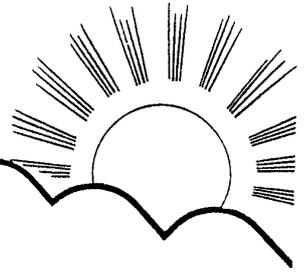


Vladivostok Sunrise



Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Thirty Eight March 1, 2001

Installation of Six More Windows

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

A special Jubilee Christmas present for us was the arrival and installation of six new stained glass windows the week before Christmas. When our parishioners came for Christmas Mass they were astonished to see the beautiful glass. The largest window is "Mary Mother of the Church" which was donated by the Seraphic Mass Association of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Capuchin Franciscans of Pittsburgh have often offered hospitality to me when I needed to be in the Pittsburgh area, and when they heard about our "Windows Project", Fr Francis Fungini, OFM Cap, the Director of the Seraphic Mass Association offered the "Mary Mother of the Church" Window to members of the Association as a special Christmas project—already in 1996. The dream came true in the Jubilee year.

The new window is in the transept of the Most Holy Mother of God Church in Vladivostok, opposite the Annunciation Window. One could say that at the Annunciation Mary already became the "Mother of the Church" by becoming the mother of Jesus, but the Church celebrates its birthday on Pentecost, so the new window shows Mary surrounded by the Apostles on Pentecost Day. The streams of fire from the Holy Spirit flow, not only to the Apostles and Mary, but through and past them to the Christians of all times who are represented in the window by a bishop and his people celebrating the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, so that the three sacraments of initiation are shown in close conjunction.

The other five windows are "Mary Mother of God", the rose window over the main entrance donated by my family three years ago to memorialize my 25th anniversary of ordination, "Pieta" donated by Mr and Mrs Robert Flynn of Snohomish WA, "St Joseph" by Mr and Mrs Robert Ozburn of Janesville WI, "Tree of Jesse" by Ms Virginia Murphy of Nativity Parish in St Paul, MN and "Seven Sorrows" donated by Mrs Juliet Shepard of Rhode Island. Of course we will send each donor a picture, and we will show the windows here in later additions of the *Vladivostok Sunrise*, but we can only show them here in black and white. You will be able to see the photos in full color on the internet as they are posted, and it has been suggested that we make postcards from them to send to you, our benefactors.





The glass artisans in their workshop in Brest, Belarus.

Vladimir Ivanov, cleaning and preparing the windows for mounting at the church building.

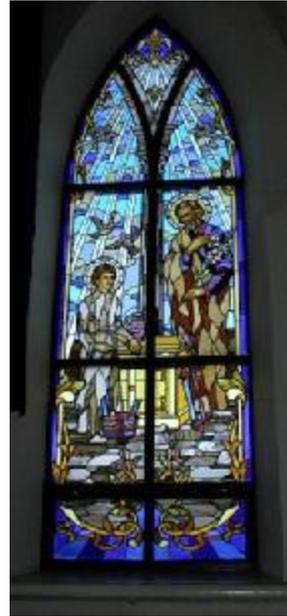


Which windows are next? We have already approved the design for the Visitation and the Nativity Windows, so perhaps they will be ready by the summer, and after that come the Presentation and the Finding in the Temple. Why has it taken so long? It is more economical not to hurry!

Our Bishop Jerzy Mazur agreed that we should invite the Russian Federation's Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Georg Zur, to bless the new windows. We are waiting for the date to be set. Thank you, benefactors, for your support of this project.

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.

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"St Joseph Window"—St Joseph and the child Jesus in the carpenter shop, gift of Mr & Mrs Robert Ozburn of Janesville, Wisconsin.

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

Letters without donations can be sent to:

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English language:

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

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

Mary Mother of God Mission Society

1854 Jefferson Ave

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Or you can donate from your credit card through our web site. Your donations are tax-deductible. You will receive any required receipt for IRS tax purposes by return mail.

