

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

One of the most distinctive features of Orthodox prayers for the departed is the singing of “Memory Eternal!” By this practice, we commit ourselves to remembering those of the faithful who have passed from this life to the everlasting life that is bestowed to us for our faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ. At the very core of Christian faith is our belief that Jesus Christ’s sacrifice of His life on the Cross was the pivotal act of universal atonement, whereby mankind is reconciled to God, and that by His resurrection on the third day, He bestow to those in the tombs the gift of risen life. By our prayers for the dead, we express our unity with the Church Triumphant in Heaven, in which we remember that the Church includes not only the faithful living on earth, but also the communion of the saints in Heaven.

Among the times, in particular, in which the Orthodox Church remembers and prays for the dead is during the season of Great Lent; in fact, it even anticipates the Lenten season in that the first of the “Lenten” Memorial Saturdays is the day before Meatfare Sunday (which makes sense, as Meatfare Sunday is the commemoration of the Final Judgment). Then, the first Saturday of Lent, which commemorates the Great-martyr Theodore of Tyre, is the day for blessing *koliva* (boiled wheat). This practice not only recalls the historical event of the persecution of the ancient Tyrian Christians in the third century, but is also linked with our remembrance of the departed, as it is a long-standing Orthodox custom to bless *koliva* at the conclusion of a *panichida* service. The following three Saturdays of Lent are specifically designated as “Memorial Saturdays,” when Orthodox faithful around the world commemorate the faithful departed at Divine Liturgy. Finally, “Bright Week” concludes with the custom of blessing graves on St. Thomas Sunday, when we go to the cemeteries for the express purpose of announcing to those in the tombs that Christ is risen from the dead – celebrating our faith that the Risen Lord Jesus Christ has indeed conquered death, and bestows everlasting life beyond the grave.

I must say to you, with reluctance, that I have observed some trends that are a cause for concern. It seems many people have come to treat the prayers for the departed during the Lenten season as a

formality – the priest is given the names to read at memorial services, but those offering the names fail to attend the services. It also seems that nowadays fewer people come to the cemetery on St. Thomas Sunday. Is this a trend that is consonant with keeping “eternal” the memory of the departed? What does this say about our commitment to the very core of Christian faith, mentioned above? What does this say about the unity of the Church – that the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant are *one* Church?

Even more disquieting is the increasing prevalence of families asking for funeral services to be conducted in the funeral home instead of the church (usually with the expectation that the service thereby would be shortened). With rare exceptions, there is no good reason why a funeral should take place anywhere other than in church. Frankly, I am baffled as to why anyone would deprive his or her family members a church funeral. To a priest, these situations are awkward: if the priest consents, then a distasteful practice is facilitated; but if the priest refuses, then the soul of the departed, through no fault of his or her own, might not have the prayers of the Church at all. What has happened to the seventh “corporal work of mercy” (i.e., burying the dead)? Is it a *work of mercy* to shorten and impoverish it as much as possible?

I ask that all of you reflect on what it means to sing “Memory Eternal” – is it an empty slogan, or do we really mean it? This Lent, make every effort to attend the services offered for the souls of the dead, and make a commitment to go to the cemetery to sing “Christ is Risen” at the graves of your family members on St. Thomas Sunday (or whatever alternative date that is offered, such as Bright Saturday or Radonitsa, etc.). Do not let our traditions of offering prayers for the dead wither and die, because that is exactly how the dead become forgotten. To a Church that commemorates the saints, most of whom lived centuries or millennia ago, as an integral part of its worship, allowing any of the faithful departed to be forgotten is unthinkable. Above all else, treat the dead with dignity and given them proper mourning; the worldly matters that we so often make haste to return to will still be there after we have observed our duties to the departed. Let us remember that place where there is no longer sickness, or sorrow, or sighing, but life everlasting, and keep the memory of all who have gone on to that place alive forever!

