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gosford

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК PARISH NEWSLETTER

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С РОЖДЕСТВОМ ХРИСТОВЫМ!

Father James, Father Martin, and the Parish Council extend to all members and friends of our parish greetings and best wishes on the feast of the Nativity of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. May He richly bless you in this festive season and in the year to come!

NATIVITY EPISTLE OF HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN HILARION OF EASTERN AMERICA AND NEW YORK, FIRST HIERARCH OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

Most Reverend fellow archpastors, most honourable fathers, brothers and sisters!

With profoundly heartfelt spiritual joy I greet all the faithful children of the Russian Church Abroad, spread all over the world like kernels of God's wheat, with the great and salutary Feast of Christ's Nativity! May the Lord send all of us this joy which saves the world. This gladness is the fruit of the struggle of faith, and stems from the triumph of the Incarnation, from God becoming man, from hearing the celestial doxology from the heavens above the city of Bethlehem.

During the celebratory days which follow the Feast we especially feel God's love for us, sinners. For though mankind turned away from its Maker, the Creator became a creature; Almighty God came down from the heavens and became one of us. He is born a helpless Infant in a humble cave where livestock is herded in bad weather. God becomes man to arrange for a mystical encounter, to destroy the barrier between Heaven and earth which was wrought by man's sin. This encounter must take place within our innermost selves and in our relationships with those in whom the image of God is reflected—our neighbours.

During these holy and joyful days each parish church becomes Bethlehem and the heart of every man becomes the cave. All over the world, God's people fill our churches. But what takes place in the cave of the heart of each one of us when Christ and His Holy Family come knocking? Does our heart open? Does it receive the Lord and what does the Lord find inside? Let us contemplate this, dear fathers in Christ, brothers and sisters. Let us remember the words of Abba Makarios recorded in the book "Sayings Worth Remembering."

Once, travelling across Egypt with a group of his brethren, Abba Makarios heard the words of a boy directed to his mother: 'Dear Mother, a certain rich man loves me, but I hate him. Another man, a pauper, hates me, but I love him.' On hearing these words, Abba Makarios was surprised. The brethren asked him: 'What do these words mean, and why have they amazed you so, father?' The elder answered them: 'In truth, the Lord is wealthy and loves us, yet we do not want to obey Him. However, our enemy, the devil, is poor and hates us: yet we love his impurity.'

So, let us open wide our hearts and welcome the Son of God who has come to earth. Let us add our voice to the doxology of the angels and worship Him with the magi. Let us rejoice in His love and mercy for us. Let each one of us, according to our meagre strength, respond with love to His love. Let us find fulfilment in communion with Him. And let each of us exemplify a virtuous Christian life, thereby supporting our neighbour

and showing him our heartfelt disposition. God is with us with His grace and love for mankind always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

With love in Christ Who is born and a request for prayers,

† Hilarion,
Metropolitan of New York & Eastern America,
First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia

Преосвященные собратья-архипастыри, всечестные отцы, братья и сестры!

С чувством глубокой духовной радости приветствую верных чад Русской Зарубежной Церкви и всех русских православных верующих, рассеянных, как Божия пшеница, по всему миру, с великим и миротворительным праздником Рождества Христова! Да пошлет всем нам Господь эту спасающую мир радость. И подвиг веры, и плод ее должен быть этой радостью, от торжества Боговоплощения и вочеловечения, от слышания небесного славословия и неземного мира, воспетого над градом Вифлеемским.

В дни рождественских святок особенно чувствуется любовь Божия к нам, грешным, ибо несмотря на то, что человечество отвернулось от своего Создателя, Творец стал тварью, Всемогущий Бог сошел с небес и стал одним из нас, родившись беспомощным младенцем в убогой пещере, куда загоняли скот в плохую погоду. Бог становится человеком ради того, чтобы совершилась таинственная встреча между Ним и нами, чтобы разрушить преграду между Небом и землей, воздвигнутую человеческим грехом. Встреча эта должна происходить в нашей внутренней жизни и во взаимоотношениях с образом Божиим, отражающимся в наших ближних.

