

PARISH LIFE: ANNUAL PICNIC ON MONDAY OF LONG WEEKEND

At the September parish council meeting it was agreed that we would once again have a parish picnic on the Monday of the October long weekend. This is not a fundraiser, just a parish get-together. It is at a nice spot not far from Avoca Beach. There are paddle boats for hire close by and plenty of room to have a game of cricket for those so inclined. Last year around 120 adults and children from the parish and elsewhere came, and everyone had a nice day. A leaflet with all the necessary information is enclosed with this issue of the newsletter. Please consider joining us this year, and feel free to invite relatives and friends!

PARISH LIFE: PREPARING FOR OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As we approach the end of the year, it is time to begin planning for our parish Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM hear reports from the outgoing Parish Council and reviews the activities of the parish over the previous year. It also elects the Parish Council for the year to come. Our AGM this year will have an additional important task in that it must elect a lay delegate to attend an extraordinary Diocesan Assembly in Melbourne on 22 December 2005. The task of the Diocesan Assembly will in turn be to elect delegates to attend the 4th All-Diaspora Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, about which more information is provided below. The most likely date for the AGM at this stage is Sunday November 20th, so please keep an hour or so after church free on this day. Nomination forms and information about the meeting will be circulated to parish members over the next couple of weeks. Parish members should renew their membership to ensure that they are able to vote at the meeting. Prayerful consideration should be given to nominations for Parish Council membership and for our representative at the Diocesan Assembly.

CHURCH LIFE: A SPECIAL DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY AND THE 4TH ALL-DIASPORA COUNCIL

As indicated above, a special Diocesan Assembly is to be held in Melbourne in December 2005 in order to elect delegates to the 4th All-Diaspora Council of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. Two delegates from our parish will attend the Melbourne meeting: Father James, and one layperson elected by the parish. It is

understood that representatives of the All-Diaspora Council Organising Committee and the Committee on discussions with the Moscow Patriarchate will be in attendance to brief delegates on the work of their respective committees. The All-Diaspora Council is an historic event of immense significance to the life of our Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. To be held in San Francisco between 6th and 14th May 2006, this Council is perhaps the most important one yet in the history of our church. Lay people, clergy and bishops will gather together to consider the following important questions

1. The establishment of normal relations between the Church in Russia and the Church outside Russia; and
2. The mission and ministry of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia in the contemporary world.

The Synod of Bishops has directed that parish delegates be "practising Orthodox Christians who bring benefit to the church". When one considers the important tasks of both the Diocesan Assembly and the All-Diaspora Council, the reason for this is clear. Archbishop Hilarion has indicated that the parish should take responsibility for the travel and accommodation costs of each delegate.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council met most recently on September 6th. The Council discussed the financial situation of the parish, noting that just over \$80,000 remained to be paid on our loan. When one considers that our small parish borrowed \$126,000 in late 2003, this is an excellent. The council nevertheless reflected on the importance of ensuring that we meet our regular repayments of \$620.00 per fortnight, and also discussed the need for ongoing fundraising. [It is noted that a "Bank Loan Repayments Chest" has now been placed in church, allowing those who so desire to make donations towards the repayment of the loan - Ed]. Other matters discussed include: the possibility of street signs showing the location of our church; the need to let the local taxi company know where we are; the October long weekend BBQ; Vladika's visit on 18/10; a Sunday roster for the candle desk; preparation for the 2005 Annual General Meeting; Father James' advice that he would be absent on Sunday January 1st 2006, and that that there would be no service that day; and the fact that we will have a service in Gosford on Orthodox Christmas Day 2006. The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 4th.

PARISH LIFE: SPRING 2005 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

As mentioned in the last newsletter, a new schedule of services covering the Spring months (September, October and November) is now available in church. Copies are also available on our website. As usual, there will be services on the first, third and fifth weekends of each month.

This year, we will also serve vigil and Divine Liturgy on Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th September to mark the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (Воздвижение). Other special services of note include the commemoration the patron saint of our school, Saint Innocent of Alaska, in early October; **Archbishop Hilarion's visit on Sunday 16th October**; and Divine Liturgy in English on Sunday 30th October.

