

## How to Communicate with Us

**FAX:** 011-7-4232-26-9616

**E-mail:** [myron@catholic.marine.su](mailto:myron@catholic.marine.su)  
[daniel@catholic.marine.su](mailto:daniel@catholic.marine.su)

**World Wide Web:** <http://www.pond.net/~jeffclang/mostholy/>

**Phone:** 011-7-4232-26-9614

**Money** cannot be sent by mail to Russia. Donations of money should be sent to:

Vladivostok Mission  
225 Cordova Street  
Anchorage AK 99501 USA

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

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

Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Parish  
Volodarskovo 22  
690001 Vladivostok RUSSIA

Due to the huge cost of transporting and importing **packages**, which often exceeds the cost of the enclosed donated items, our shipping agent in California can no longer receive packages without our prior approval. Please do not mail packages directly to Russia, since every package mailed to Russia costs us \$50. If you have items that you think we can use, please contact our volunteer representative in Arkansas who will help you:

Mr Dan Pyne,  
5 Sun Crest Dr  
Cabot AR 72023  
Telephone: 501 843-8671.

Issue Number Fifteen September 1, 1996

Vladivostok Mission  
225 Cordova Street  
Anchorage AK 99501

Sister Susan Wal  
Miss Sisters of St Peter Claver  
265 Century Ave  
St Paul MN 55125-1155  
612 738-9704

Vladivostok Mission  
Nativity of our Lord Parish  
324 Prior Ave South

St Paul MN 55105-1617

Address Correction Requested

Vladivostok Mission  
Nativity of our Lord Parish  
324 Prior Ave South  
St Paul MN 55105-1617

Address Correction Requested

**Remember “Vladivostok Mission”  
in your will.**

- 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5 - - 6 - - 7 - - 8 - - 9 - - 10 -

- 11 - - 12 - - 13 - - 14 - - 15 - - 16 -

## Capital in a Socialist Country

by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

Our mission is totally dependent upon you, our donors, but we don't want it to be like that forever! We want to begin our own process of support in Russia itself.

Russia is a developed second world country. Because of Russia's socialist past the Church has no capital and no assets to work with here. Consequently we can only operate if there is a steady supply of donations. Let's be concrete--I'll use some examples.

In Khabarovsk, a city with a population of nearly one million people and a regional center like Chicago or St Louis, my parish has no building, no car, no phone, no property. We must rent a two-room office where we have Sunday mass as well as carry on the activities of our parish. We must pay \$560 per month for rent! At the end of the month this is lost money. If we had the capital to buy an office for \$40,000, we could afford to pay \$560 per month back on the loan with interest, so that the loan would be repaid in, say, eight years. In the end we would have the value of the apartment as a permanent asset of the parish. As it is now, after eight years we will be left with nothing but rent receipts, and we will still be dependent on fundraising to continue to pay our rent!

Another example: Two years ago we realized that a crematorium would be a good source of income for our charitable work in Vladivostok, and at the same time a moneysaver for the elderly poor of our city who cannot afford burial, grave, and casket. It would also save money for the city which buries 15 unclaimed bodies per week. Burial is expensive here because Vladivostok is built on the end of a rocky peninsula, and land is very scarce.

In Catholic Mexico City, the chief source of income for the Cathedral parish is the sale of niches for burial of cremated remains, with interment in the crypt of the Cathedral where there is a weekly mass for the deceased. Providing similar funeral services in Vladivostok would also give us a chance to evangelize people at a crisis time in their lives--the death of their loved ones.

But we didn't have and couldn't find the \$40,000 capital to begin a crematorium, although we had the place, the opportunity, and the talent, and we were sure we could repay the loan in a reasonable time. Now a consortium of businesses has announced a \$4 million dollar crematorium project for Vladivostok. It will still benefit the poor and the city who have no money for burial, but it won't provide a long-term income source for our charitable work. Businessmen have decided that it would be a profitable business for themselves, but who would invest their money "where no thief can reach nor moth destroy?" The profits will go to private persons instead, and we will still be begging. We could still begin a crematorium

within the next six months, but after that it will be too late for us.

A third example: When we came to Vladivostok we were able to rent an apartment, although it was far from the center of the city and from our church building. When we were getting ready to receive the building, we had to find an apartment near the church. We hated to think of paying the high prices for rent, knowing that the money would be lost forever. Then two wonderful benefactors decided to buy an apartment for us to use, and we would rent from them at less cost than the usual rent in our neighborhood. Now the market value of that apartment has risen considerably, so that the donors can realize a capital gain, and we have benefited from reduced rent!

Most funding organizations provide money for programs like evangelization or current charitable needs. They say, "we don't support capital needs, but send us a pastoral project." How can we run a pastoral project if we don't even have a desk to sit at or a door to open at five of our parishes? And doing only pastoral projects will leave us forever dependent upon foreign aid and never allow us to develop our own resources. Pope Paul VI said in *Populorum Progressio*, "The new name of peace is development," referring to his support of the development of Third World countries. The same should be true in the Church. We don't want to be dependent forever--we want to develop!

This is the special problem of the Church in the Second World. The Church in Russia so far has no assets which it can use to borrow money, and consequently, Russian banks will not loan us money. Where and how can we find such loans of capital for the development of our parishes here in the Far East of Russia? Who can help us with the development of our own resources? In any development project in a mission area, the difficulty is the increased risk, but covering the increased risk is exactly the part that still makes it charitable giving--otherwise it would be just a business arrangement. We are hoping that our benefactors and friends will see this need and give us a helping hand. The Church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. We missionaries need a solid economic foundation on which we can build a church.

## **Volunteer English Teachers Raise Money for the Church**

*by Elena Solop*

How can the Church raise some money in Russia, instead of being totally dependent upon foreign aid? Talking with an American businessman friend of his, Fr Myron came up with a great idea: Why not offer courses in English? We have many American parishioners who might be willing to volunteer as teachers. We have extra rooms in our church building that could be used as classrooms. There are plenty of Russians who would pay for a few hours a week with a native speaker of English. And if we had the students "make a donation for the renovation of the church building" rather than "pay their teachers," we wouldn't need to be concerned about taxes. All donations would be pure income, with no cost to the church whatsoever!

