



russian orthodox
church of
saint panteleimon
gosford

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК PARISH NEWSLETTER

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CHURCH LIFE: GREAT LENTEN EPISTLE OF THE PRIMATE OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH ABROAD

*In that Thou art compassionate, O Christ, I pray [Thee]:
By true fasting and repentance bring to life a soul done to death
by the fruit of transgression; and grant that I may always walk in the
straight and good paths of Thine honoured commandments,
that having obtained Thy divine glory, with all who
love Thee I may glorify Thy goodness in all things, O Jesus.*

-Sessional hymn after the Second Kathisma on Monday of the Second Week of Lent

Beloved in the Lord Archpastors, Pastors, Monastics and Laity!

Once again we enter a special period in church life—Great Lent. All of us, burdened with life's struggles, in the rhythm of modern life, cannot help but "travel in the distant land," and may God grant that we be as wise as the Prodigal Son who returned to his father, having understood his poverty and inability for an independent, cognizant life because of his sins. But we are often so burdened by temporal life with all of its bothers and complications that we forget our very purpose on earth.

The Lord, desiring the salvation of each person, having spent forty days in the desert in fasting and prayer, showed us the importance of these labours. Lent is a special time in the life of the Church and of every one of her members, a time when we are called upon to concentrate on pondering our life, recognizing our faults and the feebleness of the human intellect which is not illuminated by the light of Divine Truth, and destined for death. During Great Lent, we must regain sobriety, directing our lives onto the track of God's commandments, and this is helped by the length of the services and their special repentant mood. Every Great-Lenten song is filled with humility and the recognition of the sinfulness of human nature, with prayer to God, the Mother of God and God's holy saints, prayer that we sinners will not die but, purified, obtain Eternal Life.

As we proceed through Great Lent, which is great not only in its length but in its austerity, we must not fall into despair, for as we pay heed to these same repentant Great-Lenten prayers, we also hear the firm voice of hope and reliance on the mercy of God. Indeed, this Lenten period is not a time when we must assume the likeness of a sufferer, or like the Pharisee, praise our own Lenten *podvigi*, for Lent is a tool and a means by which we once again regain clarity and boldness of mind, remembering that we Christians are only travellers on this earth

and that we strive for our Heavenly Fatherland, strive towards our Father! We must pray to God, humbly beseech Him that we worthily pass through the period of Great Lent.

Every week of Great Lent provides us with an example of growth in spiritual life: the Week of the Triumph of Orthodoxy shows us the correctness of the chosen path, the victory of the Church of Christ over the devil; the second week is devoted to St Gregory Palamas, which shows us the path towards Light, and so to the true path; the Veneration of the Cross emboldens us in the middle of the difficult but salvific road; St John of the Ladder, remembered during the fourth week, presents us with the Ladder upon which upon which, girded with purposeful desire, we will no doubt ascend on the path of our spiritual growth; St Mary of Egypt, as a bright lighthouse shows us that even in depths of dishonour, we can be elevated towards God even in our earthly life, so long as we have patience and genuine repentance in the sins we have committed.

The crown of Great Lent, the fore-image of future life, is the Greatest of Events in the whole world, the Bright Resurrection of Christ, the Pascha of the Lord! It is this great celebration of the spirit over flesh that we must behold over the course of this long but salvific Forty-day Fast, remembering that as we proceed properly along the path of Great Lent and preserve piety within our souls throughout our entire lives, we will be bestowed with undying life through the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!

*HILARION,
Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York,
First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad*

Великопостное послание Первоиерарха Русской Зарубежной Церкви

*«Преступления плодом умерщвлена душою оживотвори Христе
постом истинным и покаянием, молюся яко щедр:
и даждь ми в путех присно ходити правых и добрых,
честных твоих заповедей, яко да Божественныя славы твоя уличив,
со всеми любящими тя славословлю твою о всех Иисусе благодать»
(седален по втором стихословии в понедельник 2-ой седмицы)*

Возлюбленные о Господе Архипастыри, пастыри, монашествующие и миряне!

Мы с вами вновь входим в особый период церковной жизни – Великий пост. Все мы, обуреваемые житейскими проблемами, ритмом современной жизни, поневоле «уходим на страну далече», и дай Бог нам оказаться столь же рассудительными, как вернувшийся к отцу блудный сын, который понял свою немощь и неспособность к самостоятельной, осознанной жизни из-за своих пороков. Но зачастую мы оказываемся настолько погруженными в мирскую жизнь со всеми ее дрязгами и неурядицами, что забываем о своем земном предназначении.

