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**PARISH LIFE: DEPARTURE OF FATHER MARTIN FOR OVERSEAS & METROPOLITAN HILARION'S VISIT**

As some readers may be aware, Father Martin and his family will be relocating to France in July due to work commitments. Father Martin's last service in Gosford will be on Sunday 1 July. Metropolitan Hilarion will visit our parish and preside at Divine Liturgy on Sunday 1 July, coinciding with Father Martin's final service. A festive lunch at the church will follow Divine Liturgy. Parishioners and friends are encouraged to be present to farewell Father Martin and to welcome Metropolitan Hilarion to preside at Divine Liturgy for the first time since he became First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia.

**PARISH LIFE: APRIL – MAY 2012**

As there has been only one Sunday service since the April newsletter was published, there is little parish news this month. Parish Council met on Tuesday 1 May for the first time since March, the number of services during April having made it difficult to meet. The meeting was a long one, with the management of risks - particularly child safety - around the parish figuring prominently. Also discussed were Father Martin's departure, preparations for Great Feast of Pentecost and the upcoming parish feast day to be celebrated on Saturday 11 August, trends in parish life, guidelines for parish office-bearers such as the Treasurer and Secretary, and plans for redesign of the parish website. Rick Golovin was asked to plan some minor renovations to the church, it now being eight years that we have been at West Gosford: 3 April was the anniversary of our first service, and 16 May the anniversary of the blessing of the church by Archbishop Hilarion, as he then was. On Saturday 19 May a small group of parishioners travelled to Wallsend (Newcastle) for the celebration of the patronal feast of the church of the Saint Nicholas. Father James concelebrated Divine Liturgy with Father Alexander Filchakov of the Holy Protection parish in Blacktown and Hieromonk John

(MacPherson). There was a moleben and procession around the church afterwards, and many stayed on for the festive lunch.

## **DIOCESAN LIFE: PATRIARCHAL EPISTLE ON THE FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CANONICAL COMMUNION**

Dear in the Lord Reverend Archpastors, Honorable Presbyters and Deacons, God-beloved Monks and Nuns, Dear Brothers and Sisters:

*Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith,  
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ  
in sincerity" (Ephesians 6:23-24).*

Today the Russian Orthodox Church marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion. This document brought to an end many years of division between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. We remember these events of great historical significance, representing the victory over one of the tragic consequences of the political and spiritual catastrophe endured by Russia in the 20th century.

Last century, our Homeland and Church were subjected to the most burdensome tribulations. Churches were destroyed, sacred objects were desecrated, God-given human freedom was trampled, the raiment of the Church was rent by internal and external enemies. A fratricidal conflict doomed millions of our compatriots, and the brutality of the godless persecutors brought a great host of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia to death in the name of Christ.

The Revolution and consequent Civil War became the cause of a massive exodus of our compatriots from Russia. Millions of them found themselves scattered throughout the whole world. The Orthodox faith united these refugees, and they carefully preserved the flame of faith, handing it down from generation to generation. But the dramatic historic circumstances also evoked divisions within the Russian Orthodox diaspora.

Even as it was lifted upon its cross, Orthodox Russia believed in its resurrection. With special earnestness did the children of the Church—both in the Fatherland and abroad—raise their prayers to our Lord and Savior to eliminate this sorrowful division. We dared to appeal to the heavenly intercession of the Holy New Martyrs with our pleas.

By Divine Mercy, the situation in our country changed fundamentally. Orthodox Christians took this as a gift from above. The Russian Orthodox Church obtained full freedom, including in the area of church-state relations.

Division was painful for the entire Church, a sorrow for the whole people. This is no exaggeration; one needs only remember the attention paid by society as our reconciliation began. The government authorities were not indifferent either. In the process of dialog, we tried to avoid bringing any harm or new wounds to each other.

There could be no conquerors nor vanquished in this process. In the end, victory was achieved by the many millions of members of the Russian Church, whose unity was reestablished.

During these days we prayerfully recall His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia and His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus of Eastern America and New York. On the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, May 4/17, 2007, they sealed with their signatures the Act of Canonical Communion on the ambo of Christ the Savior Cathedral and concelebrated Divine Liturgy together. We also thank all those who labored and drew this unity near.

Now, when our communion is reestablished and we commune of one Chalice together, let us bring thanks to the All-Merciful God, Who with His almighty hand led us to our desired unity to the glory of His Holy name and the good of His Holy Church.

Today we can boldly state that we have manifested in deed the testament of St Tikhon, Patriarch of All Russia: "It is specifically in unity, cooperative action and brotherly love that power lies." We can joyfully attest to the fact that the gates of hell (Matthew 16:18) have not prevailed over the Russian Church. She now fruitfully fulfills her salvific service both in the Fatherland and outside its borders.

