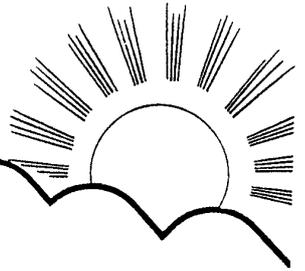


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul

Issue Number Sixty Four July 1, 2005



First Baptisms at St Joseph's Parish

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

May 1 was a happy day at St Joseph's Parish in Second River, Vladivostok. It was the first baptisms in the parish: Two infants, one child, and three adults. The three adults were all wives of Catholic husbands! The very first baptism was of the child Radion Schroeder who became "Nicolaï". His family came all the way from Slavyanka near North Korea for the event. Lyubov Sadovnika was the catechist to help Fr Myron with the lessons for the adults who were baptized. The first baptisms are always a milestone in a new parish. It means that the parish has come of age to give birth to new children in Christ. Congratulations to the new Christians!



Radion facing being buried with Christ in baptism.

Baptism garments and candles brighten the atmosphere.



Our Spring Concerts

By Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

Our two Ecumenical Easter Concerts were held here on Tues and Wed, May 3-4. The first one was a bit raggedy. The choir lost their way on one song completely, and Marina Amelchinko (our organist) tried to help us by reiterating our notes, but we didn't quite make it. So we threw that song out on the second evening, and therefore it turned out to be our most musically successful ecumenical event yet. The spirit of the second concert was GREAT. I loved every minute of it.

I was probably overly nervous the first evening, especially since I found out only one hour before the concert that I would have to be the concert announcer. But the second evening our regular announcer was in place and did a very fine job. His song introductions were brief and very biblical. For the second performance the choir was really together. And the orchestra was good, and the directors were great. And of course Marina was the star on the "Stella Maris" organ. After the final performance we had a wonderful cake and tea party in the downstairs hall, and everyone stayed and stayed because no one wanted the spell to end. Thus we brought our level of ecumenical unity and brotherhood to a new peak. It was just exactly what I wanted to accomplish.

The repertoire was almost as good as the first year (2004). One of the great new additions is "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord" in Russian. Our parish choir director and I did the translation a month ago in about 30 minutes. (Inspired!). Last January by email I got a very fine choral arrangement from Dr Jenkins in St Paul, MN. He was Marina's first-ever organ teacher when we sent her there in the summer of 2002 for a short course, and he has remained a music consultant ever since. For the first evening performance we had a male soloist from our professional Catholic Concert Choir sing the first verse and lots of "O's" during the fourth verse, but he had to be gone the second evening, so the choir sang all four verses. It was very beautiful. Our volunteer parish choir will be able to sing "Were you there" for our Good Friday service in the parish next year. Once you know it, it stays with

you. Also the directors, acting as our repertoire committee, paid me the great compliment of choosing "Holy Is His Name" as one of the only two songs to be repeated from last year's performance. This is John Michael Talbot's arrangement of the *Magnificat* in Russian translation. It is very nice. Last year for the Ecumenical Easter Concert I spent parts of over two weeks putting the Russian translation to the same musical arrangement, and it worked out well.

We did not record the concert this year, as we still have 800 of last year's CD's, so our great second performance "went with the wind", but most importantly it went to God. This year there were 50 members of the choir from six different confessions, only six of whom were men. But everyone who participated seemed very dedicated and would like to do it again. I told a few of the choir directors of the slight possibility of doing it next year at a large theater, and they seemed to like the idea quite a lot. We'll see, if we can get a grant for a "traveling organ". I was proud of the fact that of the six men in the whole ecumenical choir, three of us were from the Catholic Church, and we sang quite well. We are all tenors--I, Dennis Bondarev and Dima Kamil. The only bass in the entire choir this year was the Lutheran pastor.

This year our parish Easter concerts (April 26, 27, 28) were wonderful, as always sold out well in advance.

