

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church, Gosford

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК  
PARISH NEWSLETTER

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**EPISTLE ON THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD BY HIS EMINENCE  
METROPOLITAN LAURUS, FIRST HIERARCH OF THE  
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA**

This epistle was read in church by Father James on Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Sunday after the feast of the Ascension. It is printed here for the benefit of those who did not hear it, and for the careful consideration of all.

Eminent brother Archpastors, beloved-in-the-Lord Reverend Pastors, dear brothers, sisters and children!

Celebrating the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Church beckons all her children, all those who were born on earth, to rejoice, singing "Clap your hands, all nations, for Christ has ascended to where He was before!" (sticheron on "Lord I have cried"). From the Church hymn it is clear that even the Holy Apostles rejoiced, for in the troparion, we sing: "You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, granting joy to Your Disciples..."

One sometimes hears from those who do not wish to part with the celebration of the Pascha of Christ words similar to this regarding this holiday: "What is there to rejoice over? It would seem more fitting to grieve, since the Lord left His disciples and the world in His visible presence and ascended to the heavens and took His place at the right hand of God, and He will only return again for the terrible and just Judgment of the living and the dead".

But in fact there are many reasons to rejoice over the Ascension! The Apostles rejoiced because Christ said to them: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" and He promised to send down His equal, the Holy Spirit, the Divine Consoler, saying: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). Christ ascended physically, and thereby elevated human flesh and our nature to Heaven, to the Divine Altar, that is, He thereby brought us into His eternal glory. And now, when we gaze upon the Divine Throne, we see not a terrible punishing God, but a Loving, Merciful and Understanding God who possesses the experience of human existence and endured all the temptations you and I experience every day. We see at the Divine Throne both a Man shining in undying Light and Divine Glory, co-reigning and abiding in full unity with Him, and interceding for us, as John the Theologian witnessed: "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2). Thanks to this holy event,

and the matter of our very salvation, achieved by Christ, we have become divine humans by potential. That is why the Apostles rejoiced, as today our Church rejoices together with her children, in which they, through the Mysteries, commune with Divinity and the holy, sinless humanity of the Ascended Lord. This holy day reveals to our spiritual eyes the new relationship which exists between God and mankind, thanks to the act of our Saviour.

On this holy day, we restore canonical unity and the fullness of church communion in one Local Russian Orthodox Church. Today the path approved by the IV All-Diaspora Council and the Council of Bishops that followed has reached its conclusion.

The dogma of the unity of the Church is expressed in the Creed, confirmed by the Ecumenical Councils on the basis of the Gospel of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief and Creator of our faith and salvation, established only one Church on earth, entrusted to Her alone the true faith, made her alone the treasury of His blessed Gifts. He desired this and especially prayed to the Heavenly Father, that all those who follow Him, that is, all Orthodox Christians, would be "one flock" under His guidance, the "One Shepherd" (John 10:16). The following words spoken by the Saviour confirm the unity and indivisibility of the Church: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand... He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:25, 30). Apostle Paul provides significant foundations for the unity of the Church by likening it to the members of a human body: "For as the body is one," said the Apostle, "and hath many members and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12:12, 27).

But what actual duty emerges for us, dear brothers and sisters in the Resurrected Lord, from the concept of the unity of the Church? In the words of Apostle Paul, all believers, forming together within the Church one body, must "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:4), without refusing communion in the Mysteries and not separating themselves from universal accord through disobedience to the Divinely-confirmed ecclesiastical Hierarchy. "Do not be tempted, brethren," said Holy Martyr Ignatius, "he who follows the teacher of schism shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, he who holds to a foreign teaching shares not in the suffering of Christ." Holy Bishop-Martyr Cyprian of Carthage witnesses that people who turn away from communion in the Church "even if they die in witness of the name of Christ, their sin shall not be cleansed with their blood; indelible and grievous is the sin of division, which is not washed away even through suffering" ("On the Unity of the Church"). Moving also are the words of the same Father: "Who hearkens not to the Church is not a son of the Church, and he for whom the Church is not a mother, to him God is not a father."

So, my beloved ones, let us rejoice in these festive days of the Paschal Triodion, because through these events, which saved the world, the Lord made our natures divine, freed us and delivered us from death and corruption, and, completing the task of our salvation by establishing the Holy Church, He, as the first sticheron after the elevation of the cross says: "elevates us to the prime blessedness", that is, restores the direct contact with God

that was lost through the sinful fall of our ancestors, which we now obtain thanks to the special mercy and providence towards us, within the salvific Mysteries of the Church.

Stand firmly in the faith, my dear ones, make bold, be staunch in the unshakable foundation of the Church, which is "the pillar and the ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Amen.

