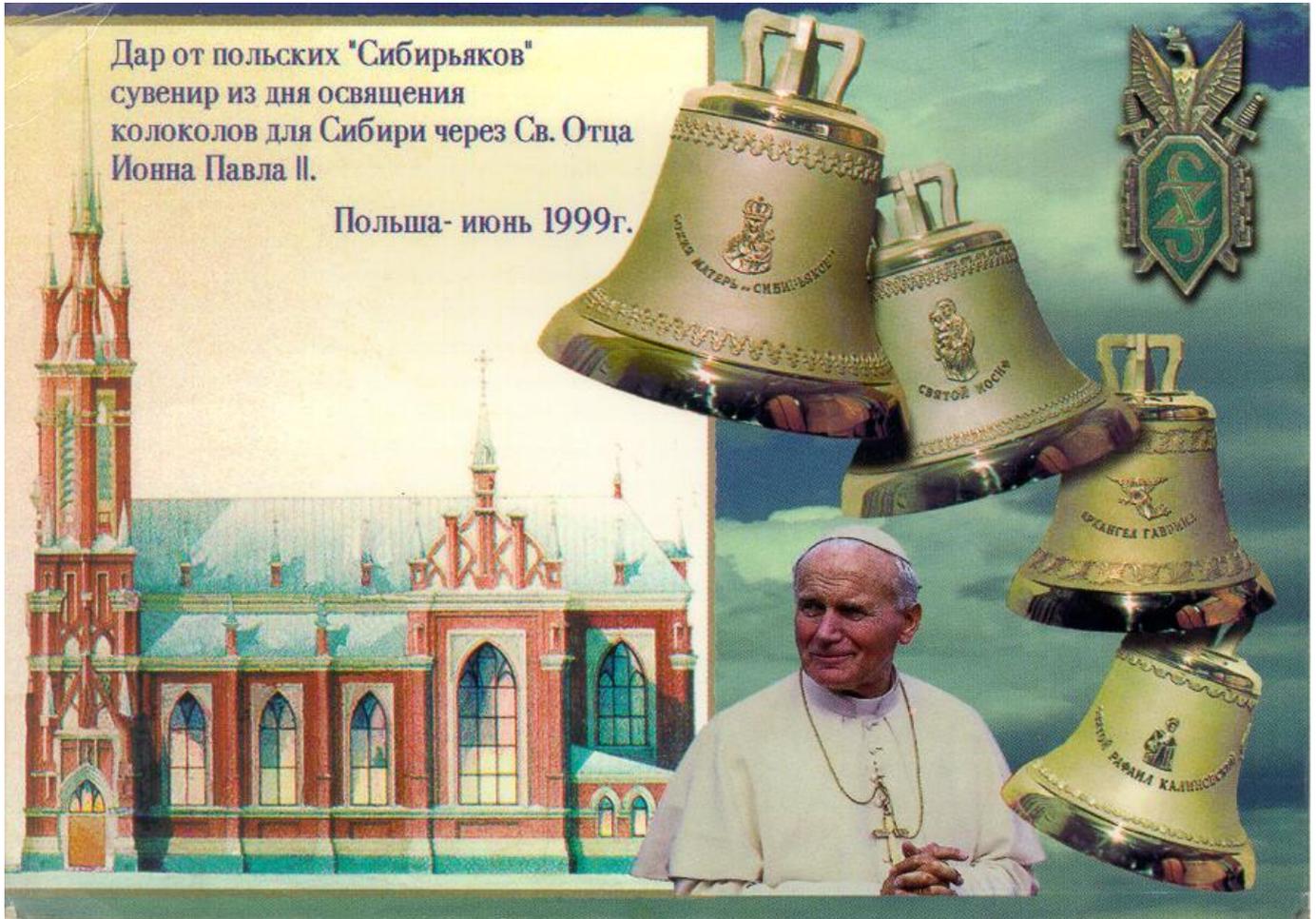
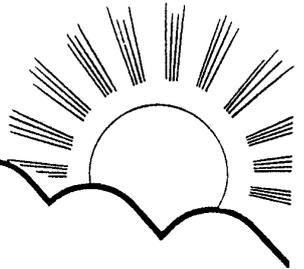


# Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Thirty Six November 1, 2000



Postcard made in Poland to commemorate Pope John Paul II's blessing of the bells.

