

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church, Gosford

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

PARISH NEWSLETTER

~ Number 75, May 2008 ~

## ХРИСТОСЪ 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: ARCHBISHOP HILARION IS ELECTED FIRST HIERARCH OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA**

On May 12, 2008, at the Synodal Cathedral of Our Lady of the Sign in New York, His Eminence Archbishop Hilarion of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand was elected Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and elevated to the rank of Metropolitan. This is the second time that the First Hierarch of our Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has come from Australia; the first was when Vladyka Philaret, Bishop of Brisbane, was elected First Hierarch nearly 40 years ago.

In accordance with the Act of Canonical Communion signed on May 17, 2007, the Council of Bishops sent an 'Act of Election' to His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia. Sent together with this 'Act' was a request from the newly-elected First Hierarch for the Patriarch's blessing to assume the duties placed upon him by his brother archpastors, and for confirmation by the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate of his election. The decision of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad on the election of Vladyka Hilarion as her First Hierarch, Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York, was confirmed by His Holiness the Patriarch and the Holy Synod on May 14, 2007.

Vladyka Hilarion's Enthronement as Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York, Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, will be held on Sunday, May 18, 2008. After a moleben at the end of the Divine Liturgy on that day, the senior hierarch present will bestow a staff upon Vladyka Hilarion - a gift from the Diocese of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand, which was blessed upon the relics of Saint Tikhon, Patriarch and Confessor of All Russia.

For the time being, Metropolitan Hilarion will remain the ruling bishop of our Diocese.

May the Lord grant the newly-elevated Metropolitan Hilarion many years!

## CHURCH LIFE: PASCHAL MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS, PATRIARCH ALEXY II OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA TO THE ARCHPASTORS, PASTORS, MONASTICS AND ALL FAITHFUL CHILDREN OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

"Come, O people, let us hymn the Saviour's resurrection on the third day, through which we have been released from the indestructible bonds of hades and all received incorruption and life, crying aloud: O thou who wast crucified, buried and rose again, save us through thy resurrection, O thou alone who lovest mankind!"  
(Verse for "Lord, I have cried..." for Vespers of Tuesday of Bright Week)

Beloved in the risen Christ, Your Graces the archpastors, God-loving presbyters, deacons, honourable monks and nuns, pious Orthodox laymen and women - faithful children of the Church!

From the depths of my heart I congratulate all of you, my dear ones, on Christ's bright resurrection - the most joyful feast for Orthodox Christians. Again our churches are replete with Paschal rejoicing. Again and again we relive the great mystery of the Redemption that has liberated those who follow Christ from the dominion of sin and death. As Saint Peter the Apostle says, our Lord and Saviour himself 'bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness' (1 Peter 2:24).

How great is God's love for us! He has not abandoned those who have abandoned him. By his suffering and death he has purified those who have deviated from him in choosing life according to their own desires. He has opened up the way of repentance and spiritual rebirth to those worn down by sin - the way to Life eternal. Let us give thanks to the Lord for his mercy and love for humanity. Let us give thanks as loving children who can take refuge from calamity and danger in the Father's House.

From ancient times until now, Christians have understood Pascha to be a transition, a Passover. "The Passover, the Passover of the Lord! From death unto life, and from earth unto heaven, hath Christ our God brought us, singing a song of victory!" the Holy Church sings today. According to our faith and our boldness, according to our love towards Christ and each other we are granted a transition from death to eternal being, from slavery to sin to the freedom of fulfillment of God's will.

Whole nations spiritually sustained by our Holy Church accomplish this saving transition too. From the darkness of unbelief they are approaching the light of Christ in being spiritually reborn and renewed. There are in our homeland and beyond its borders in the great Russian diaspora more and more people who have in Christ "life... in abundance" (John 10:10), which means genuinely happy people enjoying the truth of the fullness of life.

Yes, we still have to labour much in Christ's vineyard. Yet your spreading of the Word and good deeds, my beloved ones, have brought forth fruit a hundredfold and many of

you have worthily heard the Lord's words, "Well done, good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21).

