



russian orthodox  
church of  
**saint panteleimon**  
gosford

## ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК PARISH NEWSLETTER

~ Number 114, April 2012 ~

# ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕСЕ!

## *Christ is Risen!*

Father James, Father Martin and the Parish Council greet all parishioners and friends of our parish in this season of the joyous celebration of the saving Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

### **CHURCH LIFE: PASCHAL EPISTLE HIS HOLINESS KYRILL, PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA**

*Beloved in the Lord Your Graces the archpastors, all-honourable presbyters and deacons, God-loving monks and nuns, dear brothers and sisters!*

Spiritually rejoicing on this great and glorious feast of the Resurrection from the dead of the Saviour of the world, contemplating in my thoughts his emergence from the tomb, I address to you all the life-affirming exclamation which is replete with inner strength, unvanquished truth, and joy:

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

The radiant Paschal night reveals to humanity the fullness of the Divine love by which the pre-eternal Son of the heavenly Father has taken upon himself human nature, healed it from the sickness of sin and, in descending into the depths of Hades, has destroyed the bonds of death, granting to us the precious opportunity of uniting with our Creator and Provider.

In uniting with this all-protecting love of the Lord, we acquire an unconquerable weapon *"against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Eph. 6:12). We overcome the fear caused by the limits of our human nature and acquire the ability to confront fearlessly all of today's challenges. For *"there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear"* (1 John 4:18).

It is no coincidence that the Gospel repeatedly conveys to us the words of the Lord, which he spoke for the encouragement and strengthening of the spirit of his followers: "Be not afraid!" Fear for the future, the fear of dangers unknown, of imaginary or real threats, is a feeling familiar to many. Yet the Lord abides with us if only we do not turn away from Him. And in these days of glorifying His victory over death the Saviour addresses each one of us: *"Be not afraid, only believe"* (Mt 5: 36).

May our behaviour, in contradiction to the evil spirit of this age, become the visible affirmation of Eternal Truth. For, although we live today in conditions of social and religious freedom, the striving to live in accordance with Christian moral norms signifies, as before, a movement against the current. It reveals a refusal to accept those stereotypes of behaviour and the position of the justification of sin which insistently and systematically make their way into peoples' lives through modern means of influencing the consciousness.

Turning to the Lord, we can leave behind the spiritual emptiness and egoism reigning in the world, see the light of the Resurrection, and perceive it as a guiding sign on the way to the Heavenly City.

May communion with the one Eucharistic cup become for us a source of strength in this movement towards eternity. May the grace of the All-Holy Spirit, in granting to our souls an inviolable peace, steadfastness in the faith and growth in virtue, strengthen us all.

In communing with the Body and Blood of Christ, we, in the words of Holy Scripture, may become *"partakers of the divine nature"* (2 Peter 1:4), we can change our natural condition. Through communion we are given the chance to be likened to Him who for our sake *"emptied Himself, and took upon him the form of a servant, and*

*was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:7-8).*

Our moral and spiritual transformation is the main pledge and foundation for the transfiguration of the life of society, the nation, and the country. It is impossible to change for the better the whole without perfecting its parts. The correct mental perception of people from all age, social, and political groups determines the well-being of our homeland. Our vectors in life will shape the development of all the countries of historical Russia, our Church and, by extension, of all of God's creation, entrusted to us by the Creator to preserve and "keep it" (Gen. 2:15).

I prayerfully wish you all, my dear ones, the abiding presence of joy in the Risen Conqueror of Hades and abundant aid from above in your daily labours.

TRULY CHRIST IS RISEN!

Amen.

