
PARISH LIFE: NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2014



On Saturday 1 November and Sunday 2 November we had services for the Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost and in honour of the Holy Great-Martyr Artemius at Antioch (+362). As the Saturday was a day of commemoration of the departed, "Saint Demetrius Saturday", a general panikhida was served immediately before the evening service. At the end of Divine Liturgy the following day Father James read the prayers of blessing over new burial shrouds and English-language copies of the Prayer of Absolution and the coronets ("venchiki") used at Orthodox Christian burials. Also blessed were two sets of new service books for use during Great Lent - in Church Slavonic but printed in Russian font - and a number of icons of the Mother of God "Helper in Childbirth". These icons are to be part of a gift bag that our parish is preparing - in conjunction with the parish of Saint Nicholas, Wallsend - for distribution to expectant mothers. We hope that these bags will be ready early in 2015.

On Tuesday 11 November we learned with sadness of the repose that morning – following a brief but grievous illness – of our greatly loved parishioner, Parish Council member and friend, Sophia Kfoury. Sophia had been involved in the life of our parish since 2002, and had served on the Auditing Committee and Parish Council since 2003. Born in Jerusalem in 1952 to an English father and a Romanian mother, Sophia spent her childhood and youth in the Russian Orthodox convent on the Mount of Olives and in the school of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission at Bethany, later moving to Australia with her mother. Here she married Nicolas Kfoury, an Orthodox Christian from Lebanon, and with him raised a family of five children. May her memory be eternal!

On Saturday 15 November and Sunday 16 November we had services for the Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost and in honour of the Martyrs Apepsimas the bishop, Joseph the priest, Aithalas the deacon (Persian martyrs of the Fourth C.) and the dedication of the original church of the Great-Martyr George in Lydda (modern-day Lod, Israel) (Fourth C.). At the end of the Sunday service, a panikhida was served for the newly reposed Sophia Kfoury. It being our last Sunday service before the commencement of the Nativity Fast, many remained afterwards to share in a barbeque prepared by our Ladies' Auxiliary.

On Monday 17 November and Tuesday 18 November our parish had a series of services for the repose of the soul of Sophia Kfoury. At 8.00pm on Monday evening her body was brought to the church and a Great Panikhida ("parastas") was served, after which family and friends – in accordance with Orthodox custom – took it in turns to read each section ("kathisma") of the Psalter and the appointed prayers for the departed. This continued throughout the night, ceasing at around 8.00am on Tuesday. The Order of Preparation for Holy Communion was then read before the commencement of the Hours and Divine Liturgy. Concelebrating with Father James at Divine Liturgy were Archimandrite Alexis (Rosentool) of the Holy

Transfiguration Monastery in Bombala and Hieromonk John (MacPherson) of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Monkerai. A great many people gathered for the funeral service, preceding which Archimandrite Alexis – a long-term friend of the Kfoury family – spoke movingly about Sophia's remarkable history and personal qualities. Following the funeral she was buried at Point Clare Cemetery alongside her beloved mother, the ever-memorable Nun Maria (Gafu) (+2004). A memorial meal was afterwards held at the Narara Community Centre.

On Saturday 29 November and Sunday 30 November we had services for the Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost and Saint Gregory the Wonderworker, Bishop of Neo-Caesarea. A great many people were in church on Sunday morning, and at Divine Liturgy Priest Seraphim Slade of the Australian Orthodox Indigenous Mission concelebrated with Father James and Father Martin. The customary Diocesan-wide November collection for the Fund for Assistance was taken up at the dismissal, after which the parish held its 2014 Annual General Meeting.

At the AGM our 2014 Annual Report and 2013-14 financial report were presented and a property purchase appeal was endorsed. Long-serving Parish Council members Vladimir Golovin, Bill Reid, and Kate Marcotrigiano were returned to the Parish Council for another year, together with Anna Kourbatov and Reader Paul Douriaguine. Elena Douriaguine was also elected to the Parish Council, and Susanna Bendeovski and Alla Karmadonoff were appointed Child Safety Contact Persons.

After serving on the Parish Council for two years Ivan Teliatnikov did not seek re-election. We thank Ivan for his contribution to the work of the parish Council over those two years.

On Saturday 6 December Father James baptised Michael Lamanov, the infant son of Sergiy Lamanov and Svitlana Froklina and a baby brother to Sofia. Michael was named in honour of the Holy Archangel Michael and his sponsors at baptism were Dmitry Reznik and Nataliya Kravchenko. We warmly congratulate Sergiy, Svitlana, Dmitry and Nataliya, and pray that God will grant his newly-baptised servant Michael many years!

On Friday 5 December we learned with sorrow of the repose of one of our founding parishioners, Tatiana Elgin-Borodin. A small family group gathered that evening for the Office after the Departure of the Soul. Tatiana had been active in the life of our parish from the beginning, singing in the choir, working with the Ladies' Auxiliary, and baking prosphora. May God grant her rest with the saints!

On Saturday 6 December and Sunday 7 December we had services for the Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost and in honour of the Great-Martyr Katherine of Alexandria. On Sunday the icons of Christ, the Mother of God and Saint Katherine were beautifully decorated with floral arrangements by Katia Waters. Immediately following Divine Liturgy a memorial litia was served for the newly-reposed servant of God Tatiana Elgin-Borodin. The rector then congratulated six parishioners celebrating their name-day – Katya Lugovoy, Katya Korolkevich-Rubbo, Kate Marcotrigiano, Katia Waters, Katya Yakimov, and Katie Carles – after which the choir sang "Many Years!"