## Bells for Our Lady in Vladivostok!

by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

Miracles happen! And this miracle was the work of a very special group of people known as the "Siberian Society of Poland." The Society exists in many countries of the world to which Poles fled after escaping from Siberia during the Communist times. The older members often remember the old Catholic churches of their former homes in Siberia and the Russian Far East.

The Society in Poland has a unique and symbolic service which it performs for the newly free Catholic Church in Russia: They produce and send church bells to Russia to

celebrate the new freedom of the Church here, and to help proclaim the Gospel in the land of their former residence.

Our story began when I met Fr Edmund Cizak of Elk, Poland, the president of the Siberian Society. He came to Novosibirsk on August 10, 1997 to bring bells for the new cathedral of Novosibirsk. I was in Novosibirsk too for the dedication of the cathedral. I was amazed and happy to see such a thoughtful gift for the Church in Russia from such a holy priest and his Society. I immediately asked him for bells for Vladivostok.

Soon after returning to Vladivostok I received a message from him asking what names we wanted on our four(!) bells. Naturally I wanted St Mary, St Gabriel, St Joseph, and St Ann! He said, "Sorry, one of them has to be Polish. Instead of St Ann, let's pick St Raphael Kalinovsky." St Raphael is a newly canonized saint who himself lived for many years near Irkutsk in Siberia. I didn't argue!

Fr Cizak choose the most beautiful material for our bells which celebrate the Jubilee Year of the Annunciation and Birth of Christ. They are shiney golden color metal. But that isn't all--While Pope John Paul II was in Poland in June of 1999, he personally blessed our bells! But how to get the bells to Vladivostok?

We proposed by sea or TransSiberian Railroad. Fr Cizak wanted to send them by truck—all the way from Poland to Vladivostok! But there aren't roads the whole distance, unless you go through China, but that opens a "whole 'nother can of worms"! Then he heard that a group of Polish Boy Scouts dealt with difficult trips to various parts of the world. They were planning to drive to Magadan, Russia, far to our north. Fr Cizak soon persuaded them to drive to Vladivostok with a truck full of bells!

They left for the Ukraine and came to the border of Russia where they encountered the first problem: Russian Customs wanted \$1500 of duty for the bells and truck. Naturally our scouts asked us what to do. We sent them \$1500 and also sent a letter to Russian Customs in Moscow asking that they admit the bells without duty, since they were not for sale and would be used in the renovation of the historic architectural monument in Vladivostok, the Cathedral of the Most Holy Mother of God. It will take many months for Moscow to answer, so we have to hope that if their reply is positive, we will receive our deposit back.



*Marek Wolosz and Przemyslaw Maciazek who drove the bells across Siberia.*

Here I have to insert a few words of praise for the scouts who set out on such a dangerous adventure. A huge, heavy truck, full of valuable metal bells, with very few service

centers along the way, in some places no roads, with mountains and plains to cross where you know no one, where there are no phones. Surely it had to be the trip of a lifetime. Such training in courage the scouts received over their years in Scouting!

They crossed Siberia and reached Chita in TransBaikalia. There were problems with the truck, and in the section ahead between Chita and Blagoveschensk there was mountainous terrain with no paved roads, and no roads at all in some sections. They decided to put the bells on the train to Vladivostok, and to leave the truck with the newly opened Catholic Parish in Chita. They then boarded a train themselves for Vladivostok to await the bells which would require nearly two weeks to arrive. They had to be in Vladivostok for the arrival of the bells to sign off on them for Customs. They could use the extra week of waiting in Vladivostok for sightseeing and for some time in the Pacific Ocean which they had never seen before.