Shortly after conceiving the idea of English classes, Fr Myron was out at "Giant," a large company run by an American parishioner, Richard Schindler, and happened to pass the idea to a few of the young American employees. He was amazed at their enthusiasm! David Poritsky, even though he is not Catholic, took charge and rounded up eight of his friends, including several other non-Catholics, for the first organizational meeting which was held in the parish office just two weeks later. He formed committees to gather teaching materials, look into advertising methods, round up more volunteers. Meanwhile Fr Myron appointed me, one of his Russian assistants who used to work as an English teacher, as overall Project Coordinator. I am also in charge of interviewing and placing students at the proper proficiency level.

The volunteers were happy to have a chance to use up some of their free time while they are away from home; happy to have an opportunity to work with Russians on their English; happy to participate by their efforts in the restoration of our church building; and happy to have a reason to meet with other Americans.

The first set of classes, held last spring, brought in \$600. Due to lack of advertising, the second set only brought in \$240. The third set, which began after the new year, brought in \$600. The cost of advertising is sky high, so it will take an investment to gather students for the fall classes. Also, it has become harder to find volunteers. Most of the original volunteers have already returned to the States. In addition, many would-be volunteers are reluctant to make a commitment because their jobs call them away from Vladivostok on very short notice or because they already have trips scheduled that interfere with the dates for the classes.

Nonetheless, the grand total so far is \$1440. Fr Myron proposed to them that their project income would be used to buy new front doors for the church. We also have Japanese

parishioners who have expressed interest in the project. Maybe classes in Japanese will be next.

## The First Bishop of Vladivostok was Karol Slivovsky

*by Miroslava-Theresa Efimova, Parish Archivist  
tr Valerie Walatka*

At the end of the last century tens of thousands of Poles, Lithuanians and Belorussians were exiled to penal labor camps in Siberia and the Far East for having participated in nationalistic revolts. Around the same time, the Russian army issued a command drafting young Poles who until that time had been exempt from military service. Great numbers of Poles began serving in the navy and in regular battalions in the Eastern provinces of Russia, and this meant that in addition to Orthodox priests, Polish-speaking Catholic priests were needed in Siberia and the Far East to minister to the spiritual needs of the Catholics.

The first Catholic priest arrived in the Far East in 1867 and began serving Catholics of the huge territory including Sakhalin Island, the Kamchatka Peninsula, the coastal settlements, as well as Nikolaev-on-the-Amur, Khabarovsk, Blagoveschensk-on-the-Amur, Ussurisky-Nikolsk and Vladivostok. The first small residence-chapel was opened in Nikolaev-on-the-Amur, and the priest was based there, making regular trips by boat in the summer, and by either horse or dogsled in the winter to visit his distant congregations and bring them the sacraments.

After the governor general's residence was moved from Nikolaev to Vladivostok, a large part of the armed forces and administrative personnel moved there as well. The Catholic priest also found it necessary to move to Vladivostok in Primorye, not only because of the general shift in population but because it was much easier to serve his congregations with Vladivostok as his base. Under the decision of the city Duma a small piece of land in the city center was allocated for the Roman Catholic Parish on which they constructed a small wooden church and rectory. The church building was destroyed by fire. After long and difficult effort, inevitable problems and trials, almost 10 years after the laying of the foundation-stone, the brick building was completed, sturdy and majestic. In our days it has been granted the status of Monument of Architecture, and it is in this beautiful cathedral that the parish of the Most Holy Mother of God, revived in 1991, now gathers.

In 1912 a new Catholic priest was appointed for Vladivostok, an experienced and highly educated man by the name of Karol Slivovsky. Coming from the Warsaw nobility, he had completed high school, seminary, and studies at an ecclesiastical academy, where he earned a Master's in Divinity. In the first years after his studies, Father Slivovsky served in two parishes in the Eparchy of Mogilyov, the Catholic diocese for all of Russia, until he was transferred to Kazan. We know about his character and his attitude toward his duties from archival materials. Of special interest is a letter submitted to

the metropolitan archbishop of Mogilyov by Father Slivovsky's parishioners and church employees, who considered it their moral obligation to petition the diocesan authorities to confer on Father Slivovsky the title of Honorary Canon. Characterizing their priest, the parishioners write: "We witnessed firsthand his fourteen years of involvement in our church and the fruitful activities in the parish entrusted to him: He initiated the fundraising for and construction of a parochial school next to the church and then took personal interest in its prosperity....He single-handedly organized the renovation of our church building to its current magnificent condition.... Father Slivovsky managed in our cold, indifferent century to attract and win the favor and the hearts of numerous benefactors to this good cause. He worked with eagerness and untiring diligence, doing everything on his own without any assisting priests, and voluntarily serving as military chaplain besides. Not exclusively a parish priest, but also a religion teacher in various educational institutions, Father Slivovsky provided lessons in both Theology and Christian Ethics in schools, junior colleges and at the Rodion Institute."

The arrival of such a businesslike, vigorous and multi-experienced pastor changed the life of the Vladivostok parish in many respects. The priest took on himself all of the many parish responsibilities, as was his practice. We know about this from the written complaints of church employees whom Father Slivovsky let go in favor of other, more authoritative and diligent workers. According to the reports of those parishioners who are still living, magnificent religious celebrations were carried out in the church and a skilled organist played at all the services, which were beautiful and solemn. Warm attention always surrounded the children, who even today, despite their respectable age, remember both Father Slivovsky and the beautiful celebrations in the church, particularly Christmas, Corpus Christi and their unforgettable First Holy Communion.

