



russian orthodox
church of
saint panteleimon
gosford

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК PARISH NEWSLETTER

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PARISH LIFE: JUNE - JULY 2011

After a busy time during Lent and in the Paschal period afterwards, the past month has been a very quiet one in the life of our parish. Our second service in June was on the Sunday of All Saints, the Day of Youth of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Although there were many people in church on the day, it had not been possible to arrange any particular activities with which to observe it. This highlights the need for a coordinated approach to youth activities in our parish, something that must be a priority in the years ahead.

Late in June we received four English-language copies of the *Pentecostarion*, called in Slavonic the *Триодъ Цветная*, the book containing all the Orthodox services from the first day of Pascha until the feast of All Saints of Russia, the second Sunday after Pentecost. Father James took advantage of the strong \$A to purchase these from the publisher in the United States, receiving in addition a 20 per cent discount. This purchase effectively completes our collection of English-language service books. We now have complete sets of service books in both Church Slavonic and English.

On the first weekend in July we had our winter parish camp at Crosslands in Galston Gorge. This was our third parish camp at Crosslands and our fifth camp since December 2009. Once again, the camp was a great opportunity for parishioners and friends to get together, build friendships, relax, and participate in the services, and all who were there spoke warmly of the experience. Over 50 adults and children attended over the weekend. Highlights included the singing of the choir under the direction of Maria Zaitseva (the choir director at St Vladimir's, Centennial Park), the campfire on Saturday night, the food, and the play based on the life of Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco. We hope to have some photographs on display in the church hall and on the parish website soon.

On Monday July 11 and Tuesday July 12 Father James, Father Martin and a number of parishioners from Gosford participated in the services at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Strathfield on the occasion of the patronal feast. Eight priests and four deacons served together on the Monday evening, with seven priests and three deacons serving on Tuesday. It being school holidays a great many families were able to be there, and the atmosphere was warm and friendly. It lacked only the presence of Vladyka Hilarion. Some good news announced on the day in Vladyka's message to the faithful was that it is planned that the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God will visit our Diocese in October-November this year. May God grant it, and that we will have the opportunity here in Gosford to have the icon amongst us.

Parish Council was not able to meet in June, but will get together in mid-July to finalise plans for our patronal feast of Saint Panteleimon, news concerning which can be found elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter.

Parishioners and friends are asked to remember Father Martin in their prayers. He will be travelling abroad in connection with his secular work during the latter part of July, and so will not be with us on Sunday July 17 or 31.

PARISH LIFE: OUR FORTHCOMING PATRONAL FEAST

It is now less than a month before the commemoration of the heavenly protector of our church, the Great-Martyr and Unmercenary Healer Panteleimon. Although the day of his commemoration falls on August 9, the divine services in his honour will be held this year on Friday August 12 and Saturday August 13. This gives an opportunity for all our parishioners and for clergy and visitors from other parishes to attend. On the Friday at 6.00pm we will have a Vigil service with the blessing of five loaves, wheat, wine and oil, and on Saturday we will have a blessing of water at 8.15am, Divine Liturgy at 9.00am, and a moleben to Saint Panteleimon immediately after Divine Liturgy. All are invited to a festive lunch afterwards at the Niagara Park Community Centre, a short drive from the church. All parishioners are encouraged to keep this day free and to be present both for the Divine Liturgy and for lunch afterwards. Between now and then, those who can are asked to donate a bottle of wine for a basket that will be one of the prizes in our fundraising raffle.

PARISH LIFE: SERVICES IN AUGUST

We will have All Night Vigil and Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, with customary blessing of fruit on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th August. Services for the feast of Dormition will be held in Newcastle, on which day we will observe the sixty-second anniversary of the first Russian Orthodox service in the Hunter Valley.

Despite having had our parish camp on the first weekend in July, there will still be two Sunday services this month. This is possible because there are five Sundays in July this year. Readers will remember that the fifth Sunday, when such occurred, was previously reserved for an English-language Divine Liturgy. These services were discontinued as they were often poorly attended, something most discouraging for those who had taken the effort to prepare them. It was felt, moreover, that as our parish has perhaps more English than any other regular Russian Orthodox parish in NSW, and as our evening services were predominantly in English, that there was little need for more. Our parish remains strongly committed to the use of both the Church Slavonic language and of English.

CHURCH LIFE: REPOSE OF HEIROMONK PANTELEIMON

Hieromonk Panteleimon (Lake) reposed in the Lord on the 19th June, and was buried on June 20 in his home village in Nilulat-Kefamenanu – 230 km East of Kupangand. Hieromonk Panteleimon was a cleric of the Indonesian Deanery (Indonesian Orthodox Church) of the Australia and New Zealand Diocese. Earlier this year he visited Australia, visiting our parish here in Gosford. He was also present at the Diocesan Conference and took part in the Syezd, but returned early to Indonesia because of feeling unwell. He was diagnosed with hydronephrosis in one kidney and spent 10 days in the local hospital in Kupang, receiving a blood transfusion. There are some photo cards available in church with a picture of him, and a prayer on the reverse. May God give him rest!

