

Leaders of the group for small kids gets their points across with costumes.

Sister Maria provided music for many activities.

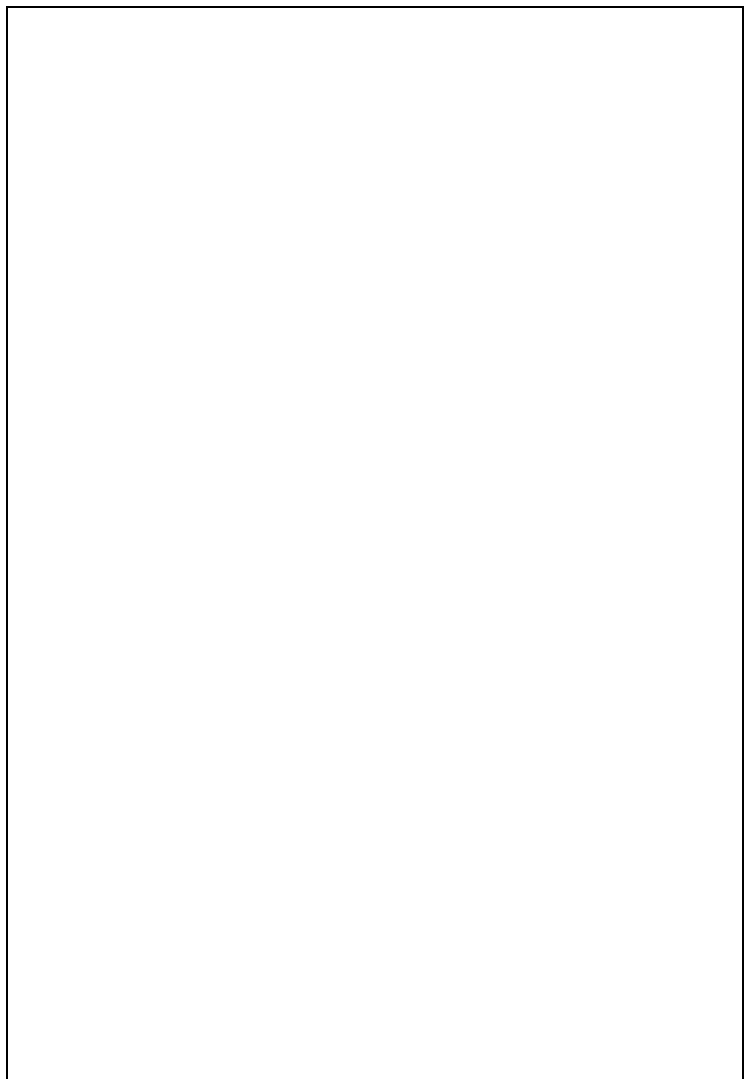
The whole crew on the last day of camp.

Father Yee and the senior group.

Doctor Marina with her daughter and son.

Nellie, her friend Laima, and Fr Myron

Arcenyev parishioners.



Nellie Artyomovna Voitsekhovskaya

*by Kristina Olegovna Pavlova
tr by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.*

When I went to see Nellie Artyomovna, I expected to find a sickly elderly lady who wouldn't be able to get out of bed after her stroke which affected the whole right side of her body. Instead, I was met by a lively, energetic woman considering her 72 years. I didn't know what kind of a difficult past lay behind her smile.

Nellie's relatives on her dad's side were Armenian, but on mom's they were Russian and German. She was born in 1926 in Armavira in the Northern Caucasus. The city had been founded by her great-grandfather Popov. Before the Revolution there was a display about him in the local museum. He was a very respected person, and for his great service to the government he had been knighted. Nellie's grandmother came from a family of rich merchants. There is still a movie theater in her home town which had earlier been a musical salon which their family owned.

After the Revolution there was a time that we might call "demerchantization", and they took away the Popov home. Her father, who served in the First Cavalry regiment named "Budennova" was shot to death when he was accused of "banditism". In recent years Nellie has applied many times to have her father vindicated, but she has received only refusals. "We don't rehabilitate bandits", she is told. Nonetheless she collects information about her family tree, but complains that she has no one to give that work to--her children and grandchildren aren't interested. In the Soviet Union there was no place for memories of the past.

