

PARISH LIFE: FEBRUARY - MARCH 2012

On Wednesday 15 February we received the happy news of the birth of a second son to our parishioner Maria Zueva and her husband John El Bacha. Maria and John have named their new baby boy, a little brother to Vladimir, Alexander. Our warmest congratulations to Maria, John and Vladimir!

On the weekend of February 18-19 we had services for the Sunday of the Last Judgement. Both the services were quieter than usual. On Sunday after Divine Liturgy the Ladies' Auxiliary served blini (pancakes) with a range of toppings: sour cream, jam, salmon, herring and caviar. It was a shame that our usual crowd was not there to enjoy the ladies' good cooking and appreciate their hard work!

After the service on Sunday 19 February, Father James travelled to the Hornsby Russian School to take the initial "Law of God" (Закон Божий) lesson and to serve the customary moleben for the beginning of the school year. For Закон Божий he spoke to the children about two of the readings from the Holy Gospel that prepare us for Great Lent – the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, and the account of the Last Judgement.

On Tuesday 21 February, the monthly meeting of the Parish Council was held. Discussion at the meeting focused on financial management and a range of safety, policy and governance issues. In addition, a number of new membership applications and renewals were considered and approved.

On the morning of Sunday 26 February there was a Romanian Orthodox service in our church. Divine Liturgy was served by Father Theodor Postelnicescu, the Newcastle-based rector of the the Apostle Andrew Romanian Orthodox parish. After Divine Liturgy, there was a memorial service. Further services for the Romanian Orthodox community here on the Central Coast will be arranged as the need arises.

That evening, it being Forgiveness Sunday, we had Vespers with the customary rite of asking forgiveness. Quite a number of people gathered in church for this solemn service, during which the vestments were changed from gold to black and the festive melodies gave way to the Lenten ones. Afterwards, the children (and some adults!) enjoyed ice cream for the last time in a while, and Father James blessed a beautiful icon of Saint Patrick, the Enlightener of Ireland, painted by Michael Galovic for our Reader Christopher Dowling. Although best-known as the patron saint of Ireland, as a pre-schism Western saint Saint Patrick is also venerated in the Orthodox Church, appearing in the Russian Orthodox calendar as «Св. Патрикия, просветителя Ирландия». His day of commemoration falls on 30 March, the day on which we also commemorate Saint Alexis, the Man of God. A missionary parish of our Diocese in the Adelaide suburbs is dedicated to Saint Patrick.

As is customary, on the first four evenings of Great Lent we had Great Compline with the reading of the penitential Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete. A small number of people attended

each service. These are solemn services that set the tone for Great Lent at the outset. A nice aspect of Great Compline is the opportunity that it gives for many people, young and old, to assist with the reading, an opportunity taken by most present.

On the first Sunday of Great Lent, the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, it was again a quiet morning. The customary "Moleben for the Conversion of those in Error" was served at the end of Divine Liturgy. That evening, a small number gathered in church again for Vespers and the first "Passia", the reading of the two chapters from St Matthew's Gospel that cover the betrayal and suffering of Christ.

On Saturday 10 March one-year-old Maison Benson, the first child of Michael and Melissa Benson, was baptised in our church. Maison was given the name Moisei, or Moses, in baptism, in honour of the Holy Prophet and God-seer Moses. His godparents were his paternal uncle and maternal aunt, Peter Benson and Nicole Tate. Maison was baptised on his first birthday, and so both his birthday and his new birth in Christ were celebrated on the same day. Congratulations to the newly-baptised servant of God, and to his parents and godparents!

On Wednesday 14 March we learned that Father Martin would be obliged, because of work commitments, to be in Europe for six weeks from 18 March. This means that he will not be with us for the remainder of Great Lent and for the Easter services. Readers are asked to remember Father Martin and his family in their prayers.

