

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

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

~ Number 33, 19 September 2004 ~

PARISH LIFE: PREPARING FOR OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 7 NOVEMBER 2004

The Normal Parish By-Laws, the rules that govern parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, require Annual General Meetings to be held each year on a date fixed by the Parish Council. Annual General Meetings are held to elect the warden, Parish Council and auditing committee, and to consider the Parish Council's report on the year's activities, the warden's and the treasurer's reports, the auditing committee's report, the budget for the coming year, and any other items placed on the agenda.

Although initially planned for Sunday 31 October 2004, the Annual General Meeting is now scheduled for **Sunday 7 November 2004**. This is because members of the parish council and auditing committee were unable to attend on the earlier date. The meeting will begin at **12.00pm**.

To facilitate the better management of the business of the Annual General Meeting, the parish council has decided that agenda items and nominations for parish offices must be submitted to the parish secretary no later than **3 October 2004**. This allows the parish secretary sufficient time to have the agenda and nominations compiled and distributed to parish members no later than 3 weeks before the meeting, as required by the By-Laws.

For those wishing to nominate a parish member to serve on the parish council or auditing committee, a nomination form is attached. Further copies may be made if required, or obtained from the candle-desk in church.

It should be noted that two parish offices are not open for nomination at this year's Annual General Meeting. The first of these is the position of warden (starosta). This position is held for a term of three years, and was filled by A.N. Yakimov at last year's AGM. The second position, that of Head Sister, is filled by a vote of the parish sisterhood, and not by a vote of the parish. Olga Petroff currently holds this position. That leaves seven positions on the Parish Council to be filled, together with the three positions on the Auditing Committee. Apart from the two members mentioned above, members of the current Parish Council are Nina Golovin, Katya Marcotrigiano, Bill Reid, Rick Golovin, George Fomin, Don Kobeleff, and Katya Rubbo. The members of the Auditing Committee are Nestor Petroff, Sophia Kfoury, and Paul Pereboeff.

According to the By-Laws, a person who is an Orthodox Christian of at least 21 years of age, and who cares for the moral and material benefit of the parish, may become a parish member.

Having been admitted to membership, parish members must attend to their spiritual life by confessing their sins and receiving Holy Communion at least once a year. They must pay an annual membership fee, assist with the moral and economic well being of the parish; remain loyal to the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, the parish and the parish authorities; and importantly, act in a way that promotes peace and unity within the parish. Members may participate in parish meetings, elect parish officials, and be elected to parish offices.

Those who took up parish membership in 2003 are now invited to renew their membership. Those who are not yet members, but who worship regularly in our church, are invited to apply for membership. Forms for this purpose are available from the candle desk in church. Completed forms may be posted to the Parish Secretary, Katya Marcotrigiano, or handed to her in person.

Current parish members should renew their membership prior to the Annual General Meeting if they intend to vote or stand for office at that meeting. New members should be aware that the By-Laws require new members to wait a period of 6 months before acquiring the right to vote at parish meetings or be elected to parish offices. This period can be waived if new members are transferring membership from one parish to another.

Ideally, all regular worshippers in our church will take up parish membership and be actively involved in the life of the parish. All are asked to pray that the business of the Annual General Meeting be conducted in a true Orthodox Christian spirit, and to the glory of God.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The last Parish Council meeting was held on 7.9.2004. In attendance were Father James, Head Sister Olga Petroff, Treasurer Nina Golovin, Secretary Katya Marcotrigiano, and council members Bill Reid, Rick Golovin, George Fomin and Don Kobeleff. Apologies were received from Katya Rubbo. Items discussed included:

- A review of the financial position of the parish;
- The need for good accounting practices in relation to candle and prosfora sales;
- A review of the parish feast day celebrations and the Fathers' Day BBQ;
- The necessary preparation for the Annual General Meeting, and the rescheduling of the AGM to Sunday 7.11.2004;

- The collection on 5.9.2004 for the family of the departed priest Father Andrei Trufanov, and agreement that contribution would be made from parish funds to make a total contribution of A\$1000.00; and
- A number of minor items.

The parish Council is due to meet next on 5.10.2004. This will be the final meeting of the current Parish Council.

