

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

A Newsletter for the Russian Orthodox Community of Saint Panteleimon, Gosford

~ Number 11, 23 March 2003 ~

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT THE COMMEMORATION OF OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS, GREGORY PALAMAS

On this, the second Sunday of Great Lent, the Church remembers St Gregory Palamas (Григорий Палама). He was the Archbishop of Thessalonica in Greece in the early 1300's, a righteous monk and a great man of prayer.

In St Gregory's time, a great dispute arose over the way to pray and the effects of prayer. Many monks of pure life at that time said the "Jesus Prayer" and used certain physical exercises or positions in their prayer, which some people thought was wrong. These same monks, at times, were granted a vision of the Divine Light when they prayed in such a way. This way of prayer was called "hesychasm" or "hesychia", which comes from a Greek word meaning "silence".

St Gregory and the Orthodox defended the physical side of prayer because people are made up of body and soul, and our spiritual life must involve both of these things. We ourselves can feel the truth of this - it is not an abstract idea. In Great Lent we combine spiritual and physical effort, recognizing that both go together. We humble our souls by humbling our bodies. We also feel how hard it is to fast, to keep Lent, if we do not pray. There has to be a balance. This is the first Orthodox truth that St Gregory defended.

St Gregory and the Orthodox also believed that the Divine Light seen by them in prayer was the same Divine Light seen by the holy apostles on Mount Tabor when Christ was transfigured. They believed that one could come to know God through prayer, and to see Him in this way. Their opponents, on the other hand, argued that God was really unknowable, that he could not be experienced. But we are not like the Moslems, for whom God is distant and unknowable. He is our Lord and God, but He is also our Saviour; He has reached out to us and bridged the gap between us. St Gregory's experience in prayer confirmed this. This is the second Orthodox truth that St Gregory defended.

Last week we celebrated Торжество Православия - the Triumph of Orthodoxy. In remembering St Gregory's defence of these truths and his victory over his opponents, we celebrate a sort of second Triumph of Orthodoxy.

Brothers & sisters, our Orthodox Faith contains the fullness of the truth about life and death and all of human existence, revealed to us by Our Lord, God & Saviour Jesus Christ. If we hold fast to it and really live by it, it will lead us to salvation: to everlasting life. That is why we celebrate the victory of Orthodoxy over every kind of falsehood. This Great Lent, let us strive as best we can to live our Orthodoxy, that we may worthily celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of Christ.

PARISH NEWS: NEW CHALICE, ALTAR CROSS

In the last newsletter, it was reported that Father James had ordered a new chalice (Чаша), diskos (Дискосъ), star (Звезда) and other items necessary for the Divine Liturgy, together with a gold altar cross and a set containing some of the items necessary for Holy Baptism. These things arrived from Russia on March 4th, and the sacred vessels and cross will be used for the first time during today's service. This is a significant step in the life of our community & an acquisition that we can take pride in. The chalice set was paid for by donations collected for that purpose in July 2002.

PARISH NEWS: IN BRIEF

* On Thursday February 20th Father James held a beseda at the Narara home of Vic & Irene Krikunov on the topic of Great Lent. Those present read through the Gospel readings appointed for the five Sundays before Great Lent and discussed what each reading teaches about our Christian lives in general and Lent in particular. Everyone present enjoyed the pizza prepared by Irene and the opportunity to meet and discuss aspects of the faith. * Vassily (Bill) Reid has been in touch once again with the solicitor representing the trustees of the Old Narara Community Hall, in which we have expressed an interest. He has been advised that the trustees hope to meet prior to the end of March. Their solicitor is most sympathetic to our interest in the property, and will contact us again as soon as the trustees have met, with a view to discussing our proposals for the use of the property. Please pray, that God will bless these things and that they will lead us closer to a permanent home for our parish. * On Thursday 13th March, as announced at our last service, Father James again visited the Krikunov's home and served Great Compline (Великое Повечерие) in English & Slavonic with the

reading of the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete. This is a very beautiful service - one of the high points of Great Lent - and we look forward to serving it in our own church next year, God willing!