After the death of her father, when the family was left without a breadwinner, they moved to Byelorussia. She was 15 years old when the War began. Her mother went to work on the front as a nurse, leaving Nellie with relatives in the city of Novocheboksarsk in Rostov. Do we need to talk about the difficulties of the war years, the hunger and cold? Like others, Nellie collected grain stalks in the fields and dug up already frozen potatoes to find at least something to eat.

In October of 1942 the Germans occupied Rostov and ordered everybody 16 years old and older to appear at the labor market. Nellie went, too. There they surrounded them and marched them under automatic weapons to the center of Rostov. There they forced them into boxcars and took them through the Ukraine to Auschwitz where they marched them through a medical exam. They were united with other such groups, and were sent through Czechoslovakia to Kapfenberg, Austria, to Camp Doichendorf where Nellie lived three years.

Nellie showed me a book, "Killed Childhood". It was a

collection of memories of former child captives of the Fascist concentration camps. Many articles in the book referred to the camp at Doichendorf, and Nellie remembers some of the events written up in the book.

"The well-kept Austrian city decked out in greenery shown brightly in the sun, with music and gladness everywhere. But we were embarrassed and offended when we, dirty and bedraggled, swollen from the cold, were taken by convoy to the camp. The locals pointed their fingers at us as if we were animals who had been let out of our cages and, without ceremony, condemned."

Camp Doichendorf was located 3 miles from Kapfenberg. It was an unbelievable beautiful place: green hills, dotted with woods, with huge pine and cedar trees. "There were lots of camps here where they held people of a variety of nationalities. Czechs, Poles, French, Italians, and even English and Americans." The most tragic were the Russians since they weren't even considered human. "Like criminals they held us behind barbed wires and made us wear blue and white clothes bearing the emblem 'East'".

Conditions were unbearable. The people practically didn't have clothes even though the temperature in the Alps rarely got higher than 38 degrees F. The camp was located not far from a military factory which was often bombed. During one of the bombing attacks a bomb fell near Nellie's bed but broke through the floor. Thankfully it didn't blow up. Their bellies grew big from the lack of proper food. In the morning they got a piece of bread partly made of sawdust (which had been baked in 1935!) and some coffee made from toasted rye malt. In the evening we got one boiled parsnip or rutabaga. Sometimes we managed to grab an old potato--that was a treat.

The kids suffered without their parents, without human warmth. Nellie tells of the time when they came to the camp they were met by an old, over-weight German lady named Steffi. She beat the kids for the slightest reason, even giving her the wrong look, sending them to the bunker to wash the toilets with bare hands. She even sent young Nellie to work in the factory where she had to work 12 hours per day as an electric welder. Nellie especially remembers with horror the guard named Spiegel. Better not to set your eyes on him. He horribly beat everyone who happened to come his way.

"In 1945 night and day Doichendorf was bombed. On May 9 at five in the morning we were all awakened by the explosions and shells. The earth began to shake as Soviet tanks began to roll down the street. At six o'clock an airplane landed on the field in front of the camp--it had red stars. The crowd of prisoners broke through the camp gates and ran to the airplane. They grabbed flowers as they ran and hugged the pilots and presented them with dandelions. What a day it was! Everybody cried from joy and fear. Suddenly the soldiers left and we were left behind. The fighters were sitting on the tanks, and even girls were among them in military uniforms. They threw us cookies, sugar, candy, and

we gave them every flower we could find."

That was May. Nellie could return home only in October. She worked during that time as a launderer in a military hospital. They waited a long time for the main troops to return through the whole of Europe. They took the former prisoners to the Russian border and abandoned them. They would have to find their own way home.

At home even more difficulties awaited them. "If a Soviet person had lived under the occupation he was distrusted further, and degraded to facelessness. Our having lived under Nazi captivity made each of us unwanted, as if we were three-year-old

Soon Nellie moved to Lithuania to Kaunas. There she became friends with the pastor of the local Catholic church and she was baptized as a Catholic on her birthday, June 7, 1948. Then she got married to a Polish pilot.

