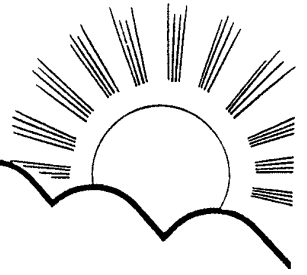


# Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Fifty Eight July 1, 2004



## At Last We Are Working on the Façade Again!

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

At last it happened! 30 Chinese workers have come to finish the work on the church façade! Everything is a mess here, with dust and grit everywhere as they sand and grind on the old bricks, replace the mortar, and close up old windows. We have no place to go to get away from the banging and sawing. We aren't complaining!! How wonderful that they have come and can continue the work that they began two years ago before SARS happened and before our funds ran out. We hope to finish the entire façade this summer, except, of course, we can't build the steeple—no benefactor has been forthcoming for that. It still isn't clear whether we can begin to work on the rectory or not. We've been saving up for it, and Ray Metzger has been calling benefactors to ask for their support so we can get as much done as we can "before the snow flies". Thanks to you, our benefactors, for your help

*The first workers rebuilt the scaffold and went to work on the façade on June 14.*



*New Light through an old door! This was the original doorway into the church sacristy. It was closed up in the 1950's when the church was converted to an archive. In connection with the repairs of the façade we just opened it up again, and even found old fittings in place. This will become again the back entrance to the church as it once was. The lady is Anna Michaelievna, one of our duty ladies who answer the doors and phones, and provide general security. Maybe somebody who didn't get in on our stained glass windows project would like to put stained glass over this door? More pictures on Page Two.*

*John Paul Sonnen, a student in Rome, holding Pope John Paul II's apostolic blessing for our parish.*



*The extra windows broken into the outside walls on the South side have to be reclosed, so that the building, an architectural monument, will look as it did when it was built from 1908-1922.*

*The windows as seen from the inside. We'll have to "live in a cave" until the last added floor can be removed from the church to restore the interior to its original condition.*



*Our workers have come to us from all parts of China. They are certainly hard workers, fast and inventive. The Russian-Chinese translators are a couple who are professors of the Russian language in a university in China.*



*Windows being closed up in the future and past sanctuary of the church behind the former and future main altar.*