In 1920 the Archbishop of Mogilyov established the Vladivostok Deanery, which included the parishes of Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Blagoveschensk, Nikolaev, Ussurisky-Nikolsk, Alexandrov-on-Sakhalin and Harbin (in China) [almost the identical area served by Fr Myron and Fr Dan today.--ed] A total of 11 thousand Catholics were registered in the Vladivostok Deanery, and five priests ministered to all of them excluding those in Harbin. Karol Slivovsky, Master of Divinity, Honorary Canon, Prelate, and Third Degree member of the Order of Stanislaw, was appointed Dean. Within three years, on October 28, 1923, Father Slivovsky was ordained Bishop of Vladivostok. The rite was performed in Harbin by Bishop Constantine of Peking, assisted by Bishop Gaspee from Giryin.

Bishop Slivovsky served in Vladivostok until the closing of the cathedral by soviet authorities. The last years of life he spent in the Vladivostok suburb of Sedanka, where, seriously ill, he was cared for by Sister Casimira Piotrovskaya. Bishop Slivovsky died on January 5, 1933, at the age of 85. Sister Casimira ordered a galvanized metal coffin in which to send his

body back to Poland, but authorities would not allow the body to leave Russia. A very modest funeral was held in an old cemetery in Sedanka. No tombstone was placed on the grave, only a simple iron cross on which were written in Polish the name, date of birth and date of death of the first Bishop of Vladivostok.

After the death of the Bishop Sister Casimira held onto his few personal effects until her departure to Poland, when she transferred everything to a former member of the Vladivostok Parish, Mr Stanislav Stanko, for safe keeping. Stanislav's daughter Regina, also a former parishioner and now living in Tomsk, has written us some letters about her early years. She informs us in particular that in August, 1938, her father was arrested and her family was sent to Siberia. During the arrest the metal box containing the Bishop's effects was confiscated. Thanks to the assistance of members of the organization "Memorial," it was possible to find the KGB files on Stanislav Stanko containing an inventory of the Bishop's personal effects: a typewriter with Latin font, a book in the Polish language which may have been a Bible, a gun, a set of binoculars, photo albums, a tea set and a few other things. Most likely these items will never be seen again.

The members of Most Holy Mother of God Parish have been searching for the grave of Bishop Slivovsky, and though they have a modest photograph of the site from Regina Stanko, in the past 60 years there has been much growth in the woods, hiding all visible signs. The hope remains that elderly people who lived in those days will remember something and be able to prompt a more precise search for the grave. May God help us in our good intentions!

*Canon Karol Slivovsky, as seen in the "Miracle Picture" of the first communion class, probably of 1923, just before his ordination to the episcopate. We presume that if the picture had been taken later, he would have been wearing a miter and be holding a crozier. Interestingly, the servers next to the bishop in the photo are wearing white gloves, as if they might have been the miter and crozier bearers. Perhaps time will tell us the actual date of this picture.*

*The bishop's house and chancery as it looks today, an apartment house for eight families.*

*The barn for Bishop Slivovsky's horses and for firewood storage, as it looks today.*

*Historical photo of Bishop Slivovsky's grave which we received from Mrs Stanko of Tomsk.*

*Today's view from the church of the former parish property. We hope to receive this land back again when it will be possible to build a new school building. There was a parish school served by sisters before the Revolution.*

*The place where a new chancery or rectory could be built for our priests next to the church. As you can see, currently it is the*

*location of the public toilet for dwellers in the old parish buildings, who today have no running water, no telephones, no central heating. They have only electricity, and must burn coal in stoves and carry water from the central faucet which is located up a steep hill and next to the church building. In the winter the path is absolutely treacherous. Currently Fr Dan lives in an apartment four blocks from the church on the sixth floor without an elevator, and Fr Myron lives and works in the sacristy of the church.*

## Our Seminarian Evgeny Peregudov

by Valerie Walatka

This spring our seminarian Evgeny Peregudov completed his second year of studies for the priesthood, and his first year at the diocesan seminary in St Petersburg. Technically he needed another year of pre-seminary study, but since he would have been alone in his class at the pre-seminary in Novosibirsk this past year, Bishop Werth decided to enroll him in seminary a year early. It hardly made sense to run a pre-seminary class for just one student. The year in St Petersburg went well for Evgeny. He did fine, not only academically, but overall, and his ordination will now be a year earlier than we expected--already in 2001!

Evgeny likes everything about the seminary, (everything except German class, that is). He is one of 32 seminarians from three dioceses: Moscow, Novosibirsk and Kazakhstan. Most of the seminary professors are priests, and classes include, Latin, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Ethics, Epistemology, Fundamentals of the Faith, Russian, and Pedagogy.

The seminarians live and study in the old seminary building which was constructed before the 1917 Revolution and used during the Revolution as a hospital for wounded soldiers. The seminary operates on the third floor of the building, and recently about half of the second floor was also returned to the Church. The Church should soon receive back the rest of the second floor. Unfortunately the tenant on the ground floor, a large bank, is still under contract to use that space, so the Church won't receive it back until after the bank's lease expires in the year 2000.

Life at the seminary is disciplined, but according to Evgeny also very enjoyable. The daily schedule there includes both prayer and study. The seminarians rise at 5:50am, and before breakfast have a half hour silent meditation followed by Mass with Morning Prayer. They have four classes each morning and gather in the chapel before lunch for the Angelus and Rosary. After lunch they have an hour of free time, then, at 3:15, a three-hour silent study session with just one 15-minute break. They gather for Evening Prayer at 6:30, eat dinner at 7:00, and are free again until 9pm, when all meet in the chapel for a half hour of spiritual reading. Silence begins at 9:30 when the seminarians leave the chapel for their rooms. Lights out is at 10:00, and silence ends after morning prayers the next day.

According to seminary rules, Evgeny was to have some practical pastoral experience in a local parish while he was home with us. Fr Myron decided he should work in the new parish in the village of Romanovka, two hours from Vladivostok. Living with his mother on Russian Island, he travelled by electric train three days a week to Romanovka where he gave instruction in the Faith, preparing about 12 women and children for baptism and confirmation.

