

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church, Gosford

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

PARISH NEWSLETTER

~ Number 56, June-July 2006 ~

PARISH LIFE: THE NEWSLETTER AND THE WEBSITE

As reported in the last newsletter, updates to the parish website have been a little less regular than usual since late April. This is partially because less is happening now than was the case in Great Lent, and partially because those involved have been taking an unscheduled break since. Some new information will be up on the website in early July; this will include some 'parishioner profiles' and new Russian translations of most pages, the latter kindly provided by Katya Rubbo. The publication and distribution of the newsletter has also been a bit patchy of late, and this combined June-July issue aims to get things back on track. Apologies are offered to all those who may have missed out on a copy of the April and May newsletters, whether by post or email. Back issues are available on the website; those parishioners and friends who make it to church only infrequently will be sent copies of the April & May newsletters when this current issue is posted or emailed out.

CHURCH LIFE: THE ALL-DIASPORA COUNCIL AND AFTER

In the May newsletter it was reported that texts of all the lectures and the official greetings heard at the All-Diaspora Council, and of the resolutions and letter drafted by the Council, are available online at the Synod website (www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws) and at the All-Diaspora Council website (www.sobor2006.com). These documents remain available, and those of the faithful able to access them are encouraged to do so. The June issue of the English-language Diocesan publication 'The Voice' (available in church at the beginning of June) includes copies of the Resolution and the Epistle of the Council, a copy of the Epistle from the Bishops' Council (read aloud in church on Sunday June 18th), and a report on the deliberations of the Bishops' Council. A surprise and a cause of sorrow to many was the announcement that Archbishop Hilarion - appointed by the Council as Chief Deputy of the Metropolitan - is to relocate to New York, a move that is expected to occur at some point in 2007. A copy of the Resolution of the All-Diaspora Council on the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad is included elsewhere in this newsletter. The Synod website reported on 29 June that Joint Commissions of the Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate have met in Moscow and approved a draft 'Act on Canonical Communion' for submission to both Synods of Bishops. We now await further developments on the path of reconciliation within the Russian Orthodox Church.

PARISH LIFE: BIBLE READING AND DISCUSSION GROUP

It was announced in the April newsletter that Father James has initiated a twice-monthly Bible reading & discussion group in response to a number of needs in parish life. The first meetings were held at the church hall on Tuesday May 9th and Tuesday May 23rd. Approximately 6 people attended each of the meetings, a small group but certainly one with a genuine interest in learning more about the Holy Scriptures and the Orthodox Christian faith. At the end of the second meeting, it was agreed that those involved would continue. For various reasons Father James was unable to schedule study meetings during June, but meetings will commence again in July. The dates for July and August are as follows: July Thursday 13th (there is vigil in Newcastle for SS Peter & Paul on the Tuesday) & Tuesday 25th, and August Thursday 10th (there is a service for St Panteleimon on the Tuesday) and Tuesday 22nd. The format will remain the same: 7.00pm sharp start, 35 minutes on Bible study, a 15 minute break, 35 minutes for discussion of a particular topic, and an 8.30pm sharp finish. A full schedule should be available in church from July 1st, and on the website soon after.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council last met on Tuesday June 6th. On the agenda were budgeting and long-term planning, a discussion of the outcomes of the 4th All-Diaspora Council and subsequent Council of Bishops, and a review of parish activities over Great Lent and the Paschal season. The Parish Council heard Treasurer Sophia Kfoury's pleasing report that we now owe only \$66455.96 on our loan, something that shows us to be over \$45000 ahead in our repayments. This reflects the good financial management of successive Parish Councils. After some discussion, the Parish Council nevertheless agreed that the purchase of land or construction of a permanent church remained beyond the present capacity (and requirements) of the parish, and that the focus should remain on parish consolidation and debt elimination. In reflecting on Great Lent and the Paschal period, Father James raised a number of issues relating to the frequency of services and the level of attendance. In particular, he expressed concern that the English-language service (held on the 5th Sunday of the month, should there be one) was divisive (in that those preferring Slavonic avoided it) and poorly attended by choir and laity. The Parish Council nevertheless agreed to continue with these English-language services until the end of 2006, reviewing the situation at that point in time. The Parish Council is due to meet next on Tuesday July 4th.

A BABY ARRIVES!

Proud parents of a new baby girl are Craig Koppman & his wife Tamme (nee Golovin), regular worshippers in our parish. They have named their daughter Emily Josephine. She is to be baptised early in July here at West Gosford. We offer our warmest congratulations to Craig & Tamme. May God grant them & baby Emily many years!

