being*. Therefore, the sacrament of healing, the divine answer to human suffering, is not something for the priest alone to care for; it is the fundamental task of the entire Church. Christ spent so much of His time with those who suffered, who were brought to Him sick and maimed and in pain. For it is to *heal* man that He came, to liberate him from his enslavement to sin and suffering.

It would be a mistake, however, to understand the sacrament of healing as *performing miracles*. We do not, to be sure, deny the possibility of miracles. When God wants to perform a miracle, He does perform it. But even Christ, when a suffering man was brought to Him, usually said “Thy sins are forgiven,” and only then healed him. Why? Because physical healing alone is of necessity a “temporary” one. In the world there can be no total and permanent healing. Therefore, in order to understand the Christian idea of healing, one must think again in terms of transformation. Let us take, as an example, two men dying in the same hospital room from the same mortal disease. For one of them this terrible suffering, this dying may be, and very often is, the ultimate defeat, the final surrender to darkness. Yet to the other man, just he opposite may happen. The same pain and suffering may make

him begin to understanding the meaning of life. As long as he was happy, driving his Cadillac, smoking his cigars, eating his steaks, getting more money, having women, etc., he never thought about God. Never. Life was fun, plenty of fun. And now God has visited him. This is how in the past Christians used to call sickness: *visitation*. What we have to understand, in other terms, is that we are spiritually so weak, so materialistically minded, so deeply alienated from the life of spirit, that there is no way for God to reveal to us what true life is than by taking away from us this “superficial” and meaningless life of *fun*. Thus, suffering can be a victory, a real *transformation* of man; and, as every priest can witness, it is in suffering that sometimes one can see the beauty of a spiritual truth, of man’s return to the spiritual reality to which he was created. Such is the purpose of the sacrament of healing. Read the prayers and lessons of which it contains. What we pray for is genuine healing, the total restoration of the man whom God has visited and who, therefore, is made whole again, for he is in communion with God. This is the real victory and the real transformation. We know that this world can never become a world without suffering, without sickness, without hospitals, but what we also know is what Christ tells us; that even suffering can become a victory of God. For Christ died and therefore death is transformed. Christ lives and therefore life is transformed. Thus, what is given to man in the sacrament of Oil is precisely the *possibility* of victory, through the One who loves you more than anyone else can ever love you, who in His love is now suffering with you, so as to overcome the power of suffering. Our Christian life must be a constant transformation of defeat into victory, and if this is true, then the sacrament of healing is indeed an essential sacrament of the Church.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann,¹ Liturgy and Life, pp. 96-101

Recipe of the Month

Easy Apple Cabbage Slaw

Delicious sweet-and-tangy slaw! A perfect topping for a pulled pork sandwich or as a garden-fresh autumn side dish.

Ingredients:

- 1 small head cabbage, cored and finely chopped
- 1 large MacIntosh (or Granny Smith) apple, cut into matchstick-size pieces
- 5 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Directions:

1. Toss cabbage, apple, and onions together in a large bowl.
2. Whisk vinegar, sugar, olive oil, vegetable oil, Dijon mustard, and red pepper flakes together in a saucepan over medium heat; bring dressing to a simmer. Pour hot dressing over cabbage mixture and toss to coat. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate until flavors blend and slaw is cold, at least 1 hour.

Parish News

Pilgrimage to Alaska in July 2020

Archbishop Michael is heading a pilgrimage, July 15-21, 2020, to the cradle of Orthodox Christianity in America – Kodiak, Alaska! The price is \$2,525/person for double-occupancy lodging (single-occupancy supplement is \$675). A flyer is posted on the church bulletin board. To register, visit www.culturallycreativetravel.com/pilgrimage-to-alaska-2020.

¹ 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.

Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council is Monday, September 30, 2019 at 7:00 PM.

Carpathian Club's Centennial Celebration

The Carpatho-Russian American Citizens Club of Bayonne ("Carpathian Club") shall celebrate its centennial anniversary on Saturday, October 19, 2019. For further information, contact Reader Stephen Wasilewski or Frank Pavuk.

