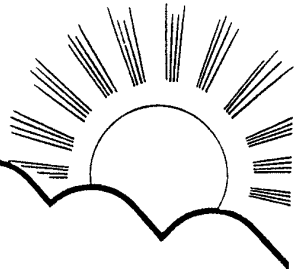


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Sixty Three May 1, 2005



First Ultrasound Equipment arrives for our Women's Support Centers

On Tuesday, March 15, 2005, our mission office received the shipment of a portable ultrasound machine from the Sacramento Lifecare Center in California. The Lifecare Center's director, Mr Tom Kubasak, donated the machine on behalf his organization. But he had a price!

He asked that the friends and associates of Mary Mother of God Mission Society pray for the Sacramento Lifecare Center, its mission, staff and clients: that his staff will remain focused and united in its purpose, and that God will soften the hearts of their clients. We know our readers will honor this commitment to pray for the Sacramento Lifecare Center. May every baby saved from abortion in Russia correspond with a saved life in Sacramento, and may every baby saved in Sacramento be matched by a saved life in Russia!

How did such a beautiful gift happen? The answer, of course, is that God works through you, our benefactors. In this instance, Penny Gowring, a longtime supporter of our mission, read our plea for help, and acted on it. She telephoned her prolife contacts in the Sacramento area, and her friend Tom said he thought he could help! Thank you, Penny, for believing and trying. Thank you, Tom, for your generosity and trouble to get the machine to Minnesota.

Another ultrasound machine was contributed by the Owatonna Clinic in Minnesota! Once again, our supporters were wonderfully diligent. In response to our website request for ultrasound machines, supporter Ellen Allen of Kasson, Minnesota, did some calling around in January. One of the many contacts she supplied to our office was Dorothy Hoff, an employee of the

Owatonna Clinic. Dorothy tracked down a machine in storage at the clinic, and obtained permission to donate it to Mary Mother of God Mission Society. She cheerfully tracked down all of the manuals and certificates necessary for a smooth transfer into Russia. Many thanks to Dorothy and Ellen!

Leaflet Missal here in St Paul, a religious book and gift store with an international clientele, asked their engineer to come in, donating his day, to prepare the machine for shipment. They purchased \$200 worth of wood and made a crate to insure this



Who are these "dolls?" See Page 3



Dorothy Hoff Executive Secretary at Owatonna Mayo Clinic, Owatonna, Fr Daniel and Sandra Sonnen with "Ultrasound #1".

Loading the ultrasound into the car.



machine's stability on the voyage across the ocean. It waits here, marked # 1.

Terry Kopp, a member of our Board, carried the portable ultrasound machine to Russia in his luggage in April, and it was immediately put to use at the Women's Support Center #3 in First River, Vladivostok. The Owatonna machine is much larger, and will go in a shipping container this summer. We are looking for four more ultrasound machines to fill a shipping container. We hope to have an ultrasound machine in every Women's Support Center in Eastern Russia by the fall. We continue

to rely on the help of our friends and supporters to get this done.

We need at least four more machines. Please contact your local doctor, clinic, and hospital. Many leftover machines are in maintenance and storage. There is a glut of these machines on the medical scene at the present time. Please ASK. We are told that they are worthless in America due to the rapid advance of technology in 4-D machines now available.

We have ordered a 20 foot over seas container shipment leaving St Agnes St Paul on July 1. We already have a benefactor to assist us in the costs of shipping. The Donald D. Lynch Family Foundation of Raleigh, NC provided an "instant grant" to ship the container, saying, "We thank you for the privilege of participating in this project and wish you every success." We are hoping that the ultrasound machines will save many lives in Russia! Thanks to all of you who believe and try on our behalf.



Portable ultra sound machine #2 in Vladivostok being checked and certified by Russian specialists. It works fine! Ultra sound machine # 3 will be coming from Modesto, CA arriving in St Paul on Wednesday, May 4.

