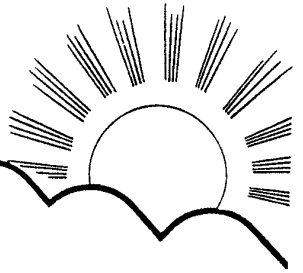


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Forty Five May 1, 2002



The Light of Christ in Russia at the Easter Vigil Mass, 2002.

Thoughts about the New St Joseph's Parish in Second River

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

Yelena Zagalskaya: The road in front of us led to the church in Vladivostok. "Momma, let's go there!" said our daughter. We went and stayed forever. Three years ago the whole family was baptised, momma, papa, our 10-year-old daughter and our year and a half year old son. Going to church was always a holiday. Our daughter began Sunday school. Fate had us move to another part of the city far away, so we went to church less frequently. We knew we had to do something about it. Suddenly there was news that there would be a new parish of St Joseph, and right in our part of the city! And already every Saturday we are meeting in nice and comfortable surroundings. We hear the news about the big parish, but now we also have news about our little parish. Doubtlessly the main advantage of a new parish is that we are part of its beginning; we can see how the baby develops from the beginning, how new traditions are developed, and we can be part of those new traditions. We parishioners all know each other, not only by face, but by name, we know the joys and sorrows of each one, and we understand each other. It's like being part of a big family which even breathes together during prayer, which gathers together to honor the Father. Of course Anton Yanovich will be here, a kind, generous, and faithful person; Nina Arzamastseva, our joyful host will be here to help us and challenge us; servers Igor and Dima will be here, so different from each other, but so harmoniously ordering our meetings; Julia and Olga are

our teachers and the souls of our gatherings. And then there is my noisy 15-year old Yanik and thoughtful Olga who is preparing for confirmation, and then me myself with my difficult questions for a 13-year old. And everything is fine when we hear the bell-like voice of little Sasha calling us to attention. How good it is to gather together, to talk about God, to pray together, to sing together with the accompaniment of the keyboard. Our kids can feel the foundations of Christianity, and we are learning so naturally together with them our happy faith, with mutual understanding and life in Christ.

Julia Zavodinskaya: I'm very glad that there is a second parish in Vladivostok at last. Our parish was just too big and one parish isn't enough. Our newborn parish is still very small, but we are all happy with it, and we even sing songs already. It seems to me that it is very symbolic that our parish is named "St Joseph's" which draws us to be one family, even though it is sad that we are still so small if friendly. So I'm asking all who live in Second River to come and join in our baby community. The owner of the apartment who so happily receives us every Saturday at 4pm—Nina Michailovna—is like a mother to us all, and her pies are delicious! Our parish was founded only recently, but we already have some traditions. Like for example we read the Liturgy of the Hours, we sing songs (for which we even have our own keyboard) we drink tea, we share our joys and sorrows, and we know each other better, which means we are becoming a real Christian family.

Dimitri Ovcharenko: I'm a parishioner of Most Holy Mother of God parish, so I belong to the "central" parish. Everybody sees me there every Sunday because I'm a server at mass helping Fr Myron and Fr Daniel. Recently I started to attend St Joseph's and I'd like to say a few words about what I've seen at the new parish. It has a very friendly open atmosphere. The soul of the parish is its active leader Olga Zotova. A cup of tea gives a unique chance for dialog and discussions about various subjects. But we don't forget about the most important—why we came



Some St Joseph's parishioners at a parish meeting.

together—to talk to God. We pray the Liturgy of the Hours and the rosary. Olga and Julia teach Sunday school for the kids. We are thinking to begin doing the Liturgy of the Word, and we are thinking about beginning classes for adults. Everybody tries to take lively part in the development of the parish. I've sometimes been amazed about the low attendance at Sunday Mass at the big parish because it is so far away for many parishioners, but by attending the parish in Second River I've seen a new aspect of the need to be with God: We want to “get”, but don't want to “give” in return. In Second River I've seen how we need to use and multiply our talents and use them for the good of the church and for God.