Parish Council President’s Message

Dear parishioners and friends:

I would like to wish all of our parishioners and friends a healthy and prosperous new year! With each new year, many of us make a resolution where we resolve to continue beneficial habits, to eliminate deleterious practices, or to accomplish a personal goal. Our spiritual lives should be scrutinized as well, to see what personal resolutions we could make to improve our relationship with God and His Holy Church. I recommend two resolutions that would benefit all of you, and the church as well.

The first is to attend church services as often as possible, and go to confession and receive the Holy Eucharist on a regular basis. In John 6:53-56, Christ tells us of the benefit of receiving the Holy Eucharist: “I tell you the truth; unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, for My flesh is food and My blood is drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him.”

The second is to show our love for God through charitable acts, such as assisting the poor, visiting the sick, donating to food drives (i.e. feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty), etc. – all of the acts known as the Corporal Works of Mercy, which we were taught in Sunday School – and supporting the Church with your time, talent, and treasure as much as possible. In closing, I would like to thank all those parishioners who are now doing more for the benefit of the church than they have ever done before.

Yours in Christ,
Robert Pierce

Lives of the Saints

St. John Cassian – commemorated on February 29th

A monk and ascetic writer of Southern Gaul, and the first to introduce the rules of Eastern monasticism into the West, St. John Cassian was probably born in Provence, circa 360; and died circa 435, probably near Marseille. Gennadius refers to him as a Scythian by birth (*natione Scythia*), but this is regarded as an erroneous statement based on the fact that John Cassian spent several years of his life in the desert of Scetis (*heremus Scitii*) in Egypt. The son of wealthy parents, he received a good education, and while yet a youth visited the holy places in Palestine, accompanied by a friend, Germanus, some years his senior. In Bethlehem, John Cassian and Germanus assumed the obligations of the monastic life, but, as in the case of many of their contemporaries, the desire of acquiring the science of sanctity from its most eminent teachers soon drew them from their cells in Bethlehem to the Egyptian deserts. Before leaving their first monastic home the friends promised to return as soon as possible, but this last clause they interpreted rather broadly, as they did not see Bethlehem again for seven years. During their absence they visited the solitaries most famous for holiness in Egypt, and so attracted were they by the great virtues of their hosts that after obtaining an extension of their leave of absence at Bethlehem, they returned to Egypt, where they remained several years longer. It was during this period of his life that John Cassian collected the materials for his two principal works, the "Institutes" and "Conferences." From Egypt the companions came to Constantinople, where John Cassian became a favorite disciple of St. John Chrysostom. The famous archbishop of the Eastern capital ordained John Cassian to the diaconate, and placed in his charge the treasures of his cathedral. After the second expulsion of St. John Chrysostom, he was sent as an envoy to Rome by the clergy of Constantinople, in order to get Pope Innocent I to intercede in behalf of their archbishop. It was probably in Rome that John Cassian was ordained to the priesthood, for it is certain that on his arrival in Rome that he was still a deacon. From this time nothing further is heard of Germanus, and of John Cassian himself, for the next decade or more, little is known (he may have spent time as a priest in Antioch between 404 and 415). About 415 he was at Marseille where he founded two monasteries, one for men, over the tomb of St. Victor, a martyr of the last Christian persecution under Emperor Maximian (286-305), and the other for women. The remainder of his days were passed at, or very near, Marseille. His personal influence and his writings contributed greatly to the diffusion of monasticism in the West. Although never formally canonized, St. Gregory the Great regarded him as a saint, and it is related that Pope Urban V (1362-1370), who had been an abbot of St. Victor, had the words St. John Cassian engraved on the silver casket that contained his head. His feast day is February 29th, though in Marseille he is commemorated locally on July 23rd.

