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**PARISH LIFE: SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 2013**

Our last newsletter was issued late in September, and a great deal has happened since then. On Saturday 28 September and Sunday 29 September we had services for the Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross and in honour of the Great-Martyr Euphemia the All-Praised of Chalcedon and Martyr Ludmilla, Princess of the Czechs. As is customary during the week after the feast of the Exaltation, the Holy Cross was in the centre of the church for veneration during these services. Receiving Holy Communion for the first time was the infant Sophia Sidorkina, baptised in our church in August. After Divine Liturgy, many years was sung for Ludmilla Roubanoff, a chorister and member of our parish from the earliest days.

On the weekend of 5-6 October we had services in honour of the Conception of Saint John, the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord. It being the last Sunday of the school holidays and the first day of daylight savings, the morning service was somewhat quieter than usual. During Divine Liturgy prayers were offered for our parishioners and friends participating in the Diocesan pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Following the service, a moleben was served for our senior altar server Sebastian Reid, before he travelled to New Delhi, India, to represent Australia in the 2013 Lawyers' Cricket World Cup.

On Monday 7 October approximately 55 people gathered for our customary October Long Weekend BBQ at Heazlett Park, Avoca. Although the wind was cold at times, an enjoyable time was had by all. Many thanks to Rick Golovin, Craig Coppman and Kate Marcotrigiano for their hard work to make this day a success.

On Sunday 13 October and Monday 14 October Father James and a number of our parishioners participated in services marking the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Holy Protection parish in Cabramatta, a suburb in Sydney's west. Archbishop Gabriel (Chemodakov) of Montreal and Canada presided at the festive services, together with the parish rector Archpriest Boris Ignatievsky, the Dean of New South Wales Archpriest Nikita Chemodakov, and a number of other Diocesan clerics.

The 2013-14 Parish Council, elected at our parish Annual General Meeting on 15 September 2013, met for the first time on Wednesday 16 October 2013. The Parish Council heard the usual pastoral and financial reports, considered priorities for the year ahead, and allocated key responsibilities. A decision was also made to continue to provide support in 2014 to the Haiti Orthodox Family Mission of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia.

On Saturday 19 October Father James baptised Emelia, the infant daughter of Ivan Zagvozkine and Natasha Belova and a baby sister to Ivan, Anton, and Alexander. Emelia's sponsors at baptism were Irina Shchelokova and Elena Fauris. Congratulations to Ivan, Natasha, Irina and Elena. May God grant his newly-baptised servant Emelia many years!

That evening and on the morning of Sunday 20 October we had services in honour of Saint Jonah of Hankow, a righteous bishop of our church who reposed in China in 1925 and was glorified in 1996. A gifted preacher of Orthodoxy and a model of pastoral service, Saint Jonah was also a great protector of children, having endured the sorrow of losing his own parents when still a child. The newly-baptised infant Emelia received Holy Communion for the first time at Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning. Following the Prayer before the Amvon, a brief moleben to Saint Jonah was served for the

children of our parish and for all present.

On Saturday 2 November Father James baptised Robert and Maxim Tomshin, two year-old twin sons of Sergey and Irina Tomshin. Robert was given the name Artemy in baptism in honour of the Great-Martyr Artemius, and Maxim was baptised in honour of Righteous Maximus the Confessor. The boys' sponsor at baptism was Olga Antropova. Congratulations to Sergey, Irina, and Olga. May God grant his newly-baptised servants Artemy and Maxim many years!

That evening, it being Demetrius Saturday, a day of commemoration of the departed, there was a general panikhida. Later that evening and on the morning of the next day there were services in honour of Saint Hilarion the Great. Towards the end of Divine Liturgy on Sunday 3 November two beautiful new icons were blessed. These icons, a gift to the parish from parishioner Ekaterina Waters, were of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia and of the Righteous Women Martha, Alexandra and Elena of Diveyevo. After the dismissal, Nestor Petroff congratulated Father James on behalf of the parish with the approach of his name-day, the feast of Saint James, Brother of the Lord (October 23/November 5). As Sunday 3 November was also the day of commemoration of Saint Hilarion, Schema-Metropolitan of the Kiev Caves, the name-day of Metropolitan Hilarion, many years was then sung first for Vladyka, and afterwards for Father James.

