

## JUBILEE OF HOLY PROTECTION CATHEDRAL

Archpriest Nicholas Karipoff, Parish rector | October, 2024



**75 years** is a considerable period of history – three generations, yet it is more interesting in a sense than a century. Seventy-five years is a period of history that can still fit into the conscious life of one person. Therefore, the anniversary of the Melbourne Cathedral gives us the opportunity to reflect on our past, present and future in a concrete way.

### Seven events from Easter to Easter



From Pascha to Pascha is one of the most significant cycles of time in the Church's consciousness. This year, the Lord especially blessed us – and the entire diocese – with visits of two wonderworking icons. On Sunday, May 26, 2024, our church was overcrowded with worshippers from 8.30 am to 1.30 pm. On this day, we were visited by the myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon, brought by Fr Nectarios from the Hawaiian Islands. As in other churches, he left us myrrh and small icons. At least a thousand people received great spiritual consolation. Thus began the anniversary year.

The other six events will be described later (of which the last two are yet to come): the arrival of Metropolitan Nicholas, our First Hierarchy, with the Kursk Icon (and the first awards given by him); the launch on 8 September of the *Pokrov Chronicle* written by Alexander Nikolaevich Rudakov; our patronal feast, the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos; the main celebration of the jubilee with

two bishops and a large host of clergy and worshippers, a luncheon for 320 people; and finally, the last two, scheduled for the first day of the Christmas and Palm Sunday. Our Pastoral Council – four priests and two deacons – has nominated more than twenty people for awards on the occasion of the anniversary. It was decided to divide these awards into four events.

### The First Hierarch Brings the Kursk Icon



In the context of the jubilee year, the first visit to our parish by the new First Hierarch, His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas, was a doubly joyous event. On the morning of Sunday, 21 July, half an hour before the hierarchal meeting, our priest Fr. Gennady Baksheev brought the Protectress of the Diaspora – the Holy Icon of the Sign of the Most Holy Theotokos. The day before, it had been at the vigil in Dandenong. While the people venerated the holy icon, Bishop Nicholas was driven to the church. In his greeting address to the Metropolitan, the rector of the Cathedral recalled the visit of the latter to our church as a young subdeacon, who accompanied the then First Hierarch, the late Metropolitan Laurus, and wished him spiritual strength and health in bearing the difficult cross of primatiate. The liturgy began, which flowed effortlessly in a joyous atmosphere. Vladyka Nicholas concelebrated with a host of the cathedral clergy, with three visitors, and with the companions of the Metropolitan, Archpriest Serafim Gan and Protodeacon Eugene Kalaur, who graced the service with his voice. The First Hierarch congratulated the parish and presented the rector with a memorial cross in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Church Abroad. (Later, during the luncheon, Archpriest Nicholas Karipoff explained in his brief address that he did not receive the cross personally, but on behalf of the entire parish).

Seven parishioners were summoned to the ambo, presented for the award:

1. **Protodeacon Alexander Abramoff**, for many years of diligent labour at divine services in the church, for parish and diocesan work with youth, as well as for his labours in the Diocesan Council and Russian community
2. **Reader Aleksander Antonovich Bialocerkowski** for many years of service as treasurer of the parish, work in the Diocesan Council and St. John of Kronstadt Welfare Society

3. **Lubov Nikolaevna Cowall** for 60 years of helping in the Sisterhood, of which she served as the Head Sister for the last two decades

4. **Marina Ivanovna Keskevich** for her generous support of parish and community projects

5. **George Mikhailovich Lavrin** for his generous support of parish and community projects, as well as for his work as an inspector in the parish school

6. **Olga Vasilievna Souprounovich** for 36 years of work in the parish book kiosk

7. **Zoran Boškov Stojanovski** for his unpaid work as a designer, engineer and project manager during the construction of the parish community centre

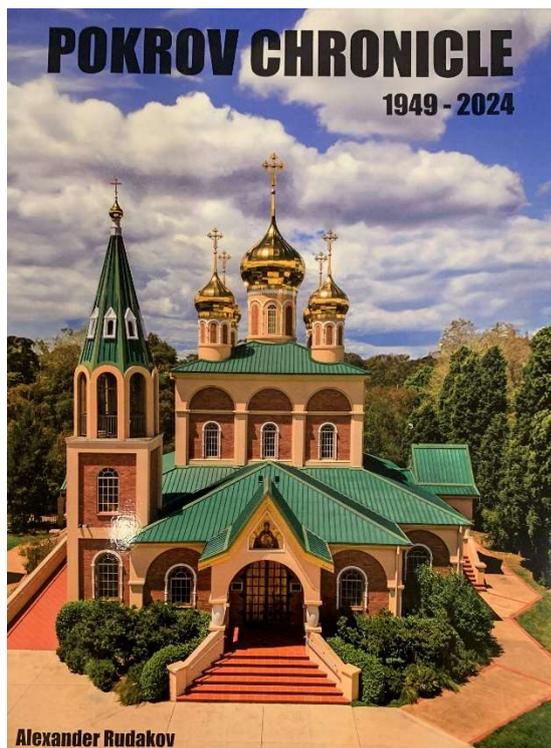
All of them approached the First Hierarchy and received his blessing and the Diocesan Medal.



