

TEN YEARS AT WEST GOSFORD



With April and May this year come the tenth anniversaries of two important events in the life of our small parish: the opening of our church at West Gosford for services on 3-4 April 2004 and the formal blessing of the new church by Metropolitan (then Archbishop) Hilarion on 16 May 2004. How much has happened in those ten years! We have had over 800 scheduled services in that time, and more than 100 baptisms. In 2008 we paid off the mortgage that was not due to be finalised until 2017, and we have since saved a further \$60,000.00 in our Future Fund, always hopeful of the

opportunity to build a permanent church. There have been sorrows and disappointments over the years, of course – the repose of parishioners and friends, and partings of the way – but it is with thanks to God that we look back over what has been accomplished here. Indeed, it is now hard to remember what a big step it was to open a church where before there had been none. May God continue to bless and help us in the years ahead!

On Sunday 18 May we will have a Thanksgiving Moleben after Divine Liturgy followed by a BBQ for parishioners and friends. Our main anniversary celebrations will coincide with our parish feast-day on 8-9 August, with Bishop George of Mayfield, the Vicar of the Eastern American diocese of our Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, presiding at Divine Liturgy.

PARISH LIFE: MARCH – MAY 2014

On Saturday 15 March and Sunday 16 March, the second Sunday in Great Lent, we had services in honour of Saint Gregory Palamas. As the Saturday was a day of commemoration of the departed we had a general memorial service before Matins that evening, with approximately 20 parishioners gathering to pray for their departed family and friends. During Divine Liturgy on Sunday, prayers approved by Patriarch Kyrill were offered for the Ukrainian land and people, a practice that has continued until now. A great many people, both adults and children, received Holy Communion, amongst them the newly-baptised infant Maria Yakimov, receiving the Holy Mysteries for the first time. A collection to assist the Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary in Jordanville, New York, was taken up after the service, raising \$247.00. Following the service, all the icons and furnishings were removed from the church in preparation for renovations beginning the following day.

Late in 2013, it was agreed that work would be undertaken during 2014 to reonovate and refurbish our small church in preparation for the celebration of ten years of parish life at West Gosford. Early in 2014 the decision was made to do this work before Pascha, a decision that regrettably made it necessary to miss services on one Saturday evening and Sunday morning during Great Lent, in addition to seven lesser services (Sunday evening Vespers and Passia on three evenings, Great Compline on two evenings, Matins with the Great Canon of Saint Andrew on Thursday of the Fifth Week, and a general pannikhida).

The renovations started with repairs to the ceiling at the rear of the church, damaged by storm water some years ago. During the three weeks that followed the lower part of the church walls

was panelled and stained, the walls and ceiling were repainted, old lights were repaired or replaced, new lights were installed, a storage shed was erected, a new electric oven and gas cooktop were installed, the icons cases were cleaned inside and out, and a number of other maintenance and cleaning tasks were undertaken. When the renovations were completed, the icons were re-hung, some changes in position being necessary because of the new panelling. Taking the lead in all this work was Vladimir ("Rick") Golovin, our long-serving Parish Council member and the original builder of our church. Rick was ably assisted by Craig Koppman, Rick's son-in-law and a steadfast friend of our parish for many years. Many parishioners came to help at different times in whatever way that they could.

On Tuesday 25 March and Wednesday 26 March Father James participated in the customary Great Lenten Pastoral Retreat and Conference for clergy of our Diocese.

The renovations having been completed, on Saturday 5 April and Sunday 6 April, we had services for the Fifth Sunday in Great Lent. These services were almost ten years to the day after our first services in West Gosford in April 2004. A great many people confessed on Saturday evening and before Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning so as to receive Holy Communion. Early on Sunday morning the Lesser Blessing of Water was served, following which the newly-renovated church was sprinkled with Holy Water. At the end of Divine Liturgy Father James congratulated Vladimir Golovin, Craig Koppman and all who assisted with the renovations.

That afternoon, Father James joined Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Miodrag Peric, Serbian Orthodox Dean of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, local rector Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Nenad Djurasinovic, and the Serbian Orthodox faithful of the Central Coast and Newcastle and their guests at a festive lunch in Mangrove Mountain, not far from the parish of the Synaxis of Serbian Saints in Peats Ridge. The occasion was the patronal feast of the parish Ladies Auxiliary, named in honour of Saint Mary of Egypt.

