



russian orthodox  
church of  
**saint panteleimon**  
gosford

## ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК PARISH NEWSLETTER

~ Number 108, October 2011 ~

### REMINDER

**A reminder to all that there will be no services on the weekend of October 29-30. Father James will be in Adelaide that weekend to serve at a wedding in our parish there.**

### PARISH LIFE: SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2011

Late in September we had services for the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord. The vigil service for this feast being a favourite with many because of the solemn "bringing out" of the Cross, our full choir was in attendance, as were many more parishioners than is usual at an evening service, even on the eve of a Great Feast. All present received something of a fright, however, when one of our choristers, Ludmila Roubanoff, became quite unwell during the service, and an ambulance had to be called. Thankfully, she recovered quickly and it was not necessary for her to be taken to hospital.

Divine Liturgy was also well-attended the following day. Unfortunately, one of our altar-servers, Christopher Kfoury, became unwell during the reading of the long Gospel passages in Slavonic and English. Like Ludmila, he recovered quickly, but we were reminded of the need to have people present with first aid training and to have contact details for family members of all our parishioners. **All parishioners with first aid or medical training are asked to advise Father James of this so that a register of such individuals can be maintained.** If need be, Parish Council will consider sponsoring first aid training for individual parishioners interested in undertaking such a course.

Our service on the morning of Sunday 2 October was the quietest in a long time, with just over 30 people in church. The changing of the clocks for daylight savings, school holidays, and heavy rain all contributed to this. It was therefore with some trepidation that we announced that our customary October Long Weekend BBQ at Avoca Beach would go ahead the following day.

It certainly rained on the morning of our picnic day, but as in previous years the skies cleared. Rick Golovin took the leading role this year, and he and his wife Nina, together with their daughter and son-in-law Tammey and Craig Koppman, were there bright and early to set things up. Despite our fears, around 65 people gathered in Heazlett Park, including many who joined us for the first time. Such a number of people was all the more astonishing in that very few of those who usually join us from Sydney were there. The children once again took

the opportunity to hire canoes and aquabikes. The pattern of good weather against the odds for our BBQ over the last few years is so striking that the Estonian man who owns the aquabike business (and whose grandfather, interestingly, was a bodyguard for Tsar-Martyr Nicholas) attributes extraordinary power to our prayers! Many thanks to Rick Golovin for organising such an enjoyable day.

Parish Council was due to meet on Tuesday October 11 but insufficient time to prepare financial reports and the fact that there was little else on the agenda led to the meeting being cancelled. Parish Council will next meet on Tuesday November 8. In addition to the financial reports, it is expected that Parish Council will consider draft administrative guidelines relating to parish awards and privacy, including the use of photographs on the parish website and in social media and promotional material.

### **PARISH LIFE: THE MONTHS AHEAD**

We are now already deep into October, and the end of the year is rapidly approaching. October and November are generally quiet months in parish life. Details of two important events in November – Divine Liturgy at Strathfield for Vladyka's name-day and the visit of the Kursk-Root Icon to our parish – are given elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter. With the Nativity Fast beginning at the end of November, we will endeavour to have a BBQ on the last Sunday beforehand, November 20. Confirmation of this and detailed information about the Nativity Fast will be presented in the November newsletter. A new schedule of services covering the Summer months should be available by then. There will be no services on December 3-4 because of our parish camp, but we hope to have services on December 6-7 for Saint Katherine. The Diocesan "teen retreat" will be held during the week beginning December 19, with some of our parish teens expected to attend. The following week Father James will be at the Diocesan Youth Conference at Wisemans' Ferry. Sometime early in 2012 we will have a church clean-up in preparation for Christmas, with the services for that feast being at Gosford again this year. Father James will serve in Wallsend on the Eve of Nativity and again on the second day of the feast. The Eve of Theophany will be observed in our parish, and Theophany itself will be celebrated at Wallsend. Parish homes will be blessed at that time. Great Lent begins in 2012 on February 27, just over a month after the Bright Days of Christmas and Theophany.

### **PARISH LIFE: THE KURSK-ROOT ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD**

The Kursk-Root icon of the Mother of God, one of the great Holy Icons of the Russian Orthodox Church, will be visiting our parish on Saturday November 19. Fr James hopes to serve a moleben and akathist in the Hornsby area mid-morning, in Newcastle mid-afternoon, and at Gosford in the evening (in place of the usual evening service). Parishioners and friends are encouraged to attend at least one of the services. The akathist and moleben will be around an hour in length altogether, and we will try and arrange a "cup of tea" afterwards. The Diocesan authorities have asked that a collection be taken up at each service. Envelopes for this collection are included with this issue of the newsletter, and will also be available in church.

### **DIOCESAN LIFE: METROPOLITAN HILARION'S NAME DAY**

His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion will be in the Australian and New Zealand Diocese from October 17 until November 17. A highlight of his visit will be the celebration of his Name Day on Thursday 3rd November, the day of commemoration of the Righteous Hilarion,

Schemamonk of the Kiev Caves. Clergy from around the Diocese – not just Sydney – will gather to concelebrate Divine Liturgy at 9am at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, Strathfield. Those of the faithful who are able to be present for Divine Liturgy are encouraged to attend. At this stage, it is expected that Fathers James and Martin will both be there.

