

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

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

~ Number 38, 2 January 2005 ~

NEW SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

A new schedule of services has been available since last week, and can be obtained from the candle desk in church or on the parish website. It has details of services up until Holy Saturday (30th April) this year.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES & ЁЛКА

As previously advised, Christmas services in Gosford this year will be on the evening of Christmas Day (Great Vespers at 7.00pm on Friday 7/1) and on the morning of the second day of Christmas (Divine Liturgy at 9.00am on Saturday 8/1). There will be a Christmas party or "ёлка" for the children after the service on 8/1, with singing, dancing, a visit from Father Christmas, and presents. Adults are also welcome. The cost for children is \$5.00; adults should simply bring a plate of festive food to share.

SPECIAL COLLECTION ON JANUARY 8th

In accordance with a directive (№ 12-2) from Archbishop Hilarion, a collection will be made in church on January 8th to aid the many suffering children in Russia and the other counties of the former Soviet Union. The collected aid will be distributed by the charitable organization "Orthodox Action". In his directive, Vladika Hilarion writes:

"The feast of Christmas is a favourite feast of the family and of children. Let us remember during the days of Christmas the poor children of Russia who are deprived of the joys and comfort of a normal family life. May the hand of those who give never experience need!"

Here in Australia, even those of us who feel that we are not financially well off have a standard of living unthinkable for most people in the world. Let us share some of the material blessings that God has given us, generously helping those less fortunate!

2ND ANNUAL FISHING COMPETITION

Almost upon us is our 2nd annual fishing competition, an important and widely spoken-of event in the life of the Russian community on the Central Coast, in Sydney, and beyond! Based once again at Deerubbun Reserve on the Hawkesbury River (UBD55, N5), the competition will take place over the weekend of 22nd & 23rd January. There is a poster with full details in the church hall and on the parish website. For registration & further information, contact Paul Pereboeff (0414-950741), George Karmadonoff (0417-

246026), or Victor Bendeviski (0410-327635).

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The 2004-2005 Parish Council met for the first time on December 7th, with almost all members in attendance, apologies being received from Don Kobeleff and Head Sister Olga Petroff. The new Auditing Committee was also invited to attend, although prior engagements prevented Andrew Kfoury and Victor Bendeviski from being present. Father James welcomed the new council and committee and expressed his hope that the coming year would be one in which they could build on the achievements of the previous year by establishing sound administrative practices and good working relationships. Items discussed included a range of building issues; the provision of new tables for the dining room/hall; building security; and a fundraising concert to be organized by O.I. Itsikson and E. Yakupova for late May 2005. It became clear during the meeting that it is important for the parish to have a sound "strategic" plan for the future that concerns both direction (parish growth and the need for a permanent church) and finances. This is something that will need attention in the coming year. 2004-05 office-bearers were elected, with Kate Marcotrigiano continuing as Secretary and Sophie Kfoury taking on the position of Treasurer, long-serving Treasurer Nina Golovin expressing the wish to step down. Many thanks to Nina for her hard work, often in difficult circumstances. The parish council is due to meet next on Tuesday January 4th.

DIOCESAN LIFE: 40TH ANNUAL RUSSIAN ORTHODOX YOUTH CONFERENCE

This year's syezd, the 40th, was held in Canberra, and ran from Sunday December 19th until Saturday December 25th. About 100 young people from around the diocese attended. Our small parish once again had a strong presence, with Father James giving a talk, and young parishioners Alex Yakimov, Nicholas Krikunov, Gerald Korelin, Sarah Carles, and Valentina Minutello attending, as many as from some of the larger Sydney parishes! To add to the impressive Gosford attendance, a very inspiring talk to the young people was given by our own George Karmadonoff, who spoke of God's help to him in overcoming various struggles in his life. Lectures were given by Father David Moser - a priest visiting from the USA - and a number of the clergy of the diocese. All felt that the syezd was a great success. Keep an eye out for an article and photographs on the Synod's website: www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws. God willing, next year's syezd will be held in Geelong.

