

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

A Newsletter for the Russian Orthodox Community of Saint Panteleimon, Gosford

~ Number 9, 5 January 2003 ~

С РОЖДЕСТВОМ ХРИСТОВЫМ!



*Wishing all the parishioners of Saint
Panteleimon's, Gosford,
a Joyful Christmas and
a Happy New Year*

ARCHBISHOP HILARION'S NATIVITY EPISTLE

Copies of Vladika Hilarion's Nativity Epistle - in both Russian & English - are included as inserts in today's bulletin.

MOLEBEN TO GREAT-MARTYR PANTELEIMON

Gosford parishioners will recall the report in the last newsletter of a possible permanent home for us in Narara: a block of land & hall on the eastern side of the railway line belonging to a community trust. A letter expressing interest in the property has since been sent to the solicitors representing the trust. Today (5/1), immediately following Divine Liturgy, we will be serving a moleben to our heavenly protector & helper, St Panteleimon, asking for his prayers in relation to this. Through his prayers, may God bless this endeavour!

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick: Metropolitan Laurus, Metropolitan Vitaly, Archbishop Alypy, George, Nestor, Olga

Expectant mothers: Victoria, Amy, Maria (Orthodox)

Special needs: Katherine, David, Constantine (Orthodox); Margaret (non-Orthodox)

Preparing for marriage: Peter & Svetlana, Daniel & Ioanna, Peter & Tatiana

WORLD NEWS: ISRAELI ARMY OVERSHADOW CHRISTMAS IN BETHLEHEM

An article from: www.news.scotsman.com - Dec 22 - written by ROSS DUNN in BETHLEHEM - There is little Christmas spirit in Bethlehem this year. The town is under occupation by the Israeli army and armoured personnel carriers patrol its streets. Since last month, the town has been under the control of the Israeli military, following a suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem that killed 11 people. The Church of the Nativity, built on the supposed site of Jesus' birth 2,000 years ago, is under military guard and soldiers warn young Palestinians away from Manger Square. Last April, a group of armed Palestinians shot their way into the church to escape capture by Israeli forces. The lengthy siege that followed ended only with an internationally backed agreement under which the fugitives agreed to be sent into exile, some to the Gaza Strip and others abroad. From time to time, a group of bearded clerics wearing their traditional cloaks emerge from the tiny entrance to the Church of the Nativity, a gateway so low that adults must bend to pass in and out of the shrine. They belong to the Greek Orthodox fraternity, which shares control over the church with other denominations but is the dominant force within the sacred site. Father Karnardos, the Greek Orthodox superior, said he and his fellow priests were determined to do all in their power to prevent a repeat of events that plagued the holy place earlier this year. Karnardos said he would be the last to blame anyone for not coming to Bethlehem, even if they were given permission by the Israeli authorities to make the journey. "The big problem is the lack of security," he said. "And that is why people are not coming to see the holy place." Until recent times, the residents of Bethlehem could have expected a visit by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at this time of year. He regularly attended Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, until he was banned from doing so last year. Last week, the Israeli cabinet, on the instructions of the prime minister, Ariel Sharon, decided that Arafat would also be prevented from travelling to the area this week. Israel blames Arafat for failing to prevent Palestinians from carrying out suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks.

And, it is understood Israel wants to deny Arafat the high-profile public platform of a visit to the Church of the Nativity to criticise the Jewish state. Israeli troops will be stationed in Bethlehem throughout the holiday period. Doron Spielman, an Israeli army spokesman, said: "The idea is to have a completely safe atmosphere by Christmas so that tourists can come without fear of a terrorist attack." But reaching that goal may be for a future Christmas. For the time being, the cradle of Christianity seems destined to remain a hostage of the current conflict.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CONVENTS IN THE HOLY LAND

Please keep in mind the fact that our convents in the Holy Land, located in Gethsemane & on the Mount of Olives, are suffering greatly as a result of the current conflict there. They rely greatly on the generosity of pilgrims but, as one would expect, the number of pilgrims has greatly decreased over the last two years. The nuns in these convents maintain some of the holiest sites in Jerusalem, places that our Lord has seen fit to place in the care of our Russian Orthodox Church. Of those to whom much is given, much is required! Donations for the upkeep of the convents can be made through the Diocesan office.

LESNA CONVENT APPEAL

Included with today's bulletin is an appeal for assistance from Abbess Macrina & the sisters of the Lesna convent in France. The Convent was originally established in 1885 at the behest of Archbishop Leontii of Warsaw. St. Amvrosii of Optina and St. John of Kronstadt were supporters of the Convent. In 1917, at the invitation of then-Bishop Anastassy (Gribanovsky, later Metropolitan), the Convent moved to the Kishinev Diocese, and then to Yugoslavia. From Yugoslavia, in 1950, the nuns of the Convent left for France, where they remain to this day. In France, St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, the Miracle-worker frequently visited the Convent. The main holy object of the convent is the Lesna Icon of the Mother of God. The Lesna Icon was found on 14 September 1683 by a shepherd, Alexander Stelmashuk, of the town of Lesna, in a thick forest on a pear tree surrounded by a bright light. The holy icon did not stay with the shepherd. It was confiscated by a Catholic Polish landowner. Misfortunes, which then befell him, moved him to give the icon to an Orthodox church in the town of Bukovich, near Lesna. Then again it was taken away by Catholics and placed in a Catholic church, which, in 1863, was handed over to the Orthodox faithful. At the same time the holy icon was returned. The icon is carved into a dark red oval stone. Some 500 miracles from it have been counted. Its' feast day is on Pentecost, and on 8 September. At the convent there are also the relics of St. Afanasii of Brest. The nuns bear a multitude of obediences: singing, cleaning, gardening, candle-making, icon-painting, a bookstore, and also warmly greet many visiting pilgrims. Please support them generously!

Father James will be preparing this newsletter to coincide with each service at Gosford. Try and let him know at least a week in advance if there is anything that you would like included (prayer requests, news, announcements). You can call him on 02-9721-2659 or email him at fr.james.carles@rocor.org.au.

GOSFORD SERVICES IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY

A new schedule with details of services for January-May 2003 is now available. Note: The Russian schedule distributed on 15/12 included incorrect dates. Corrected copies are available today.

5 January	Sunday	Sunday before the Nativity of Christ <i>Divine Liturgy</i>	9.00 am
19 January	Sunday	Theophany - The Baptism of the Lord <i>Divine Liturgy</i> followed by Great Blessing of Waters & blessing of parish homes	9.00 am

All those wishing to have their homes blessed on Theophany should let Father James know. There is a list at the front desk for names & addresses.

OTHER IMPORTANT CHURCH DATES

7 January	Рождество Господа нашего Иисуса Христа The Nativity of our Lord, God & Saviour Jesus Christ - Christmas
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NEWCASTLE SERVICES IN JANUARY

As of 15 December 2002, Father James has been appointed to serve at St Nicholas, Wallsend (Newcastle). Father James will continue to serve at Gosford, of course, & to assist at Cabramatta. Sunday services in Newcastle will be three-weekly, as at Gosford. There will also be services in Newcastle on major feast-days. The following services have been scheduled for Newcastle in January:

6 January	Всенощная/All-night vigil	6.00 pm
7 January	РОЖДЕСТВО ХРИСТОВА Nativity of Christ Божественная литургия Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
18 January	Всенощная/All-night vigil	6.00 pm
19 January	БОГОЯВЛЕНИЕ - Крещение Господне Theophany - The Baptism of the Lord Божественная литургия и великое освящение воды Divine Liturgy & Great Blessing of water	9.00 am

For those interested, a complete schedule of services for Newcastle is available from Father James.