Olga Zotova: It is always difficult to start something new, especially if it is something completely new for you. When Fr Myron started to talk about the need to start a new parish, it was difficult for me to grasp what it would look like and how to start it in general. I remember well the day when, after Sunday Mass, Fr Myron for the first time gathered all those living in Second River. We all looked vacantly at each other and couldn't even gather our thoughts to ask a question. But after our first independent meeting of future parishioners of St Joseph I was amazed to discover that all those who were to be part of the new foundation were such remarkably friendly and communicative people. It seems to me we immediately understood each other, and our first shock and discomfort immediately left us. Gradually the relationships between parishioners became easier and warmer. At our second meeting we started to pray together, we started working with the children, and soon a small organ appeared.

We can't overestimate the contribution to the founding of our parish of Nina Michailovna Arzamastseva, because without her we wouldn't have a place to meet and to pray. The value of our small parish is now obvious to me: All the parishioners live near one another, we have many common interests, and common problems that we can solve. We feel it if someone doesn't come to our meeting because we really feel like one big family. A line from the Bible comes to mind: "If God doesn't build the house, those who build it build in vain." All that we have today is thanks to God's help. Without God we would have accomplished nothing.

All the same, we'd like to say a word of thanks, first to Fr Myron for his original missionary initiative, to Fr Daniel that we have music to sing and to play, to Yuri Byelozorov for ideas and good advice, and for all those who remember us in prayer, especially our sister parish in Modesto, California. The only parish in Vladivostok until now has the name "Most Holy Mother of God". St Joseph was the spouse of the Virgin Mary, and her unflinchable friend and helper, chosen by God to be concerned about the Savior of the world and His mother. Today we are hoping for the patronage of St Joseph, his help and support for our new parish, which becomes the second, but hopefully not the last, of the new Catholic parishes in our city.

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Please do **not** send any **donations** of any kind directly to Russia. For donation information, see below.

Letters without donations can be sent to:

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Internet: English language: <http://www.vladmission.org>

Donations of money and **letters** should be sent to:

Mary Mother of God Mission Society
1854 Jefferson Ave
St Paul MN 55105-1662

Or you can donate from your credit card through our web site. Your donations are tax-deductible. You will receive any required receipt for IRS tax purposes by return mail.

Donations in kind. If you have items that you think we can use, please contact Mrs Sandra Sonnen at the Mission Office in St Paul giving a complete list of items.

Vladivostok Sunrise Edited and Produced in Russia by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D. Printed by the Sisters of St Peter Claver, St Paul, Minnesota. Assembled for mailing by Nativity Parish, St Paul, Minnesota. Mailed by Mary Mother of God Mission Society, St Paul, Minnesota. Authors are noted if other than the editor. A full color version of the *Sunrise* is available at <http://www.vladmission.org>

News Notes

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

- The best children's choir I ever heard in my life left me in disbelief recently when I visited the School for the Blind in Artyom. Artyom is in the boundary of the new St Joseph's Parish in Second River. Our British parishioner Dimitri Ilich has a special place in his heart for blind children, and so we went to the concert together. I was happy to speak to the children for a few minutes about our famous blind American musician Ray Charles, and encouraged the children to continue to develop their talents. There is an urgent need to reach the deaf and blind with the Gospel. Handicapped people in general in Russia have a very difficult life with little of the respect and help that American handicapped people are accustomed to.



The wonderful Children's Choir in Artyom.

- Recently our local Orthodox bishop, Bishop Benjamin, was invited to Bari, Italy, to see the relics of St Nicholas (St Nicholas is one of the patron saints of Russia), and when he returned to Vladivostok the topic of his morning radio show was how wonderful the Catholics of Italy were to him. My parishioners excitedly called me to tell me about the bishop's remarks, because they were positive remarks made by an Orthodox bishop about Catholics. I am of the opinion that 1000 years of the division of Christianity is enough, and we can hope that in the year 2033, which will probably be a holy year, the division of the Church will have been healed. We pray for the reconciliation of our churches every day. Hatred should have no place in Christianity.

- On March 21 Bishop Jerzy Mazur celebrated the Chrism Mass in Vladivostok with most of the priests of the Russian Far East. The bishop also confirmed 22 adults from our various parishes. In order to reach us in time for the ceremonies, Bishop Mazur had to fly from Irkutsk to Moscow (6 hour flight) and then Moscow to Vladivostok (9 hour flight)! When there is a direct flight from Vladivostok to Irkutsk, it usually is a four hour flight. Those numbers don't add up because there is usually a large tailwind on the eastward flights, and a headwind on western flights.



Bishop Mazur confirming a Vladivostok parishioner, with Fr Joseph McCabe from Khabarovsk and Fr Myron.