+KYRILL

*Patriarch of Moscow & All Russia*

### **Пасхальное послание Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла архипастырям, пастырям, диаконам, монашествующим и всем верным чадам Русской Православной Церкви**

*Возлюбленные о Господе Преосвященные архипастыри, всечестные пресвитеры и диаконы, боголюбивые иноки и инокини, дорогие братья и сестры!*

Духовно торжествуя в сей великий и славный праздник Воскресения из мертвых Спасителя мира, мысленно созерцая Его исхождение от гроба, обращаю ко всем вам жизнеутверждающий, исполненный внутренней силы, необоримой правды и радости возглас:

**ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕСЕ!**

Светозарная пасхальная ночь являет человечеству полноту Божественной любви, по которой превечный Сын Небесного Отца принял на Себя человеческое естество, исцелил его от болезни греха и, сойдя в адские глубины, сокрушил оковы смерти, даровав нам бесценную возможность единства со своим Создателем и Промыслителем.

Приобщаясь к этой всепокрывающей любви Господа, мы обретаем непобедимое оружие *"против мироправителей тьмы века сего, против духов злобы поднебесных"* (Еф. 6:12). Мы преодолеваем страх, вызванный ограниченностью нашей человеческой природы, и обретаем способность безбоязненно смотреть в лицо любым вызовам времени. Ибо *"в любви нет страха, но совершенная любовь изгоняет страх"* (1 Ин. 4:18).

Неслучайно Евангелие многократно возвещает нам слова Господа, произносимые Им для ободрения, укрепления духа Своих последователей: "Не бойся!" Страх будущего, боязнь опасностей, неведомых, мнимых или реальных угроз – это чувство, знакомое многим. Но Господь пребывает с нами, если только мы сами не отвергаемся Его. И во дни прославления Его победы над смертью Спаситель вновь взывает к каждому из нас: *"Не бойся, только веруй!"* (Мк. 5:36).

Пусть наше поведение, противоречащее лукавому духу века сего, станет зримым подтверждением Правды Вечной. Ибо, хотя ныне мы пребываем в условиях общественной и религиозной свободы, стремление жить в соответствии с христианскими нравственными нормами по-прежнему означает движение против течения. Оно обнаруживает несогласие с теми стереотипами поведения и позицией оправдания греха, которые настойчиво и системно внедряются в жизнь людей через современные средства воздействия на сознание.

Обратившись ко Господу, мы сможем выбраться из духовной пустоты и царствующего в мире эгоизма, увидеть свет Воскресения, воспринять его как путеводный ориентир в шествовании к Небесному Граду. Источником сил в этом движении к вечности да станет для нас приобщение к единой Евхаристической чаше. Да укрепит нас благодать Всесвятого Духа, даруя нашим душам неотъемлемый мир, стойкость в вере, преуспеяние в добродетелях.

Приобщаясь Тела и Крови Христовых, мы, по слову Священного Писания, становимся причастниками *"Божеского естества"* (2 Пет. 1:4), способными изменить свое природное состояние. Через Причастие мы получаем возможность уподобиться во всем Тому, Кто ради нас *"уничжил Себя Самого, приняв образ раба, сделавшись подобным человекам и по виду став как человек; смирил Себя, быв послушным даже до смерти, и смерти крестной"* (Флп. 2:7-8).

Нравственное, духовное изменение самого себя является главным залогом и основанием для преображения жизни общества, народа, страны. Невозможно изменить к лучшему целое, не совершенствуя его части. Правильное умонастроение людей всех возрастных, социальных и политических групп непосредственно определяет благополучие Отечества. От того, какими будут наши жизненные векторы, зависит путь развития всех государств исторической Руси, Церкви нашей, а в

предельном значении — и всего творения Божьего, врученного нам Создателем, чтобы беречь и "хранить его" (Быт. 2:15).

Молитвенно желаю всем вам, дорогие мои, неослабного пребывания в радости о Воскресшем Победителе ада и преизобильной помощи свыше в ваших повседневных трудах.

ВОИСТИНУ ВОСКРЕСЕ ХРИСТОС!

Аминь.

