

PARISH LIFE: JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2012

The past month has been a busy one in parish life. During the week 8-15 January, four children from our parish – Nick Carles, Nick Shchelekov, Liza Carles and Katie Carles – attended the annual camp of the National Organisation of Russian Scouts (NORS) near Nowra. On Friday 13 January, Father James visited the camp and served a moleben to Saint George, the patron saint of Russian scouts. The camp was a great success. We hope that next year NORS will consider a camp to the north of Sydney, in a place a little more accessible!

On Saturday 14 January the Saint Seraphim Community Russian School, Hornsby, had a yolka, or Christmas party, at Mount Colah Public School. A great many young children were present, together with their parents. As is customary, the yolka involved games and a pantomime, with Father Christmas (Дед Мороз) arriving to give gifts. The administrators and teachers evidently made great efforts to prepare for this wonderful and highly successful event.

On Saturday-Sunday 14-15 January we had services in honour of Saint Seraphim of Sarov. It being the patronal feast of the Hornsby Russian School, the icon in the centre of church was the school icon, and we had a moleben at the end of Divine Liturgy for all the students, teachers and administrators. After the dismissal, Father James congratulated school principal Paul Douriguine and all involved with the school on their success in establishing it late last year.

On Wednesday-Thursday 18-19 January we had services for the Great Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, or Theophany. All-night vigil was served on Wednesday evening, and Divine Liturgy with the Great Blessing of Waters on Thursday morning. Father James then blessed home around Gosford and on the Peninsula on Thursday; in the Hornsby Shire on Friday; and through Gosford and up to Wyong on Saturday. Those homes not blessed at this time were visited over the following two weeks.

On the eve of Theophany, after the All-night vigil, Father James served a moleben for our parishioners Eric and Katya Yakimov and their infant daughter Tanya in preparation for their move to Canberra. The grandson of our founding starosta Alexander Yakimov, Eric has a long association with this parish, having served as an altar boy during the services back at Narara Community Centre. He and Katya were married in our church in 2009, and Tanya was baptised here in 2010. We wish them all the best for their move to Canberra.

Father Martin was not with us for a number of services during January, work commitments taking him elsewhere. His absence was a cause of much concern, with many parishioners seeking reassurance that his absence would not be permanent, and it was a comfort for them to see him back again by the end of the month. He will be away again on Sunday 19 February, his assistance being required for a hierarchical service and ordination at the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Strathfield.

Parish Council met for the first time this year on Tuesday 24 January. The usual financial and administrative reports were given. Of note to readers will be the fact that our Future Fund – money set aside for future building and investment needs – now totals over \$34,000.00. Father James reported on his attendance at a Pastoral Conference on 26 December 2011 at which a Diocesan 'Policy and Procedure for addressing Inappropriate Behaviour' was discussed. This document is a formal statement that the Diocese – and, with it, each parish – is committed to an environment free of inappropriate behaviour such as bullying, harassment, and sexual impropriety. More information about this Policy will be made available in due course.

On Saturday 28 January three people were baptised at our church: an infant, Dmitry Tsyplakov – the son of Sergey and Katie Tsyplakov; Dmitry's grandfather, Vyacheslav Tsyplakov; and Oleg Timoshenko. As there were two adults to be baptised, our large font was used, with the immersion taking place under the awning at the side of the church. Interestingly, each of the three was named in baptism after a right-believing ruler – Saint Dmitry Donskoy of Moscow, Saint Vyacheslav (Wencelaus), Prince of the Czechs, and Saint Oleg of Bryansk. Congratulations to the three newly-illuminated servants of God, Dmitry, Vyacheslav and Oleg!

On Sunday 5 February we had a BBQ after Divine Liturgy in honour of our hard-working Ladies' Auxiliary, Monday 6 February being the day of commemoration of Blessed Xenia, the heavenly patron of our sisterhood. At the end of the service many years was sung for Kate Marcotrigiano, our head sister, and all her helpers. Father James congratulated the Ladies' Auxiliary on their feast-day, reminding those present that so much of what makes our parish what it is due to the hard work of the sisters. As in previous years, the men of the parish did the cooking at the BBQ, and then the washing up, in order to give the ladies a break.

PARISH LIFE: FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, AUTUMN SCHEDULE OF SERVICES AND SERVICES DURING GREAT LENT

On Sunday 26 February – Forgiveness Sunday - we will have no morning service, but Vespers with the rite of asking forgiveness late in the afternoon. This is a beautiful service that in which the melodies changes from festive Lenten at the mid-point, with the vestments changed from gold to black at the same time. Afterwards, all present ask forgiveness of one another before setting out on Great Lent. Ice cream will be served after Vespers. **N.B. The Russian and English versions of the Summer schedule both note a different starting time for Vespers on Forgiveness Sunday – the correct time of the service is 4.30pm. Apologies for any confusion!**

A new schedule of services covering the Autumn months will be available in church as of Sunday 19 February. This schedule provides details of services during Great Lent and the Paschal season.

In the first week of Great Lent (beginning on Monday 27 February) we will have the service of Great Compline with the reading of the Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings at 7.00pm. Compline (or «Повечерие» in Slavonic) is a service of psalms and prayers. Great Compline («Великое Повечерие») is the service appointed for weeknights during Great Lent and at certain other special times of the year. It is a solemn and beautiful service characterised, during Lent, by many prostrations.