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

The Story of an Adoption in Vladivostok

By Kelly Whittier

Terah Natasha-Valentina is a very happy little girl today, the youngest of four children of Joseph and Karen Lesko. She was adopted from Baby Hospital #3 in Vladivostok, Russia, in March of 2004. Some of you may remember this picture:



This was from the *Vladivostok Sunrise* of March 2004. Deanna LeValle is the woman in the picture. She, Mara Poole, and I spent many hours at the orphanage in July 2003 trying to hold all the babies, eight months before Natasha was adopted. Mrs Lesko received a copy of that issue of the newsletter from a friend a few months later, and recognized her adopted daughter in the picture! She wrote to the Vladivostok Mission office, and now we have a beautiful picture of her little girl (See front cover).

This is the story of the Lesko family and their adoptions: Karen and Joseph adopted two boys from America, in 1986 and 1990, and were told that they could not adopt more than two because of the waiting list for American adoptions. Karen and Joseph yearned for a larger family, though, so after several more years, they learned of Russian adoptions. There was a six-month wait, and then they spent six weeks in Vladivostok at the “Hotel Vladivostok” before they could adopt Chelsea Vera from Baby Hospital #3 in Vladivostok, in 1997.

The director of Baby Hospital # 3, Valentina, especially loved (Chelsea) Vera, so she carried her around with her all day. Because of this, Chelsea Vera adjusted easily to her adoptive family. More years went by, and Karen still longed for another child. She and her husband inquired and found out that 80 % of couples want to adopt little girls. They said they would be happy to adopt a boy. They accepted a little boy from Sakhalin Island near Vladivostok in June, 2003 through paperwork, thinking this would be easiest. Before the adoption went through, they realized he was not the child they were meant to

adopt. By now it was July, 2003, the exact time that Deanna and I were holding Natasha and praying for the babies. They cancelled the adoption of the boy in August and kept waiting.

At the end of January, the director of the agency called and said that a little girl in Vladivostok had just been rejected for the third time by prospective parents, and was available. She had Hepatitis C, was HIV positive, and had both atrial and ventricle defects in her heart. Despite all this, Karen and her husband decided to go back to Vladivostok to see her. Karen brought Chelsea along, who had been adopted from the same hospital.

Natasha screamed the first time they saw her, and would throw herself on the ground whenever she saw them coming. She started crying whenever she noticed that Karen was looking at her. For two weeks, Natasha cried every time they came to see her--every day. Thankfully, an American doctor at the Hotel Vladivostok told them that 17 months old is too young to have an attachment disorder, and that they had had a similar experience at first, but now were adopting their fourth child. After this, Chelsea was able to bond with Natasha by throwing a little ball to her.

Karen went to the orphanage every day for six weeks, from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm, and prayed over all the babies. She brought holy oil with her from Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine in Ohio and anointed the little ones. When Karen first arrived, she saw that Natasha’s little feet were badly infected from always having her feet in a sleeper. Natasha was served tea out of a tin cup which she couldn’t drink, and a bowl of mush every day, which helped feed her with a serving spoon. Karen was able to bring in some medicine to heal her feet and helped feed Natasha.

Regarding her HIV and hepatitis, up until 18 months old, the baby still has the antibodies of the mother. Thankfully, after 18 months, the diseases can leave the system. Natasha had the three required negative HIV tests in order to be brought to the US. Healthwise, Natasha is now free of HIV and Hepatitis C, and when an American doctor looked recently at her heart, he said she only has a hole in the lower chamber now, which they can operate on when she gets older.

Karen and her husband thank God every day for their children. Terah Natasha-Valentina was baptized into the Catholic Church on May 23rd, 2004. Her name “Terah” means “to endure suffering;” Natasha means “born Christian;” and Valentina is after the director of the orphanage, who was so helpful with both adoptions. Chelsea Vera means “ship haven” and “faith.” Karen says

that she and her husband were both fifty when this last adoption went through, but that each child is such a blessing from God that it does not matter that they will be older parents than most. Karen and Joseph would be delighted to speak with any couple interested in adopting from Russia.

To help with the Most Holy Mother of God Parish "Milk and Fruit Program" to supplement the food at Baby Hospital # 3, please write a check to "Sisters in Jesus the Lord," with "orphans" on the memo line, and send to 525 Thomas Ave, St. Paul MN 55103.

Living Trusts for future donations to Mary Mother of God Mission Society.

Are you interested in donating to Mary Mother of God Mission Society, but now is not the right timing? If you answered yes, then creating a living trust might be something you would like to consider.