Nellie and her whole family moved several times around the country, and in 1985 they came to Vladivostok. In six years Fr Myron Effing came to Vladivostok, and Nellie found out about it from a friend of her daughter. Nellie joyfully attended the very first mass on November 13, 1991 which Fr Myron served at the doors of the closed church. She remembers the day--it was cold, and Catholics were few, but people came from the neighboring houses to watch. Nellie gave me some photographs of that mass. Her daughter had baked bread for the occasion, and brought various towels and dishes and candlesticks, all of which are still in use at the church.

Nellie remembers subsequent masses at the House of the Pioneers, at the House of the Trade Unions under the busts of Engels and Lenin, until the first mass inside the church in 1993 when the church has still not been officially returned.

But now she can't come to mass, and is homesick for the parish. She lives with her family: daughter Tanya who came with her to the first mass; grandson and greatgranddaughter Elizabeth who has brought special joy to her life. When I was at their home I understand that the family really is the home church. When several people live under the same roof and believe in the same one God, could it be otherwise?

unwanted children. They didn't allow us to get a higher education, kept us out of the Communist Party and out of the Communist Youth Organizations. We could get ahead at work, couldn't enter better professions, nor have positions of authority. For many years we were considered unreliable, people of an inferior kind, even though we were never convicted of anything."

In Rostov Nellie couldn't find work. Soon her mother returned from the front and they returned to Byelorussia where Nellie was able to work as a welder building a train depot making use of her camp training.

News Notes

by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

- The Fire of November 4, 1998--Dear Father Myron,

Life around here is never boring when you go away. This morning Julia Danielovna [our building guard], called me by intercom a little before 7:00 to say that the cupboards under the kitchen sink were filled with smoke. We looked but could find nothing burning, so we went out to open the basement boilerroom, and it was full of smoke, but not dense, and again, no visible source, but it seemed somehow electrical-related, so she ran up the hill to get Andre [the building superintendent]. He was not home but our electrician Sergei was there, so he came down to the church. Meanwhile, I noticed that the light bulbs in the first floor hall were very, very bright, like TV spotlights, so I got out your multimeter and measured: 330 volts! I told Sergei when he arrived a few minutes later. He checked with your multimeter all the circuits in the kitchen, said that it may be due to a short in one of our three phases, and went away. I went around unplugging everything and turning off as many lights as possible.

An hour later, thick dense white smoke was pouring out of the circuit boxes in the kitchen and on the second floor landing of the back stairwell outside the sacristy. It was terrible. It looked like the whole place was going to ignite. We quickly called the fire department, and I turned off all the circuit breakers in the kitchen (surprised that Sergei had not done that before.) The fire department came in about 15 minutes with three trucks and about 20 men. Just then Andre showed up with Sergei. They found out that the voltage was so high that all the cables in the conduits were melting and the insulation was burning. It did no good to turn off the circuit breakers. So Sergei, at quite a risk to his life, put on insulated gloves and cut the main cable from the city to our building. He was not injured. That kept the situation from getting worse but it was already bad enough. Cables on the first and second floors were making ominous popping sounds, they were so hot, and the insulation continued to smoke and melt. The firemen stayed around for about an hour to make sure than nothing ignited. They went away when they saw that the place was not going to burn down.

A man from the city electric company came right out and with Andre and both of our electricians they inspected the damage. Surprisingly it was not as extensive as we thought when we were watching all the smoke pouring out of the conduits. Andre said later that some of the cables were twice their usual diameter from the heat. Within an hour they hooked up our Honda generator that we shipped from Seattle to all the circuits except mine (library/front entrance/choir), because that cable was ruined. They also had to make some re-connections in the circuit boxes because things had burned so badly there. They were able to turn on the city power system in every circuit by 3:00 pm. Andre says he still needs to replace some of the cable, but it can be a gradual process. He also wants to make a special grounding pit on our property so that it won't happen again.

Neighbors have been coming to us all day to use the phone to call the electric company to press charges against them. In our immediate region

- The CARITAS Pregnancy Support Center of Vladivostok opened for business on September 30! Congratulations to the American staff who trained our volunteers. Bishop Mazur was so impressed with the volunteer staff of our center that he asked me for the names and

many people's televisions and refrigerators were burned out by the high voltage. We have tested all our appliances and they all work fine. The only damage is to the cables, to our throats and lungs from the acrid smoke and to our nerves.

