

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

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

~ Number 22, 18 January 2004 ~

PARISH LIFE: TODAY'S BLESSING OF WATER & THE BLESSING OF PARISH HOMES

Today is the eve of Theophany (Крещенский Сочельник), and it is customary to serve a Great Blessing of Water on this day. This will be done after Divine Liturgy. The Great Blessing of Water begins with the service of Vespers (Вечерня), which means that today's service will be longer than is usual. There are a large number of Old Testament readings at Vespers, and some of these will be read in English, some in Slavonic. This afternoon, Father James will bless as many parish homes as he can, concentrating on Kariong, West Gosford, Wyoming, Narara, Niagara Park, Ourimbah and surrounding areas before travelling to Newcastle for Vigil at 6.00pm tonight and Divine Liturgy at 9.00am tomorrow, the feast-day of Theophany (Крещение) itself. Those homes not blessed today will be blessed on Tuesday 20th and, if need be, Wednesday 21st. As usual, a list for those people wanting Fr James to visit will be left at the candle desk.

PARISH LIFE: UPDATE ON OUR NEW PROPERTY

Some work at our new property at 4/7 Comserv Place, West Gosford, is underway, and a great deal of space there has now been taken up by new building materials: gyprock, steel for the wall and ceiling frames, and insulation. A plumber has been on site to look at the work needed to provide both the altar and the kitchen area with running water, and our electrician has also checked things out. A little gyprocking has already been done, although we are awaiting final Council approval before undertaking any major work. Contact with Gosford Council last week indicated that our paperwork will not be considered until this coming week. This will make it difficult to complete the new church prior to February 15th, the planned opening day.

The Parish Council met on Thursday 15th January and considered progress so far on the new church. Given Gosford Council delays and the real difficulties that completion of the new church before February 15th presents, it was decided to postpone the opening on that day. We will therefore continue to have services at Narara during February & March 2004, and plan to have the new parish centre ready for use by Palm Sunday (Вербное Воскресение), which falls this year on

April 4th. We hope to be able to celebrate the Easter services at the new church, holding our official opening in May or June 2004.

This change of plans allows the building team a bit more time to get things right, and will ensure that the whole centre is completed by the time the official opening takes place. Regular updates on progress will be given in the newsletter and at church.

CHURCH LIFE: "THE VOICE" NEWSPAPER

Late last year, Vladika Hilarion decided that the English-language edition of the diocesan newspaper "Word of the Church" («Церковное Слово») would be incorporated into another newspaper, "The Voice". "The Voice" is an English-language missionary newspaper that has been produced over the last few years by Hieromonk Joachim of Saint John the Baptist Skete, a small monastic community based in Kentlyn. We will have a number of copies of each issue available for purchase at a cost of \$2.00. All parishioners are encouraged to purchase this fine publication, which always contains edifying & profitable reading material.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick & suffering: Metropolitan Vitaly, our parishioners Fyodor & Antonina Tialshinsky, Ioann, Alexander, Nina, Alexandra, child Ksenia

Special needs: Katherine, David, Paraskeva, Antonina, Nicholas & family

Expectant mothers: Alla, Irene

Newly-baptised: Elizabeth (Heather)

Preparing for marriage: Gregory & Elizabeth (Heather), to be married on 25.1.2004

Newly-reposed: Jason (non-Orthodox), killed tragically on 11.1.2004

NATIVITY EPISTLE OF METROPOLITAN LAURUS,

FIRST HIERARCH OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

In its hymns for the Nativity of Christ, the Holy Church says of the incarnation of God the Word: "He became man in His love for mankind" (sticheron on "Lord, I have cried...", Tone 2).

It is precisely this love for mankind which moved our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, to be born of the Virgin in the lowly cave of Bethlehem. The Lord assumed flesh, not for the salvation of some abstract humanity, but for the salvation of each of us individually.

All of us are, as children, dear to our heavenly Father, so dear that He not only took upon Himself the "guise of a servant", but endured all the afflictions of a life

of poverty and wandering for the sake of our salvation, enduring mockery, torture and death on the Cross.

The voluntary sufferings of our Savior are the highest proof of His divine love for each of us. His love is ever efficacious, for His very nature is love, and at any given moment it is knocking at the heart of every lost man.

The Lord has told us that there will be great joy in heaven over a single penitent sinner.

