

News Notes

by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

- We were saddened by the death of Fr Patrick Lannan, 56, pastor of our sister parish of the Nativity of our Lord of St Paul, Minnesota. He died at about midnight of heart failure on November 9 in Tiberias, Israel, where he was on tour with a group of his parishioners. A Minneapolis native and graduate of St Paul Seminary, he was ordained a priest in 1968. He was an assistant pastor of St Stephen's Church in Anoka, Minnesota when Fr Myron and Fr Lannan became acquainted. Soon after our starting our work in Russia, Fr Lannan became interested, and approved of the establishment of a sister parish relationship. In addition to other projects, our Nativity sister parish publishes and mails this newsletter, has a monthly mission collection for us, and remember us in Perpetual Adoration which Fr Lannan started at Nativity. Our condolences to our sister parish. Fr William Baer has been named administrator of the parish until a pastor is found.

- The Christmas celebration here was especially beautiful this year. Fr Dan did a great job decorating the church, and then there were the three concerts, the most impressive of which was the Festival of Christian Choirs that Fr Dan organized for the Sunday after New Years [See related article.] It was a great experience. If it were a contest, the winners would have been the Methodist choir (which included violins and cellos, and all the members were in uniform) and the Baptist choir which had only four members whose clothes didn't even match, but they sang wonderfully! Also our Spanish sisters drew the most applause (of course we had planted our parishioners in the hall). We are hoping that the Festival of Choirs will be a good way to celebrate the 2000th birthday of Christ, and help heal wounds and misunderstandings between various Christian religions working here.

- George Riess from Dayton, Ohio, has proposed a program called "Adopt-a-Birth". The idea is that sometimes Russian women can't afford to pay the hospital for the birth of their child, which are about \$20, while abortions are free. It is known that some poor women choose to abort because they don't have enough money to pay the birth costs. He said, "In our own Emmanuel Parish, we have had an Advent project called "Adopt-a-Birth". When I told our pastor about the cost that the birthing hospitals in Vladivostok charge for a Russian woman to give birth, and that many of the women cannot afford even that \$20 in American money, he suggested that we ask people, as part of their Advent almsgiving, to donate \$20 for the birth of a Russian baby. We have collected about \$500 so far!" Since we regularly work in two birth hospitals--one where we have our anti-abortion Women's Support Center, and one where they take in foundlings which are sometimes left on their doorstep or where women from the street give birth and walk out without their child--it is easy for us to see which women can't pay their bills, so we can pay for

them, thanks to George and our friends in Ohio. We send back to the donor the date of birth and first name of the child that they helped. The donation pays the basic hospital fee. Special services, food, and medicine are extra. Would this program interest you or your friends? George shows how our many benefactors help us to run our mission. We can't do without the prayers, support, and actual physical help of our benefactors.

- Helping needy families is another possibility for charity. There are few families who are always needy--who need regular support for an elderly or chronically ill member--and we already have a program in this area. But sometimes it is a matter of an emergency situation. For example, our 22-year-old parishioner who was just baptized at Easter suddenly found herself in the hospital with a ruptured vessel in her head which required open brain surgery. Of course it was expensive and unexpected. So we are thinking about starting a Russian Family Emergency Fund to which Russians can apply to get emergency help. Often they would be able to return the money in time and the fund could continue. Insurance is a rare thing here in Russia, especially because of inflation. An emergency fund in more stable dollars from which parishioners could draw in case of emergency would be very welcome.

- *Vladivostok Sunrise* also has its Russian edition, "Zarya Vladivostoka", which is our parish bulletin. It is more than just a bulletin, since it is meant especially for those parishioners who live far from the city, and for members of our parishes which see their priest only once a month. It includes a calendar of feasts and readings for family use, a list of prayer intentions for the month, news of the Catholic Church around the world and of our parishes in the Far East, articles about parishioners, and always a theological article and something for the children. Sometimes we share articles between the "Sunrises".