Until the city service was restored, our generator worked very well on the building system. Unlike the past, it was not just hooked up to an extension cord or two but hooked right up to the electric system-- or what is left of it.

--Fr Dan

- Our new bishop, Jerzey Mazur, SVD, made his first visit to our parish on October 25 when he confirmed some of our parishioners who had been baptized in childhood, but never confirmed. They had prepared themselves during Lent of last spring, and were waiting for the new bishop to come. The Holy Father has decided that, although Bishop Mazur is auxiliary to Bishop Joseph Werth of the Apostolic Administration of Asian Russian, he is nevertheless our ordinary, with full apostolic authority himself to shepherd the church of Eastern Siberia and Far Eastern Russia. His chancery will be in Irkutsk, and the cathedral, at least for the time being, will be the Assumption Catholic Church in Irkutsk, a beautiful old historic church in the center of the city. So far the parish still shares the building with the State Philharmonic Society, since it is used as an organ concert hall, so it can't be the permanent cathedral unless the building is returned to the church. The new "ordinariate" includes the regions of Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Zabaikalia, and the Far East.

- Recently I had the pleasure of visiting with the superior of the Orthodox convent which is located just outside of Vladivostok. Mother Maria is a dynamic woman with many years of service. They have plenty of vocations, and are in the process of expanding their buildings to eventually make room for nearly a hundred sisters and retreatants. We help the sisters with humanitarian aid when we can. Their chaplain, a Russian Orthodox priest, came up to me and introduced himself, and invited me to Vespers. We try to have good relations with the Orthodox as much as possible, not only because it is a Christian duty, but because the conversion of Russia will come about partly through the reunion of Churches.

- Opps! A frustrated visitor to our web site wrote us that there was an error in our published web address. Try again, using the address listed in the section, How to Communicate with Us. We hope it is correct now. Thank you to Mr Jeff Lang of Eugene Oregon who created and managed our web site so beautifully. More and more Russians are on the internet, thanks to the Saros Foundation which has made major donations to Russian universities and colleges. Unfortunately, in our poverty I still plod along with only email without access to the internet. Bishop Jersey wants all of our parishes to have at least email, since it is the cheapest and most effective means of communication within Russia. Fax and long distance phone services are very expensive here. Sending a page of fax to America is still more than \$3. Skip the coverpage! The lion's share of our single letters and FAXES to America are still handled by Mr Dan Pyne in Jacksonville, Arkansas, from our sister parish of St Jude's. I send him the letters and faxes by email, and he puts them on paper for mailing or faxing within America. Thanks to you, too, Dan.

addresses of the American folks who came to Russia to train them. He is thinking to ask them to come to Irkutsk, Russia, to train another staff next year! We are already thinking of opening the second Support Center in Vladivostok. Khabarovsk or Blagoveschensk will be next.

Anybody want to support this work? During these difficult economic times in Russia, women find it difficult to consider giving birth to their children, even though the death rate is higher than the birthrate now in Russia. More about the Center in the next issue.

- We've had our fourth monthly mass at our new Parish of the Annunciation in Arsenyev. The parish is forming already, with an organist, a children's catechist, some kids who have already been at our Children's Camp, some representatives at the Youth Conference, and now we are looking for a more permanent place to meet. It is very hard to have a parish where there is a priest only once per month! But what can we do until more priests decide to come to Russia, or until our seminarians get ordained? We now have three seminarians, and expect a fourth one, God willing. We also have four married men who have made it known that they would like to be ordained deacons, but the Russian bishops have not yet made the decision to establish the permanent diaconate in Russia. We've named the parish in Arsenyev after our sister parish of the Annunciation in Washington, D.C. The next parish will be named "Nativity"--your turn, St Paul, MN!