*The bells arrive at the door of the church.*

*It was no easy job getting them off the truck.*



After the bells arrived at the Second River Freight Station, we couldn't see them because they were locked up in Customs, but the scouts were ready to return to Europe. They bought train

tickets for the seemingly endless trip to Moscow, but I found out that they had never flown before, so I presented them with plane tickets as a token of gratitude for their generous help. It also solved their problem that the trip had taken longer than they intended, and they would have been late for the beginning of the school year at their university.



*The large bell is dedicated to Our Lady of Siberia, but the note that they were blessed in the year 2000 by Pope John Paul II.*

Finally the happy day arrived: October 12, 2000. The bells arrived at the church by truck and I helped our workers unload them. They are beautiful! The most beautiful I have ever seen! We had to simply place them in the vestibule of the church—until the day when they can be elevated to their future home in some future steeples.



*The bells stand in the vestibule until...*

The "Miracle of the Bells" has happened. The next miracle to be scheduled by Our Lady might be "The Miracle of the Steeples". Jubilee bells! When can we hear them ring?



*The as-yet steepleless church. The steeples were never completed before the building was confiscated in 1922. The Czech Army, which was part of the interventionary force trying to protect the Russian Far East from the Communists, were the last who tried to complete the church.*

## News Notes

*by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.*

- Our good friend and pastor of our sister parish of the Annunciation in Washington DC, Monsignor James Montgomery, died on September 10. Although he was 75 years old, this humble priest still served his parish with full vigor, and yet managed to help his brothers and sisters in Christ in Russia. We send our condolences to Annunciation, and our prayers to God for them and for Monsignor Montgomery.
- My parish of Our Lady of the Pacific in Nakhodka has opened the fourth Women's Support Center in our Territory of Primorye. The main purpose of the Centers is moral and material support for pregnant women who might otherwise consider abortion. The Centers also help families with many children, and participate in the "Adopt-a-Birth" program in which we help supply needed medicines and supplies for poor women who are to give birth. Perhaps you would like to donate to these programs?



*New volunteers for the Nakhodka Women's Support Center meeting with Christina Pavlova, our specialist in this area.*

- September 8, 2000, was the date of the consecration of the new Cathedral of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Irkutsk, Russia. The event was attended by two cardinals, 12 bishops, 70 priests, and many sisters and laity. The size of the diocese is illustrated by the fact that Irkutsk is a four hour flight from Vladivostok. Vladivostok is at the extreme southeast end of Russia in the "Russian Far East", while Irkutsk is in the central part, which is known as "Siberia".

- The Parish of the Visitation in Lesozovodsk has found very good premises to buy for a parish center--a former barbershop with several attached rooms. If we manage to buy it, it will be the first property for that parish, which currently has nothing. The probable cost will be about \$6,000. We usually have mass in the office of the Blind Society, since the blind like to attend our mass which is in Russian instead of Old Slavonik as in the Orthodox church—they don't understand Old Slavonik. They don't mind that we don't have a beautiful church with beautiful icons--they can't see them anyway! But the space is too small already because the parish is growing. If we manage to buy the new premises there will be enough room for the Lesovodsk Women's Support Center as well as a store for used clothing. The large hall of the shop and the barbershop office can be used as a chapel for mass and a parish office.

- Speaking of Lesozovodsk, it was one of the cities hard hit by the series of typhoons we've had this summer, because it is on flat land near the Ussury River. Catholic Relief Service made a donation for flood relief in Eastern Russia, so we will be able to reach out to the folks of Lesozovodsk who lost their gardens and crops in the flood. Thanks to parishes in Minnesota, Indiana, and Oregon, we also have a shipment of clothing which we can distribute to the victims. Vladivostok itself isn't very affected by floods since we are built on hills near the ocean, and not in a river valley. But Nakhodka, which is also on the ocean was affected by the typhoons because seawater was blown inland. Our 90-year-old parishioner in Nakhodka, Babba Ghelia, lost her garden vegetables which she still usually tends by herself! We're here to help her, too.

