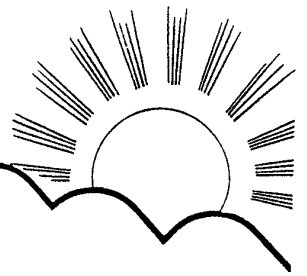


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Thirty Four July 1, 2000



Dream of the Decade Realized!

Ordination of First Far Eastern Roman Catholic Russian

With the ordination to the diaconate of Evgenie Peregodov on June 25, 2000, the dream of the decade has been realized—our first Russian parishioner to be ordained!

That the Church in Russia needs local vocations was clear from the beginning, and we foreign priests can serve the local church, but a really mature church needs local ministers. Just as the first baptism in a parish signals the birth of a parish, the first ordination signals a parish's maturity—in this case, Most Holy Mother of God Parish

Bishop Mazur and the whole parish pray for Evgenie as he lies prostrate on the floor.



of Vladivostok. Eight years ago in the region of Vladivostok called Russian Catholicism was first ordained when we enrolled him at the Holy Spirit University in Vladivostok that was founded in 1992. Then he entered the priestly seminary. Then he entered the priestly seminary. Finally Queen of Apostles Seminary. As a deacon he will remain in our diocese. He will work in Bratsk, and helping with

From the Development desk...

Dear Readers,

- Hopefully we can offer you quick insight to some new things happening in the mission as well as a short synopsis of what's inside these pages.
- We are continuing to lay the groundwork for adoptions through Catholic Charities, USA
- There is a person from Vladivostok coming to Minnesota June 20 to July 24 to attend the international AA convention and visit treatment centers with an eye to future work in Russia with rehabilitation programs.
- We are in the process of finding a mortgage for our parish center/rectory in Vladivostok.
- We are starting a missing persons service. If you know of anyone looking for someone in Russia please ask him or her to contact us or visit our web site www.vladmission.org.
- We need good, newer computers for our parishes, for women's centers, and for charitable operations.
- We need any computers to teach word processing in a computer lab.
- We need work teams: travelers willing to visit Vladivostok for 10 days. Call or e-mail the office for details.
- Please consider our mission for mass stipends. Our priests are happy to offer mass at your request. Please contact our office in Minnesota.
- See next page.

- We had a successful clothing collection with St Cloud and St Raphael's in Minnesota. There will be a collection in Grandview, MO July 14-16. There are also collections in Evansville, Indiana, and Baton Rouge, LA. If you live near any of these areas please contact our office to add to the collection.
- Fr Dan is coming to the states for the month of August. We will post where he will be preaching on our web site. We are hoping to schedule our priests into new parishes on the weekends. We are looking for speaking engagements during the week. If our priests have been to your parish could you arrange a time on a weeknight that he could have a short visit with your Pastor and parishioners? Please contact our office.
- We are in need of insulation for the church ceiling, contact our office if you are interested in helping with this project.
- See the May/June 2000 issue of *This Rock* magazine published by Catholic Answers (www.catholic.com) for an article CHRIST'S PEACE OFFERING by our Pastor Fr Myron.
- We have a service on our web site for secure online credit card donations. Please consider AllCharities.com link on our web page. Donations go immediately into our bank account with follow up reporting to us. This is 100% funding for us sponsored by AOL Foundation.
- We would like to offer a gift for a donation of \$30.00 or more--a beautiful candle made in Vladivostok as a commemoration of the 2000th anniversary of the Annunciation. They are hand carried to the States by returning travelers. It is off white and stands 8" tall and 1 1/2" wide. Donation by check, cash or internet credit. Allow 4 weeks for delivery.
- Our priests are travelling in America in August and in November. We can use your frequent flyer miles.
- A special "thank you" to Crosier Community, Onamia, MN, St Raphael's parish, Minneapolis, MN, and St Cloud, MN area Catholic Churches for the recent collection of used goods for our St Vincent de Paul clothing store in Vladivostok. The ship will arrive in Russia on July 27, 2000.

preparations for the dedication of the new cathedral in Irkutsk which is scheduled for September 8.



The ordination moment—Laying on of hands.