- At last we have some addresses for the boy's prison in Vrangel. If someone would like to try some "care" packages for the boys aged 14-18 in prison there, please contact us. What to include? Maybe gloves, socks, handkerchiefs, underwear, T-shirts, pingpong balls, paddles, nets, soap, toothpaste, pencils, ballpoints, combs, vitamins, plastic crosses, holy pictures. Each package should be small and light and have the green customs sticker attached which you get at the post office. Mark the sticker, "gift". Don't send: money, metal objects, medicine, food.

How to Communicate with Us

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World Wide Web:
<http://www.pond.net/~jeffclang/mostholy/index.htm>
Phone: 011-7-4232-26-96-14

Money cannot legally 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

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 us by electronic mail or fax giving a complete list of items. If we accept your offer you will need official inventory information from:

Mrs Joan O'Rourke
P.O. Box 266
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FAX (650)871-2856
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Remember
"Vladivostok Mission"
in your will.

Remember "Vladivostok Mission"
in your will.

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

Dear Sister Susan,

Please send the photos, when you are done to:

Thanks. God bless you. --Fr Myron

Mr Jeff Lang
2095 Morning View Dr
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Marina Viktoreva Yarigina: Woman, Wife, Mother, and Doctor

by *Christina Olegovna Pavlova*
tr *Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.*

Jesus Christ combined in himself two great early professions: teacher and physician. He was a healer of body and soul. I had the occasion to spend an evening in conversation with our parishioner who represents one of those professions of Jesus-- Marina Viktoreva. She is a physician. Our conversation helped me to understand something very important. The professions of teacher and doctor are not really divided, because you can't heal the body of a person while ignoring his spirit.

Marina's mom was Polish but Orthodox. She didn't know her father because he spent 25 years in the "gulag", as they called the system of concentration camps for political prisoners of the Soviet Union. The first time she saw him after his long absence was when she was in college. He lived 70 years, which is considered an unusually long time for a person who had spent a third of his life in the concentration camp where heavy work and poor nutrition take their toll on human health. Before his death he told his daughter, "The only thing I can take with me from my life are the first seven years when I really believed in God, when grandma taught me my prayers and when we went to church."

Marina finished her education in two institutes: medical and social and then became an intern. In 1993 she and her group of fellow students took a trip through the churches of Moscow. Marina was amazed at the spirituality and humility of the Catholic parish.

A year later Marina got acquainted with our parishioner Miroslava Igorevna at the museum where she took her children for an exhibit. They immediately felt attracted to each other and began a lasting friendship. In 1996 Marina and her children were baptized and Miroslava became their godmother.

Marina's activities in the parish actually began before her baptism. She wanted to be helpful using her penchant for working with people. First she donated her talents as a doctor, seeing patients for consultation free of charge. Fr Myron happened to mention to her that there is a special day for prayers for doctors--the feast of St Luke, patron of doctors--and Marina saw that this was for her. She understood that a person is not just material, but a spiritual being.

Marina told me that her compassion for people began because of a cosmetic defect on her face, but now she understands how she was freed as a result of the physical defect to be more compassionate.

After baptism her life changed. Her husband commented,

"You've become completely different." Her relationships with her family became better. After the 1991 economic and political crisis life in Russia became more difficult and many families were destabilized. Marina's family also underwent a crisis, but after they began to attend church their interrelationships became more trustworthy, especially in the spiritual area.

Marina's husband Sergei noticed the healthy effect of the church on their family life, so he began to use prayer daily himself, and then decided to take the Course in Christianity at the parish to prepare for baptism and confirmation. He also began to participate in the life of the parish. His profession is that of Electronics specialist. At the time we received our organ from Epiphany Parish in Minnesota, and it needed some tender care. Marina volunteered her husband to help, and he has maintained the organ ever since with monthly tuneups.

Marina and Sergei have two children, daughter Evgenia, aged 14, and son Andrei, 8 years old. Andrei is an altar server. The kids have grown with prayer. Before they came to the Catholic parish, they often went on Saturdays to the Orthodox church, but they didn't feel needed there. They didn't want to just pray, but to be part of things. Besides, Marina says that the richness of the decorations in the Orthodox churches oppresses a person, not giving room for the spirit. So now they are at home in the Catholic parish.

The story of this family is remarkable, but our conversation with Marina touched on things which affect every family. She often talked about love of which there never seems to be enough.