News Notes

by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

• The early days of January were very difficult for us, as for all of Russia. At the same time that the weather was exceptionally cold, it was difficult to get fuel supplies in Vladivostok. We went on an energy saving regime, and we were without electricity for the better part of several days. We had to buy a small generator to run the heating system when the electricity would fail. And we were finally able to get a shipment of fuel oil just in the nick of time. Now we are warmer again, but many parts of smaller villages are without adequate heat. Our parish apartment in Arsenyev is very cold, so that it is not possible to have activities there for a while. Siberia has been especially hard hit with temperatures in some places of -60F, and many heating systems and pipes have frozen.



Mountain of Insulation filling the vestibule of our church waiting for installation in the attic. Hopefully it will be warmer in the church next year.

We have purchased insulation to install in the attic of the church. Donations for the insulation came from St Philip Benizi Parish in Oregon City OR, from Christ the King Council 9257 of the Knights of Columbus of Clackamas OR, and from St Joseph's Church in Salem OR. We are at the same latitude as Oregon, but our weather is more like south Alaska. "Thank You" to those who donated toward the insulation.

• On January 2 our good friend Father John McGuire died in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky of severe heart problems. He had been very sick in the past few weeks and was not able to eat hardly anything. Fortunately we were able to visit in November, and I was able to thank him personally for all of his concern for our mission. His organization *Father McGuire's Mission Share* has been a big help to us to acquire land and buildings for our parishes. As he made a home for so many of God's children here on earth, may he have an everlasting mansion in heaven. His funeral mass was held

on January 5 at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Covington, Kentucky.



Fr McGuire [seated], with Fr Myron, Fr William Hinds, the new president of Fr McGuire's Mission Share, and Fr William Neuhaus.

• On January 8 we completed our series of Christmas concerts. There were four organ concerts, and the Festival of Christian Choirs. Choirs came from the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches. No Orthodox choir was able to attend this year because all had evening services to sing for on January 7—Orthodox Christmas. The concerts were the culmination of our Jubilee Year. Total attendance was more than 800 people. There is such a demand that we may have to expand the program even more. Our parish organist, Marina Omelchino has been invited to do a concert in the city of Khabarovsk.

• Thanks to Mr and Mrs Terry Baltes of Immaculate Conception Parish in Dayton, Ohio, I have a "new" car. It is a 1993 Toyota Mark II. Hopefully it will last several years for my long distance travelling to parishes. The picture isn't backward--the steering wheel is on the right in all Japanese cars produced for Japan. Almost all cars in our part of Russia



Anatoly Petrovich with the new car. Anatoly takes care of the car for me.

have the steering wheel on the right because they are imported a used cars, even though we drive on the right side of the road in Russia. It makes passing very difficult (and dangerous!)

- At last Holy Trinity parish in Romanovka was able to buy an apartment. What held us up was not lack of desire, nor funds, since Holy Trinity's sister parish, St Philip Benizi in Oregon City, Oregon had already offered its help. The problem was that parishioners could not find an appropriate apartment in the right location at a reasonable price. Finally it happened. Thank you, parishioners of St Philip Benizi.

- On January 23 I returned from the auction of excess property of the City of Lesozovodsk as the proud owner of an old barbershop with a damaged roof, fallen ceiling, and broken bathroom fixtures. The sale price was 202,000 rubles which is about \$7500. The location is great--between three very large dormitories where young families live in one-room apartments with facilities down the hall. The government official who completed the transfer of ownership papers said, "There are a lot of poor kids in that neighborhood. I think you will be a big help to them!" We are ready and anxious to help. We will be able to have a Women's Support Center here, as well as parish offices and maybe a little religious goods store. Of course we will have to repair the place first, but I hope that within several months we will have a working chapel and a real parish center. It will be so nice to have a place which the Catholic church can call its own here in the city of Lesozovodsk. Perhaps we can finish the repairs and have a dedication by May 31, the Feast of the Visitation, the parish feastday.

Until now the parish has been doing most of its activities at the Association for the Blind, who like coming to our masses and sermons, since they can't read religious literature. They will be able to continue coming to the new place.



The view of the location of our new quarters in Lesozovodsk—between the left two huge dormitories.



Each window in each dormitory building is a one-room apartment housing a young family. Facilities are down the hall.

So it is a new stage in the development of this little Parish of the Visitation which doesn't have a sister-parish in America yet, but it is very adoptable. It is clear that the parish will continue to be small, but will have many charitable activities. There is already the Women's Support Center and the orphanage program. Now parishioners are seriously considering a feeding program for street children. Would you like to help them with that project?