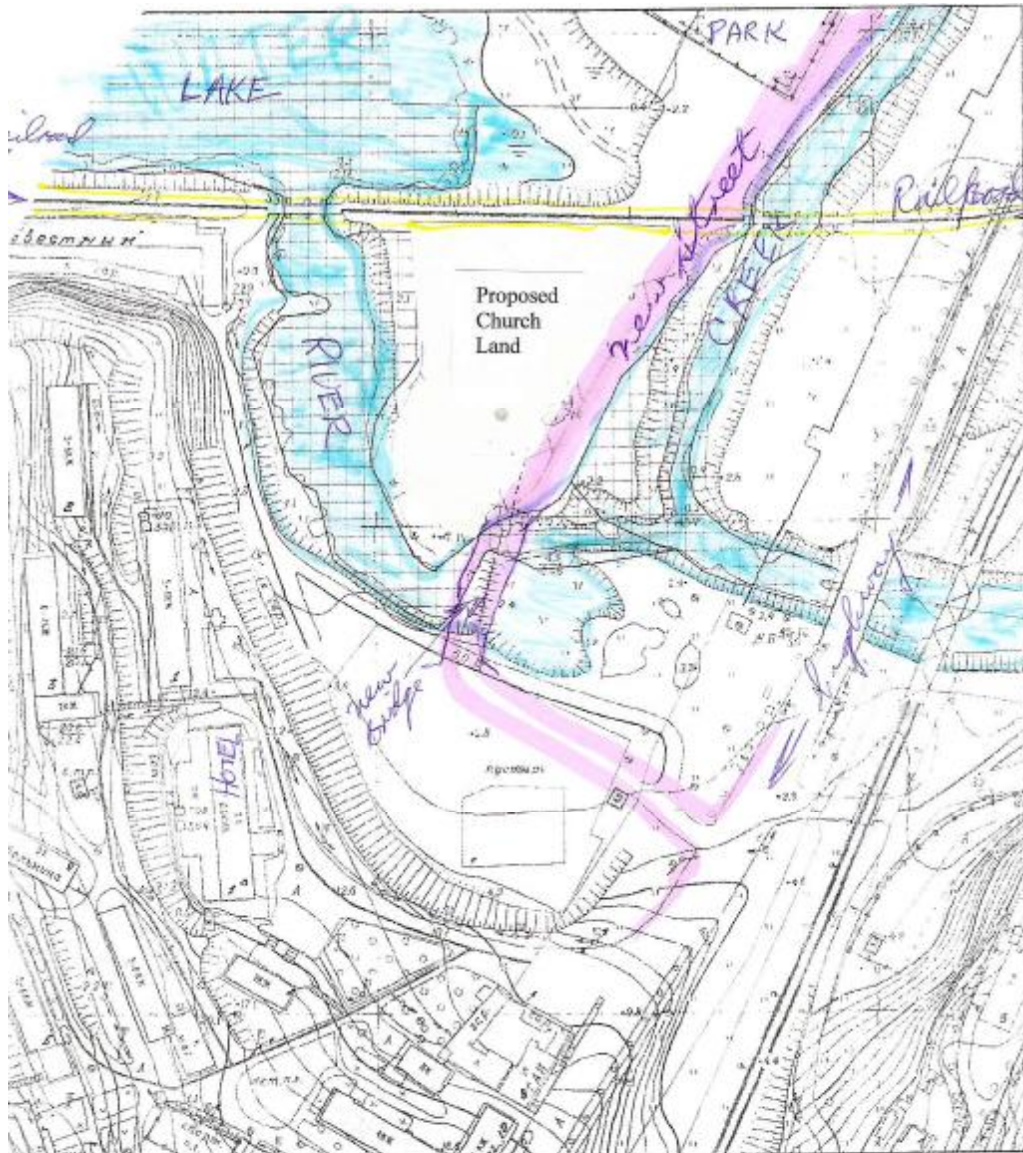
*The exterior walls are beautiful after restoration!*

# Nakhodka Parish Given Land

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

The City of Nakhodka has offered us a beautiful piece of land near the city center for building a church dedicated to Our Lady of the Pacific! Nakhodka is Russia's main shipping port on the Pacific Ocean. The land will be rented to the parish at a minimal price (Land rental in Russia is like property taxes in America.) provided we help the city to build a bridge on the nearby city street which will be needed in any case by our parishioners. Our part of the bridge project is \$28,000. Is it possible to think that our poor Nakhodka parish will at last have a church building all its own? The city insists that it has to be a beautiful building to receive such a prestigious piece of land right in the middle of the city (one block from city hall), and

Our Lady of the Pacific needs a beautiful church, doesn't she? The land really promises to be a beautiful location, bordered on two sides by a small river, on the third side by a rarely used railroad track, and on the fourth side by a street which parallels the main highway through Nakhodka. Across the river there is a high bank and a hotel which will look down at the church and river below. Beyond the railroad tracks there is planned the new stadium and other sports facilities for the city, including water sports on the lake which empties into "our" river. There is enough land for the foreseeable needs of the parish in that parcel. We have about four months to present the preliminary church building plan, and two years to begin construction before the mayor's order giving us the land would expire. On July 5 we made the first payment—half of the cost. We don't have a grant for this work in Nakhodka. We are depending upon our daily mail donors. God bless you! Who would like to help build a beautiful church in downtown Nakhodka dedicated to Our Lady of the Pacific?



Находка. Масштаб 1:2100

## News Notes

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

● In late April CARITAS was notified that the cafeteria where it feeds 60 elderly and handicapped people four times a week had been sold and was closing. This was sad for us and the clients because that cafeteria was just a block from the train station where all the transportation from throughout the city intersects, so it was the ideal place for a soup kitchen. CARITAS has since found another cafeteria--not nearly so conveniently located--and was able to get a contract and begin working again with only a two week intermission. They say that the food is even better at this new cafeteria. The program serves aged and handicapped people including those who were registered at the government Social Protection Agencies of Frunzensky, Pervoretchensky, Sovietsky, Leninsky and Pervomaisky counties of Primorye. Our clients are



representatives of the most indigent group of these needy people. The parish also invites people encountering difficult situations--those who have lost their homes in fires and other homeless. The tasty meals consist of vegetable salad, soup, meat or fish, porridge, a bun, and tea. This work is sponsored by the Sisters Mercy of St Anne of Zaragosa, Spain. All the volunteers who organize and operate the soup kitchen are our parishioners.



