

PARISH LIFE: OUR PATRONAL FEAST OF SAINT PANTELEIMON

On Wednesday August 9th we observed the feast-day of our patron saint, the Great-Martyr and Healer Panteleimon. Matins was served on the evening of Tuesday August 9th, and on the following morning - the day of the feast itself - Divine Liturgy was served. Joining Father James and Hieromonk John in serving Divine Liturgy was Hieromonk Joachim of Saint John the Baptist Skete in Kentlyn (Campbelltown), visiting our church for the first time. Father James gave a brief sermon at the end of the service about the importance of learning from the example of Saint Panteleimon, both in our relationship with God and in our relationships with each other. After the Liturgy, all present shared in tea and cakes, and Father Joachim conveyed to us the greetings of the sisters of the Convent of Our Lady of Kazan (also in Kentlyn).

Festivities will continue with all-night vigil on the evening of Saturday August 12th and blessing of water early on the morning of Sunday 13th, followed by Divine Liturgy at which Archbishop Hilarion will preside. Deacon Christopher Henderson (of Centennial Park) will also join us on the Sunday. A festive lunch at Narara Community Centre will follow.

DIOCESAN LIFE: 3RD ANNUAL FATHER SERAPHIM ROSE SEMINAR

The 3rd annual 'Hieromonk Seraphim of Platina' Memorial Seminar will be held on the evening of Friday September 15, 2006, at the church of 'All Saints of Russia' in Croydon. These seminars are organised by Hieromonk Joachim of Saint John the Baptist Skete. Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) was an American convert to Orthodox Christianity who died in 1982. Having come into contact with Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco, he went on to have considerable influence in the Orthodox Christian world, particularly through his writing and publishing. Two well-known books of Father Seraphim's are 'Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future' and 'The Soul after Death'.

The evening will begin at 6.30pm with a panikhida (in English) for the repose of the soul of the ever-memorable Hieromonk Seraphim. The seminar will begin at 7.30pm. This year's guest speaker is Archpriest Michael Protopopov (Rector of the Dormition Church in Dandenong, Victoria). Father Michael will give a presentation of Father

Seraphim's teaching on the importance of being faithful to the received tradition of the Orthodox Church. A period of questions and answers will follow, after which there will be a DVD presentation on the return from the USA to Russia of the revered "Tihkvin" Icon of the Mother of God.

Refreshments will be served at the end of the evening. There will also be a collection for the Building Fund of St John the Baptist Skete. A bookstall, mainly featuring books written by or about Hieromonk Seraphim, but with a selection of others, will be available.

PARISH LIFE: THE WEBSITE

Shortly after the announcement in the June-July newsletter that updates to the website would soon be posted, a communication problem with the company hosting our site resulted in it becoming unavailable. This situation continued throughout July and the site still (in early August) cannot be accessed. The company that designed and maintains our website without charge, Lusoft Systems, has been working to get the site back online. At this stage, the site is expected to be up again in late August. Please note that there will be a slight change to the domain name: rather than www.gosfordrussianchurch.org, it will be www.gosfordrussianchurch.org.au.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council met on Tuesday July 4th and August 1st. In the course of the August meeting, Fr James indicated future schedules of services would have only fixed 1st, 3rd & 5th weekend services and a share (with the Wallsend parish) of the Great Feasts. He advised that it was difficult to maintain more than occasional weekday evening services along with work in Sydney, family and study commitments, and responsibilities in the Wallsend parish. Fr James noted that weekday evening services and the newly-scheduled Bible studies and 'besedi' (discussion groups) were attended by very few parishioners, and expressed concern that he was directing his efforts in church life towards activities that were not really meeting parish needs. Some general discussion about church life followed. Details of the Spring Schedule of Services and more about the Bible studies can be read elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter.