Vladimir Pisarenko, the parish Trustee, showing the interior of the former barber shop.

Meanwhile I don't know where the money to buy and repair the barber shop will come from. For the auction I borrowed money from our building fund in Vladivostok, hoping we will find donors for Lesozovodsk to repay the loan before the money is needed in the summer in Vladivostok.



Repairs have to begin with the roof and ceiling, which have been destroyed by rain after bottles, thrown from dormitory windows, broke through the roof in many places. We'll have to have a strong roof.

- A former student of mine, Father Bob Clark, and a lay parishioner Patricia Leonard-Mayer came to visit Vladivostok from St Agnes Parish in St Paul, MN. They said that their favorite time was their visit with our eldest parishioner, Sophia Michaelovna, whose husband was among the martyrs of the parish. She will celebrate her 90th birthday in February. Of the social projects that they visited, they said that the greatest impression was made by the soup kitchen and by the orphanage where our sisters help. Father Clark's sermons were featured in the journal *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* for January of 2001.



Father Robert Clark

- Our web-site, www.vladmission.org, was set up five years ago and was maintained by our good friend in Oregon, Jeff Lang, and more recently it has been taken over by Nativity parishioner Jim Weatherly because Jeff thought he didn't have the technical expertise to advance the site further. Sorry about the bit of misinformation in issue 37 of *Vladivostok Sunrise* about how the website originated. Thank you to both men for their work for our mission.

- Alcoholics Anonymous is gradually gaining strength in the parishes we serve. Recently the first group of five gathered in Ussurisk; Nakhodka already has an average of 12 people; Lesozovodsk is working its way toward its first meeting. In Vladivostok, AA has a history of nine years already.

- Want to buy a church anyone? There is a building which is nearly ideally suited to be a church and ideally located in the City of Nakhodka. It just needs a little TLC (honestly—at

lot of TLC!) The company who owns the building is nearly bankrupt, so they would like to sell the building before it goes to auction by the court. We could buy the building and do a reasonable repair for about \$66,000. 2000 sq ft main floor, and full basement for social projects, like the Women's Support Center, street children feeding, spiritual library, and more. Any buyers? The Parish of our Lady of the Pacific in Nakhodka needs a church building.

Our Volunteers: Anchorage, Alaska

Ray Rzeszut

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

Our mission and the Church in the Russian Far East will forever owe a debt of gratitude to our volunteer who singlehandedly and without any compensation manned our Stateside mission office while it was in Alaska.

Ray Rzeszut and his wife Jeannie never wanted any glory for their endless hours of work and worry for the mission, and he always torpedoed any public attempt I made to acknowledge their contribution in energy and time and money. One of Ray's characteristics is that he is extremely thorough and meticulous in his work, which means that we never had to be concerned about the condition and honesty of our work in America. That was a great blessing, because it was difficult enough for us to have a mission so far away in such an inaccessible place, let alone have to worry about problems in our office in America.

Besides the wear and tear on his nerves during his work for us, Ray sacrificed a great deal of time and energy. Here are some statistics from Ray's stewardship:

- Volunteer Hours of Service: 5000
- Miles traveled in Service to Mission: 23,000
- Messages to and from Vladivostok Mission which required action: More than 1100



Ray Rzeszut and his wife Jeannie

- Income from Ray's money-saving initiatives alone: \$3,310

- Number of trips to the bank to arrange our financial support:
more than 120

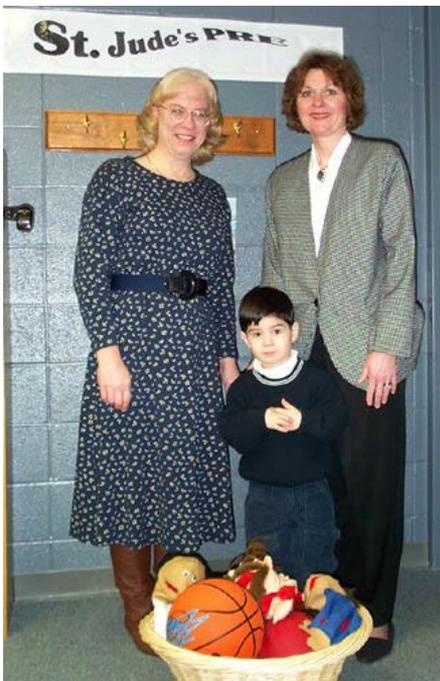
When our office moved to Minnesota, Ray could take a breather from his seven years of carrying our burdens. His interest in our mission and his love for the people of Russia sustained his labors of stewardship in service of God and Holy Mother Church in Russia.