The focal point of our faith, of our witness to the world, of our whole life is the good news of Christ's resurrection. Paschal joy was the sole spiritual condition of our saints. Saint Seraphim of Sarov greeted all those who approached him with the words: "My joy, Christ is risen!" Saint John of Kronstadt, the hundred and eightieth anniversary of whose birth and hundredth anniversary of whose blessed repose we celebrate this current year, was known by the people as the "Paschal Father." "I love to gaze", he wrote in his diary, " upon the image of the risen Giver of Life holding the cross banner, this symbol of victory over death and the one who has the power of death - the devil. O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy victory? How glorious is the Victor!"

Let us then tread yet more firmly the way of Christ, fulfilling the apostle's commandment, "Therefore, brethren, be the more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10-11). And no matter how difficult we find it along this path, let us not fall into despondency, "knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise up us also with Jesus and bring with you into his presence" (2 Corinthians 4:14). This radiant hope will illumine the lives of our families, communities and peoples with a spiritual light, and both peace and happiness will reign in our homes, cities and towns.

Today, as my heart is full with this great joy, I congratulate all of you, my dear ones, on the feast of Holy Pascha, addressing you with the eternal words of the greeting from apostolic times, passed on from generation to generation:

CHRIST IS RISEN!  
HE IS RISEN INDEED!

I hasten to share the Paschal rejoicing with all Orthodox peoples of the world, with each person who calls upon the name of Christ in prayer. May our joy touch those who are but seeking saving faith and striving to live with Orthodox Christians in peace and good neighbourliness.

May the risen Christ our Saviour grant to all of us peace, spiritual joy, health, salvation and furtherance in all good things.

**+ALEXY**  
**Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia**  
Pascha 2008  
Moscow

**THE PASCHAL EPISTLE OF ARCHBISHOP HILARION OF SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
AND NEW ZEALAND, DEPUTY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA**

Most Reverend brother-archpastors, all-honorable fathers, beloved-in-the-Lord  
brothers, sisters and children,

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

With the overwhelming feeling of Paschal jubilation I greet all of you with the great and salvific feast of the Lord's Pascha, which instils in us the firm conviction of our immortality and hope of future blessed resurrection!

In exchanging the Paschal kiss with you today, I prayerfully desire that the joy of the Risen Christ strengthen all of us, since we have been orphaned following the untimely repose of His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, who in the morning of the Triumph of Orthodoxy pronounced in spirit together with the Apostle Paul: "My desire is to part and be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23). As written in the Holy Scriptures, death for a person is repose. Though we weep over the parting, our sorrow is now filled with faith, hope and the Paschal reality; we know that death is a temporary slumber, a slumber for the body which will arise on the last day of history, and a time of rejoicing for the liberated righteous soul.

Since we have the firm conviction that after this brief life comes another, eternal life, where God will bless us with heavenly joy and will comfort those who have patiently borne temporal sorrows and sufferings, no manner of death or misfortune which comes our way can be too burdensome. Death itself is not fearful to a person who has complete hope in blessed resurrection: death for him is the path to the longed-for union with Christ. Amidst the fiery temptations which assail an Orthodox Christian, the Christian rejoices in suffering with Christ, being steadfastly assured that in the appearance of Christ in His glory, he will rejoice and be triumphant. Remembrance of the future life and hope of blessed resurrection serve as strong incentives and sure means towards moral perfection and spiritual achievement. If we remember well that our homeland is in heaven, while here we are only temporary guests, we will cease living only for our bodily pleasure. We will cease observing the commandments only outwardly, being honest, truthful, or benevolent solely out of temporal calculations, but will fulfill our duty of serving God and neighbour unselfishly and without seeking recompense.

One of the ancient teachers of monasticism, Abba Evagrius, offers us the following admonition: "The Passover [Pascha] of the Lord is the passing from evil to good. Let us also bring Him some God-pleasing gift." This gift can take the form of active love, active works of charity and self-sacrifice, when we dedicate our life to Christ, His Church and our neighbour, and gaining inspiration, maintaining constant zeal for the struggle to do

good. In perfecting ourselves in virtue, we will be able to preserve in our hearts faithfulness to God, the Church and those around us, as well as dedication to the blessed memory of His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, who gave us an example of love, humility and goodness.