Oils prepared to be blessed.



It was a very big group of people to be confirmed.



The priests from the Russian Far East renew their priestly promises before Bishop Mazur: Fr Thomash from Blagoveschensk, Fr Dominic from Ussurisk, Fr Martin from Petropavlovsk Kamchatsky, Fr Vishnevsky from Sakhalin, Fr McCabe from Khabarovsk, Fr Syek from Blagoveschensk, Fr Igor from Aldan, our Fr Daniel and Fr Myron.

Tea After Mass in Honor of the Newly Confirmed.



• On Easter I baptized 12 people and received 10 into the Church in Vladivostok. The parishes in Nakhodka and Arsenyev also added members during the Easter Season.

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



Bishop Mazur also blessed some of the new stained-glass windows, shown here blessing the Nativity window.

• March 25 was a bit of a record day for our music program. For the first time our Epiphany Organ was working at 100% of its abilities. Ever since we received the used organ there were some problems with some registers, some buttons, and some circuits. The Rodgers Company really did great work helping us via the internet free of charge, but some things just can't be fixed at a distance. Various people have tried to solve the problems, but a complete organ wasn't realized until two great electronics experts from the Vladivostok Radio Factory tackled the problems. One by one they solved them all! So the Easter concerts promise to be the best of all, thanks to them.



Father Dan with electronics experts Michael Ivanovich and Vladimir Pavlovich after the last session to fix problems with the Epiphany Organ.

• On April 6 we celebrated Arsenyev's parish feastday of the Annunciation, and, as Dean of the Vladivostok Deanery, I installed Fr Christian Labanovsky, OSF as the new pastor. On April 21 I installed him as pastor of Nativity of our Lord Parish in Ussurisk. Meanwhile the Sisters of St Paul from Seoul, Korea, have purchased an apartment in Ussurisk and will be moving there on May 1. I told the parishes that I was

giving away my daughters like a father at a wedding, but was gaining a new son, and that I was looking forward to spiritual grandchildren! It is wonderful to have a second group of religious in our Territory of Primorye. Welcome, Franciscans!



Installation of Fr. Christian Labanovsky as pastor in Arsenyev.

The whole parish gathered for a photo for the “goodbye” to Fr. Myron.



“Grandfather” Fr. Myron at his last Arsenyev mass as pastor.



Fr. Christian’s first act as pastor of Arsenyev, the baptism of newborn Vyacheslav Kolomeitsev in Lyubyanka at home.

- In early April we were surprised by a visit from our old friend, Orthodox priest Father Valetine. He now works near Moscow, and he invited us to visit if we happen to be in Moscow.

- I’ve been busy with preparing speeches and talks for the universities in Vladivostok and in Nakhodka. The university people are excited to get to know an educated priest who is a scientist—they were told by the Communists that only ignorant, uneducated people believe in God.

At the Marine University here in Vladivostok my topic was “Early Warning Signs of Alcoholism”. Hopefully that will be helpful to the university teachers. My topic in Nakhodka was “Religion and the State”, which was for a congress of professors and students, and it sparked a lot of discussion. Of course it is fun for me, and I’m so glad that I now speak Russian well enough to give lectures in the universities (with an American accent and many mistakes, of course). I’ve been a teacher my whole life, so these activities are refreshing for me compared to routine parish administration!

- On April 22 we bought a five-room apartment in Second River to serve as the base for the new St. Joseph’s Parish. St. Joseph’s parishes in Modesto, California, and in Columbia, South Carolina, are offering to help with the purchase. We will also need to do some repairs, take down some walls, and add a new entrance. We will also need a refrigerator, tea urn, altar, tabernacle, seating, and religious decorations. The apartment should serve the parish for some time until it will be necessary to build a self-standing church building. See the article on page one for more details. Anybody like to make a contribution in honor of St. Joseph?

The Catholic Concert Choir of Vladivostok

Rev Daniel L. Maurer, C.J.D.

Relying on God's guidance we announce the beginning of a new project in the development of sacred music in the Russian Far East, the founding of the Catholic Concert Choir of Vladivostok.

In 1992 at the beginning of the rebirth of the Catholic parish of the Most Holy Mother of God, one of the greatest pastoral needs was to give people access to the Sacred Liturgy which had been denied to them for so long. The Catholic Church in Russia was completely destroyed by the Communist repression of religion. The Russian Orthodox Church, too, suffered the worst persecution in its history. By the end of 71 years of persecution very few people knew anything at all about Christianity, except that it was dangerous to have anything to do with it.