PARISH LIFE: A BAPTISM

On June 17th, at West Gosford, Father James baptised baby Larissa, a first daughter for Aaron and Natasha Holloway of Blue Haven. Aaron and Natasha brought their baby girl to church the following day to receive Holy Communion for the first time. Many years to the newly baptised servant of God, the infant Larissa, to her parents and big brothers, and to her godparents, Svetlana and Stephen!

RUSSIAN SCHOOL NEWS

Our parish Russian School of Saint Innocent of Alaska is now on a mid-year break that coincides with civil school holidays, with classes resuming on July 22nd. In view of the fact that Fr James is often tied up with pastoral work and christenings of a Saturday (and that it is often the only morning to take a break!), Matushka Marie is now teaching 'Law of God' at Russian School. With the younger children, Matushka has been working to develop a foundation for Christian belief by looking at stories from the Old and New Testament and having the children think about the way God works in our lives. Each week, the young children express their understanding in pictures, and some of their drawings are pinned up in the church hall. With the older children, Matushka is working on a timeline that links events in Sacred History with the history of the world in general. The timeline is being compiled on a 10-metre long strip of fabric, and it is hoped that it can be displayed in due course (that is, if we can find enough wall space on which to hang it!). The children are responding enthusiastically.

DIOCESAN LIFE: ARCHBISHOP HILARION TO VISIT WALLSEND

Our neighbouring parish of Saint Nicholas Wallsend (Newcastle) celebrates its' patronal feast on May 22nd, the day of commemoration of the translation (or movement) of the relics of Saint Nicholas from Myra in Lycia (in modern-day Turkey) to Bari in Italy. Archbishop Hilarion was unable to visit Wallsend in May this year because of commitments abroad (at the All-Diaspora and Bishops' Councils) and then in Fairfield (for the 50th anniversary celebrations), and so his archpastoral visit to the parish will be on Sunday July 23rd. After the Divine Liturgy that morning there will be a festive lunch to which all are invited. Parishioners and friends of Saint Panteleimon's are encouraged to visit on this special occasion. The drive from West Gosford to Wallsend takes only an hour down the freeway, a quicker and far less demanding trip than is required in visiting on of the Sydney parishes! The church is at 3 Irving Street, Wallsend.

DIOCESAN LIFE: PATRONAL FEAST IN CANBERRA

Friday July 7th will be the feast of the Nativity (or birth) of Saint John the Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, and the patronal feast of the beautiful memorial church in Canberra. Although there will be services in Canberra on the day itself, the main festive solemnities will be on Saturday July 8th and Sunday July 9th, when Archbishop Hilarion serves at All-night vigil (5.00pm) and Divine Liturgy (9.00am). The

"Tikhvin" Icon of the Mother of God, recently and movingly returned to Russia from the United States, will also be commemorated on this day.

In Gosford, we will have the service of Matins at 7.00pm on the eve of the feast of Saint John's Nativity. This service - lasting approximately one and a half hours - consists of beautiful hymns and readings pertinent to the feast. It is one of the most significant saints' days of the Orthodox liturgical year. Some more about Saint John and the significance of this feast-day can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

DIOCESAN LIFE: MONASTERY ART EXHIBITION

A visit to Canberra for the feast-day solemnities could also be nicely tied in with a drive to Cooma. Why? Because from July 1st to 30th, an exhibition of arts and crafts from the Holy Transfiguration Russian Orthodox Monastery in Bombala will be held at the Raglan Gallery & Cultural Centre, Cooma, NSW, only about an hour's drive from Canberra. The exhibition is titled "Where Rivers Meet", and it is to be opened by June McPhie (President, NSW Law Society) at 3pm on Saturday July 1st 2006. Many of us here on the Central Coast are familiar with the Monastery's arts and crafts, of course, but this would be an interesting opportunity to see the work of the fathers there showcased. The Gallery is located at: 9-11 Lambie Street, Cooma, NSW 2630; Tel: 6452-3377. Opening hours are: 9.30am to 4.30pm, Wednesday to Sunday.

REMINDER: LENTEN DESERT COOKBOOK IN PREPARATION

As reported in previous issues of the newsletter and on the website, Vicki Kadnikov from Brisbane is coordinating the compilation of a book of recipes for Lenten cakes, sweets, and desserts. The proceeds of sales of this cookbook are to assist the convent of the Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple in Bungarby (in SE NSW). Those with recipes to contribute should email Vicki at nkadnikov@optusnet.com.au or write to her at 1/20 McIlwraith Street MOFFAT BEACH QLD 4551. Vicki is keen to have the cookbook published soon, so please help if you can!