The editor of the bulletin for seven years has been Anastacia Potopenko who is also Director of CARITAS for the Russian Far East. Her workload has been such that the bulletin was being produced more and more rarely. Besides a big debt of thanks to her for her years of work on the bulletin, we owe her relief from the task, since CARITAS work has become even bigger with the economic crisis in Russia. We also owe her thanks for the birth and baptism of her fourth child--John Paul--who was blessed in the womb by our Holy Father Pope John Paul II while Anastacia was in Rome on CARITAS business! She is still the editor of CARITAS's bulletin, "Charity".

The new editor of our parish bulletin will be Yuri Byelozorov, the Parish Director of Evangelization, and he has a committee of parishioners to help produce each month's issue. The first of January saw the rebirth of our parish bulletin. Thanks, Yuri!

- "Father McGuire's Mission Share", is an organization in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky founded by Fr John McGuire who was himself a missionary in Columbia. Thanks to Fr McGuire and

his interest in our mission work and mission work in general we received a grant of \$24,000 to make possible the purchase and acquisition of the private home which is next door to our church in Vladivostok! Our church is surrounded on all sides but one by cliffs, streets, and high tension lines making it impossible that the parish could expand in those directions. Now have the small, old private home just to our North which

CARITAS will move its offices to the "new" old building in order to occupy it and safeguard it from thieves until such time as it will be possible for the priests to move there themselves. The home has a floor space of 430 sq ft and sits on a piece of land of 3200 sq ft. The neighboring home which might also come up for sale has an area of 470 sq ft with land of 7500 sq ft. We would be wise to purchase it, too, if it will be possible at some future date.

- How would you like to take a ride on Beauty Avenue? It is a dream come true. That's the name of the new four-lane street that the city of Vladivostok has built on the hilltop one block from our church. The Avenue is sort of like a skyline drive with good views of the city below on both sides. We long dreamed of having a better access to our church, a better fast road from downtown to our part of the city, and of having the possibility of a busstop just a block from our church. Dreams do come true. Near Beauty Avenue are also located the Lutheran church, the Orthodox cathedral, the new Baptist church, the land for the Armenian church, and the newly to be built mosque. As I was walking with Bishop Werth on Beauty Avenue and we were admiring the view, he said, "Father, you must build the belltowers on the church, otherwise people won't see the church in the city below, and, as long as the towers aren't built, people won't know that it is the Catholic church!" An architect is currently doing research on the project for us. We previously announced that Solidarity in Poland, the trade union, is donating bells for our church, but who will donate the steeples?

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will be a place where we can build a rectory for the future. Currently Fr Dan lives in the bell-tower, Fr Myron lives in his office, and our seminarians live in the sacristy when they are home. Our parishioners complain that these super-hard living conditions, in addition to the already difficult circumstances in Russia, detract from the health of our priests.

How to Communicate with Us

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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.

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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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First (Annual) Christmas Festival of Christian Choirs

by Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

Christmas is a time for music. In Christian countries Christmas music is the most beloved of all musical categories. Who could even imagine celebrating the birth of our Savior without the traditional carols that we all know by heart and that we love to hear and to sing repeatedly? It is not difficult, then, to understand the great inadequacy in the celebration of Christmas in Russia immediately following the return of religious freedom in the early 1990's. Nobody knew any Christmas songs!

Before the Communist Revolution of 1917 Russian culture was one of the most Christianized cultures in the world. Every holiday, every celebration, every special occasion in life was connected in some direct way to the deeply abiding Christian faith of the Russian people. Over the course of the next four generations the Communists' total war against religion destroyed completely that cultural link between faith and life. In the largest county in the world, spanning 11 time zones, and at the cost of millions of lives, Christianity was forcibly relegated to a handful of almost empty churches where it was presided over by surly government agents dressed in priests' clothing, whose job it was to ensure that religion would have no appeal to the next generation growing up in the brave new world of socialist realism.

Then all of a sudden the prison walls came tumbling down and most Russians were surprised to find out that religion was more than the slightly-silly, pass[□] superstition that their Communist guards had been ranting against for almost a century. They learned that vast billions of people around the formerly-walled-off world believe in God, and that each year two billion of them actually celebrate His birth as a human being in Bethlehem of Judea almost two thousand years ago. From 1990 to about 1996 many thousands of Russians went to church for the first time (and perhaps the last) in their lives to get baptized. The still surly, now-"ex"- government agents gladly accepted their money to perform the ceremony.