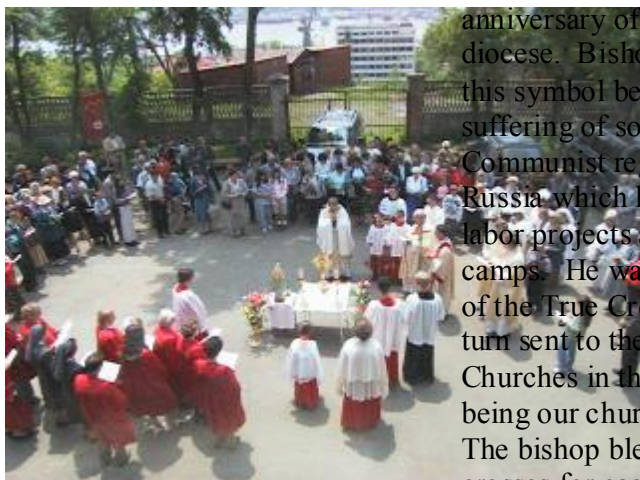
Dressing of the new deacon by Fr Alexander, Director of CARITAS for the Apostolic Administration of Eastern Siberia





Helping the Bishop with Communion

June 25 was "Corpus Christi" in Vladivostok. Here the new deacon is helping with the procession on the street.



**Remember
"Mary Mother of God
Mission Society"
in your will.**

Pilgrims for the Year 2000

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

The Cross is the symbol for the celebration of the 2000th anniversary of Christianity in our diocese. Bishop Mazur chose this symbol because of the suffering of so many during the Communist regime in our part of Russia which had many forced labor projects and concentration camps. He was given five relics of the True Cross, which he in turn sent to the five Jubilee Churches in the diocese, one being our church in Vladivostok. The bishop blessed special crosses for each parish of the diocese, and each pilgrim is to receive a small "Pilgrim Cross" as he finishes his requirements for the Jubilee indulgence.

We had a tradition of summer pilgrimages for youth, so it was natural to redouble our efforts.



Deacon Peregudov in his first independent service, a Communion Service for the pilgrims in Lyubyanka



The day always began with prayer, with a "spiritual theme of the day"—one of the titles of Jesus.



Lunchtime break in the shade of a handy tree.



After breakfast there was more time for discussion.



Day ended with time for the rosary and fellowship around the fire.



Then the long trek began.



Home at last with Pilgrim's Cross in hand.

News Notes

by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

- By July 1 we succeeded in replacing all of the old large window frames in the main body of the church with new ones, even though the stained glass will be coming in only gradually from Belorus as it is produced. Still remaining to do are the smaller windows near the main entrance and in the old sanctuary. What a difference the new windows and frames make! We won't see our breath during mass next winter!

- On March 16 we received the certificate of re-registration of our parish with the Russian Federation under the new law about religion. Ever since the new law was passed we priests and sisters have been able to receive visas good only for three months--every three months we had to leave Russia, get a new visa, and return. Hopefully this is the end of the threat which stood before us of the "new law about religion". Now we are proceeding to the registration of our other smaller parishes.

- Three Sisters of St Paul arrived in Vladivostok from Seoul, Korea, to study the Russian language. Where they will then serve has not yet been decided. Let's hope they will begin a trend of Korean religious who want to work in Russia. North Korea neighbors our parish. Of course there is a big demand for Catholic religious in all of Asia. Welcome, sisters!



Sisters Theophila, Gemma, and Theresa add smiling and happy faces to our parish, at least for several months.

- More good news from Korea: The Franciscans of Seoul (OFM) have decided to begin a mission in Russia. Brother Peter will be the first to study Russian. Where they will

eventually work is not yet decided. It will be the first mission for their community outside of Korea.

- In March I was invited to give a lecture to the senior Astronomy class at a semiprivate school in Nakhodka. I gave a lecture on the Theory of Observation. The questions then moved on to religion, so I was able to give a lecture about who is God, what was the sin of Adam and Eve, and lots of other questions. I returned in April to give a talk on the theory of alcoholism. That is one of Russia's biggest problems. Hopefully a better understanding of the disease, its prevention, and its cure will help the students and their families. The students seemed very well disciplined and bright. Then in June I spoke on alcoholism to the 60 cadets of the police academy in Nakhodka, and gave a 45 minute live presentation on Nakhodka TV. The result is that the first group of AA is being founded in Nakhodka. In the fall I plan to try to speak at schools in the cities of each of my parishes.