A living trust is a legal document created during a person's lifetime, which is much like a will but with certain advantages that are not available with wills. Upon a person's death or disability a spouse, child or Trustee or a trust company takes over and carries out that person's wishes as expressed in their written estate plan. With a Living Trust this is done without putting the family through the trauma and delayed expense of Probate.

An estate planner--a lawyer--is necessary, but the results are excellent and cost effective. *It truly gives one the opportunity to be a good steward of the gifts God has given us during our lifetime.*

If you are interested in Living Trusts you may contact Mark Henry, JD, Stewardship Planning Group llc, PO Box 2864, 25 Easy Street Suite A, Carefree, AZ 85377 or call (480) 423-5632.

● Summer programs in Vladivostok

--► **Pilgrimage on Foot:** June 23-30 from Ussuryk to Arsenyev.

--► **Pilgrimage by bicycle:** July 3-12 Lesozovodsk to Vladivostok

--► **University Student Conference:** July 15 17 Sodgorod

--► **Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference:** July 24-30 Blagoveschensk

--► **Boy Scout Camp:** June 2-24 and July 20-24 on Russian Island; August 7-14 on Popov Island

--► **Family Retreat:** August 7-14 Sodgorod

--► **Girls' Camp:** August 14-20 Sodgorod

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
daniel@catholic.vladivostok.ru

Internet: Russian language: 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

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.

Sisters in Jesus the Lord

www.cjd.cc 525 Thomas Ave
St. Paul, MN 55103 (651)230-3337

Vladivostok Sunrise Edited and Produced in Russia by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D. Assembled for mailing by Nativity Parish, St Paul, Minnesota. Authors are noted if other than the editor. A full color version of the *Sunrise* is available at www.vladmission.org

News Notes

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

● On March 7 our Brother Oleg Yelchaninov, C.J.D. received the minor order of Lector at the Seminary of St Charles Borromeo in Kosiçe, Slovakia. Congratulations, Brother Oleg! I was able to attend the liturgy on the way from America to Russia. It was the fourth time I've visited the seminary here in Kosiçe, and there are developments, of course. First of all, Slovakia has joined the European Union, which means that secularization and materialism is increasing. So the number of seminarians is decreasing. There were only half as many first year students this year as last year. Of course, all the Iron Curtain countries are going through their crisis later than the rest of the world. American seminaries are already growing, and the number of interested candidates is increasing. Here they will still have a crisis. As in America they are trying to cope by having women students to increase the number, but we Americans know from experience that that will only help temporarily, and then it will be a problem. The seminary is in the center of the city on Main Street without any campus. It is a storefront, but when you go inside—wow—four floors, two courtyards, a big chapel and a big church, with library, cafeteria, and recreation spaces. All the rooms are bigger than you would expect even in America. The building itself is from the 1700's. It was first used as a boarding school by the Norbertines. Then it was a Franciscan monastery. As they do repairs to the walls and floors they are always running into skeletons. It seems that the Franciscans buried many of their dead under the floor, above the ceiling, and in the walls! They've found over 30 so far. They rebury them outside the city.

Brother Oleg is in the front row, 2nd from right.



Brother Oleg receiving the Scriptures for the ministry of Lector from Kosiçe's Archbishop Alois Ktach.



The sanctuary of the Gothic seminary chapel.

● Our parishioner Irina Kuzmichova was invited to Gaming, Austria, to attend the Catechetical School sponsored by Franciscan University of Steubenville. We just got the following report: "Irina Kuzmichova is our top student. She is very hard-working and intelligent, and at the same time peaceful, friendly, and just delightful to have here among our students. Thank you for sending her to us! The theology professor also told me that she surpassed all of the Franciscan University students in the Scripture class. That is quite an achievement for a non-

native speaker who hasn't formally studied theology!"
Congratulations, Irina!

- We learned from Fr Val Peter of Boys and Girls Town, Nebraska, that the children and staff decided to make our mission in the Russian Far East the goal of their Lenten sacrifices for 2005. We received a check for almost \$8,000. Thank you, boys, girls, and staff of Boys and Girls town for your sacrifices for the children of Russia!