It is easy to pour water over the heads of the spiritually bereft. It is much harder to instruct them in the beliefs of their newly re-found faith and to relate the mysteries of that faith to their life experiences. That requires hard work, patience, tact, cultural sensitivity, language skills, and the ability to continue, undiscouraged, through many trials and disappointments.

One measure of the very slow but discernible comeback of deeply held Christian faith in Russia is the annual celebration of Christmas and the music that accompanies it. In preparation for our first Christmas in Vladivostok (1992) we were able to

find only two Christmas carols to teach our people: "Adeste Fideles" in Latin and "Silent Night" in an awkward Russian translation. (Since then we have found a much better translation of "Silent Night".) These two Christmas carols are still the uncontested favorites of our parishioners, such is the force of tradition, even a tradition of only a few years since that is all the tradition that Russian Catholics have now.

After that modest beginning our Catholic parish has made further musical progress each Christmas. Last year (Christmas 1997) our choir was able to provide a pre-Mass musical program of international Christmas carols in 7 languages. A few days later they sang the same carols to a standing-room-only crowd at our annual Christmas concert in the church.

In these same seven years other Christian communities have been making similar progress. In Vladivostok, a city of one million people, there are now over 12 different Christian denominations officially registered with the governmental Department of Religious Affairs. Most religious affiliations, like the Catholics and Lutherans, have only one parish, but the Russian Orthodox now have four parishes, and independent evangelical "house churches" may number as many as seven or eight.

With the slow but steady growth in the weekly practice of Christianity among the various Christian denominations in Vladivostok, the time seemed right for the first general ecumenical festival of Christian music. What better feast to organize it around that Christmas? But who would do the organizing, and who would be the host? Based on local religious conditions the logical answer to these questions clearly was the Catholics. The local Russian Orthodox diocesan bishop has repeatedly spoken out against ecumenical cooperation of any kind. The four Orthodox church buildings in the city are very small, even cramped. They have no chairs, no organ and no tradition of allowing non-liturgical events to take place inside. On the other hand the Catholics are, after all, the universal Church, and in Vladivostok we have the largest church building, comfortable theater seats and the only organ in the entire Russian Far East.

Although our building is the largest, it is not what one could call large. Its seating capacity is approximately 250. That fact required us to limit participation in the festival to the choirs of about seven parishes. Invitations were issued to the parishes which are most active—and most likely to attend. Because of the severe self-isolation of the Orthodox I expected that none of their choirs would attend, but two were invited anyway for overriding reasons: The Orthodox Church holds primacy of place in Russia. It would be a shame to organize the first general ecumenical event in our major Russian city and not invite the home team. Also Russian Orthodox chant is some of the most beautiful music this side of heaven. It would show a lack of hope on our part to exclude them from the invitation list and thereby miss the off-chance that they might decide to

grace us with their presence and their superb music.

Because of our very busy holiday schedule the only possible date for the festival was Sunday, January 3, the Feast of the Epiphany for our parish, which, from our point of view, is a very fitting day for a music festival since our organ is named the "Epiphany Organ" in honor of the Coon Rapids, MN

In addition to our parish choir, invitations went out to the Russian Orthodox, the Old Believers (an 18th century break-off from the Russian Orthodox), the Lutherans, the Methodists, the Baptists and the Seventh Day Adventists. To our surprise and delight, one Orthodox choir accepted the invitation with the blessing of their pastor. The Adventists, however, had a previous engagement and had to decline. Also declining with regrets was the newly-reorganized parish of Old Believers who, following the Julian calendar according to which December 25 falls on our January 7, were too busy preparing for their own celebration of Christmas.

During the last week before the festival two other groups were found to fill the gaps in the originally planned number of seven choirs: the Ukrainian Folk Choir and our Spanish Sisters of Charity of Saint Ann (who all sing and harmonize beautifully). For the festival program all choirs were asked to prepare three religious Christmas songs. A Russian version of "Jingle Bells" would not be allowed. In addition all choirs were given the sheet music to prepare for the grand finale of everyone singing together a Russian translation of George Frederick Handel's and Isaac Watts' "Joy to the World".

