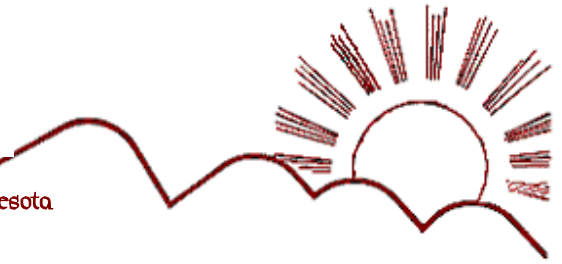


# Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Sixty Seven January 1, 2006



## Two Benefit Programs, California and Minnesota!

*Modesto, California: Enjoying Dinner*



*Hats off to Chef Pino Scarpinati for donating his expertise.*



*Icons, candles, anyone?*

“Wow! Our dinner was a success!” were the words of Vicky Trevillyan, Sister Parish Chairman of St Joseph’s Parish in Modesto, California. “Thanks be to God! Our sister parish in Second River in Russia will benefit from the generosity of so many volunteers and supporters! I have heard from many of the attendees that they “had a wonderful time!” “couldn’t have been any better!” “had so much fun!” “decorations were perfect!” “food was outstanding!” and so on. Everyone has been all smiles and praise, even those who didn’t get any appetizers!

*St Joseph Parish  
Pastor, Fr Joseph Illo.*



Mission. Much of the preparations for the dinner were done by Tom and Barbara Fitzsimmons, chef Pino

Thank you to all of our volunteers for your very hard and exhausting work!” There were 191 attendees for the dinner on September 3, including Fr Daniel of the Russian



*Tom Fitzsimmons and Dave Scott working hard in the kitchen.*

Scarpinati and his wife Carol, John and Milissa Souza, Roberto Guitierrez and his wife Ana, Dawn Powers and other sister parish supporters. Many surrounding businesses donated food and drink for the dinner. Vicky says, "It's so exciting to hear all the enthusiasm for planning next year's dinner for our Sister Parish! God is sooo good! We do have room for improvement and this year's dinner was a great learning experience."

**And in Minnesota...**



*Fr Dan, St Nick, Sandie and David Sonnen*

**Minnesota Conference and Saint Nicholas Gala**

*by Rev. Fr. Daniel L. Maurer, CJD*

Long time mission helper, Mr Lee Larkey of St Anna, MN was a great master of ceremonies as "Saint Nicholas of Myra" (Santa Claus), who is not only the protector of children, but also the main patron saint of Russia and of



*Terry Kopp speaking during the Gala dinner.*

*Is he peeping while he is drawing the raffle winner?*



the city of Vladivostok! Almost 40 mission helpers and others from around the US gathered in Saint Paul, MN for three days, Dec. 2,3,4 for the second Mary Mother of God Mission Conference, and for the Gala.

This year for the first time, in conjunction with the Mission Conference there was a special "Saint Nicholas Day" dinner to help raise funds for the Vladivostok Street Children. Over 70 people attended. The goal of the fund



*Mr Randy Longseth making the check presentation from the Cloquet parish.*

raiser was to begin gathering \$60,000 for the purchase of a food van and drop-in center for the kids. By the time of the dinner on the evening of December 3, proceeds from dinner pledges, either by the guests in attendance or by those who sent in their regrets, already came to \$20,000--one third of the goal.

After dinner the guests heard an audio presentation by our board member Fr Benedict Groeschel, CFR about the need for ministry among street children. It was accompanied by a video presentation of moving photographs of the street children in Vladivostok who are served by our outreach. Then I spoke briefly about the latest developments in the street children program and then Mr Terry Kopp, our long time benefactor and vice president, spoke inspiringly about both the spiritual and charitable needs of the young citizens of Vladivostok and Russia and the necessity of our mission to respond to them. Finally Ann Weatherly, a member of the dinner planning committee spoke about how the fund raising for the food van was going.

The goal of the conference was for mission helpers and benefactors to meet each other, share ideas for the support of the rebirth of the Catholic Church in the Russian Far East, learn more about the efforts and progress that our missionaries are making, and pray together for the conversion of the non-believing multitudes in Russia where less than 1/2 of one percent of the population practice any religion whatsoever.

