

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

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

~ Number 24, 29 February 2004 ~

ВЕЛИКОПОСТНОЕ ПОСЛАНИЕ К ПАСТВЕ

Первоиерарха Русской Православной Церкви за рубежом

Возлюбленные о Господе братья и сестры!

Наступают великие, спасительные дни Святой Четырдесятницы. Дни эти приведут нас к Светлому Празднику Воскресения Христова. Но для того, чтобы достойно приступить к радостным Пасхальным дням, нам и дано время на достойное к нему приготовление. Это и есть время Великого Поста, время нашего очищения. Святой Григорий Палама, память которого отмечается Церковью на Второй неделе Великого Поста, говорит: «Истинный пост, это такой пост, который распространяется на все; такой пост все очищает и все врачует.» Постараемся же очистить себя постом от греховного груза, тяжело облепившего наши тела и души. Этот накопленный слой греха не дает нам слышать слово Божие, понять Его волю о нас, не дает видеть Божии дела, которые совершаются нам во благо.

На минувшей неделе состоялось очередное заседание Архиерейского Синода. Наряду с прочими обсуждениями, шла речь о приглашении посетить Отечество наше, полученном мною от Патриарха Алексия Второго. Приглашение это было передано мне российским президентом В.В. Путиным во время его посещения Нью Йорка в сентябре прошлого года. Сам факт подобного приглашения, обращенного к Русской Зарубежной Церкви впервые за 80 с лишним лет ее существования, обстоятельства, при которых оно было получено, - все это с несомненностью говорит о важных переменах, происходящих в России. Наша святая обязанность - по мере сил разобраться в происходящем и по словам Святителя Игнатия Брянчанинова, «понять время». (смотри на обороте)

IMPORTANT NOTE: GOSFORD SERVICE NEXT WEEK!

Beginning this year, services in Gosford will be held on the 1st, 3rd, and the 5th Sundays of each month. In 2004, February, May, August & October all have 5 Sundays. What this means is on four occasions during the year there will be services on two consecutive Sundays. The first such occurrence is this week and next, meaning that there will be a service today AND on Sunday March 7th. Don't forget!

«Скажи мне, Господи, путь вонже пойду», - повторяет ежедневно Православная Церковь, но ни в коем случае не дерзает уклониться от путей Господних, но напротив, молит Господа указать их. Поэтому уклоняться от поисков путей к уврачеванию разделения в Русской Церкви, коснеть в отвержении самой возможности такого уврачевания, - может означать, что мы отказываемся от всех средств к уразумению воли Господней.

Архиерейским Синодом было решено, что, с помощью Божией, моя поездка в Москву состоится до праздника Вознесения Господня. В ходе ее я встречу с главой Московского Патриархата, а также надеюсь познакомиться с церковной жизнью в России. В частности, я хотел бы посетить Екатеринбург и другие города России с намерением поклониться святыням. Таким образом, поездка эта будет носить, прежде всего, ознакомительный характер. Эта поездка ни в коем случае не является «началом объединения», как иногда выражаются журналисты. Не идет речь и о молитвенном общении, которое должно стать завершением всего процесса уврачевания. Это лишь смиренная попытка изыскать путь к осмыслению наших общих основ и взаимопониманий. Путь этот может оказаться достаточно долгим. Но даже не попытаться ступить на него - было бы глубоким заблуждением.

Тросим всю нашу боголюбивую паству вооружиться терпением и усилить молитвы. В особенности же просим усугубить молитвенное призывание Новомучеников и Исповедников Российских, а также Святых Царственных Мучеников, чье почитание в нашем Отечестве чудесно шириться с каждым днем. Именно это почитание Святых Новомучеников Российских объединяет сегодня всю православную русскую паству, во Отечестве и в рассеянии сущую.

Да благословит вас Бог!

С любовью о Господе,

† Митрополит ЛАВР

GREAT LENTEN EPISTLE TO THE FLOCK

of the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Brothers and Sisters, Beloved in the Lord!

The great, saving days of Holy Lent are approaching. These days will lead us to the Bright Day of the Resurrection of Christ. But in order to begin the joyful Paschal days with worthiness, we are given time to properly prepare for them. This is the period of Great Lent, the time for us to purify ourselves. St. Gregory Palama, whose memory the Church celebrates on the second week of Great Lent, says: "True lent is one which spreads throughout everything; this kind of lent purifies everything and heals all." Let

us try to cleanse ourselves of our sinful burden, which covers our bodies and souls, through fasting. This thick layer of sin does not allow us to hear the word of God, to understand His will for us, it does not allow us to see God's work, which is done for our benefit.

