

Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Seventy July 1, 2006



FOCUS Retreat for Omega Student Center

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

April 30 and May 1 were the days we selected for having a retreat for our Omega Student Center staff, for our university students, and for our university professors. May Day, May 1, is a holiday in Russia, and the students were free.

The retreat was led by four staff members of FOCUS missionaries (Fellowship of Catholic University Students with headquarters in Greeley, Colorado) (<http://www.focusonline.org/>). There were 27 attendees, and the main point was evangelization among unbaptized students at the universities. Basically it was also meant to help our students avoid the temptations of campus life and to see themselves as having a role to play in the salvation of their fellows. (Continued on Page 2.)

Three presenters came to talk about their work as FOCUS missionaries, Sean Dalton, Christine Wright, and Sarah Akers.



“Grandma Tatyana” giving one of “her boys” a haircut at Children’s Hospital #3 in Vladivostok. Is he enjoying it or what? Grandmas’ usual response: I can’t believe these kids have been rejected by their parents! He also looks well-fed, thanks to the Fruit and Milk Program.

The “Grandma Program”

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

The Grandma Program is making great progress in all three orphanages where it is operating so far, thanks to our benefactors. This program is sponsored by American and Canadian parents who have adopted in Russia. The idea is to give the kids in the orphanage more socialization, and to give the “grandmas” additional income. After our first experiments, we find that the program costs about \$60 per month per grandma. At the Children’s Hospital #3 five “grandmas” are working. During May they worked with the kids 35 times for a total of 210 hours of contact. At Children’s Hospital #3 the grandmas are allowed to take the kids on excursions in the city. Some of them had never been off the property, had never seen the ocean, had rarely seen a dog! Some of the grandmas take their own grandchildren along to the orphanage, and everybody is happy! (Continued on Page 3.)

Sometimes American students have a wild fling when they are away from their parents for the first time, and Russian students are two years younger! It can be tough, from drinking parties, to pornography, to thinking of cheating as an almost necessary thing. (In the Soviet way of thinking, everybody should have everything in common, so if you know something and your neighbor doesn't, you are obliged to tell! I wouldn't want to go to a doctor who cheated his way through college, would you? And now, the universities need money, so it is fairly easy just to buy your grades and graduate!)



FOCUS Director John Zimmer explaining the program to Victor Anisimov, one of the interpreters for the meeting.

To help us with this project, four people came from FOCUS in the USA, a program gaining followers on many college campuses in the US. They came from Colorado, Nebraska, Massachusetts, and Virginia. They have had a lot of experience with the program which they were happy to share with us. FOCUS isn't ready to begin its own program in Russia yet, but we wanted them to share their experience with our own university people and with the Omega Student Center staff.

We are grateful to the Mustard Seed Foundation and to Renovabis (a program of the German bishops) for funding this program.

It seems to me that the most impressive part of the experience was the ease and grace with which the FOCUS people could witness to their faith in a public way. This is something new for Russians who were forced to keep their religious convictions to themselves for so many years, sometimes under pain of death. It would have been better if our time together could have been longer, but now Omega is planning its own retreat for students later this

summer. Pray for us, and pray that this little mustard seed will grow into a big tree!



Kirill Voitzel, staff member of our Omega Student Center who teaches theology at the Vladivostok State University of Economics and Services.

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(Continued from Page 1) In Artyom and Ussurysk volunteers are just beginning to work, so there were no hours of contact for May, yet.



Lyubov Sadovnika, one of the “Grandmas” in Artyom, delivering goodies to the kids.



Air Conditioners on the top floor of Children's Hospital #3, thanks to Immaculate Conception Parish in Dayton, Ohio, and to the Ohio St Vincent de Paul Societies.

News Notes

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

- In our last issue Fr Daniel wrote about our young parishioner's emergency problem with his eyes and how he was in danger of losing his eyesight totally. Sergei's operation in Khabarovsk was a success, and his eyes are in stable condition. There is still some possibility of continued deterioration, and he will need some additional surgery in the months ahead. Thanks to the Lions for their financial support, and to all our benefactors for their prayers.