In Vladivostok at the present time there is an effort toward the establishment of a Center of Support for Pregnant Women and the training of volunteers for the Center. Readers are certainly familiar with such centers in America, but in Russia, such centers are something new.

Marina said that the idea of combining social and spiritual aid interested her long ago. After her internship she even wanted to found her own center for psychological support. Marina was working with CARITAS Primorye when Yuri Byelozorov came to her to tell her that the process for establishing such a center was underway, and she could participate, study, and work in it. Marina told him that if such a center would be founded, it would be a great joy for her.

What they call "pregnancy crisis" is a very serious problem in Russia. One has to be ready to help women at any moment of their development, whether it is girls, teenagers, pregnant women, women with many children, older women. The main difficulty for women having a pregnancy crisis isn't the lack of money or housing for her child, but absence of affection.

Marina says "What a joy it is when my son, lying in bed to sleep or waking up in the morning says, 'I love you.'" "If we can sow seeds of love, patience with our neighbors and with the

budding life within us, it will be our great victory."

She is also happy that the Department of Health of Primorsky Krai approves of the program. The chief state gynecologist said, "We [doctors] have come to the point where we can have only the most primitive kind of conversation with women."

With great pain but with unflagging hope Marina spoke about the condition of the medical profession in Russia. Societal conditions impinge on medicine. Physicians are accustomed to suffer with the patient, but they are today humiliated. It seems that the government has simply forgotten about doctors and teachers, even though these are the most important professions on earth. All the same, doctors aren't squelched, but continue to work, even if they don't have the most elemental medicines and equipment. When our guests from Washington State and Ohio visited Vladivostok Birth Hospital #5, one of them remarked in great surprise, "These methods are unknown even in America. With such capabilities we would be swimming in gold!"

What is interesting to me is that with greater frequency you will find doctors among our parishioners. They are looking for comfort and peace. Without these it is difficult to continue your service. Perhaps it is part of their ongoing education. They have a choice: either quit medicine and go into business, or participate in doctors' strikes, or go to the church and pray and continue to help people. If they choose the later, maybe something will change in Russia. Often our doctors offer to treat our parishioners free of charge. Here Marina sees a way out of the spiritual vacuum after 70 years of the absence of the faith. Teachers, artists, scientists, and physicians represent the intelligentsia of the nation. So they are involved in the spiritual development of the whole country. She thinks that spiritual formation should come before any other, and the basis is the commandments of love.

I asked Marina, "What do you think about women who are homemakers. As a woman, what do you think about the family?"

Her answer amazed me: "Not only the woman is the homemaker--every member of the family must be a homemaker. Every member of the family needs love. It might be more difficult to love overactive children, but that is love which must be blended with patience, with humiliating one's pride. No matter how strong one's family is, when there are times of difficult choices, you have to remember that the family remains the chief support of the whole nation, because that is where the kids grow up. If we understand that, then we understand the importance of our counselors--our priests--and the oftener we come to them the healthier will be our kids."

Of course there are a variety of problems but any good effort is a Way of the Cross. "The priests help us. We get their advice and receive spiritual support. That is very important.

News from our Benefactors

Flocks of Pink Flamingos

by Susan Gray

You have to spread this pink flamingo idea to your other sister parishes. At work we get this newspaper that deals with nothing but fund-raising ideas. Last spring I saw an article in it about a little Baptist church in West Virginia that did this flamingo project. They bought 70 plastic pink flamingos, divided them into two flocks, and planted the flocks in two different parishioners' yards. On each parishioner's door, they left a sign saying "You Have Been Flocked", along with instructions on someone to call to get the birds. When the person came for the birds, the parishioner had to make a donation to the church and suggest the next parishioner who should get flocked.

We here at your sister parish [St Jude's in Jacksonville, Arkansas] started with two flocks--one in Jacksonville and one in Cabot. They've been going less than a month and have made a thousand dollars for Russia already. It's gotten so popular that there are people whose feelings are hurt if they're NOT flocked. And there are families where the kids get up and look out the window every morning, checking to see if their yard is full of flamingos. No one has been unhappy about having all these birds in their yard.