After the service on Sunday 16th October, the day on which Vladika is visiting, our Saturday-morning Russian school students will give a brief concert lasting around 15 minutes. Following the concert there will be a BBQ for parishioners and visitors.

CHURCH LIFE: RUSSIAN ORTHODOX YOUTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Enclosed with this issue of the newsletter is a questionnaire for voluntary and anonymous completion by Russian Orthodox "youth". It seems that anyone up to the age of 40 is welcome to complete the questionnaire, the age range having been extended to gather the views and experiences of the generation now starting their own families. Prepared with the blessing of His Grace, Archbishop Hilarion, this questionnaire aims to address church youth issues within the Australian Diocese with the purpose of identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. The information gained will be used by Archpriest Gabriel Makarov (of the Brisbane Russian Orthodox Cathedral) in preparing a report to be presented to the 4th All-Diaspora Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and will help inform any decisions taken by the Council in relation to the mission and ministry of our church. All parish "youth", young and old, are encouraged to complete the questionnaire and return it to Father Gabriel at the address given on the form.

DIOCESAN LIFE: FUNDRAISING FOR SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST SKETE, KENTLYN

In the last newsletter it was mentioned that a small but energetic group of friends of the skete (or small monastery) of Saint John the Baptist in Kentlyn were assisting Father Joachim, the priest-in-charge, by organising a number of fundraising activities. These included an inter-parish cooking competition to be held at the Cabramatta parish hall; a photo competition; and a cash raffle/guessing competition, with a single prize of \$500.00.

Unfortunately, the photo competition and the cooking competition have had to be cancelled because of a poor response from the church community. There will now simply be a fundraising BBQ at Cabramatta church on Sunday September 18th. For those still wishing to support the skete's fundraising efforts, information is available from Auxiliary members on 4620-4813 or 4869-3913. All parishioners are encouraged to support this worthy endeavour.

PARISH LIFE: RUSSIAN SCHOOL

Our parish Russian School continues to function on Saturday mornings, with the children studying Russian language and the Orthodox Christian faith and worship. Children aged between 7 and 16 are welcome. As mentioned in the last newsletter, the school has extended activities, with a number of adults from outside the church community now attending Russian language classes on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. These classes are also open to parishioners. More information is available from Irina Kouznetsova on 4329-0046. All parishioners are encouraged to attend the services for our school's heavenly patron, Saint Innocent of Alaska, on October 5th and 6th. For those unable to attend these weekday services, there will also be a moleben to Saint Innocent before classes (that is, at approximately 9.00am) on Saturday 8th.

CHURCH LIFE: SAINT CHARITON MONASTERY IN ISRAEL AND THE BUILDING OF ST NICHOLAS CHAPEL

A correspondent writes: "During May-June 2005 there was a pilgrimage led by Father Gabriel Makarov and Archbishop Hilarion to the Holy Land [a pilgrimage in which our own Sophie Kfoury and her son Daniel participated - Ed]. During this highly interesting pilgrimage the group soon became aware of the cultural, economic and political differences that separated us from the lifestyle of the peoples of the Holy Land but at the same time there was the recognition of a strong spiritual bond that transcended all borders. We were greeted everywhere with warm hospitality, courtesy and friendliness and returned home with positive memories and spiritually enriched.

The diverse program ensured that we all had the opportunity to walk as much as possible in the footsteps of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the Holy Fathers. There were many highlights and each pilgrim returned home with his/her own personal spiritual reflection and insight from the Holy Land. We were all blessed to have this unique and wonderful opportunity and now would like to return some of this blessing to the Holy Land.

The Russian Orthodox Church has a proud history of patronage and pilgrimage in the

Holy Land. Russian pilgrims have visited the Holy Land since the 11th century and in 1858 the Russian Orthodox Mission was established - land was bought and churches, schools and monasteries were built. Today these lands and churches are supported by pilgrims and charitable donations. When these cease, so will the Orthodox tradition.

