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## **PARISH LIFE: JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2012**

Our last newsletter came out in mid-July, two months ago, and a great deal has happened in parish life since then.

We had our usual services on the weekend of 14-15 July, quiet services after the festivity and emotion of Metropolitan Hilarion's visit and Father Martin's departure at the beginning of the month.

On Saturday 28 July it was the day of commemoration of the Holy Great Prince Vladimir, the enlightener of Russia. Father James served at the church of Saint Vladimir in Centennial Park on Friday evening and Saturday morning, together with the rector, Priest Daniel Metlenko, and clergy from across the Diocese. On Saturday evening he served at the church of Saint Nicholas in Fairfield and on Sunday he served Divine Liturgy at the church of All Saints of Russia in Croydon before presiding at a wedding there that afternoon. There were no services at Gosford that weekend.

During the first week of August we learned with some surprise that His Eminence, Archbishop Michael of Geneva and Western Europe, visiting Australia for a month with Metropolitan Hilarion's blessing, would be joining us for our feast-day celebrations.

We had services again in our parish on the weekend of 4-5 August. At the end of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday 5 August Father James spoke briefly about the ever-memorable Patriarch Varnava of Serbia – details of his life were printed in the July newsletter – before serving a litia – or memorial service – for the repose of his soul. Patriarch Varnava was a great friend of the Russian Orthodox Church in difficult times. 23 July 2012 was the seventy-fifth anniversary of his repose.

Following Divine Liturgy Father James baptised Feodor, the infant son of Paul and Elena Douriaguine. Fedya's godparents were Ivan Teliatnikov and Irina Shelokova. Our warmest congratulations to all!

On the evening of Friday 10 August we served All-Night Vigil in honour of our heavenly protector, the Holy Great-Martyr and Healer Panteleimon. It was a cold and wet night, and there were very few people in church.

The next morning, in view of the rain, a moleben with the blessing of water was served inside the church. Archbishop Michael was greeted at the church doors by Father James. Also present were Archpriest Nikita Chemodakov, the Dean of the NSW parishes and Rector of the church of Saint Nicholas in Fairfield; Hieromonk John from the Holy Trinity Monastery in Monkerai; Priest Alexander Korjenevksi from the parish of Saint George in Carlton; and Protodeacon Alexander Kotlaroff from Strathfield.

The choir sang beautifully under Olga Ivanovna's direction, so much so that the visiting clergy remarked upon it. The service was prayerful and uplifting. Following the customary moleben, Vladyka Michael gave an edifying sermon about the importance of Saint Panteleimon in the lives of the Russian Orthodox faithful. He said that it was his first visit to Australia, and remarked on the warmth of our small parish.

We were joined on the day by many friends from Sydney and Newcastle. There were approximately 150 people in church for the service, and around 120 gathered for the festive lunch at the Niagara Park Community Centre. It was a most enjoyable day. The Ladies' Auxiliary raised over \$4000.00 from the raffle, the auction of cakes and Russian dolls, and the sale of food. In addition, we received a donation of over \$500.00 from the visitors from Cabramatta.

Assisting at the service were Subdeacon Nicholas Martinov and his son Michael. The Martinovs also joined us when Metropolitan Hilarion served in our parish at the beginning of July. Nicholas is one of the most experienced subdeacons in the Diocese, having served in this capacity for thirty years. Michael recently commenced studies at the Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville, New York, the first seminarian from Australia for quite some time. Please remember him in your prayers.

The Parish Council met on Tuesday 14 August, primarily to review the draft Annual Report in preparation for the Annual General Meeting on 2 September 2012. Other matters were also attended to: it was decided to purchase four new gilded bronze candle-stands to replace the wooden ones in church, and attention was given to the management of risk and the parish finances.

On Saturday 18 August Father James baptised Melanie Glazirina, the infant daughter of Alexey Glazirin and Iryna Charapanava, a young couple married in Wallsend in 2010. Melanie's godparents were Matushka Marie Carles and Alexander Liu. The newly-baptised handmaiden of God received Holy Communion for the first time the following day, the Great Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, at the parish of Saint George in Carlton.