Another matter of serious discussion at the August meeting was the financial position of the parish. Although good financial management has put us in a sound position (over \$45,000 ahead on our mortgage), making our regular fortnightly repayments has been challenging over the last few months. Our average fortnightly collection over the last 8 services (3-4 months) has been \$715.00. Our loan repayments are \$620.00 per fortnight. This leaves just \$95.00 per fortnight to cover our various expenses (electricity, an allowance for the choir conductor,

purchase of candles for resale, building maintenance, and so on). This makes things somewhat more difficult than we would like. Although we have done a lot of good work in paying off so much of the loan so soon, we need to ensure that we have the means to meet our various financial commitments. Parishioners and friends are asked to keep this in mind, and to help as best they can.

The Parish Council is due to meet next on Tuesday September 5th. Preparations will then begin for our parish Annual General Meeting in November.

PARISH LIFE: NEW SPRING SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

As of mid-August, a Spring Schedule of Services will be available in church. Covering the months September, October and November, it includes the regular weekend services, a service for the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (on September 27th), and an English-language Divine Liturgy on the last weekend in October.

PARISH LIFE: BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION GROUP

It was announced in the April and June-July newsletters that Father James has initiated a twice-monthly Bible reading & discussion group in response to a number of perceived needs in parish life: the need for better knowledge of the Bible, the need for an opportunity to discuss matters of general interest to us as Orthodox Christians, and the need for spiritually-focused informal fellowship amongst parishioners. In July those present at the study group worked through the second part of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chapters 5:12-8:39. In early August chapters 12-14 were examined in order to list Saint Paul's "instructions" for Christian living (a list compiled on the evening is on display in the church hall). The dates for late August and September are as follows: Tuesday August 22nd, Tuesday September 12th, and Thursday September 28th. In general, the study and discussion meetings have been attended by only very few people; in a small and geographically widespread parish like ours it is hard to get a large number of people together, especially on a weeknight. For this reason, Father James will make a decision at the end of September as to whether or not to continue. The format, designed to keep the time commitment to a minimum, is as follows: 7.00pm sharp start, 35 minutes on Bible study, a 15 minute break, 35 minutes for discussion of a particular topic, and an 8.30pm sharp finish. A full schedule is available from Father James.

PARISH LIFE: ENGLISH SERVICES IN JULY & OCTOBER

The last Sunday in July being the fifth for that month, we had an English-language Divine Liturgy. Hieromonk John (MacPherson) presided at the service and also gave the sermon. The choir -conducted by Matushka Marie - was in full strength and sang beautifully. We will have two more English services in 2006, with both October and

December having five Sundays. Fr James has invited Fr John to also preside at the October service.

DIOCESAN LIFE: A HISTORY OF RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY IN AUSTRALIA AVAILABLE ONLINE

Readers may recall a report in the May issue of the newsletter that Archpriest Michael Protopopov's book, 'A Russian Presence: A History of the Russian Orthodox Church in Australia', had been published and that copies were on sale for \$95.00 each (+\$7.50 postage & handling). For those unable to afford the book, the thesis on which it is based it can be read online at:

<http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/digitaltheses/public/adt-acuvp09042006.85/02whole.pdf>.

By all accounts, this book is an exhaustive and fascinating history of the life of our church in Australia.

HOLY CROSS AUSTRALIAN ORTHODOX MISSION BULLETINS

For the past 10 years Deacon Christopher Henderson has compiled a weekly bulletin that includes the Sunday Epistle and Gospel readings, the troparia and kontakia (hymns) sung that Sunday, sermons and lives of saints. Now preparing for retirement and a period of travel abroad, Father Christopher is seeking to more efficiently distribute the bulletin by sending it direct to those who wish to continue receiving it. All parishioners interested in receiving the bulletin should email Father Christopher (cchrishendo@yahoo.com.au) and ask to be added to his mailing list. The bulletin is also available online at www.saintjonah.org/bltn/.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick & suffering: Metropolitan Vitaly, our parishioners Antonina (Tialshinsky) and Irina (Kamenev), Vladimir, Vasili, Vera, Eugenia, and Daniel

Expectant mothers: Larissa

Families with new babies: Reader Seraphim, Anna and baby Ksenia (born 6.8), with big sisters Callista and Anna

Newly-baptised: Child George

Newly-departed: Abbess Evpraxia of the Convent of Our Lady of Kazan, Kentlyn



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