
PARISH LIFE: FEBRUARY-MARCH 2010

There have been more services than usual during February and March, Vespers having been served each Sunday night, and Great Compline every Wednesday night. In many parishes in our diocese it is the custom to serve what is known as "Passia" with Vespers on the first four Sunday evenings during Great Lent. This involves the singing of stichera from Vespers of Holy Friday and Matins of Holy Saturday, together with a long reading from the Gospel concerning the betrayal, trial, crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the first Passia there is a reading from St Matthew's Gospel, at the second a reading from St Mark's Gospel, and so on, with a reading from each of the four Gospels at each service. These are beautiful and solemn services, keeping one focused during Great Lent on Christ's sacrifice for our sins. The last of these services was on Sunday 14 March 2010. Sunday evening Vespers and Wednesday Great Compline have generally been very quiet services this year.

On 2-3 March 2010 Father James attended the customary clergy gathering for Great Lent. In Vladyka's absence, clergy gathered in deanery groups rather than as a whole diocese. The NSW-ACT deanery clergy met at Croydon on the evening of Tuesday 2 March, there reading the Rule of Preparation for Holy Communion and serving Lenten Matins. The services take quite a different form on weekdays of Great Lent, and the clergy formed a choir to sing the beautiful Lenten melodies. On the morning of Wednesday 3 March they gathered at Strathfield to serve the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, another service only served during Great Lent. Only seven priests were able to be there: the dean, Archpriest Nikita Chemodakov (Fairfield); Archpriests George Lapardin (Strathfield) and Boris Ignatievsky (Cabramatta); Hieromonks Joachim (Ross, from Kentlyn) and John (MacPherson); Father James; and Priest Seraphim Slade from the Indigenous Mission. At lunch after the service, the clergy discussed matters of pastoral concern, including the 2010 Russian Orthodox Youth Conference. The Central Coast is a possible venue for this year's conference.

On the evening of Saturday 6 March our full choir sang at All-night Vigil under Olga Itsikson's direction. Our church was full the following morning, the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross.

Parish Council met on Tuesday 9 March 2010, with all members in attendance, hearing reports on parish life, reviewing the parish accounts, and making plans for the weeks and months ahead.

PARISH LIFE: SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

The Service of General Anointing ("Soborovanie") will be held on Sunday 21 March at 5pm. As mentioned in the past issue, there will be a midnight service at Gosford on Pascha, this year falling on Sunday 4 April. Easter baskets will be blessed after the Paschal Matins service. Other services of note between now and then include the blessing of palms and pussy willows on Lazarus Saturday (27 March), with the Palm Sunday service being held in Wallsend. We will have Divine Liturgy on Holy Thursday, and Vespers with the bringing out of the shroud on Great & Holy Friday at 3pm.

CHURCH LIFE: RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PODCAST

With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, a free subscription to a new Russian Orthodox podcast service is available via iTunes and at www.russianorthodoxpodcast.com. A podcast is an audio file that can be downloaded and listened to on a computer or portable audio player. A variety of topics relevant to families and youth will be discussed on a weekly basis.

CHURCH LIFE: CHURCH SINGING CONFERENCE

Brisbane will be hosting a Singer's Conference from 27-30 May, with the theme being "Sing to God, with knowledge". Further information on the conference can be obtained from Fr Gabriel Lapardin on 0419 780 407 or Deacon Kon Semovskih on 0432 419 361 or email: frkonstantin@gmail.com.

DIOCESAN LIFE: METROPOLITAN HILARION RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA

Metropolitan Hilarion returned to Australia on 17 March 2010, and it is understood that he will remain with us for quite some time, having been in the United States since just before Christmas. We hope to have him visit our parish during his time in Australia, it having been some time since he has been with us.

As is customary, Vladyka will serve at Strathfield on the first day of Pascha, and in Croydon on the second day. Father James and Father Martin plan to serve in Croydon on the second day, together with other clergy from smaller parishes in the Sydney area. This is always a beautiful and festive service, with clergy and laity alike gathering at Vladyka's home afterwards.