*Fr Dan and the organizers of the Easter Ecumenical Concerts.*

● The Easter Ecumenical Concerts brought our Catholic parish a priceless amount of good will and collegial cooperation in the Protestant community. Because of our collaboration the Protestants feel even closer to us than before. During the two months of rehearsals, one of the participating Protestant confessions invited us to be part of a weekly radio program produced by a consortium of Protestant Churches, which we had not heard about before. We have to pay for whatever air time we use, but the prices are heavily discounted, so it has presented a great opportunity for us. We have already done two programs about our Pro-Life work and our Women's Support Centers; and about Science and Religion, featuring an interview with our resident physicist and astronomer Fr Myron and a talk by our resident lay theologian Cyril Voitsel. Later in May we will be responsible for producing another third program about the difficulties the older generation (60's and 70') have to convert to Christianity after living most of their lives trying to conform to good Communist ideology. So just for this invitation to take advantage of heavily discounted radio air time, it was well worth organizing the Ecumenical concerts.

● Sister Agatha Kovalchikova, SSsP, is the new Diocesan Director of CARITAS. It was wonderful to have her as our guest in May so we could show off all the wonderful work which is being done by our parishioners-volunteers in support of the poor, elderly, and the infirm, all with the help and support of our benefactors. She agreed with Fr Myron, the President of CARITAS of the Vladivostok Deanery, that his workload is too great to adequately serve as President, so it was agreed that he would appoint his personal representative who would carry out much of the President's work. Fr Myron decided to appoint Vladimir Pisorenko from Lesozovodsk as the President's Representative. Vladimir has years of experience as a CARITAS volunteer, practices law in the courts of Lesozovodsk, and works as an officer of the organization "Consumer Rights Protection", so he has much experience with the kinds of questions the President is faced with. He will continue as Trustee of the Lesozovodsk Parish of the Visitation. Mrs Anastasia Potopenko continues as Director of the CARITAS for the Vladivostok Deanery.

● RENOVABIS is an organization of the German Bishops which is concerned with helping the Church in the newly freed parts of the Soviet Union and other places. We are grateful to RENOVABIS for providing half the money for our church windows and frames, the other half having been donated by American benefactors. This year and last they also provided funding for some of our summer programs. Now our friend at RENOVABIS Mrs Christine Dodt is coming to visit Vladivostok for the first time! She is especially interested to see the work of our eight Women's Support Centers. Her visit is planned for September.

● It was a pleasant surprise when a former parishioner, Denis Bondaryev, returned to Vladivostok after ten years in America. It was Denis who was our first evangelization director, and he was the anchor of our TV program at prime time on Saturday night. He has a son and his mother here in Russia, and thought it best to return for some time. Naturally, we immediately asked

him to work again for the parish. He will have four tasks: Help found boy scout troops (He has experience working with the scouts in American), help develop St Joseph's Parish in Second River, help anchor the program for university students, and edit the Russian version of the *Vladivostok Sunrise* which is our parish bulletin and deanery magazine which has special meaning for those aged parishioners who can rarely attend Sunday Mass, and for those parishioners who live too far from parishes to attend mass more than several times a year. Yuri Belozorov has been editor for some time, but giving Denis the job will free up Yuri to be more involved in pro-life work and scout work. Welcome back Denis!

- We are always looking for historical materials about our parishes. Viktor Gregorievich is a friend of ours who is an avid collector of old photos and postcards, and is the city's expert on old construction methods and supplies. He can tell which factory an old brick came from! A recent find of his at the postcard-club exchange is a photo of Vladivostok taken from the Golden Horn Bay in 1922. Low and behold a fragment of that postcard shows our cathedral surrounded by the scaffold during its construction! Below the church is the white rectory, and the barn for the priests' horses to the left of that. The temporary church is invisible in the trees to the right of the rectory.