- The new parish in Ussurisk is making steady progress. Fr McGuire's Mission Share has helped us to buy an apartment there where we can have the parish activities, including choir practice, children's classes, weekly prayer time when there is no priest, and a place to begin our charitable work. The Office to Aid the Church in Eastern Europe in Washington DC is buying a keyboard instrument for the parish. I baptised the first children there on June 3, and appointed the first parish council. But we just have to have more priests for this huge land.

- Congratulations to Sandra Sonnen, the National Coordinator of Mary Mother of God Mission Society. The Society is now included in The Official Catholic Directory of the US. It is difficult to work in the States without being in the directory for all to see. Thanks to those who helped with this project in the Archdiocese of St Paul-Minneapolis.

- We've completed the study of the places where our parishioners live in Vladivostok, and it is clear from that study that the second parish should be in the Second River area of the city. We'd like to name the parish "St Joseph's". Both Fr Myron and Fr Dan were baptized in churches dedicated to St Joseph, and there are several other parishes who have shown us support during these years named for St Joseph. The first stage is to buy an apartment in the Second River area so that we can start having catechism classes there, and so that parishioners will have a place to gather for prayer and activities. Four room apartments in that part of the city run about \$40,000, including the minimum in furniture. Can anybody help?

St Jude's, Jacksonville, Arkansas



Sister parish Committee



Hungry and waiting for the promised spaghetti dinner.



Desert Anyone?

Coronation of Our Lady, Grandview, Missouri



Pastor Fr Robert Murphy rolling out the welcome.



Sister Parish Committee in the limelight.



Raffling off the Russian Christmas dolls.

About our Benefactors:

The History of the "Adopt-a-Birth" Program

By George Riess

In July of 1998, three Emmanuel parishioners from Ohio, Dr Chris Kahlenborn and George and Joan Riess spent several weeks in Vladivostok, Russia, as part of a pro-life missionary team.

Chris is a young doctor of internal medicine, who has been on a year-long sabbatical trying to advance the pro-life cause in the Dayton-Cincinnati area. George and Joan are active members of our St. Vincent de Paul Conference and the Women's Support Center in Kettering, a suburb of Dayton. The Women's Support Center is a Catholic center located directly across the street from the largest abortion mill in the Dayton area which is operated by Dr Martin Haskell, one of the originators of Partial Birth Abortion. The other members of the team were Dee Baltes, a pro-life interior designer, and Rose Bucher, the founding director of the Women's Support Center, who now resides in Seattle.

The purpose of our trip was to establish the first pregnancy support center in Far Eastern Russia, whose women have had an average of four to ten abortions. While Russia does not have a government-enforced one-child-per-family policy as China does, the extremely poor Russian economy is one of the many reasons for the abortion situation.

While in Russia, the team functioned under the auspices of the Catholic Parish of the Most Holy Mother of God, the only Roman Catholic parish in Vladivostok. The pastor and his assistant, Fr Myron Effing and Fr Dan Mauer, are American priests who have established seven very active parishes in their state of Primorye.

The team spent 2 1/2 weeks training a director and ten volunteer advisors for the proposed pregnancy support center, which was to be located in Birthing Hospital #5, which deals only in birthing and pre-natal care. Our tour of this hospital was an eye-opening experience. The hospital was clean but, although only forty years old, it looked like something from the last century. The hospital director told us that the staff of 400 had not been paid since the previous February. When we asked how they managed to exist, we were told that some of them live with their retired parents (the pension checks usually came through), some had side jobs, and besides, every once in a while some pay does come through, not enough to make up for back pay, but enough to keep them at their jobs. Or, as one of them said to me, "What else would we do?" The hospital had not received operating funds for two or three months. As a result, there were no anesthetics available for normal births. For Caesarian births, the woman's family had to purchase the anesthesia. The women were fed one meal a day. If she

wanted, or needed more, her family had to physically bring food. The hospital charged \$20 for a normal birth, although the sum is not constant because of the changes in the exchange rate. Most Russian woman could not afford to pay even this amount.