Following Divine Liturgy that day, Father James baptised Matthew Shmelev, the infant son of Kirill and Olga Shmelev and the baby brother of Anastasia. Matthew's sponsors at baptism were Olga Kusnetsova and Vladislav Efremov. Congratulations to Kirill, Olga, Olga and Vladislav. May God grant his newly-baptised servant Matthew many years!

Later that afternoon Father James and a small group of our parishioners journeyed to the Convent of Our Lady of Kazan in Kentlyn, New South Wales, for the celebration of the Convent's patronal feast. The November feast of the Kazan Icon commemorates the miraculous deliverance of Russia from the Poles in 1612. On Monday morning 9 priests and a deacon, headed by Archpriest Nikita Chemodakov, served Divine Liturgy.

The Parish Council met again on Wednesday 13 November. The usual reports on parish life and finances were presented, and applications for renewal of membership were considered. The forthcoming Extraordinary Parish Meeting (Чрезвычайное Приходское Собрание) on 17 November and Diocesan Conference on 12-14 December were discussed. Father James advised the Parish Council that the new parish website had been launched, and sought assistance with the preparation of a Russian version of the site. Paul Douriaguine gave a report on the operation of the Saint Seraphim of Sarov Community Russian School. It was agreed that the money-box collection during the Nativity Fast would benefit an organisation providing support to autism spectrum disorders, and that money-boxes would be available as of Sunday 1 December.

On Saturday 16 November Father James baptised two girls, two year-old Chanel and seven month-old Paris, the daughters of Edward Permikin and Oksana Novosyolova. The girls were named Alexandra and Sophia in baptism. Alexandra's godparents were Marina Wills and Zhenya Albert, and Sophia's godparents were Olga Albert and Phillip Wills. Congratulations to Edward, Oksana, Marina, Zhenya, Olga and Phillip. May God grant his newly-baptised handmaidens Alexandra and Sophia many years!

Of interest to readers will be the fact that these baptisms were the ninety-eighth and ninety-ninth in our church at West Gosford! The first was Monica Karmadonoff, way back on 4 April 2004, the day of the first Divine Liturgy in our new church.

### **PARISH LIFE: COLLECTION TO BENEFIT THE ROCOR FUND FOR ASSISTANCE**

In parishes of our Diocese a collection is generally taken up every year during November to help the work of the Fund for Assistance of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. The Fund for Assistance supports the moral-spiritual education of the youth, provides aid to the clergy, and

distributes emergency relief to the missions of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. This year, the collection will be taken up in our parish on Sunday 1 December 2013. Collection envelopes will be available in church from Sunday 17 November 2013. Those who wish to make a donation but who are unable to be in church on either of these Sundays may make a direct donation to the Fund for Assistance via their website: [www.fundforassistance.org/donate](http://www.fundforassistance.org/donate).

### **DIOCESAN LIFE: 49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SYEZD & 2013 TEEN RETREAT**

With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, the forty-ninth annual Russian Orthodox Youth Conference ("Syezd") will be held at Camp Manyung, Mt Eliza, just south of Melbourne. Beginning on Thursday, 19th December, the Syezd will be held over six days and five nights ending on Tuesday, 24th December, 2013.

Topics to be covered at this year's Syezd include: Science and Nature, Morals and Conscience, Family and Values, and Atheism and Apathy. Syezd is open to anyone over the age of 18. Detailed information about Syezd 2013, including registration, is on the official Syezd website: [www.syezd.com.au](http://www.syezd.com.au)

Running concurrently with Syezd, but in Sydney, will be the third annual Teen Retreat. Taking place to the south of Sydney at Stanwell Tops, the Teen Retreat will gather Russian Orthodox students in years 9-12. The cost of the retreat is \$200, or \$180 for those who register early. For further information, visit the website: [www.rocorteenretreat.info](http://www.rocorteenretreat.info), or see the promotional material displayed in church.