+КИРИЛЛ

*Патриарх Московский и всея Руси*

*Москва - Пасха Христова 2012 г.*

## **CHURCH LIFE: PASCHAL EPISTLE OF HIS EMINENCE HILARION, METROPOLITAN OF EASTERN AMERICA & NEW YORK, FIRST HIERARCH OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD**

Christ is risen!

The feast of feasts and triumph of triumphs has arrived for us, brother archpastors, right honourable fathers, brethren and sisters beloved in the Lord! Let us all greet the resurrection of Christ and not hide our feelings: *"Let us be divinely glad, for Christ hath risen as One omnipotent."*

O wondrous and blessed night! O night so full of joy for every Christian! The risen Christ "changed the lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women into joy" on this night. And He does the same for us! This night of splendour proclaims to us His arising. And now this "prophetic night" renews us to the depths of our soul. And it gives us the certain hope that our departed ones, and we ourselves, will arise on the last day of the world to *"celebrate the eternal Pascha in the never-waning day of the kingdom of Christ."*

The resurrection of Christ is the central point of the doctrine of the Orthodox Church. The entire essence of the teaching of Christ is bound up with the resurrection, and without this fact it loses its meaning. It is therefore not surprising that it is precisely in this question that we encounter the most powerful of stumbling blocks. We see the beginning of such opposition even in antiquity, when, for example, the Apostle Paul's speech about the resurrection in the learned Areopagus of Athens was greeted with considerable irony. When he spoke about God and His attributes, about the creation, about salvation from sin, the Athenians listened to Paul. But as soon as he spoke of the resurrection, they interrupted him, saying: *"We will hear thee again of this matter"* (Acts 17: 32).

For this reason let us strongly believe, with all our heart, in the resurrection, and let us immerse ourselves in the dogma of the Church, that we may *"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you"* (1 Pet. 3: 15). Let us strive to instil this truth in our own life and thus inspire others to serve God and man. In our parishes and monasteries let us see genuine followers of the risen Christ, who shine with His beauty and radiance, His triumph over evil. Let our clergymen and monastics, parishioners and pilgrims, become a living and convincing proclamation of Christianity, that the people may be confirmed in the Faith. Only this will help our neighbour to see, feel and understand that the resurrection of Christ is the beginning of our common resurrection, that it is the passage to that region where there is no grief or sighing, where the ideal of the fullest human life is the day that never sets, the joy that never ends.

I prayerfully desire that all be renewed by joy in the resurrection of the Lord and made steadfast in firm faith, hope and love for God and neighbour!

May the noteworthy dates celebrated this year also restore our strength: the 5th anniversary of the restoration of unity within the Russian Orthodox Church, and the 200th anniversary of the victory of Russia over Napoleon and of the blessed repose of Metropolitan Platon (Levshin), that great hierarch of the Church of Russia, who did so much to bring about the rebirth of spiritual enlightenment in our homeland.

The celebration this year of the 5th anniversary of the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion should prompt us to analyse the path we have taken and to set forth plans for the strengthening of brotherly ties, good cooperation, joint action and unity, continuing to build up the Church's service to God and man on the foundation of our common heritage of Holy Russia. This celebration should remind us that we must carefully address ourselves to unity on all levels of our life and activity, refraining from introducing our own passions into the life of the Church, striving in word and deed to establish among us *"the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* (Eph. 4: 3). May this celebration inspire us to an active, irenic labour within the Church, both with those with whom we are in fellowship, and those with whom we wait and hope for the joy of fellowship and unity!

