Welcome

Welcome to this first issue of Harp of the South, the newsletter of the recently formed Saint Patrick Orthodox Mission.

Saint Patrick Orthodox Mission is a congregation of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), Diocese of Australia and New Zealand. ROCOR is a self-governing part of the Russian Orthodox Church, and is led by His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, who is also the Archbishop of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand.

As a part of the Russian Orthodox Church we are part of the largest of the Local Orthodox Churches, which accounts for about three quarters of all Orthodox worldwide. Some eighty per cent of ethnic Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians identify themselves as Russian Orthodox; but the Church includes representatives of over sixty other nationalities as well. Under the leadership of His Holiness Patriarch Kyriol of Moscow and All Russia, the Church is rapidly expanding. As at February 2010, there were 160 dioceses, 207 ruling and auxiliary bishops, 28,434 priests and 3625 deacons. Also, there were 30,142 active parishes, 386 male monasteries, and 402 female convents.

Saint Patrick Mission has developed from the ‘English-speaking congregation’ at Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Wayville SA. Though still small in number, with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, we have taken up the challenge of planting an English language congregation in the Adelaide suburbs. Our goal is to provide a spiritual home for Orthodox who are not currently attending a church, or who would appreciate participating in services in English, as well as reaching out to the vast number of people in our community who know little of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel of salvation.

The name of our newsletter, Harp of the South, coincidentally recalls the famous 1948 novel by the late Ruth Park, The Harp in the South, which portrays the life of a Roman Catholic, Irish-Australian, family of batters. In both titles the ‘harp’ evokes Ireland, and in the case of the Mission, is intended to remind us of what a great work God did through our holy patron, Saint Patrick, in converting the wild, pagan Irish. It is our prayer that God, in His mercy, may pour out some measure of the same grace on our Mission. Further, in Holy Scripture, the harp is an instrument of praise, used to sing of God’s great deeds, and intimately associated with the king and prophet David and the book of Psalms. The ‘South’ speaks to us of Australia, and in particular, the State of South Australia in which we live. In a State founded by, and dominated by, religious ‘dissenters’, Saint Patrick Mission aims to stand as a testimony to the historic Christian Faith. We hope that through our testimony many will ‘come home’ to the Orthodox Church, and thereby enter into the abundant life of the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church.

Holy Bishop Patrick, pray to God for us!
A Brief Life of Saint Patrick, 
Bishop of Armagh and Enlightener of Ireland

Saint Patrick, the Enlightener of Ireland was born around the year 385. He was the son of Calpurnius, a deacon “the son of Potitus, a priest, of the village Bannavem Taburniae,” who also held an administrative position as a Roman Decurion (an official responsible for collecting taxes). His name is from the Latin Patricius, meaning highborn. The place where he lived has not been identified with certainty. The village of Bannavem Taberniae may have been located at the mouth of the Severn River in Wales. However, others suggest that the village was situated on the west coast of England, while some place it as far north as Dumbarton in Scotland. Whatever the precise locale, the district was raided by pirates when Patrick was sixteen, and he was one of those taken captive. He was brought to Ireland and sold as a slave, and was put to work as a herder of swine on a mountain identified with Slemish in County Antrim. During his period of slavery, Patrick acquired a proficiency in the Irish language that was very useful to him in his later mission.

He prayed during his solitude on the mountain, and lived this way for six years. He had two visions. The first told him he would return to his home. The second told him his ship was ready. Setting off on foot, Patrick walked two hundred miles to the coast. There he succeeded in boarding a ship, and returned to his parents in Britain.

Some time later, he went to Gaul and studied for the priesthood at Auxerre under St Germanus (July 31). Eventually, he was consecrated as a bishop, and was entrusted with the mission to Ireland, (July 7). St Palladius did not achieve much success in Ireland. After about a year he went to Scotland, where he died in 432. Patrick had a dream in which an angel came to him bearing many letters. Selecting one inscribed “The Voice of the Irish,” he heard the Irish entreat him to come back to them.