DIOCESAN LIFE: PLANS TO BUILD A NEW CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND

Although building a permanent church is at this stage beyond the strength and need of our young parish, an older parish across the Tasman Sea is preparing for just such an effort. The parish church of the Resurrection of Christ has been located in the Auckland suburb of Balmoral for over 50 years. Although the church initially served the needs of the first wave of Russian immigrants to New Zealand in the middle of last century ("Displaced Persons" or "DPs" from Europe and, shortly afterwards, refugees from China), it is currently too small to adequately Auckland's estimated 5,000 recent Russian immigrants. In view of this, a project for a new church building is currently being developed. Further information is available on the parish website:

<http://www.orthodox.net.nz/newchurch.html> Those wishing to assist with the building project or ask any questions about church life (in Auckland specifically or in New

Zealand in general) can contact the parish rector, Father Vladimir Boikov, by emailing: frvlad@extra.co.nz. For those interested, some NZ church history is provided below.

DIOCESAN HISTORY: NEW ZEALAND'S FATHER ALEXEY GODYAEV

The Mitred Archpriest Alexey Godyaew was for some time the only priest serving our church in New Zealand. Born in Russia in 1900, he married his future matushka Anna in Paris in 1930. Ordained deacon 1932, he served in this rank in parishes in Italy, Yugoslavia and Austria. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1949. Leaving Europe with so many others in the wake of the Second World War, Father Alexey arrived in NZ on 1 September 1950. Caring initially for the Russian emigrés at the transit camp in Pahiatua, he set about establishing churches for the Russian Orthodox in NZ. The first was in Wellington, then Auckland (the Resurrection parish mentioned above), Christchurch, and Dunedin. His family joined him in 1951. In Wellington and other cities he was the only Orthodox priest and so baptized, married and buried not only Russian Orthodox but also Greeks, Serbs and Lebanese. For a time he was celebrating liturgies on the 1st Sunday of the month in Auckland, on the 2nd Sunday in Wellington, on the 3rd Sunday in Christchurch, and on the 4th Sunday in Dunedin. When there was a 5th Sunday he served at the Russian Refugee Home, Lower Hutt. Father Alexey supported himself and his family, working as a biochemist for the NZ Dairy Board and a dairy company until his retirement. His matushka passed away in 1986 and he reposed in the Lord in 1991, having spent 42 years of his priesthood serving God and the Church in NZ. May the memory of this hard-working servant of the Lord be eternal!

LIVES OF SAINTS:

THE HOLY, GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIST JOHN

After the Most Holy Mother of God, the greatest saint in our church is Saint John the Baptist.

Most of what we know about Saint John's family and birth can be read in the Bible in chapter 1 of the Holy Gospel of Saint Luke. Saint John's father Zachariah was a Hebrew priest. An angel appeared to him in the temple one day, and told him that God would answer his prayers, and that he and his wife would have a son. The angel said that the baby would be a great servant of the Lord, and that he would lead many people to God. He told Zachariah that the baby should be called John (in Russian, Иоаннъ), which is a Hebrew name meaning "God has been gracious" ("благодать Божия").

Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth were already old and hadn't had any children, and Zachariah didn't really believe the angel. Because of this, the angel stopped Zachariah from being able to talk. He wasn't able to speak again until after the baby was born. The people were very surprised when they found out that Zachariah couldn't speak. They knew that something unusual must have happened to him in the temple.

Zachariah went home and wrote down what had happened for his wife. Soon after, Elizabeth found out that she was expecting a baby, just as the angel had said. Her baby was filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born. Once, when Elizabeth had been expecting for about 6 months, Mary the Mother of God, her cousin, visited her. The Virgin Mary had just been told by the Archangel Gabriel that she too would have a baby, and that her baby would be the Son of God. As soon as Mary said "hello", Elizabeth's baby jumped inside her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit at that moment too, and realised that her baby had jumped because Mary was to become the Mother of Jesus Christ, our God.

When Zachariah and Elizabeth's baby was born, their relatives wanted him to be named after his father. But Zachariah wrote that his name should be John, just as the angel had said. As soon as he had done this, Zachariah was able to speak. He sang a very beautiful song about all the wonderful things God had done, and about his baby son John's part in God's plan for us.

Lots of people heard about these things happening, even the wicked King Herod. He later sent soldiers to kill Saint John, because he thought that the baby might grow up to be a king and challenge him. Elizabeth ran away with her baby and hid with him in the wilderness. After she died, he stayed there, cared for by God and his angels until he grew up. King Herod's soldiers killed his father Zachariah in the temple.

When Saint John grew up, he had three very important things to do. Firstly, he was a prophet. This is a Greek word which means "someone who speaks for God" and who explains God's will. There were many prophets before Christ, but Saint John was the greatest of them. Secondly, Saint John was the one who prepared the way for Christ. That is why he is called the "forerunner". He prepared the way by teaching people about God's will. And thirdly, he baptised people in the River Jordan to wash away their sins. The most important person that he baptised was our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Saint John's birth was accompanied by miracles that many people saw or heard about, and lots of people talked about these things. His coming into the world was the beginning of our salvation - the first step in God's plan to save us from sin and death. That is why we celebrate his birthday.