On Wednesday 10 December we served a moleben and akathist to the heavenly protector of our parish, the Great-Martyr Panteleimon. As of December 2014, there will be two such services each month, one in Church Slavonic and the other in English. This first service was in Church Slavonic, with the parish choir singing under the direction of our conductor Olga Ivanovna Itsikson. Many people prayed in church and put up their names for commemoration at the moleben. The next moleben and akathist – in English – will be at 7.00pm on Wednesday 24 December.

On Thursday 11 December Tatiana Elgin-Borodin's funeral was served at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, Strathfield, in which she had been active for many years before moving to the Central Coast. Father James served at the funeral together with Archpriest George Lapardin, the senior priest of the Cathedral, and a great many relatives and friends were present to pray for her soul and to pay their respects. Tatiana had been active in the life of our parish from the beginning, singing in the choir, working with the Ladies' Auxiliary, and baking prosphora. May God grant her rest with the saints!

On 16 December 2014 we received a letter from Metropolitan Hilarion ratifying the decisions of our 2014 Annual General Meeting and invoking God's blessing on our parish.

On Saturday 20 December it was the fortieth day of the repose of Sophia Kfoury. A large group of Sophia's family and friends gathered by her graveside for a pannikhida, afterwards returning to her family home in Karingong for refreshments.

PARISH LIFE: PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council has met on two occasions since our last newsletter. The first occasion was on Tuesday 11 November. Immediately before the meeting, Parish Council members and others gathered for a panikhida for Sophia Kfoury. At the meeting the usual reports were presented. Particular attention was given to the recent acquisition by the parish of mobile technology allowing the bookstore – and, if need be, the church candle-desk – to receive payments by card through **Paypal** rather than cash. A proposed appeal for assistance with the purchase of a property was further considered and preparations for the Annual General Meeting were reviewed. The use of Skype for some Parish Council meetings was also discussed, two members of the Parish Council living over 50 kilometres from the church.

The Parish Council next met on Tuesday 9 December. This was the first meeting of the newly-elected Parish Council and the final meeting for 2014. In addition to the usual pastoral, administrative and financial reports, the Parish Council made plans for the celebration of the feast of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) on 7 January 2015 and considered the work of the parish bookstore. A detailed report was heard on the Saint Seraphim Community Russian School in Hornsby that operates in association with our parish and a decision was made to fund one full-year and two half-year scholarships in 2015, the total value being \$1,600. The Parish Council will next meet on 13 January 2015.

PARISH LIFE: PRE-CHRISTMAS CLEAN-UP

On Saturday 3 January 2015 we will have a church clean-up beginning at 8.00am. This will be the major clean-up that we customarily have before Christmas and Pascha each year. All the furnishings will be removed from the church for washing and polishing and all the icons and service items will be cleaned. We will have lunch at around midday. Please join us and help! There is a great deal to be done, and it will be nice to have the church looking bright and clean for Christmas!

PARISH LIFE: CHRISTMAS SERVICES

This year we will once again have services for the Great Feast of the Nativity of Christ. All-night Vigil with the blessing of five loaves, wheat, wine and oil will begin at 6.00pm on Tuesday 6 January, and Divine Liturgy will begin at 9.00am on Wednesday 7 January. Those who are planning to confess so as to receive Holy Communion are asked to do so on Tuesday evening rather than Wednesday morning. Following Divine Liturgy on the day of the feast there will be a festive meal in the church hall. All who wish to stay and celebrate the feast in this way are welcome to do so. Please bring a plate of festive food to share!

PARISH LIFE: 2015 CALENDARS

Our parish has once again prepared two calendars that are available free of charge to our parishioners and friends. The first is a small magnetic calendar that has our parish contact details and which shows the Saturdays and Sundays on which we expect to have services. The second is a wall calendar in Russian and English that includes festive days and seasons, fasting days and seasons, and Bible readings for each day. The 2015 wall calendar commemorates Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky), First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia from 1936 until his repose in 1965. Both calendars are available at the candle-desk in church. Anyone who would like one posted to them should contact Father James.

PARISH LIFE: THEOPHANY

In 2015 the Great Blessing of Water will take place at the end of Divine Liturgy on Sunday 18 January, the Eve of the Great Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Theophany). Father James will bless a small number of homes on the Central Coast that afternoon before travelling to Newcastle for the festive services there on Sunday evening and Monday morning. He will again be blessing homes on Monday afternoon and during the week that follows. At this stage the likely schedule is as follows: Sunday 18 January – Narara Valley; Monday 19 January – from the North Lakes region down to Wyong and Bateau Bay; Tuesday – the rest of the Central Coast; Wednesday – Hornsby and the surrounding suburbs. As usual, a list will be available in church on which all those who wish to have their homes blessed can make this known.

IMPORTANT DATES IN 2015

In 2015, Pascha falls on Sunday 12 April, one week after Western Easter. As this will be a weekend on which Father James would usually serve in Newcastle, we will not have the midnight Paschal service. Instead, there will be an early Paschal service beginning at 7.00pm, after which there will be a blessing of festive foods. The services for Palm Sunday (one week before Pascha) and Pentecost (Троица - 50 days after Pascha) will both be in Gosford. Please use your wall calendars to plan so as to be in church on these important days!

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick: Mitred Archpriest Michael (Li), Mitred Archpriest Michael (Klebansky), Nun Euphrosyne; Leonid; and our parishioners Vladimir, Michael, and Tatiana.

Newly-departed: Tatiana (Borodin), Sophia (Kfoury).

Departed: Our 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), Nikolai (Pinczuk), Tatiana (Venttsel), and John (Gordeyeff).



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