The two principal works of Cassian deal with the cenobitic life and the principal or deadly sins. They are entitled: "De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remediis libri XII" ("Institutes") and "Collationes XXIV" ("Conferences"). The former of these was written between 420 and 429. The relation between the two works is described by Cassian himself (Instit., II, 9) as follows: "These books [the Institutes] . . . are mainly taken up with what belongs to the outer man and the customs of the coenobia [i.e. institutes of monastic life in common]; the others [the "Collationes" or Conferences] deal rather with the training of the inner man and the perfection of the heart." The first four books of the "Institutes" treat of the rules governing the monastic life, illustrated by examples from the author's personal observation in Egypt and Palestine; the eight remaining books are devoted to the eight principal obstacles to perfection encountered by monks: gluttony, impurity, covetousness, anger, dejection, accidia (listlessness), vainglory, and pride. The "Conferences" contain a record of the conversations of John Cassian and Germanus with the Egyptian solitaries, the subject being the interior life. It was composed in three parts. The first instalment (Books I-X) was dedicated to Bishop Leontius of Fréjus and a monk (afterwards bishop) named Helladius; the second (Books XI-XVII), to Honoratus of Arles and Eucherius of Lyons; the third (Books XVIII-XXIV), to the "holy brothers" Jovinian, Minervius, Leontius, and Theodore.

These two works, especially the latter, were held in the highest esteem by his contemporaries and by several later founders of religious orders. St. Benedict made use of John Cassian in writing his Rule, and ordered selections from the "Conferences," which he called a mirror of monasticism (*speculum monasticum*), to be read daily in his monasteries. Cassiodorus also recommended the "Conferences" to his monks, with reservations, however, relative to their author's ideas on free will. On the other hand, the decree attributed to Pope Gelasius, "De recipiendis et non recipiendis libris" (early 6th century), censures this work as "apocryphal," i.e. containing erroneous doctrines. An abridgment of the "Conference" was made by Eucherius of Lyons which we still possess. A third work of John Cassian, written at the request of the Roman Archdeacon Leo (afterwards Pope Leo the Great) about 430-431, was a defense of orthodox doctrine against the errors of Nestorius: "De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium." It appears to have been written hurriedly, and is, consequently, not of equal value with John Cassian's other works. A large part consists of proofs, drawn from the Scriptures, of Our Lord's Divinity, and in support of the title of Mary to be regarded as the Mother of God; he denounces Pelagianism as the source of the new heresy, which he regards as incompatible with the doctrine of the Trinity.

Yet John Cassian did not himself escape the suspicion of erroneous teaching; he is in fact regarded as the originator of what has been known as Semi-Pelagianism. Views of this character attributed to him are found in his third and fifth, but especially in his thirteenth, "Conference." Preoccupied as he was with moral questions, he exaggerated the role of free will by claiming that the initial steps to salvation were in the power of each individual, unaided by grace. His teaching on this point was a reaction against what he considered as the exaggerations of St. Augustine in his treatise "De correptione et gratia" as to the irresistible power of grace and predestination. St. John Cassian saw in the doctrine of St. Augustine an element of fatalism, and while endeavoring to find a middle way between the opinions of the great bishop of Hippo and Pelagius, he put forth views which may be interpreted as Semi-Pelagian. He did not deny the doctrine of the Fall; he even admitted the existence and the necessity of an interior grace, which supports the will in resisting temptations and attaining sanctity. But he maintained that after the Fall there still remained in every soul "some seeds of goodness . . . implanted by the kindness of the Creator," which, however, must be "quickenened by the assistance of God." Without this assistance "they will not be able to attain an increase of perfection" (Coll., XIII, 12). Therefore, "we must take care not to refer all the merits of the saints to the Lord in such a way as to ascribe nothing but what is perverse to human nature." We must not hold that "God made man such that he can never will or be capable of what is good, or else he has not granted him a free will, if he has suffered him only to will or be capable of what is evil" (ibid.). The three opposing views have been summed up briefly as follows: St. Augustine regarded man in his natural state as dead, Pelagius as quite sound, John Cassian as sick. John Cassian's view is generally in line with most of the Greek Fathers; his error, then, might be in having regarded a purely natural act, proceeding from the exercise of free will, as the first step to salvation. In the controversy which, shortly before his death, arose over his teaching, St. John Cassian took no part. His earliest opponent, St. Prosper of Aquitaine, without naming him, alludes to him with great respect as a man of more than ordinary virtues. Semi-Pelagianism was finally condemned by the Second Council of Orange in 529.¹