That evening, the eve of the feast of the Transfiguration, we served All-night Vigil with the blessing of wheat, wine, oil and loaves. Before Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning Father James again served a moleben with the blessing of water, the faithful having taken all the Holy Water blessed on our feast-day.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy baskets of fruit were blessed, as is customary on this day, together with around 80 jars of organic Wollombi honey, a gift to our parish and the Wallsend parish. Each jar had a beautiful label designed by Katya Korelkevich-Rubbo. Each family was give a jar to take home, with the remaining jars given to parishioners at Wallsend on the following Sunday.

From 22 August until 8 September a number of contemporary artworks by our parishioner, noted iconographer Michael Galovic, were exhibited in the McGlade Gallery at the Australian Catholic University in Strathfield. Included in the exhibition – entitled 'The Son of Man' – was an icon belonging to our parish. A number of the works exhibited can be seen at [www.michaelgalovic.com](http://www.michaelgalovic.com).

On Saturday 25 August Father James baptised Dominic Domtchenko, the youngest son of Dmitri and Marina Domtchenko. His godparents were Sergio Domtchenko and Olena Vladyko. In baptism, Dominic was given the name Dometius – ДОМЕТИЙ in Russian – in honour of Saint Dometius of Mount Athos. May God grant his newly baptised servant, together with his parents and godparents, many years!

The weekend of 1-2 September was a quiet one. It being the afterfeast of the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God – УСПЕНИЕ – the beautiful tomb of the Holy Virgin remained in the centre of the church for the faithful to venerate. On Sunday after Divine Liturgy, our AGM was held. Details of the AGM are elsewhere in this newsletter.

Parish Council met again on Tuesday 11 September, the first meeting of the 2012-2013 Parish Council. The usual financial reports were considered, and attention was given to the need for appropriate storage of parish records. The filling of positions was held over for the October meeting. The responsibilities of the key positions to be filled are discussed elsewhere in this newsletter.

## **PARISH LIFE: SPRING 2012 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

As of the beginning of September, a new schedule of services for the Spring month – September, October and November – was available in church and on the parish website. September is a busy month for us with services on three weekends in addition to the Great Feast of the Nativity, or Birth, of the Mother of God. October and November are much quieter, with just the regular services on two weekends. On the first Saturday in November, Saint Demetrius Saturday («Дмитриевская Суббота»), we

will have a general service for the departed at 5.00pm, immediately before the evening service at 6.00pm. A major feast in October is that of the Protection of the Mother of God, Покров, celebrated on 14 October, which falls this year on a Sunday. This feast is observed with great joy throughout the Russian Orthodox Church. We will not be having a service in Gosford that day, it being a Sunday on which Father James will serve in Wallsend. On this day parishioners and friends are encouraged to visit either

the beautiful Holy Protection church in Cabramatta, celebrating its patronal feast-day, or Wallsend. The first Russian Orthodox church in the Hunter Valley, established at the Greta Migrant Camp in 1949, was named in honour of the Protection of the Mother of God, and so at Wallsend it is celebrated like a patronal feast, with the blessing of water beforehand and a procession around the church afterwards.

## **PARISH LIFE: OUR 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

As has been mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, our AGM was held on Sunday 2 September 2012. The AGM discussed and accepted the 2012 Annual Report. It also endorsed a number of important Diocesan and parish policies, details of which are given below. A Parish Council for 2012-2013 was elected, with Rick Golovin, Kate Marcotrigiano, Bill Reid, Sophia Kfoury, Anna Kourbatov, Ivan Teliatnikov all returning for another year, and Paul Douriguine newly-elected.

Paul Pereboeff and Victor Bendeviski did not seek re-election. Both Paul and Victor have served on the Parish Council for a number of years, and before that on the Auditing Committee, and their experience will be missed. We thank them for their service to our parish over the years.

The Diocesan *Policy and Procedure on Inappropriate Behaviour* was discussed and the meeting passed a resolution of commitment to it. This policy, details of which were also given in the July newsletter, defines inappropriate behaviour and makes it clear that it is unacceptable in church life. It also sets out a process for dealing with such behaviour should it occur. A copy of this document was given to each member before the meeting. For those interested, copies will soon be available in church. Alternatively, a copy can be accessed online at [www.rocor.org.au](http://www.rocor.org.au) under 'Documents' and 'Regulations'.