- Bishop Kirill Klimovich, our bishop of the Diocese of St Joseph in Irkutsk held the Annual Chrism Mass for our Russian Far Eastern deaneries in Vladivostok on March 15. We hosted our bishop and Archbishop Francis Hurley from Anchorage; 9 priests from the Russian Far East, some flying in from as far as 2000 miles away, two Daughters of Charity of St Vincent DePaul from the US who were traveling with Archbishop Hurley, 8 sisters from the Russian Far East, and several lay people from distant parishes. The Chrism Mass included the rites of renewal of priestly vows and the blessing of the Holy Oils (for the sick, for catechumens, and the sacred chrism for baptisms, confirmations and ordinations). Even though the Mass was held at 11:00 AM on a workday, we had a good turnout of our Vladivostok parishioners, including choir members and servers. It all worked out well. In his homily, and again after the Mass, our bishop spoke glowingly about the service that his priests render to the Church in Russia. He is always very grateful to us. He praised the work done on the façade of our church saying that the church looks "like new" on the exterior.



Religious who attended the Chrism Mass with Bishop Kirill and Archbishop Hurley

- Good news: Fr George Park has been transferred to us from Ulan Ude, Buratia. He will be the new pastor of Visitation Parish in Lesozovodsk—their first live-in pastor. I founded the parish six years ago, and it has



grown steadily and now has its own chapel and charitable activities. It was on my monthly auto trips to take care of this parish that I had my accidents—three in all! I guess the last one scared the bishop, so he decided it was time to appoint a live-in pastor.

Fr George Park Of

course, Mary Mother of God Mission Society will continue to provide part of the financial support for the parish, as it does for all the parishes we founded.

Fr George is a member of the Korean Foreign Mission Society. Before his work in Ulan Ude, he worked as assistant pastor in Chita, Chitinsky Province. Lesozovodsk will be his first pastorate.

Naturally the parishioners are also excited to have a live-in pastor. Though they have gathered for prayer and Rosary every Saturday, they have usually had to have holy day masses only a week after the holy day because that was the only time that priests were available for them. Now they can have mass every day, and especially on Sundays! The parishioners have long done works of charity, including feeding the poor children of Lesozovodsk, the Lesozovodsk Women's Support Center, the Society for the Blind, and works at the local public hospital. Lesozovodsk has also been one of the favorite sites to see for Americans who visit our mission. As Dean of the Vladivostok Deanery, I installed Fr George as pastor on April 2. The Trustee of the parish is Vladimir Pisorenko. We are praying that both Fr George and the parish will have a happy adjustment!



Fr George and parish kids.

- Condolences to you on the death of Pope John Paul II. It was certainly a big event in Russia. All the media reported on great depth, and one station ran long documentaries of his life and work. We received lots of calls from non-parishioners with condolences and even a letter of condolences from the Orthodox Bishop of Vladivostok, Archbishop Benjamin. Some people came and put flowers by the front door. One man called to say that he was an atheist, but had a great love for Pope John Paul and will miss him! Of course the 4-million people crowd also impressed the Russians. One reporter from the Russian news service said that the Russian Orthodox Church continues to follow the path of the Communists by trying to keep news about the outside world away from Russians—so they wouldn't know about the good things outside of Russia!--and that this was the main reason that the Orthodox Church is so against Catholics in Russia. But the death of the Pope opened up Russian eyes to see what the Church outside Russia is really like, so that the Orthodox Church can no longer try to keep the Russian in the dark. The result will be that they will have to dialog with the Catholic Church. So perhaps the Pope's death will mean more for Russia than his previous attempts to open dialog. They say that it is now certain that the KGB hired the killer who shot Pope John Paul because they sensed in him an end to their Communist system. (Of course President Reagan was a factor, too. Reagan said, "Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" Pope John Paul said, "Open the doors to Christ!")

- Along the same theme, yesterday three high school boys came to ask to see the church and talk to someone about religion. They wanted to know more. Can we hope for Russian vocations? I hope Pope John Paul will ask the Lord for Russian vocations!! It could be another miracle we could ascribe to him! Thanks are in order for benefactors who support our seminarians and vocations efforts.

