

### **PARISH LIFE: OUR FEAST DAY ON AUGUST 9<sup>TH</sup>**

We will be celebrating our patronal feast-day of Saint Panteleimon here in Gosford on Friday 8 August and Saturday 9 August 2008. On Friday evening we will have All-Night Vigil with the blessing of loaves and wheat, wine and oil at 6.00pm. On Saturday morning we will have a blessing of water at 8.15am and Divine Liturgy at 9.00am. Following Divine Liturgy, we will have a festive lunch at the Narara Community Centre, the place at which we held services from 2001 until early 2004. Unfortunately, Metropolitan Hilarion will not be with us on our feast-day as he will be visiting the Victorian parishes of our Diocese with the relics of Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Nun Barbara.

### **PARISH LIFE: NEW VESTMENTS AND CHURCH ITEMS**

During the last week in July we received with joy a number of items that we ordered from Russia late last year. The items received were two new golden candle stands; a set of wedding crowns; a vessel to contain holy water, for use when the clergy are blessing people or things such as Easter cakes, fruit, cars, and so on; vessels for the washing of the hands of the clergy at Divine Liturgy; a large set of fifty-two icons, stored within a single frame, depicting the saints commemorated each day; and four sets (in red, white, blue and gold) of priest's vestments. These items were purchased by our parish Ladies' Auxiliary for the beautification of our church, and Olga Petroff and all of our hard-working parish ladies are to be congratulated for their efforts. All of the items were blessed by Father James with the customary prayers and holy water on Saturday August 2<sup>nd</sup>, and have been in use since.

### **PARISH LIFE DURING JULY 2008**

July 2008 was a quiet month in parish life, with only our regular services. Parish Council met on Tuesday July 8<sup>th</sup> and heard the usual pastoral, financial, and activity reports. Olga Petroff reported that the concert organised by Katya Lugovoy and held at the Russian Club during June had raised \$3651.00, a significant help to parish finances. Having considered the Treasurer's report, the Parish Council decided to reduce regular mortgage repayments to the minimum possible for the foreseeable future. This will help the parish better respond to its' various financial responsibilities. Just under \$36000 now remains to be paid on the mortgage, and Parish Council maintains the longstanding policy of directing surplus funds towards debt reduction. Parish Council next meets on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

**CHURCH LIFE: EPISTLE OF THE FIRST HIERARCH OF THE RUSSIAN  
ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE  
MEMORY OF HOLY PRINCE VLADIMIR THE GREAT, EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES,  
AND THE 1020TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVERSION OF RUSSIA**

Right reverend brother archpastors, most honorable pastors,  
brethren, sisters and children, beloved in the Lord!

With a sense of profound spiritual joy I greet all of you on the day of the commemoration of Holy Prince Vladimir the Great, Equal-to-the-Apostles, the godfather and enlightener of the peoples of the Russian land, and on the noteworthy 1,020<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conversion of Russia. Our hearts are now directed towards three commemorations: the first is Saint Vladimir's conversion to Christ and his own baptism; the second is the baptism of the inhabitants of Kiev; and the third is that which happened after that of the Kievans: the conversion of all Russia.

Having accepted the Christian faith with all his soul, Holy Prince Vladimir the Great was totally transformed spiritually: from a crude pagan he became a saint, an equal of the apostles. The peoples of our homeland are eternally in his debt for instilling in them the highest Christian traits of character: piety, patience, guilelessness, forgiveness of enemies, humility, loving-kindness, the doing of good, and especially, love for children - and all of this to a greater degree than one finds among other peoples. What an indescribable impression was made on the newly-baptised Russian people by Vladimir's generosity, which was shown to be benefaction on a state-wide level. This trait of Vladimir is also reflected in the character of our sinful but good fellow Russians, from almsgiving to pity for criminals condemned to death, inclusive. Invisibly, in spirit, our common godfather is with us now: Prince Vladimir is with us in his love, his kindness, his precepts and his prayerful intercession.

988 AD was a particular year of God's providence, an exceptional year in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church. According to tradition, its birth was foreseen prophetically by Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called. This was the will of our heavenly Father, since, as Christ said, "No one can come to Me except My Father bring him." And it is He Who has drawn the Russian people to share in the life of the Christian Church. The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit has been set upon the new Church. Like a bride it has been clothed in the radiant apparel of divine grace. From the sanctified waters of the Dniepr emerged a new people, born of water and the Holy Spirit. Over our common font and the mountains of Kiev, over the whole expanse of Russia, shone the light of new life bearing a concept of holiness hitherto unknown to our forebears. Therefore, together with the famous theologian and historian of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Macarius (Bulgakov) of Moscow, who rests in the Cathedral of the Dormition at the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra, on these festive days we

triumphantly exclaim: "This event is beyond doubt the most important of all that had ever happened on the face of the Russian land..."