SPIRITUAL LIFE: WHAT IS FAMILY HAPPINESS?

What is family happiness? When you hear the word "happiness," a bright feeling of the joy of living, of participation, is born in the soul from the word itself. Happiness is harmony of spirit, soul, and body. It is when the body submits to the soul, and the soul to the spirit. Not the swan, the crab, and the fish, as in Krylov's fable, but when the feelings and movements of the flesh are in submission to the reason. Just look at what catastrophic consequences can come from a bodily movement that is not in submission to the spirit. The body sees a beautiful woman and goes off in answer to the call of lower demands not in submission to the spirit. His reasoning says, "Family happiness is not in this..." But the body does not ask anyone for advice; it just wants something, then goes and does it, without thinking about the consequences.

In *Trinity Leaves From the Spiritual Meadow* there is a story. One day a woman learned of her husband's unfaithfulness. She cried bitter tears and asked God to forgive her husband's sin. When her husband left for work, his wife, not saying anything, with tears in her eyes, blessed her husband as she usually did. When they said good-bye, the husband could not bear it, and fell on his knees asking his wife's forgiveness—so sincerely, that he never sinned again. This was the true repentance of the husband. Thanks to the wife's longsuffering, the marriage was saved, and happiness and harmony returned to their relationship.

Oh, how important it is to submit the body to the spirit in order to escape a family break-up. Today in Russia over fifty percent of all marriages end in divorce [and America is not far behind]; every second union of loving couples falls apart. Is this really love? The causes of this may be various, but the meaning is the same. Thoughts draw us in one direction, feelings in another, and the body is off to the side. Every day a sentence is passed on children in the wombs, who never had a chance to be born. Over ten thousand of these helpless infants are being killed ever day in Russia alone! Can happiness be built upon the blood of children? Nevertheless, even amongst those who call themselves Orthodox are people who continue to live with an unrepentant heart, who continue to sin. And how many women are there who have to endure alcoholic husbands, smokers, and adulterers? How much violence and beating?

Many families today are experiencing a state of crisis. However, every person, in the depths of his heart, wants family happiness—this hierarchical, harmonious existence. In order to achieve this state, we have to bind our passions with good thoughts. Let us suppose that a family has come together, it is functioning well, there were no abortions, and the husband is not an adulterer or a drunk; but there is no happiness... Is there a chance that it could be saved? I recall a story about this.

In one city lived a married couple. They lived together a long time, but always felt that something was missing in their relationship. They tried everything, and after twenty years of marriage, they broke up. They broke up so that they could find a union that would be stronger. It turns out that they had built their lives without a foundation; although they were baptized in childhood, they were not very religious. Finding themselves in an extremely unhappy state, they both went, each to his and her own church, to place a candle. There they met people who invited them to a catechism class. After the classes, they met in order to be wed in the Church, and they never left each other again.

Of course, if this couple had been taken to church from childhood they would never have had to smash their porcelain hearts in order to gather the pieces together again later. It is very important to explain to children in their teenage years the difference between love and being in love. A great example of this is the following story told by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

A young couple came to Vladyka to ask his blessing upon their marriage. He looked at them and asked the young man, "Do you love your bride-to-be?" The man answered that he loves her very much. Then Vladyka said to him, "Imagine that you now go home, you have received my blessing for marriage, and suddenly you have an accident. Your beloved becomes an invalid for life. Would you be ready to repeat the words you just said?" No words were needed—it was enough to see the young man's facial expression in reaction. That is how greatly love (sacrifice) differs from superficial "being in love." It is very important to bring this home to those who want to have family happiness. One last word. Without mutual love and faithfulness, it is impossible to have family happiness.

Priest Gleb Grozovsky, available at: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/36020.htm>

PARISH LIFE: FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

A parish presence on the social networking applications Facebook and Twitter has been created. This will help get information about church life out to many parishioners and friends much more quickly than by means of the newsletter or the parish website. Photographs, service schedules and news will be the focus.

Search for 'Gosford Russian Orthodox Church of Saint Panteleimon' on Facebook to "like" the page, or to become a follower on Twitter, search for "Gosford Church" and "RevJamesCarles".

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick: Subdeacon Vitaly (Lupish) and Nun Euphrosyne; our parishioners Nestor, Natalia, Michael, Tatiana, Nina, Boris, Ekaterina, and Ekaterina.

Departed: Patriarch Alexis, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, infant Ekaterina, and former parishioners and benefactors Irene (Claydon), Victor (Manjetny), Vladimir (Dmitrieff), George (Fomin), Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Kraihin), Theodore & Antonina (Tialshinsky), Lyubov (Smieska), Victor (Pulkownik), Olga (Timohina), Alexander (Dikan), Elena (Yakupova), Lydia (Ustimko).

Travelling: Deacon Martin; John, Maria & Vladimir.

Expectant mothers: Daria, Svetlana, Maria, Anastasia.



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