- Thanks to the Archdiocese of St Paul, we will be listed in the Official Catholic Directory in America. We opened our

office in St Paul just in time, because now it is getting more and more difficult to get to Anchorage from here, whereas it is easier and easier to reach the States through Seoul and San Francisco. Thanks to our benefactor Mr Russell Haas, I usually have free tickets between Seoul and San Francisco!



*Babba Gelia surrounded by friends and family.*

- We've had recent celebrations of birthdays for our most elderly Catholics in Primorsky Territory, both members of Our Lady of the Pacific Parish in Nakhodka. Gelia Yakovlevna (or Babba Gelia, as we all call her) celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on September 22! She was surrounded by parishioners, friends, and family. She tells everyone that God told her in a dream that she would receive a golden reward in heaven for keeping her Catholic faith through all of the terrible years. Joseph Latkovsky was 87 years old on October 15. He likes to tell about his father who was a pioneer in Siberia from Latvia. After twenty years of building his farm from nothing, the Red Army (Communists) and the White Army (Czarists) stole everything, named his father as an "enemy of the people", and they had to flee to Kazakhstan to save their lives.



*Joseph Latkovsky and his wife with daughter and great-granddaughter.*

- A recent development in our parish life has been the activation of the Korean Catholics who live in Vladivostok. The Sisters of St Paul of Chartres from Seoul have come to live with us for a year while they learn Russian. They have begun

to interact with the local Korean community, and recently I had the joy of baptising four Korean children, and gave First Confession and First Communion to them. They have been waiting a long time, but since they do not live in Korea, they did not have an opportunity to participate in regular catechetical programs—until our Korean sisters came. We are making the Sacrament of Penance available, too. The sisters have translated a list of sins, and even if I and the penitent can't understand each other, by pointing to the sins on the paper that are written in two languages, they can make a confession.



*The Korean Catholic Community in Vladivostok*



*All dressed up in baptismal clothing.*

## How to Communicate with Us

### In Russia:

**Phone:** (011-7)-4232-26-96-14

**FAX:** (011-7)-4232-26-96-16

**E-mail:** [myron@eastnet.febras.ru](mailto:myron@eastnet.febras.ru)

[daniel@eastnet.febras.ru](mailto:daniel@eastnet.febras.ru)

[CARITAS@mail.primorye.ru](mailto:CARITAS@mail.primorye.ru)

**Internet** Russian language: <http://www.catholic.ru>

Please do **not** send any **donations** of any kind directly to Russia. For donation information, see below.

**Letters** without donations can be sent to:

Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Parish

Volodarskovo 22

690001 Vladivostok RUSSIA

### In America:

**Phone:** (651)690-5139

**FAX:** (651)690-5139

**E-mail:** [RussianMission@juno.com](mailto:RussianMission@juno.com)

English language:

**Internet:** <http://www.vladmission.org>

**Donations** of money and **letters** should be sent to:

Mary Mother of God Mission Society

1854 Jefferson St

St Paul MN 55105-1662

Your donations are tax-deductible. You will receive any required receipt for IRS tax purposes by return mail.

**Donations** in kind. If you have items that you think we can use, please contact Mrs Sandra Sonnen at the Mission Office in St Paul giving a complete list of items. If we accept your offer, you will need official inventory information from her, too, for Russian Customs.

**Remember**  
**“Mary Mother of God Mission Society”**  
**in your will.**

## Our Work with Women Prisoners

by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

Besides our correspondence course "Introduction to Christianity" which has interested many prisoners across Russia, we have begun some personal work in prisons. We especially wanted to work in the women's prisons because women are at a special disadvantage when they emerge from several years in prison into the new Russian world of today. Often they don't have a place to live, no work prospect, no clothing besides what is on their backs, no ticket home, and no one who cares. We can't take care of all prisoners, but we want to do what we can. What can we do?

