

IMPORTANT REMINDER: NO SERVICES ON THE WEEKEND OF JULY 28-29

Readers are reminded that there will be no services in Gosford on the weekend of 28-29 July. On Sunday 29 July Father James will be concelebrating at Divine Liturgy in the parish of All Saints of Russia, Croydon, and afterwards presiding at a wedding there.

PARISH LIFE: OUR PARISH FEAST-DAY ON SATURDAY 11 AUGUST 2012

On Thursday 9 August it will be the day of commemoration of the heavenly protector of our parish, the Holy Great-Martyr and Healer Panteleimon. As in previous years, the services will be transferred to the closest Friday and Saturday – in 2012, Friday 10 August and Saturday 11 August. This helps ensure that as many as possible of our own parishioners can attend, as well as clergy and faithful from Sydney and Newcastle.

On the Friday evening at 6.00pm we will have All-night Vigil with the blessing of five loaves and wheat, wine and oil. There will be opportunities to confess during this service. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion on Saturday morning should make every effort to confess on Friday evening.

On Saturday morning at 8.15am we will have the Lesser Blessing of Water before the church doors. Those wishing to take some of the Holy Water home should bring bottles with them. The Hours and Divine Liturgy will begin at 9.00am. As is customary, there will be a moleben to Saint Panteleimon after Divine Liturgy, followed by the singing of Many Years and Eternal Memory.

We have been advised that friends from the Strathfield and Cabramatta parishes are organising a bus again this year, and many people from the Wallsend parish will again join us. This year, it is expected that the Dean of the New South Wales parishes, Archpriest Nikita Chemodakov, will be present, and that he will preside at Divine Liturgy.

Our festive lunch will once again be held at the Niagara Park Community Centre, a large hall approximately 10 minutes' drive from the church. There is plenty of room for everyone there, and space for younger children to play under supervision. Our raffle will be drawn during lunch.

The patronal feast-day of our parish is, in addition to being a commemoration of the heavenly protector of the parish, a day on which we rejoice in parish life. Giving thanks to God for all that we have in our parish, we share our blessings with friends and guests. We also find encouragement in the company and support of others, it being clear that we are not just part of a small parish, but of a spiritually rich and vibrant Diocese, and beyond it, a united and resurgent Russian Orthodox Church.

Parishioners and all regular worshippers are encouraged to make time to be in church on this important day, and also to be present at the lunch afterwards. It is rare for such occasions to pass without joy, or for the time spent to come to nothing.

DIOCESAN LIFE: FEAST OF SAINT VLADIMIR, EQUAL-TO-THE APOSTLES

The oldest Russian Orthodox church in Sydney is Saint Vladimir's in Centennial Park. Prior to the completion of the church of Saints Peter and Paul at Strathfield, this small church - originally a private residence - was our Diocesan cathedral!

Under the wise leadership of Father Daniel Metlenko and his Matushka Elena, Saint Vladimir's has been beautifully renovated and extended in recent years, and is home to a lively Russian Orthodox community based in Sydney's eastern and inner suburbs. Participants in our parish camps in 2011 will remember Maria Zaitseva, the conductor of the choir at Centennial Park.

The commemoration of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Grand Duke Vladimir, Enlightener of Russia, is on 28 July. This year, 28 July is a Saturday, which gives many of us an opportunity to visit the parish and share in their festivities. There will be a vigil service at 6.00pm on Friday evening and Divine Liturgy at 9.00am on Saturday morning. Saint Vladimir's church is at 31 Robertson Road, Centennial Park.

PARISH AND DIOCESAN LIFE: JUNE – JULY 2012

On the weekend of 16-17 June we had services in honour of All Saints of Russia. Our church was still vested in green, and the large icon depicting the baptism of Rus', together with all the saints and righteous ones who have shone forth in the Russian land, was placed in the middle of the church. Father Martin was not with us that weekend, taking the opportunity to serve at his other parish, Croydon, on the occasion of its feast-day.