Upon our return home, I was telling our Emmanuel pastor about this and he urged us to conduct an "Adopt-a-Birth" Program during Advent along with our normal Adopt-a-Family Program for St. Vincent de Paul. We had a flier made up and had announcements in the parish weekly bulletin. (I'll be glad to send you a copy of the flyer if you give me your address.) We raised \$820 during Advent, and have since raised nearly \$200 more. In writing our thank-you notes, we enclosed a color photo of a newborn Russian baby being held by a nurse in Birthing Hospital #5. Father Myron obtains names and birth dates of the babies that our money is assisting to be born.

During our tour of the hospital we were shown the proposed location of our pregnancy support center, a room ten feet by twenty feet. As Father Myron warned us, things move slowly in Russia, and it was not until October 1st that we received an e-mail from Fr Myron telling us that the contract and licensing for the new center had been finalized as of that date. The rental is about \$100 per month. Needless to say, we were concerned as to whether the staff had retained their training. These fears were dispelled by an e-mail message in early November in which Fr Myron told us that the new auxiliary bishop for Asian Russia had just visited the new pregnancy support center and was so impressed that he wanted the names and addresses of the Americans who had started it because he wants them to come again to Russia to start more centers.

On December 28th, Fr Myron sent an e-mail message with items of good news. He stated that the Vladivostok center had begun to publish and distribute a newsletter that not only publicized the center, but also discussed the ethics of life. The newsletter is being widely distributed throughout the city, especially to the high schools and colleges, and is being well received. Secondly, Fr Myron said that he intended to start a second center in Vladivostok..

Continued by Fr Myron: Not only did the second center open in a Women's Consultation Center, but now the third center has opened in the city of Lesozovodsk, and several other centers are in the planning stages in the cities of Nakhodka, Blagoveschensk, and Arsenyev.

"Adopt-a-Birth" has expanded to other centers and parishes and has already helped more than 200 poor women to give birth.

George designed a birthcard announcing the name and place of birth of each child which he sends to the American donors who want to sponsor this program. This week we sponsored the birth of twins!—Edward and Vladimir—in Arsenyev.

Thanks, George, for being a "greatgodfather" to our kids.

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From the Editor:

I visited our elderly parishioner Maria who broke her hip three months ago. Maria lies in bed all day locked into her small house because her relatives must work in the city. They come home at about 6 pm, and unlock her door to see if she has any needs. Meanwhile, she lies in pain all day unable to help herself. The door has to be locked because they are afraid of burglars, and Maria can't fend them off.

Her doctor says that it is beyond repair, but I'm sceptical because Fr Dan's 90 year old grandmother had a hip replacement, and so did another of our parishioners who also was 85 years old. So I asked CARITAS to check up on Maria, to see if her doctor really did x-rays, and to get a second opinion if she did. Whether we can help and what the cost will be remains to be seen, but at least I'd like more information.

I anointed Maria, and gave her Holy Communion, and asked her to offer her pain for her family and for the development of the parish. "70 years is the life of man, or 80 for those who are strong, and most of these are emptiness and pain", according to the psalm, but we want to do what we can.

Another elderly parishioner had a burglar who completely emptied her apartment while she was out--stole everything.

Nothing remained. She is even more upset with her neighbors who heard and saw nothing (or didn't want to see and hear anything). So now she has only borrowed furniture and borrowed kitchen equipment, and a pension of \$30 a month.

Deacon Evgenie Peregudov's mother came to his ordination, but said that she couldn't be gone from home long because recently while she and her neighbor were both out, burglars stole everything from her neighbor, and she is afraid she will be next. She lives on Russian Island, so getting back and forth to the mainland is difficult. People can watch at the wharf to see who goes to Vladivostok, and then burglarize their homes.

Here there aren't electronic alarms, good locks, strong doors, and helpful neighbors. The Soviet system alienated not only neighbors but even members of the same family with multiple divorces and abortions. Who do you trust? If there isn't any God, everything is allowed--that is the result of 80 years of atheism.

One person in 50 is addicted to hard drugs. The reuse of needles is causing an explosion of AIDS. President Putin, in his "state of the union", put high emphasis on the decline in the population of Russia--If abortions, emigration, addictions, and birth control continue, the population of Russia will decrease 1% per year for the foreseeable future.

We Christians always have hope.