Excerpt from the Church Fathers

"Let the mind hold ceaselessly to this way of prayer . . . until it renounces and rejects the whole wealth and abundance of thought. Thus, straitened by the poverty of this verse, it will very easily attain to that gospel

¹ Pelagius and his fellow heretic Caelestius were condemned by the Third Ecumenical Council for their heresy. On this point there is no possible doubt. And further than this the Seventh Ecumenical Council, by ratifying the Canons of Trullo, received the Canons of the African Code, which include those of the Third Council of Carthage's condemnations (in 397) of Pelagianism. The Second Council of Orange (529)—a local council—strongly affirmed the necessity of prevenient grace, yet did not present divine grace as irresistible, or deny the free will of the unregenerate to repent in faith, or endorse a strictly Augustinian view of predestination. It is a historically significant council, as it was the decisive influence for the interpretation of St. Augustine in the Western Church, but as a local council, its canons are not universally binding.

beatitude which holds the first place among the other beatitudes. For it says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' And thus whoever is admirably poor with poverty of this sort will fulfill those prophetic words: 'The poor and the needy will praise the name of the Lord.' And, in fact, what poverty can be greater or holier than that of one who realizes that he has no protection and no strength and who seeks daily help from another's bounty, who understands that his life is sustained at each and every moment by God?"

– St. John Cassian (c. 360 - c. 435), *Conferences*, X, 11.

Modern Theological Classics

II. Transcendence and Immanence of God

In our experience of God, in the encounter with God, two aspects are intimately linked and complete one another: the sense of the *nearness* and that of the *remoteness* of the Divine, the immanence and the transcendence of God.

The sense of the Holy, causing fear, trembling, and reverence, belongs to the core of religious feeling. There is a mystery, there is majesty that cannot be investigated by us. An ineffability belongs to the innermost character of the Divine. There is in every religious notion, in every image of divinity – however gross and distorted it may be – a shade of mystery. Sometimes this element is but weakly represented; the Godhead is then more or less felt as dissolved in the life of the world or identified therewith. But often the sense of a transcending Majesty strikes the soul with deepest awe, makes it prostrate itself in humble adoration. Without this awe, without this adoring prostration there is no real piety. The element of “transcendence” is thus to a certain extent present even in immanent or naturalistic aspects of religion. On higher levels it becomes more and more decisive and explicit. “Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground” – so the voice of God addresses Moses from out of the burning bush.

This sense of divine aloofness, the being aware of Something that is unapproachable, overpowering, of Something that awakes awe, that requires adoring devotion and surrender, is characteristic of every deeper religious emotion, especially as we said, on the higher levels of religious life and experience. And this is closely connected with the feeling that the overawing Divinity is at the same time a *Presence*, that can be approached, that can be propitiated, that can show Itself gracious and merciful. So Transcendence and Immanence are closely connected with one another in various forms of religious experience. But often one of these elements predominates in a decisive way: in the naturalistic or pantheistic religions, the element of Immanence; in the religious outlook of Platonism, that of Transcendence. In Mystical experience – especially Christian mystical experience – the highest synthesis is achieved between these simultaneously given aspects: the sense of the nearness and the sense of the transcendence of God.

The Highest is quite near, here. He enters my heart and soul. I become united with Him. And Christ, here among us, a man like ourselves (“we have touched him with our hands,” says John), is the inrush of the Living God, of Life Eternal into the texture of our human, earthly life and history, *is* Life Eternal. “And we have seen – His glory,” says the apostle and we worship Him thus with Thomas: “My Lord and my God!”