Although St Patrick spreading the Gospel, he achieved remarkable results in was not the first or only missionary perhaps around 432, about a year after St Palladius began his mission to Ireland. There were also other missionaries who were active on the southeast coast, but it was St Patrick who had the greatest influence and success in preaching the Gospel of Christ. Therefore, he is known as “The Enlightener of Ireland.”

His autobiographical Confession tells of the many trials and disappointments he endured. Patrick had once confided to a friend that he was troubled by a certain sin he had committed before he was fifteen years old. The friend assured him of God’s mercy, and even supported Patrick’s nomination as bishop. Later, he turned against him and revealed what Patrick had told him in an attempt to prevent his consecration. Many years later, Patrick still grieved for his dear friend who had publicly shamed him.

St Patrick founded many churches and monasteries across Ireland, but the conversion of the Irish people was no easy task. There was much hostility, and he was assaulted several times. He faced danger, and insults, and he was reproached for being a foreigner and a former slave. There was also a very real possibility that the pagans would try to kill him. Despite many obstacles, he remained faithful to his calling, and he baptized many people into Christ.

The Saint’s Epistle to Coroticus is also an authentic work. In it he denounces the attack of Coroticus’ men on one of his congregations. The ‘Breastplate’ (Lorica) is also attributed to St Patrick. In his writings, we can see St Patrick’s awareness that he had been called by God, as well as his determination and modesty in undertaking his missionary work. He refers to himself as “a sinner,” “the most ignorant and of least account,” and as someone who was “despised by many.” He ascribes his success to God, rather than to his own talents: “I owe it to God’s grace that through me so many people should be born again to Him.”
By the time he established his episcopal See in Armagh in 444, St Patrick had other bishops to assist him, many native priests and deacons, and he encouraged the growth of monasticism.

St Patrick is often depicted holding a shamrock. He used the shamrock to illustrate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Its three leaves growing out of a single stem helped him to explain the concept of one God in three Persons.

St Patrick reposed at Saul, Downpatrick, Ireland, on March 17, 461.

Adapted from the web site of the Orthodox Church in America, online at:
http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=100821

The Three Kings

Father Peter

Carols are a big part of the Christmas season, and a perennial favorite at carol sing-a-longs is “We Three Kings”:

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy Perfect Light.

Part of the appeal is exotic. Kings from distant, romantic lands, on a quest clouded in the mists of ancient history. Imagination is reinforced by Christmas card scenes, with silhouettes of noble, crowned figures, riding camels across some Arabian desert, set against the backdrop of a vast night sky in which one star shines brightly.

That star, which came to hover over the Bethlehem stable where Christ was born, has been a source of constant curiosity. What was it? Haley’s Comet has been suggested, as have the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, and other astronomical phenomena. However, given that it was a miracle, there seems little point in seeking a naturalistic explanation. Better is the account given by Blessed Theophylact, who considered the star to be an angelic power, because “it shone even by day...it moved as [the kings] moved, and stood still as they rested; also it moved from Persia in the north to Jerusalem in the south. For a star never moves from north to south.”

So much for the star; but what about these ‘kings’, who were they?

St Matthew’s Magi

In the Gospel of St Matthew (2:1–12), we discover that the ‘kings’ of the carol were in fact Magi from the East. These three men – three is inferred from the number of gifts they bring – came to Jerusalem, following an unusual star in their search for the newborn King of the Jews, whom they desired to worship. A report of this reached Herod the Great (37BC–4BC), king of Judea at the time. Herod was an Idumean, not a Jew, who held the throne by leave of Rome. He had tried to win popular support through instigating a number of monumental building projects, including the lavish rebuilding of the Temple. He had maintained a ruthless grip on power, even to the extent of having murdered his wife, three sons, and many other close relatives whom he regarded as competitors. On hearing that the Magi sought a king, he was
troubled. Undoubtedly, his first thought would have been that a plot was being hatched to support a rival claimant to his throne. But it soon became clear that the Magi were talking about the long awaited Messiah. Consulting the priests and scribes, he discovered that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem according to the Scriptures. Thus he sent the Magi to that city, with the hypocritical request that once they had found the child, that they let him know the place, so that he also might worship Him. Of course, had Herod really believed the Scriptures, he would have humbled himself to worship the King of kings. Instead, in his pride and insecurity he hardened his heart and planned to kill the child once the Magi located Him. As it eventuated, after they found and worshipped Christ at Bethlehem, they were divinely warned in a dream not to return to Herod. Subsequently the enraged Herod ordered the slaughter of all the infant boys, two years and younger, in the Bethlehem area, in a vain attempt to dispose of the One who so deeply troubled him (Mt. 2:16–18).