A canon is best described as a "liturgical poem", generally in nine parts or "odes". In the Orthodox Church, canons are a basic part of the service of Matins, and are also read at other times (in preparation for Holy Communion, for example). The Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete is perhaps the most elaborate of all the canons that we read. It is a long and penitential

poem that is at the same time a reflection on the Holy Scriptures. Divided into four parts for reading during the first week of Great Lent, it is read in full on the Wednesday evening of the fifth week.

The main commemoration on the first Sunday of Great Lent (in 2012, Sunday 4 March) is that of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. This commemoration relates to the defeat of the heresy (or false teaching) of "iconoclasm" (literally, "icon-smashing"). In parishes, we generally serve a moleben (or service of intercession) for "The Conversion of those in Error" on this Sunday. In cathedrals, the far more elaborate "Rite of the Triumph of Orthodoxy" is served. This majestic service includes the proclamation of Many Years for our hierarchs and Eternal Memory to our departed rulers and guides (both spiritual and temporal); and the pronouncement of Anathema! (literally, "May it be cursed!") upon those who have and who continue to lead the faithful astray.

That Sunday evening we will have Vespers with the first Passia at 6.00pm. Sunday evening Vespers during Great Lent is a service in which the transition is made from the festal atmosphere of the weekends back to the penitential tone of the weekdays. This change is symbolised by the change from red vestments back to black at the half-way point of the service.

The "Passia" is a service that is, in the practice of many parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church, appended to Vespers on the first four Sundays of Great Lent. It is served in a number of different ways, but the usual approach in the Sydney parishes of our Church is as follows: at the end of Vespers, the choir slowly and with great solemnity sings a sticheron of Great and Holy Friday, "Joseph with Nicodemus took Thee down from the Tree". The Royal Doors are opened, and the priest brings forth the Gospel book from the sanctuary and places it on a stand in the middle of the church. An image of the crucifixion is also often placed in the centre of the church. The church is fully censed, and the reading of the Gospel then begins. The church remains darkened. The portions of the Gospel that are read each week (from each Evangelist in turn) focus on the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ. At the end of the reading, another sticheron of Holy Friday is sung: "Come and let us bless Joseph of everlasting memory". The faithful then venerate the Holy Gospel before the dismissal is given. It is customary for the faithful to bring their own Bibles to follow during the long reading.

In the second week of Great Lent (beginning on Monday March 5th) we will have Great Compline on Wednesday 7 March at 7.00 pm, and Vespers with the third Passia on Sunday 11 March at 6.00pm. The Gospel reading will be from Saint Mark, chapters 14 & 15.

In the third week of Great Lent (beginning on Monday 12 March) we will have Great Compline on Wednesday 14 March at 7.00 pm, and the usual weekend services. The main commemoration on the third Sunday of Great Lent is that of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. On Saturday 17 March, we will have Matins with the bringing out of the Cross at 6.00pm, and on Sunday 18 March, Divine Liturgy at 9.00am and Vespers with 3rd Passia at 6.00pm. The Gospel reading will be from Saint Luke, chapters 22 & 23. The Holy Cross remains in the centre of church for veneration throughout the 4th Week.

PARISH LIFE: CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS

Two mandatory Diocesan collections will be taken up over the next month. On Sunday 19 February, there will be a collection for Orthodox Action Melbourne, a charitable organisation that assists needy people, children and orphanages in Russia. On Sunday 4 March, the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, there will be a collection for the Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary in Jordanville, New York, to provide assistance to students from our Diocese with

tuition, room and board. Envelopes for these collections will be available in church as of this coming weekend.

PARISH LIFE: CHANGES AT 7 COMSERV CLOSE

Parishioners may have noticed some changes of late in the complex that we share at 7 Comserv Close. Pacific HD, the motorcycle business which has for a number of years occupied all three units on our side of the complex, now occupies only the first two. The third unit – situated between Pacific HD and our church – is now occupied by the Elite Dance studio. Parishioners should note that the two parking places immediately outside Elite Dance have been marked as studio parking only. It is important that this be respected at all times, as the studio will be used outside usual business hours. In another change, the gymnasium and training facility on the opposite side of the complex has closed. It is not yet known who will occupy the vacant space. Over the years we have been most fortunate in our neighbours, all of whom have shown understanding and sensitivity to us. It is important that we return this kindness, observing parking restrictions at the complex and ensuring that the complex is left clean after each service.

DIOCESAN LIFE: GOODWILL TRIP TO INDONESIA

A goodwill trip to Indonesia is being organised by Hieromonk Joachim (Saint John the Baptist Skete, Kentlyn) and Protodeacon Konstantin Semovskih (Saint Nicholas Cathedral, Brisbane). This trip, which will coincide with school holidays across Australia, will be from 30 June – 9 July, 2012. Around 10-12 places are available for young people from 18-30 years of age. The plan is to visit a number of Orthodox Christian parishes and establishments across Indonesia. Those wishing to attend should contact the organisers ASAP. Hieromonk Joachim: kosovo_au@yahoo.com.au; Protodeacon Konstantin: frkonstantin@gmail.com

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

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

Families with new babies: Svetlana, Peter and their first baby Emilia (10 January); Natalia, David, and their first baby Alexandra (13 January); Maria, John and their baby boy, with big brother Vladimir (15 February).

Expectant mothers: Marije, Elena, Elise, Lydia, Katherine, Irina, Cathy.

Newly-married: Nadine and Alexander (19 February).

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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