Local Sons of Italy Event

The Sons of Italy Lodge #2560 is presenting a "Salute to the Stars of Opera" at 3:00 PM on Sunday, October 20, 2019, at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 979 Avenue C, Bayonne, N.J. Donation is \$20 (advance), or \$25 (at the door). Tickets may be purchased by contacting Marie at 201-858-0520, or Elaine at 201-339-2904, or Grace at 201-823-0293.

Wedding Banns

Mr. Dylan Thomas Wisniewski, of Bayonne, New Jersey, the son of Thomas Wisniewski and Rosellen Ponik, and Miss Vivianne Saleh, of Bayonne, New Jersey, the daughter of Peter Saleh and Suzy Ann Silva, are to be wed in holy matrimony at Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church on Sunday, September 29, 2019 at 12:00 PM. Anyone knowing of a canonical obstacle to this marriage ought to contact the Parish Rectory at (201) 436-3244 as soon as possible.

Schedule of Services

August 31-Sept. 1, 2019

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

September 7-8, 2019

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

September 13-14, 2019

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

September 14-15, 2019

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

September 21-22, 2019

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

September 28-29, 2019

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

Reminder: We shall return to having all morning services at 9:30 AM starting on Sunday, September 8, 2019.

Special Donations

Please note that for Special Donations in October 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 September 17, 2019.

September 8, 2019

Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Andrew Wanko (anniversary of repose). **Sanctuary Lamp** offered in honor of Helen Wanko's birthday by her grandchildren (Lauren, Matthew, Nicholas, Kenneth, John, Daniel, and Lindsay) great-grandchildren (Kiera, Mia, Leila, and Landon).

September 15, 2019

Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Grudinoff (anniversary of birth). **Sanctuary Lamp** offered by V. Rev. W. Sophrony Royer in memory of Wilfred Royer (fifth anniversary of repose).

September 22, 2019

Altar Vigils offered by John and Helen Wanko in memory of Mary Grudinoff (anniversary of repose).

Daily Bible Readings

1. 1 Corinthians 9:2-12; Matthew 18:23-35
2. 2 Corinthians 5:10-15; Mark 1:9-15
3. 2 Corinthians 5:15-21; Mark 1:16-22
4. 2 Corinthians 6:11-16; Mark 1:23-28
5. 2 Corinthians 7:1-10; Mark 1:29-35
6. 2 Corinthians 7:10-16; Mark 2:18-22
7. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Matthew 20:29-34
8. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Matthew 19:16-26*
9. 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 3:6-12
10. 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5; Mark 3:13-19
11. 2 Corinthians 9:12-10:7; Mark 3:20-27
12. 2 Corinthians 10:7-18; Mark 3:28-35
13. 2 Corinthians 11:5-21; Mark 4:1-9
14. 1 Cor. 1:18-24; John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35
15. 1 Corinthians 16:13-24; Matthew 21:33-42
16. 2 Corinthians 12:10-19; Luke 3:19-22
17. 2 Corinthians 12:20-13:2; Luke 3:23-4:1
18. 2 Corinthians 13:3-14; Luke 4:1-15
19. Galatians 1:1-10, 20-2:5; Luke 4:16-22
20. Galatians 2:6-10; Luke 4:22-30
21. 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Luke 4:31-36
22. 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4; Luke 5:1-11
23. Galatians 2:11-16; Luke 4:37-44
24. Galatians 2:21-3:7; Luke 5:12-16
25. Galatians 3:15-22; Luke 5:33-39
26. Galatians 3:23-4:5; Luke 6:12-19
27. Galatians 4:8-21; Luke 6:17-23
28. 1 Corinthians 4:17-5:5; Luke 5:17-26
29. 2 Corinthians 4:6-15; Luke 6:31-36
30. Galatians 4:28-5:10; Luke 6:24-30

* Additional reading for the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary on September 8th: (1) Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (Theotokos).