Господь, хотящий спасения для каждого, находясь в пустыне сорок дней в посте и молитве, показал нам важность сего делания. Пост – это особое время в жизни Церкви и каждого из ее членов, время, в которое мы призываемся особо задуматься над своей

жизнью, осознать несовершенство и бессилие человеческого разума, не просвещенного светом Божественной Истины, обреченного на гибель. В дни Великого поста мы должны отрезвиться, направить свою жизнь в русло Божиих заповедей, ведь этому способствуют и продолжительность служб и особый – покаянный их настрой. Каждое великопостное песнопение наполнено смирением и осознанием греховности человеческой природы, мольбой к Богу, Божией Матери и святым Божиим угодникам, о том, чтобы мы грешные не погибли, но очистившись, обрели Жизнь Вечную.

Проходя время Великого поста, великого как по продолжительности, так и по строгости, мы не должны впадать в уныние, ведь внимая все тем же покаянным великопостным песнопениям, мы слышим твердый глас упования и надежды на милость Божию. И действительно, пост это не время, когда мы должны надеть на себя страдальческую личину, или подобно фарисею, хвалиться своими постными «подвигами», пост – это орудие и средство, через которое мы вновь должны обрести ясность и бодрость ума, вспомнить, что мы, христиане – всего лишь странники на этой земле и стремимся к Отечеству Небесному, к нашему Отцу! Мы должны молиться Богу, со смирением просить Его, чтобы нам достойно пройти поприще Великого поста.

Каждая неделя поста приводит нам пример возрастания в духовной жизни: Неделя Торжества Православия указывает нам на правильность выбранного пути, торжество Церкви Христовой над диаволом; неделя вторая святителя Григория Паламы – показывает нам путь к Свету и как встать на сей верный путь; Крестопоклонная – словно ободрение на середине тяжелого, но спасительного пути; преп. Иоанн Лествичник, воспоминаемый в четвертое воскресение Великого поста, дает нам Лествицу, по которой мы, имея неуклонное желание, непременно возвысимся на пути нашего духовного возрастания; преп. Мария Египетская, словно яркий маяк указывает нам на то, что, даже находясь на глубине нечестия, мы можем возвыситься к Богу еще и при земной жизни, главное же иметь терпение и искреннее покаяние в содеянных грехах.

Венцом же поста, словно прообраз будущей жизни, является Величайшее Событие всего мира – Светлое Христово Воскресение, Пасха Господня! Именно сие великое торжество духа над плотью нам нужно иметь перед своим взором на протяжении тяжелой, но душеспасительной Четырнадцатницы, помня, что мы, достойно проходя поприще Великого поста и сохраняя благочестивый настрой наших душ на протяжении всей нашей жизни, сподобимся бессмертной жизни через Воскресение Господа нашего Иисуса Христа!

+ ИЛАРИОН,

*Митрополит Восточно-Американский и Нью-Йоркский,
Первоиерарх Русской Зарубежной Церкви.*

Великий пост 2011 г.

PARISH LIFE: MARCH 2011

The first Sunday in March was Forgiveness Sunday, the final Sunday before the commencement of Great Lent. According to the custom of the Russian Orthodox Church, immediately after Divine Liturgy on that day we had Vespers with the rite of asking forgiveness. Following the long service, we then sat down to a feast of *blini*, or pancakes, prepared by our hard-working parish Ladies' Auxiliary. A delicious array of toppings was also offered: jam, sour cream, herring, caviar and smoked salmon. The *blini* were a great success, with the ladies raising nearly \$700.00.

The first week of Great Lent (7-11March) was very busy, with services every night on the first four days. Each evening, we had Great Compline (Великое Повечерие) with the reading of the Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete in four parts, one part each evening. In parish life, Great Lent is the only time that Great Compline is served in full. The Great Canon, a long poem of repentance in which all of Sacred History from Adam and Eve until now is reviewed, is also reserved for Great Lent. Together they make for a beautiful and solemn service that very much sets the tone at the beginning of the Church's season of repentance. We will have Great Compline (without the Great Canon) every Wednesday night during the Fast up until and including the sixth week. On Tuesday evening of the fifth week, the Great Canon will be read in full at Matins.