The instrumental accompanists of the choirs were invited to arrange for a schedule of practices on the large Epiphany Organ if they so desired. Only one took us up on the offer. Anna Shulga, piano accompanist of the Methodist choir came to our church for three pre-festival rehearsals which opened up to her a whole new world of sacred music accompaniment on a large organ. Now she is praying that her parish obtain an organ instead of the piano and tabletop keyboard that she currently uses. The Orthodox and the Lutherans sang without instrumental accompaniment, the Baptists and Evangelicals brought their synthesizers, and our sisters used a classical guitar with microphone amplification.

Even though the planning and inviting was done on almost a moment's notice in the rush of the holiday season, the actual festival was one of the most pleasantly memorable experiences of this author's life. The church hall was beautifully decorated with the large crèche from St Clement's Parish in Dearborn, Michigan; an extravagantly-lit 15-foot Christmas tree graced the sanctuary; pine boughs were hung on pillars, and red and gold garlands were draped between them and on the railing of the choir loft. The spirit of Christmas, peace and joy and brotherly love, was palpable to all who gathered for the festival. Without advertising except through word of mouth to members of the participating parishes, the seats were full. With the addition of a few portable chairs no one had to stand.

parish of the Epiphany of Our Lord which donated it to us in 1995. It is also a good date for an ecumenical Christmas gathering since it is midway between the two dates on which Christmas is celebrated in Russia. Due to the discrepancy in calendars, the two dates are 13 days apart.

The festival was a wonderful microcosm of renaissance Christianity in the former Soviet Union. With the exception of the Orthodox and the Sisters of St. Ann, none of the groups had more than six years of experience singing together. Yet the performance of each denominational choir was marked by characteristics typical of its particular Christian tradition. The Orthodox, dependent on profession singers from the Vladivostok classical music community, were sublime. The Catholics, as our name implies, were eclectic, singing in Latin, Russian, French and Spanish. The Lutherans sang complex polyphony in German and Russian. The Methodists, the largest choir with twenty members dressed in two-tone purple and lavender choir robes, sang rousing, sentimental pieces of popular appeal, just as one would expect from the descendants of John and Charles Wesley. The Ukrainian folk choir sang in the repetitive nasal chant typical of Ukrainian peasants. The combined Baptist/Evangelical group sang beautifully in the style of quiet, Christian rock ballads. Our sisters sang Spanish folk carols from the region of Aragon where their congregation was founded. To fill out the program and to feature the Epiphany Organ on the Feast of the Epiphany, our organist Marina Omelchenko played a mid-festival solo interlude consisting of a grandiose arrangement of the overture to Handel's "Water Music" with all the stops pulled out, and another, beautifully tranquil composition by Handel entitled "Peace Abiding". For the finale over 65 singers crowded into the choir loft, overflowing the risers, for a high-spirited rendition of "Raduysyah Mir", literally "Rejoice, World", better known in America as "Joy to the World". No one wanted it to end with the fourth and final verse. Though we had been gathered for almost two hours of Christmas music, everyone wanted the festival to continue. The spirit of Christmas had been incarnated in all of us again in a particularly poignant way which temporarily overcame our doctrinal and ecclesiological differences.

We fervently hope that this successful beginning of ecumenical activity among many groups of Christians can be continued in the months and years to come. We particularly hope, now that the local ice between the Apostolic Churches of Rome and Moscow has been broken in a public way, that the Catholics and Orthodox can find increasing fields of cooperation and even collaboration, not just in music, but in more substantial aspects of our universal Christian mission to bring the light of Christ to a world darkened by sin and suffering.

Meanwhile we hope that we have begun an ongoing tradition and that from now on the Christmas Festival of Christian Choirs will be an annual event in Vladivostok on a

Sunday between the two dates of Christmas. A yearly ecumenical Christmas Festival will be a great gift to the Christians and to all the citizens of Vladivostok because, as any Christian in Vladivostok can tell you, Russia needs all the Christmas it can get.

For Love of Russia

by Janet Clark

Someone once told me that people thought perhaps that I might be a spy. That made me laugh a lot, because it makes my life sound much more exciting than it really is. As a single mother my life is very busy but quite ordinary, filled with work at Alaska Airlines and with work at my home and with driving between the two places which are an hour's drive apart. I spend the rest of my time being concerned about my son because I would like to spend more time with him. So you see I have no time left to lead the adventurous life of a spy.