В эти святые и радостные дни каждая приходская церковь становится Вифлеемом, а каждое сердце человеческое – вертепом. Наши храмы по всему миру наполняются народом Божиим. А что происходит в вертепе сердца каждого из нас, куда стучит Христос со Святым Семейством? Открывается ли наше сердце? Принимает ли оно Господа и что находит в нем Господь? Задумаемся над этим, дорогие о Господе отцы, братья и сестры, и вспомним слова аввы Макария из "Достопамятных сказаний": *"Однажды, проходя с братьями через Египет, авва Макарий услышал слова отрока, который говорил своей матери: Матушка! Один богач любит меня, а я ненавижу его, а такой-то бедный ненавидит меня, а я люблю его. Услышав это, авва Макарий удивился. Братия спросили: что значат эти слова, что ты, отец, им удивился? Старец отвечал им: действительно, Господь наш богат и любит нас, а мы не хотим Его слушать, а враг наш, дьявол, беден и ненавидит нас, а мы любим его скверны"*.

Итак, широко раскроем свои сердца, примем пришедшего на Землю Сына Божия, присоединимся к славословию ангелов, поклонимся Ему с волхвами, возрадуемся о Его любви и милости к нам, постараемся в меру своих скудных сил ответить любовью на Его любовь и насладиться общением с Ним, укрепив нашего ближнего добрым примером христианской жизни и сердечным к нему расположением.

С нами Бог Своею благодатью и человеколюбием всегда, ныне и присно, и во веки веков. Аминь!

С любовью о Христе Родившемся и просьбой о молитвах,

+ ИЛАРИОН,
Митрополит Восточно-Американский и Нью-Йоркский,
Первоиерарх Русской Зарубежной Церкви.
Рождество Христово 2011/2012 г.

Patriarch Kirill's Nativity Epistle

Your Eminences the Archpastors, Honourable Fathers, God-Loving Monks and Nuns, Dear Brothers and Sisters!

On this radiant and joyful feast of the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, I cordially greet you all, my dear ones. On this light-bearing night together we prayerfully echo the doxology of the angels, proclaiming "great joy to all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour" (Luke 2:10-11).

Humanity, which rejected God in the Fall, discovers anew the chance to be united with its Creator and Provider. The coming of the Son of God into the world is his voluntary self-abnegation, ready to descend to a tortuous and shameful "death – even death on the cross" (Philippians 2:8). God is born in the flesh so that He may manifest His love to people and help every person willing to listen to His call to find the fullness of life.

That is why today's feast grants to us the immutable hope of help from above in the most complex situations of our life. God, Who has not abandoned His creation and has revealed to it the way to eternity, is revealed to us in the Infant Christ, a defenceless Child in need of care and love.

All of us must retain in our hearts this Biblical image. In recalling the Divine Infant lying in a manger, we acquire a firm faith and indestructible hope in Divine Providence leading to the good of every human person. And even if in our life no support remains, if all seems to be unsure and unreliable, we are to realize clearly that the Lord can transform through His gracious power the pain, suffering and poverty of our world into happiness, joy and an abundance of spiritual gifts.

On the feast of the coming of the Saviour the mental gaze of the faithful is turned towards the cradle of Christianity, the Holy Land, which was deemed worthy to be the place of the birth, abode and earthly ministry of the Lord. Today, Christ's followers in the countries where the events of sacred history took place are experiencing difficult trials, encountering new threats to the existence of centuries-old spiritual traditions. During these radiant days of the Nativity, let us offer up ardent prayers for our brothers in the faith, the guardians of precious holy sites, the heirs of the tradition of ancient Christianity.

"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26). These words of the Apostle concern not only the members of a single parish, a single church community. Indeed, they embrace all of the children of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Orthodox Church spread throughout the world. Her unity abides not only in a single patristic faith and communion in the sacraments but also in the sharing of hardships together, in sacrificial ministry towards each other, in mutual prayer. The past year has been difficult in the life of many countries and nations, including those who live in the expanse of historical Russia: many tragic events and cataclysms have proved to be a trial of our faith and steadfastness.

However, today the worst tribulations occur not in the material but in the spiritual realm. The dangers which abide on the physical plane have a negative impact on our physical well-being and comfort.