Denis Bondaryev of St Vincent de Paul in Vladivostok who oversaw the air conditioners' installation. One of the inside units is visible overhead.



Sergei, in front of Fr Daniel, and members of his family and neighbors. At the present time his father is in the Pacific near Peru—He is a sailor. The family invited us to dinner to say thanks for the help. See homemade wine on the table from their garden in Anisimovka.

- Our Parishioner and guest master Dmitri Kamil received his letter of acceptance from the International Theological Institute For Studies on Marriage and the Family in Gaming, Austria, and he received almost a full tuition scholarship. He applied for a program leading to a degree in theology. He had to leave for Moscow already, even though school starts in the Fall, because, to get an Austrian visa, you have to apply in person in Moscow—seven time zones from here—and then you have to wait six weeks to return to get your visa! Obviously he can't afford to fly twice to Moscow, so Dmitri will try to find a place to live and help in Moscow while he waits. Even though it is difficult and expensive to get a theological education, it is very necessary for the future of our work here in the Far East.

Dmitri is hoping to get work-study to pay for room and board, but he doesn't know yet if he will be able to do that. It might be hard for a Russian citizen to get a work permit in Austria. What he still needs are:

- 200€ Matriculation fee
- 500€ Tuition remainder
- 1500€ Room
- 1500€ Board
- ? € Health Insurance
- 1600 € Travel Expenses (estimated)
- TOTAL 3800€, or about \$4830 at today's rate.



Dima Kamil as Jesus during the Sedar at the Youth Conference last summer.

“Dima” had served as our guestmaster for several years already, so many folks who have visited us in Russia already know him. And he has served as the program director for the Omega Student Center.

- I know our benefactors are waiting anxiously for the completion of our Our Lady of Fatima rectory, parish center, and garden of the Immaculata. We announced the project soon after Mr and Mrs Sonnen became our chief stateside helpers in the year 2000. There have been many delays caused mostly by unstable situations in the City of Vladivostok which almost made it impossible to get and

keep a building permit. The most recent delay happened last fall when the county prosecutor sued the city for giving us a building permit! So we were ordered to stop work. The city won the case fair and square in the lower court and in the appeals court. We could have easily solved their problem if they had talked to us. But as it was, we had to hire lawyers and experts on preservation of historical buildings to make our case in court. Amazing—but typical Russia—that the prosecutor’s office had no conversation with us to settle their complaints before the suit! On May 11 the prosecutor’s office withdrew their suit, so we hope that is the end of it! So we are ready rolling again. What a way to tie up a court, lawyers, prosecutors, and laborers for months at a time. Meanwhile the City has listed our new building on the list of officially approved buildings of the City, with the address of 22B Volodarskovo Street. (In Russia plots are not numbered, as in America, but buildings are numbered.)

In the six years since we first applied for the building permit, ruble prices in Russia have skyrocketed compared to the dollar. The contributions to date for the project are not sufficient to complete it. So we’re still asking for benefactors for this project. Naturally we couldn’t allow your donated money to sit idle for those five years of waiting. We invested it in real estate in Russia, whose prices have continued to rise, and so we have an increase in the funds, and we will complete the project—God willing and no more lawsuits! Shingles for the roof were shipped from St Paul in May and arrived here on June 20. Now we are working on Customs and importation permits. The workers are tiling the floors in the building, making doors, and installing glass at the present time.

We are very anxious to move to the new building, and then we can finish the restoration of the church by taking out the last remaining storey and building the steeples. Stay tuned for news reports of progress. Thanks to those who regularly pray the prayer for the restoration of the church building.

- Our Women’s Support Centers are still operating at maximum efficiency, and they are having an effect in Russian society. Government attitudes are shifting to a more pro-birth mentality, and President Putin just announced that every woman who gives birth to a second child will receive a fund worth about \$5000 which she can use to buy more apartment space, invest in her second child’s education, or put in the bank toward her retirement. At the present date, the six Women’s Support Centers have a deficit of \$18,611.78.

