
PARISH LIFE: JUNE-AUGUST 2013

It has been a long-time since our last newsletter, and a great deal has happened since then. On 19 June 2013 Father James presided at the funeral of Nikolai Pinczuk, a Berkeley Vale resident whose repose was reported in the last newsletter. The funeral was at the church of All Saints of Russia in Croydon, the church in which Nikolai's father-in-law, the ever-memorable Protopresbyter Victor Lototsky, was senior priest for many years. The burial afterwards was at Rookwood Cemetery. May God give him rest!

Our services on the weekends of 29-30 June and 6-7 July were uneventful. On 11-12 July, the feast of the Holy Preeminent Apostles Peter and Paul, Father James and a number of our parishioners attended the services at our Cathedral in Strathfield, at which His Grace Bishop George of Mayfield, a vicar bishop of the Eastern American Diocese, presided. A number of priests and deacons from the smaller New South Wales parishes concelebrated at All-night Vigil and Divine Liturgy, and many people gathered from across Sydney.

On the morning of the feast itself, Friday 12 July, with Metropolitan Hilarion's blessing Bishop George tonsured Paul Douriaguine a reader for our parish during the Sixth Hour. A little later in the service, at the time of the small entrance, Father James was awarded the right to wear the gold pectoral cross for his service to the church.

On the weekend of 20-21 July we had services in honour of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God. The copy of the icon placed in the centre of the church for veneration, brought to church by Bill Reid, was the work of our parishioner, well-known iconographer Michael Galovic.

Following Divine Liturgy on this day, Father James presented the newly-tonsured reader Paul with an *Apostol* – the book containing the New Testament readings – and bookmark on behalf of the parish, congratulating him on his tonsure and wishing him God's continued help in his service to the church.

On the weekend of 27-28 July Father James served in Wallsend. On Sunday 28 July 2013, the day of commemoration of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles and Enlightener of the Russian Peoples, Grand Duke Vladimir, the Wallsend parish joined the wider Russian Orthodox Church in celebrating the passing of 1025 years since the conversion of Saint Vladimir and the Baptism of Rus'. A number of Gosford parishioners travelled to Wallsend for this day. The Lesser Blessing of Waters was served early that morning. At the end of the Divine Liturgy Father James read aloud the Message of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church to Archpastors, Priests, Monastics and Laity on the Occasion of the 1025th Anniversary of the Baptism of Rus', the text of which is printed in both Russian and English elsewhere in the newsletter. Following the dismissal, there was a moleben to Saint Vladimir together with a cross procession around the church. In

the litany at the conclusion of the moleben, prayers of thanksgiving for God's mercy on the Russian land and people were offered, together with petitions for Saint Vladimir's help and the deliverance of the church from schism and division.

On Sunday 4 August, following Divine Liturgy, Father James baptised Sophia Sidorkina, the infant daughter of Anton and Aksana Sidorkin, and a younger brother to two year-old Misha. Sophia's godparents were Vitali Lisau and Inna Klyuchnikova. Our warmest congratulations to Anton and Aksana, and to Vitali and Inna. May God grant his newly-baptised handmaiden Sophia many years!

Friday 9 August was the day of commemoration of the heavenly protector of our parish, the Holy Great-Martyr and Healer Panteleimon. As in previous years, the services to observe this day were transferred to the closest Friday evening and Saturday morning – in 2013, the evening of the feast, Friday 9 August, and Saturday 10 August.

On Friday evening, All-night Vigil with the blessing of five loaves and wheat, wine and oil was served. A large number of our parishioners and friends were there, and many took the opportunity to confess.

On Saturday morning Father James served the Lesser Blessing of Water before the church doors. The Dean of the New South Wales parishes, Archpriest Nikita Chemodakov, joined us for Divine Liturgy, together with Priest Dionysios Halim, a priest from the Indonesian Deanery now serving in Kentlyn, and Protodeacon German Polorotov from the Fairfield parish. The church was full of people from almost every parish in Sydney and from Newcastle. After the dismissal, those present were each given a copy of the Akathist to Saint Panteleimon as a blessing from the parish.

Our festive lunch was held at the Narara Community Centre, the place in which we held services from 2001-2004. Approximately 200 people were seated for lunch. The afternoon was a warm and joyful one, and the auctions and raffle a great success. Congratulations and thanks are due to Kate Marcotrigiano and her helpers for all their hard work.

