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**PARISH LIFE: NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2012**

On Saturday 17 November Father James baptised fifteen year-old Tanya Kazakova-Orel. He and Tanya's mother, Elena, sponsored her at baptism. Tanya received Holy Communion for the first time at Divine Liturgy the following day. May God grant his newly-baptised handmaiden many years!

That evening the services were in honour of Saint Tikhon the Confessor, Patriarch of Moscow. In his sermon on Sunday 18 November, Father James spoke of Patriarch Tikhon's great piety, his missionary zeal when serving in North America, and his courageous defence of Orthodoxy against the godless Soviet authorities.

After Divine Liturgy, a memorial litia was served for another hierarch of the Moscow Diocese – Metropolitan Platon (Levshin), the two-hundredth anniversary of whose repose had been on 11 November 2012. Before prayers were offered for the repose of Metropolitan Platon's soul, Father James spoke briefly about the life and pastoral labours of this great hierarch of the Russian Church.

A collection was taken up this day for the Fund for Assistance (FFA) of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia ([www.fundforassistance.org](http://www.fundforassistance.org)). This collection, taken up in every parish of our Diocese each November, assists the important work of the FFA throughout the world. This year we collected \$600.00, more than the 2010 and 2011 collections combined.

That afternoon, the Saint Seraphim Russian Community School in Hornsby had its first Annual General Meeting. At this meeting our parishioner and Parish Council member Paul Douriaguine was reappointed as School Principal, and parish member Anna Borisovskaya was reappointed as School Secretary. Congratulations to Paul, Anna and all involved with the Saint Seraphim School on the completion of a successful year!

On Saturday-Sunday 1-2 December we had services in honour of yet another holy hierarch of the Moscow Diocese, Saint Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow. Receiving Holy

Communion for the first time that day was Sofia Lamanova, baptized in our church in September 2012.

After the service, collection tins were distributed for our Nativity Fast collection. Father James spoke briefly at the end of the service about the project that this year's collection was to benefit – the construction of a "church on the blood" at Moscow's Lubyanka, the site of persecution and martyrdom of a multitude of Orthodox Christians during the Soviet era. More information about this project is at <http://goo.gl/pTi97>.

Sunday 2 December was the birthday of the ever-memorable Irene Claydon, our parishioner who reposed in the Lord in July 2010. Irene's husband Bill was in church that day, and after the service he and Father James served a memorial litia for her.

Later that day, Father James visited ailing parishioner Tatiana Venttsel at Henry Kendall Village, Wyoming, giving her Holy Communion for what was to be the last time.

On Monday-Tuesday 3-4 December we had services for the Great Feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple. All-night vigil on Monday evening was well-attended, as was Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, despite it being a working day. A great many people prepared for and received Holy Communion on the day of the feast.

Sadly, we learned during All-night vigil on Monday night that the handmaiden of God Tatiana had reposed. After the service Father James joined Tatiana's family – her son and daughter, our parishioners Sergei Schreider and Maria Schreider, her son-in-law Ivan Teliatnikov, Maria and Ivan's children Ksenia, Nicholas and Alexander, her god-daughter Anna Kourbatov, and others – by her bedside to serve the "first panikhida", the Canon at the Departure of the Soul.

A panikhida was served for the newly-reposed Tatiana after Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, and on Wednesday evening her body was brought to our church and a Parastas – or "great panikhida" – was served. Afterwards, her family remained in church throughout the night, taking turns to read the Psalter – the Book of Psalms - continuously in accordance with Orthodox tradition. Tatiana's funeral was served on Thursday morning. Afterwards, she was laid to rest in the Wamberal Cemetery, where a number of our parishioners and friends have also been buried. May God indeed give her rest!

Friday 7 December was the day of commemoration of the Great-Martyr Katherine, and the name-day of a great many of our parishioners: Katya Lugovaya, Kate Macotrigiano, Katia Waters, Katya Shevchenko, Katie Carles and Jessica Katherine Datsyuk. May God grant them all many years!

On Sunday 9 December Father James baptised the infant Victoria, the third daughter of Oleg and Natasha Korotaev and a baby sister to Maria and Alyssa. Victoria's godparents were Oksana Udovenko and our parishioner Mikhail Shevchenko. Our warmest congratulations to Victoria, her parents and godparents! Victoria's baptism was the sixteenth in our parish this year.