A striking instance of immanency in religion, where the Transcendent seems to be completely lost sight of, is the religion of Dionysus in Ancient Greece. There is a mighty stir and uprush of life in awakening Nature. The young god coming to his worshippers is identified with the wild exultant stream of renewed life. The mountain-tops awake, men and animals revel in the encounter. Nature is entranced and enchanted. Rock and cliffs spout streams of wine, milk flows from the depth of the earth, honey drops from wild forest-oaks. And the god suddenly appears among them in the shape of a young bull, or a he-

goat, or a young lion, and his raw flesh is torn in pieces and swallowed by the maddened followers. It is the triumph of wild emotions, of savage exuberant life; it is an ecstasy of rioting sap running again through the veins of Nature. There is no transcendency, no moral restraint whatever. The faithful are borne along by this exuberant stream, become part thereof, just little drops, losing their personality, submerged in this torrent of impersonal, elemental, riotous revelry. They are submerged in the Divine, they participate therein, but this Divine is nothing else than the exuberancy of Nature-life, always renascent from death and always succumbing to it anew. For in pure Immanence there is no victory over death. This young god himself, carried along in triumph, succumbs to it again and again. There is no final redemption from the sway of Fate and Evil and Suffering and Death in the purely immanent divinities of Nature.

Alongside the wild Dionysian cult which streamed into Greece in comparatively recent times (seventh or eighth century B.C.) from half-barbarian Thrace, there is the balanced, harmonious Olympian Greek religion, with its beautiful, so human, so nobly shaped gods, in whose company even the turbulent Dionysus became harmonized, a vision of shining youthful beauty and grace. These divinities of the Olympian pantheon are not – or are no more, if they ever had been – an embodiment of elemental forces of Nature; they are shapes of beauty, they are inspired by an aesthetic conception of life, they reign in a Universe of harmony and beauty. But in the aesthetic character of the Universe lies its weakness.

The aesthetic point of view obscures the moral one. There is harmony and balance, but no final justice in this world. And no salvation from death. Death swallows up all individuals and all that is concrete and personal, human joys and human sorrows, this man and that man, this plant and that plant – only the species remains, only the general outlines, the harmony and the order. And the gods are the guardians thereof. They are “jealous” of all individual achievements, of all that brings man near to immortality: They keep the immortality for themselves. They are the embodiments of the unshakable laws of the universe, where all that is individual passes, but the laws remain. Their beauty, their shining forms are immanent to the immutable harmony and order of the “Cosmos” that passes away in all its components, except the gods, but remains in its general outlines, in its eternal beauty and life. But it is a life composed of innumerable series of deaths, not victorious over Death, not conquering and destroying it, not really transcendent to it – no real Life Eternal. These gods are immanent in the beauty and harmony of an unsatisfactory “Cosmos,” unsatisfactory despite all its beauty: because dying, decaying, and remaining only in its idea, in its general forms and unshaken order. The Stoic on the imperial throne, Marcus Aurelius, having praised the beauty and harmony of the world’s order, suddenly exclaims in a fit of deepest despondency: “How long then?” and six hundred years before, another sage – Heraclitus – also, after entranced, enthusiastic words about the order and harmony of universal life, adds in deepest sadness and resignation: “The most beautiful Universe is comparable to a heap of rubbish scattered about in random.”

On the line of pure immanence there is release from the bonds of individuality, but no final release from the fetters of Death. All that is concrete and individual, all living personality, is sowed to Death.

The transcendent God! An immense truth is revealed here, as we have seen it already. The Seraphim in the vision of Isaiah (ch. 6) cover their faces with their wings and exclaim in fear and trembling: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaoth!” The creature does not dare to look up. This sense of overwhelming, crushing Majesty and of immense distance between God and creature pervades the writings of the prophets. There are words, there are prayers or confessions which, to a certain extent, succeed in conveying the sense of immense distance – the utter smallness and nothingness of the creature and the overpowering greatness of God, of God who is Master over life and death, over being and non-being, over all that exists and whatsoever shall come into existence, but is still beyond that, Unreachable, Unfathomable, and – Real, the Only One who is really Real in the ultimate sense of the word.

The transcending majesty of God is strongly conveyed e.g. in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah:

“Who hath measured the waters in the hallow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended all dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him?

With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will yet compare unto him?

Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is he who sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in;

That brings the princes to nothing; he makes the judges of the earth as vanity.

Scarcely they have been planted; scarcely they have been sown; scarcely their stem did take root in the earth; and he shall blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? Saith the Holy One.

Life up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that brings out their host by number: he calls them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one fails.” (vv. 12-18 and 21-26).

“I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” – so we read in the Revelation of St. John.