In the Gospel, as in the service books of the Church, the Magi are never referred to as ‘kings’. The term magus (= μάγος) — magi is plural—may refer to a sage or wise man, as to a class of astrologers and magicians, or to sorcerers in general. In the New Testament the term reappears only in Acts 13:6&8, with reference to the sorcerer Elymas who attempted to oppose the Apostle Paul. Further, in Acts 8:9–13, we are introduced to a man named Simon, “who previously practiced sorcery” in Samaria, but then professes faith in Christ. This man is remembered in history as Simon Magus (i.e. Simon the Magician). St Justin the Philosopher relates that later Simon Magus went to Rome, became a notorious cult leader, and promoted heresy and occult practices.

The Magi who adored Christ were the successors of a class of sages and astrologers, who originated in the ancient Median Empire. Herodotus (Histories I.101&132) uses the term to describe a tribe of the Medes, who had a priestly function in the Persian Empire, and who specialized in astrology and dream interpretation. Over time, it appears that the term, magi, came to describe magicians more generally, especially those attached to the royal court. Certainly, it appears in the Greek version of the book of Daniel, when describing such persons in the Babylonian court (Dan. 1:20; 2:2, 10, 27; 4:7; 5:7, 11, 15). By the time of Christ’s Nativity, the Median, Babylonian and Persian empires had all come and gone. But magi survived, and people in their idolatry and superstition, continued to look to astrology and the stars for meaning and guidance.

None of this is to say that the description of the Magi as ‘kings’ is entirely inappropriate. After all, they were representatives of an ancient class of power brokers, and they offer the infant Jesus royal gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. It may even be the case, as St Dmitri of Rostov thought, that the three were rulers of mini-states in the far-flung regions of Persia, Arabia and Egypt. But if we only think about ‘kings’, we will run the risk of missing their significance in St Matthew’s account of the Nativity. That significance may be expounded as follows.

i. The Magi underscore the fact that Christ is Saviour of the world.

The Evangelist Matthew wrote first for his own people, the Jews. He dearly wanted his people to understand that Christ’s Nativity was in accord with the Old Testament prophecies, and that He is the fulfillment of the covenant promise to Israel. Jesus the Messiah is the glory of Israel, the meaning of the Jewish people, for He is Seed of Abraham in whom all the nations will be blessed (Gen. 22:17–18). So you might think the Gospel would begin with lots of rejoicing on the part of Israel. No so. Rather there is a very significant twist. For it is not the Jewish priests or Bible scholars who are first to make a beeline for Bethlehem. Neither is the Jewish ruler the first to worship the Messiah. Rather, the first group who come to worship the newborn King are Gentiles, the Magi.4 “The Magi came from such a great distance to worship Him, while the Jews, who had Christ there in their midst, persecuted Him.”5 Further, the Magi are the first of many who will come from every nation to worship Christ and be incorporated into the Church: “As the first fruits of the Gentiles were they led unto Thee...”6 Accordingly, St Dmitri of Rostov7 refers to the names
of the Magi as they have been preserved in Holy Tradition—Gaspar (or Caspar), Melchior, and Balthazar—and matches them with the three sons of Noah. Thus Gaspar, an Arabian, represents Shem; Melchior, a Persian, represents Japheth; and the Balthazar, an Egyptian, represents Ham. Symbolically then, in the three Magi, all the sons of Noah, i.e. all of humanity, worships Christ.

