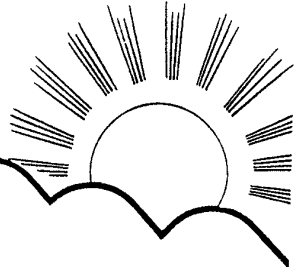


Vladivostok Sunrise



Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Sixty November 1, 2004



"Kids2Kids" made a big splash at our first mission conference. (l to r): Chris Grandon, Mary Bast, Lindsay Adams, Chris Kopp, and Mathew Kopp.

Great First Weekend Conference!

By Rebecca Hennemann

Fr Myron typically spends about two months in America every year visiting parishes as a means of fundraising. This year, however, he spent one of those weekends, the weekend of October 22-24, at our conference for mission supporters. It was a chance for supporters from across the country to come together and put faces to names they had heard for so long. The distance winners were Rosemary Wilder Strange from Washington, DC, and Tim Purdy from Las Vegas, Nevada. There were also those at the conference who were relatively new to the mission, so for them the weekend conference was a chance to learn more about the mission.

The first talk in a series of five by Fr Myron was on the history of Russia and the Catholic Church. This was followed by talks on what Mary Mother of God Mission



Look at the geographical distribution of the participants at this table!: Jean Haskel of St Paul, MN, Gail Gavin of our Mission Office in St Paul, Kathleen Daniels from Grandview KS, Rosemary Strange from Florida, Jim Richardson from St Paul, and Janet Clark from Seattle.



Sanctuary of St Agnes Church in St Paul MN where the conference was held.

Lucy and Jerry Alfveby who have been so faithful to our newsletter crew from Nativity Parish in St Paul.



Society is all about: obstacles, openings and in-betweens with the Russian government; understanding the Russian culture; and the future for Russia and the mission. Sandie Sonnen, long-time mission worker, said that every time she heard Fr Myron speak she was amazed at how much new information she learned. Jim Richardson, a conference attendee, said, “Every time Fr Myron gave a new talk it was like hearing from a new speaker. It was never the same thing twice.” The variation in talks was part of the reason why the conference was such a success. There were also round tables on various aspects of mission work, and attendees were able to make suggestions and propose new programs, as well as get to know one another.

“Kids2Kids”, our new youth mission club, is another reason many people enjoyed the conference. Youth involvement is something the mission has needed to actively incorporate, and this conference was the perfect opportunity to start. Five youth from different parts of the

nation came together in St Paul for the kickoff meeting of the club, which they call Kids 2 Kids, or K2K. Their goal is to help the kids in Russia, especially the street kids and orphans. Every three months they will be united in a different activity: raising money for the Russian kids, praying the rosary, offering masses or collecting toys to send with mission teams. It was inspiring for many adults at the conference to see the vigorous enthusiasm of the youth. The kids’ questions, hopes for the mission and zeal in helping were amazing, said one conference attendee. One highlight for all was a skit the K2K put on to introduce their new group. It was also a means of after-meal entertainment for everyone in attendance Saturday night. The skit was a parody of an Oprah show with guest appearances from the new K2K members as well as presidential candidates. Kids 2 Kids founding member Mary Bast gave up a birthday party at home in St. Louis, Missouri to travel nine hours with her mom for the conference. She said of the weekend: “It was the best weekend of my whole entire life! I became closer to God, and I met all the people I’ve been longing to meet. I feel an



There were panel discussions, here including Susan Gray, Kelly Whittier, Mission Coordinator Sandra Sonnen, and .

The kids kept us in stitches!



even stronger tug at my heart for the orphans and street children.”

Spending three days together was the perfect chance to bond with other mission supporters. Dave Sonnen said, “It was time to leave and everybody kept hugging, 15 times!” Most would agree that the weekend conference spent with Fr Myron was a success. Shall we look forward to next year?



“You mean you didn’t get tired after 6 hours of lectures?”

This is the best picture I could find of Fr Torborg! But that is “Kerry” and “Bush” battling it out!



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.

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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.

Sisters in Jesus the Lord

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

What do Steubenville and Vladivostok have in common?

By Rebecca Hennemann

In May of 2004 the Franciscan University of Steubenville sent a mission team to Vladivostok, Russia. The university participates in numerous missions all over the world, and last summer, for the first time, they went to Russia. A team of 15 students traveled to the Far East, armed with bibles for evangelization. They got the chance to see firsthand the lingering effects of communism. One student said, "Every one of us came back a changed person . . . we started entertaining the idea of coming back and living there. . . that's how much we fell in love with it. Russia will never leave my heart."

Once again the university plans on sending a mission team to the Vladivostok mission. They will be going in May 2005. For more information on Franciscan University of Steubenville you may check them out at www.franciscan.edu



Leigh and Joseph got into native costume.

During Fr Myron's recent visit to the United States, he had the opportunity to visit the Steubenville campus. He met with the president of the university, Fr Terrence Henry, as well as students interested in traveling to Russia, and gave several talks about the Russian church.



Painting windows at the Hospice.