And while making the material aspect of life more complex, they nevertheless cannot do essential harm to the life of the spirit. Yet it is precisely the spiritual dimension which sheds light on the most important and grave challenge to our view of the modern world. This challenge is aimed at the destruction of the sense of morality embedded in our souls by God. Today we are told that the human person is the measure – and sole measure – of truth, that each individual has his own truth and that each individual decides for himself what is good and what is evil. The divine truth, and this means the distinction between good and evil that is founded on this Truth, is being substituted by a moral indifference and permissiveness which destroys people's souls and denies them eternal life. If natural disasters and wars ruin the external structure of life, then moral relativism corrodes one's conscience, making us spiritual invalids, distorts the divine laws of being and breaks the connection between creation and Creator.

We are to resist this danger in the first instance by calling to our help the Most-Pure Virgin and the host of God's saints so that through their intercession before the Throne of the "Sovereign Lord, Holy and True" (Revelations 6:10), now venerated in the image of the newborn Infant, they may beseech for us the strength to combat sin and fight "against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). It is important to learn how to recognize the deceits and illusions of

earthly well-being in our destructive addictions, in our greedy strivings, in the temptations of advertisements, in the entertainment industry and political propaganda. It is important at all times to listen to the voice of our conscience warning us of the danger of sin, to be able to make our actions fit the commandments of the Gospel.

Now, as always, each Christian is called upon to assert through his everyday actions the dignity of a righteous way of life, to consciously resist moral relativism and the cult of getting rich quickly. We are surrounded by a great number of infirm, sick and lonely people. There are also many who out of economic necessity have left their homes in search of a wage and need our care, often finding themselves in a hostile environment. Every pastor and layman is to participate in the social, missionary and public life of the Church. As St Innocent of Chersonese says: "It is only in the light of Christ that we can see God, see ourselves and see the world in its true aspect; it is only through the guidance of heavenly Revelation that we can find the path leading to life eternal."

With those who hope for the consolation of Christ we are to share warmly the joy of today's feast. Each of us can bring the light of the star of Bethlehem to those close to us and far from us – to our colleagues, friends, relatives and neighbours.

In the past year, working with the state authorities, public organizations and the representatives of the business community, many initiatives have been undertaken that can unite people and revive the strong spiritual and moral foundations of public life.

The development of this co-operation, as well as witness to the precious unity of our Church, was aided by my trips throughout Russia, Ukraine and Moldova. These visits enriched my experience of prayer and communion with the faithful and, I hope, helped to strengthen our spiritual ties. In divine worship attended by a huge number of people, the strength of faith and prayer which is the beauty of Orthodoxy, the beauty and power of "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), manifested itself in a special way.

In congratulating all of you on the Nativity of Christ and the New Year, I prayerfully wish that you abide unflinchingly in the joy of the Lord who was incarnate so that "we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7). "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13). Amen.

+ KIRILL
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA The Nativity of Christ
Moscow
2011/2012

Преосвященные архипастыри, всечестные отцы, боголюбивые иноки и инокини, дорогие братья и сестры!

В светлый и исполненный радости праздник Рождества по плоти Господа и Бога и Спаса нашего Иисуса Христа сердечно приветствую всех вас, дорогие мои. В эту светозарную ночь мы вместе молитвенно вторим ангельскому славословию, возвещающему *«великую радость, которая будет всем людям: ибо ныне родился в городе Давидовом Спаситель»* (Лк. 2:10-11).

Человечество, отвергшее Бога в грехопадении, вновь обретает возможность единства со своим Творцом и Промыслителем. Вхождение Сына Божия в мир есть Его добровольное умаление себя до готовности снизойти до мучительной позорной *«смерти, и смерти крестной»* (Флп. 2:8). Бог рождается во плоти, для того чтобы явить Свою любовь людям и помочь обрести полноту бытия всякому человеку, желающему услышать Его призыв.

Именно поэтому нынешний праздник дарует нам непреложное упование на помощь свыше в самых сложных обстоятельствах нашей жизни. Бог, не оставивший Своего творения и открывший ему путь к вечности, явлен нам во Младенце Христе, беззащитном ребенке, нуждающемся во внимании и заботе.

Всем нам необходимо хранить в своем сердце этот библейский образ. Вспоминая лежащего в яслях Богомладенца, мы обретаем твердую веру и нерушимую надежду на Промысл Божий, ведущий ко благу всякого человека. И даже если в жизни нашей не остается опоры, все кажется нетвердым и ненадежным, мы должны ясно осознавать, что Господь способен преобразить Своей благодатной силой боль, страдание и нищету нашего мира в блаженство, радость и изобилие духовных даров.