2. **The Magi are proof of the fulfillment of the Divine prophecies**

They knew enough of the prophecies of Scripture to be aware that when the star shone it betokened the birth of the promised King of the Jews. Their knowledge of the prophecy must have been gleaned either through contacts with the widespread Jewish diaspora, or else was knowledge handed down from the time of the Prophet Daniel, who himself had resided in a court filled with magi (see Dan. 2:48; 4:6; 5:11). Daniel had prophesied the time of Christ's coming (Dan. 9: 25–26), and doubtless shared other prophecies with members of the Babylonian and Persian courts. From him magi may have learned the prophecy of Balaam about the star shining forth from Jacob (Num. 24:17). Whatever the source of their knowledge, and however limited its scope, they are examples of faithfulness for us, because they actively believed God's word and followed the star when it appeared, whatever the difficulties they would confront.

Moreover, they themselves were fulfilling prophecy. The Prophet Isaiah foretold the adoration of Christ with gold and frankincense (Isa. 60:6), and the Magi serve also as a type for the rulers who would come and worship Him (Isa. 49:7; 60:3).

3. **The Magi stand for the triumph of light over the darkness of superstition and magic**

As we have mentioned, the Magi were astrologers and magicians. Neither Scripture nor the Church countenances such practices. However, God used the astrological interests of the Magi to fulfill prophecy and for their salvation.

In his Letter to the Ephesians, the first-century martyr, St Ignatius of Antioch, describes the star in the following terms:

> ...no words could describe its luster, and the strangeness of it left men bewildered. The other stars and the sun and the moon gathered round it in chorus, but this star outshone them all. Great was the ensuing perplexity; where could this newcomer have come from, so unlike its fellows? Everywhere magic crumbled away before it; the spells of sorcery were all broken, and superstition received its death-blow. The age-old empire of evil was overthrown, for God was now appearing in human form to bring in a new order, even life without end.8

St Ignatius sees the star as the great sign of the defeat of magic and dark superstition. The star outshines the natural bodies, because it heralds a new creation. It causes perplexity, because the evil prince of this world, and his age-old empire are to be overthrown. Christ, the Light of the world, the One through whom all things were created, has come to reclaim and redeem mankind. So the idols are overthrown and magic must crumble, for death itself, and the fear of death which has held men captive, is to be defeated by the Child born in Bethlehem. Thus it is that the magicians—the Magi—come and surrender themselves at the manger, and by gifts, adore the Light of the world, and pledge themselves to the worship of the One True God. In the words of the dismissal hymn of the Nativity:

> Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone upon the world with the light of knowledge: for thereby they who adored the stars through a star were taught to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high.

**Conclusion**

The Magi believed the testimony of the star even as they believed the ancient prophecies. It was to lead them to the place where, amidst the humble circumstances of the Holy Family, they found no mere worldly prince, but rather the Lord of Glory. “They perceived,” says an ancient commentator, “one thing with the eyes of their bodies but another with the eyes of
The Three Kings - continued

the mind. ‘The lowliness of the body He assumed was discerned, but the glory of His divinity is now made manifest.’ Thus they adored Him, worshipping with royal gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

They teach us that the truly wise worship and adore Christ the King. What gifts, then, may we bring to honour Him? St Gregory the Great advises that we may offer gold to the newborn King if we shine in His sight with the brightness of wisdom from on high...offer Him incense if we enkindle on the altar of our hearts the thoughts of our human minds by our holy pursuit of prayer, so as to give forth a sweet smell to God by our heavenly desire...offer Him myrrh if we mortify the vices of our bodies by our self-denial...the spice of self-restraint...”

Notes:
1 Written and composed by an American Episcopal clergyman, John Henry Hopkins, Jr., in 1857.
3 For Daniel the Church prefers the Greek version of Theodotion.
4 Significantly, St Luke’s Gospel, written for a Gentile audience, has the Shepherds as the first group to come and adore Jesus (Lk 2:8–20). The two elements come together in icons of the Nativity, where on one side of the cave, accompanying the Angels, stand the simple, believing, Jewish Shepherds, while on the other side, looking towards the star, are the far–travelled Gentile Magi.
5 Blessed Theophylact, p. 23.
6 Matins of the Nativity, First Canon, Ode 4, in The Festal Menaion. Trans. By Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (London:Faber & Faber, 1969), p. 273. See also the Vespers of the Nativity, after the Third Parable, where the adoration of the Magi comprises the theme of the refrain repeated after each verse of Psalm 86, which speaks of the nations coming to the Zion of God and being numbered among her children (Festal Menaion, pp. 256–257).