Two of the priests of the cathedral put medals on the awardees, after which two photographs were taken: the clergy headed by Vladyka Nicholas and the medal recipients also with him.

The sisterhood prepared a wonderful luncheon in the hall, which was booked in advance due to the limited (200) seats in the hall. The meal was held in a relaxed and warm atmosphere. The parish had the opportunity to feel the spirit of its new First Hierarchy and to draw closer to him. The people dispersed joyfully, having received the nourishment of the "feast of faith" at the Liturgy (from the Paschal sermon of St. John Chrysostom) and the meal in the hall. This is how the second of the seven events of the anniversary year took place.

## Launch of the *Pokrov Chronicle* at the Annual General Meeting



On Sunday, September 8 of this year, the annual general meeting was scheduled, for which the rector, on the occasion of the anniversary, prepared a particularly detailed report on the life of the parish. In December 2023, the elder sister, Lubov Nikolaevna Cowall, asked to stay for one more year to put her efforts into holding the anniversary. Therefore, the rector especially noted the achievements of the Sisterhood under her leadership over the past two decades. A great deal has been done in various projects of the Sisterhood for the parish, charitable work for monasteries and help for the needy.

Before the beginning of the meeting, a small ceremony was held to launch a magnificent book written by an active parishioner, Alexander Nikolaevich Rudakov. First, the rector in his speech to the congregation noted the enormous work of the author, which took three and a half years of hard work. This book should become a benchmark for the writing

of parish chronicles, not only in our Diocese, but throughout the entire Church Abroad. The large-format hardcover book is beautifully crafted by the printer of our diocesan magazine, Eureka Printing Pty Ltd. It contains 258 pages and more than 300 photographs and snapshots of documents, drawings, tables. The author studied a huge number of archival documents of the parish, diocese and even the Anglican Church. He made use of material from previously published books (especially the books of Archpriest Michael Protopopov on the history of the Russian presence in Australia and the biographies of diocesan bishops). He held many conversations with eyewitnesses of the events of 1949-2024. This is reflected not only in the text of the book itself, but also in 652 footnotes and references to documents.

The author responded to the rector's welcoming speech and briefly outlined how his work went. After the meeting, the sale of the book began, which can be purchased at the church (\$70). The sale is a great success. People can't tear themselves away from the book.

## **Patronal Feast**

Each parish has a special day of the year - the patronal feast. It is, as it were, the Namesday of the parish. Since this year the feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos fell on Monday, it was decided a year before that the parish would invite guests beginning with bishops and other clergy for the following Sunday, 20 October.



A lot of preparatory work was done by the parish council and the sisterhood, which took on the main responsibilities and expenses. Nevertheless, on Sunday, October 13th, a festive vigil was held, and on Monday, the 14th, all the customary services took place: the blessing of the water, the hours, the liturgy, and a moleben with a procession around the church. Since the tables in the hall were already set for the 20th, the sisters arranged a meal on the lawn behind the hall. The Lord sent wonderful weather, which is always appreciated by Melburnians. The

attendees were in a joyful mood, with people saying how wonderful it was—like a picnic! Outside the fence, we have a park and a river, even though the cathedral is only five kilometers from the city center.

## **The Main Celebration**



Discussing our possibilities last year, the parish council and sisterhood decided that the parish would organise a luncheon in our hall (200 people) and in a large white marquee for 120 people. It was decided that paid tickets would be offered to cover the cost of hiring caterers. There were also many other expenses such as drinks, entertainment for children and others. A significant amount of money was to be spent in the publication of the *Pokrov Chronicle* (more than \$15,000), award medals and other expenses.

On Saturday, October 19, the rector and Rev. Gennady Baksheev and his family met the Ruling Archbishop George and Archbishop Gabriel of Canada, who had been invited by us, at the airport. (We knew beforehand that the latter would be visiting Australia at that time.) On the feast of the Protection, a few days earlier, the rector learned that there was an opportunity to receive the Kursk Wonderworking Icon for the feast. What a joy it was for us when we saw the hierarchs getting out of

the plane with this holy icon! I remembered the words of the martyr Brother Joseph, guardian of the myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon: "The Mother of God goes where She Herself wants."

Before the vigil, Fr. Gennady brought the relic, and half an hour later the bishops arrived. The service began. The choir sang enthusiastically and briskly. A host of clergy came out of the altar for the polyeleos. The service was led by the Ruling Archbishop George. After the service, Fr. Gennady took the bishops to his home for supper, and then drove them to their hotel.