PARISH LIFE: OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND FUNDRAISING BBQ

George Karmanadonoff, Victor Bendeovski, and Paul Pereboeff have organised a fundraising BBQ to be held on Monday October 4th, the Monday of the October long weekend. Starting at 10.00am, the BBQ will be at J F Heazlett Park, Avoca Beach (UBD reference 99J4), a beautiful spot in between the beach and Avoca Lake. At a cost of \$15.00 for adults and \$5 for children (ages 2-15), lunch, soft drinks and lots of activities will be provided. Alcoholic drinks are BYO. This will be a nice opportunity to get together and relax with friends and family whilst raising funds to help our growing parish. Please try and make it, and let others know of the event.

CHURCH LIFE: 40TH ANNUAL RUSSIAN ORTHODOX YOUTH CONFERENCE

The 40th Annual Youth Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese will be held from Sunday the 19th of December 2004 to Saturday the 25th of December 2004 at the Sundown Village, Jerrabomberra Avenue, Narrabundah (Canberra) ACT. This will be the first time that our youth conference has been held in Canberra.

This year's theme is "Shelter us with Thy most precious Protection. Most Holy Theotokos, help us." The keynote speakers will be Father David Moser from the USA and Mother Evfrosinis (Molchanov) of the Lesna Convent, France.

We hope to have a good contingent of young people from our parish; those aged 14 and over may attend. For further information check out the syezd website:
<http://www.rocor.org.au/syezd2004/>

The Organising Committee has asked that those who have attended any of the past 39 youth conferences - especially the first 15 - send them copies of any photographs (especially group photos) &/or recollections (both in Russian and English). They hope to put together a small jubilee booklet (pamyatka) if they get a good response to this request & receive the items in time.

HAPPY NEW YEAR?

Last Tuesday, September 14th, was September 1st on the Church's Julian (or "old") Calendar. In the Divine Service books and calendars of the Orthodox Church, this day

is referred to as "The beginning of the Indiction, or the New Year". What does this all mean?

The Israelite religious calendar began with March, the month in which the Exodus from Egypt took place. September, the seventh month from March (the word "September" comes from the Latin for "seven"), was traditionally the month in which the world had been created, a month especially marked by God in the Old Testament, and the beginning of the Jewish civil year. In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, or Laws, it is recorded that God said to Moses, "The first day of the seventh month must be a day of complete rest" (23:24-25). According to Holy Tradition, September is also the month that Moses came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments and the month in which the building of the Tabernacle commenced. It is the month in which the High Priest sacrificed for the sins of the people, the month in which the people of God fasted and prayed for the forgiveness of their sins (Leviticus 23:27-32), and the month in which all the tribes of Israel came to Jerusalem to pray (Leviticus 23:33-43). It is the month in which the building of Solomon's temple began.

"Indiction" is a word that comes from Latin. It has a few different meanings. The root of the word means "to declare". Most commonly, the word "indiction" refers to the periods of 15 years instituted by the Roman Emperors for the gathering of tribute from around the empire. The Roman year began on this day, the date on which Augustus Caesar defeated Anthony and Cleopatra and declared his rule in 31BC.

In the New Testament we read that our Lord Jesus Christ commenced his public ministry by going into the synagogue to teach. He proclaimed, "The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, 'This is the year that the Lord has chosen'" (Luke 4:16-19). In Holy Tradition, this event is linked to the first day of September.

The Holy Fathers at the first Ecumenical Council established this feast. Mindful of three traditions (Old Testament, New Testament, and Roman), and wishing to mark the freedom and security into which Christianity had come with the victory of Emperor Constantine, the Holy Fathers decreed that the New Year be observed in church on September 1st. All of the old meanings of the feast were given new meanings. Instead of observing the giving of the Law, sacrifices for sin, and the building of the Temple, it would celebrate the grace given us by the Lawgiver Himself, the forgiveness by Him of our sins, and the building of His temple, the Church. Instead of being the beginning of a time of giving tribute to an earthly king, the feast would mark the beginning of tribute to the Heavenly King. It would be a day of acknowledging the blessings given us by God.

Until the time of Peter the Great, New Year's Day was celebrated in Russia on September 1st. After his great tour of the West, Peter changed New Year's Day to

January 1st, beginning with the year 1700. The church continued to mark September 1st as the beginning of the church year, however.

There is a beautiful service for this day in the Divine Service books. Unfortunately, it is rarely served now in parish churches, usually only being observed if it falls on a Sunday. This is a shame, and is something that we can perhaps seek to set right next year. As Orthodox Christians, we must always seek to further enrich our lives with the Divine Services of our Holy Orthodox Church.