On Monday 7 April, the Great Feast of the Annunciation of the Mother of God, we learned with joy of the birth of a baby boy, Samuel, to our parishioners Dmitry and Larissa Sheptitsky, a younger brother for Daniel and Evelina. Our warmest congratulations to Dmitry and Larissa!

That evening our parish celebrated the Holy Mystery of Anointing with Oil. At the end of the service, Father James gave a brief sermon on the history and significance of the sacrament before anointing forty-four of our parishioners with the Holy Oil for the healing of soul and body.

On Wednesday 9 April a small group of parishioners gathered for the final Great Compline for 2014. After the service all present helped change the church vestments from black to green in preparation for Lazarus Saturday.

From the evening of Friday 11 April until Pascha, Sunday 20 April, there were ten services in our parish: Matins and Divine Liturgy for Lazarus Saturday (11-12 April); Matins for Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (13-15 April); Matins and Divine Liturgy for Great and Holy Thursday (16-17 April); Vespers of Great and Holy Friday with the bringing out of the Shroud of Christ (18 April); Midnight Office, Paschal Matins, and Divine Liturgy (19-20 April); and Paschal Vespers (20 April). All the main services were well-attended, with many parishioners receiving Holy Communion at the three Divine Liturgies, and over one hundred people gathering for Paschal Matins at midnight on Sunday 20 April. Easter cakes, eggs and other festive foods were blessed after Paschal Matins and again at midday, immediately after Paschal Vespers.

During Great Lent and on Lazarus Saturday we collected money to assist the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. Our collection raised \$784.25, and will be added to the proceeds of similar collections around the Diocese.

On Friday 25 April and Saturday 26 April, Bright Saturday, Paschal services were again held in our church. At Matins on Friday evening the Paschal Canon was sung in English. At the end of Divine

Liturgy, prayer having been offered for the bodily and spiritual health and blessing of those who would partake of it, the artos was cut and distributed to the faithful.

On 30 April we learned with joy of the birth of a baby girl, Emily, to our parishioners Victor and Susanna Bendevski, a baby sister for Phillip, Melanie and Daniel. Our warmest congratulations to Victor and Susanna!

On Saturday 3 May and Sunday 4 May we had services in honour of the Holy Myrrh-Bearing Women and of the Righteous Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. On this weekend, two of our choristers, Anna Kourbatov and Ekaterina Waters, participated in the Seventh Diocesan Liturgical Music Conference in Canberra, learning much and making many new friends.

On Tuesday 5 May Father James visited the parish of Saint George, Carlton, for the celebration of the parish feast day. Metropolitan Hilarion presided at Divine Liturgy, assisted by ten priests and two deacons.

On Tuesday 13 May we had Matins for Mid-Pentecost, the feast-day marking the half-way point between the Great Feasts of Pascha and Pentecost. As it is customary on this feast-day to bless water, this was done after Matins that evening.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Tuesday 8 April. In addition to the usual reports on parish life, finances, membership and communications, the Parish Council heard a detailed report on the recent renovation and refurbishment of our church. Plans were made for the observance of Holy Week and Pascha, and Father James' arrangements to work part-time in secular employment as of the beginning of April 2014, with three days per fortnight for pastoral duties in this parish and in Wallsend, were discussed.

The Parish Council met again on Wednesday 14 May, the evening of the feast of Mid-Pentecost. The customary pastoral and financial reports were presented, and attention was given to the possibility of a property purchase and the celebration of our parish feast-day in August. Father James noted the approach of the end of the financial year and the need to prepare for an audit of parish finances and, in September, an Annual General Meeting of parish members. The Parish Council will next meet on Wednesday 11 June.

