

PARISH LIFE DURING OCTOBER

October was a quiet month for us, the main event in parish life being our annual picnic day at Heazlett Park, Avoca Beach, on the Monday of the Long Weekend, October 6th. Although the weather threatened to be unkind, and rain was in fact pouring in Umina and Charmhaven that morning, the weather was fine at Avoca, and over 70 adults and children - both parishioners and friends - attended. The younger children had a great deal of fun playing on the skateboard ramp, and the older children and young adults spent hours out on the lagoon in canoes and on surf skis and paddleboats. There were also games of soccer and volleyball, and a tug-o-war. The pleasant day and good company got some of the adults thinking seriously of the possibility of a weekend camp, more on which can be read elsewhere in this newsletter. A very nice group photo was taken at the end of the day, and as we assembled for the photo the sky became darker and darker. Just as we finished packing up, the heavens opened, and the few still not in their cars were soaked! So we were indeed fortunate on the day, both with the company and the weather.

Parish Council met on Tuesday October 14th. It was revealed that \$12280.00 in donations had been received during September, all of which had been paid off the mortgage. The effect of this, together with our regular repayments, now has the balance owing on the mortgage at less than \$15000! Regular repayments to the end of 2008 and a forthcoming fundraising activity should reduce this to less than \$10000, making it quite likely that we will have paid of our loan by the end of 2009, 8 years early! This is an extraordinary achievement, and one of which the whole parish can be proud. The Parish Council next meets on November 11th.

PARISH LIFE: FUNDRAISING BBQ AT CABRAMATTA

Once again, our dear friends at the Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church in Cabramatta have organized a fundraising BBQ and raffle to benefit our parish. This year's BBQ will be held on Sunday November 9th, immediately after Divine Liturgy. These fundraisers have been a great help to us over the years, and are one of the key reasons why our mortgage is now nearly paid off. All parishioners and friends of our parish are encouraged to attend on the day to show our gratitude for this kindness. The cost will be \$13.00 per person.

PARISH LIFE: A FAMILY CAMP IN DECEMBER

It was mentioned above that the success of the parish picnic day encouraged some present to consider the possibility of a weekend camp, a gathering that would provide the opportunity for parishioners and friends to spend time together and share in activities apart from our regular services. Father Martin in particular acted quickly on this, and after receiving general endorsement of the concept at Parish Council on October 14th, Crusaders Lake Mac Outdoor Recreation Centre at Balcolyn (around 30 minutes north of Gosford) has been booked for the weekend of Saturday December 20th and Sunday December 21st. This is really the only viable summer weekend when Father James' commitments in Newcastle, the Youth Conference, Christmas, Theophany, and back-to-school preparations are taken into account.

The general idea at this stage is to arrive mid-afternoon on Saturday, with some activities that afternoon, followed by a service that evening and dinner. All would be encouraged to prepare for Holy Communion the next day. We would have Divine Liturgy on the Sunday morning, followed by lunch and an afternoon of games and activities. After dinner on Sunday evening, there will be something like a trivia/talent night. Packing up would be after breakfast on Monday. The teens and young adults in the parish, together with friends from other parishes, will be organising a programme and supervising activities with parental help. Teams will look after meal preparation and cleaning up.

There will be no services at West Gosford that weekend, and it is hoped that those unable to stay for the weekend will at least join us on the Sunday for church, lunch, and games. If the camp is a success, consideration will be given to a summer and winter camp each year.

Accommodation will be available for up to 112 people. There is a swimming pool and BBQ facilities, and arrangements will be made for canoeing and rock climbing. Those interested can also go fishing. Further information, including costs, will be provided to parishioners and friends by mid-November. Every effort will be made to keep the cost as low as possible.

PARISH LIFE: SERVICES DURING NOVEMBER

November will be a quiet month liturgically, with no services apart from those regularly scheduled. These will be on November 1st and 2nd, and again on November 15th and 16th. We will also have an English-language Divine Liturgy on the last day of November, Sunday 30th.