The first week of the practicum was both physically and emotionally draining for Evgeny and led him to a deeper appreciation of priests, especially priests in Russia. "I'm still young," he said after the second day of his practicum, "and if three days in Romanovka can wipe me out for the rest of the week, I can't imagine how our priests travel and work the way they do ten, twelve, fourteen hours a day seven days a week with hardly a break." But after the first week, Evgeny was already used to the work and enjoying it very much.

Evgeny loves children and was delighted with the opportunity to prepare about eight children for baptism. He was especially pleased with their receptiveness to the Faith and their interest in prayer. The majority of children in Romanovka are small and underdeveloped for their age, due to the great poverty in the village. The children Evgeny prepared were poor, but simply joyful, and kind-hearted, too, and he could already see the grace of God at work in many of their hearts.

The most important thing Evgeny learned in Romanovka was how to work with people of different backgrounds. People in the village, he noticed, have quite a different lifestyle from city people, with different ways of behavior and speech. Valentina Demyaovna, an active member of the Romanovka Parish, was a big help to Evgeny, showing him around the village, introducing him to those interested in learning more about the faith, assisting him with evangelization and instruction, and often preparing his lunch.

*Visiting guests Christian and Sister Jean Reimer with Evgeny on a Saturday "Subbotnik"--volunteer laborers.*

## Archbishop Hurley Visits

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

Valentine's day had a special meaning for us this year--the visit to our mission of the Most Rev Francis Hurley, Archbishop of Anchorage, Alaska. Archbishop Hurley has long had an interest in the church in Russia, not only because of the Russian history of Alaska, but because he is the bishop of a neighboring diocese to the East of Russia. This love and interest in Russia was expressed six years ago already by Archbishop Hurley's participation in the sister-city program of Magadan, Russia and Anchorage, Alaska. Since that time the Archdiocese of Anchorage has sponsored our northern neighbor parish in Magadan, Nativity, and Archbishop Hurley has visited us in Vladivostok several times.

His first visit was in January of 1992, even before Fr Dan and I moved to Vladivostok. He met with the baby Catholic community and celebrated with them the official registration of the Catholic parish as a religious organization, a task which was completed by the Russian Catholic laity themselves using sample documents sent from Father Gayak of Lublin University in Poland. The fact that they did this on their own initiative is evidence that our parish is not a foreign missionary effort, but the work of native Catholic Russians, even if, temporarily, their priests need to be foreigners.

Although our work is not directly under the sponsorship of Archbishop Hurley, our nearness to Magadan and Alaska, and our being Americans, makes it natural that we collaborate. We are especially grateful to Archbishop Hurley for his help when Fr Dan had to have emergency surgery--this was done in Anchorage at the Archdiocese's remarkable Providence Medical Center. Our volunteers in Anchorage know well the halls of the chancery building where they sometimes labor on our behalf. Fr Dan and I know well the Archbishop's stationwagon and his refrigerator--his home is like our home away from home! It is usually in Anchorage where we get that first taste of America when we return on vacation.

While he was with us Archbishop Hurley showed his interest in our parishioners and in all that we do, from our CARITAS work with the needy, to our parish evangelization program, to the mass graves of our martyred parishioners. He was able to see four years of progress and even celebrate mass with us in our church building which was still an archive four years ago. Our parishioners simply resonated with Archbishop Hurley, remarking later what a wonderful man he is, how friendly and open, how easy to talk to him and rejoice with him. For them he isn't at all like the old commissars that you had to fear, but like a father who obviously loves you and is interested in you. He was a breath of fresh air from God.

Thank you, Archbishop Hurley, from the Catholics of Vladivostok for your interest and help.

*Archbishop Hurley saying mass in Vladivostok. l to r: Our own Fr Daniel Maurer, Fr Michael Shields who is pastor of the Magadan Parish of the Nativity, Archbishop Hurley, Victor Anisimov who served the Archbishop as translator, and Fr Myron.*

*Archbishop Hurley sent Fr Shields and Valerie Walatka from Anchorage to Russia in the same ceremony. She is Fr Myron's secretary. Fr Myron and Fr Dan are also in the picture.*

*Archbishop Hurley sharing dinner with some of our elderly parishioners at the CARITAS Charity Dinner scheduled for St Valentine's day.*

## News Notes

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

• Last month, when I was in Blagoveschensk, I took a five hour side trip by car to the city of Shimanovsk to visit an 86 year old Catholic lady who was reported to me to be very ill. When I found her apartment, I anointed and gave her Holy Communion. I was the first priest Sophia Felixovna had seen in over 70 years! Her brother had been shot to death during the Stalin repression in Vladivostok. I took a picture, and include it here in the newsletter. This is one of the most pleasant parts of my job as Pastor in Russia--finding and ministering to those who have been so long without the sacraments! Now I've heard about another lady, also approximately 86, who lives in a distant part of our own state of Primorye--in Dalnegorsk. I'm making plans to visit her, as soon as possible. It will be very difficult on the car, because the roads to Dalnegorsk are not as good as those to Shimanovsk. Pray that it will all work out okay, and I can bring Holy Communion to this "lost Catholic"--not lost through her own fault, but by persecution!

• Did you see our parish on TV? We had a three-minute spot on CBS News on Saturday night, June 15. Mr Richard Threlkeld was in Vladivostok to cover the Russian elections, and decided we were a good story, too! When we received the tape, our parishioners were happy to see themselves on American TV! Thanks to Mr Threlkeld, producer Mr Mark Katkov, and CBS News.

• Recently a lady came to the church asking how to bury her mom who "was" a Catholic. Undertakers are still a rarity here. Naturally, I gave her a rosary to put in "Mom's" hands, and an icon to lay at her feet in the casket.