RUSSIAN SCHOOL TO BEGIN IN FEBRUARY 2005

In mid-December, Father James and Irina Kouznetsova met to finalise plans for the commencement of a parish school in February this year. These plans have been previously mentioned here, and have been discussed with the parish council and with Archbishop Hilarion, who has warmly expressed his support for this project. The school

will be named in honour of Saint Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow and Apostle to Alaska. Irina, a member of our parish and a Wyoming resident, will be teaching. Irina has a tertiary degree in Russian language and literature and has a great deal of experience teaching in Russia and in parish schools here in Australia. She and her husband Dmitri have two young boys, Daniel & Matthew. Irina has put together an interesting and contemporary curriculum that makes use of a lot of the newer Russian-language resources available. Although a number of adults expressed interest in the school, it will initially cater only for the school-age children of the parish, with approximately 12 students commencing this year. The focus will be on speech development and reading and writing in Russian. Drama will also be part of the curriculum, and older classes will do some history and geography. As with any church school, religious education will of course be an important subject, with Father James teaching Законъ Божий ("Law of God") each week. The school will operate in the church hall on Saturday mornings from 9.30am. A moleben for the beginning of the school year will be served at 9.30am on Saturday February 5th, 2005. If you have any questions, please see Father James or call Irina on 4329-0046.

WHY FAST BEFORE THE NATIVITY?

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord's birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things that we sometimes allow to control us -- and for many people, food is a controlling factor. While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner -- if we "ruin our appetite" we will enjoy the restaurant less -- so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently. If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a "must." In Matthew Christ says, "WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites," not "IF you fast" or "IF YOU CHOOSE to fast."

Finally, it seems quite odd that in our society -- a society in which people gladly and freely spend huge sums of money for diets, most of which recommend that one refrain from red meats and dairy products -- fasting is not more widely embraced. How odd that a Jenny Craig consultant or diet guru or physician will tell us to refrain from eating meat or cheese or butter and we will gladly embrace -- and pay large sums of money for -- his or her advice, while when the Church offers the same advice [at "no cost"] we tend to balk, as if we were being asked to do the impossible.

From "Further Q&A on the Orthodox Faith"
Fr. John Matusiak
<http://www.oca.org>

A WORD OF THANKS

Tanya Borodin and Nina Golovin and family have expressed their sincere thanks to all in the parish who consoled them and who offered prayers after the sudden repose of their son and brother, Victor Elgin, on November 1st 2004.

COMMUNITY LIFE: RUSSIAN SCOUT CAMP

Национальная Организация Русских Скаутов

The National Organisation of Russian Scouts (NORS) has once again had its' annual camp at Telford, a campsite located within the bounds of the Royal National Park on Port Hacking. Having commenced on December 27th, the camp is due to finish tomorrow, January 3rd. Together with a number of leaders, over 60 young people (ages 7-25) have attended, including some of our own parishioners. Archbishop Hilarion and Father James both visited the camp on the Open Day, Thursday December 30th, and together served a moleben to Saint George, the patron saint of Russian Scouts. Vladika and Father James later had a beseda with the camp participants, talking initially about the Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Children, and then answering a range of questions from the children. Chief Russian Scout Nikita Gileff leads NORS in Australia. It is a fine organization, and one that many of our parishioners were active in it their youth. We hope one day to see a troop established on the Central Coast.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick & suffering: Metropolitan Vitaly, our parishioners Fyodor & Antonina Tialshinsky, Vladimir & Nestor; Newcastle parishioners Vasili, Alexander, Antonina, Vladimir, Nina, Alexandra; and others known to us: child Ksenia, Ioann

Special needs: Katherine, David, Paraskeva, Vera, Matthew, Tamara, Andrew; all victims of the tsunami disaster in South-East Asia.

Father James tries to prepare this newsletter to coincide with each Sunday service at Gosford. You can call him about it on 0428-639156 or send an email to info@gosfordrussianchurch.org.