



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

January 15, 2008

First the late-breaking news! Sandra Sonnen of St Paul MN has headed up our American operation for eight years already, after Ray Rzeszut of Anchorage AK did it for seven years. As I've mentioned in my letters to you, Sandie has been having health issues and needs less stress in her life. So I've asked Vicky Trevillian of Modesto CA to head up the American operation now. She is a super lady, too, and loves Russia very much. The banking and mailing operations will remain in St Paul under Sandie and Dave Sonnen's supervision, but the overall coordination and development program will be shifting to Vicky. Sandie was the coordinator of the Nativity of our Lord sister parish program for us before she became national coordinator, and Vicky has served as sister parish coordinator at St Joseph's Parish in Modesto. Another example of how important sister parishes are to us!

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Vicky Trevillian

I know that Sandie is glad to be giving so much of her responsibility over to someone who has proved very capable and faithful. And thanks, Vicky, for accepting!

Bishop Kirill has agreed to bless the rectory on the evening of February 2, The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord Jesus in the Temple. What could be better than that? And then he will re-consecrate the church building itself on February 3, the 70th anniversary of the death of our martyrs—1938--during Stalin's time. Also, the consecration will take place 100 years from the blessing of the first cornerstone for the church, which was done by Bishop Cepliak in 1908.

I just got a call from Fr Sebastian in Nakhodka that a young girl appealed to the Women's Support Center for help. Her boyfriend (both of them are very young) just abandoned her after she gave birth to twins! The girl is pretty weak, and there isn't enough milk for both babies. So we'll be taking this project on for a while. It's the first appeal they've had

1854 Jefferson Avenue • St. Paul, MN 55105-1662 • Phone/Fax 651-227-0208
E-mail: USOffice@vladmission.org myron@catholic.vladivostok.ru

after the appointment of the new director and the reformation of the Center. So it is kind of exciting for them.

Meanwhile, we've started work on the steeples! We won't have them done by February 3, of course, but we'd like to have at least some of it done! We're only halfway on the financing, but we are relying on God (and benefactors) to provide. Here is a photo of the bricks going up (although it has been -4 °F here this week, so nobody worked up high in the wind this week!) We are praying that no one will fall from the scaffold!



Bricks already rising higher.



The Vietnamese "steeple crew" working up high.

No doubt 2008 will be a significant year for all of us, what with elections in Russia and in America, and with the re-consecration of our church and the blessing of our rectory in Vladivostok. The news media here are following the American elections very closely.

It is a pleasure to thank you for your contribution! I just looked through the list of people who donated to the rectory construction and the church restoration—I hope I haven't forgotten anybody! We know that God can't be outdone in generosity (and I'm counting on that for myself, too!) We think that our presence and work here is very important for the future, so thank you being a part of it. There seems to be a new swell of interest in vocations (as in America, too) and President Putin has declared 2008 to be the "Year of the Family" so we are hoping for good things from that, too.

God bless you! And thanks for all that you do! Most Holy Mother of God, please give our benefactors a special answer to prayers!

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.