On the afternoon of Sunday 11 August 2013 Victor Pinczuk and Christina Brunskill were married in our church. Our parish choir sang very nicely under Olga Ivanovna's direction. Victor and Christina's wedding was an occasion of great joy, and we wish them both much happiness and many years together.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Council has met twice since the newsletter was last published. At the first meeting, held on 9 July 2013, the usual agenda was for the most part set aside to allow the Parish Council to consider the draft of the 2013 Annual Report. The draft, prepared in detail prior to the meeting, was comprehensively reviewed and changes were agreed upon. The Parish Council also discussed future direction of the parish and agreed upon a general form of words to be incorporated into the draft Annual Report. Finalisation of the report now depends upon receipt of the external auditor's report, expected late in August. At the second meeting, held on 6 August 2013, the parish expenditure and awards policies were revised, the financial reports were considered, guidelines for those volunteering at the candle-desk were finalised, arrangements for the Annual General Meeting were agreed upon, and feast-day plans were reviewed. The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 10 September 2013. This will be the final meeting of the current Parish Council, with a new one to be elected at the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 15 September 2013.

SPIRITUAL LIFE: EPISTLE OF PATRIARCH KYRILL ON THE OCCASION OF THE 1025TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAPTISM OF RUS

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

This year we commemorate a significant event – the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus. In the distant tenth century Rus, through the labours of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir, adopted the Christian faith and culture, making a choice of religion and civilization which defined the vector of the historical development of our peoples.

As Metropolitan Hilarion of Kiev said, 'faith, replete with grace, has spread throughout the world and has come to our Russian people... Our beneficent God has had mercy upon all lands and has not despised us; he desired it, and we were saved, and he has brought us to the reason of Truth.'

The past 1025 years have seen both glorious and tragic events. Faith in Christ was inculcated in our forefathers and brought forth abundant fruit, yet it happened in the most difficult of circumstances. Many have tried to deflect the peoples of Rus away from Orthodoxy. This was the goal of those who wanted to enslave us, coming from the West and the East. This was the wish of those wanting to build the 'ideal' society without God, going against his eternal law. Yet the nation that adopted the Christian faith has repeatedly shown its fidelity to Christ. It was able to return to him even after the apostasies imposed by those who cruelly persecuted it. Despite the 'weak endeavours' of the latter, the hearts and souls of many of our compatriots have been sanctified by Christ's truth. It is our duty and spiritual imperative to preserve this truth and build our private and public lives upon its foundations.

We must learn the lessons of the past. And the main lesson is this: the edifice of our civilization cannot exist without the Gospel foundation upon which it was raised up. Today many again are proposing that we build up our lives without God. Freedom is often understood as the pursuit of all kinds of desires, including those imposed upon the human person from without. This understanding of freedom may be broadened to the extent that it will begin to threaten our natural moral instinct, our duty to our neighbours and ultimately the very possibility of speaking the truth and acting according to conscience.

Nations that have lost the morality of self-limitation and ministry to God, the Fatherland and neighbour lose their spiritual strength and become weak and vulnerable, thus bringing the threat of extinction and the sad prospect of conceding their place to others spiritually stronger. We have to understand this clearly and not pursue the path leading to destruction, recalling the words of the prophet: 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls' (Jeremiah 6:16).

The modern world encounters many afflictions: crime, terrorism, the increasing number of suicides and abortions, the collapse of the family, alcoholism and drug addiction, the destruction of the environment and social injustice, the loneliness and suffering of the souls of many people. These calamities can be overcome by embarking on the path of the revival of faith in God who is ready to grant forgiveness of sins and his gracious aid for a new life to both individuals and whole nations. The Baptism of Rus is the life-creating fount which sustains us to the present day and which gives strength to build up the lives of the lands that are the inheritors of historical Rus on the basis of the eternal values which they have received from God and which unite and bind us spiritually. These values and the world view which they have influenced are reflected externally in the culture of our peoples, including art,

architecture, literature, education, our family way of life and the way we order our economy, our relationship with nature and many other things, forming a commonality of a single spiritual expanse of the inheritors of Holy Rus.