PARISH LIFE: SERVICES DURING THE REMAINDER OF GREAT LENT

In the fourth week of Great Lent (beginning on Monday 19 March) we will have the service of Great Compline on the evening of Wednesday 21 March and Vespers with 4th Passia at 6.00pm. The Gospel reading will be from Saint John, chapters 18-19.

In the fifth week of Great Lent, we will have the service of Matins at 6.00pm with the reading of the entire Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete on the evening of Wednesday 28 March. Also read at this service is the moving life of Saint Mary of Egypt, the model of repentance commemorated the following Sunday. For those particularly interested in hearing the life of Saint Marry of Egypt read, this occurs within the first hour of the service. On the weekend of Saturday 31 March and Sunday 1 April we will have Matins and Divine Liturgy.

At 5.00pm on the evening of Sunday 1 April we will have the special service of Anointing with Oil («Соборование»). The Holy Mystery of Anointing with Oil for the healing of sickness is referred to in the Bible by Saint James, the Brother of the Lord. He says, "If you are sick, ask the priests to come and pray for you. Ask them to put olive oil on you in the name of the Lord". Ideally, seven priests together perform this mystery, but it can be done by less, and even by one priest alone. In the service of Anointing with Oil there are seven epistle readings (readings from the "Letters" in the New Testament) and seven readings from the Holy Gospel. The priests pray that God will bless the oil (which is usually mixed with wine) and that it will be for the healing of the soul and body of the person to be anointed. There are also prayers for the forgiveness of sins. The sick person is then anointed on the forehead, nostrils, cheeks, lips, chest, and both sides of the hands. During Great Lent, it is the practice of the Russian Orthodox Church to have a service of general anointing in which everyone comes to be anointed for the healing of spiritual and physical sickness. The service will take between 2 and 3 hours.

In the sixth week of Great Lent (beginning on Monday 2 April) we will have the final service of Great Compline on the evening of Wednesday 4 April. On Friday 6 April and Saturday 7 April, we will have All-night vigil and Divine Liturgy for the Great Feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God, and for Lazarus Saturday. Pussy-willow and palm branches will be blessed after Divine Liturgy on Saturday. Services for the Great Feast of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem or "Palm Sunday" will be held in Wallsend.

During Holy Week, we will have services on all evenings but one. Beginning with Matins at 6pm on Sunday 8 April, we will then have services at 7.00pm on Monday 9 April and Tuesday 10 April. These services, known as "Bridegroom" Matins because of the singing of the troparion «Се Жених грядет в полунощи» ("Behold, the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night..."), are very solemn and extraordinarily beautiful. The theme of these services is that the end (not just of the Fast, but of all things) is at hand, and that we must repent while there is still time.

On Monday 9 April, a public holiday for Easter Monday, we will have a general clean-up beginning at 8.00am.

On the evening of Wednesday 11 April and the morning of Thursday 12 April there will be services at 7.00pm and 9.00am (Matins and Divine Liturgy respectively) to commemorate the Last Supper, the institution of the Mystery of Holy Communion. It is a pious custom to make every effort to receive Holy Communion on this day.

On Thursday evening at 6.00pm Matins with the reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels will be served. These twelve readings from the Holy Gospel begin with Christ's words at the Last Supper and end with His burial. During this service, the large image of the Crucifixion of Christ remains in the centre of the church, and the Gospel is read before it. Six of the readings will be in Church Slavonic and six in English. Booklets containing the twelve readings will be available in Slavonic, English, and Russian for the faithful to follow. In the Russian custom, the candles held during this service are taken home still alight, often in a small lantern.

On the morning of Friday 13 April, Great and Holy Friday, Vespers with the bringing out of the Shroud will be served at 3pm. A large icon depicting the body of Christ is carried forth from the sanctuary and placed on a "tomb" in the centre of church. The faithful then venerate Christ's tomb as the priest reads Small Compline with the Canon of the Crucifixion of our Lord and the Lamentation of the Mother of God.