In Khabarovsk, we found that 108 of the prisoners in one prison have tuberculosis. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Venice, Florida, has helped us to find medicine for these



*Isolation Ward at the Women's Prison in Khabarovsk*

women. Our parishioner Alexei Hartman visits the prison regularly, and helps individual women as they are released. Sometimes it is clothing, or a ticket home, or simply advice. The prison is so happy with Alexei's work that they have named him to the Honorary Council of the prison. At his induction it was said that many churches and organizations have sent aid to the prison, but then they usually disappear. Alexei and the Catholic Church are the first to take a regular on-going approach to helping in the prison.



*Alexei Hartman with prison officials*

Some day perhaps we can have a prisoner's rehabilitation center in Khabarovsk, but we've already begun one in Vladivostok. The women's prison in Primorye Territory is in a small village, so released prisoners usually go to Vladivostok to begin a new life. They can't find work because they don't have a permanent address, which is

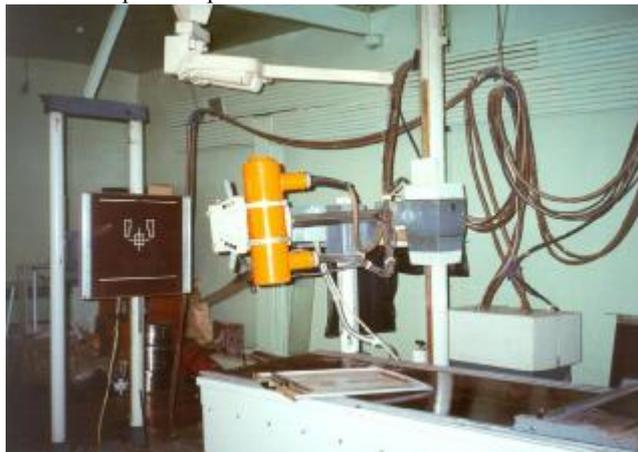
required for work in Russia. So we bought a very small apartment near our St Vincent de Paul used clothing store where women can live temporarily and officially register their address. Until they find work, they can help in the store, mending and cleaning clothing. Meanwhile, several American have donated used computers, and we can train the prisoners in new secretarial skills at the store. With a grant from the Sisters of Charity of St Anne of Saragosa, Spain, CARITAS can now provide one meal per day for 50 needy people, and the prisoners can make use of this opportunity until they find work. From a grant from the House of Peace of Austria we can buy new shoes for the women if needed.



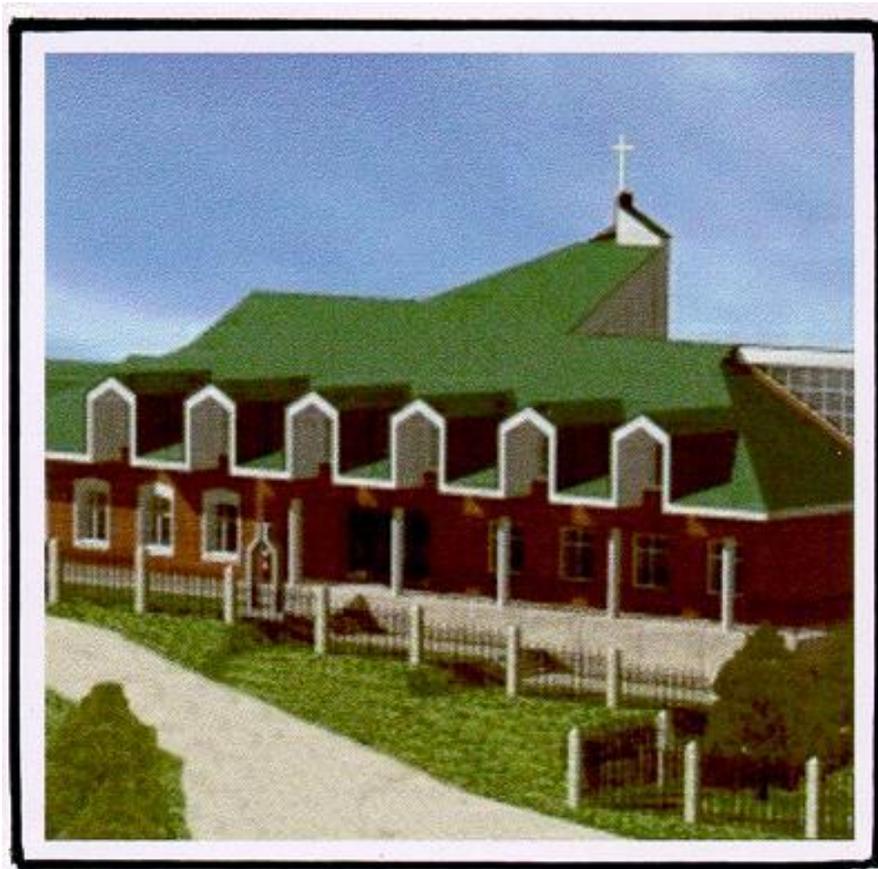
*Women who are soon to be released fill out applications for a ticket home.*