Therefore, beloved-in-the-Lord fellow archpastors, reverend fathers, brothers, sisters and children, let us establish ourselves firmly on the radiant path of virtue, remembering the words of the Apostle Peter: "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:3-4). Let us turn our minds and hearts to the heavenly Jerusalem, our heavenly homeland—and the thought of our high calling will enlighten the dark paths of our life, grant us consolation and peace amid the sorrows of this world and bring us joy and delight.

Once again I congratulate all of you with this "Feast of feasts," and sincerely desire that the flock of the Russian Church Abroad, as well as our brothers and sisters in Russia and in all the world, enjoy these most wondrous days in good health and well-being, guarded by the victorious power of the Life, Righteousness, Holiness, Goodness and Divine Beauty radiating from the Life-giving Tomb of the Lord, the Enlightener of our souls!

With Paschal joy in the Risen Christ and the request for your holy prayers,

**+HILARION**

Archbishop of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand  
Christ's Pascha 2008

### **PARISH LIFE DURING APRIL AND MAY**

We had 17 different services during April this year, the majority of them the beautiful Lenten services. Those present have noticed many more people attending the weekly services during Great Lent this year, something pleasing to see. A church clean-up was held on Saturday April 19, with the church prepared beautifully for the Palm Sunday services that evening and on the following day. A large number of people, upwards of 50, were present for both the evening and the morning services on this Great Feast. On the first day of Holy Week we had Vladyka Hilarion visit us to preside at the Service of Anointing with Oil. Father Alexander Filchakov from the Theophany parish in Mayfield (Newcastle) was present, together with Father John (MacPherson), Deacon Christopher Henderson, and our own deacon, Father Martin. After services on Holy Friday and Saturday, we again had an early Paschal service this year, with a good number of people in attendance. In 2009 and 2010, God willing, we will have a midnight Paschal service here in Gosford for the first time since our first in 2004! Late in April our new awning

covering the area outside the church hall was finished, thereby increasing the sheltered space available to us. We had a baptism early in May - the details of which are below - and have another planned for later in the month, that of baby Chloe, the new daughter of Craig and Tammy Coppman. Apart from that, May has been quiet so far, as is usual so soon after Pascha.

### **PARISH LIFE: A BAPTISM**

On Saturday 3 February 2008 Father James baptised Christian Robert, the infant son of Robert and Vera Anderson of Copacabana. Baby Christian was given the name Julian at baptism, in honour of the Martyr Julian of Tarsus. His godparents are Alexander Zubryn and Jocelyn Forage. Christian-Julian was brought to church to receive Holy Communion for the first time the following day. We pray that God will bless His newly-baptised servant, together with his parents and godparents, and we welcome the Anderson family to our parish.

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

The Parish Council elected at our late 2007 Annual General Meeting (AGM) in March met for the first time on Tuesday 8 April 2008, and again on Tuesday 13 May. At the April meeting Father James welcomed the one newly-elected member of the Parish Council - Reader George Karmadonoff - as well as all the other members who were returned at the AGM. At the meeting all were re-elected to their previous offices: Kate Marcotrigiano as Secretary, Sophia Kfoury as Treasurer, Rick Golovin as Building and Maintenance Coordinator and Paul Pereboeff as Charities and Fundraising Coordinator. At both the April and May meetings the focus of discussion was on improvements in parish administration, particularly financial management and record-keeping. Father James reported on developments in church life locally and internationally, and Sophia Kfoury advised that there is now only \$37482.66 remaining to be paid on our mortgage. The Parish Council is due to meet next on Tuesday June 10, 2008.

### **PARISH LIFE: WINTER 2008 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

A Winter 2008 Schedule of Services covering the months June, July and August will be available in church and on the parish website in mid-May.