It was a quarter of a century ago that the rebirth of the Russian Church began. During these years tens of thousands of churches and hundreds of monasteries have been restored and built, the Church's mission has been put on a sure footing in many spheres. A powerful spiritual and moral factor in the life of our peoples – the Orthodox faith has become the heritage of millions of people. With humility it is to be noted that world history has not known such a great and swift religious revival as that which has occurred throughout the territory of Historical Rus over the past twenty-five years. We render our sincere thanks to God, who is the Lord of history, for the mercy which he has shown to our peoples. From our hearts we thank all those who have through their labours responded to this compelling divine grace and made all of this possible.

However, there is still much to be accomplished, for the Lord awaits from us new fruits. And the main fruit must be the uniting of faith and life, the affirmation of Gospel truth in the words and deeds of our compatriots.

We recall that throughout history the destinies of the peoples who were spiritually born in the baptismal font of Kiev have played out in various ways. In the past they lived in a single country extending from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, from Galicia to the Volga River. At other periods some of these peoples found themselves under foreign dominion and formed part of other countries. Yet our spiritual unity, preserved by the gracious power of God and the common moral ideal preached and guarded by the Russian Orthodox Church, has existed and still exists immutably.

The peoples in whom the holy Orthodox faith has taken root are called upon, as St. Sergius of Radonezh teaches, 'to overcome the divisions of this world in contemplation of the Holy Trinity,' being an example of brotherhood and mutual aid for mankind. Holy Rus will live as long as it remains faithful to the choice made by St. Vladimir, as long as it preserves its spiritual unity, as long as it remembers and prayerfully venerates our common saints. And if we preserve this single heritage and spiritual affinity, then we have a future.

May God, through the prayers of the saints who have shone forth in the Land of Rus, grant that we may be confirmed in the truth upon which the life of our peoples has been built and, we believe, will be built.

Послание Святейшего Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Кирилла и Священного Синода Русской Православной Церкви архипастырям, клиру, монашествующим и мирянам в связи с 1025-летием Крещения Руси

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

В этом году мы вспоминаем знаменательное событие — 1025-летие Крещения Руси. В далеком десятом веке Русь трудами святого равноапостольного князя Владимира восприняла от Византии христианскую веру и культуру, сделав духовный и цивилизационный выбор, определивший вектор исторического развития наших народов.

По словам митрополита Киевского Илариона, *«вера благодатная по всей земле распространилась и до нашего народа русского дошла... Все страны Благой Бог наш*

помиловал и нас не презрел, восхотел — и спас нас, и в разумение Истины привел».

За прошедшие 1025 лет имели место как славные, так и трагические события. Вера Христова усваивалась нашими предками и приносила обильные плоды, но происходило это в очень непростых условиях. Многие пытались отвратить народы Руси от Православия. К этому стремились поработители, приходившие с Запада или Востока, этого хотели люди, желавшие построить на земле «идеальное» общество без Бога, вопреки Его вечному закону. Но народ, принявший христианскую веру, не один раз доказывал верность Спасителю. Смог он вернуться к Нему и после отступления, навязанного жестокими гонителями. Вопреки их «неможным дерзостям» сердца и души многих наших соотечественников освящены истиной Христовой. Хранить эту истину и созидать на ее основании личную и общественную жизнь — наш долг и духовная необходимость.

Мы должны усвоить уроки прошлого. И главный из них таков: здание нашей цивилизации не может существовать без евангельского фундамента, на котором оно было возведено. Сегодня многие вновь предлагают нам строить жизнь без Бога. Свободу подчас трактуют как следование любым желаниям, в том числе внушенным человеку извне. Такое понимание свободы может расширяться до пределов, когда она начнет угрожать и естественному нравственному чувству, и долгу перед ближними, и, в конечном итоге, самой возможности говорить правду и поступать по совести.

Нации, утратившие этику самоограничения и служения Богу, Отечеству и ближнему, теряют духовную силу, становятся слабыми и уязвимыми, что влечет за собой угрозу исчезновения и печальную перспективу уступить свое место другим, духовно более сильным. Нам нужно ясно понимать это и не идти путем, ведущим к гибели, памятуя слова пророка: *«Так говорит Господь: остановитесь на путях ваших и рассмотрите, и расспросите о путях древних, где путь добрый, и идите по нему, и найдете покой душам вашим»* (Иер. 6:16).