But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son – Gal. 4:4

The feast of the Nativity reminds us that we are born of God, that we are sons of God (1 John 3:1), that we have been saved from sin (Matt. 1:21) and that we must live for God and not sin; not for flesh and blood, not for the world which lies in evil (1 John 5:19). What does the Incarnation of the Son of God require of us? It requires of us to remember and hold in sacred honour the fact that we are born of God; and if we have sullied and trampled upon this birthright with our sins, we must restore it by washing it with tears of repentance; we must restore and renew within us the image of God which has fallen and the union with God and blessedness, truth and holiness which has been destroyed. ‘Now God became man, that He may make Adam a god’ (Stichera for Lauds of Annunciation).

—St. John of Kronstadt
“How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” (Psalm 137:4)

Ninety years ago, on November 6/19, 1920, aboard the naval ship Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, docked in Constantinople, what was in essence the founding meeting of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia took place. The earlier Provisional Supreme Ecclesiastical Authority of South-Eastern Russia—the central organ of church administration in the southern territories of Russia not yet seized by the Bolsheviks—because believers, had decided to continue its existence under the new circumstances. Emerging into the emigration together with the last portions of the White Army evacuated from Sevastopol, the Russian hierarchs immediately took up the challenge of establishing a supreme ecclesiastical organ for administering to the hundreds of thousands of émigrés, military as well as civilian.

This decision was dictated by necessity. It was founded upon the experience of recent years and was rooted in particular in the decisions of the Local Council of 1917-1918. This arrangement of a new higher church administration had as its canonical basis two documents issued almost concurrently.

The first was Ukase No. 362, issued on November 7/20, 1920, by the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration of the Russian Church, that is, by the Joint Presence of the full complement of all three higher ecclesiastical instances: His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow and All Russia, the Holy Synod and the Supreme Church Council. This Ukase included the following directive: “In the event a diocese... finds itself completely out of contact with the Supreme Church Administration... the diocesan bishop immediately enters into relations with the bishops of neighboring dioceses for the purpose of organizing a higher instance of ecclesiastical authority.”

The second document was the Decree of the Holy Synod of the Constantinople Patriarchate, No. 9840 of December 2, 1920, sent to Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev and Galicia, granting him permission to convene, out of the member hierarchs of the PSEAS-ER, a temporary commission under the supreme authority of the Constantinople Patriarchate “for the supervision and guidance of general church life of the Russian colony within the borders of Orthodox countries, comprised of both Russian soldiers and refugees, settling unmixed with other Orthodox Christians in the cities and towns, in camps and special premises.” This commission was given the name the Provisional Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration Abroad (Vremennoe vyysheje tskerkovnoje upravlenije zagranitsej—VTsUZ). As mentioned in the aforementioned Decree to Metropolitan Anthony, signed by the Locum Tenens of the Constantinople Throne, “You are to send them priests, antimensia, preachers and all that is necessary, you are to visit them in person, dispersing through exhortation any doubts, ending discord, you will in general do all the things entrusted to the Church and religion with the aim of consoling and encouraging the aforementioned Russian Christians.”

It was upon this ecclesiastical-spiritual and canonical basis that the life of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia began, which immediately set forth for itself the following goals:

To minister to Russian Orthodox Christians abroad and scattered throughout all the lands and continents of the world. No matter where Russian people would settle, they built
churches, monasteries, seminaries, established church-parish schools, social and cultural centers, scout and other organizations for educating children, homes for the aged and Orthodox cemeteries.

The preservation of the legacy of Holy Russia in its fullness and intactness in order to pass it on to the next generation. It was also necessary to preserve the Orthodox Faith, and the Russian language and Russian culture in general, and the firm understanding that wherever a Russian person lives, he is called upon to be a loyal son of the Holy Church and his Fatherland.