It's turned out to be a really neat project. Other sister parishes need to know about this.

An "Oasis" for Our Kids-- Summer Camp 1998

*by Marina Viktoreva Yarigina
tr by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.*

On August 19 we finished the 4th annual Christian Children's Camp "Oasis". For four years the kids of Primorye from Christian families have had the opportunity to improve their health, rest, and at the same time to deepen their knowledge as Christians. This year the number of participants of the Camp sponsored by Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Parish in Vladivostok noticeably increased. There were 50 children between the ages of 6 and 16, which were divided into three groups: little kids, middle agers, and the older group.

Just before the camp there had been a workshop for the catechism teachers of our region of the Russian Far East sponsored by Most Holy Mother of God Parish. The catechism teachers came from Vladivostok, Blagoveschensk, South Sakhalin, Ancenyev, and St Petersburg to the camp as their first and intense practice of what they had learned at the workshop.

"The Holy Spirit" was the theme of our Camp this year, corresponding with the "Year of the Holy Spirit" in the preparations for the millennium. We carefully worked out our difficult theme in our lessons, but it all turned out very interesting, not only for the kids, but for us adults, too.

The main event of every day was the Children's Mass, which was said jointly, either by Fr Myron or Fr Daniel and Fr Yee, who came to us from our Japanese sister parish in Yokohama. Their sermons corresponded with the themes of the day, "The Holy Spirit in Creation", "The Holy Spirit and the Prophets", "in the Church", "in Prayer", and "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin Mary".

At the camp our staff was joined and supported by the help of student members of our Japanese sister parish, especially during the lessons, the sporting events, and for general services. Several return every year for our camp. Fr Yee said that the interest in our camp was so high in Japan that there was a contest to decide who could participate. Among the students were musicians, teachers, and even sisters. The Russians and the Japanese complimented each other at class, with the Russian doing mostly the verbal part, and the Japanese illustrating things with games, drawing contests, and skits. There was a huge variety of hymns and songs for the kids. Even the morning wake-up call was sung by the camp leader Yuri Byelozorov: "O God, teach me to love." Sister Maria who came for the fourth time to our camp from Japan also played guitar and accompanied the smallest children in song. Sister Naoko helped the children of the middle-age group, and served all the kids with scrapes, bruises or bumps as a nurse.

On the last day there was a play which was presented by the small kids and the Japanese leaders. The middle and senior

groups took care of the Prayer of the Faithful and the readings at mass, as well as the hymns at morning and evening prayer. Here is a prayer which was composed by the committee of small kids: "We are grateful to you, Lord, that you gave us good mothers and fathers, brothers and

sisters, and good friends. We are grateful to you for our camp and that you made it possible for us to be here. Lord, I am grateful that you protect me, even if sometimes I'm not too obedient to you, even though in the depths of my heart I love you. Lord, forgive us our sins and our wrongdoing. We ask you, Lord, to protect all of us gathered here from sickness and from disobeying your commandments. Let our time in the camp go well and peacefully without accidents. Lord help my family. Lord, help all orphans, the needy, the sick, the handicapped. Lord, help our country! Amen." There were special prayer requests from certain children: "Lord, let my moma return to us." "Lord, keep my parents from arguing." "Lord, let my father come back." "Lord, give my mother good health." "Help my mother to find work, Lord."

The sports aspect of the camp was specially prepared by professional sports educators, Khabarovsk parishioner Valerie Ovtsyanenko and his helper Alexander. They began every day with group exercises, but then the games were so interesting that the adults and kids alike were glad to participate. On the shore of Lake Hanka we played "Lapta", a kind of Russian baseball. Every day ended with prizes for the game winners, Russians and Japanese alike.

So the basic aims of the camp--Christian formation, international cultural exchange with Catholics from Japan, and friendship between youth of our various parishes--were fulfilled. We will continue our work in Sunday School which most of the kids attend. The Russians and the Japanese exchanged addresses so that cultural exchange can continue during the school year, with promises to see each other next year.

Everybody left camp with tears in their eyes: kids and adults, Russians and Japanese. We Sunday School teachers left with love and great hope in our coming school year which we would spend with our students who had become like our own kids through the experience of the camp.