Marina received the longest and loudest applause of her career on each of the three evenings. The choir also was extremely well received. And our two regular soloists, a mezzo and a soprano, were also in fine voice. The concerts were triumphs, again. Marina is growing steadily in her proficiency. Her liturgical playing, which was always good, has gotten even better since she attended a 10-day seminar on liturgical organ playing in Gratz, Austria last September. She throws in some great new harmonies, and uses grander registrations when appropriate. Since she was here during Easter season (instead of studying in the Conservatory in Moscow), it really added to the celebration of the season.

I wrote a letter of invitation to Mr Dan Miller, a highly praised US concert organist and product manager at Rodgers Instruments, to come and give three concerts in the Fall. He will be the first internationally famous, non-Russian organist to play in Vladivostok. He is a specialist at combining the Trillium stops with the MX-200 MIDI synthesizer voices for some amazing sounds. If you do not know his work, you can check out his website at: <http://www.danmillermusic.com/home.htm> I have five of his CD's. They are amazing.

So I just wanted to tell you that the project was a success from many different points of view this year, and we hope to continue.



Ecumenical Easter Choir, 2005

Our Benefactors...

Father Michael McGivney 4th Annual 24 Hour Famine

By Evan Battenheimer

As a student at Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy in Markham, Ontario, Canada, and as a participant in the 2005 24-hour famine, I am proud to be the one to tell you that we had great success in our mission to raise enough money to help out the Mary Mother of God Mission Society. This year we raised more than any other year, over 1,300 dollars. My name is Evan Battenheimer, and I am a student at Father Michael McGivney. Each year we do a 24 hour fast just before Holy Week. The event was initiated 4 years ago by Mr. Doug McManaman, a Religion teacher at Father McGivney. This year we learned of the Mary Mother of God Mission Society and its pro-life work in the former Soviet Union, so we decided that we would like our money to be channeled there.

During our time at this fundraiser, we were involved in a series of activities not only to keep our energy and spirits up, but to help us understand the message that Christ left for us. We started the first day with some simple icebreakers. After that we headed back to our "home base" where we would take a small break and refuel with some juice (we take juice breaks every so often to keep our blood sugar level up). Then we got together in a

group and prayed the Stations of the Cross around the entire school building. Each station is posted at a different spot around the building. This was one of the most significant parts of the evening. After that, we were sent back to home base to listen to a very inspiring talk from Cale Clarke, a former Evangelical pastor who became a Catholic. He gave us the chance to ask lots of questions, and we had the opportunity to speak to him one-on-one at the end of his talk.

To end the first day of the famine, the whole school became our playground in a game of Hide-and-Seek. This definitely was a nice way to end off the evening.

The next day was filled with as much as the first day. Mr McManaman took attendance and then led us into the chapel for morning prayer. After that, we began the Scavenger Hunt. Here, we had to read clues in order to find the next clue. The one to discover the final clue is the winner, who won a huge box of Corn Flakes and chocolate Easter eggs, which were not to be eaten until the famine was over.

For the finale, we headed off to the chapel for Mass, after which we were treated to a meal. We are never sent home on an empty stomach. Each year we end off our famine in style with a meal fit for a king made by our culinary genius, Mr Trapp. He cooked a delicious pork loin roast for all the students, as well as delicious pasta for the vegetarians. What a way to end it all off!



The whole hungry gang. Is that Mr McManahan making sure no one cheats?

Opportunities

♥ Caritas in Lesozovodsk is looking for donors who want to help four very poor children who have diabetes. They need to buy their sugar test strips, which comes to a total of \$2248.20 per year for all of them if bought in Russia.

♥ A Vladivostok Russian parishioner with extensive administrative experience in the fishing industry and with English language skills is looking for work. He has six children, and has been out of work since the Fall. He is a responsible person who doesn't drink.

♥ A young Russian man, blind after an accident, has taken up music, and would like a decent guitar.