This past week, a regular session of the Synod of Bishops was held. In addition to other matters, there were discussions on the invitation to visit our Fatherland, received by me from Patriarch Alexey II. This invitation was given to me by the Russian President, V.V. Putin, during his visit to New York in September of last year. The very existence of such an invitation, made to the Russian Church Abroad for the first time in 80 years of her existence, the circumstances under which this invitation was received, all undoubtedly speaks of the important changes occurring in Russia. Our holy duty is to try our best to discern what is happening, and in the words of Saint Ignatii Brianchaninov, to "understand the time."

"Teach me Your way, O Lord, and I will walk," says the Orthodox Church daily, in no way daring to stray from the paths of the Lord, but on the contrary, asking the Lord to show these paths to us. That is why to decline to seek the paths to healing the divisions in the Russian Church, to stagnate within the rejection of the very possibility of such healing, might mean that we reject the means of understanding the will of the Lord.

The Synod of Bishops decided that, with God's help, my trip to Moscow is to be made before the Ascension of the Lord. During this trip I will meet with the head of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also hope to acquaint myself with church life in Russia. In part, I wish to visit Ekaterinburg and other cities of Russia with the aim of prostrating myself before holy relics. In this way, the trip will be first of all an exploratory one. This trip will in no way be the "beginning of unification," as some journalists put it. We are not speaking of prayerful communion, which must be the crowning event of the entire process of healing. This is only a humble effort to seek out a way to grasping our common foundations and mutual understanding. This path may prove fairly long. But to fail to embark upon it would be a profound mistake.

We ask our God-loving flock to arm themselves with patience and to strengthen their prayers. We especially ask that you double your prayerful appeals to the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, and also to the Holy Royal Martyrs, the veneration of whom is miraculously growing day by day in our Fatherland. It is this veneration of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia that today unites the Russian Orthodox flock, both in the Homeland and in the diaspora.

May God bless you!

With love in the Lord,

† Metropolitan LAURUS

ТОРЖЕСТВО ПРАВОСЛАВИЯ

The Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy

The first Sunday in Great Lent (Великий Пост) is called "Торжество Православия" or "The Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy". On this Sunday, we celebrate the return of the icons to the churches in the year 842, over 1000 years ago.

Why did the icons have to be put back in the churches?

In those times, there were people known as "Iconoclasts", or "icon-smashers". They thought that they were good Christians, and smashed icons because they thought it was wrong to have such things. Two wicked kings, Leo the Third and Leo the Fifth, who were icon-smashers themselves, allowed their supporters to destroy many holy icons. They were only stopped when the good Queen Theodora came to the throne and supported Orthodoxy.

For Orthodox Christians, icons have always been very important. Because they are pictures of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, His Mother, and the saints, we venerate them and show them respect. Because they show us things that happened in the earthly life of our Lord or in sacred history, we can learn from them. Importantly, there are also many icons through which God has worked great miracles.

Iconoclasm or icon-smashing was a terribly bad thing, but it is just one of many wrong ideas that have threatened our Holy Orthodox Church over the centuries. Some examples of other wrong ideas are that Jesus was not God, that Holy Communion is not the body and blood of Christ, that the Holy Spirit is not God, and that all religions are really the same. There are many, many more examples. On the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy we don't only celebrate victory over the icon-smashers, but also the victory of the truth over all wrong ideas. We thank God that he has preserved the Holy Orthodox faith that he gave to us so that we could be saved, & have eternal life.

God has revealed the truth to us about

- Things we can't see - God Himself, angels & demons, & our souls
- His creation of the world, and the end of the world
- His constant help for us
- The wrong things that we do, and the salvation he has prepared for us
- Heaven, and how we must live in order to go there
- The Last Judgement, and eternal life.

The whole truth about these things is to be found only in the Orthodox Christian faith.

We must never make the mistake of thinking that all Christian churches are the same, and that the differences between them are just on the outside. Only the Holy Orthodox Church carefully protects the whole truth about God. This does not mean that we are better people than other Christians. What it does mean is that we should be especially thankful to God for giving us the whole truth, and that we should always try to live the way He wants us to.