On Saturday 23 June Genevieve, the infant daughter of Paul and Linda Perebeoff, was baptised in our church. Her godparents were her aunt and uncle, Julie de Castelbajac and Clint Parkes. The newly-baptised Genevieve received Holy Communion for the first time the following day during Divine Liturgy in Wallsend. Congratulations to the newly-baptised handmaiden of God Genevieve, and to her parents and godparents!

On Sunday 24 July another child was baptised in our church – Alexander Rowan, celebrating his first birthday that day. Alexander, the infant son of Ricky and Anna Rowan of Lisarow and younger brother of Annabelle, baptised in our church in April 2010, was sponsored at baptism by his maternal grandmother, Nadezhda Rakova. May God grant his newly-baptised servant Alexander many years!

On 26 June we received the happy news of the birth of a baby boy, Feodor, a second son for Paul and Elena Douriguine, and a younger brother to Alexey, Polina and Tatiana. Congratulations to Paul and Elena!

The weekend of 30 June – 1 July was a busy one with Metropolitan Hilarion presiding at Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning. It was a great joy to have Vladyka with us, this being his first visit to our church since 2008, and the first time he had presided at Divine Liturgy in our parish since becoming First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia in 2008.

Many friends of our parish – a number from Newcastle and some from Sydney – joined us on the day. Vladyka was welcomed upon arrival at our church by the parish children sprinkling flower petals and by Nestor Petroff and Kate Marcotrigiano offering the customary bread and salt. The bread was a beautifully baked loaf prepared by Olga Petroff.

To our dismay, we had learned only a few days before this that we would have no electricity on the day, Ausgrid having planned a power outage so as to undertake necessary maintenance. Rick Golovin did a wonderful job obtaining battery-powered lights for the altar, choir and bathrooms, and Ausgrid assisted by providing a small generator. Lunch – a lovely Lenten BBQ of fish and prawns – was cooked on gas.

Our joy on the day was overshadowed only by the knowledge that it was the last time that Father Martin and his family – Matushka Tatiana and children Xenia, Alexander and Sebastian – would be with us for three years. After Divine Liturgy, Father James thanked Father Martin for his loyalty and commitment to our parish and presented him with a gift – a beautiful orarion (the long vestment that a deacon wears over his left shoulder) and matching cuffs embroidered by the sisters of the Convent of Saint Elisabeth in Minsk, Belarus. Matushka Tatiana was also thanked for her support, and presented with a floral bouquet.

An emotional Father Martin thanked the parish for its kindness, expressing his gratitude to Vladyka for having assigned him to us. As a token of his appreciation he presented the parish with a beautifully-bound English-language Holy Gospel. Vladyka then intoned Many Years for Father Martin and his family before almost everyone present sat down for lunch.

On 11-12 July Father James and Father Martin both participated in services at the Strathfield in honour of the Holy Preëminent Apostles Peter and Paul, the patron saints of our cathedral there. His Grace Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand was present at All-night Vigil together with clerics from his Diocese. During the course of the service, Bishop Irinej presented Metropolitan Hilarion with an award on behalf of His Royal Highness Prince Davit Bagration Mukhraneli, head of the Royal House of Georgia. This award – the prestigious Order of the Eagle of Georgia and the Seamless Tunic of our Lord Jesus Christ – was established by Saint Tamara, Queen of Georgia, in the thirteenth century.

On the following day the cathedral was full to overflowing, with clergy and people present from across Sydney. Our Gosford parish was well-represented, with more than a dozen of our parishioners present, in addition to Father James and Father Martin. The customary cross procession was somewhat shortened because of rain, but the church hall and Russian School were afterwards filled with guests who stayed for lunch.

