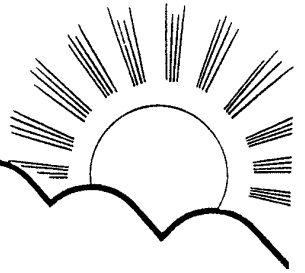


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul

Issue Number Forty Eight November 1, 2002



The Blessing of the Chapel of the Visitation in Lesozvodsk

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

On September 25 the priests of our deanery gathered in Lesozvodsk for a meeting, because Lesozvodsk is centrally located between Khabarovsk and Vladivostok. It gave us the opportunity to have guests for the blessing of the new parish chapel. Congratulations are in order for our regular benefactors whose regular donations by mail paid for this project. While we sought financing for this project from many sources, it was our daily mail donors who contributed to this project. Much of the work was done by parishioners of Lesozvodsk, especially Vladimir Pisarenko, the parish trustee, who coordinated the project. Even the neighborhood kids got into the act by carrying bricks and shoveling sand. It is a dream come true for the parish to have its own



The parish trustee Vladimir Pisarenko addresses the assembly. He was in charge of the chapel project.



Parishioners had tea after the first mass in the new chapel a month earlier when it wasn't completely finished

"The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary"—one of our new windows in the cathedral in Vladivostok.



The blessing of the walls of the new chapel of the Visitation in Lesozovodsk.



chapel, which also has attached simple overnighting quarters for a priest, a room for charitable activities for CARITAS, and space for catechism classes. A big sign outside the outer door of the building welcomes everyone. There is a piece of land not far away which we look at occasionally, thinking about the time when the parish might have its own church building. The present chapel could be the priest's apartment in that future plan. The parish really needs a priest, of course, because it is far from Vladivostok, and the parish territory includes a third of the State of Primorye. There are many young families with children which live in very small one-room apartments in the building near the parish. It would be a paradise for a missionary who would want to work with children.



First sample pew for Lesozovodsk from our factory. We decided to use these usual Russian kitchen benches as a model--with kneelers added. They were produced by the wood factory of FOMIP, our charitable organization modeled on the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The chapel is at the far end of a complex of furniture stores



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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.

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Autumn Anointing of the Sick

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

One of my favorite liturgical events of the year is the anointing of the elderly and sick of our parish which took place this year on September 29. Winter can be hard for our elderly who usually don't have cars, telephones, and often live in tall apartment buildings without elevators. Even if they can get to public transportation, they still face the daunting task of either climbing the slippery slopes up to our church building from the main street of Vladivostok which is called "Svetlanskaya", or they can risk the steep, icy dirt road which comes down to the church from the new "Beauty Avenue". Parts of the city never have the snowed plowed all winter. Many of the elderly simply can't get to the church in the wintertime. The anointing takes on even greater meaning for them. This year the first snow was on October 21.



Laying on of hands with prayer before anointing.

Anointing with oil.



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



There is a treat and tea for the elderly after the mass.

A few minutes of personal talk with the pastor.



News Notes

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

- You've heard about crime in Russia. This time it struck us again. On August 30 Sergei Akulenko, the program coordinator of CARITAS Primorye, found that he had a flat tire when he returned to his car after paying some bills. As he dealt with the flat someone entered the car and stole his briefcase which had his passport, all of his documents for work that day, and \$1250. The money he was carrying to deliver it to the various Women's Support Centers (\$750) and for the Home Nursing Program (\$520). Unfortunately Sergei hadn't seen the TV report last week about the groups of criminals who operate in just that way: puncturing a tire, helping you to fix it, while a partner steals from the inside! They were specialists. Thank God there will be the final judgment—How will it look then for the criminals, stealing from helpless elderly and contributing to the dead of unborn children?
- Recently a man was dying of cancer here. Boris could barely talk, and couldn't hear anything. As his last days were

approaching he asked to be baptized by a Catholic priest. His family couldn't understand because they were either non-believers or Orthodox, but he insisted. They asked me to baptize him, which I did, and gave him Holy Communion under the form of wine, anointed him, and confirmed him. He died two days later, clutching his baptismal cross. He also said that he wanted a Catholic funeral, so the whole family came for the funeral mass and burial. For many it was the first time they had ever met a Catholic or been in a Catholic Church. We don't know how God moved him in this direction, but probably more of his relatives will become Catholics. It was a mystery of grace.