The summer 2008-09 Schedule of Services is currently being prepared, and should be available in church and online by Sunday November 16th.

DIOCESAN LIFE: SPECIAL COLLECTIONS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

As usual, there will be an annual, diocesan-wide collection in November, this one for the Charitable Fund of the Synod of Bishops, the proceeds of which go to needy parishes and churches throughout the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. In our parish, this collection will be taken up on Sunday November 16th.

There will also be the usual collection (also annual and diocesan-wide) on December 7th (the Sunday closest to December 4th, the feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple) for suffering children in Russia and the other countries of the former USSR. All funds collected are distributed through "Orthodox Action - Sydney", the diocesan charitable organisation. Please keep both collections in mind!

As usual, we will also have tins available from late November-early December for our own charitable giving during the Nativity Fast. It has been agreed that funds collected this year will again go to disadvantaged families in Russia.

THE NATIVITY FAST

Friday November 28th is the first day of the Nativity Fast, the period of spiritual preparation that we observe over the 6 weeks prior to the feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, or Christmas. Strictly speaking, every day from November 28th until January 6th should be one on which no meat or dairy products are eaten. Fish is permitted on every Saturday and Sunday during December, and also - in 2008 - on December 4th, 8th, 18th, 19th, 22nd, and 25th. Wine and oil are permitted on fish days, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and also on December 10th, 17th, and 26th. Fish, wine (or alcohol in general), and oil are all allowed on these fasting days in honour of certain saints' days; the "higher" the rank of the saint, the more we can relax our fasting. The fast becomes much stricter from the beginning of January onwards. It is acknowledged, of course, that people observe the fast in many different ways, each according to their strength. Talk to Father James if you have any questions or concerns.

METROPOLITAN HILARION'S NAME DAY

Monday November 3rd is the commemoration of Saint Hilarion the Great, and the name-day of Metropolitan Hilarion. Vladyka is at present traveling in Latin America with a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, the "Derzhavnaya" Icon of the Mother of God, and the Sretensky Monastery Choir. On October 26th, 2008, Vladyka and the clergymen with him served Divine Liturgy at the foot of world-famous statue of our Lord Jesus Christ in the city of Corcovado, over 700 meters above Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. We congratulate Vladyka Hilarion warmly on his name-day, and pray that God will continue to help and strengthen him in his care for our Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia.

DIOCESAN LIFE: FORTHCOMING SPIRITUAL TALK

In the last newsletter it was announced that there would be a seminar arranged by the Sydney Orthodox Theological Association (SOTA) on the afternoon of Saturday, November 29th. This seminar will now be held on Saturday December 6th. Entitled 'Asceticism - An Inspiration for Renewal', the seminar will be held at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Strathfield. Speakers will include Sister Virginia from St. Anne's Monastery in Melbourne (Antiochian Orthodox Church), and Dr Christos Galliotos, also from Melbourne. Sr. Virginia is a lecturer at the Melbourne Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies. Lunch will be served at 12.30pm, with lectures beginning at 1.00pm. Cost: \$20.00, or \$15.00 concession. Those wishing to know more can contact SOTA by email at sydneyorthodoxtheology@gmail.com or Daniel Kisliakov by telephone on 0425-809702.

NEW ISSUES OF «ЦЕРКОВНОЕ СЛОВО» ("WORD OF THE CHURCH") AND "THE VOICE"

New issues of both Diocesan publications, the Russian-language «Церковное Слово» ("Word of the Church") (September 2008) and the English-language "The Voice" (August 2008), will be available in church as of November 1st. Colour flyers about this year's youth conference are included in both journals. The cost of each is \$2.00.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

Mark and family, George and family

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

Traveling or living abroad: Protodeacon Christopher and family, Anastasia

Expectant mothers: Elise

Mothers with new babies: Anastasia and baby Isaac

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), Elena (Yakupova)



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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 (katya.marco@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au).