Our Volunteers: Jacksonville, Arkansas

Brenda Stevens

by Susan Gray

I would like to highlight a volunteer helper we have in Arkansas named Brenda Stevens. For several years, Brenda has asked all of the parish religious education classes to create "theme baskets" and given them to our Russian Mission group for silent auctions. One grade makes a "golf basket" full of golf balls, instructional videos, tees, towels, etc. and puts everything in a nice, big wicker basket. The next grade makes an "elegant bath" basket. Then there's the "movie night" basket with videos, microwave popcorn, etc. The gardener's basket, the kitchen basket, Christmas basket, baby boy basket, baby girl basket, and so on. They are really neat. This fall, the baskets brought in \$501. The basket auction helps keep the Russian effort visible and makes the kids and their parents aware of what's going on. What a great idea. Thank you Brenda.



Brenda Stevens (r) and a "Sports Basket", with Susan Gray and Matthew Knighten.

The Trials of Adoption

by Anonymous

[The following is an actual letter with only the identifying information changed.--ed]

Dear Father Myron,

Thank you so much for your letter. It was so nice to hear from you. Please don't feel the need to apologize for the delay in your response; I know you must be very busy.

I was interested to read about the factors that keep adoption costs so high in Russia. It is sad, because it is the children who suffer the most. Fees for international and domestic adoption are all so high, which is why so many children wait so long, and why so many adoptive families go into such debt. Every day I receive e-mails from loving people with wonderful homes, waiting to welcome little ones, but they simply cannot afford the adoption fees. Many of them commit a huge portion of their income to providing for the children who are waiting in their foreign countries, or who will not be adopted, or to other humanitarian activities. It is the same with us.

I'm happy to write a short article for the newsletter, about the ins and outs of adoption here. People might be shocked by what we go through. Most people who don't know think you just go to the orphanage, pick out your child, and come home with them.

My husband and I have been married for ten and a half years. We wanted to have five children, and thought we would have one or two biological children and then adopt the rest from the multitude of waiting children. But birth children didn't come, so we decided to pursue fertility treatments at the same time as adoption. They said we had unexplained infertility, but that they could see no reason why we were not pregnant. Thus began the monthly cycles of ups and downs, expensive drugs, humiliating tests, but it was worth it if it would give us our baby. The money just dripped through the floor. Mortgages, loans, garage sales etc. became the order of the day. Still no baby.

We also hit every obstacle in adoption. There was the three year old in India whose embassy said it would take four years for them to process the paperwork to bring him here, and finally in his best interests we had to find a home for him in India, so he could be home soon.

There was the two year old in El Salvador who needed open heart surgery, which was covered by our medical plan here, but the facilitator wouldn't accept a partial payment before we took custody, brought him home, and then paid off the balance, so we were making payments. During this time, he died from a correctable condition.

Then there were twins locally whose birthmother in a fit of suicidal depression aborted them at seven months, when we had been waiting for them since she was two months pregnant.

There were the four year old twins in Romania, who were in the final stages of being adopted by us, when someone with more money came along and offered an incentive to adopt them. Yesterday I was asked to take triplet girls of five months from Asia, and I would give anything to be able to do that, but the total cost would be \$35,000. Then there are five siblings in Brazil, who will be split up if someone doesn't take them this week. One sister has already gone, and the nine-year-old promised the younger ones they would stay together. The adoption and travel would be \$15,000. We have the room and everything else, except that \$15,000. It is very frustrating.