Playing with the kids in Lesozovodsk.





we were a little slow because of Bogdan (11 y.e) - he could not catch up with the tempo of the march, so the boys were giving him "back riding". But still, if we would continue that "fast" we would miss the ferry. The next one would be in three hours and the parents would get worried and the homework would not be done in time for school tomorrow. But another islander gave us a jolly ride directly to the already approaching ferry. We crossed the Strait of Peter the Great and met the boys' waiting parents. We agreed to have our next meeting in our troop room at Public School # 9." - Scoutmaster Denis Bondaryev filled us in on these details.

Progress with our Scouts

By Denis Bondaryev

One of the highlights of the 2004 summer camping program was the Scout Camp! All the boys who attended our parish catechetical camp were invited to continue at Sod Gorod into the Scout camp, and other non-Catholic boys joined them, from nearly all of our Primorye parish cities. Besides camping and nature skills, the Scouts made several hikes to beauty spots on the Vladivostok peninsula between Amursky Bay and Ussurisky Bay. After the boys had experience and had gotten to know one another, they chose a leader for the troop in each city. It was decided to have four camps per year during the four school holidays, and meanwhile they are learning the scout honor code and planning their activities for this school year.

The Vladivostok troop –1860 (Their troop number is the founding date of Vladivostok)—made an overnight trip to Russian Island to clean up and prepare an apartment which the city had given to the “Just Say No To Drugs and Alcoholism” organization as a site for AA meetings and a place to begin alcohol rehabilitation. Their main objective was a "good deed" for those addicted. They also organized night patrols, had a training session in shooting air guns and in safe cliff climbing, and the sea was quite warm for swimming.

“We cleaned our camp on the beach and cleared the base at 12.00 headed toward the dock to catch the ferry to the mainland again by foot, but now all geared up except for the food which we gave to the elderly lady, who watches the AA apartment while it's not in use. On the way back



Pointing out the route on the trek across the Peninsula.

The map of their trek.



News Notes

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



Around the campfire.

At a later meeting, the troop choose the design of 1860 troop symbol --"Pegasus"-- and our troop flag. They had a discussion of their individual good deeds of the past week, and made further plans of the good that they could as a troop. And the boys said they have friends interested in joining the troop. It was decided to meet their friends and to teach them basics about scouting: the goal, knots, first aid. Also they started to get their uniforms ready for the coming marching drills and just to gear up a bit. The four leaders will ready their troops for the 9th of May Victory parade, and continue to invite new members to their troops. Finally, they made plans to get ready for the summer camp in 2005 to pass the scout test. Parishioner Lilia Nikolayevna kindly agreed to finish our flag despite her poor health.

Practicing his aim in the morning fog at Sod Gorod.



- Because of the low birthrate of these last ten years of financial crisis in Russia, many schools have few children and empty classrooms. Our new mayor, Mr Nikolaev, said that these empty premises MUST be used for the benefit of the city, so any school which has empty premises must find constructive ways to use them. So we immediately offered to the local school to help begin a scout troop at the school, and the boys can use an empty classroom for their meetings. Naturally there could be a girl's troop, too, but our main interest is in the formation of men, what with Russia already be a matriarchal society where girls gets lots of training from their moms and grandmas. It is the boys who suffer from absent fathers—just the same as inner-city communities in America. Women control the homes, small as they are. There is no public area “outside the house” where the men can exert their masculinity, so the only “image” left for men is the military. Now President Putin is trying to promote sports, but all the doping shown by the Olympics leaves a bad taste in the mouth for Russians, too. We hope that the scouts can fill a real need. Our successful summer scout camp shows that we can do it. Incidentally, we have to do it ourselves! American scout organizations say they won't help unless we are officially part of the international scout organization. To be part of an international scout organization, we have to belong to the Russian scout organization. The Russian scout organization was suspended from the international scout organization for non-payment of dues! So there you have it! We are on our own. Anyway, troop 1860 is already organized (the number reflects the founding date of Vladivostok). The Nakhodka and Lesozovodsk troops are on the way. We need uniforms, we need to sew our symbols, and we need to translate merit badge booklets.

- A parish family with five kids just came to ask me if there is any possibility of getting a loan from benefactors so that they can buy an apartment. They have been living in a rented apartment—paying rent each month--which means they have gained nothing but a roof over their heads for that temporary time. Now their landlady herself wants to come from Irkutsk to live in that apartment, so they are out. But again the question is the lose of rent money, for, if they rented from us under contract of "rent-to-buy" like Viktor did, they would have some equity after paying years of rent and could become owners. They can pay 5% interest. The apartment would remain in the name of one of us priests until it was paid for.

- Our Bishop Cyril Klimovich has appointed Mr Viktor Anisimov as the Trustee of our parish of the Most Holy Mother of God in Vladivostok. The Russian Federation’s “Law About Religion” does not allow a foreigner to be the head of a Russian religious organization, so in addition to a pastor, each parish in our state now has a trustee who is the Russian citizen responsible in civil law for the parish. According to the Canon Law of the Church, the pastor is still head of the parish. Viktor has been a member of our parish almost from its refoundation in 1991. He is a convert from Krishnaism and Adventism, and has worked for the parish for many years already as translator, interpreter, and internet catechist. He has written and produced many brochures on the Catholic faith, and is the theological censor for our materials printed in the Russian language. Viktor and his wife Natasha have two children. They both have been volunteers in the first Women’s Support Center, and have participated in many youth activities of our parish. Their two children, Veronica and Cyril, are familiar to our benefactors from the video production by Ted Lewis about our parish.



