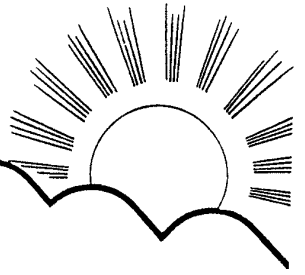


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Fifty Five January 1, 2004



A New Organ To Praise The Lord And To Honor Mary

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

The Vladivostok parish of the Most Holy Mother of God was able to purchase a large, state-of-the-art digital electronic organ, through generous donations designated solely for this purpose from parishioners of a Catholic parish on the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S.A. The parish and donors wish to remain anonymous. The acquisition of such a magnificent and versatile instrument will allow us to continue our efforts in the liturgical and sacred music development programs that we began when we first arrived in Russia 12 years ago.

Sometimes people can be so generous that the recipients are completely overwhelmed. For our parish this has been one of those times. Never could we have imagined that parishioners of one parish would offer such a large sum for such a purpose. Our response has been and will continue to be humble gratitude and prayer for the intentions of the

Construction to Begin Again?

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

We are hoping to begin once again the construction of the rectory building beginning April 1. Last year's plans were spoiled by the appearance of the SARS disease in China, with the result that the Russian-Chinese border was closed just at the time we are going to begin. It also means that the work we began two years ago on the façade of the church also stood still—scaffolds in place—for two years while we were attempting to solve the labor difficulties. Now we will try again. We have collected about half of the funds needed for these two projects, and we can't finish them in one year, so our hopes are in our benefactors who want to see these projects brought to a final conclusion. The restoration of the Cathedral can't be completed until the rectory is built, because many parish activities are now located on the first floor of the church. These activities will move to the new rectory when it is complete so that we can at last remove the last remaining added floor inside the church and thus return it to its original plan.



*Christmas Concert:
photo taken during the
first Christmas 2003
concert, December 28,
2003. Marina
Omelchenko at the Stella
Maris Organ, Tatiana
Lupach directing the
Catholic Concert Choir
of Vladivostok, and the
parish's concert
chamber orchestra
"Regina Angelorum".*



Marina Omelchenko playing just after the organ was first turned on. She played "Ave Maris Stella" as the first hymn to be played on the organ in Vladivostok.

donors. As the pastor of the parish that donated us the money to buy the organ said to me, "The liturgy needs to be done beautifully, and people need beauty."

The new organ has been christened *Stella Maris* in honor of Our Lady Star of the Sea, and in appreciation of the parish which made its purchase possible. When it was first installed in our church on December 3 and again when it was blessed by our bishop at Sunday Mass on December 14 during his first pastoral visit to Vladivostok, the first music that was played on it was the ancient hymn *Ave Maris Stella*. The hymn, in Russian translation, is a particular favorite of our parishioners. At the solemn blessing, as the bishop sprinkled the *Stella Maris* organ with holy water and incensed it, the congregation sang all seven verses, four of which are translated here into English:

Hail, Star of the Sea,
 Mother of the Word of God,
 Ever Virgin
 Blessed Daughter of Heaven

Gabriel's greeting "Ave"
 You received with trust,
 Thereby turning the sadness
 Of the children of Eve into joy.

Give peace to those who stray,
 Give light to those in darkness,
 Root out from our hearts all evil,
 Send down to us your goodness.

Holy Mother, do not abandon us!
 Intercede with your Son,
 Born from you into the world
 For the salvation of sinners.

The *Stella Maris* organ is a Rodgers Trillium 927 digital electronic instrument of three manuals and pedal board with 94 speaking stops. It presently has ten audio channels speaking

from ten speaker cabinets; with a capacity of as many as 28 audio channels. It also has the potential to play ranks of winded pipes in the future, and to accommodate MIDI systems of hundreds of other sounds.

The decision to buy a Rodgers digital electronic organ was made after an extensive study of four major digital organ builders (two from the US and two from Europe), and after consultation with US and German companies involved in the relocation and rebuilding of used pipe organs.

There was never really any contest: a Rodgers electronic instrument was chosen because of Rodgers' unparalleled, magnificent pipe-like sound fidelity; its reputation of long-lasting quality workmanship; the possibility of easy future upgrades and additions; and the superior customer service that Rodgers has extended to our parish free of charge during the last seven years of maintaining the vintage (1973) Rodgers Cambridge 220-II analog electronic organ given to us by Epiphany Parish in Coon Rapids, MN in 1995. I can truthfully say that I have never experienced such good customer service from any other company. I take this opportunity publicly to thank the people at Rodgers headquarters in Hillsboro, OR for their excellent help and advice, and to say that we look forward to working with them in the coming years with new musical instrument possibilities.