PARISH LIFE: WINTER 2014 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

A Schedule of Services for the winter months – June, July and August – will be available in church and online on the weekend of 17-18 May. June and July will be quiet months with just the regular Saturday and Sunday services, but August will be a busy month with services for Saint Panteleimon and the Transfiguration of the Lord in addition to the usual Saturday and Sunday services. A number of NSW-ACT parishes have their feast-days during the Winter months: Croydon (All Saints of Russia) on 22 June, Canberra (Saint John the Baptist) on 7 July, Strathfield (Apostles Peter and Paul) on 12 July, Centennial Park (Saint Vladimir) on 28 July, and Wollongong (Dormition) on 31 August. As we will not have services on these days, our parishioners are encouraged to visit other parishes to celebrate these important feast-days.

DIOCESAN LIFE: FEAST-DAYS OF SAINT NICHOLAS IN FAIRFIELD AND WALLSEND

On Thursday 22 May it will be the day of commemoration of the Translation of the Relics of Saint Nicholas from Myra in Lycia to Bari in Italy. This is the patronal feast-day of two parishes in New South Wales: the parish of Saint Nicholas in Fairfield, and our neighbouring parish of Saint Nicholas in Wallsend, Newcastle. At Fairfield All-night Vigil will begin at 6.00pm on Wednesday 21 May and Divine Liturgy will begin at 9.00am on Thursday 22 May, with Metropolitan Hilarion presiding. Father James is planning to be present at these services, the Fairfield parish being the place where he served as a deacon and was ordained to the priesthood. Parishioners and friends from Gosford and Hornsby who are able to do so are encouraged to join Archpriest Nikita

Chemodakov, the Dean of New South Wales, and his parishioners on this day. Because of the small size of the Wallsend parish, there will be no services in Wallsend on 21-22 May. Instead, All-night Vigil will be served at 6.00pm on Saturday 24 May, and Divine Liturgy at 9.00am on Sunday 25 May. There will be a blessing of water before Divine Liturgy, and afterwards there will be a moleben to Saint Nicholas with a procession around the church, followed by a festive lunch to which all are invited. Parishioners and friends are also encouraged to travel to Wallsend, the parish this year celebrating 65 years of Russian Orthodoxy in Newcastle and 50 years since the consecration of the church. Our friends in Wallsend will greatly appreciate your kindness!

PARISH LIFE: DEACON MARTIN NAEF AND FAMILY RETURNING TO AUSTRALIA

Our parishioners and friends will be pleased to learn that Father Martin and his family are returning to Australia in July 2014 after two years abroad. We hope that Father Martin will again be assigned to serve in our parish, and look forward to welcoming him and his family back. Readers are asked to remember in their prayers Deacon Martin, Tatiana, Xenia, Alexander and Sebastian as they make this move.

REMINDER: 2014 PARISH MEMBERSHIP

It being well into 2014, parish members are again asked to renew their membership, and regular worshippers are invited to consider becoming members. The annual membership fee is \$30.00. Copies of the 'Application for Parish Membership' are available in church or from our website. All members are reminded that their membership is only valid if they have confessed and received Holy Communion at least once during the year. Any questions or concerns about parish membership may be raised with Father James.

DIOCESAN LIFE: FUNDRAISER FOR THE PRESENTATION CONVENT, BUNGARBY, NSW

On the evening of Sunday 1 June 2014 a fundraising dinner will be held in the parish hall of the Protection of the Holy Virgin Church in Cabramatta, NSW, to assist the Building Fund of the Presentation Sisterhood in Bungarby, NSW. After dinner Archpriest Nicholas Karipoff, our Diocesan Secretary and the senior priest of the Protection of the Holy Virgin Cathedral in Melbourne, Victoria, will give a talk: "Christianity: Not a Religion". More information is available on our website or from Father James. Please support the Sisterhood by attending this dinner or by making a donation to the Presentation Convent Building Fund.

DIOCESAN LIFE: RUSSIAN ORTHODOX KIDS' CAMP, 14-19 DECEMBER 2014

A group of young families associated primarily with the Protection of the Holy Virgin parish in Cabramatta, NSW, is organising a camp for children and young people aged 7-17 to be held at Camp Lutanda in Toukley, NSW - here on the NSW Central Coast - in December 2014. For those interested, leaflets are available in church and from our parish website. It should be noted that this year the Diocesan Teen Retreat - for young people aged 15-18, or in Years 9-12 - will be held in Victoria from 19 December-24 December.



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