Современный мир сталкивается со многими бедами: преступностью, терроризмом, ростом количества самоубийств, абортами и распадом семей, алкоголизмом и наркоманией, разрушением окружающей среды и социальной несправедливостью, одиночеством и душевными страданиями многих людей. Преодолеть эти невзгоды возможно на пути возрождения веры в Бога, Который готов даровать прощение грехов и благодатную помощь для новой жизни и отдельным людям, и целым народам. Крещение Руси — это животворный источник, питающий нас донныне и дающий силы созидать жизнь стран-наследников исторической Руси, на основе вечных ценностей, полученных нами от Бога и соединяющих нас духовными скрепами. Эти ценности и обусловленное ими миропонимание внешне отразились в культуре наших народов, включая изобразительное искусство, архитектуру, литературу, образование, семейный и хозяйственный уклад, отношение к природе и многое другое, что формирует общность единого духовного пространства наследников Святой Руси.

Четверть века прошло со времени начала возрождения Русской Церкви. За эти годы восстановлены и построены десятки тысяч храмов и сотни монастырей, возобновлена и поставлена на прочную основу церковная деятельность во многих областях. Являясь мощным духовным и нравственным фактором бытия наших народов, православная вера стала достоянием миллионов людей. Со смирением следует признать, что мировая история не знает столь грандиозного и стремительного религиозного возрождения, какое произошло на пространстве Исторической Руси за последние 25

лет. Мы возносим наше искреннее благодарение Богу, Который есть Господь истории, за милость, явленную нашим народам; мы сердечно благодарим всех, кто своими трудами ответил на призывающую благодать Божию и сделал все это возможным.

Однако многое еще предстоит совершить, ибо Господь ждет от нас новых плодов. И главным из них должно стать единство веры и жизни, утверждение Евангельской истины в словах и делах наших соотечественников.

Мы помним, что на протяжении истории судьбы народов, духовно рожденных в Киевской купели, складывались по-разному. В прошлом они жили в едином государстве, простиравшемся от Балтийского моря до Черного, от Галиции до Волги. В иные периоды некоторые из этих народов находились под иноземным владычеством, входили в состав других государств. Долгое время мы вместе жили в одной большой стране, а сейчас — в нескольких суверенных государствах. Но неизменно существовало и ныне существует наше духовное единство, сохраняемое благодатной силой Божией и общностью нравственного идеала, проповедуемого и оберегаемого Русской Православной Церковью.

Народы, в которых укоренилась святая православная вера, призваны, по наставлению преподобного Сергия Радонежского, *«воззрением на Святую Троицу преодолевать ненавистную рознь мира сего»*, служа примером братства и взаимопомощи для всего человечества. Святая Русь жива до тех пор, пока она верна выбору, сделанному равноапостольным князем Владимиром, пока сохраняет свое духовное единство, пока помнит и молитвенно чтит наших общих святых. И если мы сбережем это единое наследие и духовное родство — у нас есть будущее.

Бог молитвами святых, в земле Русской просиявших, да даст нам утвердиться в истине, на которой всегда созидалась и, верим, будет созидаться жизнь наших народов.

PARISH LIFE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Every year, parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia are obliged by the Normal Parish By-Laws to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of parish members. The 2013 AGM of the parish will be held on **Sunday 15 September 2013** at **12:00pm** in the parish hall. Parish members are asked to keep this day free for attendance at the AGM.

An AGM is lawfully convened if the meeting is announced in church on three successive Sundays and if parish members receive notice of the meeting and the agenda at least 3 weeks before the meeting. Announcements will be made in church on the following Sundays: **18 August, 1 September, and 15 September 2013**. Notice in writing of the meeting will be displayed in the church hall from 18 August 2013, and distributed to members in the week that follows.

For decisions at an AGM to be valid, two-thirds of financial members must be present. If less than two-thirds of members are present, the meeting must be postponed for an hour, and may then start with whoever is present. So as not to delay proceedings and inconvenience others, it is therefore important that all financial members either attend the meeting or give their apologies in advance.

As in previous years, the Parish Council will compile financial and other reports into a parish 'Annual Report'. The Annual Report will be distributed to financial parish members by post at least one week before the AGM, and tabled at the meeting.

Although all regular worshippers in our parish are welcome to attend the AGM, only those who are formally members of the parish may vote. **Any existing members who have not yet renewed their membership should now do so.** Membership forms are available in church. New members are welcome to join, but those who do so may not be able to vote or stand for office at the AGM, the Parish By-Laws requiring at least six months' membership before such participation in parish life is possible.

