

### **PARISH LIFE: RUSSIAN SCHOOL CONCERT ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>**

Our parish school of Saint Innocent of Alaska is now almost at the end of the second year of operation. Although a humble endeavour, with only 6 students at present, the school is doing good work in teaching the fundamentals of the Orthodox Christian faith and Russian language and culture to some of our younger parishioners. The end of the school year will be marked with a small concert and presentation after Liturgy on Sunday December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The concert will include an English-language play based on the life and work of Saint Innocent, a great missionary and church figure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a short Russian-language play based on the fable of "The Dragonfly and the Ant", and some poetry recitation. The students and teachers have put a great deal of work into the concert, and parishioners and friends are encouraged to be present and show their support for our parish school. Those able to do so will be asked to make a small donation to assist with the expenses of the school.

### **CHURCH LIFE: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS WITHIN THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The official website of the Synod of Bishops of our Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, [www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws](http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws), has a great many recent documents concerning the reconciliation process within the Russian Orthodox Church. Available on the site in both English and Russian, these documents include Resolutions and Epistles of Diocesan and Pastoral Conferences held in San Francisco and Chicago; a copy of the "Act on Canonical Communion" between our Church Abroad and the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate; a "Canonical Assessment" of that document by Mitred Archpriest Alexander Lebedeff; the materials of the Commissions discussing reconciliation; and a great deal more. Father Alexander has this to say in his "Canonical Assessment" of the "Act on Canonical Communion": "If the Act is not signed, the opportunity we have been given would quickly disappear. Not only the Moscow Patriarchate, but the entire Orthodox world would thereby be convinced that cannot be dealt with seriously, that we ourselves prefer to be essentially sectarians, torn from the fullness of universal Orthodoxy, and do not wish to be united with our much-suffering Church in the Fatherland and with canonical Orthodoxy. If this occurs, and if once again we were to desire to hold talks with the Russian Church in the Fatherland, then—even if they agree to speak to us—it would be an entirely different conversation. We will never again be

given the opportunity to preserve the entire Church Abroad as a completely self-governing Church. The best we could hope for would be that the unconditional demand is made that we merge into the Moscow Patriarchate, which will then indeed fully control our church matters—they will appoint and transfer bishops and clergymen, etc. We now have the opportunity, through signing the Act of Canonical Communion, to ensure the future of our dear Russian Church Abroad, specifically, by governing ourselves, and to place her on a sound canonical foundation—this is necessary, since our right to fully independent existence, which was only temporarily afforded on the basis of Ukase No. 362 by Patriarch Tikhon, cannot be canonically justified at all under the present circumstances". These are sobering words, indeed.

It appears that a number of parishes, deaneries and church bodies from around the world, including our Diocesan Council and the Victorian and Queensland deaneries in our Diocese, have sent letters of support for the current course in church life to Metropolitan Laurus. For those able to read Russian, many of these can be read online at [www.pravos.org](http://www.pravos.org), a Russian-language website dedicated to the reconciliation process and entitled «Да единомыслием исповемы!» ("That with one mind we may confess").

### **DIOCESAN LIFE: NEW ISSUES OF «ЦЕРКОВНОЕ СЛОВО» ("WORD OF THE CHURCH") AND "THE VOICE"**

New issues of both Diocesan publications, the Russian-language «Церковное Слово» ("Word of the Church") and the English-language "The Voice", are now available in church. The November-December edition of «Церковное Слово» (32 pages) has articles marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of that journal, together with material on the 4<sup>th</sup> All-Diaspora Council earlier this year, a copy of the gramota sent to the Rocklea parish in Brisbane on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and a copy of an interesting and heartfelt letter from Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco to his flock that discusses church life in the modern age and the reconciliation process within the Russian Orthodox Church. The November issue of "The Voice" (16 pages) contains a copy of the "Act of Canonical Communion" between our Church Abroad and the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, approved by our Synod and now awaiting formal signing. Other articles include pieces on the New Martyrs of Serbia and Russia, in addition to church news and articles concerning the spiritual life. Both journals are sold for \$2.00 each.