The Divine Darkness, the Primordial Light, that is so bright, that is felt as darkness by our bedazzled eyes which are too weak to sustain it, the Divine Desert, or Waste, the Unknown Country, the Abyss of Divine Silence (“in which are engulfed all the true lovers,” says Ruysbroeck), the totally Other (“Niti! Niti!” – “Not so! Not so!” – of the Upanishads), the Night of Otherness and total Estrangement, of which John of the Cross explains in rapture: “Oh! Noche que guiaste. Oh! Noch amable mas que l'alborada!” (“O Night, that hast led me! O Night, that are more honorable than the light of the Dawn!”) – these all are utterly inadequate images, poor stammerings, pointing to the overwhelming Majesty of Transcendent Reality and Life, Unapproachable Transcendence, ultimate depth of profoundest Peace and Quiet, which is also utterly dynamic; there is no lifelessness, no passivity, but Creative Energy, Overpowering Might, Burning, cleansing, attracting, opening the eyes of the soul, converting, taking hold of, totally reshaping, changing, making a new creature. The Transcendent God shows His Transcendence, His Otherness, His overpowering, indescribable Majesty in His immanence, in His drawing near, in His speaking to the heart.

Dr. Nicholas Arseniev,² “The Revelation of Life Eternal,” pp. 19-23

Recipe of the Month

Cheese Blintzes

A blintz is a thin crepe-like pancake filled with cheese. Its origin is believed to an Ashkenazic Jewish offshoot of Russian and Ukrainian blini (which are made with buckwheat, rather than wheat, flour and served with savory garnishes). Blintzes are pretty easy to make, and they're one of the most delicious things! This blintz recipe includes vanilla in both the blintz and the filling, which gives it a delectable flavor and aroma. You can actually eat these blintzes without the cheese filling (if you cook them on both sides), they are pretty tasty on their own. For the blintz filling, use a blend of low-fat ricotta cheese (or, more traditional, farmer's

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.

cheese) and cream cheese. If you're watching your fat intake, try substituting non-fat ricotta and Neufchatel cheese. The blintzes are sweet, but not overly sweet. They're perfect for breakfast or brunch.

Blintz Ingredients:

- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- Pinch salt
- Nonstick cooking oil spray
- Vegetable oil with a high smoke point for frying (grapeseed or peanut oil works best)

Filling Ingredients:

- 1 cup low-fat ricotta cheese
- 8 oz. cream cheese (1 package)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- Pinch salt

Directions:

1. **The night before:** Place the ricotta cheese from the filling ingredients into a strainer lined with cheesecloth placed on top of a bowl. Let the ricotta drain overnight in the refrigerator to remove excess liquid. Note -- this step is optional, it will help the filling to thicken so it won't be quite so soft in the center.

2. Blend all of the blintz ingredients together using a food processor, blender, immersion blender or electric hand mixer. Consistency of the batter should be smooth (no lumps). Alternatively, you can use a fork to mix all ingredients together until the batter is smooth. Make sure you get rid of all the lumps.

3. Warm up a nonstick skillet on medium heat until hot. The skillet is ready when a drop of water sizzles on the surface of the pan. If the water pops or jumps out of the pan, the skillet is too hot—let cool slightly before starting. If the water sizzles, it's at the perfect temperature. Grease the entire surface of the hot pan generously with nonstick cooking oil spray (keep the oil spray away from gas stovetop flame).

4. Pour the blintz batter by 1/3 cupfuls into the pan, then tilt the pan in a circular motion till the batter coats the entire bottom of the pan in a large, thin circular shape.

5. Let each blintz cook for 60-75 seconds until the edges of the blintz brown and the bottom of the blintz is lightly golden. You can tell it's ready by touching the center of the pancake's surface-- it should be dry and slightly tacky to the touch. Do not flip the blintz to cook the other side. Use a spatula to take the blintz out of the pan and place it on a plate.

6. Keep the blintzes separated by pieces of parchment paper, wax paper, or paper towels. This will help keep them from sticking together.