### **PARISH LIFE: CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS**

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November, we will be taking a collection for the Synod of Bishop's 'Fund for Assistance'. Taken every year in November, this collection is for financial assistance to parishes and projects in Russia and abroad. Envelopes are included with this newsletter and available at church. Further information about the important work of the Fund for Assistance can be obtained by visiting [www.fundforassistance.org](http://www.fundforassistance.org).

### **PARISH LIFE: GROWTH AND CHANGE**

A number of parishioners and friends have recently remarked to Father James concerning the growth and change in our parish over the past two or three years. Many of those who were with us in the early days at Narara Community Centre and at the time of our move to West Gosford are no longer with us, and many more others have joined. The extent of the change is particularly evident in our parish directory: whereas the earliest directory listed just 35 households in regular contact with our parish, that number had increased to 80 early in 2010. The latest edition of the directory lists nearly 120 households! Despite such growth and change our parish has remained as friendly and relaxed as it was back in the early days, welcoming everyone and seeking to respond to the needs of a diverse community. May God grant that our parish continues to prosper and grow.

### **SPIRITUAL LIFE: HOW THE LIFE IN CHRIST BEGINS IN THIS LIFE**

"The life in Christ originates in this life and arises from it. It is perfected, however, in the life to come, when we shall have reached that last day. It cannot attain perfection in men's souls in this life, nor even in that which is to come without having already begun here. Since that which is carnal, the mist and corruption which derive from the flesh, cannot inherit incorruption, it casts a shadow over that life in this present time. Therefore Paul thought it to be a great advantage to depart in order to be with Christ, for he says, 'to depart and to be with Christ is far better'. But if the life to come were to admit those who lack the faculties and senses necessary for it, it would avail nothing for their happiness, but they would be dead and miserable living in that blessed and immortal world. The reason is, that the light would appear and the sunshine with its pure rays with no eye having been formed to see it. The Spirit's fragrance would be abundantly diffused and pervading all, but one would not know it without already having the sense of smell.....Those, then, who have not acquired these things before they departed have nothing in common with that life. To this the five foolish virgins and the man invited to the wedding feast are witnesses, since they came without either the oil or the wedding garment and were not able to buy them then."

From *The Life in Christ* by Nicholas Cabasilas

### **SPIRITUAL LIFE: ON TIMES OF DARKNESS**

"The weather shifts from cloudy to clear and then back to rain: thus it is with human nature. One must always expect clouds to hide the sun sometimes. Even the saints have had their dark hours, days and weeks. They say then that "God has left them" in order that they may know truly how utterly wretched they are of themselves, without His support. These times of

darkness, when all seems meaningless, ridiculous and vain, when one is beset by doubt and temptations, are inevitable. But even these times can be harvested for good. The dark days can best be conquered by following the example of St. Mary of Egypt. For forty-eight years she dwelt in the desert beyond Jordan, and when temptations befell her and memories of her former sinful life in Alexandria beckoned her to leave her voluntary sojourn in the desert, she lay on the ground, cried to God for help and did not get up until her heart was humbled. The first years were hard; she sometimes had to lie this way for many days; but after seventeen years came the time of rest. On such days stay quiet. Do not be persuaded to go out into social life or entertainment. Do not pity yourself, seek comfort in nothing but your cry to the Lord: Haste thee, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O Lord (Psalm 70:1)! I am so fast in prison that I cannot get forth (Psalm 88:8), and other such appeals. You cannot expect real help from any other source. For the sake of chance relief do not throw away all your winnings. Pull the covers over your head: now your patience and steadfastness are being tried. If you endure the trial, thank God who gave you the strength. If you do not, rise up promptly, pray for mercy and think: I got what I deserved! For the fall itself was your punishment. You had relied too much on yourself, and now you see what it led to. You have had an experience; do not forget to give thanks”.

Chapter 24 of *The Way of the Ascetics* by Tito Colliander

#### THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

**The sick:** Nun Euphrosyne; our parishioners Nestor, Natalia, Michael, Tatiana, Nina, and Boris.

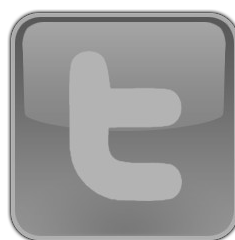
**Departed:** Patriarch Alexis, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, infant Ekaterina, and former parishioners and benefactors Irene (Claydon), Victor (Manjetny), Vladimir (Dmitrieff), George (Fomin), Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Kraihin), Theodore & Antonina (Tialshinsky), Lyubov (Smieska), Victor (Pulkownik), Olga (Timohina), Alexander (Dikan), Elena (Yakupova), Lydia (Ustimko).

**Expectant mothers:** Daria, Svetlana, Maria, Anastasia, Natalia.



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