But as the conversation continued, I realized that the daughter wasn't really sure Mom had died! It seems her sister had called to say that Mom was near death (minutes to live, according to the doctor), and that was hours before, but there was a chance that Mom was still alive. I asked the daughter to find out if Mom, Antonina Antonovna, was still alive, because, if so, I wanted to go to see her! It was complicated, with so many places in Russia without phones, but the following morning the daughter called to say that Mom was still alive! So we planned a trip to bring Mom Holy Communion and to anoint her, in case she was still alive after our five hour drive.

When I arrived, Antonina was lying in bed, very sick. When she heard that the priest had come, she reached up to kiss me. The daughter asked me to go to the other room while she arranged mom's clothing. When I returned, I anointed Antonina, conditionally confirming her, since I didn't know her story, and gave her Holy Communion. Within seconds she was saying, "God came and kissed me!" In 15 minutes she got up, put on her regular clothes and went out to sit on the porch!

She told me her story, about how she had been born in Chita and baptized in the Catholic church there. She remembered her first communion and confirmation (but judging by her age, it seems impossible to me that she would have received these sacraments before the Chita parish was closed--maybe she remembered other kids' sacraments). It is interesting to note that the Chita parish still does not have a priest--it is between my parish in Blagoveschensk and our neighbor priest's parish in Irkutsk. As far as I know, no priest has been there--maybe there are many Catholics still in that area, too. Several days later Antonina was going about her life as usual. Naturally, all her children who had gathered for the funeral were amazed! Now they are talking about becoming believers and Catholics, "like Mom".

The village where she lives is called "Anisimovka", and I heard that there were other Catholics in Anisimovka, so I made plans for a second trip to find them. Several days later it was a rainy, rainy day. So I was sopping wet climbing through all the brush and woods just beyond the village to find our Catholics. We had to think twice, too, because the area is known for its Siberian tigers--in fact, the next village is known as "Tigrovaya"--the village of tigers.

When I came to the home of an 84-year old man, what a character and story I met! Sygismund Yanovich had been born in Odessa, but his father was killed by the Communists in the Revolution. His mom was frightened that the whole family might be killed, so she took the kids and disappeared, living like a bum without documents. The kids earned a living by doing odd jobs in the market and by begging. Mom took him to the Catholic church in Odessa for baptism, but he escaped from mom's view and received Holy Communion, even though he was not old enough. Good thing too! Mom died, and the three children were sent to the State orphanage where the name of God was never mentioned. Sygismund became a sailor, and when he happened to be in Odessa, he occasionally went to his old church for the sacraments, until it was torn down by the Communists. After that, he has never received the sacraments until I brought him Holy Communion there in Anisimovka.

But there is still another part of the story--Sygismund's sister became the regional director of State education in Odessa. When the Nazi's came to power, she saved many Jewish children as long as she could by receiving them as "orphans" in the State orphanages. In 1944, she was found out and hanged by the Nazis. I reassured Sygismund that he surely had a saint in heaven who was looking out for him! In spite of his 84 years he is very bright and spry, and surely a committed Catholic.

Sygismund and the other Catholics of Anisimovka will become members of our parish in Romanovka, Holy Trinity. So far this parish has nothing: no building, no office, no phone, no sign on a door, no chapel, and a pastor only once a month--Father Dan. I took over for him while he was in America. That makes a total of seven parishes in our care. Of course, many



other cities are waiting for parishes, but we are already overworked. No more parishes until there are more priests!

- All our parish letters and documents are now being printed on blue paper, because the American ship Blue Ridge was here for the 300th anniversary of the Russian Navy. The Catholics on the ship donated the paper to us--we were out of paper! Thanks, Father Doug Smith and the Catholics of the Blue Ridge!

- Missionary success. They've visited every village in Khabarovsk State (as big as California), and managed a convention of members of which 200 attended, even though travel is very expensive for Russians. Now they are in the process of building places of worship throughout the state, including a three-story school and office building in the capital, Khabarovsk, with help from the U.S.A. They have a magazine which everybody has read, and even started a second magazine with interesting human interest stories. Who are they--the Catholics? No!--the Jehovah's Witnesses! After five years, the Catholics don't have a single priest in the whole state, not a single publication, not a single building, not a single door with a name on it, not a single telephone number, not a single listing in the phone book. For five years there has been a direct weekly flight from San Francisco to Khabarovsk. For five years there has been a weekly direct flight from Seattle to Khabarovsk. Why didn't Catholic Church officials in these cities respond to these opportunities? Does any American Catholic organization care to help the tiny Khabarovsk parish which, for five years has been tossed from hall to room to hallway, with no place to call "home"?

*Mr Threlkeld of CBS News, and other members of the team posing before the temporary altar of our church.*

*Sophia Felixovna--70 years without the sacraments until Fr Myron came to her city!*

## An Old Ideology Lives On

*by Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.*

Perhaps all missionaries have mixed feeling about returning to their native countries. On the one hand it is a great blessing to renew relationships with family and friends. On the other hand it is always disconcerting to have to rearrange one's habits, to live and work out of a suitcase, and to be away from the support structures of one's religious community. In the case of going from Russia to America and back again, there are also the complicating factors of two very divergent cultures and two very different living standards. It feels strange to experience culture shock upon returning to one's own culture! And for those of us who have been living away from America for a very long time, there is also the sadness of seeing our country's progressive slide down the slippery slope of decadence and demoralization. If that last sentence sounds harsh to those readers who have never lived outside of the U.S., it is not meant to be. It was written with love for a great and beautiful country which is not living up to its responsibilities and its potential, and which, by dominating the culture of other countries, is spreading its poison abroad at an alarming rate.

What is most distressing to me when I am in the United States (usually once or twice a year for about a month at a time) is to see the myriad ways in which many Americans are short-changing their children. I will mention three of them.