CHURCH LIFE: SERVICES IN WALLSEND OVER THE COMING MONTH

At this time of year in particular, there are services that we are unable to attend in Gosford because Father James is serving in Wallsend. Although many attend these services in the Sydney parishes, it may be helpful to know details of services in Wallsend. "Soborovanie", the service of General Anointing, will be served there at 6.00pm on Tuesday 23 March. Vigil and Divine Liturgy for Palm Sunday will be served there at 6.00pm on Saturday 27 March and 9.00 on Sunday 28 March respectively. Matins with the reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels will be at 6.00pm on Thursday 1 April, Holy Thursday, and Matins with the Lamentations before the Tomb of Christ will be at 6.30pm the following day. On Holy Saturday, 3 April, Divine Liturgy will begin at

8.00am. That evening, Father James will serve an early Paschal Matins at 7.00pm, the midnight service being in Gosford this year.

This year, the early celebration of Pascha means that the Great Feast of Annunciation falls on Wednesday of Bright Week. The services for this Great Feast will also be in Wallsend this year. A complete schedule of services for Wallsend can be obtained from the website: www.stnicholaswallsend.org.au.

PARISH LIFE: HOLY COMMUNION DURING GREAT LENT

All parishioners are encouraged to confess and receive Holy Communion at least once during Great Lent. In this parish, those who confess and receive Holy Communion on Lazarus Saturday this year will generally be permitted to also receive Holy Communion at Divine Liturgy on Holy Thursday and Pascha. Opportunities to confess include services on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, or by other arrangement with Father James. Those parishioners who confess to another priest should let Father James know before coming to Holy Communion so as to avoid any misunderstanding.

PARISH LIFE: CHARITABLE WORK

Our usual money box collection during Great Lent is for the ROCOR Mission in Haiti. For those wishing to learn more about the ROCOR Fund for the Assistance in Haiti, more information is available on the ROCOR website: www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws.

Across all parishes on Palm Sunday, there will be a collection for the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in the Holy Land – as we will not have a service on this day, the collection will take place on Lazarus Saturday. Envelopes are included in this newsletter, and will be available in church from Sunday 21 March.

For those wishing to learn more about the situation in Chile following last month's earthquake, the ROCOR website also has information that may be of interest, including details on how to donate to the Fund for Assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (for Chile). Our money box collection during the Apostles' Fast in June and early July will be for the assistance of the Russian Orthodox Church in Chile.

PARISH LIFE: BOOKSTORE

Readers of the newsletter are reminded of our parish bookstore. Although still very much in need of a dedicated person to look after it, some new titles in Russian have been added lately, and a range of silver and gold crosses are now on display. Amongst the new Russian books are prayer books and lives of saints. There are also many new icons of various saints. We have a range of books, DVDs, CDs, and calendars in Russian and English. Please take the time to have a look! Father James and Matushka Marie are currently preparing a list of bookstore items that Susanna Bendevski, our new website content editor, will arrange to post online.

PARISH LIFE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Parish members are asked to renew their parish membership, and regular worshippers are invited to consider becoming members. Our AGM this year will be held on Sunday April 18. An AGM is convened each year in order for parish members to hear the Parish Council and Auditing Committee report on the year just completed, and to elect a Parish Council to serve in the year ahead. For further information, please speak to any Parish Council member.

PARISH LIFE: NEWSLETTER

As of this month, parishioner Kira Paznikov Barry has taken responsibility for editing the Parish Newsletter. This is the second issue of the newsletter that she has prepared. Kira can be contacted by email at newsletter@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au, should readers wish to send prayer requests, news or photos for addition to the newsletter.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick: Subdeacon Vitaly (Lupish); our parishioners Victor (Manjetny), Natalia, Irene, Tatiana, Michael and Nina. Also for Elena, Olga, Margaret, Nun Euphrosyne, Nikita, and Christopher.

Expectant mothers: Lydia, Elena, Catherine, Catherine, Cindy.

Departed: Patriarch Alexis, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, newly-reposed Vladimir (Dmitrieff), George (Fomin), and former parishioners and benefactors Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Kraiuhin), Theodore & Antonina (Tialshinsky), Lyubov (Smieska), Victor (Pulkownik), Olga (Timohina), Alexander (Dikan), Elena (Yakupova), Lydia (Ustimko).



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