- Fr Daniel is working on the coming concerts. There are three professional organ concerts with the Regina Caeli Orchestra—Easter concerts. They are running late this year because we didn't want to begin much before Orthodox Easter. Then there is the inter-confessional Easter Concert, which is sung and played by the choirs from local churches, including ours. Yesterday they were practicing "Were you there when they crucified my Lord"—in Russian. It is a "Negro Spiritual" from America, but Russians like this music as much as Americans do. Fr Dan himself and his organist Masha worked on the translation. He said it was very hard to do. Russian has so many more syllables per word than English. The concert

is a chance for ecumenical understanding and dialog, as well as a chance for Christians in this pagan culture to witness together.

- Mrs Sonnen and our volunteers have long needed to expand office space in St Paul. It is hard to work when you are sitting on top of each other! St Agnes parish was able to give us some extra space in the basement of the rectory, so early April was a time to move half the office to that space. Sandra says, "I just set up two older computer systems down there today and we didn't blow a fuse! We have been cleaning, painting and moving. New ideas. We are looking into - a computer program so we can cut long distance charges, and we are planning to use wireless cards for the computers so we can work from here to the computers downstairs with no need or cost to put wires through walls and floors."

- Sisters in Jesus the Lord will have a vocation retreat this June 24-26th at St. Agnes Convent in St. Paul, MN. All women age 17 and older are encouraged to call and register! We plan to be canonesses in Vladivostok and beyond. There is no set age limit. Please call (651) 291-7777 or email info@cjcd.cc for more information.

- Our Women's Support Centers' staffs were very excited about what happened on April 27. The gynecologists of Vladivostok declared a "Day Without Abortion!" Seeing the appallingly low birthrate in our Territory, and themselves sick of the killing, they took a day off! Their action was promoted by the Vladivostok organization "Physicians against Abortion", and coordinated by Dr Alexandra Mukhotina.

It was part of a big 4-day program to study the health and demographic situation of our Primorsky Territory. The day was planned by the City of Vladivostok's Department of Culture and Youth, the Territorial Health Department, the city health department, the Vladivostok Medical University, the city Center for Psychotherapy, the Territorial Women's Council "A Planet for kids", several religious organizations, and several pharmaceutical companies.

Maybe the idea can spread further. Don't physicians ever get tired of the intentional deaths of the innocents who would otherwise make our future? And don't people ever realize the social instability that results from one-child families? Congratulations, Vladivostok! Maybe our pro-life efforts and our Women's Support Centers are having an effect in our general Russian society.

Announcing..

December 2, 3, & 4, 2005

More information? See Below!.

Kids2Kids, too!

Second Annual Mary Mother of God Mission Society Weekend Conference

All of our friends, supporters, parish speakers and benefactors, and their families, are invited to our **Second Annual Mary Mother of God Mission Society Weekend Conference**, to be held **December 2, 3, and 4, 2005** in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Father Daniel Maurer will be giving talks at St Agnes on Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday morning. He will be with us as we pray, chat, worship, share meals together, and get to know one-another. We'll exchange stories about the mission, the parishes, and the parishioners, and about our experiences as speakers, pilgrims, and supporters.

New this year: a gala fundraising event December 3 Saturday night, to benefit the street kids of Vladivostok. Multimedia productions, food, drink, and fun are to be expected. The location will be at the hotel Sheraton Four Points Midway hotel.

Attendees can bring their families. **Kids 2 Kids** junior missionaries (ages 10 to 15) will be offered their own activities. As for the little ones many of our local supporters can provide babysitters. If you choose to stay in our designated hotel, the Sheraton Four Points Midway hotel, there is a pool, plus shuttles to the **Mall of America**, St Agnes Parish (site of the conference), and the airport.

- **Cost:** \$50.00 per person, with 5 catered meals. The Saturday evening gala event costs are yet to be determined.
- **Accommodations:** We have booked rooms at the Sheraton Four Points Midway Hotel, Hamline Avenue and I-94 in Saint Paul. Telephone 1-800- 535-2339 or 651-642-1234 to make a reservation. Be sure to mention the Mary Mother of God Mission Society to receive a discounted rate of \$110.00 per night for 2 double beds or a king. If needed request an additional rollaway bed. **Hotel reservations must be made by November 2, 2005.**
- If you are interested in staying as a guest in the home of a local mission supporter, please call our office at 651-227-0208.
- Watch for more details in the next 4 newsletters!