В праздник пришествия Спасителя мысленные взоры верных обращаются к колыбели христианства, Святой Земле, удостоившейся быть местом рождения, обитания и земного служения Господа. Ныне последователи Христа в странах, где происходили события Священной истории, переживают нелегкие испытания, сталкиваются с новыми угрозами существованию многовековой духовной традиции. Вознесем в светлые дни Рождества усердные молитвы о наших братьях по вере, хранителях бесценных святынь, наследниках первохристианского предания.

Если страдает один член, то с ним страдают все члены (см. 1 Кор. 12:26). Эти слова апостола относятся не только к членам одного прихода, одной церковной общины. Они, конечно же, охватывают всех чад Единой Святой, Соборной и Апостольской Церкви, Церкви Православной, распространенной по всему миру. Ее единство — не только в единой святоотеческой вере и общении в Таинствах, но и в сопереживании трудностям, в жертвенном служении друг другу, во взаимной молитве.

Минувший год был непростым в жизни многих стран и народов, в том числе тех, что проживают на пространстве исторической Руси: немало трагических происшествий и катаклизмов послужили испытанием нашей веры и стойкости.

Однако сегодня главные испытания свершаются не в материальной, а в духовной области. Тс опасности, которые лежат в физической плоскости, наносят урон телесному благополучию и комфорту. Осложняя материальную сторону жизни, они вместе с тем не способны нанести существенный вред жизни духовной. Но именно духовное измерение обнаруживает важнейший и серьезнейший мировоззренческий вызов нашего времени. Этот вызов направлен на уничтожение нравственного чувства, заложенного в нашей душе Богом. Сегодня человека пытаются убедить в том, что он и только он мерило истины, что у каждого своя правда и каждый сам определяет, что есть добро, а что — зло. Божественную истину, а значит, и основанное на этой Истине отличие добра от зла, пытаются заменить нравственным безразличием и вседозволенностью, которые разрушают души людей, лишают их жизни вечной. Если природные катастрофы и военные действия превращают в развалины внешнее устройство жизни, то нравственный релятивизм разъедает совесть человека, делает его духовным инвалидом, искажает Божественные законы бытия и нарушает связь творения с Создателем.

Этой опасности нам должно противостоять в первую очередь, призывая на помощь Пречистую Деву и сонм угодников Божиих, дабы они своим заступничеством у Престола *Владыки Святого и Истинного* (Откр. 6:10), почитаемого ныне в образе новорожденного Младенца, исходатайствовали для нас силы бороться с грехом, бороться *«против мироправителей тьмы века сего, против духов злобы поднебесных»* (Еф. 6:12). Обманы и миражи земного благополучия важно научиться распознавать в наших пагубных пристрастиях, в корыстных устремлениях, в соблазнах рекламы, в развлекательных и политических текстах. Важно всегда слышать голос своей совести, предупреждающей об опасности греха, уметь согласовывать свои действия с Евангельскими заветами.

Ныне, как и всегда, каждый христианин призван подтверждать своими ежедневными поступками ценность праведного образа жизни, сознательно противостоять нравственному релятивизму и культу быстрой наживы. Вокруг нас много немощных, больных, одиноких людей. Немало и таких, кто в силу экономических трудностей покинул родные места в поисках заработка и нуждается в заботе, попадая подчас в недружелюбное окружение. В проведении социальной, миссионерской, церковно-общественной работы должен участвовать каждый пастырь и мирянин. По слову святителя Иннокентия Херсонского: *«Только во свете Христовом можно видеть Бога, себя и мир в истинном их виде; только по указанию Откровения небесного можно найти стезю, ведущую в вечную жизнь»*.

С теми, кто чаёт Христово утешения, мы должны разделить тепло и радость нынешнего праздника. Каждый из нас может принести свет Вифлеемской звезды ближним и дальним — коллегам, друзьям, родственникам, соседям.

В минувшем году в соработничестве с государственными властями, общественными организациями, представителями деловых кругов было положено начало многим инициативам, которые могут сплотить людей, возродить твердые духовные и нравственные основы общественной жизни.