1. The most glaring and horrific example of this is the wholesale slaughter of babies in their mothers' wombs. After almost a quarter century of this nightmare it is still no easier to accept than it was when the Supreme Court justices betrayed their sworn oath of office and inflicted this ghoulish scenario on a largely unsuspecting American public. Even though this ideological interpretation of our laws has been a sad reality of American life for over 20 years, I did not feel so bad about being an American until the election of our first pro-abortion president. The occupant of the office of president has the power to bring to symbolic reality what he stands for. With a pro-abortion president we are now faced with ever more powerful abortion lobbies and media campaigns, like minded Supreme Court appointments, and death-dealing executive policy decisions. It is a cynical betrayal of our nation's heritage. It is wrenchingly sad for me to be in America knowing what is being perpetrated there. Never doubt that it will haunt our collective conscious for generations to come, even if all elective abortions were to cease today. What child can enter fully into the loving bond that God intends between parent and child when he knows that his own parents have killed one or more of his brothers and sisters and that they could just as well have killed him before they ever knew him. For these deadly personal sins we as a nation are paying dearly with untold anger and depression on the part of the mothers, bewilderment on the part of fathers and grandparents, and loss of trust and faith on the part of the surviving children.

2. Selfishness toward children is also clearly demonstrated by widespread divorce. America has the highest divorce rate in the world. In the last 25 years no-fault divorce laws have brought about the virtual elimination of the indissolubility and sanctity of marriage. Sacramental marriage is always a difficult vocation, but in present day America, it has become a game of Russian roulette. Who can be sure at the moment they pronounce their vows that their spouse won't simply walk out on them a few years later? What other legal contract is held in such low esteem that it can be broken with impunity (no fault) whenever one party feels like it? And what of the children? Twenty years ago it was common to hear psychologists and marriage counselors pronounce solemnly that divorce could be the best thing for children so that they need not grow up in the tense atmosphere of a strained marriage. Now many of the same experts are saying, "OOPS, sorry! We were wrong. Excluding grave bodily harm, a broken home is the single worst thing that can befall a child." Yet divorce continues in America unabated.

3. America is also harming her children by the low expectations of their own parents, of school teachers and administrators, and of society in general for a good education. Content has been replaced by "process", subjects by projects. Children are taught that learning should take place through fun and games. When I was teaching in an expensive Catholic high school in California just before I came to Russia, I learned to my amazement that many of my students' parents did not want their children to learn Spanish, and the school administrators didn't really care how much Spanish was taught. How dare I (the Spanish teacher) require that my students memorize anything! Parents were paying high tuition and administrators were receiving high salaries for the children to be baby-sat and kept out of the trouble of drug- and gang-infested public schools. Later when I spoke to groups of students in Catholic schools in Michigan my faith in contemporary Catholic education was somewhat restored because I met bright and interested children and dedicated and self-sacrificing administrators and teachers. I wish they were the rule and not the exception.

Perhaps my perception of these contemporary American problems has been heightened by my first-hand experience of the same difficulties in Russia, difficulties magnified to an infinite degree by the anti-god, anti-family ideology of Communism which has influenced American culture in many ways. Here is a brief glance at the same three problems, Russian style.

1. In 1921 Russia became the first country in the world to legalize abortion. By 1934 there were almost three (2.7) times more elective abortions than live births in Moscow. During the last 45 years of the Soviet period (1946-1991), elective abortion was the only generally available means of family planning. No pro-life educational program or activity was permitted by the totalitarian state, and Natural Family Planning was not taught. Because of this, reliable studies indicate that today women of late child bearing age in Russia have

undergone on average 6 to 8 elective abortions, and some more than 20 elective abortions. Here in the Far East Russian women are desperately seeking other ways of spacing their children because they know that the abortion procedure is so invasive that their chance of ever becoming pregnant again decreases by 10% with every abortion. Will America realize where godless, death-dealing ideology leads?

2. What about divorce and the destruction of the family under Communism? As a way for the new Communist ideology to gain greater control over the young people of Russia and to spread their propaganda with less resistance the totalitarian central planners devised schemes to weaken parental authority. A key tactic was an all-out attack on the family and a drastic loosening of divorce laws. The following quote is from the book, *The First Socialist Society*, a sympathetic history of the Soviet Union by Geoffrey Hosking (Harvard University Press, 1985):

In the 1920's the regime had tried to weaken the family as a 'bourgeois institution', which exploited women and perpetuated a paternalistic notion of property. Under legislation passed at that time, any stable cohabitation, whether registered or not, could be considered a family... A partner to a marriage could obtain divorce simply by requesting it: the other partner had to be informed, but not necessarily consulted, so that sometimes divorce was achieved simply by sending a postcard. There is little doubt that these provisions... quite seriously weakened the family as a social institution. (pg. 212-213.)

This anti-family policy, coupled with abortion on demand, soon led to a dangerous drop in the birthrate, a huge increase in the number of orphans, a much greater burden on limited state funds, and steep increases in street beggars, roving gangs of parentless children, hooliganism and gangsterism. To their credit, the socialist tinkers of the Soviet Union quickly saw the difficulties inherent in their own prejudice against the family, and by the mid 1930's they set about to correct them. The government propaganda machine was pressed into service to extol the value to society of the traditional family, and the need for more progeny. "Divorce was made both more expensive and more difficult, becoming from 1944 contingent on court proceedings." (Hosking, pg. 214.) But the damage was already done. The delicate fabric of family life had been worn thin and torn in too many places. Today most of my Russian friends and acquaintances do not know their own fathers. Three generations of children have been raised by single mothers. Anger and alcoholism are rampant among people of all age groups who over the last 75 years have been raised more by the State than by a traditionally-structured family.