*Our church surrounded by scaffold during its construction in 1922.*

- In May, George and Joan Riess, our benefactors from Kettering, Ohio, who started our Women's Support Centers, went to Cleveland to take part in the Knights of Columbus State Convention as representatives of their Maria-Joseph Council. Saturday morning, many awards were made by category and by the six Ohio dioceses. George was surprised to receive a plaque as the Volunteer of the Year of the Cincinnati Archdiocese. However, at the State Banquet Saturday evening, he was "totally stunned" to receive a plaque as the State Knights of Columbus Volunteer of the Year. In reading the citation, the State Deputy emphasized his volunteer work in Russia, and the great effect his volunteer efforts have had on the lives of so many Russian people, including the more than 600 Russian children who have been helped by George's invention and promotion of the "Adopt-a-Birth" program, let alone all the women and families he has helped through the Women's Support Centers. He was selected as the best from among 68 nominees. Congratulations, George! We'd say, "Hat off to you!" The Russians would say "A deep bow to you".

- On June 13 we finished the first Rachael's Vineyard retreat. This first retreat was sponsored by the Donald D. Lynch Family Foundation of Raleigh, NC, and was surely a wonderful success. It is a retreat to help heal women who are suffering from post-abortion syndrome, which most Russian women are, as the abortion rate has been an average of eight abortions per woman (Men, too!) Speak about genosicide!—when a nation kills itself in the womb. No wonder Russia suffers so. The Russians say that the situation here is so bad that they have to have abortions. I say that the situation here is so bad BECAUSE they have abortions. I just heard that the Australian government is now taking measures to increase the number of births—so much for the "Population Explosion". The Russian government is also thinking of taking steps. Diane Szurleys came from Ketchikan, Alaska, to lead our Rachael's Vineyard retreat. Our parishioners are very anxious to continue these retreats here in Russia. They have already done the first one of their own at St Joseph's Parish in Second River. The retreat directors prefer smaller groups, so our small parish premises are sufficient to do the retreats in each of our parishes. If there should be a larger group, we are ready with the children's camp at Sod-Gorod.

- In May I had to go to Moscow for a meeting of the Archdiocesan Commission on Relationships with the Government. It was good to get a fresh view of the situation all over Russia. The main difficulties have to do with the unfounded complaints of the Orthodox Church. Meanwhile, the Orthodox Church does in Roman lands exactly what they accuse Catholics of doing in Russia. If you have internet, try looking at <http://www.ocmc.org/index.php> We try to maintain good relations, and pray every day for reconciliation between the Churches, but meanwhile the government is anxious to guarantee that all religious people have their rights as written in the Russian Constitution respected, thanks be to God.

- Brother Oleg has a funny story to tell us from the seminary in Slovakia where he has just finished taking his exams for this year. One teacher decided to propose to his class that he would just give them all C's if they didn't want to take the exam. Because it was to be the last exam, they all agreed—except Brother Oleg. He took the exam and got a B. Then the other seminarians complained that maybe they might have gotten a B, too, but it was too late! A good lesson: Don't try to take the easy way out.

- This past year Brother Oleg was our only seminarian, but now, for the next school year, we have added one more, and a third is in the planning stage. Five married men—our parishioners--have also petitioned our bishop to become permanent deacons. So far the Russian bishops have not approved a deacon program, but perhaps it will happen.

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

## The Birth of Pain

By Kristina Pavlova

Larisa Kalinichenko and I were on our way to the first Russian retreat sponsored by “Rachel’s Vineyard”. I never imagined that I was about to discover something amazing for myself and the other women who would attend. This first Russian retreat of Rachel’s Vineyard was held in Magadan this past April by Diane Schuley from Ketchikan, Alaska, for women suffering from Post-Abortion Syndrome. Larisa is the head of the Ugolnaya Women’s Support Center, and I work with the formation of our WSC volunteers and as a volunteer for the Central WSC.

It is clear what a great need we have in our country for spirituality: each and every family is touched by the tragedy of the death of an unborn child--these are personal tragedies for could-be mothers, sisters, grandmothers and just someone we know. We simply cannot live on as the same person, when children are being killed right next to us. This was my first discovery I made during the retreat. And that it’s not necessary to experience abortion yourself to plant its pain in your heart for many years to follow.