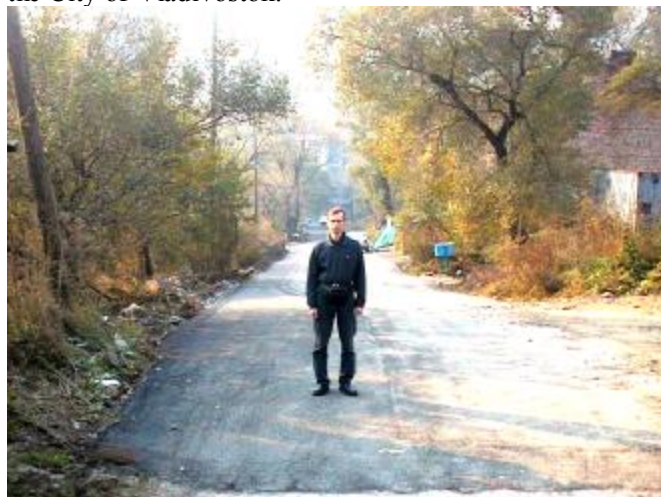
New Trustee of the Most Holy Mother of God Parish in Vladivostok, Viktor Anisimov.

- Father Sebastian D’Silva returned to Vladivostok on a new visa on October 27, and Father Daniel Maurer returned on October 28. Fr Sebastian said he had to wait an hour at the airport in Moscow for the border agents to check out his visa. He is the first of us three priests to return after our “visa crisis” of 2004.

- Children’s Hospital # 3 in Vladivostok is the orphanage most visited by our mission travelers, and where parish volunteers regularly work and play with the children, and where we have the “milk program” for providing added nutrition to the children. Recently they asked us to provide water heaters, as theirs were already all broken. The St Vincent de Paul Society arranged for, purchased, and installed the new heaters, Igor Radzyuk and Denis Bondaryev being the movers on this project, with money provided by the St Vincent de Paul Society in Dayton,

Ohio, Bowie MD, and Detroit, MI. An additional problem of the orphanage is the absence of any playground equipment so that the children can get some sun and vitamin D. The Chief Doctor asked SVDP to help out to organize a playground for the kids in a manner of a regular kindergarten play yard and provided us with some pictures and sketches of the needed equipment. Anybody want to help?

- After many years of being officially “closed” for repairs, Volodarskovo Street, where our church is located in Vladivostok, finally has a new look with a fresh coat of asphalt. Already 13 years ago the road was damaged by the waters of a large typhoon. Then construction of new high rises opened it up for the laying of water and sewer lines. It was left almost impassible. Our parishioners called it the “war front road”. Now they can walk up to the church without wading through the mud. Thanks to the City of Vladivostok.



Viktor Anisimov showing the newly asphalted street.

- Father Michael Shields who is the pastor of Nativity Parish in Magadan, our staff theologian Kirill Voitzel, and Fr Myron have been working on a proposal to present to the Russian Bishops’ Conference about a training program for permanent deacons. Russia currently does not have a permanent deacon program, but six men from our deanery have petitioned the bishop for ordination has deacons. We need native clergy, and deacons would help fill that need, especially if for some reason foreign priests could not get visas. The small number of widely scattered Catholics means that parishes are small, but we have many of them. Having deacons would allow them to pastor parishes, with priests doing more supervisory work and celebrating mass and confessions. The Orthodox Church has permanent deacons, so this would make our church more understandable to the Russians. Our catechists already must preach, and ordination would give them the grace of the sacrament to help them.

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Mary Mother of God Mission Society
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From the development desk...

Dear Vladivostok Mission supporter,

- We are looking for candidates for a full-time position as web designer, programmer, and grant writer. The person must be able to work with us in St Paul MN. Contact Sandra Sonnen at the office 651-227-0208
- The newsletter has been printed by Sister Susan at The St Peter Claver Convent here in St Paul. She and her six fellow sisters are very stretched with their many jobs entailed in the printing and mailing of the periodical "Echo from Africa" for their own religious community. Might there be a printer who would print the Vladivostok Sunrise newsletter as part of his tithe? We could cover costs, and volunteers might be found in the local community for processing. Color would be the way to go, if possible.
- A benefactor from Minnesota writes, "This amount was accumulated by putting my loose change in a sauce dish every night." He donated \$31!! Great idea. Thanks so much.

- Now we can offer Automatic Monthly Donation--by credit card or by automatic bank withdrawal. Avoid the monthly hassle of writing checks, mailing and save the postage, too! Send us a voided check with your permission to have automatic withdrawal or call me with your credit card number, expiration date, and the amount to be donated every month.

God love you and your family,
Sandra Sonnen

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*Michael Krestsov,
a benefactor from
Vancouver BC
where Fr Myron
recently preached
at All Saints
Parish.*