НАЗНАЧЕНО ВЕЛИКОПОСТНОЕ ГОВЕНЬЕ ДУХОВЕНСТВА АВСТРАЛИЙСКОЙ ЕПАРХИИ

Великопостное говенье и пастырское совещание Австралийско-Новозеландской епархии будет проходить с 25 по 26 марта с.г. Совещание откроется в 4 ч. дня в Архиерейской крестовой церкви в Кройдоне. Вечером назначено богослужение и исповедь духовенства. В среду 26 марта в 8 ч. утра в Покровском храме г. Кабраматты будет совершена литургия Преждеосвященных Даров Высокопреосвященным Иларионом, архиепископом Синдейским и Австралийско-Новозеландским с сонмом духовенства. В нынешнем году Покровском приход в Кабраматте будет отмечать свое 50-летие. По окончании литургии духовенство отслужит заупокойную литию по приснопамятному основателю прихода, протоиерею Ростиславу Гану. После трапезы состоится совещание, а на следующий день - заседание Епархиального совета.

CHURCH LIFE: CLERGY RETREAT

On Tuesday & Wednesday 25th & 26th March, the annual Clergy Retreat will take place in Sydney. Priests and deacons from throughout the diocese gather to confess, serve together, & discuss pastoral issues. A number of the clergy usually form a choir and sing beautifully. Although usually held in Strathfield, the main service this year will be at the Holy Protection church in Cabramatta, celebrating its' 50th Jubilee this year. A Hierarchical Presanctified Liturgy will be served at Cabramatta on the Wednesday, beginning at 8am. A memorial litia for the late ever-memorable Father Rostislav Gan, the founder of the church, will follow, as Thursday 27th March is his nameday. After lunch, there will be a number of lectures and reminiscences concerning Father Rostislav. All the faithful are welcome at the Liturgy, lunch & lectures, which will end at around 4.00pm.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick & suffering: Metropolitan Laurus, Metropolitan Vitaly, Archbishop Alypy, George, Seraphim, Irene, Ioann, Sergei

Special needs: Katherine, David, Nina & family, Paraskeva

Preparing for marriage: Peter & Svetlana, Daniel & Ioanna, Gregory & Heather

Newly-married: Peter & Tatiana

Preparing for baptism: Margaret, Sebastian

Newly-reposed: Archpriest Alexei (Dmitrieff), Reader Leonid (Bihancov)

GOSFORD SERVICES IN APRIL

13 April	Sunday	5 th Sunday of Great Lent: St Mary of Egypt Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
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OTHER IMPORTANT CHURCH DATES

7 April	Благовещение Annunciation
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This is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of our Church. In most churches, vigil will begin at 6.00pm on Sunday 6th April. The Divine Liturgy on Monday will be preceded by the longer and more penitential Lenten hours, typika and Vespers, it being a weekday of Great Lent.

NEWCASTLE SERVICES IN MARCH & EARLY APRIL

<http://www.rocor.org.au/stnicholaschurch/>

The following services have been scheduled for Saint Nicholas, Wallsend (Newcastle) in March & April. Father James will be serving at Newcastle on these days.

29th March	Saturday	All-night vigil with the bringing out of the Holy Cross	6.00 pm
30th March	Sunday	3 rd Sunday of Great Lent: Veneration of the Holy Cross Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
6th April	Sunday	All-night vigil	6.00 pm
7th April	Monday	Annunciation to the Most Holy Mother of God Divine Liturgy	8.00 am

Father James tries to prepare this newsletter to coincide with each service at Gosford. Let him know at least a week in advance if there is anything that you would like included (prayer requests, news, announcements). You can call him on 02-9721-2659 or email him at fr.james.carles@rocor.org.au.