On Sunday 9 December, the day of commemoration of Saint Innocent of Irkutsk and Saint Alypy the Stylite, it was the twelfth anniversary of the reception into Orthodoxy of our parishioner, Parish Council member and chorister Bill Reid. May God continue to bless him, and grant him many years!

On Tuesday 11 December 2012 we received a package from Minsk, Belarus, containing six of the sixteen new sticharia – or vestments for altar-servers – that we had ordered. The sticharia are beautifully made and are in a range of sizes. All are made of a red-gold brocade. These will be used at every service and will mean that all our altar servers will be vested consistently for the first time in many years. In time, we plan to obtain vestments in other colours: white first, and then green, blue and black. When all of the current order has arrived they will be formally blessed at a Sunday service prior to use.

### **PARISH LIFE: YEAR IN REVIEW**

As we come to the end of 2012, it is interesting to look back over the past year. In January, services for the Nativity of Christ were held in Wallsend, but we had services for the Theophany of Christ in Gosford, and many homes blessed afterwards in accordance with Orthodox custom. During February, a Romanian Orthodox service was held in our church, and we had Vespers with the rite of asking forgiveness on Forgiveness Sunday, the last day before Great Lent.

Throughout March and April, we had 25 services, including a well attended Paschal Vespers on the morning of Pascha itself. Metropolitan Hilarion visited the parish on the weekend of 30 June – 1 July, his first visit to our church since 2008. Vladyka's visit coincided with Deacon Martin Naef's last service with us, Father Martin and his family having relocated to France for 3 years due to Father Martin's secular work commitments. Father Martin had served our parish faithfully since his ordination in January 2008.

In August we celebrated our parish feast day. Archbishop Michael of Geneva and Western Europe presided at Divine Liturgy – our second hierarchical Divine Liturgy in as many months. A great number of parishioners and friends joined us, with a festive lunch held at the Niagara Park Community Hall afterwards.

In September we elected a new Parish Council and adopted a number of important policies to ensure safety, security and stability in parish life. Although no summer or

winter camps were organised in 2012, the customary October long weekend BBQ at Avoca Beach was a great success.

Sixteen people – children, young people and adults – were baptized in our church this year, the most in any year since the parish was founded. Our choir has expanded and become stronger this year. As we approach our ninth full year at West Gosford, we continue to welcome new people into our parish and beautify our small church. May God help us and bless us again in 2013 and beyond!

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

On Tuesday 11 December Parish Council met for the final time in 2012. In addition to the usual financial reports, the Parish Council gave attention to a range of administrative matters including the insurance needs of the parish, GST reporting procedures, and purchasing arrangements. It was agreed that the parish would again sponsor a family through the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia's Haiti Orthodox Family Relief ([www.haitiorthodoxfamilyrelief.com](http://www.haitiorthodoxfamilyrelief.com)) program in 2013, sponsorship of US\$100.00 a month having commenced in 2011. Father James advised the Parish Council that the Child-safe, Child-friendly Policy adopted at the parish Annual General Meeting in September 2012 had recently been adapted for use by the Diocese as a whole. He also thanked Parish Council members for their co-operation and support during 2012, a year in which there had been a number of improvements in parish administration. Priorities for the Parish Council in 2013 will be forward planning in parish life and continuing the administrative improvements commenced in 2012.

### **PARISH LIFE: PRE CHRISTMAS CLEAN UP**

The usual pre Christmas clean up will be held on Saturday 5 January from 8.00 am. This will be a major clean-up, with everything in the church and hall being thoroughly washed, scrubbed and polished in preparation for our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. Although it will be a busy few days with many services, all those who are able to spare a few hours to help with the cleaning are asked to attend. A list of tasks will be prepared to ensure that everyone has something to do. As is customary, a light Lenten lunch will be served afterwards for all those working. Please join us!

### **PARISH LIFE: SERVICES FOR THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST AND FESTIVE LUNCH**

We will have Divine Liturgy on Sunday 6 January, followed immediately by Vespers with 8 Old Testament readings. Anyone wishing to help with the Old Testament readings - which can be done in Slavonic, English or Russian - should speak with Father James. That evening, an All-Night Vigil at 6.00pm will be served. This service will include the customary blessing of five loaves, wheat, wine, and oil. On Christmas Day, we will have Divine Liturgy at 9am, followed by a festive lunch in the hall for all those wishing to stay. Those who confess on Saturday evening are welcome to receive Holy Communion at one

or both of the Divine Liturgies that follow.