The conference was held in the parish hall of the historic and beautiful Saint Agnes Church, and participants came from California, Oregon, Louisiana, Illinois and Washington, D.C. Half of the participants were from the Minnesota Twin Cities area. Others came from the cities and towns of Minnesota and Iowa.

This author was one of the featured speakers along with US national office coordinator Sandra Sonnen of Saint Paul and grant writer Susan Gray of Cabot, AR. Topics included: the foundation of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord and the early history of how we came to go to Russia in the first place (1988-92); the construction of the new monastery/parish center; insights into Russian culture and the present spiritual devastation in Russia; and how to establish and development sister parish committees in parishes in the United States.

This Fall, to encourage donations to our mission, Florida donors raffled off a one-winter-week stay in their Gulf Coast condo this winter. During the conference I drew the winning name: Mr Joe Wewers of Fort Smith, Arkansas! We are grateful to the condo owners for this initiative.

And two members of the Parish of the Queen of Peace in Cloquet, MN came to the Gala to make a special presentation of a check for \$25,000 from their Parish Outreach Committee to help remove the final added floor from our historic church in Vladivostok. Pastor Fr Joe Sirba and to the members of the parish and the tithing committee offered this generous help. We look forward to an ongoing relationship between our parishes, and to the upcoming visit of Cloquet parishioners to the Vladivostok mission. [Come in March and help remove the floor!—ed]

**Thanks to all who worked on these programs to make them fun and helpful to our mission.**

## How to Communicate with Us

### Office in Russia:

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

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

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

**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. Please be assured that we do not sell our mailing list or any other donor information to other organizations.

### Sisters in Jesus the Lord

[www.cjd.cc](http://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 digital version of the *Sunrise* is available at [www.vladmission.org](http://www.vladmission.org)



## News Notes

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

- Our three young parishioners who received a grant to attend the World Youth Day with Pope Benedict have returned—on cloud nine, of course. They told the whole parish about their experience, and they shared their photos. Their trip was sponsored by RENOVABIS, an organization of the Catholic Bishops of Germany.
- Ever since we have received the cathedral back from the state government we and our benefactors have been praying for its restoration. Earlier we removed two floors, put in new window frames and windows, and fixed the façade. Thanks, benefactors, for those wonderful steps! Now it is time for some further work: Beginning in February or March we are planning to remove the last added floor to return the church to the same plan as it had before confiscation! The group of workers who are building the rectory will begin this work after they return to Russia from Chinese New Year. We'll keep you informed! Naturally we still need financial help with this project.

The last step in the restoration will be the building of the steeples. We've contracted with an architect to do the plans, and we've already received a beautiful set of bells from Poland which have been waiting to be installed for years already. Last year a benefactor promised to build the steeples himself, but then he backed out—we presume something happened to his economic situation. But it means we are looking for benefactors to build the steeples. Our advisors tell us that this is a very important project because our church is not very visible in the city, and there are still many people who don't even know the Catholic parish exists. And many don't know that the building is a church. They tell us that when the steeples are built with the crosses on top and the bells are heard, everyone in the city will know that there is a Catholic church functioning in the city.

- A vocations program? Fr Sebastian tells us that in his part of India there is a special custom after the baptism of a baby: The mother takes the child and puts it on a towel at the foot of the main altar as a sign for God to take the child as a vocation if He wants. The mother leaves the child there and leaves the church. Then the godmother gathers up the child and takes it out of the church to its mother. Here we see godmother Clarissa Martis picking up little Joanne Andrade to take her to her mother.



- On October 12 Sister Olga Nimchinova renewed her religious vows. Her provincial superior came for the event from the Philippines. During the celebration with the parish youth group, Sister dressed as the founder of their congregation, the Sisters of Charity of St Anne, for a skit about the founder and the history surrounding that event.

*The parish youth who attended the renewal of vows.*





*Sister Olga Nimchinova as Mother Maria Rafols.*

- “Kids 2 Kids” program is continuing to help needy children. Recent donations include \$210 to buy badly needed test strips for five diabetic children in Lesozovodsk. Also, with the coming of winter, Kids 2 Kids was able to buy winter boots for the following kids in Lesozovodsk: Artyom Yershov, Katya Simonenko, Kristina Andenko, Sveta Sirik, Dima Kubacob, Nikita Pikin, Masha Melnik, Vitya Kvasnyk, Dima Timirov, Vanya Koslov, Vova Andenko, Andre Kubarev, Sergei Koslov, and Yura Lukyanchikov. Maybe it is hard to read the Russian children’s names, but I wanted to be sure our American kids who sacrifice for this program would know that their efforts go toward specific Russian kids in need. Thanks, Kids!