- Our young parishioner Asya Shevchenko was chosen to represent us at the World Youth Day in Toronto, Canada. She traveled with a group of 50 youth from throughout the Russian Federation, the expenses having been donated by a European benefactor. They say that the Russian youth were very visible at the Youth Day because of the bright orange tee-shirts with the word "Russian" in English on it. It was Asya's first experience outside of Russia. She was chosen for the trip because of her volunteerism for parish activities.



Asya at Niagara Falls.

Fr Vladimir Sek from Blagoveschensk was among the pilgrims.



The Russian flag was proudly displayed at the Youth Day.

- On September 21 in the early morning the crate arrived at our church from Brest, Belarus with the next installment of our stained glass windows, The Finding in the Temple, The Assumption, and the Coronation. One page one is a photo of "The Coronation", in my opinion the prettiest. It is the only window in which the event pictured doesn't take place on earth, but in heaven, and so its style is very different from the other windows. Do you like it? Only a few more windows to go and the whole set will be complete.

Unloading the windows in the fresh autumn air.



- On September 16 Miroslava Igorevna, our parish archivist and historian, and I traveled to Sedanka to see if we could find the house where Bishop Slivovsky lived and died after he had been exiled from Vladivostok. We did indeed find the home which still has the address it did in the 1930's. Stanislava Josephovna who now lives in Tomsk, but who was a child when the bishop was still alive and who used to take him milk every day from their family, described the house in detail, and how to walk from there to the bishop's grave at the Sedanka cemetery. After finding the house, we followed her instructions, and the path took us to the general area where we had believed earlier that the bishop was buried. Naturally, we hope to definitely locate the bishop's grave in conjunction with plans to work toward his canonization. Unless we find some further documentary of eye-witnessed facts, it will take quite a bit of work yet to locate the grave.



The house near the river in Sedanka where Bishop Slivovsky spent his last days. He died in his room in the left-center part of the building, in the addition, which had a facelift in 1995.

- Maybe own donations are down because people have heard that there is renewed repression of Catholicism in Russia. In a sense that is true. After the four dioceses were created in Russia by the Holy Father, the Orthodox Church has sent signals of anger and outrage via the mass media, and maybe by government channels, so that we are meeting all kinds of roadblocks that did not exist earlier. Suddenly it is harder to get government documents, harder to get our construction permits, and last week even a cafeteria where we had planned to feed the children during the catechism camp declined to work with us because we are Catholics! Russia just passed a law outlawing mass demonstrations of hate (such as were done earlier this year in Novosibirsk against Catholics), but we are facing more personal discrimination on the part of some government authorities and some private individuals. I feel sure it isn't government policy, but just bigoted individuals. But keep us in your prayers. We don't plan to do anything about it for now, hoping it is a passing phase, but let us hope and pray that it doesn't get any worse. Most of our Orthodox friends who are priests or bishops are petrified to have anything to do with us just now, not because they have changed their minds, but because they fear reprisals from higher up in the Orthodox Church. Naturally it is all very sad, not especially because we are suffering, but sad to see such hatred in the name of Christ and of religion. How I would like to see a happy, healthy Orthodox Church in Russia, but instead it is frightened, revengeful, and not at all attractive even for Russians, at the present time. While they blame us for "proselytism", they continue to drive their own people away by the lack of charity and misunderstanding of Christianity on the part of many priests, and even bishops. People still come to us saying, "I went to the Orthodox Church, but I just couldn't go in!" Prayers for the reconciliation of our Churches are in our daily prayers.