I could go on and on. I still see every face. It seems so easy, and yet it is not; ironic when you hear of all these unwanted babies and children. People who are not involved with adoption do not understand that the "psychological pregnancy" of a pre-adoptive parent is the same as the pregnancy of a birthmother, and a pre-adoptive loss as a miscarriage. People say "Oh well, it is not like they were your own. You can just adopt another." I have always wanted to adopt identical twins, and just once in my parenting career I would like to have a baby.

I do lots of volunteer work of all sorts, working at the local humanitarian kitchen and with homeless people. But I really want a family of my own.

Jane

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

("From the Development Desk", Continued from Page 8.)

- A special thanks to a young person, Christina deGoode of Mossy Rock WA who writes and sends us her mission (Continued on Page 7) money with her prayers. They really mean a lot to the mission. A special thank you to Ella and Kate, age 85 and 92, who offer their prayers for us. And the Carmelite convent in Wales that prays for us night and day. If you pray for us, please write and tell us.
- Please send us your sacrificial \$400 donation for the building drive. See our up-to-date thermometer on the web site.
- *Vitae Corporation*, the "culture of life" people, support our Russian missions with their "culture of life" credit card and long distance telephone programs. You can sign-up online, www.vitae.org, or call 1-888-883-5433. Our group number is 1160. You can support us with every phone call and credit charge you make!
- Our good wishes to you all. God love you and your family,

David and Sandra Sonnen
National Chairman and National Coordinator

Women's Center in Lesozovodsk

*by Svetlana Lazarenko, Volunteer
tr V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.*

In May of 1999 the Women's Support Center opened under the auspices of Lesozovodsk's Visitation Parish, a move which was very necessary for the city which has a population of 60 thousand. The birthrate is about 25-30 babies per month, but the death rate is two times greater.

At the Women's Center women can receive a free pregnancy test, find moral support, and learn about Natural Family Planning. In the year and a half since its opening the Center has served 147 persons. 60 new moms received kits which contain all the necessary items to take care of a neonate ("Adopt-a-Birth" program).

The majority of the new moms and their children are very weak because of the absence of essential nutrition, vitamins, and minerals. More than 50% of the children have diseases or have pathologies at birth. When the official minimum living standard is 1,600 rubles per month (\$56), multivitamins for pregnancy cost 750 rubles (\$26) in Lesozovodsk. Therefore it is necessary to help support women during their pregnancy with multivitamins. Those who would like to help, please specify your donation to Mary Mother of God Mission Society for the "Women's Support Center in Lesozovodsk". Thank you.

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

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Address Service Requested

From the development desk...

Dear Readers,

- Sixteen volunteers are ready to speak for our mission in your parish or area. Please consider calling the office to have a chat on how to approach your pastor to request a mission preaching date. Also consider some Catholic groups in your area. We are also lining up Fr Dan's visit in July and Fr Myron's trip in November. If you would like to meet our missionaries, please consider hosting a one night visit to your area.
- Airline employees--share your unused companion fares with us so we can send priests to Vladivostok and people who will speak for us to their speaking posts. If you know an airline employee, check to see if there might be any unused passes that we might use.
- The adoption program we have been waiting for has been approved by the Russian government. Get going friends. Call Catholic Charities USA at 1-(888) 990 4199. Ask for Carol or Michelle, and mention the Vladivostok Program.

- We have a new format on the web site www.vladmission.com Please see there our gifts for you from Russia.
- Five of our Russian parishes are waiting to have a sister parish in America; some have waited 6 years now. If you might like a video of a perspective parish, call the mission office (651)690-5139. *St Joseph's* in Second River will be adopted by *St Joseph's* in Modesto, CA. *Presentation* is another new parish we are opening in Olga. Then there is *Nativity* in Ussurisk, *Our Lady of the Pacific* in Nakhodka, *St John the Evangelist* in Bolshoi Kamen, and *Visitation* in Lesozavodsk.
- The "appreciation event" is still going on. Any one we hear from January until Easter will have their name put in a basket to draw for the free condo week in Florida, and other nice gifts. Each time we hear from you we will place your name in the box. Laurie Murphy, our new Secretary of the Mission Society, will pick the names on Easter Sunday.
- Norman Jones, if you read this, we are trying to find your address to send you the cross you requested.

(Continued on Page 7.)