One such example is a monastery built into the cliff face in the Judean desert at Faras. This is the monastery of St Chariton, built c. 275AD. This monastery built by Saint Chariton is exceptional in that it began the tradition of monasteries in the Holy Land in the 4th century. St Chariton was a monk who was persecuted and imprisoned during the time of the Roman Emperor Aurelian. He escaped into the wilderness and found sanctuary in a cave. One day he was attacked by bandits and left for dead. The bandits revelled and drank wine from their barrels but unbeknown to them, snakes had drunk their wine earlier and left their poison in the wine. As a result the bandits died from the poison and when St Chariton regained consciousness he found the bandits' riches and with these he established a monastery or 'lavra'. Here monks lived in a community with a common law and a leader yet they maintained their independence.

During the centuries the monastery fell into disrepair but later some monks from Mount Athos settled there for a while. Difficulties of maintenance arose and during the 1980's the monastery again fell into disrepair. The Israeli government recently annexed the surrounding territory and this is now a National Park. Today a number of monks live there. If the monastery is vacant then the monastery will pass over to the Israeli government.

The monks who are there today have worked hard to restore the monastery and continue to struggle. The current chapel is accessed by climbing a ladder. In the winter months when monks need to rise at 4am the often slippery climb up the steps to reach the chapel in the cliff face is arduous. Snow, wind and rain make it dangerous. Now the monks are building a chapel dedicated to Saint Nicholas and this chapel is easily accessible.

This monastery urgently needs your/our donations in order to complete the building and outfit the interior of the church. The monks have worked hard to become self sufficient; for example, by planting their own gardens, building a fence to keep out attackers and thieves, and vigilantly maintaining the property. Bringing supplies is a feat in itself. All food, building materials and other goods need to be hand carried up the mountain. It takes determination, discipline and strength of spirit to accomplish these tasks in the face of the harsh climatic conditions of the desert.

And the monks are doing this to preserve this monastery for Orthodox people.

Now these monks need our assistance. Soon the winter months will arrive. Monasteries have always been the soul of the Russian spirit. It is in these places that many have found spiritual guidance and solace. It is in these places that holy fathers have prayed for us and continue to do so.

The surrounding lands have already been lost, so let us all unite to preserve this Orthodox church. Give generously for the building of the Saint Nicholas chapel”.

Those wishing to support this appeal, one that has Archbishop Hilarion's blessing, may do so in one of two ways. The first is by making a donation. There is a donation list at the candle desk in church and one may pledge an amount in this way, with the total being passed on to those organising the appeal. The second is by attending a fundraising BBQ (another one!) at the Cabramatta church on Sunday October 23rd. To be held after the Divine Liturgy, the BBQ will cost \$15.00, and will include salads, dessert, tea & coffee. A short film will be shown, and a discussion will follow.

CHURCH LIFE: HIS GRACE BISHOP ALEXANDER (MILEANT) OF BUENOS AIRES AND SOUTH AMERICA REPOSES

News from www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws

On the night of September 12-13, after a lengthy illness, His Grace Bishop Alexander of Buenos Aires and South America departed to the Lord. A pannikhida will be held this evening at Holy Trinity Church in Oxnard, CA. A pannikhida will be held there also on Thursday before the body of the newly-reposed hierarch, and the following morning, a hierarchal Divine Liturgy and the funeral. The burial will be held at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY.

The late Bishop Alexander was born Alexander Vasilievich Mileant in Odessa in 1938. During the Second World War his father disappeared at the front, and his family, fleeing the Bolsheviks, went to the West. They lived in Prague, in Rome, and finally in Buenos Aires, where the young Alexander received his primary education and then completed a seven-year electro-technical school. He worked as a machine draftsman for several companies. He then enrolled in Buenos Aires University.

From the age of 8, Alexander served as an altar boy under Archbishop Panteleimon, then under Archbishop Afanassy, who took him under his wing and gave him three years of formal theological training. Vladyka Afanassy possessed a great theological library. Wishing to read the works of the Holy Fathers in the original, Alexander first learned modern Greek, then ancient Greek.