On the evening of Sunday 13 March, the First Sunday in Great Lent, we had Vespers with the Passia. Vespers on Sunday evenings in Great Lent begins festively, but changes at the mid-point to a solemn Lenten service. The Passia is an addition to Vespers on the first four Sundays of Great Lent that is commonly served in many parishes in our Diocese. Stichera from the services of Holy Friday and Holy Saturday are sung, and two chapters from each of the four Gospels are read – Matthew on the first Sunday, Mark on the second, and so on. The two chapters recount the betrayal and suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, and help us keep focus during Great Lent on Christ's sacrifice for the sake of our salvation. And so it can be seen that even in a small parish such as ours, there are many services to help us balance our fasting and repentance with prayer.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Council met for the second time this year on Tuesday 15 March. The meeting was a long and tiring one, starting at 7.00pm and ending just before 10.00pm. In part, the length of the meeting was due to the fact that it was the first regular Parish Council meeting of the year, the February meeting having been devoted almost entirely to the preparation of the Annual Report. It was also the first meeting of the new Parish Council, with newly-elected members Anna Kourbatov and Ivan Teliatnikov attending for the first time. In addition to regular agenda items such as reports on parish life and finances, it was necessary to elect office-bearers, attend to governance issues, decide upon attendance at the forthcoming Diocesan Wardens' and Treasurers' Conference, resolve issues relating to parking, cleanliness and car park safety at church, and consider an investment proposal.

Parish finances are in excellent health, expenditure so far this year having been minimal. All existing office-bearers were returned to their positions, with Katya Marcotrigiano's position of Secretary being modified to Minutes Secretary in view of her new role as Head Sister. Metropolitan Hilarion will now be asked to ratify the decisions of our Annual General Meeting

and the election of office-bearers. It was decided that Sophia Kfoury, Rick Golovin and Anna Kourbatov would attend the Diocesan Wardens' and Treasurers' Conference on Tuesday 29 March. Presentations at this conference will address parish governance, financial management and reporting, risk management and insurance. An item elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter summarises the issues with church parking, cleanliness and car park safety.

With regard to the investment proposal, the Parish Council heard from Treasurer Sophia Kfoury and Building and Maintenance Manager Rick Golovin concerning a meeting with Westpac about the possibility of a loan to purchase a residential property. Although Westpac was willing to lend money to the parish, additional funds would be required for a purchase to be possible. To this end, the text of an appeal to be published in the Russian-language newspaper, *Unification*, was tabled. After a long and vigorous discussion, during which it was noted that property could only be purchased with the consent of a majority of parish members as expressed at a general meeting, the following resolution was passed:

"The Parish Council, having considered investment options, decided that purchase of a residential property would best provide equity for future development, in addition to the possibility of a residence for parish clergy. Steps will now be taken to present a business case to an Extraordinary Parish Meeting as soon as possible after Pascha".

In all likelihood, Parish Council will next meet in May, April being a busy month because of Lenten and Paschal services.

PARISH LIFE: CHURCH PARKING, CLEANLINESS AND CAR PARK SAFETY

Our church being situated as it is in a complex of units with different owners, it will come as no surprise that there is a strata committee that deliberates and makes decisions upon matters of mutual concern. At a meeting of the strata committee earlier this year, concern was expressed with regard to parking during church services, cleanliness of the car park and grounds, and the safety of children and others in the car park area. The other units are used on weekends as well as weekdays, and the owners and occupants of these units are at times inconvenienced by parishioners and friends of our church parking in front of the roller doors, despite signs warning against this. It also seems that cups, plates and other rubbish are at times inadvertently left lying about, and that our children are at times endangered by climbing on machinery or when playing unsupervised in an area where vehicles are moving. We have enjoyed good relations – and even warm friendship – with our neighbours at 7 Comserv Close in our time here, and it would be a shame to jeopardise this.

In order to avoid this, and in view of the concerns raised by our neighbours, parishioners and friends are asked to observe the following rules: (1) Do not park in front of a roller door at any time; (2) Please ensure that any cups, plates or other rubbish are returned to the hall and placed in the bin before leaving after the service; and (3) Please ensure that children play safely and do not climb on vehicles or machinery. From Sunday 20 March, traffic cones ("witches' hats") will be placed in front of roller doors as a reminder regarding parking.

PARISH LIFE: HOLY MYSTERY OF ANOINTING WITH OIL («СОБОРОВАНИЕ») ON SUNDAY APRIL 10TH

On the evening of Sunday 10 April at 5.00pm we will have the special service of general anointing («Соборование»). The Holy Mystery of Anointing with Oil for the healing of sickness is referred to in the Bible by Saint James, the Brother of the Lord. He says, "If you are sick, ask the priests to come and pray for you. Ask them to put olive oil on you in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). Ideally, seven priests together perform this mystery, but it can be done by less, and even by one priest alone. In the service of Anointing with Oil there are seven epistle readings (readings from the "Letters" in the New Testament) and seven readings from the Holy Gospel. The priests pray that God will bless the oil (which is usually mixed with wine, a practice that calls to mind the Good Samaritan, who poured oil and wine on the wounds of the man who fell among thieves) and that it will be for the healing of the soul and body of the person to be anointed. There are also prayers for the forgiveness of sins, the ultimate cause of all sickness. Each person is then anointed on the forehead, nostrils, cheeks, lips, chest, and both sides of the hands.