The open witness before the whole world of the terrible persecutions which unfolded against millions of Christians in the much-suffering Homeland: about destroyed churches, the murder for the Holy Faith of clergymen, monastics and simple laypersons. At a time when it was forbidden to speak the truth of these persecutions in the Homeland, we spoke out to all in defense of the Church, prayed for the tortured, killed and for those who suffered in prisons, camps and in exile.

Preaching the Holy Faith, addressed not only to Russian Orthodox Christians, but to local populations in all the lands of the Russian diaspora. Wherever Russian Orthodox churches were built, wherever Russian Orthodox communities were established, they began missionary work. Many who had previously not known Orthodoxy, or who had not even heard of it, accepted the faith in Christ, heeding the voice of the Savior our God: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Fulfilling these challenges, the Russian Church Abroad, during the entire course of its 90-year existence, had to painstakingly build relations with those nations in which it operated, with both government and social figures, and with society at large. The Church became also the center of cultural life in the diaspora. The Church did not only publish divine service books and spiritual literature, but organized concerts and festivals of Russian culture, held conferences on scholarly and historical topics, printed schoolbooks for children, and supported and nourished the Russian emigration to the best of its abilities.

Clergymen and communities of the Russian Church Abroad, preserving and keeping the warmth of the Russian heart, at the same time helped Russians “build bridges” in their new circumstances.

In the darkest days of repression of the Church in the Fatherland, the Russian Church Abroad used every means possible to send Bibles to the Homeland, along with prayer books, spiritual literature and printed icons. The members of the Russian Church Abroad actively participated in radio broadcasts, so that the Word of God was constantly heard in all points of the much-suffering Homeland.

The spiritual bond with the whole Russian Church was indissoluble for us. For this reason, when the glorification of the saints was impossible in the Homeland, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia canonized to the ranks of the saints: St John of Kronstadt, St Herman of Alaska, St Xenia the Blessed, the Host of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia headed by the Royal Martyrs, as well as the podvishniki St Paisius Velichkovsky and the Holy Elders of Optina, and then the Saints who lived among us: St John of Shanghai and San Francisco and St Jonah of Hankow.

* * *

Now, 90 years later, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia continues to fulfill the same goals, but under new circumstances. By the mercy of God, the persecution of the faith has ceased in Russia: the Church in the Fatherland has been emancipated. Churches and monasteries are being reestablished, religious books are being published, millions of people are once again finding faith and life in the Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia was not a bystander in the changes taking place in the Homeland, but in 2000 entered into discussions with the Russian Orthodox Church in the Fatherland, with the Moscow Patriarchate, with which it had no contact for many decades due to the lack of freedom of the Church under the militantly-atheist regime.

By Divine mercy, the discussions between the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church were
crowned with success, and on the feast day of the Ascension of the Lord in 2007, the Act of Canonical Communion was signed. This Act clarified and confirmed that the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia had always been an inseparable part of the Local Russian Church; this Act reestablished full canonical and Eucharistic communion within the one Russian Church; the self-governing status of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia within the framework of the Local Russian Church was confirmed.

Now Russians both in the Homeland and abroad can pray together and commune from one Holy Chalice. Clergymen and parishioners of the Russian Church Abroad can take an active part in the reestablishment of church life in Russia which had lost so much during the years of Bolshevik rule.

The flock ministered to by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia is diverse and heterogeneous. One can, from a very general approach, describe some of the main “layers” of our flock.

• The first wave of emigrants were forced to leave the Homeland in the most difficult of times after the end of the Civil War. Among them were White officers and other soldiers, Cossacks and professors, composers and writers, doctors and priests. It is our duty to cherish their memory, and, following their example, preserve love for the Orthodox Faith, to the Russian language and culture, love for the Homeland of our fathers, preserving and passing it on to the following generations.

• Those who found themselves in the emigration after World War II endured terrible years of war: bombings, imprisonment, forced labor, then life in refugee camps in Europe and Asia. Resettling in new lands, they had to build new lives. Despite the privations and sorrows of the war and post-war times, they remained devoted children of the Church of Christ. Russians participated in the building of churches and church schools wherever they settled. They serve as examples of irrepressible faith in Divine aid, firmness and staunchness of faith.