In Church on this day there will be one of two special services:

- In Cathedrals there is a service called the "Rite of Orthodoxy" («Чинъ Православия»). In this service, the protodeacon reads the Creed («Верую») out aloud, and all false ideas and teachings are condemned. When a false idea is read out, the choir & people sing "Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!", which means "It is wicked!"
- In parish churches, a simpler service "For the conversion of those in error" («О обращении заблуждшихъ») is held. In it, prayers are read asking that all people confused by wrong ideas will find the truth.

In Gosford, of course, we will have the second, and simpler, service. Nevertheless, pray on this day (and always!) that God will help you to always follow the true path, and that you, your families and friends will never be confused by wrong ideas!

PARISH LIFE: UPDATE ON OUR NEW CHURCH AND PARISH CENTRE

In the last issue of this bulletin we reported that Gosford City Council had approved our building plans and that work was proceeding at a great pace. Things have certainly progressed in the past two weeks, with the gyprocking and plastering of the church area now almost entirely completed, sanded, and ready to paint! The electrical wiring has also been done. Even at this early stage, the church is most impressive, and all those involved have done a wonderful job! It is a good size, with a beautiful arched roof and fine acoustics, a house of God that we can really rejoice in. The plan is to finish the painting over the coming week, and then to begin laying the floor and building the iconostasis. Walls will also be built to divide the vestry (ризница) and sacristy from the main part of the sanctuary, and a sink and storage cupboards will be installed in the sacristy. With the painting of the church completed, the scaffolding will then be free to work on the ceiling in the hall and kitchen areas. Father James also hopes to have all the parish icons assembled by mid-March, and to begin selecting those to be hung in the new church. As mentioned in the last bulletin, those wishing to offer assistance are encouraged to talk to Rick Golovin, the coordinator of efforts at the new centre.

PARISH LIFE: FINANCIAL NEEDS

The installation of the new church has so far been within our budget, but as owners of property we now have a number of other financial responsibilities, besides regular repayments: rates, body corporate fees, insurance, and so on. All of these things place significant demands on our resources. We also hope to purchase in due course items for the adornment of the church, in addition to other things like a baptismal font. We have a benefit concert planned for April 25th at the Russian Club, & there will be a collection in parishes throughout the diocese during Great Lent. Many friends of the parish also continue to donate generously; Father James this week received a donation of \$2000.00 from a young Sydney family. Nevertheless, charity begins at home, and all parishioners and regular worshippers at Saint Panteleimon's are asked to give generously to support the building and adornment of our new parish centre.

CHURCH LIFE: «ЦЕРКОВНОЕ СЛОВО» NEWSPAPER

Available today are a small number of the latest edition of the diocesan newspaper "Word of the Church" («Церковное Слово»), now published only in Russian, the English edition having been incorporated into "The Voice" newspaper. The purchase price is \$2.00. For those who read Russian, it contains a great deal of interest; Articles include a life of Protopresbyter Alexander Shabashev, founder of Australia's first Russian Orthodox parish in Brisbane (and whose picture appears on the cover); an account of a trip to Voronezh; the transcript of Archpriest Michael Protopopov's address to the All-Diaspora clergy conference in December 2003; church news (including Russian translations of some articles from our very own «Пантелеимонский Листок»!); ukazi (including news of a new deacon, Fr Nikifor, in Brisbane); and much more. Please support the Diocese's efforts and keep up with Church news and views by purchasing a copy!

CHURCH LIFE: CLERGY RETREAT

On Tuesday & Wednesday 9th & 10th March, the annual Diocesan Clergy Retreat will take place in Sydney. Priests and deacons from throughout the diocese gather to confess, serve together, & discuss pastoral issues. A number of the clergy form a choir for the services and sing beautifully. As is usual, the retreat will be held in Strathfield. A Hierarchical Presanctified Liturgy will be served at Strathfield on the Wednesday, beginning at 8am. This is a wonderful service to be present at, as one rarely sees so many clergy serving together, and especially at the Presanctified Liturgy, served for the most part only on Wednesdays & Fridays during Great Lent. All the faithful are welcome to attend the Liturgy, although the lectures afterwards are reserved only for the clergy.

FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION («ТРИОДЬ ПОСТНАЯ»)

The Lenten Triodion or «Триодъ Постная» is the special service book that the Orthodox Church uses from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee until Midnight Office late on Great and Holy Saturday. To those familiar with the content of the Lenten services, it is always a great joy to open the Lenten Triodion each year, called by the Holy Fathers a "treasury of repentance". The hymns and readings contained within it are often instructive as well as edifying, and a copy of the Triodion is recommended reading during the Fast, especially for those unable to attend the beautiful Lenten services. Some of the hymns and verses may also be added to one's regular morning and evening prayers. Copied below are a few extracts from recent Triodion services.