- Oh, that Russian language! Here are some recent bloopers: Fr Sebastian accidentally said, “Christ the firstborn of all the weeds,” when he meant, “firstborn of all creatures.” Fr Myron prayed that Fr Dan would have “a useless flight,” when he meant “a safe flight.” Fr Dan prayed “that we may enjoy the fruits of our temptation,” when he meant “the fruits of our redemption.” Is it a sin to laugh in church?

- The ultrasound machines have arrived in Vladivostok, and we are now bringing them through customs. Then we

will get them checked out and authorized, and then send them to the Women’s Support Centers who have asked for them: Lesozovodsk, Ussurysk, Arsenyev, and Nakhodka.

An interesting note: the portable one that we received earlier--brought by a traveler in his suitcase--has worked so well that the clinic where it is located as bought additional instruments for it to broaden its use. Soon we’ll have statistics about its use.

- We’ve made a big jump in our care of the street children here in Vladivostok. It was made possible by two American volunteers who have come to help us for an extended period of time, Mark Wilhelm from San Diego, California and Erin Flynn of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Mark says, “I was a practically a street kid myself, so I understand them.” He goes out in the afternoon and evenings and gets acquainted with kids who are cleaning windshields at stoplights—even though he doesn’t speak Russian yet! (He’s working on that.)

He has found a group of boys that live in a manhole under a building where it’s warm. Three had toothaches; one was obviously sick and gray and needed to see a doctor. One was shivering in the cold without enough clothing. All had very dirty clothes (There are no Laundromats here.) So he immediately took them to get clothing and boots from a merchant at the Chinese open market who, seeing it was for very poor kids, immediately donated more. Mark took them to bathe and to change their clothes and get cleaned up, and then brought all their dirty clothes to the church for washing and sterilizing. So now they have warm clothing, new winter boots, and today one will see our “street kids doctor” and three will see the dentist. Mark and Erin are hoping to help them to decide where they can live in a more decent place, and how to get into school or into normal jobs.

Mark was jumping up and down with joy about this good progress with this group of street boys. He was amazed that they are polite and courteous, and like to recite poetry!—not what he expected at all. They are just poor kids, living in a manhole in the street, and making a family from each other as best they can.

Our regular program of feeding street kids and providing medical care to those in need is continuing, too. One of the Protestant pastors has a program for some street kids who live near her. We asked the new street kids why they didn’t go to her for help, and they said that she only gives help if you accept her religion. Smart kids. Christian love would demand that you meet their urgent needs first, and then maybe they might be interested in your religion, “seeing your good deeds and giving thanks to the Father!”

- We are beginning to think about how it will be when we can move to the Our Lady of Fatima rectory—the move should be in February. Andre, our building supervisor, says that in March he wants to begin removing the last added floor from the church, so we'll temporarily be without church building for about four months. We'll have to celebrate Easter in the basement of the rectory, or maybe at the Lutheran or Armenian church. We feel like Moses and his people in the desert—always on the move.

- We've learned about a tragic new trend at the Orthodox Convent in Sedanka. It seems that some elderly don't die soon enough for their relatives. People bring their elderly to the convent wall and put them out of the car for the nuns to find them—if they find them in time. It is presumed that people are trying to clear out their small apartments for the next generation.

- A funny thing happened—God's Providence? The City of Lesozovodsk called to ask if we wanted to buy the whole building where our parish is located—for \$40,000 outright! A bargain. We've been trying to get it for years, including participating in two auctions of the building. Since we were the only bidders, the auctions were declared not valid. President Putin has been insisting that cities sell their surplus property--it is a way for the cities to get money, collect property taxes, and at the same time to encourage private business by opening up real estate opportunities in the city centers. Also, it was on the news that the electric company said it was going to turn off the juice in Lesozovodsk if the city didn't pay its electric bills. The result? Now we can simply buy the building. Anybody want to help? We could open a Caritas dental clinic there, and rent out space to businesses which would make our parish be self-supporting for further charities in Lesozovodsk, like the Women's Support Center and the street children program.