The five-year period which has passed since the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion has proven abundant with good examples of cooperation. There is not enough time to recall the daily examples of cooperation happening on the local level: our Church is not only declared united in word, but it is so in our deeds. It is even remarkable how quickly and easily the barriers fell. This has become possible precisely because we were and continue to be the bearers of the very same Russian Orthodox tradition, we have common spiritual and moral values which we bring to the world.

Let us thankfully and carefully preserve the great gift of Church unity, the unity of the people of God. Let us resist any attempt to introduce strife and division in the life of the Church, to shake the foundations of her canonical existence.

Let us pray in earnest for those who for various reasons find themselves outside of unity with the Russian Orthodox Church. Again and again we invite them to commune in the love of Christ, which "seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Corinthians 13:5-7).

May the Lord behold with His merciful gaze our prayers and efforts and "bless His people with peace" (Psalms 29:11), of which He told the Apostles before His sufferings: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).  
Amen.

+KIRILL,  
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA  
Moscow, May 17, 2012

**Послание Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Кирилла архипастырям, пастырям, диаконам, монашествующим и всем верным чадам Русской Православной Церкви по случаю пятилетия подписания Акта о каноническом общении между Московским Патриархатом и РПЦЗ**

*В преддверии пятилетия подписания Акта о каноническом общении между Московским Патриархатом и Русской Православной Церковью Заграницей. Святейший Патриарх Московский и всея Руси Кирилл обратился с посланием к архипастырям, пастырям, диаконам, монашествующим и всем верным чадам Русской Православной Церкви*

**Возлюбленные о Господе Преосвященные архипастыри, всечестные пресвитеры и диаконы, боголюбивые иноки и инокини, дорогие братья и сестры!**

*«Мир братьям и любовь с верою от Бога Отца и Господа Иисуса.*

*Благодать со всеми неизменно любящими Господа нашего Иисуса Христа»  
(Еф. 6:23-24).*

Ныне Русская Православная Церковь отмечает пятилетие подписания Акта о каноническом общении. Этот документ положил конец многолетнему разделению между Московским Патриархатом и Русской Православной Церковью Заграницей. Мы вспоминаем о событии большого исторического значения, знаменующем собой преодоление одного из трагических последствий политической и духовной катастрофы, пережитой Россией в XX столетии.

В минувшем веке нашу Родину и Церковь постигли тяжелейшие испытания. Разрушались храмы, осквернялись святыни, грубо попиралась Богом дарованная человеку свобода, хитон церковный раздирали враги внешние и внутренние. Братоубийственная междоусобица погубила миллионы наших сограждан, а

лютость безбожных гонителей привела к кончине за имя Христово великого сонма Новомучеников и исповедников Российских.

Революция и последующая гражданская война стали причиной массового исхода из России наших соотечественников. Миллионы их оказались рассеянными по всему миру. Православная вера объединяла беженцев, и они бережно сохраняли огонь веры, передавая его из поколения в поколение. Но драматические исторические обстоятельства вызвали разделение внутри русского православного рассеяния.

Восходя на крест, православная Русь верила в свое воскресение. С особым усердием возносили чада церковные — как в Отечестве, так и за его пределами — молитвы ко Господу и Спасителю нашему об упразднении горестного разделения. В этом чаянии мы обращались к дерзновенному небесному предстательству новомучеников.

Милостью Божией ситуация в стране изменилась коренным образом. Православные люди восприняли это как дар свыше. Русская Православная Церковь обрела полную свободу в том числе и в среде церковно-государственных отношений.

Разделение было болью всей Церкви, скорбью всего народа. И это не преувеличение: достаточно вспомнить, с каким вниманием наше общество следило за начавшимся сближением. Не оставалась безучастной к нему и государственная власть. В процессе диалога мы действовали так, чтобы не наносить ущерба и новых ран друг другу. На этом пути не могло быть победителей и победивших. В итоге победу одержала вся многомиллионная Русская Церковь, чье единство было восстановлено.

В эти дни мы молитвенно вспоминаем [Святейшего Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Алексия II](#) и [Высокопреосвященнейшего митрополита Восточно-Американского и Нью-Йоркского Лавра](#). В праздник Вознесения Господня 4/17 мая 2007 года на амвоне кафедрального соборного Храма Христа Спасителя они [скрепили](#) своими подписями Акт о каноническом общении и совместно совершили Божественную литургию. Мы благодарим также всех тех, кто потрудился и приближал это единство.

Теперь, когда восстановлено наше общение и мы вместе причащаемся от единой Чаши, возблагодарим Всемилостивого Бога, Своею всеильною десницею приведшего нас к вожделенному единству, во славу Его Святого имени и на благо Его Святой Церкви.