Pondering the 200th anniversary of the victory in the Patriotic War, the fact springs to mind unbidden that in 1812, before the battle of Borodino, a miracle-working copy of the Kursk-Root Icon was sent to General-Field Marshal Mikhail Ilarionovich Kutuzov, who was with the army in the field. This connection with the principal

holy object of the Russian Diaspora obliges us to mark this event with prayer and to take an interest once again in our own rich history. The invasion of Napoleon profoundly shook the pillar of the Church of Russia of that period, namely, Metropolitan Platon of Moscow and Kolomna, that *“second Chrysostom”* and *“apostle of Moscow”*, great pedagogue, homilist and writer, who educated a whole series of talented clergymen, among them the holy hierarch Philaret (Drozdov). May the life, labours and writings of Platon help us to meditate on this unique personality, to delve into the doctrine of the Orthodox Church, and to delight in the *“banquet of faith”* and the *“richness of the goodness of the Lord”* (the Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom), mindful that the resurrection of Christ is our life and our eternal joy!

With paschal joy in the resurrection of Christ!

+Hilarion,

Metropolitan of Eastern America & New York,

First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad

Pascha, 2012

## **Пасхальное послание ИЛАРИОНА, митрополита Восточно-Американского и Нью-Йоркского, Первоиерарха Русской Зарубежной Церкви.**

**ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕСЕ!**

Праздников праздник и торжество из торжеств наступило для нас, собратья-архипастыри, досточтимые отцы, возлюбленные о Господе братия и сестры! Воскресение Христово все мы встречаем с великой радостью и не скрываем своих чувств: *«веселимся божественно, яко воскресе Христос, яко всесилен»!* О, чудная и благословенная ночь! Всерадостная ночь для всякого христианина! Воскресший Христос в эту ночь «мироносицам плачь преложил». И нам преложит! И нам эта светоносная ночь вещает восстание. И сейчас эта «провозвестница ночь» обновляет нас до глубин нашей души. И дает несомненную надежду, что и наши усопшие, и мы воскреснем в последний день мира, чтобы *«Пасху праздновать вечную в невечернем дни Царствия Христова»*.

Воскресение Христово является центральным пунктом вероучения Православной Церкви. Вся сущность Христова учения тесно вяжется с воскресением и без этого факта теряет свое значение. Поэтому неудивительно, что нам приходится встречать самые сильные препятствия именно в этом вопросе. Начало такого противодействия мы видим еще в древности, когда, например, речь о воскресении апостола Павла в ученом афинском ареопаге была встречена с большой иронией. Пока он говорил о Боге и Его свойствах, о творении и спасении от греха, афиняне слушали Павла. Но как только он заговорил о воскресении, его перебили словами: *«об этом мы слушаем тебя в другой раз»* (Деян. XVII, 32).

Посему, крепко, всем сердцем будем веровать воскресению и углубляться в учение Церкви, чтобы всегда быть готовыми *«дать отчет о нашем уповании»* (1Пет. III, 15). Будем стараться своей жизнью насаждать эту истину и, таким образом, воодушевлять других на служение Богу и людям. Пусть в наших приходах и монастырях увидят подлинных последователей Христа Воскресшего, которые сияют Его красотой и святостью, Его торжеством над злом. Пусть наши священнослужители, монашествующие, прихожане и богомольцы станут живой и убедительной проповедью христианства, чтобы утвердить людей в вере. Только это поможет нашим ближним увидеть, почувствовать и понять, что Воскресение Христово есть начало нашего общего воскресения, что оно есть переход в ту область, где нет печали и вздыхания, где идеал самой полной человеческой жизни, невечерний день и нескончаемая радость. Молитвенно желаю всем обновиться радостью о Воскресшем Господе и утвердиться в крепкой вере, надежде и любви к Богу и ближним!

Пусть обновят наши силы и празднуемые в нынешнем году знаменательные даты: пятилетия восстановления единства внутри Русской Православной Церкви, двухсотлетия победы России над Наполеоном и блаженной кончины митрополита Платона (Левшина), великого иерарха Отечественной Церкви, много сделавшего для возрождения в ней духовного просвещения.