♥ Larisa Kaleninchenko, our street kids' "mom," found out that a 16 year-old couple had a baby, and they are determined to marry and to keep the child. As street kids, they don't have anybody else for family. But they can't make a home for their child on the street. They need \$158 per month rent while they are still in school and working when they can.

News Notes

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

• Sophia Michaelovna Brzhynskaya died on June 9. She was our most honored parishioner whose husband was one of the martyrs of our parish, and who saved her First Holy Communion picture which she then donated to our parish—the "miracle picture". She was 94 years old, and had been baptized and married in our church before it was closed and confiscated in the 1930's. On June 8 Fr Myron anointed her and gave her Viaticum.



Sophia Michaelovna congratulating Fr Myron on his 60th

birthday in about 2001.



Sophia as a young wife with her children and martyr husband Sigismund Vladislavovich Brzhynsky..

• Recently three high school boys came to ask to see the church and talk to someone about religion. They wanted to know more. Can we hope for Russian vocations? I hope Pope John Paul will ask the Lord for Russian vocations! It could be another miracle we could ascribe to him. Thanks are in order for benefactors who support our seminarians and vocations efforts. It was Pope John Paul who said, "Open the door to Christ!" Now we need workers for that vineyard.

• Biju Kuriacose, our candidate from Pune, India, spent a month here. He is a former member of the Canons Regular of Premontre in India. It was a nice visit for us, although he suffered somewhat from Fr Dan's absence to Korea to get a new visa and my absence later, when I went to Jerusalem. When he returned to India, he was robbed by the taxi driver on the way from the airport, apparently after being hit on the head. He woke up in the hospital with his brother attending to his needs. So it means that he will be late in returning to the seminary. He has one



more year of seminary, and then his pastoral year before ordination to the priesthood. Hopefully he will be ordained a deacon at the end of this coming school year here in Russia. Then he can spend his pastoral year here, including taking first vows and learning Russian, and then he can return to India for the ordination to

the priesthood with his family and pastor in his own parish. After those festivities he can return to Russia in earnest.

- Congratulations to our parish college graduates for 2005. Here is a photo of two of them who work for the parish, Christina Pavlova and Dmitri Kamil. Christina's degree is in social work *Summa Cum Laude*. She was told by her advisor that her diploma research was of doctoral quality. Christina is one of the main movers in our Women's Support Centers, creating and editing the pamphlets and magazines used in the centers and helping to train volunteers. Her research had to do with the social implications of the Church's teachings about the family life. Dmitri's degree is in geography. He is well-known to our guests as their chief host and translator. He was a former student in Franciscan University of Steubenville's Gaming, Austria program, and did his research on the geography of Austria. He is hoping to get an advanced degree in Theology in Gaming, as soon as there is an opening in that program again.



Christina Pavlova and Dmitri Kamil with their diplomas.

- Sisters in Jesus the Lord have a new postulant! Nicole

Morse entered the convent in St. Paul on May 31st, the Feast of the Visitation, after attending the vocation retreat in March. After several years in a cloister, she has discerned that her calling is to a more active religious community. She is 22 years old, hails from Iowa, and hopes to begin college this Fall. She is very interested in learning Russian and going to Vladivostok. The second vocation retreat was held on June 24-26th, and ten women came.

Sr Maria Stella (Kelly Whittier) will make her first profession of private vows on August 6th at St. Agnes Convent in St. Paul, MN.

Thank you to all of our benefactors for your prayers for this sister-community-to-be for the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord.

- The latest statistics from our Primorsky Territory is that the number of marriages is equal to the number of divorces. The population continues to decline, not only from emigration, but also because the death rate is twice the birthrate. If the economics looked brighter last fall, with the beginning of 2005 many people, especially elderly got desperate and hopeless. This was because the government decided it was time to convert all of the official "discounts" that people received from the government into cash benefits. This is what happened:

Years ago during the economic crisis of the 1990's the government tried to ease the burden on certain categories of people like veterans, retired people, government workers, and soldiers by giving discounts on government services. For example, free bus tickets, discounts on energy, discounts on hospitalization and medicines, and so on. Even though this helped many people, especially city dwellers, it was ruinous for the transportation, medical, and electrical sectors because they were not compensated for the discounts. Half the riders on buses in Vladivostok, for example, didn't pay for their rides, but the bus company had to continue to supply services. The result was a terrible decay in the quality of services and in equipment.