### **PARISH LIFE: OUR NEW WEBSITE PUBLISHED!**



Readers will be pleased to learn that our new website was finally published on 2 November 2013. New material is added at least every fortnight. It has regular news updates, photographs of parish life now and over years past, links to important parish documents and church websites, service timetables, information about our parish, and helpful material about occasional services like weddings and baptisms. Updates on the new site are automatically published on Facebook and Twitter, saving us work in doing so, and it has an online subscription form for those wishing to receive this newsletter and other news and information from our parish. Readers of the newsletter are encouraged to visit the new website and to provide feedback. Photographs are also welcome! Those involved in preparing the written material are not always free during the services to take photographs, but others are welcome to do so provided that order in church is maintained.

Work is now underway on a Russian-language version of the site. A small team of translators has been formed to assist with this. Any readers wishing to offer additional help should contact Father James. Once the work of setting up the Russian-language site has been done, it is expected that the usual requirement will be the translation of a paragraph or two each week from English to Russian.

### **PARISH LIFE: SUMMER 2013-14 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

The Summer 2013-14 Schedule of Services will be available on the parish website by the weekend of 23-24 November and in church from the weekend of 30 November-1 December. In December we will have three Sunday services. There will be one additional service on Saturday 7 December for the feast of Saint Katherine. It is expected that Father Martin and his family will be visiting Australia in late December-early January, and we hope to have him join us for a service at this time.

In January we will have just two Sunday services, one of them being for Theophany, the Great Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. For the feast of the Nativity of Christ (January 6-7, Russian Orthodox

Christmas) Father James will be serving in Newcastle. More information about the Christmas services will be provided in the December newsletter, together with information about the customary blessing of homes on and after the feast of Theophany.

### **SPIRITUAL LIFE: NATIVITY FAST**

The Nativity Fast begins on Thursday 28 November. Strictly speaking, every day from 28 November until 6 January should be one on which no meat or dairy products are eaten. Fish is permitted on every Saturday and Sunday during December, and also on 4, 17 and 19 December. Wine and oil are permitted on "fish" days, on Tuesdays and Thursdays during December, and also on 29 November and 13, 18, 25 and 30 December. 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. It is acknowledged, of course, that people observe the fast in many different ways, each according to their strength. Having said that, it is important that Orthodox Christians do everything in their power to preserve the integrity of the Orthodox pattern of fasts and feasts and the spiritual benefits that it brings. The Nativity Fast coincides with a time of end-of-year gatherings and "Christmas" parties. Those participating in such social activities should do so with the Nativity Fast firmly in mind. The same approach should be taken in relation to Western Christmas and New Year celebrations. Those with questions and concerns should talk to Father James.

### **PARISH LIFE: 2014 CALENDARS**

In 2014 our parish will once again be distributing the magnetic calendars that show the days of which we will have Sunday services and the wall calendars with detailed information about fasts, feasts, saints' days, and Bible readings. The wall calendar will be a commemorative calendar marking the ten-year anniversary of the opening of our church and parish centre at West Gosford. We hope that both calendars will be ready for distribution in late December.

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

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

**Expectant mothers:** Inez, Kathrine, Cathy, and Nicole.

**Newly-baptised:** Infants Emelia, Artemy, Maxim, Matthew, Alexandra and Sophia.

**Travelling:** Ivan, Maria, Nicholas and Alexander.

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

**Newly-departed:** Stefan (Smieska), the widower of Lyubov Smieska, a parishioner of ours back in the days at Narara.

**Departed:** Patriarch Alexis, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, and former parishioners and benefactors Irene (Claydon), Victor (Manjetny), Vladimir (Dmitrieff), George (Fomin), Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Krauhin), Theodore & Antonina (Tialshinsky), Lyubov (Smieska), Victor (Pulkownik), Olga (Timohina), Alexander (Dikan), Elena (Yakupova), Lydia (Ustimko), Nikolai (Pinczuk).



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