"The gateway to divine repentance has been opened: Let us enter eagerly, purified in our bodies and observing abstinence from food and passions, as obedient servants of Christ who has called us into the heavenly Kingdom. Let us offer to the King a tenth part of the whole year, that we may look with love upon His Resurrection". (Sessional hymn at Matins, Monday of Cheesefare Week)

"When we choose to observe the Fast, we always profit from it. For the devils dare not attack us when we fast, and the guardian angels that protect our life stand at our side with greater eagerness when we are cleansed by fasting". (Aposticha sticheron at Matins, Monday of Cheesefare Week)

"If thou dost fast from food, my soul, yet dost not cleanse thyself from passions, thou dost rejoice in vain over thine abstinence. For if thy purpose is not turned towards amendment of life, as a liar thou art hateful in God's sight, and thou dost resemble the evil demons who never eat at all. Do not by sinning make the fast worthless, but firmly resist all wicked impulses. Picture to thyself that thou art standing beside the crucified Saviour, or rather, that thou art thyself crucified with Him who was crucified for thee; and cry out to Him: Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom". (Aposticha sticheron at Matins, Wednesday of Cheesefare Week)

"The glory of the Fast shines upon us, putting to flight the darkness of demons. The solemn time of abstinence has come, bringing with it healing for the passions of our soul. Protected by it Daniel shut the mouth of lions, and the Children in Babylon quenched the flame of the furnace. Through fasting save us also with them, Christ our God, in Thy love for mankind". (Aposticha sticheron at Matins, Thursday of Cheesefare Week)

"Let us joyfully begin the all-hallowed season of abstinence; and let us shine with

the bright radiance of the holy commandments of Christ our God, with the brightness of love and the splendour of prayer, with the purity of holiness and the strength of good courage. So, clothed in the raiment of light, let us hasten to the Holy Resurrection on the third day, that shines upon the world with the glory of eternal life". (Sessional hymn at Matins, Monday of the First Week of Lent)

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick & suffering: Metropolitan Vitaly, our parishioners Fyodor & Antonina Tialshinsky, Ioann, Alexander, Nina, Alexandra, child Ksenia

Special needs: Katherine, David, Paraskeva, Antonina, Nicholas & family, Ioanna, Daniel

Families with new babies: George & Alla Karmadonoff, big brother Christopher & new baby Monica; Vassily (Bill) & Irene Konstantinidis, big brothers Dimitri & Alexander, with new baby Ambrose

Newly-baptised: Ambrose (15/2), Alexandra (14/2), Heather (Elizabeth) (18/1)

Newly-married: Gregory & Heather (Elizabeth)

Please also remember in your prayers Skye, a young woman from the Central Coast who in late January tragically took her own life, and her grieving family and friends.

GOSFORD SERVICES IN MARCH

Note: The services listed below will be at the Narara Community Centre.

7 th March	Sunday	2nd Sunday in Great Lent: Saint Gregory Palamas Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
21 st March	Sunday	4th Sunday in Great Lent: Saint John of the Ladder Divine Liturgy	9.00 am

We hope to be in our new church for services on Palm Sunday, Great & Holy Thursday, Great & Holy Friday, & Pascha. A new schedule of services will be prepared for distribution shortly.

NEWCASTLE SERVICES IN MARCH

6 th March	Saturday	Commemoration of the Departed Liturgy for the departed & general pannikhida	8.00 am
13 th March	Saturday	All-night vigil with the bringing out of the cross	6.00 pm
14 th March	Sunday	3rd Sunday of Great Lent: Veneration of the Cross Divine Liturgy (Parish Annual General Meeting at 1.00pm)	9.00 am
20 th March	Saturday	Commemoration of the Departed Liturgy for the departed & general pannikhida	8.00 am
27 th March	Saturday	All-night vigil	6.00 pm
28 th March	Sunday	5th Sunday of Great Lent: Saint Mary of Egypt Divine Liturgy	9.00 am

Father James tries to prepare this newsletter to coincide with each service at Gosford. You can call him about it on 0428-639156 or email him at fr.james.carles@rocor.org.au.