Two important parish policies were endorsed. The first of these was called *Safety, Security and Stability: Managing Risk in Parish Life*. It commits all in the parish, especially the Parish Council, to ensure the safety of our people, the security of our property, and the stability of parish life. It recognises that we can best concentrate on the one thing needful – our salvation in Christ – in such an environment. It provides for the election of a Health and Safety Officer, a member of the Parish Council, to take a leading role in this. A Health and Safety Officer will be elected at the October

meeting of the Parish Council. The parish Health and Safety Officer will monitor progress against our Risk Assessment and Treatment Plan, now being prepared for lodgement with the Diocese, as required of all parishes, by 30 September 2012.

The second policy endorsed was a parish *Child-safe, Child-friendly Policy*. It commits the parish to creating an environment in which children are safe from all forms of physical and emotional harm and in which they are valued and included. It provides for the election of two Child Safety Contact Persons, one male and one female, to act as an initial point of contact for any concerns with regard to the safety and participation of children and young people in parish life. The two Child Safety Contact Persons elected by the AGM were Paul Douriaguine and Katya Waters. Paul is the Principal of the Saint Seraphim Community Russian School in Hornsby. Katya has a background in psychology and has undertaken cross-cultural liaison in the childcare sector. More information about this policy will soon be made available.

The minutes of the AGM and key documents are now being prepared for submission to the Diocesan authorities. Decisions of the AGM and elections to key positions must be confirmed by the Diocesan bishop – in our case, Metropolitan Hilarion – to be valid.

## **PARISH LIFE: ANNUAL OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND PICNIC**

For some years now parishioners of all ages have gathered on the Monday of the October Long Weekend for a parish picnic day and BBQ at Heazlett Park, Avoca Beach. These picnic days have been a great success, with friends from Sydney and Newcastle often joining us. Heazlett Park is between Avoca Drive and the lagoon, and has a large playing area, plenty of shady trees, a skate ramp, and amenities. There are also canoes and paddle boats to hire close by. We plan to gather again this year on **Monday 1 October**. Please mark this date in your diaries! Further information will be available soon. Rick Golovin has kindly agreed to take the lead in organising the BBQ this year.

## **PARISH LIFE: KEY POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

An important task for the Parish Council at its October meeting will be the filling of a number of key positions in parish life. Although the *Normal Parish By-Laws* provide for the election of a Warden, Secretary, and Treasurer, it has been difficult over the years to find people in our small parish with time and ability to manage all that each position requires. In view of this, a different approach will now be taken.

Nine distinct roles essential to the smooth functioning of parish life have been identified:

- Property and maintenance co-ordinator – responsible for property security and maintenance and for inventory;

- Meetings co-ordinator – responsible for organising and keeping the minutes of meetings and correspondence;
- Financial reporting co-ordinator – responsible for financial reporting and complex matters such as taxation;
- Health and safety co-ordinator – ensures awareness of health and safety matters and compliance with the parish risk assessment and treatment plan;
- Candle desk and collections co-ordinator – responsible for ensuring that the candle desk is staffed at each morning service and that collections are taken up;
- Accounts payable and banking co-ordinator – ensures that bills are paid, money is banked, and income and expenditure is recorded;
- Records co-ordinator – responsible for organising and maintaining parish records;
- Membership co-ordinator – responsible for parish membership and maintaining relevant records; and
- Events and catering co-ordinator – ensures that there are arrangements in place for catering after services and on special occasions, and organises key fundraising events.

Each role is designed to be manageable in terms of workload and commitment required. One person could nevertheless undertake more than one role.

Although all roles have customarily been undertaken by members of the Parish Council, only the first four *must* be done at this level. The other roles could, with proper support from the Parish Council, be undertaken by other parish members.

Anyone interested in any of these roles, or requiring more information about the responsibilities and the level of commitment required, should speak with Father James at the earliest opportunity.