A beautiful and edifying service early in June will be that of Paschal Matins on the evening of Tuesday June 4. As Wednesday June 5 is the last day of the Paschal season (the "Apodosis", or the "Leavetaking" of Pascha - «отдание», in Russian), we will serve Matins exactly as on the day of Pascha itself: sung in full, and with the sanctuary doors fully open. Attendance at this service is always a nice way to complete the 40 days of the Paschal season.

On Saturday June 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday June 15<sup>th</sup> we will have services for the Great Feast of Pentecost, with a parish BBQ after the service on the Sunday. We will take the opportunity on this day to bless the new awning covering the area beside our church hall. All parishioners and friends are encouraged to attend!

July will be a quite month with only the regular Saturday night and Sunday morning services.

August will be a little busier, with services for our parish feast-day of Saint Panteleimon on Friday August 8<sup>th</sup> and Saturday August 9<sup>th</sup>. God willing, we will have Vladyka Hilarion with us on the day, in his first visit to us as Metropolitan. We hope to have lunch afterwards at our old home, the Narara Community Centre. Later in August we will have a service for the Great Feast of the Transfiguration, and our first English service in almost a year.

### **PARISH LIFE: CHARITABLE WORK**

An important development in parish life during the last twelve months or so has been the undertaking of charitable collections during the three longer Lenten periods in the church year: Great Lent (before Pascha), the Apostles' Fast (before the feast of Saints Peter and Paul on July 12), and the Nativity Fast (before Christmas). This has helped us as individuals to link our prayer and fasting during these times to almsgiving, the provision for material needs of those less fortunate than ourselves.

The idea with the money-boxes provided by Parish Council has been that individuals or families can take the tins home and, in the course of the fast, set aside whatever their circumstances allow. Some people find that putting their loose change in over a few weeks is a good approach; others budget to set aside a certain amount. The important thing is that individuals make a sacrifice for the sake of others.

It is certainly not the right approach for individuals to take the tins to work or to other parishes and collect funds there. Apart from shifting the focus from one's own almsgiving to that of others, it also raises all sorts of questions about accountability for funds, receipts, tax exemption, and so on.

So far we have passed on monies collected to Gosford Hospital and the Vladimir Children's Fund (in Russia). The monies collected during Great Lent this year have yet to be collected in full and counted, but will be passed to the Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia. The Parish Council will continue to identify worthy causes - Orthodox and non-Orthodox, local and international - that the monies raised can be passed to.

It is important to understand that no-one is obliged to participate in these collections. Some of us have many, and much more direct, opportunities to give alms: people that we

pass on the street might often ask us for assistance, and we can give there and then. But for those who do not, the collection tins provide a co-ordinated way of giving alms that is connected to periods of increased prayer and spiritual discipline in the life of our church.

Of note is the fact that other parishes have become aware of this practice of ours, and have expressed interest in doing something similar.

Paul Pereboeff is the Parish Council's Charities and Fundraising Coordinator. Parishioners and friends of our parish are welcome to discuss charitable projects with either Paul or Father James.

### CHURCH LIFE: SAINT NICHOLAS' DAY IN FAIRFIELD AND WALLSEND

Thursday May 22 is the feast of the Translation of the Relics of Saint Nicholas, and the patronal feast day for our parishes at Fairfield (Sydney) and Wallsend (Newcastle). This year, on the day of the feast itself, Father James will serve at Fairfield, the parish in which he served as a deacon from 1998 until 2001. On the Sunday after, May 22, Father James will serve in Wallsend, the parish in which he currently serves on alternate Sundays. Those who are able to do so are encouraged to travel to Wallsend for the festivities on this day. Although Vladyka Hilarion had previously agreed to come, the great changes in church life that have occurred mean that this will not now be possible.

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

Newly-elevated Metropolitan Hilarion and the Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia; Ioanna; Anatoly and family; Maria; Archpriest Michael and family

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

**Traveling abroad:** Ekaterina, Michael and Ellen; Donat and Deborah

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

**Families with new babies:** Craig and Tammy and baby Chloe; Matthew and Irene and baby Cecilia

**Newly-baptised:** Infant Julian; Infant Cecilia

**Departed:** Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, and former parishioners and benefactors Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Kraihin), 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).