As the Ladies' Auxiliary will not be preparing lunch on Christmas Day, many people having family plans for Christmas lunch, those wishing to stay should bring a plate of festive food and some kind of drink with them to share. We expect to be joined for the services and for lunch by around 20 people from Wallsend. Please consider joining us!

On 8 January, the second day of the feast of the Nativity of Christ, Metropolitan Hilarion customarily serves at the parish of All Saints of Russia in Croydon. Like many priests from the smaller Sydney parishes, Father James serves at Croydon on this day, taking the opportunity to greet Vladyka and to share in the joy of the feast with him and the other clergy and their families. Many of the faithful likewise visit, and Vladyka afterwards invites everyone to his residence. Parishioners and friends who will be free on this day are encouraged to join us.

### **PARISH LIFE: CHRISTMAS RAFFLE**

As in previous years, the Ladies' Auxiliary will be running a Christmas raffle. There are a great many prizes, all of which are on display in the church hall. Tickets - selling at 3 for \$1.00 - will be available for purchase on Sunday 16 December, Sunday 30 December, Sunday 5 January, and on Monday 7 January, Christmas Day. The raffle will be drawn at lunch on Christmas Day. The money raised by the Ladies' Auxiliary goes towards things like our new sticharia for altar servers. Please support them!

### **PARISH LIFE: MAGNETIC & WALL CALENDARS FOR 2013**

To help parishioners and friends remember which days our regular services are on, a magnetic parish calendar has been prepared for 2013. It includes parish contact details and has the Sundays highlighted on which there will be services in our church. In addition, the Parish Council has ordered enough wall calendars for each household in the parish to have one. The wall calendars – printed in Russian and English - show both fast and feast days, list daily Bible readings, and note major saints' days. They also include the rules for fasting throughout the year. These calendars will be available towards the end of December, and will be distributed at church so as to prevent them from being damaged in the post. Those not distributed at church will be home delivered. If we do not have your address and would like a calendar, please ask for one in church.

### **PARISH LIFE: 2013 PARISH MEMBERSHIP**

All parish members are now asked to renew their membership, and regular worshippers are invited to consider becoming members. Parish membership is something quite distinct from church attendance, or even participation in the sacramental life of the church. Membership makes it possible for a person to be involved in formal parish decision-

making at various levels. A person cannot serve on the Parish Council, for example, without first becoming a parish member.

The rules governing parish membership are set out in the Normal Parish By-Laws or the "Нормальный Приходской Устав" ("the By-Laws") of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia (ROCOR). A person may become a member of a ROCOR parish if they are an Orthodox Christian, have reached the age of 18 years, pay the established membership dues, make their confession and take Holy Communion not less than once a year, and tend to the moral and economic welfare of the parish.

There is no obligation upon any person to become a parish member. A person might regularly attend one or more parishes in our Diocese and participate in the sacramental life of the church and yet feel no desire to seek formal parish membership. This is entirely a decision for each individual. There are certainly no adverse consequences for not seeking parish membership. Pastorally, no distinction is made between members and non-members.

It is nevertheless the policy of this parish to encourage all regular worshippers and friends of the parish to consider membership. The reason for this is that it helps ensure that parish decision-making is representative of the broadest range of people who attend and take an interest in the welfare of the church. It also increases the pool of people from which a Parish Council can be drawn.

In our parish, the annual membership fee is \$30.00. Membership is granted for a calendar year; that is, from January to December. New members gain the right to vote only after 6 months of membership. Those new members who transfer membership from another ROCOR parish may vote immediately. Paragraph 12 of the By-Laws requires any person wishing to become a member of a parish to make a written application to the Parish Council. To make this easier for everyone, our parish has developed an 'Application for Parish Membership' form. A copy of the membership form will be mailed out with the calendars in late December.

If required, additional copies of the form are also available at church. Please ask at the candle desk! Parish members are asked to complete the 'Application for Parish Membership' form upon annual renewal of membership. This helps ensure that parish records are up-to-date, that personal details remain correct, and that the conditions for membership continue to be met. Any questions or concerns regarding formal parish membership should be raised with Father James. Completed membership forms may be handed in at the candle desk.