1988 was also a special year for the Russian Orthodox Church. By that time the Russian Orthodox Church had justified its vocation. It had glorified many holy favourites of God and washed the whole Russian land in the blood of its new martyrs and confessors. This became the seed of a second Conversion of Russia, its gradual spiritual rebirth. Glory to God! The Lord spared His people, according to His true word (Joel, Ch. 2), and began to transform the bloody Russian Golgotha into the radiant joy of the Resurrection. As is well known, the Sacrament of Repentance is often called a "second baptism", and the word "repentance" itself is (in Russian) a precise translation of the Greek word for "turning around", "change". Those great changes that took place at that time in the life of our nation were signs of hope, signs of that a process of repentance and the restoration of our souls had begun. Repentance is a great spiritual struggle that is undertaken in the name of the restoration of life.

Therefore, along with our gratitude to God, sincere repentance must also be present in our prayers today. For therein lies genuine restoration, the attainment of righteousness, the re-establishment of what is good, beautiful and true, the acquisition of hope, humility and boldness. And if such be the will of God, we will celebrate and rejoice over the victory of our Church together with the glorious, invincible martyrs. All of us, whether we are good or bad Christians, rejoice on these days, for the persecutors were unable to destroy us, to slay all the servants of the Church, and to make of our homeland a nest of the darkest obscurantism and godlessness. Let us further place our hope in the invincible power of the Founder and Head of the Church and on His promise that it will never be overcome. Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered! Let Him rise again in our hearts, as once He arose in the heart of our godfather, the holy, right-believing Prince Vladimir the Great, equal of the apostles and enlightener of Rus'! Amen.

With love in the Lord, and asking your holy prayers,  
+Hilarion, Metropolitan of New York & Eastern America

15/28 July 2008

### **PARISH LIFE: SERVICES DURING AUGUST**

Apart from services on the weekend of Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>, and for our feast-day, we will also have services during August on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>; on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>, for the Great Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord (remember to bring a basket of fruit for blessing on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>); and on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup>, our occasional English-language Divine Liturgy.

## PARISH LIFE: SPRING SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

We now have only a month of winter to go, and so a new schedule of services will be prepared during August for Spring 2008. Spring will be a relatively quiet period for our parish, with only two services - those for Exaltation of the Cross on September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> - other than those regularly scheduled in this parish (that is, on the first, third and fifth Sundays of each month). The new schedules should be available in church from Sunday August 17<sup>th</sup> onwards, and on our parish website soon afterwards.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

Our deacon, Father Martin, and Matushka Tatiana and their family returned to Australia in late July after a trip to Europe. We welcome them back to parish life! ~ On 20 July 2008, a letter was received from Metropolitan Hilarion endorsing the decisions of our parish Annual General Meeting in March this year. His decision was delayed as the Parish Council had to make certain amendments to the 2007 Annual Report, and because of his absence abroad during May-June 2008. Metropolitan Hilarion wrote that he "invoke[s] God's blessing on Father James, the members of the Parish Council, Sisterhood, Choir and all the faithful of the parish". ~ The 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese will be held on the Gold Coast from December 26<sup>th</sup> to December 30<sup>th</sup> this year. ~ We learned with sadness late in July of the repose in the Lord of Elena Alexandrovna Yakupova, an active member of the Croydon parish and a great friend and supporter of our church here in Gosford. May the Lord grant her rest!

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

**The sick & suffering:** Priest Simeon; our parishioner Victor (Manjetny); and also for Vasili, Vera, Eugenia, Olga, Margaret, Galina, Tatiana, Nun Euphrosyne

**Expectant mothers:** Anastasia, Olga, Natalia

**Newly-departed:** Elena (Yakupova)

**Departed:** Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, and former parishioners and benefactors Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Krauhin), Theodore & Antonina (Tialshinsky), Lyubov (Smieska), Victor (Pulkownik), Olga (Timohina), Alexander (Dikan)



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Our parish newsletter is published monthly. If you wish to receive it by post or email, please talk to Father James (0428-639156) or Katya Marcotrigiano, the parish secretary (4369-1765).