Any parish member who has been a member for six months or more can be nominated, or nominate another member, to serve on the Parish Council. The role of the Parish Council encompasses financial management and planning, asset management, governance, and the adornment of the church. Parish Council members should have the time, skills and energy to devote to their duties, and the Parish Council as a whole should have a diversity of experience and perspective. All seven regular positions on the Parish Council will be open for election at the AGM.

A form that is to be used when nominating parish members to a position on the Council is available in church. There is no limit to the number of nominations that each member may submit. It is asked, however, that each nomination be seconded by another member and endorsed by the nominee.

Completed nomination forms should be given to the Rector no later than **Sunday 1 September 2013**. This will allow the Parish Council adequate time, if required, to prepare ballot papers.

Although permissible, nominations at the meeting are discouraged. This is because nominees for Parish Council need adequate time to carefully consider their candidacy.

As of January 2011 it has been Diocesan policy that all parish officials undergo the National Criminal History Check (NCHC) before the Diocesan Bishop confirms their appointment. The NCHC helps ensure that all persons holding positions of responsibility in church life are suitable to do so. Any person unwilling to undergo the NCHC should not accept nomination to the Parish Council.

Anyone with any questions about parish membership or participation in the AGM should speak with Father James.

PARISH LIFE: UPCOMING SERVICES & SPRING SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

The great feast of Transfiguration will be celebrated at Wallsend on Monday 19 August, where the customary blessing of fruit will take place. As in Gosford last year, honey will also be blessed on this day.

This year, the great feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God will be celebrated in Gosford for the first time since 2007. All-night vigil will be served on Tuesday 27 August at 6.00pm, and Divine Liturgy at 9.00am on Wednesday 28 August.

On the feast of the Dormition Father James usually serves in Wallsend as it is the anniversary of the first known Russian Orthodox service in the Hunter Valley in 1949, now 64 years ago. In 2014 the Wallsend parish will celebrate 65 years of Russian Orthodoxy in the Hunter Valley and 50 years since the consecration of the current church of Saint Nicholas.

A new schedule of services for the Spring months – September, October and November – will be available in church on 18 August 2013 and online soon afterwards. September will be a busy month for us with services on three weekends in addition to the Great Feast of the Nativity (or Birth) of the Mother of God. October and November will be much quieter, with

just the regular services on two weekends. On the first Saturday in November, Saint Demetrius Saturday («Дмитриевская Суббота»), we will have a general service for the departed at 5.00pm, immediately before the evening service at 6.00pm.

A major feast in October is that of the Protection of the Mother of God ("Покров"), celebrated on 14 October, which falls this year on a Monday. This feast is observed with great joy throughout the Russian Orthodox Church. This year, God willing, Father James will be serving on this feast-day at the Holy Protection church in Cabramatta, the parish to which he was first assigned upon ordination to the priesthood in 2001. Parishioners and friends are also encouraged to visit the church in Cabramatta on this day. In 2013 the Cabramatta parish will be celebrating not only its patronal feast-day, but also 60 years of parish life. All-night Vigil will begin at 6.00pm on Sunday 13 October, and Divine Liturgy will be served at 9.00am on Monday 14 October.

PARISH LIFE: WEBSITE NEWS

Work continues behind the scenes on a complete redesign of our parish website, www.gosfordrussianchurch.org.au. Readers will know from previous editions of the newsletter that Orthodox Web Solutions (OWS), a US-based company, has been engaged to undertake this work. At this time, Father James is working with OWS on a new website for the Wallsend parish. The new Wallsend site is expected to be online by the end of August, and it is hoped that the new Gosford site will be online by the end of September. OWS offers an easy-to-use content management system that will help our parish keep the website up-to-date and interact with our Facebook page and our online mailing list. This will be a big step forward in our communication with parishioners and friends, and also with those new to our parish.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick: Nun Euphrosyne; Leonid; and our parishioners Ludmila, Vladimir, Michael, Natalia, Tatiana, and Tatiana.

Expectant mothers: Natalia, Inez.

Newly-baptised: Infant Sophia.

Newly-married: Victor and Christina.

Studying and working abroad: Michael; Deacon Martin, Tatiana, Xenia, Alexander and Sebastian.

Departed: Patriarch Alexis, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, 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), Nikolai (Pinczuk).



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