The prisons in Primorye asked us to help them find textbooks for the school year. It was only a matter of several days of legwork and we found all the necessary books which were donated to us from schools who changed textbooks.

We would like to work more regularly in prisons in evangelization, but that takes trained people, and the time required will mean paychecks. What the future will bring depends upon additional grants from other foundations that want to help in the prisons of Russia.



*X-ray machine in the prison hospital which is used to detect tuberculosis.*



**Dear Father Myron,**

Yes, I'd like to help provide living space for you and the seminarians and for the mission effort in Russia in commemoration of the 2000<sup>th</sup> jubilee of Christ's birth. Please accept my pledge or donation for the following items selected from the needs list:

First Choice: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Second Choice: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Third Choice: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make the dedication plaque to read:

" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ "

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

My address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mary Mother of God Mission Society  
1854 Jefferson Ave  
St Paul MN 55105-1662

Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage Paid St Paul Minnesota Permit No. 6732
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Address Service Requested

### From the development desk...

Dear Readers,

- We are close to being authorized by the Russian government to start adoptions. Please tell your friends about this program. Catholic Charities USA will be working with us. Call 1- 888-990-4199 in Ashville,NC. Ask for Michele or Carol, request the Vladivostok program for adoptions.
- We have many needs in our sister parishes in Russia. Please consider coming to Russia for 10 days to help us. Bring your teen agers, collage age young people, or sponsor them. What an adventure. We have several that would like to come. If you might consider sponsoring someone the cost is \$2,500. E-mail Dan Pyne at [herkeynav01@earthlink.net](mailto:herkeynav01@earthlink.net) for a travel information packet. Its stuffed with answers and information. Or call him 501-941-2682
- We have several priests and seminarians who would like to visit Vladivostok. We are in need of plane fare or frequent flyer miles for them. We also need the frequent flyer miles for our priests travelling back and forth every three months for visas as well as for their two visits to the States each year. The trip here in the States uses all airlines. If you wish to donate frequent flyer miles

please contact our helper, Kathleen at 816-322-2398 or e-mail her at: [vbrown@kc.rr.com](mailto:vbrown@kc.rr.com)

- We received a donation of \$200,000 from The Kopp Family Foundation in Minnesota for the start of the parish rectory building and for restoration of the facade of our Most Holy Mother of God Cathedral. The entire project is \$625,000. The wish list is on our web site if you would like to continue this generosity, or call the mission office for a copy. This might be a memorial for living or deceased members of your family, or a Jubilee Year Christmas gift for someone who has everything. Now their can have a room in Vladivostok to honor the donor or anyone you designate!
- We have begun a speaker's bureau. We would like to send a representative from the mission to speak to your group or church. If you would like to know more contact me at the office.

God love you and your families,

Sandra