Празднование в этом году пятилетия подписания Акта о каноническом общении должно заставить нас сделать анализ пройденного пути и наметить планы на укрепление братских связей, доброго сотрудничества, взаимодействия и единства, продолжая строить церковное служение Богу и людям на основе нашего общего святорусского наследия. Это празднование должно напомнить нам о том, что мы должны бережно относиться к единству на всех уровнях нашей жизни и деятельности, воздерживаясь от привнесения своих страстей в церковную жизнь, словом и делом стремясь к созиданию среди нас *«единства духа в союзе мира»* (Ев. IV, 3). Пусть это празднование воодушевит нас на активную

умиротворяющую работу в Церкви как с теми, с которыми мы имеем общение, так и с теми, с которыми ожидаем и надеемся на радость общения и единства!

Размышляя о двухсотлетию победы в Отечественной войне, то невольно вспоминается тот факт, что в 1812 г., перед Бородинским сражением, список с Курско-Коренной иконы, прославившийся чудотворениями, был послан к генералу-фельдмаршалу Михаилу Иларионовичу Кутузову в действующую армию. Эта связь с главной святыней русского зарубежья обязывает нас к тому, чтобы мы молитвенно отметили это событие и лишней раз заинтересовались своей богатейшей историей. Нашествие Наполеона глубоко потрясло столпа Русской Церкви того времени, а именно митрополита Московского и Коломенского Платона, этого «второго Златоуста» и «московского апостола», великого педагога, проповедника и писателя, воспитавшего целый ряд талантливых священнослужителей, среди которых был и святитель Филарет (Дроздов). Да помогут нам жизнь, труды и сочинения Платоновы вдуматься в эту неповторимую личность, погрузиться в учение Православной Церкви, насладиться «пиром веры» и «богатством благодати Господа» (из Пасхального слова Златоуста), памятуя, что воскресение Христово есть жизнь наша и наша вечная радость!

С пасхальной радостью о Христе Воскресшем,  
митрополит Восточно-Американский и Нью-Йоркский,  
Первоиерарх Русской Зарубежной Церкви.

### **PARISH LIFE: MARCH - APRIL 2012**

The past six weeks has been very busy, with 25 services in our church from between 14 March and 21 April. Most of these services were the solemn services of Great Lent. Although work and family commitments – together with the sheer number – made it hard for many people to attend more than a few of these services, a number those who did attend took the opportunity to read in church for the first time. It is hoped that more and more parishioners, over time, become involved in the services in this way.

A parish activity at which a great many people were present was the pre-Easter clean-up. There were possibly more people present at this clean-up than at any other since our church opened in 2004! This was encouraging, and certainly made for light work. It also ensured that our small church was at its best for the Holy Week Services and Pascha.

A lively and well-attended Paschal service was Vespers at 11.00am on the feast of Pascha itself. This service is one that we have had at this time only since 2009, prior to which it was always in the evening, and attended by very few people. This year, approximately 40 people were in church, Easter baskets were blessed, and most remained behind afterwards to celebrate the feast and socialise.

We learned of two significant clergy moves soon after Pascha. Late in April, Reader Christopher Dowling relocated to Canberra because of work commitments. Although received into Orthodoxy in our parish, Chris was tonsured a reader in Canberra when working there in 2009, and it is expected that he will now resume his responsibilities there in the parish of Saint John the Baptist.

At around the same time we learned that Father Martin and his family will be relocating to Lyons, France, as of mid-July, also because of work commitments. Father Martin has been with us since his ordination in January 2008, and his absence will be keenly felt.

At this stage, it is expected that Father Martin's final service in Gosford will be on Sunday 1 July 2012. Metropolitan Hilarion has agreed to visit the parish and preside at Divine Liturgy on this day, his first visit to our parish since he became Metropolitan. Parishioners and friends are asked to keep this day free and to be with us on this day as we welcome Vladyka and farewell Father Martin.