Развитию такого соработничества, также как и свидетельству о драгоценном единстве нашей Церкви, служили и совершенные мною поездки по России, Украине, Молдове. Эти посещения обогатили мой опыт молитвы и общения с верующим народом и, надеюсь, содействовали укреплению духовных уз. В богослужениях, проходивших при участии очень большого количества людей, особым образом являлась сила веры и молитвы, что и составляет красоту Православия, красоту и мощь *«единства духа в союзе мира»* (Еф. 4:3).

Поздравляя всех вас с Рождеством Христовым и Новолетием, молитвенно желаю неизменного пребывания в радости о Господе, Который воплотился, чтобы *«мы по упованию соделались наследниками вечной жизни»* (Тит. 3:7). *«Бог же надежды да исполнит вас всякой радости и мира в вере, дабы вы, силою Духа Святаго, обогатились надеждою»* (Рим. 15:13). Аминь.

+КИРИЛЛ,
ПАТРИАРХ МОСКОВСКИЙ И ВСЕЯ РУСИ
Рождество Христово 2011/2012 года
Москва

PARISH LIFE: DECEMBER - JANUARY 2011

Our final Divine Liturgy for 2011 was on Sunday 18 December. At the end of that service, as mentioned in the last issue of this newsletter, our new icon of the Martyr Irene of Egypt, the patron saint of Irene Claydon, a parishioner who reposed in 2010, was blessed. After the dismissal, a brief memorial litiya was served for Irene.

That afternoon, Father James baptised Alicia, the daughter of Roman and Angela Tomachinsky. Alicia was given the name Elizabeth in Holy Baptism, in honour of the New Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia. Her godparents were Anna Savenkova – whose own children were recently baptised in our church – and Alexander Gerasimov. May God grant his newly-baptised handmaiden Elizabeth many years!

The following day, Monday 19 December, was one of the feast-days of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia. Father James served in Wallsend, with a small number of people travelling from Gosford for the services.

On the weekend of 24-25 December, Fathers James and Martin served at the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Strathfield, there being no services at either Wallsend or Croydon.

On Monday 26 December Father James participated in a Pastoral Conference at Croydon, with a number of priests from around the Australian and New Zealand Diocese in attendance. The main item of discussion was the development of Diocesan policy and procedures for addressing inappropriate behaviour in the life of the church.

On Tuesday 27 December Father James, Rick Golovin and Craig Koppman packed a number of items from the church into two vans and drove to Wisemans Ferry, the site of the 2011 Diocesan Youth Conference, or Syezd. A Syezd "chapel" was arranged there in one of the conference rooms, in very much the same style as our camp "chapels". Morning and evening prayers were read in the chapel each day of the Syezd, and Matins and Divine Liturgy were served there towards the end of the week. On the Friday afternoon, Rick and Craig arrived again to pack everything up and return it to the church. For those interested, information about the Syezd – including photographs and the Syezd resolution – can be viewed at www.rocor.org.au. It is expected that next year's Syezd will be held interstate.

On Saturday 31 December, we had Matins for the Holy Fathers, and on Sunday 1 January, our first Divine Liturgy for 2012. That afternoon there was another baptism – that of Evelyn Bondarenko, the infant daughter of Reader Evgeny Bondarenko and his wife, Daria Yushkova. Evelyn, born on 11/11/2011, was baptised on 1/1/2012! She was given the name Eva in Holy Baptism, in honour of our Righteous Foremother Eve. May God grant Reader Evgeny, Dasha and the newly-illuminated Eva many years!

On Monday 2 January a small group of parishioners gathered to clean the church in preparation for the Christmas services. As usual, Olga Petroff prepared a lovely lunch for everyone to share. The church looked wonderful after the clean-up, with everything polished and in order. Many thanks to all who were able to help on the day.

On Thursday 5 January and Friday 6 January we had services for the Eve of the Nativity of Christ. Both services were very well attended. A number of people helped with the reading of the Old Testament prophecies on Friday morning. At the end of the service, Father James congratulated Klava Dmitrieff and Chloe Koppman, both of whom were celebrating their name-day, and the choir sang "Many Years". Most present remained behind for tea, at which time the Ladies' Auxiliary drew their Christmas Raffle. This was a really lovely day in the life of our small parish.