- Here is something that is happening more frequently: People call to say, "Grandma died, and she was a Catholic. What should we do? We are Orthodox." Naturally I explain

how I would have wanted to see grandma before her death! We get these kinds of calls about twice a week, which means that there are still more than 100 elderly Catholics in Vladivostok who will die without the sacraments this coming year! How can I find them?? I'm thinking of placing some ads like, "Are you Catholic and elderly? Call us now—before you die—so your children won't have to call us after your death!" Maybe it sounds cruel, but do you have another idea? An ad campaign will cost money, of course. People in this part of Russia were often baptized as children in Europe, and then move here as adults, and so they have lived without the Church for many years.

- As was reported in the last *Sunrise*, one of our cars was totaled on the road to Arsenyev. Finally we were able to recover the car after the police finished with the investigation. The driver was found not guilty of any wrongdoing, and the conclusion was that it was a freak accident involving gravel at the end of the road. Now we have to replace the car.



Our wrecked car. Most valuable parts were stolen from it while it was in police impoundment, including the radio/audio system. It is a total loss.

The corner where Fr Frederico was sleeping, the only one hurt in the accident. His remains were cremated and flown to Spain for burial.





The house near the river in Sedanka where Bishop Slivovsky spent his last days. He died in his room in the left-center part of the building, in the addition, which had a facelift in 1995.

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The corner where Fr Frederico was sleeping, the only one hurt in the accident. His remains were cremated and flown to Spain for burial.



- Congratulations, Fr Daniel Maurer on the 10th anniversary of your ordination! He was ordained a priest on September 20, 1992, in Vladivostok at the trade union building by Bishop Joseph Werth, S.J.



Fr Dan was congratulated on his 10th anniversary by Lilia Timofeevna, director of the parish department of CARITAS.

Fr Dan's own Romanovka parishioners also brought congratulations in the person of the parish trustee, Ludmilla Sidarenko.



- The latest member of our mission staff in Russia is Cyril Voitsel, a native of Novosibirsk who has moved with his family to Vladivostok. Cyril is a lay theologian, having gotten his degree at the University of Krakov in Poland. His responsibilities now include, coordinating and teaching in our deanery's part of the diocesan program to prepare catechists. He also is working in our adult education program, helping prepare people for baptism and confirmation, and teaching a weekly Bible class. He is also coordinating the men's conference which will be led by Steve Wood of the Covenant Keepers of St Joseph. As if that isn't enough, he is also teaching two theology courses at the Vladivostok Government University of Economics and Service. Welcome, Cyril!



Cyril spends a lot of time at the computer. He loves to work late at night when everything is quiet in the church building.

- That latest news here is that we have finally managed to work on the façade of our Church building! The cracks and fallen bricks and mortar have long ago asked for repair, but we didn't have the funds to do it. Recently a generous benefactor provided the money to begin repairs on the façade, and work began on September 21. A team of ten Chinese workmen are laboring on the scaffolds every day.



Work on a bad corner.

Why Chinese? Because there aren't enough Russian stoneworkers in Vladivostok to do all of the reconstruction work that is going on in the city at the present time--Russia's economy is gradually improving, so now there is a lot of neglected repair work that has to be done. There are many Chinese workers in the city. They work from sunrise to sunset for several months, and then return to China to be with their families for a rest, especially during the cold winter months. I wish I could speak Chinese, but an old man like me is already having trouble dealing with the Russian language! The Chinese border is just miles away from us, of course. Bishop Slivovsky, in his failing years, had a Chinese cook who was very faithful to him. We still haven't discovered his name, in spite of our efforts.

As the work began we prayed at mass that no one would be

injured during these dangerous repairs. Once the façade is finished we will still have two giant steps to finish the repairs of the cathedral: To build the steeples, and to remove the extra story that was added inside, when the Communist government converted the building to an archive.