## **PARISH LIFE: VIST FROM THE BELARUS CONVENT, FORTHCOMING SERVICES**

As of Sunday 20 May, our new service timetable will be available in church. Our Sunday services in June coincide with two major commemorations: the Great Feast of Pentecost on 3 June, and the Feast of All Saints of Russia on 17 June. On the evening of Saturday 2 June, we will have All-night Vigil with the blessing of loaves and wheat, wine and oil. As is customary, the church will be decorated with green branches in honour of the life-giving Trinity. The Ladies' Auxiliary will be preparing the small bunches of fresh flowers that are held by the faithful during the services on this feast, and these can be purchased upon arrival at church. Divine Liturgy on the feast of Pentecost itself will be followed by Vespers with the "kneeling prayers", so called because during them we pray on our knees for the first time since Pascha. It is possible that at one of our Sunday services in June we will have a visit from a nun of the Saint Elisabeth Convent in Minsk, Belarus. More information about this visit and the forthcoming services will be included in the next issue of the newsletter.

## **PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS**

Parish Council met on Tuesday 1 May for the first time since March. It was a long meeting – over two and a half hours – with many aspects of parish life discussed. The usual financial reports were presented, with these showing that our parish "Future Fund" totalled just under \$40,000.00 at the end of March 2012. It was agreed that Diocesan and Synodal levies totalling \$2625.32 would be paid for the 2011 calendar year, the first time that our parish has been asked to pay such levies. The important work of the Risk Sub-Committee was considered, with suggestions put forward for ways of making our church and grounds safer. It was agreed that our parish charitable collections during the Apostles' and Nativity Fasts would be to assist the Pakistan Mission and the building of the Lubyanka "Church-on-the-Blood" in Moscow respectively. Consideration was also given to changes in parish administration that will allow Father James to concentrate more fully on pastoral work. Parish Council is due to meet next on Tuesday 12 June 2012.

## **CHURCH LIFE: PARISH FEAST DAY AT WALLSEND**

Our neighbouring parish of Saint Nicholas in Wallsend, Newcastle, will this year celebrate its patronal feast on Saturday 19 May, transferred from Tuesday 22 May so as to allow as many as possible to attend. This is the parish in which Father James serves when he is not at Gosford. For those who have not visited Wallsend before, the parish was founded in 1952 by Orthodox Russians, Belorussians and Ukrainians who left Europe after World War 2. It is one of the oldest parishes in our Diocese. The current church, a small red brick church with blue cupolas, was built by the parishioners themselves in the 1960s. Vigil with the blessing of loaves, wheat, wine and oil will be at 6.00pm on Friday 18th May. Blessing of Water will be at 8.15am on Sunday 19th, the day of the feast itself, and Divine Liturgy will be at 9.00am. A moleben to St Nicholas and a procession around the church will follow. There will be a festive lunch in the church hall afterwards. Only 88 kms and one hour's drive from West Gosford, or 114 kms and one hour and ten minutes from Berowra! Please let Father James know if you are planning to attend so as to assist with catering. Regardless of your plans to attend, please consider one or more tickets in the raffle to assist the Wallsend parish renovate its small church. We at Gosford have been very fortunate in our friendships over the years, and it is important that we extend the same friendship and generosity to others.

## **PARISH LIFE: TIMES FOR CONFESSION**

During Great Lent many people came to confess before and during the reading of the Hours (Часы) that precede Divine Liturgy. Although this can at times be a practical arrangement, the large number of people wishing to confess meant that on more than one occasion during Great Lent the beginning of the service was delayed. To avoid this happening in future, all those who are able to do so should confess on Saturday evenings, there being opportunities to do this before, during and after the evening service. Coming the evening before also allows for a fuller and more careful confession. With Father Martin leaving us, there is now a great deal more for Father James to do during the services, and planning times at which to confess will greatly help him in this regard.