During Great Lent, it is the practice in all parishes of our diocese (and indeed, of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia) to have a service of General Anointing in which everyone comes to be anointed for the healing of spiritual and physical sickness. This is an important part of the preparation for the celebration of Pascha. Some church writers say that this Holy Mystery in part absolves us from those sins that we have forgotten or are unaware of. The service takes between 2 and 3 hours. All are encouraged to attend, and those wishing to do so should endeavour to confess their sins beforehand. In previous years Metropolitan Hilarion has joined us for this service. Although he is in Australia for Great Lent, Vladyka is unlikely to be able to join us this year.

SPIRITUAL LIFE: CONFESSION AND COMMUNION DURING GREAT LENT

All parishioners are encouraged to confess their sins and receive Holy Communion at least once during Great Lent. At the time of preparation of this newsletter, we have four Divine Liturgies remaining during Lent: on Sunday 20 March, the day of commemoration of Saint Gregory Palamas; on Sunday 3 April, the day of commemoration of St John of the Ladder; on Palm Sunday; and on Holy Saturday.

It is possible to confess on the evenings before these services, and in the morning before Divine Liturgy, or at other times by arrangement with Father James (0428-639156 or rev.james.carles@rocor.org.au). Those parishioners who confess to another priest should let Father James know before coming to Holy Communion that they plan to receive the Holy Mysteries that day.



PARISH LIFE: CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS

Across all parishes on Palm Sunday, there will be a collection for the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in the Holy Land. Envelopes will be available in church from Sunday 3 April, and will also be distributed by post early that month.

DEVASTATION IN JAPAN AND NEW ZEALAND

A powerful earthquake has claimed thousands of lives in Japan, caused a tsunami and damage with fire, radiation, and blackouts. As of this writing, it is known that at least 4 out of 150 Orthodox churches in the country have been completely destroyed, some damaged, others severely. Many parishioners are still missing but fortunately, no clergymen are yet known to have perished.

There are no ROCOR parishes in Japan, but the Japanese Orthodox Church, like the Russian Church Abroad, traces its roots to Russia, and we are of one faith in God. Our Holy Faith was brought by a Russian saint – St. Nicholas of Japan (Kasatkin) – who came to the Japan in 1861. For further information on donating funds please visit: <http://fundforassistance.org/>

Metropolitan Hilarion has written the following epistle to the Orthodox people of Christchurch following the devastating earthquake. It reads as follows:

Beloved in the Lord Fr Arkady and the flock of St Nicholas Church:

The clergy and flock of the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, with pain and profound empathy, send their heartfelt Great-Lenten greetings to you.

We experience together with you, our brothers and sisters, members of our one ecclesiastical family, the Body of Christ, the heavy tribulations and losses endured by you as a result of the recent destructive earthquakes.

We learned with sorrow of the tragic death of one of the parishioners, servant of God Tamara Tsvetanova, who died in the ruins of a multi-storey dwelling. Eternal memory to her, and may she abide in the Kingdom of Heaven! We express our genuine sympathies to her husband, children and relatives.

Sharing your sorrows, we pray for the quick recovery from the aftereffects of the disaster. May these tribulations serve to strengthen your spirit and reliance on the All-merciful Lord. May our Lord Jesus Christ send consolation, health and strength to all who suffered, and may He grant the Kingdom of Heaven to all those who perished.

With love in the Lord,

+HILARION

Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York

First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Archbishop of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand

PARISH LIFE: FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

Our website content manager, Susanna Bendevski, has recently created a parish presence on the social networking applications Facebook and Twitter. 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 'Russian Orthodox Church of Saint Panteleimon' on Facebook to "like" the page, or to become a follower on Twitter, search for "GosfordChurch".

CHURCH WEBSITES OF INTEREST

For those interested in up to date information on various church matters, the following sites may be of interest:

Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR): <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws>

Australian and New Zealand Diocese of ROCOR: <http://www.rocor.org.au/>

PARISH LIFE: PRE PASCHA CLEAN UP – SATURDAY 9 APRIL 2011

Our usual pre-Pascha general clean-up day at church will be held on Saturday 9 April, beginning at 8.00 am. This will be a major clean-up, with everything in the church and hall being thoroughly washed, scrubbed and polished in preparation for Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and the Paschal services. All those who are able to spare a few hours are asked to attend. A list of tasks will be prepared to ensure that everyone has something to do. As is customary, a light Lenten lunch will be served afterwards for all those working.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

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

Departed: Patriarch Alexis, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, 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).



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