3. Concerning the education of children, the problems of American schools can be traced in part to the acceptance in America of basic principles of Communist ideology. Early Soviet educational theorists such as V.N. Shulgin believed that

any system of formal education was inherently elitist and should be abolished or at least drastically diminished. When Shulgin's disciples gained control of the Commissariat of Education in 1929 the curriculum was vastly altered to contain much less content and much more "process". "There was now far less classroom teaching: children spent much of their time on 'projects'... and on social and political work. The proportion of political instruction was also increased". (Hosking, pg. 175.) In just a few short years the Russian educational system was in shambles, and even the Communist ideologues had enough humility to see that it was the excesses of their own cultural revolution which caused the problem. "In August 1931 the Central Committee passed a resolution noting that schools were 'not imparting a sufficient amount of general knowledge, nor adequately solving the problem of training fully literate persons with a good grasp of the basic sciences.' This reflected the views of both parents and employers that children were coming to their first jobs without good work habits and without the fundamentals a school could be expected to have taught." (Hosking, pg. 214-215.)

As a noted sports figure has said, "*Deja vu*, all over again." To America's credit, many parents and teachers have recognized the problem. But big government bureaucracy, including teachers' unions and school administrators, continues to insist on its monopolistic right to disburse tax revenues in its own self interest.

Some readers might jump to the conclusion that I am a conspiracy theorist, seeing a communist behind every crumbling cultural pillar. Not at all. It would be naive to think that the monolithic system of Soviet Communism never spent a penny to try to influence American public opinion. But I believe that the main reasons for the cultural drift toward atheistic, ideological positions in the U.S. cannot be blamed on foreign forces. The reasons for our modern, cultural malaise are many, and the roots are deep. What is clear is that the growing pattern of confusion and doubt on the part of many American Catholics about the traditional teaching of the Church concerning the family and sexual reproduction has contributed to America's cultural problems. This confusion and doubt has not been addressed forcefully enough by the leaders of the Church in the United States. All too often theologians and those responsible for teaching future priests and catechists the truths of the Faith have themselves broken faith with the American Catholic people who have counted on them to transmit the ever-constant truths of the Church in a clear and understandable way. Too seldom have our bishops used the ministry of their God-given authority to call teachers and priests back to the Truth. Today we are paying the price of the cowardice and confusion of the past 30 years. Tomorrow the price will go up.

To all Americans who have been swayed by or who have toyed with the following enticing ideas:

- a woman's right to "choose"
- our "duty" not to overpopulate the earth

- “Parents who have many children are irresponsible.”
- “every child a wanted child” (so abort those who are not wanted.)
- no-fault divorce
- “We’re splitting up for the sake of the children.”
- “It’s my turn!” (self-actualization independent of prior life-commitments)
- affirmative action quotas (hiring or promoting people of lesser merit)
- “Children must not be made to do things they don’t like.”
- “Learning should be fun.”
- “quality of life” arguments to justify the elimination of people judged not worth keeping alive
- and many other ideologically-based and politically correct ideas,

I invite all of you to come to Russia and see the consequences of these same ideas. I guarantee that you will not like what you see. And after you see, I think you will go back to America with a new understanding of the dire consequences of the cultural revolution that is taking place in the U.S, a revolution which too many in the Church actively or passively support.

Those of us who love America must learn a lesson from Russia which has undergone almost a century of spiritual, moral, economic and ecological devastation wrought by the atheistic ideology of Communism. The clear and constant teachings of the Church are not a burden imposed arbitrarily on the faithful. They are the light of Christ, present in His Mystical Body, guiding us away from the darkness which our human nature can too easily crawl into when left to itself. I invite all *Sunrise* readers who strive to be faithful Christians to take to heart the words of St Paul to Timothy, "I charge you to preach the word and be urgent about it, whether convenient or inconvenient -- correcting, reproofing, appealing. Teach constantly, and never lose patience... For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own liking. They will stop listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be steady. Put up with hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." (2 Tim 4: 1-5).

## **Hoorah for Socialized Medicine and the Raising of Children by the State!**

“[The health of recruits for the Army] is much worse now than ever before. They are thin, underfed and a lot are mentally retarded. It’s very difficult to select people for the special forces”--Russian Army Colonel Vladimir Kupriyanov, speaking about the Russian youth. (*Vladivostok News*, July 11, 1996, p5.)

“Statistics from the medical commission show that 20 percent of the boys have mental disorders or drug problems. Another 20 percent have eye problems, while many have internal diseases. ‘Another big problem is negligence,’ says Pyotr Kudran, senior physician with the medical commission. “We see kids with 10 or more teeth missing....Sometimes a guy isn’t sick, but sort of lost and under-developed and his reactions are like he is retarded.” (*Vladivostok News*, July 11, 1996, p5.)

News of Our Benefactors:

## **D.C. Parish Sponsors “Vecherinka”**

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

The Church of the Annunciation in Washington D.C. decided to start its support for our Russian Mission with a party--that’s the meaning of the Russian word “Vecherinka”. They held a Dinner-Dance on April 13, 1996, had an excellent turnout, and forwarded to us a check for \$4000.00!

The “instigator” was of course the Pastor, Monsignor James Montgomery, well known for his love of his parishioners and his concern for the development of the Church. The willing “victims” were the new Sister-Parish Committee, chaired by Mr George Omas. Even though the timing was a bit bad--it was the time of budget fights and many parishioners were either very busy or very idle--the evening was a wonderful respite from the troubles of the day.

The event was catered by the Capitol Hill Club, and dinner was prepared by their master chef, Alaaldin Saleh, who donated his time to prepare a wonderful meal of prime ribs of beef, salad, vegetables, potatoes and rolls. Other members of the parish committee contributed baked chicken and a large assortment of salad. Two waitresses from the Capitol Hill Club also donated their time and effort: Jackie Shaw and Theresa Volel. Mr J. Mills from JAMESTAR Productions was the D.J., providing music for dinner and dancing.

The result was excellent and the expenses were low. Over 90 people, both from the parish and from the local community participated, and everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. Prior to dinner Msgr Montgomery made a brief speech in which he thanked everyone for their support, and spoke of the many important activities of the Vladivostok Mission. In addition to the attendees, 30 people made personal donations. Donations from local businesses and the dedicated efforts of the Sister-Parish Committee members helped to minimize expenses and thereby to increase the proceeds for our work.