The troparion for this day is: "Fashioner of all creation, who fixes times and seasons by Your own authority, bless the crown of the year with Your goodness, Lord, preserving all Orthodox Christians in peace, at the prayers of the Mother of God, and save us". The kontakion is: "You created the universe in Your ineffable wisdom, and fixed the seasons by Your authority; grant victories to Your Christ-loving people; may You bless our goings and comings of the year, directing our works to Your divine will".

May God indeed preserve us in peace, bless our goings and comings, and help us to do His will. May it be for us "the year the Lord has chosen". And in this way may it be for each of us truly a Happy New Year!

IMPORTANT CHURCH DATES IN SEPTEMBER

Two Great Feasts fall during the month of September. The first of these is the feast of the Nativity - or the Birth - of the Mother of God, which is celebrated this coming Tuesday, September 21st. The parents of the Holy Virgin were called Joachim and Anna. They were good people who tried to do God's will and who gave a great deal of money to the poor and needy. They had a wonderful marriage and loved each other very much. Joachim came from the royal family of King David. Anna came from a family of priests. They were very old and although they had been married for 50 years, they had no children. Because of this, they were very sad and ashamed. In those days, having no children was thought of as a terrible thing, a punishment from God.

One day a sad thing happened. Joachim had travelled all the way to Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice to God in the temple. The High Priest was very rude to Joachim and said, "You are not worthy to offer sacrifice with those childless hands". Other men, who had been blessed with children, all pushed Joachim out of the way.

At home, Anna looked out of the window and saw a mother bird in a nest with her babies. She was sad, seeing that even the birds had babies, while she had none. When Joachim came home again, he and Anna were both so sad that they cried and cried. They prayed with many tears that God would give them a child. They remembered how He had given a baby to Abraham and Sarah when they were very old. They promised that they would dedicate the baby, if God gave them one, to His service. Almighty God heard their prayers. He sent an angel to tell them that they would have a baby and that they should

call her Mary. Because Mary would herself later have the most special baby of all - our Lord Jesus Christ - Saints Joachim and Anna are called by a special name: the "Ancestors of God".

Saints Joachim and Anna lived in Nazareth, and this is where the Mother of God was born. When she was 3 years old, Saints Joachim and Anna kept their promise to dedicate her to God. They took her to Jerusalem, to the temple. The High Priest (a good one, this time) was told by God to take her into the "Holy of Holies", a part of the temple that was like the altar area in our Orthodox Christian churches. This was very unusual - even the High Priest was only allowed in there once a year! This showed that something very special would happen to the Virgin Mary.

Mary lived at the temple until she was 14, reading and studying and doing handiwork. After this, she was betrothed and given into the care of her relative, Joseph, who was already an elderly man.

As we have read above, New Year's Day on the Church Calendar is September 1st. Because of this, the first Great Feast of the Church year is the Feast of the Nativity (or Birth) of the Mother of God. This reminds us that the birth of the Holy Virgin Mary was the first step in saving us from sin and death. As Father James will be serving in Wallsend on this day, there will be no service at Gosford.

The second of the Great Feasts to be observed in September is that of the Exaltation of the Cross, celebrated on September 27th each year, and which we will celebrate this year in Gosford. It is different from all the other Great Feasts because it is the only one that does not recall events in the lives of our Lord Jesus Christ or His all-holy Mother. This feast is based on two things that happened to the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. The first is the finding of the Cross on Golgotha by Saint Helena and the subsequent raising up ("exaltation") of it for people to see, and the second is the return of the Cross to Jerusalem many years later, the Cross having been seized in war by the Persians. Even though it is Great Feast, we keep a fast (пост) on this day, in remembrance of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. We will serve vigil with the "bringing out" of the Cross on the evening of Sunday, September 26th, at 6.00pm, and Divine Liturgy at 9.00am the following morning, Monday, September 27th.

Please do not forget the akathist to the Holy Blessed Xenia of Saint Petersburg scheduled for 7.00pm on Friday September 24th, the anniversary of her canonisation in 1978. Blessed Xenia is someone that we turn to for prayer in so many difficulties - finding homes and work, difficulties in married life - and so it is fitting that we praise her Christian life and example. A moleben will be served together with the akathist, at which time all parishioners will be commemorated. The akathist will be read alternately in Slavonic and English.

PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA AND GREEK-AUSTRALIAN BISHOP KILLED

Many were distressed to learn early last week of the death in a helicopter crash of a number of high-ranking clergymen of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, including the Patriarch himself, Petros (Peter) VII. The helicopter crashed into the Aegean Sea as it flew towards Mount Athos. The cause of the accident remains unknown.