On Christmas itself there were no services at Gosford. Father James served at Wallsend, with quite a number of Gosford parishioners travelling there for the services. The church at Wallsend was full during Divine Liturgy, with a great many more people present than in many years. There was a festive lunch afterwards for which many people stayed. On Sunday 8 January, the second day of Christmas, Father James and Father Martin both served at the All Saints of Russia parish in Croydon, there being no services at Gosford or Wallsend.

CHURCH LIFE: DECEMBER 2011 SYNOD DECISIONS

Our Synod of Bishops, meeting in New York from 9-12 December 2011, approved important liturgical materials that will be of interest to the faithful. The first of these was a *Prayer before Surgery*. Appointed for use in a moleben for the sick in place of the usual prayer, it reads as follows:

O Master Almighty, holy King, Who dost chastise yet slayest not, Who settest aright the fallen and liftest up those who have been cast down, Who curest the bodily ailments of men! We pray Thee, O our God: With Thy mercy visit Thy servant *N*, who is ill, and forgive him (her) his (her) every offense, voluntary or involuntary. Yea, O Lord, send down from heaven Thy healing power, to guide the mind and hand of Thy servant, the surgeon, that he (she) may successfully perform the needful surgery, that the bodily affliction of Thy servant *N* may be completely healed, and that every adverse affect thereof may be driven far away from him (her). Raise him (her) up from his (her) bed of pain, and grant him (her) health of soul and body that he (she) may be well pleasing to Thee and do Thy will.

Exclamation: For Thine it is to have mercy and to save us, O our God, and we send up glory unto Thee—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit—now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The second was an *Order for Blessing a Couple Who Have Lived Together for Many Years Without Church Marriage*. This service is essentially an abbreviated form of the marriage service, without an exchange of rings or crowning. It includes the following prayer:

O Master, Lord our God, Who knowest the secret things of men, Who forgavest Rahab the harlot and didst accept the repentance of the publican: Be not mindful of our sins of ignorance, committed from the time of our youth. For if thou shalt mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall withstand Thee, or what flesh will be justified in Thy sight? For Thou alone art righteous, sinless, holy, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, and dost repent of the evils of men. O Master Who didst bring thy servants *N* and *N* together, do Thou unite them one to another in love, and grant them the publican's change of heart and the tears of the harlot, that, repenting

with all their heart, and doing Thy commandments in oneness of mind and peace, they may also be accounted worthy of Thy heavenly kingdom.

Exclamation: For Thou art the Arranger of all things, and unto Thee do we send up glory—to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit—now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

The third was a short *Blessing of Oil Performed by a Lone Priest in the Hospital or Home*. This order replaces the full *Rite of the Mystery of Holy Unction* (or «Соборование»), such as is served in our parishes during Great Lent. The full service is customarily served by seven priests and has seven epistle readings, Gospel readings, and prayers.

Anyone with any questions about these liturgical materials may speak with Father James.

SPIRITUAL LIFE: BLESSING OF HOMES DURING THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY

As is customary, Father James will be blessing parish homes during the feast of Theophany. This is not the full blessing performed when residence is taken up in a new home – in which the four walls of the home are anointed with oil, as in the consecration of a church – but the simple blessing by sprinkling the Holy Water that is blessed on the feast of Theophany. This annual blessing is a way that the Church comes to us and becomes a part of our home life. The service takes around ten minutes, with Holy Water being sprinkled throughout the house as everyone sings the troparion and kontakion for Theophany. Prayers for the health and salvation of all who live there are then read, and finally all are sprinkled with Holy Water as they kiss the Cross.

At this stage, it is likely that Father James will visit homes in and around Gosford and Woy Woy on Thursday 19 January; homes in Hornsby on Friday 20 January; and homes around Wyong on Saturday 21 January. Any homes missed on these three days will be visited during the following week. Those wishing to have their homes blessed can make a note of it on the list at church, or contact Fr James directly.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council, which last met on 13 December 2011, is at present enjoying an extended summer break, with the next meeting not due until the evening of Tuesday 24 January 2012. The focus of the next meeting is likely to be primarily on a range of legal and governance issues: occupational health and safety, privacy, and child safety, amongst other things.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

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

Families with new babies: Svetlana, Peter and baby Emilia.

Expectant mothers: Maria, Natalia, Marije, Elena, Elise, Lydia, Katherine, Irina, Cathy.

Newly-departed: Josef (Slyszak).

Departed: Patriarch Alexis, 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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