The Parish Council is also seeking expressions of interest from parishioners interested in undertaking basic food safety training at parish expense. Anyone interested in undertaking this training should speak to a member of the Parish Council.

## **DIOCESAN LIFE: 18-35s YOUTH CONFERENCE IN DECEMBER 2012**

For nearly 50 years, youth of the Australia and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia have gathered together each December for fellowship

and the strengthening of their Orthodox Christian faith. Over the years, these conferences have provided an important opportunity for young Orthodox Christians to learn, develop friendships, and to meet with clergy from across the Diocese. With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, the forty-eighth annual Russian Orthodox Youth Conference will be held from Thursday December 27 until Monday December 31, 2012. The theme of this year's conference will be **'Orthodoxy: From the Cradle to Beyond the Grave'**.

The conference venue will be Rydges Southbank in the heart of Brisbane's arts and entertainment precinct. Rydges is less than two kilometres from the historic Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral, the oldest church in our Diocese. On the evening of Saturday 29 December and the morning of Sunday 30 December, the feast of the Holy Forefathers and of the Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths, All-night vigil and Divine Liturgy will be served at the Cathedral.

A structured program of lectures and small group discussions will examine the significance of the Holy Mysteries, the "lesser" blessings of the Church such as monastic tonsure, and the services of the Church in the course of our lives. Consideration will also be given to spiritual challenges at different stages of life. There will be ample time for relaxation, social activities and informal discussion. There will also be opportunities to confess and prepare for Holy Communion. More detailed information, including costs for participants, will be available soon. For further information, email [info@syezd.org.au](mailto:info@syezd.org.au).

### **CHURCH LIFE: PLANNING AHEAD – SOME KEY DATES IN 2012**

With the end of the year now rapidly approaching, it is important to keep in mind some important dates in 2013.

The Great Feast of the Nativity of the Lord – Orthodox Christmas, 7 January - falls in 2013 on a Monday. Although the preceding Sunday will be a Gosford Sunday, it is expected that the 2013 Christmas services will be in Gosford too.

Orthodox Christmas Day in 2013 will also be the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deliverance of the Russian Church and Empire from the invasion of the French and twelve other nations under Napoleon in 1812. We will have a thanksgiving moleben to commemorate this great event on Sunday 6 January 2013.

The Great Feast of the Baptism of the Lord – Theophany, 19 January – falls on a Saturday. Father James will serve in Wallsend on the day of the feast, and in Gosford on the second day. Water will be blessed at the end of Divine Liturgy that day, and homes will be blessed that afternoon and on Monday and Tuesday 21-22 January.

Forgiveness Sunday will be on 17 March, a Gosford Sunday. Palm Sunday will be on

28 April, a Wallsend Sunday, and Pascha will be on 5 May, a Gosford Sunday. The Great Feast of the Annunciation – 7 April – also falls on a Gosford Sunday in 2013, and will coincide with the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross. Western Easter will be on 31 March in 2013, five weeks before Pascha.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

**The sick:** Nun Euphrosyne; Leonid; and our parishioners Vladimir, Nestor, Michael, Tatiana, and Boris.

**Families with new babies:** Yuri, Alexandra, and new baby John – born on the feast-day of Saint Panteleimon.

**Expectant mothers:** Jacqueline.

**Preparing for marriage:** Andrew and Christine.

**Newly-baptised:** infant Fedor, infant Melanie, infant Domety.

**Travelling:** Olga, Anne, Marina.

**Studying and working abroad:** Michael; Deacon Martin, Tatiana, Xenia, Alexander and Sebastian.

**Departed:** Patriarch Alexis, Patriarch Varnava, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, infant Ekaterina, Alexey, 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), and Lydia (Ustimko).



russian orthodox  
church of  
**saint panteleimon**  
gosford

4/7 Comserv Close  
West Gosford NSW 2250  
PO Box 3356  
Erina NSW 2250

[www.gosfordrussianchurch.org.au](http://www.gosfordrussianchurch.org.au)  
[info@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au](mailto:info@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au)  
[newsletter@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au](mailto:newsletter@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au)