The Second Vatican Council reminded us that the Eucharistic Liturgy is the "source and summit" of our Christian life. When Fr Myron and Fr Daniel, members of the liturgical religious order of Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord, came to Vladivostok in February 1992, they saw that the greatest need was to help people to celebrate the Eucharist and to experience its beauty. The development of sacred liturgical music has been a major part of this recovery process since the beginning of our work in Russia.

Providentially, as *Vladivostok Sunrise* readers know, in 1995 the Catholic Parish of the Epiphany of Our Lord in Coon Rapids, Minnesota gave the parish in Vladivostok a used electric organ. It is a powerful instrument with 39 stops and a beautiful pipe organ-like sound. It has been an incomparable gift to the parish and to the entire city. It is used every week for Sunday and feast day Masses, and it has allowed us to develop perhaps the only regular organ concert series of sacred music in all of Russia. We now have at least 12 organ concerts a year. Not wanting our church to become just another concert hall in the city, our concerts consist only of sacred and classical organ music and other sacred music. The closest concert organ to ours is 2600 miles away.

For the first year of our concert program (1996) all concerts were open to the public free of charge. But because the demand for admission was so great, we had to start selling tickets as the only way to LIMIT the number of concert goers! Because our church has only 200 seats suitable for paid admission we also increased the number of performances of each concert. Our concerts have become the most popular concerts in the city. The price of admission in rubles is equivalent to \$3.30, which is slightly more expensive than the average ticket for classical music events in our area.

Since a whole concert of only organ music can be too heavy for some people to listen to our concerts always include guest soloists of other musical instruments and guest vocalists, among whom are the best performing artists in the Russian Far East. The money realized through ticket sales allows us to offer a stipend to them and also to make a modest, tax free profit for the restoration of our pre-Revolutionary church building. All tickets are always sold out well before the date of the performance. In addition we give some free tickets to people who cannot afford the price of admission, including special group tickets to orphans and other children living in institutions and chronic care hospitals.

Since our concert series began it has become our tradition to include in the program of four Christmas concerts and four Easter concerts not only soloists but also one or more choirs in order to lend a fuller, more celebrative sound to these festal seasons. Vladivostok, however, does not have a tradition of high quality choral music, and has no tradition whatsoever of SACRED choral music. The performances of these secular choirs at our concerts in the past have been disappointing. Yet our parish choir, made up of members of the parish, most of whom do not read music, are not able to learn difficult music quickly enough to keep to a concert schedule.

With over five years of concert experience but without an adequate choir in the city, the time seems right to form our own Catholic concert choir. The choir will be made up of 26 members and one director. To become a member a person must have some university-level training in choral music. The choir director, Miss Svetlana Naumova, who is a parishioner and also the director of the parish choir, is a graduate student in the faculty of choral music at the Vladivostok Academy of Fine Arts.

The yearly schedule of the choir is divided into two parts by the feasts of Christmas and Easter. The main musical piece the choir will prepare is the "Christmas Oratorio" by Camille Saint-Saens, performed in Latin. The choir will also rehearse a number of traditional Christmas carols in Russian and in other languages. After Christmas the choir will again meet regularly to prepare the four Easter concerts, the program for which will include the appropriate parts of G. F. Handel's "Messiah", including the "Alleluia Chorus".

We look for benefactors to support the new choir only from among people who are not already donors to our mission projects. We do not want to divert the attention of our present benefactors from the good works that they are already supporting, so we hope to invite new benefactors to become involved in sponsoring the revival of sacred music in Russia. If you are an active benefactor of any of our specific projects or of our Russian mission in general, please do not divert your contribution to the new choir. But if you know someone who has never given to our mission work and who is interested in supporting good sacred music, perhaps you could invite them to become a founding sponsor of this new project.