With a great surprise to me my recent plans had to be changed quite suddenly. My employer, Alaska Airlines, announced about two weeks before our departure that they would no longer fly to Russia after 06 October due to economic problems. Because I work for the airlines I am able to fly for very little money when I fly on Alaska Airlines. They also allowed me to transport more baggage than other passengers with no extra charges. So this is why I was able to ship the goods I collect for the children's hospital and children's orphanages in Russia. But that still does not eliminate the problem of paying Russian Customs. I do not know any official in Russian Customs who would allow me to bring more goods in for the children. So that is why it is necessary to bring additional people with me--I advise each person that I will take them to Vladivostok with me if they bring goods for the children in their baggage.

Because I collected more money than I usually do and a lot of goods like medicine and school supplies and children's winter coats and sweaters I knew I must hurry and change my plans so I could deliver all of this where it was intended to go. But it meant hurrying to change the letters of invitation from Russia and the Russian visas. Also, some of the people could not change their vacations to go on a different week than what we had planned (me included). So...that meant the only time we could go was to depart on 03 October arriving 04 October, Sunday evening at 7:15 pm and then to depart with the same airplane the next day, 05 October, Monday morning at 9:15 am. This, of course, would be difficult for me since I would not be able to spend time with my friends in Vladivostok. But the most important reason to go was to deliver the goods to the children. Because people decide to share even more goods for the children at the last minute, I was very busy for the last few days prior to my departure. I try to pack everything very tightly so I can take as much as possible in every box.

My airplane was supposed to make stops in Anchorage, Magadan and Khabarovsk before landing in Vladivostok. Unfortunately, we had to make an additional stop in Anadyr for more fuel. The delay in Anadyr was costly in two ways: 1. we already had so few precious hours to accomplish our goals

in Vladivostok and this would only shorten the time 2. the previous pilot was requested to contribute money to the Anadyr airport treasury fund in order to gain permission to depart! But when they allowed the cigarette smokers to deplane, everyone got off the airplane and began taking photographs. I believe they were not very happy about that. Very soon they told all of us to go back into the airplane and they gave us fuel and we were moving down the runway at a rapid speed! The pilot did his best to make up the time, but we still arrived about 3-4 hours late into Vladivostok.

Then the Russian Customs inspector wanted me to provide documentation to show prior approval to bring in humanitarian aid. Of course, you know...I had no papers!

At that point I was so tired (I had only 1 hour of sleep prior to leaving my own home in Olympia, WA) I had great difficulty thinking of what my own name was! I had to ask for help to remember how to convert pounds to kilos so I could make sure I told him the legally correct amount of the goods...not going over the amount where we could be charged, of course. But thanks to a great friend of mine who continued to patiently speak to the Customs official, the tired government employee relented (I am sure his back and his feet hurt and he was not getting paid anything extra for staying late)and he allowed us to continue. Not only did we not have to weigh our bags, we did not have to pay any duty! And I know we exceeded 2,000 pounds of goods between all of us! Yes, God does answer prayers!

We loaded all of our goods onto a bus only to find there was not enough room for about 6 of us. There were 18 of us in all. Thankfully, others also came to meet us at the airport with a car. That took care of three of us. Now only three to go. I found a taxi driver and questioned him about the fare. He gifted me with the rate of \$50 which would not be so bad in some cities for a 45 minute ride for 3 people. When I let him know that I was completely shocked, he counter-offered a rate of \$14 and I quickly agreed. The most rapid exchange of bargaining for either of us I will bet!

We delivered boxes of medical supplies to the Children's Hospital...even a heart defibrillator and a lot of antibiotics which a good doctor here in Olympia, Dr Dickason, donated. One of our group quickly spent time with a child who was most seriously ill while the others unloaded the boxes. With no extra time to spare we quickly left.

Next we hoped to stop at the Nostalgia Gift Shop and Cafe so the group could purchase souvenirs and look at their art gallery. Earlier we had arranged with them about opening up for us after closing hours. But when it appeared that we were so late that we would not be coming they must have given up on us. We tried to rouse them from their sleep--no success.