On Saturday 14 April, we will have the Reading of the Acts of the Holy Apostles at 9.00pm and Midnight office at 11.30pm, followed by a procession, Paschal Matins, and Divine Liturgy. Easter eggs and kulichi will be blessed after Paschal Matins, and there will be a festive meal after Divine Liturgy. Paschal Vespers will be served at 11.00am on Sunday morning, after which Easter baskets will again be blessed.

DIOCESAN LIFE: GOODWILL YOUTH VISIT TO INDONESIA

With the blessing of Metropolitan Hilarion, a goodwill youth visit to the Indonesian Orthodox Church (Gereja Orthodox Indonesia) will take place from 30 June – 9 July, 2012. Young adults (18 - 30) are invited on this visit, which will include 2 nights in Jakarta, 2 nights in Solo and four nights in Bali. Attendees will meet the local Indonesian clergy, youth and parishioners and attend Sunday Divine Liturgy at St Thomas Church, Jakarta. Travel will then be by air to Solo, Central Java, to meet the clergy, youth and parishioners of Holy Trinity parish and see the result of Orthodox missionary work. Following this, travel will be by road to visit two nearby mission centres at Boyolali and to see a proposed orphanage and volcano refugee relief work. After this, travel will be by road to Jogjakarta to visit the World Heritage ancient Buddhist complex of Borobudur, then by air to Bali where, from a base in Ubud, visits will be made to Father Aleksander Kobesi (who attended Syezd 2011) and parishioners of St Nicholas parish in Singaraja. The trip includes two free days for relaxation and sightseeing; after Divine Liturgy on the last day there will be a panikhida at the Bali Bomb Memorial in Kuta. The group will be led by Hieromonk Joachim and Protodeacon Konstantin Semovskih. The cost will be approximately \$2,000.00, which includes air and road transport, accommodation and most food. A deposit of \$500.00 is payable by 30 March. It is possible that some financial assistance will be available to youth wishing to

participate but unable to meet the full cost. For further information please contact Father Joachim on 02-46263945, or Father Konstantin on 0432-419361.

DIOCESAN LIFE: LENTEN PASTORAL GATHERING

On Tuesday-Wednesday 13-14 March, the clergy of the Diocese gathered for their customary confession and Pastoral Conference. The Rule of Preparation for Holy Communion (the canons to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mother of God and the Guardian Angel, together with an akathist to Christ) and Matins were served at the Croydon church on Tuesday evening, with a number of the clergy forming the choir. On Wednesday morning, 22 priests and 3 deacons from across the Diocese concelebrated the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, with Metropolitan Hilarion – still recovering from knee replacement surgery – and three other priests and a deacon (these four had formed the choir) joining them to receive Holy Communion. After a Lenten meal prepared by the Cathedral Ladies' Auxiliary, the clergy discussed a number of Diocesan initiatives, amongst which were: the new Diocesan 'Policy and Procedure for addressing Inappropriate Behaviour'; identification cards for clergy; a forthcoming conference for parish wardens, treasurers and Ladies' Auxiliaries; and youth and missionary work. Some pastoral questions were also discussed.

PARISH LIFE: CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS

On Lazarus Saturday-Annunciation we will have a collection for our Orthodox monasteries in Jerusalem. Although it is generally taken up every year on Palm Sunday, we will have the collection at the service closest to this Great Feast. Readers may also be interested to know that a letter of thanks was received from Father Daniel of the Haiti Orthodox Family Relief Program in response to a our parish's sponsorship of a Haitian Orthodox family.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

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

Families with new babies: Maria, John & baby Alexander, with big brother Vladimir; Marije, Michael & baby Joshua, with big sister Zara.

Newly baptised: Moisei (Maison), with parents Michael and Melissa and his godparents Peter and Nicole

Travelling: Deacon Martin

Expectant mothers: Elena, Elise, Lydia, Katherine, Iryna, Cathy, 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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