A financial gift for the support of the Catholic Concert Choir of Vladivostok has the potential to make a great spiritual impact on the Christian awareness of an entire large city of one million people. Ten years ago fewer than 4% of the population of the region was baptized. Evangelization of the atheistic Soviet people has been very slow because of the thoroughness of Communist propaganda against religion and because of the destruction of family life and the cynicism of unfulfilled dreams of heaven on earth. We have found that the most successful way to get non-religious or non-practicing Russians to visit our church is through the beauty of sacred music performed at our concerts. We do not use the concerts as a manipulative way to preach to the unsuspecting, but we do use them as a way to share with others the incomparable beauty of the Catholic sacred musical tradition, and occasionally to teach them something of the biblical tradition connected with the major feasts. Since beauty and music are very important to the Russian soul our concerts have a very positive influence on what and how the citizens of Vladivostok think about the Lord and His Church.

We hope to find Russian benefactors who can take over the ongoing support of the choir. This may take some time, but with the recent progress made in the Russian economy, it is at least thinkable that Russian people may have some day the wherewithal to become civic-minded supporters of cultural and religious programs. For now their tradition of Communist totalitarian government works against this, since no Russians have ever been taught to take financial responsibility for anything outside their own family. Everything was always provided by the State.

Please pray for the success of the foundation and growth of the Catholic Concert Choir of Vladivostok.

Our Benefactors...

Janet Clark from Seattle WA continues her regular flights to Russia to bring help to Russian children. On a recent trip she brought many knitted items meant for Russian street children and residents at orphanages. Her personal involvement in helping the poor is a real inspiration.



Janet Clark (2nd from right) with American fellow travellers and Lilia Timofeevna of our parish's CARITAS program.

Our Benefactors...

It was a pleasure to be invited to Florida to speak to a group of potential benefactors. The visit was organized by our friend in Florida **Howard Bruns** who planned a motorcycle trip across Russia. (He didn't make it the whole way—yet!) His friend Nita Beach helped with the organizational questions, and we were all invited to the home of Mr and Mrs Chris Searcy of North Palm Beach. If my memory serves me right, there were about 70 people in attendance for cocktails, a wonderful meal, and a talk. Thank you, folks, for a wonderful evening.



Our hosts for the evening, Priscilla and Chris Searcy of North Palm Beach.

Howard Bruns of Singer Island and Nita Beach of Juno Beach, Florida, planned our events and hosted my stay in Florida.



Continued from Page 8...

We were offered speaking engagements in 6 parishes after parishioners requested our visit from their pastor. Please consider this lay missionary work for us. I can send an introductory letter and a packet to you or to your pastor.

God love you all, --Sandra Sonnen
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From the development desk...

Dear Mission friends,

Some ways you can donate to the mission are:

- Buy an apartment in Russia , as an investment for the mission to use.
- Make monthly donations by check.
- Request our office to take credit card donations.
- On-line credit card giving at www.Vladmission.org
- Donate stocks and bonds.
- Consider donating real estate or jewelry.
- Remember us in your will.

Visit our web site to view the beautiful Baptism gowns made by our parishioners and other gifts from Russia

A Princess Line cruise is coming to Vladivostok on November 2, starting in Osaka, Japan and ending in Beijing. The ship will dock for a day in Vladivostok. Our parish will host the pilgrims for the day. If you might wish to take this cruise, check the internet for “Marian Helpers, Stockbridge MA” or “Mary’s Pilgrims” at www.maryspilgrims.com

Summer camps are coming soon for parishes in the Far East of Russia. If you are the Scouting type consider coming to

Vladivostok for a pilgrimage camping experience with the kids from our parishes. Walk 15 miles a day, camping by the roadside, and swimming in a Russian river. A time to pray and walk. Dates are June 25 to July 4. See our web site for pictures of last year’s faith filled experience. Literally, we need Scouts to help us restart Scouting in Vladivostok.

Young Catholics, perhaps you would like to participate in the Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference from August 4 to 11 in Blagoveshensk (travel via Vladivostok or Moscow). This retreat is for faith formation and socialization of Catholic young adults. No Russian language skills are needed, just devout faith-filled Catholics to witness by their presence the support and love of the Catholic world for our young parishioners.

Then there is the Oasis Children’s Camp in Sod-Gorod near Vladivostok during August 15 to 25--A great experience for kids to have fun and grow in the knowledge of God and His Church. Please contact me at the office if you are interested in coming. If you would wish to sponsor a kid to camp, it’s \$80 for the event.

We have 20 parishes to speak at this summer. We will be in the dioceses of Portland OR, Minneapolis-St Paul MN, Las Vegas NV, Lansing MI, Scranton PA, Green Bay WI, Cincinnati OH, Belleville IL, Chicago IL.

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