- When it was the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in America, the Russian government announced that beginning January 1, every woman who gave birth would receive 2000 rubles cash from the federal government, and the birth house where she gave birth would receive 5000 rubles. That's \$70 and \$175. It is a move to decrease the abortion rate and increase the birth rate.

- On Friday December 16, Evgenia Ivanovna Perch died in my arms of cancer, after having received the papal forgiveness of all her sins and the Sacrament of Anointing. At 91 years old, a geologist who worked on developing the coal resources of the Russian Far East, she was one of the few last members of our parish who were baptized in our church before the Russian Revolution and who

remembered the bishop and our last pastor. If you've seen our video, then you've seen her. She is the very elderly lady who speaks there about her first Holy Communion. I know she will appreciate a prayer from you.



*Evgenia Ivanovna Perch 1914-2005*

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

- On October 28 and 29 Fr Daniel and I were in Khabarovsk, 400 miles from Vladivostok, for the dedication of the Khabarovsk's parishes' new chapels. St Benedict's parish is located in a former store in the northern edge of the city. The parish, thanks to the help of Fr Joseph McCabe MM the pastor, and the Maryknoll Fathers, was able to do a beautiful job of making it into a church. Holy Trinity parish, in the south side of Khabarovsk, bought an old dormitory, and made the new chapel on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The rest of the building is large enough to use as a retreat and conference center. Congratulations, Khabarovsk parishioners! Incidentally, the third Khabarovsk parish, Immaculate Conception, is still waiting for the government to return its original church building which is still standing.





*Bishop Kirill Klimovich dedicated the new chapel of St Benedict's Parish in Khabarovsk. Pastor Fr Joseph McCabe and our Fr Daniel and Fr Myron attended.*

*The Holy Trinity chapel is a beautiful high-ceilinged room. Here Fr Dan is introducing our organist Marina Omelchenko who played the first organ concert in the new chapel to celebrate its dedication.*



● Our archivist Miroslava Igorevna has finished her book in Russian about the history of our parish. She collected materials from Russia, Belorussia, Ukraine, Poland, and France. It is 159 single-spaced text. We'll be looking for

a way to publish the book which should be of interest to many.



*Miroslava Igorevna Efimova*

## More Opportunities . . .

♥ We are now set up to help provide food supplements to three children's orphanages in Russia: Children's Home #3 in Vladivostok, and the Children's Homes in Ussurysk and Artyom. Parents who have adopted children at these homes asked us to provide a way for them to help the children who are still there. If you want to help, please specify to which home your donation should go-- #3, Ussurysk, or Artyom. You can also donate to this program on our website.

♥ Thank you to a wonderful donor who gave her guitar to a blind Russian man so he can practice his music. He lost his sight in an accident and is trying to replan his life, and music will be a big part of it.

♥ We are looking for benefactors who want to help build the steeples on our church. Bells announce the Gospel, which is why they are anointed with chrism. Ours were anointed by Pope John Paul II himself. Help him to continue to announce the Gospel!

♥ We have a wonderful opportunity to receive a dental office for our use free of charge from the city, if we can supply it will modern dental equipment. Our dentist could take commercial customers to pay for salaries and expenses, and s/he could also handle our charitable patients, including street children and the elderly poor free of charge. Does someone want to offer us dental equipment?

## From the development desk...

Dear Vladivostok Mission supporter,

- We attended a large Eucharistic Congress in St Paul, MN. A beautiful framed icon of Mary Mother of God was offered as a raffle to those who visited our table. It was won by Marie Nelson of St Paul. At the National Catholic Youth conference in Atlanta, with over 24,000 young people present, another of our framed icons was won by Jane Vicness of Neilsville, MN.

- We received a letter from Joe Wewers in Arkansas saying that men in the nearby prison are overwhelmed with gratitude that the parishioners in Russia are praying for them. They are having a prison retreat in February. Please join our Catholic family in Russia praying for these men. We will send this newsletter to them.

- In order to maximize the value of your donations, we now have two ways you can help us trim costs:  
#1. Let us know whether we can send you *Vladivostok Sunrise* by e-mail. You will receive the newsletter more quickly.

#2. Let us know whether you would like to receive your donation “thank you” letters via e-mail. (Of course, your IRS statements will still come by regular mail.)

God love you and your family,

Sandra Sonnen  
Mary Mother of God Mission phone (651)227-0208



*Abe Lincoln's Home? No. A stil-used home in Romanovka!*