7. When all of the blintzes are cooked, create your filling. Put all of the filling ingredients into a mixing bowl, then use a fork to mix them well. Filling should be well blended but slightly lumpy.

8. Now you're going to stuff and wrap up your blintzes! Put 3 tbsp. of filling on the lower part of the blintz, about an inch from the edge. Fold the lower edge of the blintz up over the filling. Fold the sides of the blintz inward, as though you're folding an envelope. Roll the blintz up and over the filling like a burrito, tucking the edges in as you roll.

9. When the blintzes are stuffed and rolled, you are ready to fry them. Pour ¼ cup of vegetable oil into the skillet and heat over medium until hot. Do not let the oil turn brown or start smoking—if this happens, discard the oil and try again. Cook the blintzes in batches of three -- this will give you space to turn them easily in the pan. Carefully place the stuffed blintzes flap-side down into the hot oil. The blintzes should fry for 1½ to 2 minutes until they're brown and crispy. Turn the blintzes carefully using a spatula and/or tongs, then fry for an additional 1½ - 2 minutes. Blintzes should be evenly browned on both sides.

10. Serve blintzes warm. They can be served “as-is” or topped with fruit topping (such as strawberries), sour cream, applesauce, whipped cream, or maple syrup.

Parish News

Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the parish council is Sunday, March 15, 2020 after Divine Liturgy.

General Confession

General Confession shall be held on Saturday, February 15, 2020 after Great Vespers.

“Souper Bowl” Project

Our parish’s collection cans of soup and other non-perishable foods for donation to St. Mary’s food pantry comes to a close on February 2, 2020. Thank you for co-operating in this project!

Memorial Saturdays

The Memorial Saturdays of the Lenten season this year are February 22, March 14, and March 21. Fr. Sophrony will also say the Litany of the Departed at Divine Liturgy on St. Theodore Saturday (March 7). If you need to update the names on your memorial list(s), contact Fr. Sophrony by February 16, 2020.

Schedule of Services

February 1-2, 2020 (Presentation of Christ)

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

February 8-9, 2020

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

February 15-16, 2020

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

February 22-23, 2020

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

Special Donations

Please note that for Special Donations in March 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 February 16, 2020.

February 9, 2020

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of V. Rev. Archimandrite Athanasy Mastalski.

February 19, 2020

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Ernest Alexander Royer.

February 23, 2020

Sanctuary Lamp offered by Fr. Sophrony Royer in memory of Rita Richards.

Daily Bible Readings

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23; Luke 17:3-10

2. Hebrews 7:7-17; Luke 2:22-40

3. Peter 2:21-3:9; Mark 12:13-17

4. 1 Peter 3:10-22; Mark 12:18-27

5. 1 Peter 4:1-11; Mark 12:28-37

6. 1 Peter 4:12-5:5; Mark 12:38-44

7. 2 Peter 1:1-10; Mark 13:1-8

8. 2 Timothy 2:11-19; Luke 18:2-8

9. 2 Timothy 3:10-1; Luke 18:10-14

10. 2 Peter 1:20-2:9; Mark 13:9-13

11. Peter 2:9-22; Mark 13:14-23

12. 2 Peter 3:1-18; Mark 13:24-31

13. 1 John 1:8-2:6; Mark 13:31-14:2

14. 1 John 2:7-17; Mark 14:3-9

15. 2 Timothy 3:1-9; Luke 20:46-21:4

16. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Luke 15:11-32

17. John 2:18-3:10; Mark 11:1-11

18. 1 John 3:11-20; Mark 14:10-42

19. 1 John 3:21-4:6; Mark 14:43-15:1

20. 1 John 4:20-5:21; Mark 15:1-15

21. 2 John 1:1-13; Mark 15:22-25, 33-41

22. 1 Cor. 10:23-28; Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36

23. 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2; Matthew 25:31-46

24. 3 John 1:1-15; Luke 19:29-40, 22:7-39

25. Jude 1:1-10; Luke 22:39-42, 45-23:1

27. Jude 1:11-25; Luke 23:2-34, 44-56

29. Romans 14:19-23, 16:25-27; Matthew 6:1-13