The Nativity - or birthday - of Saint John is one of the oldest saint's days that we celebrate. It is celebrated on July 7th (June 24th on the Church calendar). The very first Christians also celebrated this feast. It is also one of the three most important saint's days in the Church calendar - the other two are the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and the commemoration of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist - and one of only two saint's birthdays that we celebrate.

The Church also remembers, on other days, the beheading of Saint John by the wicked King Herod, the three findings of his precious head, the day on which his father and

mother learned from the angel that he would be born, and his baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the River Jordan. The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist is remembered on September 11th (29 August on the Church calendar). It is a day of fasting because of the sad things that we remember. We also pray for fallen Orthodox Christians soldiers on this day.

If it seems surprising that we commemorate Saint John on so many days, we should remember that our Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples that "no man ever born is greater than Saint John the Baptist".

RESOLUTION OF THE IV ALL-DIASPORA COUNCIL ON THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

[Editorial note: This resolution, which calls upon parishes to give careful consideration to their work, is an important document. It asks us to give thought to missionary work, work with our young people, and the more frequent reception of Holy Communion; to care for one another and for all those with whom we come into contact; and for the recognition of the importance of the work of women in particular and lay people in general. Parishioners and friends are encouraged reflect upon this resolution, and to consider ways in which we can respond to it in parish life].

We, the participants of the IV All-Diaspora Council, having gathered in the God-preserved city of San Francisco, in the blessed presence of the Protectress of the Russian Diaspora, the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God and the holy relics of Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco, having heard lectures and presentations devoted to the life of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in the modern world, express our conciliar opinion on vital questions of our church life.

Throughout the history of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, her bishops, theologians and thinkers untiringly stressed that the ministry of the Church Abroad in the world is inspired by the lofty spiritual ideals of Holy Russia, placing as its cornerstone the fulfillment of the testament of Christ on love for God and man. We confess dedication to the missionary spirit of Saints Sergius of Radonezh, Stefan of Perm, Job of Pochaev, Herman of Alaska, Innokenty of Moscow, Nicholas of Japan, St Tikhon of Moscow and St John of Shanghai and San Francisco. We call upon the children of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia to lovingly preserve devotion to this spirit, through faith, word and our very lives, to witness Holy Orthodoxy in the world surrounding us, and to act with responsibility within the Church.

We call upon the children of the Church to preserve faithfulness to our hierarchy, remembering the words of St Cyprian of Carthage: "where the bishop is, there is the Church."

The spiritual focus and wellspring of living strength of the Church is the bloodless and saving Eucharistic sacrifice of the Son of God for all the living and the dead. In the church, at the holy Altar table, and in common church prayer, the earthly Church and the heavenly Church unite; present at the Divine Altar are people and angels and saints.

We call upon the rebirth of Eucharistic life, we call for the understanding that in partaking of the Holy Gifts, we unite with Christ, and through Him, with the Universal Church.

We call for the rebirth within the conciliar consciousness of the pastors and flock of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia the lofty ideal of church community and parish. Only a parish which senses itself as the original structure of the Universal Church and an inseparable part of the Body of Christ will have the strength to battle against that which hinders our salvation—evil and sin. Only the parish that remembers that its roots go back to the time of the Acts of the Apostles can adopt the necessary measures to provide for the spiritual needs of youth, to show merciful love for the unfortunate and needy.

We, the delegates of the IV All-Diaspora Council, mark with profound gratitude the vital living ministry that the women of the Russian Church Abroad perform in the parishes and other establishments of our Holy Church, and we call upon all laypersons to provide help to the pastors in their very difficult podvig [spiritual struggle].

We call for the establishment of a Commission on Youth under the Synod of Bishops with the purpose of being an all-diaspora coordinating organ. Authorizing the Commission to examine the expediency of opening not only Saturday and Sunday schools everywhere, but also regular Orthodox educational establishments where the young generation would receive both general and Orthodox education, would serve towards the rebirth of Russian Orthodox culture.

PARISH LIFE: FUNDRAISING RAFFLE

As reported in the May newsletter, Head Sister Olga Petroff has begun to organise the usual fundraising guessing competition and raffle for our patronal feast-day in August. Tickets have been specially printed to facilitate sale prior to the feast day. Parishioners and friends are encouraged to take a book or two of tickets to sell to family and friends; those interested should make arrangements with Olga Petroff. Contributions to the basket of wine are also required; these can be brought to church.



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Our parish newsletter will be published monthly. If you wish to receive it by post or email, please talk to Father James (0428-639156) or Katya Marcotrigiano, the parish secretary (4369-1765).