Each attendee received a “Rose from Russia” prayercard, and a beautiful printed program for the evening. The programs, designed like greetings cards, were so beautiful, with a picture of our church on the cover, that we are considering printing more and making them available to our other sister-parishes and friends. They could be bundled with envelopes, packed in plastic wrap, and sold like greeting cards, as a fundraising project for sister-parish committees with the proceeds going to the restoration of our church.

We’d like to say “Thank You”, to Msgr Montgomery, Mr Omas, to Mr Mort Goldman who took care of all printing and of communications with us by electronic mail, to all the members of the Sister-Parish Committee (whose names we

don’t know, unfortunately), and to all those who worked to make the “Vecherinka” a success. Fortunately, Fr Dan was able to give his personal thanks when he visited Washington during his vacation this summer, and I will say thanks again in October when I will meet with the Sister-Parish Committee and we work toward the next great event in Washington!

*Mr George Oman and Mr Mort Goldman receiving personal thanks from Fr Dan.*

*Mr Mills, Monsignor Montgomery, and Chef Alaaldin Saleh.*

*Listening to speeches, hoping that delicious prime rib will come soon.*

News of Our Benefactors:

## **Parish Does Double Collection**

*by Rev William J. O’Halloran, SSS, Pastor  
St Mary Catholic Church, Menasha, WI*

Two months ago [i.e. February, 1996--ed] our parish of St Mary in Menasha, WI, sent you a gift of \$948.25 for your church in Vladivostok. Your beautiful letter of thanks reached me in March. I then copied your letter and placed it in our weekly bulletin for the entire parish to read. The people were so impressed that they readily agreed to another collection for Holy Mother of God. Our second collection (for \$948) was taken last weekend. I gladly enclose it and pray that it will help in some small way to lighten your financial burden.

Our parish is praying for you and your people. As we are about to celebrate the victory of the risen Lord, we ask him to share with you renewed life and vigor for the long dormant church in Russia.

*Mr George Oman, Sister-Parish Committee Chairman, and Mr Mort Goldman receive our thanks from Fr Daniel Maurer.*

*Monsignor Montgomery, introducing the Chef (whose name, unfortunately, didn’t make our deadline! I promise to make up for this oversight when I meet him at the Capitol Hill Club as soon as possible!)*

*Dinner guests, ready to pray those words of thanks to God for the soon-to-be-appearing feast.*

News of Our Benefactors:

## Canadians Make Splash in Vladivostok

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

1996 is the 300th anniversary of the Russian Navy, so foreign ships have been coming to pay their respects. On one day there were American, Communist Chinese, South Korean, North Korean, and Japanese ships in the port, side by side. But the bigger splash, for us, was made by the Canadian ship "HMCS Protecteur" which tied up on April 18.

The coming of the *Protecteur* was heralded by a barrage of electronic mail fired from its home port of Victoria, B.C., and, after its departure, from the ship itself. The sailors were anxious to know about Russian customs, and they were anxious for advice well in advance of their arrival so that they could carry out their main objective: the restoration of Canadian graves in Vladivostok's Sea Cemetery. These Canadians, British, and even an American were killed while helping the local "Far Eastern Republic" fend off the invading Soviet forces after the Russian Revolution. The bodies of most Americans who were killed in the action were already taken back to American soil, but there remain many bodies of Canadian, Czech, and other nationalities in the Sea Cemetery (probably many of them Catholics.) They were the first to give their lives to defend the world from the Communist terror. Over the years that section of the cemetery had fallen into disrepair. The *Protecteur*, using volunteers, would fix the damage and pay honor to the fallen. They had already done their research and had new granite tombstones prepared for every grave, and a new central monument. All this was on board.

That isn't all that was on board. The people of Victoria had seized the opportunity and collected hockey equipment for Russian children, 200 pairs of skates, and enough equipment to outfit several teams. The city of Calgary also got into the act and sent 75 sets of hockey equipment. They decided to show their love to Russian children by a Teddy Bear collection, and that, too, was on board. How to take care of all these things in the few short days that the ship would be in port. Naturally, we offered to help.

Warrant Officer Henry Albrecht and I quickly established communication and set to work. As soon as the ship arrived, the tombstones were off-loaded onto a smaller boat and then brought to shore where the Russian Navy provided a truck to the cemetery. Working in the rain all day Friday, April 19, together with Russian sailors, the Canadians put the cemetery into shipshape and a memorial service was held by the ship's chaplain.

On Saturday it was time to unload the hockey equipment and toys. The ship was awkwardly placed, so we had to find the longest crane in Vladivostok to pluck the huge, heavy boxes

from the deck and place them directly into a truck on shore. We arranged with the Vladivostok Athletic Club to receive the hockey equipment in its warehouse for inventory and later distribution--it was spring, so there would be months to make the plans. The equipment would be distributed through CARITAS, the international Catholic charity organization, of which we are members.

Meanwhile the sailors wanted to distribute some of the toys themselves and to see the Russian children who would receive them. CARITAS immediately made appointments with the Children's Muscular Dystrophy Hospital where our volunteers regularly read to the children, and with the Police Children's Holding Ward, where we regularly supply clothing to needy children. Naturally the big Canadian sailors were a hit with the kids, many of whom are fatherless or even parentless. And one must say that the kids were a hit with the Canadian sailors! There might have been some instant adoptions, if it were possible!

Now it's September and time to get that hockey equipment distributed. Thanks, Henry and Michelle Albrecht, Lori Murphy, citizens of Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, and sailors of the HSCS *Protecteur* for bringing your love and joy, not just to the Russian Navy, but to the children of Russia. As is the custom after leaving port, sailors put their unused Russian money in a collection for a local charity. It will be used by CARITAS for children in need. Those garden tools and wheelbarrows you left behind? Well, the cemetery will need work again sometime!