At the end of 1963, Alexander enrolled at Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville, which he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Theology in 1967. A year earlier, Archbishop Averky (Taushev, +1976) ordained him to the diaconate, and during Great Lent, Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky, +1985) of blessed memory ordained him to the priesthood and sent to Protection of the Holy Virgin Russian Orthodox Church in Los Angeles, where he served as rector for 31 years. From 1971-1985, Fr Alexander led several youth pilgrimages to Greece and the Holy Land. While spiritually nourishing his flock, Fr Alexander continued his scientific education, receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Electronics in 1978, then a Master's Degree in Electronics, and finally, in 1983, an Engineer's Degree from the University of Southern California in Communications. He worked in the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of NASA. His lay work enabled Fr Alexander to become an expert in computers, which in turn helped him publish numerous missionary pamphlets which enjoyed great popularity in Russia and abroad. Today there are over 300 brochures published in Russian, English and Spanish on Orthodox Christianity.

In 1995, Protopriest Alexander was tonsured a monk in Holy Trinity Monastery and given the name Alexander in honor of Holy Martyr Archbishop Alexander of Kharkov, who died in prison in 1939 (until then, Fr Alexander bore the name of St Alexander Nevsky, whose feast day was celebrated on September 12th). On May 28, 1998, Archimandrite Alexander was consecrated a bishop at the Synodal Cathedral in New York and appointed Ruling Bishop of Buenos Aires and South America.

CHURCH LIFE: RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN VISITS THE SYNODAL CATHEDRAL

News from www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws

On September 14, at 4 pm, President Vladimir Putin visited the Synodal Cathedral of Our Lady of the Sign. The Russian President was greeted in the courtyard by Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan; Protopriest Peter Holodny, the Synodal Treasurer; and Protopriest Andrei Sommer, the Senior Priest of the Synodal Cathedral. The President then entered the Cathedral, where he was met by His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Venerating the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God and the relics of SS Elizaveta and Varvara, Vladimir Vladimirovich prayed during the moleben performed before the main holy icon of the Russian diaspora by Mitred Protopriest George Larin along with Protopriest Alexander Lebedeff and Priest Serafim Gan, with a male choir singing under the direction of Andrei E. Burbelo. At the end of the service, His Eminence greeted the President, recounting some of the miracles that had occurred after prayers before the wonder-working icon during the Second World War and

wished God's help in his service to Russia and the Russian people. He then gave President Putin an album on the 75th anniversary of Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville. In his response, Vladimir Vladimirovich expressed his joy at their joint prayer before the oldest holy icon of the Russian Church and gave His Eminence the gift of an icon of the Mother of God.

Amid a warm, gregarious atmosphere during a cup of tea, Vladimir Vladimirovich told of his visits to Mt Athos, Valaam and Solovki Monasteries and expressed the hope that the process of peacemaking between the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate would conclude peacefully and fruitfully.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick & suffering: Metropolitan Vitaly, our parishioner Antonina (Tialshinsky), Ioann, Nina, Vladimir, Vladimir, Nadezhda, Vasili, Nina, Vera, Daniel

Special needs: All those involved in the organization of the 4th All-Diaspora Council and in negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate; Katherine, David, Paraskeva, Antonina, Nicholas & family

The newly-reposed: Bishop Alexander, Alexander, Vitaly

«ЦЕРКОВНОЕ СЛОВО» - "WORD OF THE CHURCH"

The September issue of the Diocesan journal «Церковное Слово» ("Word of the Church" is now available. Material in the issue - all in Russian - includes copies of the Synod decisions relating to the All-Diaspora Council; reminiscences of a 2004 pilgrimage to Russia; an article on Dostoevsky; and an interview concerning "Orthodox mission today". Copies are available in church for \$2.00



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Our parish newsletter will be published monthly. If you wish to receive it by post or email, please talk to Father James (0428-639156) or Katya Marcotrigiano, the parish secretary (4369-1765).