Original owners Quentin and Karen Smith at the organ in their home in September 2003 when Fr. Dan visited them to see the organ for the first time.

The story of the acquisition of our new Rodgers Trillium 927 *Stella Maris* organ does not end with the donors and the company. There is another major chapter related to the purchase. The *Stella Maris* organ was originally bought in 2002 by Mr and Mrs Quentin and Karen Smith of Rohnert Park, California for Karen who had been a concert organist, but who had not played publicly for some time. After receiving the Rodgers Trillium 927 as a 30th anniversary wedding gift from her husband, and installing it in their home, and realizing the great strides made in electronic sound reproduction, Karen decided to get back into shape as a concert artist. For that it was also decided that the top-of-the-line three-manual Rodgers

Trillium 967 would be better. So the Smiths put the Trillium 927 up for sale on an internet website.

I happened to be browsing the web for want ads of vintage electronic organs at the request of the Baptist bishop of Khabarovsk, Russia, who had heard our Rodgers Cambridge 220-II during a visit to our church earlier in the day. Using the Google search engine I typed "used Rodgers electronic organs", and received several hundred links. (Astute readers will realize that by including the word "Rodgers" in my search, I already had a firm opinion about the superiority of the Rodgers sound.) The third link received was to an ad that the Smiths had posted about their Trillium 927.

Having researched the latest digital electronic organs and having decided on a three-manual Rodgers, I knew that the price the Smiths listed was too good to pass up. It amounted to a 32% discount off the original purchase price (36% if you count sales tax), and it had only been played for three months! With fingers trembling on the computer keyboard I wrote the Smiths an email letter asking if the organ was still for sale or if it had already been snatched up. With surprise and relief I received an immediate response from Mr. Smith that it was still available for purchase. If I had not found this amazing opportunity, we would have had to purchase a smaller, less versatile Rodgers organ with the donations from our US benefactors. It would still have been a high quality Rodgers, but it would not have had as many stops nor as many possibilities for future audio channel expansion.

The Smiths not only gave us a great discount on a great instrument. They have been very helpful about getting the instrument appraised by a Rodgers representative, having it packed and trucked to a west coast port, including in the shipment personal gifts of speaker wire, books of organ music, stop registration lists and suggestions for our organist, Marina Omelchenko. They even were able to get the remaining 9 years of the original parts warranty extended to us! We are very grateful to them for their indispensable help and encouragement in this new world of Rodgers digital electronic organ music.

The *Stella Maris* organ is installed, blessed, initiated in its sacred duties by our Advent and Christmas Masses, and it has already become the new star of our four sold-out Christmas concerts (Dec. 29 - Jan 5) attended by more than 1100 people. It has been the subject of at least three TV feature reports; 4 newspaper feature articles; and innumerable radio reports. Soon it will even appear in a special feature in the Moscow trade newspaper, *Musical Milieu*.

The *Stella Maris* organ is a big step up for our small mission parish, and an answer to many prayers. With it our liturgical, concert, festival and recording programs now have unlimited possibilities. We will be able to invite guest organists from all parts of Russia and the Far East, expand the kinds of organ music to be presented, and perhaps attract future organists to learn how to play the organ.

We are very grateful to the donors who have made all this possible, to the support staff at Rodgers for their excellent assistance, and to the Smiths and others who have helped up pack, ship and receive this major acquisition for our parish. We look forward with joy to many years, perhaps many generations, of beautiful music from the *Stella Maris* organ.

How to Communicate with Us

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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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Volodarskovo 22
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Office in America:

Phone and FAX: (651)227-0208 and (651)690-5139

E-mail: usoffice@vladmission.org

Internet: English language: 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.

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News Notes

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



Bishop Klimovich with the parishioners of Our Lady of the Pacific Parish in Nakhodka.



Bishop Klimovich gave holy cards to parishioners of Holy Trinity Parish in Romanovka.

• The big news of December was the visit of our new bishop, Kirill Klimovich! It was his first trip to the Russian Far East, and he determined to visit every parish in Primorysky Krai, which he did! We certainly like our new bishop. He is simple and sincere, a man who knows the people because he was born in Kazakhstan and then grew up in Belarus where he served the Cardinal as Assitant Bishop of Minsk. Naturally he was surprised to suddenly be made the bishop of the Diocese of St Joseph in Irkutsk, the largest diocese in the world in terms of square miles of land. Bishop Klimovich confirmed 28 parishioners here in Primorye. We are certainly wishing him well in his very difficult assignment.