• In recent decades, people who come from the former Soviet Union have streamed into our parishes and also found themselves in an utterly new environment. They were born in a country where faith was persecuted; where for the open confession of faith in Christ, a person was driven out of his institution or fired from his job. From their childhood, they were taught that God does not exist. Yet despite all the efforts of the godless regime, it proved that it is impossible to root out faith in God. Many of them came to faith as mature adults. Now they fill the churches and parish schools of the diaspora. Often, they must delve further into church life, ripen in the faith and in piety, and in the experience of their predecessors come to the conviction that preserving the Faith, the Russian language and culture in a new environment is both possible and necessary.

• Finally, many parishioners have appeared in our church society who converted to the salvific Orthodox Faith and were baptized. They consciously left behind their prior religious convictions, accepting Holy Orthodoxy. Some of them even accepted ordination to the priesthood and minister to their own flock. Others participate in the life of Russian-speaking parishes; some comprise communities of the Russian Church Abroad in which divine services are held not in Church Slavonic but in the vernacular. Others take part in the life of parishes which are primarily Russian speaking. Both types face difficulties and obstacles. But they should not feel sorrow nor despair, nor wane in spirit, but grow strong and firm in the faith. Passing the faith on to their children and illuminating the heterodox, they continue the missionary work which once brought them to the bosom of the Holy Church.

To all the faithful children of our Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia we address the words of the Holy Apostle:

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

By Divine mercy, the Russian Church Abroad has for 90 years fulfilled the obedience lain upon Her: to minister to the faithful and disseminate the Orthodox Faith through all the lands of the diaspora.

There are many obstacles on its path. The Russian Church Abroad has endured persecution, privation, sorrows; at times, the pain of schisms and divisions.
Epistle of the Synod of Bishops – continued

We beseech the All-Merciful Lord to do away with division, so that with one mouth and one heart, even in a strange land, all together in the bosom of the Holy Church we may joyfully sing together to the glory of the Triune God. Amen.

- Metropolitan Hilarion
- Archbishop Mark
- Archbishop Kyrill
- Bishop Gabriel
- Bishop Peter
- Bishop Jerome

November 28/December 11, 2010 New York

BLOKES DAY OUT

John Wayne may have overstated the issue when he said, “A man’s gotta do what a man’s gotta do,” but nevertheless it is rather good to get away with the blokes once in a while. Thus, having in mind the benefits of a bit of male bonding and team building, the men of the Mission after the English Liturgy, leaving as soon as practical the majority of the adult couple of ring-ins – neatly the trip. We were the men of the Mission Tokareff and Nick Paul and Nick, together beautiful Clare Valley three volunteer advisors Reilly’s Wines Rector of Saint Nicholas Deduhin, have been the practicalities of

Thus it is hardly a surprise that the women were roused to arrange a bit of an outing – of which, no doubt, a full report will appear anon in these pages.

The blokes at Kilikanoon

Paul and Scooter
Midway Through the Nativity Fast
Words of Encouragement from Father Rotislav Sheniloff

We have now gone through almost three weeks of the Nativity Lent, my dear friends.

This fast, beginning on November 28th, lasts for six weeks - almost as long as the Great Lent. However, the Nativity Lent has a different and entirely unique character. Lent in our minds is usually associated with penitence, sorrow, weeping over one's sins, cleansing the soul in preparation for the forthcoming great event or sacrament. In Christmas Lent, all concepts concerning lent - except for the last one, that is, purification of the soul, - are eclipsed by two dominant characteristics. These are - humbleness and internal joy.

Why does the Church urge us to use this lenten period to bring our souls into a state of complete humility? Because the coming holiday, although so joyous and so great, is completely enveloped in the spirit of humility. The Apostle Paul explains to us that in this holiday "God on high descended upon earth, in order to elevate us into heaven." But in order to achieve this, the Lord "diminished Himself, taking on the image of a servant, and was likened to man." We are all servants of God, that is, we have all been created, and in order to become like man, the Lord had to diminish, lessen, exhaust, in other words - humble His Divinity. And all of this the Lord did for us, in order to save us from death and the power of the devil, so that man - the crown of God's creation - would not perish. In like manner we, too, should honor and thank our Creator and Saviour. We should diminish our pride, lessen our self-extolment, exhaust our selfishness, and only then - through total humility - will we find that ascending road into heaven, into the Heavenly Realm, which the Lord has opened for us in His descent to earth.