With love in the Lord and my plea for your holy prayers,

+ Metropolitan Laurus

First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

May 14/27, 2007

**ПОСЛАНИЕ ВЫСОКОТРЕОСВЯЩЕННЕЙШЕГО МИТРОПОЛИТА ЛАВРА,  
ПЕРВОИЕРАРХА РУССКОЙ ЗАРУБЕЖНОЙ ЦЕРКВИ,  
К ПРАЗДНИКУ ВОЗНЕСЕНИЯ ГОСПОДНЯ**

Преосвященные собратья-архипастыри, возлюбленные о Господе отцы-сослужители, дорогие братие, сестры и дети!

Празднуя Вознесение Господа нашего Иисуса Христа, Святая Церковь призывает всех своих чад, всех земнородных к веселию и радованию, воспевая: «все языцы (народы) воспещите руками, яко възиде Христос, идеже бе первее» (стихира на «Господи възвах»). Из церковных песнопений ясно, что и святые апостолы радовались, ибо в тропаре поется: «Вознеслся еси во славе, Христе Боже наш, радость сотворивый учеником...»

Иногда приходится слышать от людей, не желающих расставаться с торжеством Пасхи Христовой, вот такие замечания по поводу настоящего праздника: чему же нам радоваться? Казалось бы надо скорбеть и печалиться, так как Господь оставил Своих учеников и землю видимым Своим присутствием и вознесся на небо и воссел одесную Бога, а в следующий раз Он придет грозным и праведным Судьей живых и мертвых.

Но на самом деле есть много радостных причин вознесения!

Апостолы радовались потому, что Христос им сказал: «Аз с вами Есмь во вся дни до скончания века» и Он же обещал ниспослать им равного Себе Духа Святого Утешителя, говоря: «лучше для вас, чтобы Я пошел, ибо если Я не пойду, то Утешитель не придет к вам; а если пойду, то пошлю Его к вам» (Ин. 16, 7). Христос вознесся телесно и, таким образом, вознес человеческую плоть и нашу природу на небо, на Престол Божий, т.е. в этом событии Он привел нас к вечной славе Своей. И ныне, когда мы взираем на Престол Божий, мы видим не грозного Бога-Карателя, а Любящего, Милующего и Понимающего нас Бога, имеющего опыт человеческой жизни и пережившего все искушения, которые мы с вами испытываем каждый день. На Престоле Божиим мы видим и Человека, сияющего в неизреченном Свете и Славе Божией, сцарствующего и находящегося в полном единстве с Ним, и ходатайствующего о нас, как свидетельствует Иоанн Богослов: «а если бы кто согрешил, то мы имеем ходатая перед Отцем, Иисуса Христа, праведника. Он есть умилоствление за грехи наши» (1 Ин. 2, 1-2). Благодаря этому священному событию да и всему делу нашего спасения,

совершенного Христом, мы стали богочеловеками по потенциалу. Поэтому, радовались Апостолы, радуется и ныне Церковь со Своими чадами, в Которой они через таинства приобщаются Божеству и святому, безгрешному человечеству Вознесшегося Господа. Праздник этот раскрывает перед нашими духовными очами те новые отношения, которые существуют между Богом и человеком, благодаря подвигу Спасителя нашего.

В нынешний праздничный день мы восстанавливаем каноническое единство и полноту церковного общения в единой Поместной Русской Православной Церкви. Сегодня завершается путь, одобренный IV Всезарубежным и последующим за ним Архиерейским Собором минувшего года.

Догмат о единстве Церкви выражается в Символе Веры, утвержденном Вселенскими Соборами на основании Евангелия Христова. Господь наш Иисус Христос, Начальник и Совершитель нашей веры и спасения, основал на земле только одну Церковь, ей единой вручил истинную веру, ее одну сделал сокровищницу благодатных даров Своих. Он того желал и о том особенно молился Отцу Небесному, чтобы все Его последователи, т.е. все православные христиане были «едино стадо» под управлением Его, «Единого Пастыря» (Ин. 10, 16.). К утверждению единства и нераздельности Церкви служат еще следующие изречения Спасителя: «Всякое царство, разделившееся само в себе, пустеет и всякий город, или дом, разделившийся сам в себе не устоит. Кто не со Мною, говорит Христос, тот против Меня и кто не собирает со Мною, тот расточает» (Мф. 12, 25-30). Существенные основания единства Церкви апостол Павел объясняет подобием единства членов тела человеческого. «Ибо, как тело одно, говорит апостол, но имеет многие члены, и все члены одного тела, хотя их и много, составляют одно тело, так и Христос... И вы - Тело Христово, а порознь члены» (1 Коринф. 12, 12, 27).