Bishop Klimovich addresses the parishioners at Visitation Parish in Lesozvodsk



Bishop Klimovich confirming in Vladivostok.

The 24 adult confirmands in Most Holy Mother of God Parish, Vladivostok.



- Our new “used organ” arrived in port November 5. The customs duty was reasonable, and there were still some shipping fees due. Fr Dan worked out a new floor plan for our concerts. With the new organ the concert goers will face the main altar instead of the choir loft. After the organ arrived in port, Fr Dan spent some time studying the space, trying to see how many seats there may be--perhaps about 320 on the main floor and another 20 in the choir loft, but that may be optimistic. After moving the red seats and adding chairs and measuring the space in detail he made a map of all the seats. The people like to see where their tickets will be before they buy them. With the old seating arrangement facing toward the back, we only could sell 200 tickets because we lost all the space in the north and south transepts. Now with so many more seats at each concert we were able to do only four Christmas concerts this year, rather than the five that we did last year. The Christmas concerts were the inaugural concerts of the new organ.

- A few years ago the Rodgers Organ Co gave Fr Dan some promotional CD's of organ music played on their new digital electronic organs, including one very similar to ours. Included were six hymns that he had never heard before. Now we have to find someone to translate them into Russian. Translating poetry into poetry is most difficult and takes a special talent.

- Fr Daniel's new assistant in his parish of the Holy Trinity in Romanovka is Igor Radzuk. It is a pleasure to work with him. He ran himself ragged helping our guests when the group of American visitors was here from Modesto, CA. Fr Dan is planning on going to the parish in Romanovka twice a month now rather than only once, and staying overnight there one of those times each month. Igor has fixed up the parish apartment there so well that now there is a comfortable place to stay overnight. Since it is only 90 minutes away by car and because there has been no good place to stay, Fr Dan had always gone there and returned in the same day. But now he will be able to take the electric train, stay overnight and take the train back the next day. That will save money, wear and tear on the car and the valuable time of our driver, who is also my general assistant here in the main parish in Vladivostok, and it will also allow me more time to stir up interest in religion among the local population. I am especially concerned for the young people, who have nothing at all to do and who get involved in drugs, alcohol and sexual misconduct at an early age. Then too, Igor will be important as we begin to build a church in Romanovka.

- On November 15 Sr Alicia Gonzalo's Spanish classes at the Far Eastern State University presented "Spanish Speakers' Day". It was a two-hour program of skits and programs that they prepare in Spanish. They are amazingly talented kids (age 17-22), and FUNNY. They were great entertainers, know how to poke fun at themselves (and gently at Sr Alicia), and have a great time doing it. They did absolutely everything in Spanish, and did it very well. It is a testament to all the hard work Sr Alicia has done with them during these last five years. Before she came they did not even have a Spanish department. The

University loves her as much as we do. Last year they gave her the "Foreign Teacher of the Year Award". They have over 40 foreign teachers, most from Korea, China and Japan, but also from Poland, the USA, Australia, and other the Pacific Rim countries.

- Following our general policy of trying to increase funding for our mission from within Russia itself, Fr Dan's homily at all parishes on the Feast of the Dedication of St John Lateran in November was on the financial support of the Church. "I was not at all demanding. I was complimentary of their generosity," he says. Here at the main parish our normal Sunday collection lately had been from 2000 to 3000 rubles (\$67 to \$100), but after his homily the Sunday collection was over 4100 rubles (\$130) with no American tourists in the congregation. I think it was the first time that Fr Dan preached on this topic. So far the collection is maintaining itself at this new level.

- In November I went to St Charles Borromeo Seminary in Kosice, Slovakia to visit our seminarian, Brother Oleg Yelchaninov. He looks just fine! I was worried because he had been having some troubles with heartburn, and so the doctor thinks that perhaps there is a gall bladder problem. I would recommend that he drink a little wine each day as St Paul recommended to St Timothy, but it is against the seminary rules. So perhaps he will need some "nexium", which I saw advertised on TV while I was in America. We'll see what the doctor has to say.



Brother Oleg Yelchaninov and Seminary Rector in Slovakia.

- In Slovakia, which still had full seminaries, it seems that the crisis is now beginning. Slovakia will join the European Union as of May 1, and the culture is already changing in the wrong direction. It seems that Poland and Slovakia will now go through the Vatican II crisis that America is now pulling out of. During the time after Vatican II Poland and Slovakia were behind the Iron Curtain and their only defense was the strength of the Church. Today they don't need the Church for that purpose, they think. There will be lots of changes, and already there are fewer seminarians. We need to decide whether Brother Oleg will continue here, or whether he will be going to

a different seminary. As a Russian he is more personally influenced by what is happening in Russia than what is happening in Slovakia. Russia had a 70-year crisis which we hopefully are also getting over!