After leaving there I tried to point out the main square and the main department store, GUM, as we passed by them in

the dark. We briefly stopped to check out the repair work done at the Lutheran Church where we have friends on the church council. Our concerns are with them as the congregation faces the coming cold winter without adequate heating. The church was returned to the members last September after being used as a naval museum during Soviet times. Due to the fact the

Our determined bus driver conquered the hazardous street up the mountain to the Catholic Church. Father Myron kindly gave a tour at 2:00 in the morning and provided an update on the restoration work. We left boxes of children's clothes for CARITAS, an organization to which the Catholic church and other churches in the area belong. The organization helps local street children and women and babies in the women's prison. Thank you, Father Myron, for your kind hospitality at such a strange early hour.

At last we headed to the place that is so dear to me, *Detsky Dom* (Children's House), where the director and her associate waited...and waited for us. With much excitement like tired children at Christmas, we unloaded our bags of school supplies, medicine, towels, blankets, soaps and shampoos, toys and candy. We gathered around, speaking of the reasons we had made the trip: Because the world is now a very small place and a child in need becomes the responsibility of everyone in this world who can help. Although times are difficult in Russia now, situations in the world today change very rapidly. I am confident that if the United States faces problems in the future, our friends in Russia would also help our children.

And, there were many hugs and many tears...with the most probably falling from my eyes because I am so concerned about the cold, harsh winter fast approaching. And, because I am unsure I when I will return. But I feel such fondness and respect for the Russian people...so much intellect, resourcefulness, endurance, hospitality, clever wit and humor! Who could not want to return to share time with these neighbors. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Then in the early morning hours the director and her helper presented us with a wonderful buffet of the most delicious breads and pastries and other tasty Russian delicacies including my favorite, *kartoshka*, fried potatoes! Thank you, friends for the wonderful buffet. I know they both worked a great deal to prepare it for us.

We were given a tour of the children's rooms and the treatment room where we saw the laser equipment she purchased from the last donation we gave in May. We gave her the money we collected from selling the candy, soda pop, and our donation from a Russian ship's crew, from the money we collected from the different raffles. Galina told us she would buy the "electrostimulator" vision equipment which would repair problem corneas. She planned to send the staff doctor to Moscow for additional training since they had been unable to do this before without a sponsor. We knew our efforts were appreciated and all we had brought would be used for the right purposes...the children.

Historical Society has no funds, they have not been able to remove the Panzer tanks which makes for a very odd type of landscaping on the church grounds. A transitional time, indeed!

But the clock told us that we only had time to gather our coats and empty bags to board the bus for our drive to the airport. We exchanged hugs for the last time while the group shouted my name in chorus, "hurry Janet!". We made it to the airport with only minutes to spare. Not even enough time to buy a souvenir. It's OK, I have a treasure store of memories, memories of good people and good times I shall never forget. The Russian Customs official gave up trying to understand why we would fly to Russia to only stay for one night. But the Russian Immigration official noticed the tears falling down my cheeks and generously complimented my passport photo. (Oh, the charm of those Russian men!)

The only time I did not sleep on the return flight from Vladivostok was when they woke me up to eat. Actually, on the last portion of the flight from Anchorage to Seattle I fell asleep before the plane left the ground and did not wake up until it landed 3 1/2 hours later. My son said that nobody was able to wake me to eat...not like me at all! And now I believe I have slept for the biggest part of the past two days.

Would I do it again--to fly to Russia to spend a few hours in the night? Without a doubt...Yes! Let's us all hope and pray the Russian economy improves rapidly. I will be on the first plane headed West, anxious to see those precious children and all of you other dear friends. Until then...I will not forget you!

The children's choir at the Christmas Midnight Mass.

Siberian version of nuns' veils?! Sisters Evgenia and Rosaria showing off their hats.

Christmas 1998. Seminarians Oleg the Elder, Zhenya the Great, Zhenya the Less, Fr Dan, Sisters Eugenia, Rosaria, Alicia, and the sister's interpreter Svetlana.

Festival of Choirs, with the audience facing the choir loft of the church.

Church lost from view on Beauty Avenue? Add towers!

The house next door to the church.