In the morning, the rector brought the Kursk Icon of the Sign in advance. The gathered people came up to venerate it. A much larger host of priests and deacons gathered than the day before, since the clergy of neighbouring parishes, having served the vigil at home, arrived at the Cathedral in the morning. The following clergy came out to meet the hierarchs: Mitred Archpriest Michael Protopopov (Dean), Mit. Archpriest Nicholas Karipoff (Rector), Archimandrite Gavril Galev (abbot of the Monastery of St. Clement of Ohrid of the Macedonian Diocese), Mit. Archpriest Gabriel Makarov (Dean and Rector of the Cathedral in Brisbane), Archpriest Nicholas Dalinkiewicz (cleric of Melbourne Cathedral), Archpriest Peter Sheko (cleric of Melbourne Cathedral), Archpriest Yaroslav Belikow (rector of the church in Geelong), Archpriest Boris Ignatievsky (rector of Holy Protection Church in Cabramatta), Archpriest Peter Shashkov, Archpriest John Dimitrov (Dandenong), Archpriest Peter Hill (Dean of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute), Archpriest Gligor Kiselinov (Macedonian community, Dandenong) Rev. George Morozov (Tasmania), Rev. Gennady Baksheev (cleric of Holy Protection Cathedral), Rev. Paul Baksheev (cleric of Dormition Parish, Dandenong); Protodeacon Alexander Kotlaroff, Protod. Vasily Kozulin, Protod. Alexander Abramoff, Protod. Vasily Konstantinidis, Protod. John Bots, Protod. Paul Tokarev, Deacon Gregory Metlenko. The Ruling Archbishop George asked our Canadian guest to lead the Liturgy, modestly preceding him to the altar, while Archbishop Gabriel was greeted and vested on the cathedra.



The presence of the great relic in the church affected the spirit of the clergy and laity. It is understandable why the Protectress of the Church Abroad is present at all important church events: Councils, sessions of the Synod and special diocesan and parish feasts. There was no tension and fuss in the altar, which sometimes happens at hierarchical services in parishes. After all, these services are very complicated, and almost everyone has little practice. The temple was full of people. (After all, we had prepared 320 seats for lunch, and there were more people present in church on the day). Four priests came out with chalices. There were many communicants. Archbishop Gabriel delivered a sermon in two languages, in which he noted the milestones in the history of the parish, having become acquainted with the material of the *Pokrov Chronicle*. After the ambo prayer, the clergy came out for a short moleben, powerfully chanting the magnification of the Most Holy Theotokos before Her icon.



Protodeacon Alexander Kotlaroff read the Synodal Gramata to our parish. Afterwards, the rector of the church spoke about the awards of July (see above) and explained that the Pastoral Council of the Holy Protection Cathedral decided to divide the awards into four events, so that it would be perceived more meaningfully, since 20-30 people were to be awarded. He summoned seven people to the ambo and briefly explained why they received parish medals as awards:

1. **Alexander Nikolaevich Rudakov** for his huge labour of researching the material and writing the *Pokrov Chronicle* (see above)
2. **Andrew Dimitrievich and Anastasia (Joy) Pavlov** for the huge financial assistance to the parish, paying for all the concrete work on the car park and paths around the church, and continuing to provide big donations for charity work
3. **Kosta Diakoumakos** for the great generosity of providing, installing and dismantling the scaffolding for the fresco painting of the temple, the cladding of the domes and other works for many years
4. **Ivan Stepanovich Bochkarev** for his diligent participation in the construction of the temple and hall for fifteen years
5. **Stepan Vasilyevich Kichakov** for zealous work on the construction of the church and hall during the same period
6. **Michael Ivanovich Stirkul** (former warden) for his diligent work on the construction of the church and hall
7. **Michael Petrovich Yakimov** for zealous work on the construction of the church and hall during the entire period.

On the 50th anniversary of the parish (1999), after the consecration of the church (2006) and on other occasions with large numbers of people, the parish arranged receptions outside the church. The last

time Pokrov fell on a Sunday, we set up a marquee for 50 people, but those happened to be seated there complained that they felt cut off from the clergy and others in the hall. It was decided that the clergy and part of the laity would be in the marquee, and most of the parishioners and guests would be in the hall. We envisaged that we would transmit speeches from the marquee to a large screen in the hall. As it turned out, after the speeches of the bishops and the rector at the end of the Liturgy, the clergy and laity enjoyed animated conversation, and there was just one brief speech.

The reception ended at 4.00pm. Despite some practical difficulties in the running of the event, people left the celebration in a joyful and inspired mood. Many received great spiritual – and emotional – solace at the Liturgy and in fellowship at the table. Such a feast gives a sense of the power of the Church of Christ in the unity of the spirit of the multitude of believers and clergy. The rector took the bishops to the airport. They took with them the Kursk Icon, which thus bid farewell to Australia for the time being. Two days after our feast, Archbishop Gabriel took it back to the Synodal Cathedral in New York City.

### **The last two events of the anniversary year**

Here we are talking about the near future. The life of the parish continues as usual. Candidates for the awards were selected from the sisterhood, builders, altar servers and choir.

They will receive, God willing, parish medals at Christmas and at Palm Sunday. Medals as awards were supposed to be used only in the jubilee year. Only a few (7) medals were issued as commemorative souvenirs of the anniversary. Now the rest will remain in the safe of the temple for the future as awards. Any anniversary is an assessment of the path travelled. For the 50th anniversary, we staged an exhibition of photographs of past decades. A book has now been published, which, with God's help, will give the younger generations a direction in the life of the parish, based on the experience of building church life over the past 75 years.