Let us pay Him back with repentance for His love for mankind, and we will share His ineffable joy in eternity with the inhabitants of heaven. Then will no man take our joy from us (Jn. 16: 22).

The Lord came to earth to save us from slavery to sin, the devil and death; He came that we might inherit and share with Him a "joy fulfilled" (Jn. 17: 13).

The day of the incarnation of Christ is the most joyous day in the history of mankind, for "today He Who is without beginning beginneth; the hosts of heaven rejoice, and earth and men are glad" (sticheron on the Praises). And we also are called to participate, having cleansed ourselves of all defilement of flesh and spirit in the mystery of repentance, and united ourselves at the divine Table with the Lord Who loves mankind.

Now, as never before, the time has come for the children of the Church Abroad to intensify their prayers for us, their pastors, that, with the help of God, we may not commit any errors at this fateful time for the Church, but may continue to steer the ship of the Church to the safe harbour of our common salvation.

Dear archpastors, pastors and flock, I greet you warmly on the joyous feast of the Nativity of Christ. Amen.

+Metropolitan Laurus

Nativity of Christ, 2003

COMMUNITY LIFE: RUSSIAN SCOUT CAMP

Национальная Организация Русских Скаутов

Between December 27th and January 1st, the National Organisation of Russian Scouts (NORS) held its' annual camp at Telford, a campsite located within the bounds of the Royal National Park on Port Hacking. Together with a number of leaders, approximately 50 young people (ages 7-25) attended, including some of our own parishioners. Archbishop Hilarion and Father James both visited the camp on the Open Day, Monday December 29th, and together served a moleben to Saint George (the patron saint of Russian Scouts), Saint Seraphim (the centenary of whose glorification we celebrated in 2003), and the first Russian Scout, New-Martyr Tsarevich Alexei (the centenary of whose birth we celebrate in 2004). Vladika and Father James later had a beseda with the camp participants, Vladika

talking about Saint Seraphim and Father James talking about New-Martyr Tsarevich Alexei. Photographs of the camp and information about NORS and Russian Scouting are available at the following website:
<http://www.pinetreeweb.com/nors.htm>. NORS in Australia is led by Chief Russian Scout Nikita Gileff. It is a fine organization, and we hope one day to see a troop established on the Central Coast!

GOSFORD SERVICES IN FEBRUARY & MARCH

Note: The services listed below will be at the Narara Community Centre.

1 st February	Sunday	Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
15 th February	Sunday	The Meeting of the Lord Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
29 th February	Sunday	1st Sunday in Great Lent: The Triumph of Orthodoxy Divine Liturgy with the order of...	9.00 am
7 th March	Sunday	2nd Sunday in Great Lent: Saint Gregory Palamas Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
21 st March	Sunday	4th Sunday in Great Lent: Saint John of the Ladder Divine Liturgy	9.00 am

NEWCASTLE SERVICES IN FEBRUARY & MARCH

7 th February	Saturday	All-night vigil	6.00 pm
8 th February	Sunday	New-Martyrs and Confessors of Russia Divine liturgy	9.00 am
21 st February	Saturday	All-night vigil	6.00 pm
22 nd February	Sunday	Cheesfare Sunday - Forgiveness Sunday Divine Liturgy & Vespers, with the rite of asking forgiveness	9.00 am
Beginning of Great Lent			
23 rd February	Monday	Clean Monday Lenten Matins, Hours, Typica, Vespers	8.00 am
		Great Compline with the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	7.00 pm
25 th February	W'day	Clean Wednesday Great Compline with the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	7.00 pm
6 th March	Saturday	Commemoration of the Departed Liturgy for the departed & general panikhida	8.00 am
13 th March	Saturday	All-night vigil with the bringing out of the cross	6.00 pm
14 th March	Sunday	3rd Sunday of Great Lent: Veneration of the Cross Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
20 th March	Saturday	Commemoration of the Departed Liturgy for the departed & general panikhida	8.00 am
27 th March	Saturday	All-night vigil	6.00 pm
28 th March	Sunday	5th Sunday of Great Lent: Saint Mary of Egypt Divine Liturgy	9.00 am

Father James tries to prepare this newsletter to coincide with each service at Gosford. You can call him about it on 0428-639156 or email him at fr.james.carles@rocor.org.au.