- I visited several seminaries while I was in the States, too, including St Mary's Seminary in Winona, Minnesota and Conception Seminary in Missouri. It seems to me that the seminarians are really upbeat and a positive thinking group at the present time. Probably the scandals and subsequent house cleaning have helped them a lot. While I was in Indiana I attended the ordination of my cousin Jason Gries. It turns out that my greatgrandfather Gries has six greatgrandson priests and eight greatgranddaughter sisters. Deacon Gries is the first one in the next generation. Another cousin priest of mine, Fr Steckler, is now the chaplain at Mater Dei High School where I went to school. He invited me to address the student body. Please add your prayers for vocations in Russia and in America to your generosity.

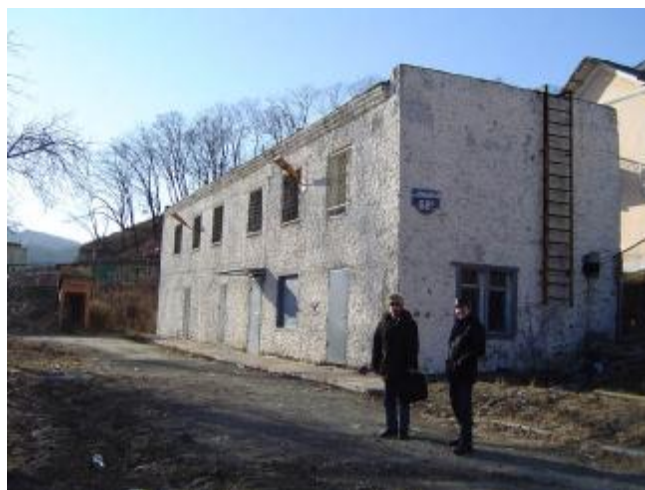
- While I was in Indiana I visited the city of New Harmony, a very famous city for Russians because it is where Robert Owen did his (in)famous social experiments which laid the groundwork for the Communists. It was he who said that both revealed religion and marriage were things of the past, and that children should be raised by the group, not by parents. Of course the Soviet Communists tried to make all of these ideas official state policy. It was a failure in Indiana where it was voluntary, and a failure in Russia where it was obligatory. Just listen to the left-leaning crowd in America at the present time! They try to drive religion into privacy, they try to redefine marriage, and they are struggling for earlier and earlier child care.

- In a letter dated November 10 from The Couple to Couple League International, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio, we were notified of the certification of our NFP teaching couple Yuri and Victoria Belozyorov. They have been our teaching couple for many years already, but now they are certified. Congratulations, Yuri and Victoria!

- In a letter from Sergei Popov, the Caritas representative in Nakhodka: "Mormons hasten to the aid! Remember, I sent you two letters: one from the Children's Rehabilitation Centre in Vrangele (25-children), and the second from the Special Correctional Boarding School in the Nakhodka (120 children). In these letters, both directors of these establishments addressed you for the help. They asked for soap, towels, toothbrushes, pillows, blankets, bedsheets, school supplies, writing sets, first-aid kits. But you didn't answer me about what to do. Right behind me were the Mormons, and now they really render to these children material aid and personally communicate with each such child (it is a condition of their contract). With the correctional school the Mormons have created a separate project and want to provide this establishment with furniture and other equipment. With our maternity hospital the Mormons already completed a project for the purchase of complete sets for newborn children for the sum of \$1800. Very much, it is very a pity to me, that at us

with it of nothing it has turned out." What can I answer? Sorry, Sergei, but the Catholics just didn't have the money. We have to be glad that the kids are getting aid from somewhere. Also, the Mormons have lots of free missionaries running around. Where are our American Catholic young people?

- Our poor Nakhodka parish, Our Lady of the Pacific. After so many years of waiting for a live-in pastor, Frs Timothy and Felix were assigned to Nakhodka as of August 1, 2003. They still haven't arrived because of visa problems, and we still don't expect them until at least March! Meanwhile Fr Myron continues to care for the parish once per month. The parish would desperately like to at last find a permanent place for a church. Recently a building went on sale which is ½ a block from the parish apartment. The building can be used for a chapel temporarily, but more importantly, the building includes enough land so that a real church could eventually be built. The purchase price?--\$160,000.00 Anybody want to help?