Father Martin left Australia for Europe on Saturday 14 July, and Vladyka will leave for the United States on Thursday 19 July. Matushka Tatiana and the children will leave on Monday 30 July. Please remember them all in your prayers as they travel.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council met on Tuesday 10 July 2012. In a shorter meeting than usual, consideration was given to the usual financial reports, the payment of levies to the Diocese and Synod, a series of draft guidelines covering key positions on the Parish Council and administrative practices, and preparations for the feast of Saint Panteleimon. The financial reports showed our parish to be in good financial health, with over \$40,000.00 now in the "Future Fund". Diocesan and Synod levies totalling \$4149.28 for 2011 and the first six months of 2012 will soon be paid, these funds being a contribution towards the needs of the church administration here in Australia and in the Synodal Office in New York.

The draft guidelines considered set out in detail the responsibilities of parish officials such as the Secretary and Treasurer, and express Parish Council policy concerning expenditure, the issue of church keys, the keeping of minutes, and parish awards amongst other things. The drafts will be considered again at the Parish Council meeting in August before being endorsed. Descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of parish officials will be circulated to all parishioners before our Annual General Meeting in September. This will assist parish members when making nominations – or accepting them – to Parish Council.

PARISH LIFE: SERVICES IN AUGUST AND BEYOND

Although the fast of Saints Peter and Paul has just ended, the Dormition Fast («Успенский Пост») will soon be upon us. Beginning on 14 August, it is a stricter fast than that of the Apostles, with fish permitted on only one day, the Great Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord (Преображение). Wine and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays.

In August there are three feasts of the Lord: the Procession of the Cross (Происхождение Честных Древ), Transfiguration, and the commemoration of the Icon "Not-made-by-hands" (Нерукотворного Образа Господа). In Russian, these three feasts are referred to as «Первый Спас», «Второй Спас», and «Третий Спас» – the first, second and third feasts of the Saviour. The first of these feasts is customarily associated with a blessing of honey, and so is often called «Медовый Спас», the "Honey" feast of the Saviour. Similarly, as there is a blessing of fruit on Transfiguration, it is known in Russian as «Яблочный Спас», the "Apple" feast of the Saviour.

In Gosford this year we will combine the two blessings – honey and fruit – having them both on the Great Feast of the Transfiguration, Sunday 19 August. Those coming to church on the Sunday morning are encouraged to bring baskets or bowls of fruit – apples, grapes, and other fruits – and to set them out on the tables that will be placed in church for this purpose. Customarily, candles are placed amongst the fruit – one per basket – and these are lit just before the blessing, which takes place towards the end of Divine Liturgy.

The honey that will be blessed is organic honey from the Wollombi region, inland between Gosford and Newcastle. Our parish has approximately 50 small jars of this honey, harvested early this year. After it is blessed, each family will be able to take a jar home to enjoy.

PARISH LIFE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN SEPTEMBER 2012

Preparations are now underway for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of our parish on Sunday 2 September. Parish members are asked to keep this day free for attendance at the AGM. Announcements will be made in church on August 5, August 19, and September 2, and notices concerning the AGM will be posted to all members by mid-August.

This will be our first AGM since early in 2011, the Parish Council having moved from calendar year reporting to financial year reporting since then. It will also be the first AGM at which an independent audit of parish finances will be presented.

The purpose of the AGM is for the outgoing Parish Council to report on parish activities and finances during the previous year, and to recommend a course of action for the

future. A new Parish Council is elected at each AGM.

Specific attention will also be given at this year's AGM to a number of other matters. The first of these will be the parish Risk Management plan, required by the Diocesan authorities by the end of September. The second will be the Diocesan *Policy and Procedure for Addressing Inappropriate Behaviour*, information concerning which can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. The third will be steps necessary to ensure that our parish is child-safe and child-friendly, as defined by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People.

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.

Parish membership has its roots in decisions of the All-Russian Church Council (or "Sobor") of 1917. This Council, the first in over 200 years, introduced many important changes with a view to invigorating the life of the Russian Orthodox Church. Although many of the Council's decisions were unable to be put into effect in Russia after the revolution, they survived abroad.

The Normal Parish By-Laws of our Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, the legal framework for parish membership and Parish Councils, are an important part of this legacy. Parish membership should not be seen as something restrictive, but rather as an opportunity to be of service to the Church.