So the government decided that it was time to eliminate the discounts so that the industries affected could recuperate. It eliminated the discounts by replacing them with a cash addition to pensions. Rural folk were delighted, because they couldn't use the discounts anyway, and thus got additions to their pensions. City folk were devastated. While they did get an addition to their pension, it did not cover the increased costs they incurred with increasing energy, health, and transportation

costs. High oil prices plus inflation caused by the sudden surge of money in the economy from the liquidated discounts eliminated any advantage they would have had. Thus many elderly, including our parishioners, are suffering. They say that if they pay their utilities they have nothing left to live on. Attendance at daily and Sunday mass has decreased because the elderly can't afford bus tickets. More parishioners are asking to attend the daily soup kitchen. Others say that they cannot buy their medicines and still buy food—it's either/or. There is a sense of disappointment and hopelessness. The suicide rate among the elderly is increasing. We will do what we can to help—with the help of our benefactors. Still we want to concentrate on preaching the Gospel which is the light at the end of the tunnel! People were promised the moon by the Communists, so now they are disappointed and find it hard to believe in anything but death. Society was so wounded by socialism that family life has to begin again from scratch. People are so used to abortion that it causes less concern than going to the dentist! This is the condition under which 120 million people live! Pray for the conversion of Russia, and for our strength and resolve to continue our work in spite of difficulties and trials.

Then the government took steps to help relieve the financial problems by giving pension increases and arranging with transportation companies for discounts paid for by the government. The crisis is easing, but many elderly are still in trouble. The government was able to pay for the increases from unexpected gain from the

increased price of oil and gas.

- We are gearing up for finishing the monastery this summer. A Canadian electrician has come to work for a month on the electricity. The Chinese workers should be coming soon—our own workers are preparing for them. When it is done it will provide good living space for our community and office space for the parish. At the present time we are living in the church, which is okay, too, but it does get boring to live and work in the same room day after day. We've done it for twelve years already!
- This past three weeks we've had 10 student visitors and a priest from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. They are pilgrimage tourists, and have been helping at the local children's hospital and the hospice. At the children's hospital they have been cleaning and painting a whole floor. It has been a lot of work, and they seem to have lost weight while they were here! They like the Russian cooking, but it is less fattening than the usual American fare. Several of the group are thinking about the priesthood, so I think this has been a good "missionary" experience for them, to help them decide. They are an impressive group of young people. I think they are preparing an article for the *Sunrise*, so you'll probably read more about them and see their pictures there.



The Steubenville gang as they were leaving.

From the development desk...

\$22,000.

Dear Vladivostok Mission supporter,

God love you and your family,

● Come one, come all to the SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE with Fr Daniel Maurer. Plan on joining us Dec 2-3-4 in St Paul MN with a FIRST annual St Nicholas dinner and gala event on Saturday evening to fund a street kids project. “Sheraton Four Points St Paul” will be the hotel of choice with the evening dinner. Costs: catered meals Fri Eve, Sat AM, Sat noon, Sunday AM, and Sunday noon \$50. St Nicholas Gala Dinner \$50.

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● ULTRASOUND MACHINE NEEDED: To all of our supporters who are physicians or health care professionals of any kind, friends of such professionals, or patients (I guess that means all of us!): Please help us find used ultrasound machines to save the lives of unborn babies in Russia. Ask your doctor or clinic if they are planning to buy the latest and greatest ultrasound machine, and would they be willing to donate the old one to us. It’s a tax write-off, of course. If you would like to make a financial contribution towards purchasing a new machine, the cost of a suitable machine for our Women Support Centers is



*I sure
wouldn't
want to
be a
"street
kid!"*