Сегодня мы можем смело сказать, что делом исполнили завет святителя Тихона, Патриарха Всероссийского: *«Именно в единении, согласном действовании и*

*братской любви — сила».* Мы можем с радостью свидетельствовать, что *врата адовы* (Мф. 16:18) не одолели Русскую Церковь. Она ныне плодотворно совершает свое спасительное служение как в Отечестве, так и за его пределами. Пятилетие, которое прошло со времени подписания Акта о каноническом общении, было богато добрыми примерами взаимодействия. Не достанет времени, чтобы приводить примеры повседневного сотрудничества на местах, которые свидетельствуют: наша Церковь не только провозглашена теперь единой, но и на деле таковой является. Даже удивительно, как быстро и легко

пали многолетние средостения. Это стало возможным именно потому, что мы были и остаемся носителями одной и той же русской православной традиции, у нас единые духовные и нравственные ценности, которые мы несем миру.

Будем благодарно и бережно хранить великий дар единства Церкви, единства народа Божия. Будем противостоять любым попыткам внести смуту и разделение в жизнь Церкви, поколебать основы ее канонического бытия.

Будем усердно молиться о тех, кто по разным причинам находится еще вне единства с Русской Православной Церковью. Снова и снова приглашаем их в общение любви Христовой, которая *не ищет своего, не раздражается, не мыслит зла, не радуется неправде, а сорадуется истине; все покрывает, всему верит, всего надеется, все переносит* (1 Кор. 13:5-7).

Господь же да призрит милостивым Своим оком на наши молитвы и труды и *благословит люди Своя миром* (Пс. 28:11), о котором Он говорил апостолам перед Своими страданиями: *Мир Мой оставляю вам, мир Мой даю Вам* (Ин. 14:27).

Аминь.

**+КИРИЛЛ,  
ПАТРИАРХ МОСКОВСКИЙ И ВСЕЯ РУСИ**

## **PARISH LIFE: WINTER SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

The winter schedule of services is now available in church, online and – if you receive it by post – enclosed with this newsletter. Services of note over the next month include a general memorial service on Saturday 2 June, a day of commemoration of the departed. Parishioners and friends can put up their commemoration books or other lists of names to be remembered in prayer at this service, and may also bring kutiya and other foods for blessing. Immediately after that service we will begin All-night Vigil for the Great Feast of Pentecost, or Троица. As is customary, Divine Liturgy on

the day of the feast will be followed by Vespers with the three “kneeling prayers”, the first time after Pascha that we pray on our knees. For Pentecost, the church will be decorated with many green branches in honour of the Life-giving Holy Trinity, and the Ladies’ Auxiliary will have small bunches of flowers for the faithful to purchase and hold during the service. Looking further ahead, Metropolitan Hilarion will join us Sunday 1 July at 9am, and we will also have a service for the Transfiguration of the Lord on Sunday 19 August. Further information on our parish feast day to be held on Saturday 11 August will be forthcoming.

### **CHURCH LIFE: APOSTLES’ FAST**

The Apostles’ Fast begins on Monday 11 June this year, continuing until Thursday 12 July – the feast of Sts Peter and Paul. In general, wine and oil are permitted on Tuesdays and Thursdays during this fast, and Fish is permitted on weekends. Anyone unsure about how best to approach the fast should talk to Father James.

### **PARISH LIFE: CHARITABLE COLLECTION**

A collection for the Orthodox mission in Pakistan will be taken up in our parish during the Apostles’ Fast. The usual money-boxes will be available on Sunday 3 June. The St Michael the Archangel Orthodox mission in Pakistan urgently requires English prayer books, study material and altar vessels amongst other items. In the future, the mission hopes to establish an orphanage. Please assist this young mission!

### **COMMUNITY LIFE: FUNDRAISING EVENT AT AVOCA BEACH PICTURE THEATRE**

On Monday 4 June at 7pm, there will be a fundraiser at the Avoca Beach Picture Theatre to raise money for bible distribution in Siberia. The proprietors of the cinema, Norman and Beth Hunter, are Christians who have over many years been involved in non-denominational youth outreach in Russia. Tickets are \$20, and include supper and screening of a Russian film (with English subtitles) ‘Lucky Trouble’ (“Vykrutasy”). More information can be obtained from [www.avocabeachpicturetheatre.com.au](http://www.avocabeachpicturetheatre.com.au).

## PARISH LIFE: RAFFLE FOR TONGAN MISSION

Raffle tickets to benefit the Orthodox mission in Tonga are available for sale at the candle desk. Tickets are \$2 each, with the raffle being drawn in July. Please assist this young mission!

### 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:** Subdeacon Luke, Elise, baby Thomas and big brother Daniel; Oleg, Natalia, baby Victoria and big sisters Maria and Alyssa.

**Expectant mothers:** Elena, Lydia, Katherine, Iryna, Alexandra.

**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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