Какая же, дорогие о Вознесшемся Господе отцы, братие и сестры, существенная для нас обязанность вытекает из понятия о единстве Церкви? По слову апостола Павла, все верующие, образуя в составе Церкви одно тело, должны «сохранять единение духа в союзе мира» (Ефес. 4, 3), не уклоняться от общения в таинствах и не отделяться от вселенского согласия церковного непослушанием Богоучрежденному в Церкви Священноначалию. «Не обольщайтесь, братие, - говорит священномученик Игнатий, - кто последует расколоучителю, тот не наследует Царствия Божия, кто держится чуждаго учения, тот не имеет части в страдании Христовом». Священномученик Киприан Карфагенский свидетельствует, что люди, уклоняющиеся от общения с Церковью, «хотя бы предали себя смерти за исповедание имени Христова, - грех их не смоеся и самою кровью; неизгладимая и тяжкая вина разделения не очищается даже страданиями» (О единстве Церкви). Весьма выразительно тот же святой отец говорит: «Кто Церкви не слушает, тот не есть сын Церкви, а кому Церковь не мать, тому Бог не отец».

Итак, возлюбленные, возрадуемся этими праздничными днями Троицы Цветной, потому что этими мирспасительными событиями Господь обожил нашу природу, освободил и избавил нас от смерти и тления, а завершив дело нашего спасения основанием Святой Церкви, Он, как поется в первой стихире после выноса креста,

«возведе нас на первое блаженство» , т.е. восстановил потерянное грехопадением прародителей непосредственное богообщение, которого мы ныне удостоиваемся, благодаря только особому о нас благоволению и промыслению, в спасительных таинствах Церкви.

Стойте твердо в вере, дорогие мои, мужайтесь, утверждайтесь на незыблемом основании Церкви, которая есть «столп и утверждение истины» ( 1 Тимоф. 3, 15).  
Аминь.

С любовью о Господе и просьбой о святых молитвах,

+ Митрополит Лавр,  
Первоиерарх Русской Зарубежной Церкви.

4/17 мая 2007 г.

In our service on Ascension Day (Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup>) we marked the beginning of this new stage in the life of our Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia simply, with prayers of thanksgiving added to the Litany after the reading of the Holy Gospel, in addition to the prayer appointed by the Synod and mentioned in last month's newsletter. Vladyka had asked that the special "Moleben of Invocation of the Holy Spirit before the beginning of a Good Deed" be served before vigil on the Wednesday evening, but this was impossible to arrange at short notice in our small parish.

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

The Parish Council last met Tuesday May 8<sup>th</sup>, with all members being present. After a long break since the last meeting the Council had a full agenda. Father James reported on developments in the life of the parish and the broader church, outlined the Winter 2007 service schedule, and presented newly-purchased church items. He also spoke of the need for a privacy policy to ensure the safety of information held by the parish (names, contact details, and so on). Sebastian Reid has since agreed to work on this project, with initial research focusing on the relevance to the parish of the Privacy Act. Father James also suggested that the parish purchase a digital camera that will remain in the church in order to record parish life, provide material for the website, and be of use in the development of an inventory of parish property. This was agreed to, and Paul Pereboeff has since obtained a suitable camera.

There was some discussion of the need for improvements in parish record-keeping (organising a filing system for correspondence and financial records), better use of the parish laptop computer, and the establishment of a "virtual office". Father James and parish secretary Kate Marcotrigiano continue to work on these tasks.

Treasurer Sophia Kfoury reported that the amount owed on the mortgage was only \$50,585.86 of the \$127,000.00 originally borrowed in late 2003, putting us \$53,393.14 ahead in our repayments. There was prolonged and lively discussion of the direction to be taken when the loan has been fully repaid. In view of the fact that different Parish Council members had very different ideas about the future Father James undertook to draft a discussion paper setting out some basic assumptions about the future of the parish. This

will be presented at the next meeting and will, in time, form the basis of a strategic plan to be endorsed at the Annual General Meeting.

Access to the parish centre was discussed and Rick Golovin took responsibility to ensure that uniform sets of keys to the premises were available to those who needed them. Arrangements were also discussed for access should keys be misplaced.

Arrangements for our patronal feast in August were discussed. Unfortunately, we have since learned that the Narara Community Centre will not be available for hire on the day of our festivities. Alternative arrangements are now being made. The Parish Council next meets on Tuesday June 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **SOME CHANGES IN THE PRAYERS AT DIVINE SERVICES**

Advice was recently received from the Diocesan authorities of an April 19<sup>th</sup> decision of the Synod of Bishops to make a number of minor changes in the prayers for Russia and for the civil authorities at Divine Services in the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia.