After work on the bad corner. The whole wall has still to be worked over for uniform color.

Our Benefactors...

Dear Sir,

April 13, 2002

Our names are Aaron Hayes and Elliot Nuss. We are 5th graders at St Matthew's Catholic School. We are doing our annual Religion Fair project this year on the Mary Mother of God Mission Society. We have raised \$255.00 to buy a table for the small chapel/vestibule/entryway for the church.

We would like to donate this table in memory of Father Mychal Judge, chaplain of the New York City Fire Department. We would like to put this in his memory because he gave up his life after giving last rites to many firefighters in New York City after the bombing of the World Trade Center "Twin Towers". He died on September 11, 2001. He was a very brave and generous man who would help anybody in need. Father Mike will be remembered for years to come. May he guide and help your church in its times of need.

Sincerely,

Elliot Nuss & Aaron Hayes

Continued from Page 8...

children's orthopedic hospital, one to prepare for the organ music workshop the following weekend, and I and several others to study the feasibility of Catholic tours and other mission teams coming to Vladivostok on a regular basis. Yes there were snags, disappointments, and we certainly used Plan A, then B and C even F and Z. But we all learned a lot. We were in uncharted waters with the newness of such a large group doing such varied jobs, but we were still enriched from Sunday Mass. A male traveler joined us 3 days later. Gordon came to study the feasibility of starting cottage industry with our parishioners in the parishes and opening gift shops in those small parishes.

I saw the four parishes that we currently sponsor. In Romanovka we visited an old people's home. As we left the staff walked us out on the plaza. Many elderly came out on the porch and soon others were opening the upper story windows and leaning out waving "good by" to us. Deanna started playing her flute, Marianne and Andrea danced a jig and I blew a kiss back to the Russians. And they blew kisses, waved to us, and called out "Dasvidania!" as we walked down the road. Our travelers had been rubbing feet, shaking hands, and singing to these residents during our visit.

We left with Russia in our hearts. Communism only lasted a few years and it devastated a society. But from the ashes God is showing His Power and Might. And we saw it.

God love you and your family,

Sandra Sonnen
Mission Desk, St Paul, MN 651-227-0208
new email: usoffice@vladmission.org
www.vladmission.org



Our two mission heros, Elliot and Aaron!

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends of the Vladivostok Mission,

- Our sister parish of St Jude's in Little Rock AR has published a parish cookbook with proceeds to go to our mission. It is a small 3 ring binder with over 500 tasty home cooking recipes from the South. Also included is a Mary Mother of God icon refrigerator magnet. \$20 including shipping. Contact Susan Gray, 11 Sun Crest Dr, Cabot AR 72023 or call her at 501-843-2014. Order two—one for you and one for a gift!
- I have just returned from Vladivostok with nine other travelers. How can I describe the warm, loving people of our parishes there? Maybe by explaining that most of the eight other women travelers were ready to pack up and return to the States on Saturday the first few hours of the day that we arrived. But then there was Sunday in the Most Holy Mother of God Cathedral parish in Vladivostok. The Sunday Mass, the choir, the parish singing "Salve Regina" in Latin before Mass began, the blessing of the elderly for "Senior Citizen's Sunday", and the tea afterward where we all mingled with our Russian

soon-to-be friends.



Sandra Sonnen (2nd from l) and our volunteers gathered in Hanceville, Arkansas, for a planning session.

Old friends from my previous trip swamped me. I ran to the Sunday school room to see the children and up to the choir loft to see my old acquaintances and then looked around for the parish staff and their families. The persons who speak English and those that speak through a translator and I are all bound together in the reviving of the Catholic Church in Russia. It was so good to be back!

You, too, share in that togetherness with your support of your time, talents and treasures. As the 10 days swiftly passed I watch my American companions embarking on our first ever mission team. Some went to the orphanages, some to the

Continued on Page 7...