My goal was to obtain skills and information I could utilize while working for the WSC’s, but I did not expect to learn much new. I had the idea that it was going to be something like a Bible workshop and I was a bit doubtful that it might be of any help to my duties. But what I saw was more like an experienced group of psychotherapists at work. The program of this seminar was developed by Dr Theresa Berk, a specialist in philosophy and psychology. In contrast with other psychotherapeutic programs I have attended, this program promoted a “spiritual approach” which I found extremely effective--pain disappeared from my heart leaving tranquility and hope instead. Yes, it happened to me right there--a sudden relief from guilt that had been haunting me since the day I failed to prevent my friend from having an abortion.

Another tremendous discovery was the fact that PAS affects women even more extensively than it was considered before. During the program *none* of the women claimed not to feel any guilt or pain. For them it did not matter how long a time ago it happened, what were the conditions, and what reasoning (or its lack) that had lead them to make the decision – the pain was born on that day. And if this pain is not released, the women will continue to live with it. Not only do they suffer, but also those close to them as well. Therefore, we all suffer from PAS. We all mourn the unborn.

So, how to release--how to “give birth” to this pain? The spiritual exercises of Rachel’s Vineyard become a “birth house” for this pain. First, a woman sees she doesn’t suffer alone.

Second, these exercises help a woman to “open-up” and meet understanding and acceptance of other participants (This program has been adapted for men also). And finally, it leads to a complete candidness with God, whose healing power dissolves the pain and grants the joy of relief and hope.

In May we offered this program in Vladivostok for our WSC’s. It was attended by many of our volunteers. This time Larisa and I served as assistants to the retreatmaster Diane Schuley. Another seminar is being planned in June, and I wish God would bless us to have these seminars each month.

The seminars end with a poll:

1. What is your impression about this seminar?
2. What do you like most in this program?
3. What do think can to improve the quality of the meeting?

And here are some answers:

“My general impression – all that we’ve done has been highly spiritual and Diane, Kristina and Larisa have been sincere in their compassion. Many thanks to you for your understanding and support! You have reached our hearts – now we are united with God through forgiveness that came from our unborn.” ***“I personally found it most exiting to see how some ‘tough’ women became relaxed and humble, even helpless, but not afraid to face and show their pain and weakness. They were strong in their humility to show us their pain-torn souls. The fact is, Diane, Kristina and Larisa were able to ‘melt’ our souls down and then to heal them. And this is what the program is about!”*** ***“I have only one suggestion – go on with the program in our WSC’s and parishes and invite everyone who has in any way been involved in abortions.”***

***“The meeting impressed me greatly! My load was heavy, many things I gave serious contemplation. I spoke up and now I feel relieved. Here is my suggestion: such exercises are a ‘must’ for all suffering from PAS.”*** ***“The impression is overwhelming. I couldn’t even imagine being part of such a meeting. I felt comfortable to share my thoughts with others and get rid of my burden. Here you can talk about such things and no one judges you.”*** ***“Overall – very positive. All steps of the program are carefully thought through, letting the participants respond to all their questions. And as the result – they gain serenity and peace.”***

***“Spiritual balance and health through spiritual purification. This program can be helpful to men as well thus helping the women – the whole families. Thanks for all you’ve done for us, for your courage, patience and love!”***

***“I liked it very much. Glad to be here. The most important part is the healing people receive. They also receive forgiveness, hope and their children back.”***

*“We all are in need of such meetings. It’s like dropping a heavy weight; this letter ‘whisper from heaven’ and a letter to my child. All helped me to acknowledge my mistakes, to come back to myself, back to the Most High. Rachel’s ineyard has to be widely popularized among women. And among the young.”*

*“Wow! Powerful stuff. Heals and comforts. The best part was the Biblical scenes played by the participants. Exercises are very powerful. I wish whole families would attend. Very impressed. Unprecedented.”*

*“This session helped me to find healing and understanding of problems in my family. It taught me how to help others. I liked every part of the meeting, I am happy. Thank you very much. You guided me to accept the Lord and opened my heart, which has been blackened by vanity and pain. You helped my heart to love again and to share this love with other people.”*