The names of those killed in the accident, all Greek Orthodox Christians, are as follows: Patriarch Petros of Alexandria and All of Africa; Metropolitan Erineos of Pilousiou; Metropolitan Chrisostomos of Karthagena; Bishop Nektarios of Madagascar; Archimandrite Arsenios; Archimandrite Kallistratos Economou; Deacon Nektarios Kontogiorgos; the Patriarch's legal adviser Georgios Mavros; the Patriarch's technical adviser Patroklos Papastefanou; press adviser Georgios Xenoudakis; the Patriarch's brother Georgios Papapetrou; the Patriarch's personal police guard Spiridon Koursaris; Major Papanastasiou; Warrant Officer Raptis; Platoon Sergeant Pantelis Hatzivangelis; First Sergeant Panagiotis Golegos; and Lieutenant Colonel Dimitris Papaspirou. Please remember them in your prayers.

The following has been written about Bishop Nektarios of Madagascar by someone who knew him, Basil Stavropoulos (bstavropoulos@stavropoulos.com.au):

"For us in Australia, the most tragic aspect of this disaster was the loss of Bishop Nektarios, who was an Australian-born Greek. He was a bank manager before being ordained priest-monk. He served in a parish in Adelaide. Some of his fellow priests thought him a bit odd. When his long service leave [came up] he decided to visit Madagascar. He had heard there was no priest there. He found there a small church to service the needs of the tiny and diminishing Greek business and diplomatic community. He spoke to two young native men he met, and in the 3 months he was there, managed to teach them something about Christ. When he returned to Australia, he asked for leave to go to Madagascar permanently. It took two years and much pestering on his part to obtain this leave.

In Madagascar, he found his two young men and completed their catechesis. With their assistance, he started visiting villages and talking to them about Christ. Within only ten years the church grew to 62 parishes and 16 native priests, with some 15,000 faithful. Not only churches, but many schools and even a theological seminary have been built. More information can be found at <http://www.orthodoxmadagascar.com>.

Remote villages would send a representative or group of men walking for up to 10 days to ask him to come and talk to them about Christ. He would go to the village and speak, and the whole village would convert. Yet this was no numbers game. He refused to baptize until catechism was complete and he was satisfied about the stability of their faith. He

was strictly and traditionally Orthodox in regard to all aspects of life. Despite the challenges he gave the people in those respects, the numbers of faithful grew exponentially.

He would visit us regularly in Australia to raise awareness of what was happening in Madagascar and to obtain support, which was given generously. Listening to him was like listening to one of the Apostles; he was so simple and direct and focused on the work of God. I was always reminded, when he would tell us stories about the Orthodox faithful of Madagascar, of the Acts of the Apostles. God, through this man alone, with almost no assistance from anyone else, created a church from nothing.

Yet he never once boasted or made it look like it was his work. As he talked, one always understood that the Holy Spirit was blowing particularly hard in Madagascar and that a great miracle was unfolding in that place. He himself was unassuming, not well spoken and lacking what would be considered a charismatic personality. His charisma was that he did God's work without thought for himself".

The Greek Archdiocese here in Australia described Bishop Nektarios as "the supreme example of an Orthodox shepherd". May God grant him rest with the saints, and Memory Eternal!

ORTHODOX ACTION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Общее Годовое Собрание Православного Дела - Сидней

Members and all interested people are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of Orthodox Action - Sydney, to be held in the church hall at Strathfield Cathedral on 26th September 2004 at 12.00 midday. Orthodox Action is a charitable organization under the heavenly patronage of Saint John of Shanghai & San Francisco, with a particular commitment to helping the needy in Russia. Apart from the usual reports & elections that take place at AGMs, the meeting will hear the impressions of recent travelers to Russia (including Vl. Hilarion) and there will be an open forum for questions and discussion. Charitable work is the responsibility of all Christians, and those of us who live in a wealthy country like Australia have a particular responsibility to help our less fortunate brothers & sisters abroad, especially those in Russia. Please show your support! Tea, coffee, and light refreshments will be provided. The meeting is to end by 2.00pm. Membership of OA is \$100/year, or \$60.00 for pensioners & students. Further information: 9674-6693 or 9623-4214.

Father James tries to prepare this newsletter to coincide with each Sunday service at Gosford. You can call him about it at home on 4342-0015, on his mobile on 0428-639156 or email him at the following address: rev.james.carles@rocor.org.au.