## **CHURCH LIFE: FUNDRAISER FOR PRESENTATION CONVENT**

The next fundraiser to benefit the construction fund for the Presentation Convent in Bungarby, SE NSW, will be held in the Cabramatta Church Hall on Sunday 27 May 12 starting at 6pm. Abbess Anna will be present and Archpriest Nicholas Karipoff (Holy Protection Cathedral, Melbourne) will give a talk on "The Confines of Science: The Cosmos of Faith'. Afterwards there will be an auction and raffle, with lots of spot prizes to keep the crowd entertained. Entry is \$25 per head and dinner will be an all Italian Buffet. To make this event parent friendly, a crèche will be set up in an upstairs classroom. Construction has commenced on the accommodation blocks at the Sisterhood and progress is being made as a result of funds raised at previous functions. For further information please contact Mark Ganin on (02) 9891 4961 or 0409 178 536. Email: [mark.ganin\(at\)bigpond.com](mailto:mark.ganin(at)bigpond.com)

## **DIOCESAN LIFE: STATEMENT OF THE EPISCOPAL ASSEMBLY OF OCEANIA SUBMITTED TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY BILL 2012**

The Orthodox Christian position on marriage requires an adequate understanding of how the term 'marriage' is understood not only in our faith community, but also its broader societal implications.

Marriage is regarded above all as a **sacrament** that has been instituted by God who created man and woman in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:27-31). There is a strong biblical basis for this view, and the position of the Orthodox Church worldwide (not only in Australia) can never depart from the teaching of Holy Scripture. The union between a man and a woman in the Sacrament of Marriage reflects the union between Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:21-33).

Those who freely choose to enter into marriage, enter into a conjugal union which ideally leads to procreation. Whilst not every marriage is blessed with the birth of children, every such monogamous union exists to form of a man and a woman a new reality of 'one flesh' (Mark 10:6-8).

The implications of such within society are:

- Marriage is a unique relationship between one man and one woman wherein the human person is made complete through gender complementarity;
- Marriage is the very foundation of a family, which in turn is the foundation of society itself;
- Confusing the institution of marriage with same-sex unions will have serious consequences for religious freedom and implications for freedom of conscience; and
- Children should be afforded every opportunity to start life, grow and develop with both their biological parents, i.e. their mother and father.

Our purpose is **not** that government legislation should become a 'tool' to impose Christian ethics upon fellow citizens who do not share our beliefs. This of course would not be legitimate, given that we respect the free will of all. Rather, our concern is that the very institution of marriage, which has a Christian tradition of two entire millennia, should remain as it is, and not be confused with the political debate concerning the legal status of same-sex unions.

This statement, signed on 20 March 2012 by Metropolitan Hilarion and bishops of the Greek, Serbian, Romanian and Antiochian Orthodox Churches in Australia, was submitted to the Parliamentary Committee considering the Marriage Equality Bill 2012. A copy of the original can be obtained from the Diocesan website, [www.rocor.org.au](http://www.rocor.org.au). The inquiry committee is currently preparing a report expected to be tabled in the House of Representatives on 18 June 2012. **It is not too late to show your support for the Christian definition of marriage** by writing or emailing your local member of Federal Parliament prior to 18 June 2012 and expressing your concerns.

### **PARISH LIFE: LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS DURING MAY AND JUNE**

Parishioners and friends are advised that lunch arrangements will be as follows during May and June: 20 May: Piroshki, prepared on the day by our hard-working Ladies' Auxiliary; 3 June: the feast of Pentecost (Troitsa), a BBQ; and 17 June: Soup.

### **DIOCESAN LIFE: RAFFLE FOR TONGAN MISSION**

Raffle tickets to benefit the Orthodox mission in Tonga are available for sale at the candle desk. Tickets are \$2 each, with the raffle being drawn in July. Please assist this young mission!

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

**The sick:** Nun Euphrosyne; Leonid; and our parishioners Michael, Tatiana, and Boris.

**Families with new babies:** Subdeacon Luke, Elise, baby Thomas, and big brother Daniel.

**Expectant mothers:** Elena, Lydia, Katherine, Iryna, Natalia, Alexandra.

**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).



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