## How to Communicate with Us

### Office in Russia:

Phone: 011-7-4232-26-96-14

FAX: 011-7-4232-26-96-16

E-mail: [myron@catholic.vladivostok.ru](mailto:myron@catholic.vladivostok.ru)  
[daniel@catholic.vladivostok.ru](mailto:daniel@catholic.vladivostok.ru)  
[CARITAS@mail.primorye.ru](mailto:CARITAS@mail.primorye.ru)

Internet: Russian language: [www.catholic.vladivostok.ru](http://www.catholic.vladivostok.ru)

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

**Letters** without donations can be sent to:

Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Parish  
Volodarskovo 22  
690001 Vladivostok RUSSIA

### Office in America:

Phone and FAX: (651)227-0208

E-mail: [usoffice@vladmission.org](mailto:usoffice@vladmission.org)

Internet: English language: [www.vladmission.org](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.

# Announcing...

## A Weekend Retreat with Fr Myron and Friends and Benefactors

Don't be "left behind"!

**When?** October 22-24, 2004 (Friday evening through Sunday noon)

**Where?** St Paul, Minnesota. Events will be held at famous St Agnes Parish. Hotel accommodations at Sheraton Four Points Metrodome Hotel or homes of local benefactors.

**Why?** We will pray together for the success of our mission. We will share the stories of our mission and better understand why this mission is so important. We will get answers to our questions. We will learn how we can be even more effective as friends and benefactors of the mission.

**How much will it cost?** Meals: \$45. Local Transportation: \$30

**How can I get more information?** See page 6.

**You'll be sorry if you miss this!!**

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*(Continued from Page 8.)*

Please prayerfully consider a donation for this religious house. It could be a reminder for your family for generations that you gave to the revival of Catholicism in Russia! We will place your remembrance on a memorial plaque in the building. If you donate a room it would be named in your honor, or after the person you designate. A room for a priest or seminarian would be \$5000. However, a gift of *any size* would help move us toward the completion of this project. A representative from our mission may have contacted you by phone to chat about this and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you, and God bless you for your continued support.

Sandra and David Sonnen  
Mission Desk, Office in America  
webpage: [www.vladmission.org](http://www.vladmission.org)

**Vladivostok Mission  
Mary Mother of God Mission Society  
1854 Jefferson Ave  
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**From the development desk...**

March 25, 2004: Feast of the Annunciation

Dear Vladivostok Mission supporter,

We are writing with a very urgent request.

You have been a strong supporter of the reviving Catholic Church in Russia. In the fulfillment of the Fatima message, we now ask your help with a much-needed building project. It is time for bricks and mortar.

Under Communism, no one was allowed to build. The Russians see church building projects as another way that shows that Communism is being overcome. As you know, our one Cathedral building is not huge by any means. Yet it serves as the church, parish hall, rectory, seminarians' living quarters, RCIA classroom, library, children's area, gift shop, staff offices, and religious publication center. Priests and seminarians live in rooms that are not much bigger than closets (one bedroom is a firetrap in the attic), and the staff work virtually on top of each other. We have operated this way for more than a decade, while our staff, parish, and programs continued to grow.

Now we desperately need to complete the rectory/parish office building that is adjacent to the church so that our priests and seminarians will have a decent place to live and our staff will

have a decent place to work. We have already procured the land, had designs drawn up, laid the foundation, and begun gathering funds. However, we still need to raise \$125,000 to complete the project.

Might you assist us in reaching this goal? Fr Myron has a contract with the construction firm to finish the facade on the exterior of the Cathedral and build the basement and first floor of the 3-story rectory. These jobs alone will take what funding we now have.

The construction crew is available and could build all 3 floors this summer—if we have the funds. The materials can be obtained soon if we can raise the needed funds to move forward. The project is already started, and we can build in the summer and into the early fall.

Fr Myron currently has two native priestly vocations. He has many more in the sisterhood. He has two young men recently returned from the Language and Catechetical Institute in Gaming, Austria and another young man is hoping to go there for seminary studies. The Institute has given full scholarships and another generous benefactor has paid their expenses. So we have good priestly candidates and we see a growing interest in the religious life. But there is no place for the seminarians to live! *(Continued on Page 7.)*