In the Holy Land, in the town of Bethlehem, where the Lord was born in a humble manger 2,000 years ago, a majestic church now stands over the site of His birth. This church is distinguished by its entrance doors, which were made so low, that an average adult has to stoop in order to go in. This was done deliberately, to constantly remind us of the need for spiritual humility before the greatness of the event that took place here.

At the same time, Christmas Lent is also a time for joy. During Great Lent, for example, the Church so gives itself over to penitence, that with the exception of two major feasts - the Annunciation of the Holy Virgin and the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem - which are both directly linked to paschal events, there is hardly any commemoration of the feasts of major saints, since a holiday spirit would interfere with the purpose of this lent. The entire Christmas Lent, on the other hand, is studded with the feasts of major saints like glittering jewels: holy great-martyr Catherine, Saint Apostle Andrew, holy great-martyr Barbara, the great Saint Nicholas, Saint Herman of Alaska, and many others, as though indicating to us that the presence of all these saints and all this rejoicing has become possible only because the Lord has come down to earth and has opened the way to heaven.

Thus throughout this entire period the Church strongly urges us to prepare for the coming joy with the words of the Christmas canon: "Christ is born - glorify Him! Christ cometh from heaven - meet ye Him! Christ is on earth - be ye exalted!" Amen.

SERVICES for CHRISTMAS and the HOLIDAY Period

Saint Patrick Mission at present comprises the ‘English congregation’ at Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Wayville. The Parish has an extensive schedule of Slavonic services and activities. An English Liturgy is served weekly.

In the schedule, dates are given according both to the Orthodox calendar (o.s.), and the modern, civil calendar (n.s.). The Orthodox calendar is thirteen days behind the civil calendar.

**English Liturgies**

- **Sunday 13 December (o.s.)/26 December (n.s.)** – NO English Liturgy (Father Peter at Diocesan Assembly and Synod)
- **Sunday 2 January 2011** – Liturgy (Hours @ 7.45am; Liturgy @ 8.00am)
- **Friday 25 December 2010 (o.s.)/7 January 2011 (n.s.)** – The Nativity of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Hours @ 7.15am; Liturgy @ 7.30am)
- **Sunday 9 January** – Liturgy as usual (Hours @ 7.45am; Liturgy @ 8.00am)
- **Sunday 16 January** – Liturgy as usual
- **Sunday 10 January (o.s.)/23 January (n.s.)** – Sunday after Theophany – NO English Liturgy – combined service with Russian congregation (Hours @ 9.30am; Liturgy @ 10.00am)
- **Sunday 17 January (o.s.)/30 January (n.s.)** – Saint Anthony the Great – TO BE ADVISED

During the holiday period there will be a number of major feast day services. These will be served mostly in Slavonic, but with some English. Please consult the Parish service schedule for:

- **Friday 1 January (o.s.)/14 January (n.s.)** – The Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ
- **Tuesday 5 January (o.s.)/18 January (n.s.)** – Eve of Theophany
- **Wednesday 6 January (o.s.)/19 January (n.s.)** – The Holy Theophany of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ

All services currently are served at Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, 41–42 Greenhill Road, Wayville SA 5034.

For enquiries about services, Saint Patrick Mission, or to obtain further copies of *Harp of the South*, please contact the Mission Rector:

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**THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IS**

**EVANGELICAL – BUT NOT PROTESTANT**

**IT IS ORTHODOX – BUT NOT JEWISH**

**IT IS CATHOLIC – BUT NOT ROMAN**

**IT ISN’T NON-DENOMINATIONAL – IT IS PRE-DENOMINATIONAL**

**IT HAS BELIEVED, TAUGHT, PRESERVED, DEFENDED AND DIED FOR THE FAITH OF THE APOSTLES SINCE THE DAY OF PENTECOST 2000 YEARS AGO**