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

On Sunday November 5<sup>th</sup> we held our fourth Annual General Meeting. Twenty parish members attended, with a further 4 giving apologies. The AGM received the 2006 Annual Report - now available on the parish website, along with other AGM documents - that summarised the parish's activities over the last 12 months. A 2006-07 Parish

Council and Auditing Committee were elected. Subject to Archbishop Hilarion's ratification, the 2006-07 Parish Councilors are: Bill Reid, Olga Petroff, Rick Golovin, Kate Marcotrigiano, Paul Pereboeff, Sophia Kfoury, and Victor Bendevski, all of whom served on the Parish Council in 2005-2006. Retiring Parish Councilors who did not seek re-election were Don Kobeleff and Valentina Minutello. The 2006-07 Auditing Committee consists of previous members Andrew Kfoury and Sebastian Reid, with Nestor Petroff retiring. Congratulations to all Parish Council and Auditing Committee members on their re-election! May God help them in their service to His Holy Orthodox Church! Likewise, thanks to the retiring members for their diligent service. The new parish council meets for the first time on Tuesday December 5<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm.

### **PARISH LIFE: SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING BBQ AT CABRAMATTA**

On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November, the Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church in Cabramatta kindly held another collection, fundraising BBQ & raffle to benefit our parish. A number of our parishioners were able to be present at what was evidently a very successful fundraiser, raising the sum of **\$4620.00!** This fundraiser is certainly a great help to us, and we are yet again thankful to all at Cabramatta for their generous support. Letters of gratitude have been prepared and will be sent to the rector of the Cabramatta parish, Fr Boris Ignatievsky, and to the lay people who undertook this good work.

### **DIOCESAN LIFE: SPECIAL COLLECTIONS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER**

In the last newsletter it was reported that there will be a collection on December 3<sup>rd</sup> (the Sunday closest to December 4<sup>th</sup>, the feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple) for suffering children in Russia and the other countries of the former USSR. All funds collected at this annual, diocesan-wide collection are distributed through "Orthodox Action - Sydney", the diocesan charitable organisation. There is also an annual, diocesan-wide collection in November, this one for the Charitable Fund of the Synod of Bishops, the proceeds of which go to needy parishes and churches throughout the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

### **PARISH LIFE: SUMMER SCHEDULE OF SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE**

As promised in the last newsletter, a schedule of services to cover the summer months: December, January and February is now available in church and on the website. Services of note over this period will be an English Divine Liturgy on December 31<sup>st</sup>, vigil and Divine Liturgy on **Christmas Day** (Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup>), Forgiveness Sunday services on Sunday February 18<sup>th</sup>, services for the first week of Great Lent between Monday February 19<sup>th</sup> and Thursday February 22<sup>nd</sup>. **Note:** There will be no service in Gosford on the feast of Theophany, January 19<sup>th</sup> 2007. Father James will nevertheless bless

homes in Gosford on Saturday January 20<sup>th</sup>, and serve the Great Blessing of Waters at church on Sunday January 21<sup>st</sup>.

## THE NATIVITY FAST

Tuesday November 28<sup>th</sup> is the first day of the Nativity Fast, the period of spiritual preparation that we observe over the 6 weeks prior to the feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, or Christmas. Strictly speaking, every day from November 28<sup>th</sup> until January 6<sup>th</sup> should be one on which no meat or dairy products are eaten. Fish is permitted on every Saturday and Sunday during December, and also -this year - on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Wine and oil are permitted on fish days, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and also on December 13<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Fish, wine (or alcohol in general), and oil are all allowed on these fasting days in honour of certain saints' days; the "higher" the rank of the saint, the more we can relax our fasting. The fast becomes much stricter from the beginning of January onwards. It is acknowledged, of course, that people observe the fast in many different ways, each according to their strength. Talk to Father James if you have any questions or concerns.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

**The sick & suffering:** Our parishioners Antonina (Tialshinsky), Victor, & Lyubov; and also for Volodymyr, Vasili, Vera, Eugenia, Olga, Olga, Galina, Tatiana and Daniel

**Expectant mothers:** Matushka Larissa, Tatiana, Susannah (Orthodox); Alison (non-Orthodox)

**Families with new babies:** Vladimir and Jasmin, their new baby boy and his big brother Alexander

**Newly-baptised:** Dmitri

**Departed:** Metropolitan Vitaly, Irina (Kamenev)



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Our parish newsletter is 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).