The proposed parish building in Nakhodka, with land for future construction.

- Many of our friends who have come to Vladivostok will remember Zhenya Uvanovna Iboshunina who lived on Russian Island. She always invited our guests to her home. Because of her jovial character and gift of hospitality, the AA groups of Vladivostok often spent holidays at her home around the fireplace, and enjoying the beautiful beach near her home. Unfortunately, her body and that of another friend who lived near her were found floating in Peter the Great Bay near an inflatable boat with motor. She had been hit or she fell upon a heavy object, as there was no water in her lungs. Police theorize that they had been murdered and murderer attempted to dispose of the bodies in the sea, but the bodies did not sink as he thought they would because they were not drowning victims. She had recently returned from South Korea, so the motive may have been that the murderer thought that she had money at home. Eternal Rest grant to them, O Lord!

- In an effort to increase our funding within Russia, we started a major crop of White Elf mushrooms and expected them to go to market October 1. But they got a disease because of the

unusual weather. We have a food technologist to plan recipes and get necessary government approvals for production.

- There were no typhoons this year at all, so Vladivostok is in the worst water crisis in 45 years. The rainfall in 2003 was only 50% of the norm. In the city there is water only on every third day. We can hope for early and heavy spring rains! Caritas is trying to help supply clean drinking water to families with babies, to elderly abandoned people, and to handicapped people who can't go to the street to buy water.

- In my October "thank you" letters I mentioned the need for some larger secured loans of money from Americans to our Russian parishioners so that these Russian families could buy an apartment rather than renting, basically using the rental money to repay the loan so that they eventually would be owners instead of renters. Several benefactors responded to this need. Thanks! There is still a need. Renters pay 5% interest, and the loan is secured by the real estate. If you are interested, please email me for details.

- The street kids continue to have a rough life. In a recent meeting with the Catholics who volunteer to participate in the program to work with the kids we heard all kinds of horror stories. The worst was about minor girls who sell themselves on the street to make a living. They don't have much medical care, knowledge about venereal diseases, nor do they have pimps to protect them. It is often the case that the girls are simply kicked out of the cars after they have been used, and are wounded and bruised, and naked. They have no defense. We are doing what we can to help them.



Mrs and Mr Lewis, and Mrs Lewis' mother.

- Part of our celebration of the 2000th anniversary of the Annunciation on March 25, 2000, was a play that I wrote which was performed by parishioners. It is simply called "The Annunciation". Some people in America have asked me for a copy of the play so that they could use it in their parishes. Now it is available. Email or write for a copy. One feature of the play is the portrayal of God using the famous Rublev Icon of the Holy Trinity.



Main Catholic volunteers working with street children: Sr Alicia, Sr Evgenia, Doctor Alexander Borsukov, and Larisa Kalaninchenko.

- While I was in Kentucky I had a good visit with Mr and Mrs Ted Lewis. Ted was the producer of our parish video which is making waves in America at the current time. Thanks, Ted, for a great job!



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

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends and Family,

- Missionary speaking has been very successful this past year, and we have spoken in very many parishes from Washington to Florida, from California to New England. Please share this mission with your Pastor if we haven't been in your parish yet. I have an introduction packet I can send you or mail to him.
- We have a video filmed in and around our parishes in Russia last year. It's 28 minutes long. We would be happy to send you one. You can show it to your church groups or bridge clubs. There is no charge. A \$5 donation would be appreciated. Please call the office or email your request. It's a great film and one you might want to share with friends, family and your Pastor. EWTN has shown it regularly, and they have our permission to translate it as well. We are able to send a super-VHS tape of it to any cable station that you might wish to contact on our behalf. Many are playing it around the country.
- A year ago, there was an insert in the August issue of the Vladivostok Sunrise asking for interested laymen and women to help with mission work, and asking also for women

interested in starting a new religious community for Russia. One year later, a community has formed at St Agnes Parish in St Paul, Minnesota, *Sisters in Jesus the Lord*. Sr Julia Kubista has been joined by Kelly Whittier, as well as by two associates (women interested in lay mission work). "Sisters in Jesus the Lord" is currently a private association, and will be a sister association to the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord in Russia. As part of her training, Kelly Whittier is learning Russian and is working toward a Master's in Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of St Thomas. If you or anyone you know is thinking about religious life and interested in mission work in Russia, please contact Sr. Julia or Kelly! www.cjd.cc or call (651) 291-7777; 525 Thomas Ave/St Paul, MN 55103.

- Our prayers to you all.

God love you and your families,

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