As has been noted elsewhere in this newsletter, information will be made available prior to the AGM about the duties of key Parish Council positions and the skills and qualities desirable for those positions.

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

CHURCH LIFE: REMEMBERING PATRIARCH VARNAVA OF SERBIA (+1937)

Early in June 2012, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia resolved that Sunday 22 July would be a day of commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the repose of Patriarch Varnava (Rosic), a great friend of the Russian Orthodox Church, and particularly of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia.

Patriarch Varnava was the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church from 1930-37. Born in Serbia in 1880, in his twenties he studied at the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy.

He came into contact there with many great church figures, a number of whom were to be martyred for their Orthodoxy. He was tonsured and ordained deacon and priest in Russia, and retained a great love of the Russian Orthodox Church throughout his life.

Patriarch Varnava was a great leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church, accomplishing much that invigorated church life. He also laboured tirelessly to assist the Russian Orthodox faithful who, because of the bitter persecution of Christianity in Russia, found themselves outside its borders. He did much to heal division within the Russian Orthodox Church, and worked with the hierarchs abroad to develop the "Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad" in 1935. When he died unexpectedly in 1937, there was much grief amongst the Russian émigrés, who everywhere raised up prayers for his repose.

Parishioners are asked to remember Patriarch Varnava in their prayers, including him on their usual lists for commemoration at home and in church. Prayers for him will be offered up in our parish on Sunday 5 August, the first Sunday after the anniversary of his repose, Monday 23 July, on which there will be a service in our parish.

DIOCESAN LIFE: YOUTH GATHERINGS IN LATE 2012

As in 2011, in 2012 there will again be two gatherings of the youth of our Diocese. The first, a teen retreat to be held on Sydney's northern beaches, will take place before Western Christmas. The teen retreat is for young people aged 15-18, and is again being organised by Archpriest George Lapardin and Priest Simeon Nekipelov of the Strathfield Cathedral.

The second gathering will be the usual youth conference, or Syezd, focused on young people aged 18-35. Held in NSW in 2010-11, this year's Syezd will be held in Brisbane. The theme of the conference will be "Orthodoxy: From the cradle to the grave". Father James will be assisting the Organising Committee with the conference programme.

It is expected that more information will be available soon. Those interested in these youth activities should also watch for updates on the Diocesan website, www.rocor.org.au.

DIOCESAN LIFE: POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In March 2012 the Diocese issued a Policy and Procedure for Addressing Inappropriate Behaviour. This Policy was introduced so as to provide a clear and consistent framework within which to address conflicts that, sadly, arise in the life of the Church from time to time.

The Policy was prepared by the Diocesan Governance Committee in consultation with

the clergy of the Diocese and with legal and other relevant professional advice. It applies to all members of the Church community of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia.

The purpose of the Policy is to encourage respectful and courteous behaviour, free from any bullying, harassment, sexual impropriety, intimidation or other unacceptable behaviour in church life. It also provides for the compassionate, prompt and confidential treatment of all complaints about such behaviour.

The Policy makes it clear that it is not inappropriate behaviour to have differing opinions, or when clergy instruct parishioners concerning Christian life, provided such discussions are undertaken with love, respect and courtesy.

A copy of the Policy is available from the Diocesan website at the following link:

http://www.rocor.org.au/news10/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/policy_inappropriate_behaviour.pdf

Anyone without access to the website can obtain a copy of the Policy from Father James. As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, the Policy will be explained and discussed at our AGM in September.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick: Nun Euphrosyne; Leonid; and our parishioners Nestor, Michael, Tatiana, and Boris.
Families with new babies: Paul, Elena and baby Feodor, with older children Alexey, Polina and Tatiana; Alexey and Iryna and their first baby Melania.
Expectant mothers: Alexandra.
Newly-baptised: infant Genevieve; infant Alexander.
Travelling: Metropolitan Hilarion; Deacon Martin, Tatiana, Xenia, Alexander and Sebastian.
Departed: Patriarch Alexis, **Patriarch Varnava**, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, infant Ekaterina, 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).



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