The following forms of words have been used up until now:

For the suffering Russian land and its Orthodox people both in the homeland and the diaspora and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord;

That He may deliver His people from enemies visible and invisible, and confirm in us oneness of mind, brotherly love, and piety, let us pray to the Lord;

For this land, its authorities and armed forces, let us pray to the Lord; and

For this city, for every city and country and the faithful that dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

These petitions will now be said as follows:

For the God-preserved Russian land and its Orthodox people both in the homeland and the diaspora and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord;

That He may deliver His people from enemies visible and invisible, and confirm in us oneness of mind, brotherly love, and piety, let us pray to the Lord;

For this land, its authorities, and armed forces, let us pray to the Lord; and

For this city, for every city and country, and for the faithful and pious that dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

At the Great Entrance, the following form of words has been used up until now:

The suffering Russian land and its Orthodox people both in the homeland and the diaspora; this land, its authorities the faithful that dwell therein, may the Lord God remember in His kingdom, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

This will now change to:

The God-preserved Russian land and its Orthodox people both in the homeland and the diaspora; this land, and all the faithful and pious that dwell therein, may the Lord God remember in His kingdom, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

In view of certain disturbances in church life, Father James has also added the following prayers from the "Supplicatory Service for the Conversion of those in Error" to the Litany after the Gospel at Divine Liturgy:

O Thou Who desirest not the death of sinners, but awaitest their conversion and repentance, turn all who have fallen away to Thy Holy Church, we pray Thee, O merciful Lord, hearken and have mercy.

O Thou Who gavest us the commandment to love Thee, our God, and our neighbour, cause hatred, enmity, strife, vengeance, oath-breaking and other iniquities to cease, and let true love reign in our hearts, we pray Thee, O our Saviour, hearken and have mercy.

These changes were put into effect on Ascension Day. Those changes determined by the Synod of Bishops are permanent, whereas those included by Father James will continue for as long as is considered appropriate.

It is understood that despite the establishment of Canonical Communion between the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia there will at this point in time be no changes to the form of words used for the commemoration of the church hierarchy, which will remain as follows:

For the Orthodox Episcopate of the Church of Russia, for our Lord the Very Most Reverend Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, for our Lord, the Most Reverend Archbishop Hilarion, the venerable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

### **PARISH LIFE: WINTER 2007 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

A winter 2007 Schedule of Services covering the months June, July and August is now available in church and should, by early June, be on the parish website. Please note that services during August will be on irregular dates.

### **SPIRITUAL LIFE: THE APOSTLES' FAST**

The fast preceding the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, commonly referred to as the "Apostles' Fast" or "Peter's Fast", begins this year on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Many of the faithful often ask why this fast is short one year and long the next. The answer is because the beginning of the fast is moveable, but the ending (the feast of the Apostles on July 12<sup>th</sup>) is fixed. The beginning is always the Monday one week after Pentecost, with Pentecost itself falling 50 days after Pascha. As Easter was so early this year, the fast is 5 weeks and 3 days in length. In 2005, by contrast, the fast was only 2 weeks and 1 day long, and in 2008 it will be 2 weeks and 5 days in length.

The rules for this fast are somewhat more relaxed than those during Great Lent: fish, wine and oil are allowed on weekends, and wine and oil in all Tuesdays and Thursdays. As with the other seasons of fasting this is one in which we should focus more on our relationship with God, repenting of our sins, confessing and receiving Holy Communion, and increasing our almsgiving and charity.

## CHURCH LIFE: VLADYKA'S VISIT TO SAINT NICHOLAS, WALLSEND

As advised in the last newsletter, Vladyka will visit Wallsend on Sunday June 24<sup>th</sup>, bringing with him the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God. It is expected that Deacon Alexander Kotliaroff from the Strathfield Cathedral will also be there on the day. There will be a festive lunch after the service, and all Gosford parishioners are invited - indeed, encouraged! - to travel north to be present on this special occasion in the life of our closest neighbouring parish, especially during this period of church life in which, sadly, there is division. The trip from our church is only about 1 hour from West Gosford. The address of the church is 3 Irving Street, Wallsend.

## DIOCESAN LIFE: 43<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

At the end of each year - generally over the Australian Christmas-New Year break - our Diocese organizes a conference for young people that gives our youth the opportunity to learn more about the faith and to form friendships with other young Orthodox Christians. This year's conference will be in Sydney, at the Crosslands Youth & Convention Centre in Galston, near Hornsby. The conference will run from December 23<sup>rd</sup> until December 28<sup>th</sup>. Further information is available at [www.syezd2007.com](http://www.syezd2007.com).

## THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

**Traveling abroad:** Deacon Christopher and Matushka Julie; Olga; Christopher

**The sick & suffering:** Deacon Christopher; our parishioners Antonina (Tialshinsky) & Victor (Manjetny); and also for Vasili, Vera, Eugenia, Olga, Galina, Tatiana and Daniel

**Newly-departed:** Gennady (Shatrov), who passed away suddenly on 1.6.2007; Volodymyr (Kaiko), church builder and long-serving parish councilor and altar server at Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church, Wallsend

**Departed:** Metropolitan Vitaly, Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Kraiuhin), Theodore (Tialshinsky), Lyubov (Smieska), Victor (Pulkownik), Olga (Timohina)



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