## **CHURCH LIFE: RELEASE OF PLOTS AT ROOKWOOD CEMETERY**

Readers will recall a notice in the November newsletter that the Anglican Cemetery at Rookwood Cemetery has released over 300 new plots adjoining the Russian section RO4. The Diocesan Cemetery Committee have been able to secure these new plots for the Russian Orthodox community, with a burial licence price for future use (grave only) - \$7557, and a 'purchase at need, including first interment' cost of \$8690. Those interested in purchasing plots are strongly encouraged to make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible. It is possible that insufficient interest within the community could lead to alternative arrangements being made for this area of Rookwood Cemetery. Enquiries can be directed to the Anglican Office of Rookwood Necropolis on 9746 2177 Monday to Friday.

## **COMMUNITY LIFE: REQUEST TO HOST EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

We have this year again been asked to publicise the work of Southern Cross Cultural Exchange (SCCE), a non-profit organisation with 25 years experience in exchange programs. Under the SCCE program, the student participates as one of the family, including helping with chores, following house rules, and joining in the fun. Southern Cross Cultural Exchange has over 100 students from Europe, Canada, USA, Japan, Brazil and Colombia, who will arrive in February 2012 for a few months. Students bring their own spending money and are covered for medical and educational expenses. For more information visit [www.scce.com.au](http://www.scce.com.au) or contact SCCE's local co-ordinator, Dianne Axam, on 0429-406126 or by e-mail: [diaxam@bigpond.com](mailto:diaxam@bigpond.com).

## **CHURCH LIFE: SERVICES IN DECEMBER 2012**

On Wednesday 19 December it will be one of the two feasts of Saint Nicholas – the commemoration of his repose. On Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning Father James will be serving in the church of Saint Nicholas in Wallsend, and so there will be no services in Gosford. Parishioners and friends are encouraged to travel to Wallsend or to visit one of the Sydney parishes, most of which will have a service on this day, Saint Nicholas being greatly revered throughout the Orthodox world. Any Gosford parishioners who confess and receive Holy Communion on the weekend of 15-16 December are welcome to receive Holy Communion at Wallsend on Wednesday.

Our final service in 2012 will be on Sunday 30 December 2012. There will be no evening service on Saturday 29 December, as Father James and Matushka Marie will be taking the opportunity to visit the parish of Saint Nicholas in Fairfield and themselves confess prior to the Nativity services.

After Divine Liturgy on Sunday 30 December we will have a Moleben of Thanksgiving in anticipation of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, on 7 January, of the Deliverance of the Russian Church and Empire from the invasion of the French and twelve other nations. 7 January

(25 December on the Julian Calendar) was the day on which the last of Napoleon's 600,000-strong army was driven from Russia, and it was as a memorial to this that Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral was built. Had Russia been defeated in 1812, how different would all our lives have been!

### **DIOCESAN LIFE: FATHER JAMES TO ATTEND PASTORAL CONFERENCE IN BRISBANE**

In recent years it has become the custom in our Diocese for a Pastoral Conference – a gathering of priests and deacons – to coincide with the annual Diocesan Youth Conference. At these conferences, matters of mutual concern are discussed, and the opportunity is taken for the Diocesan authorities to brief clergy on important issues. This year, the Pastoral Conference will take place in Brisbane on the afternoon and in the evening of Thursday 27 December. Father James plans to travel to Brisbane that morning, remaining in Brisbane overnight and for the first full day of the Youth Conference – Friday 28 December – before returning home that evening.

### **PARISH LIFE: HOUSE BLESSINGS AT THEOPHANY**

Parishioners and friends will know from the Summer 2012-13 Schedule of Services that we will have the Great Blessing of Water at Theophany on the second day of the feast, Sunday 20 January 2012. Father James will be blessing homes that afternoon and again on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 January. At this stage it is likely that homes on the Central Coast will be blessed on Sunday and Monday and homes in the Hornsby area will be blessed on Tuesday. Please mark these dates in your diary and let Father James know if you would like him to visit at this time. The service of blessing is relatively short, usually taking no more than 10 minutes, and is customarily done every year at this time.

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

**The sick:** Nun Euphrosyne; Leonid; and our parishioners Vladimir, Michael, Tatiana, Tatiana and Boris.

**Expectant mothers:** Jacqueline.

**Newly-baptised:** Tanya, infant Victoria.

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

**Newly-departed:** Tatiana, Michael, George.

**Departed:** Patriarch Alexis, Patriarch Varnava, 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), and Lydia (Ustimko).



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