- A new law has gone into effect here concerning foreign non-governmental agencies, which includes foreign churches and foreign adoption agencies. The main problem being addressed is foreign money being used to influence elections and the future of the country.

As far as churches, we are okay because we have our own local long-term history, a local incorporation as a Catholic parish, and we are members of the local officially incorporated diocese.

The foreign adoptions agencies are another matter. While new regulations to reflect the new law are being worked on by the government, all adoptions through agencies are on hold. Those who already began a process are being treated as private adoptions so that the process can move forward in already moving cases. But not every region is allowing the private adoptions to foreigners. It is partly a Russian reaction to the abuse and killing of several adopted Russian children in America. (Don't confuse them with the facts that abortion is the worst type of child abuse and it is epidemic here, and that all these kids in children's homes have already been abused by their Russian parents by being rejected.) Last year, according to TV reports, 1800 born children were killed by their parents in Russia.

- Congratulations to the editor Fr Myron on the occasion of this 70th edition of Vladivostok Sunrise (Okay, so I'm patting myself on the back!) Thanks go to those wonderful people at Nativity Parish in St Paul, MN who so selflessly put it all together and mail it six times a year.

- We are hoping to inaugurate our Retreat Center on Russian Island. We need to complete the project, but we can use it already in a Spartan way. We own one "three-room" apartment there, and have the use of two more similar apartments. Our apartment has a nice fireplace and a big room for meetings and group activities, and big kitchen. The other two apartments will serve as dormitories for men and women. The toilets and showers will be in those two apartments—they aren't there yet! This summer we have an Omega retreat scheduled, a family retreat, scouts, adults, and moms with babies retreats. The retreat center will be heated, so it will be available all year. We're very excited about the possibilities that it gives us for deepening the spirituality of our parishioners and those of our region, as well as the AA and NA groups that will use it. Because it is on an island, the sea will be close for swimming in the summer, and the restricted number of ferries that go there everyday makes it feel more isolated as you'd like a retreat house to be. Yet it is in the city limits of Vladivostok, in Fruzhensky County. A produce store and a medical clinic are a block away.

- Fr Sebastian celebrated his 25th anniversary of ordination with his family in India, and with friends on a trip to Jerusalem. Unfortunately, he hasn't returned yet so that we can celebrate his holiday here in the parish. Watch for the next *Sunrise*.



Roberto Gutierrez from our sister parish of St Joseph's in Modesto, CA, and Fr Sebastian D'Silva.

- Once again I had the joy of being the first priest to give the Sacraments to a dying person who hadn't received them for years! A lady from Slavyanka came to see me to say that an elderly lady there was dying and wanted to see a Catholic priest. It seems that Regina Stanislavovna is 94 years old. She lives in Slavyanka, a four-hour drive from Vladivostok. She's lived her whole adult life there, and, because of distance and age, had never been to church in years and had not contacted us. It turns out that she has relatives in the parish in Blagoveschensk, and it was they who told her how to find me! Naturally it was a joy to bring her Holy Communion, and to anoint her in her weakening condition. She remembers her First Communion and Confirmation in Byelorussia as a child. Now she is our parishioner, and among our eldest. Slavyanka is located right near North Korea and is actually further south than Vladivostok. It was an awful ride on absolutely terrible roads, and we didn't get by without having to pay a "bribe" to a policeman to get through, but nature in that part of the world is really spectacular. Sort of reminds me of the Oregon coast. I know Regina would appreciate your prayers for her, too.

D'Iberville High School

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DEAN SCARBROUGH
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

ELMER MULLINS
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HEATHER MITCHELL
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Opportunities

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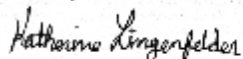
April 24, 2006

Dear Sisters,

My name is Katherine Lingenfelder and I am the President of D'Iberville High School Key Club on the Gulf Coast. I met one of your Sister Missionaries at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Atlanta. I knew in my heart that we could at least try to do something to help with the expenses for the orphanages in Russia. Many of our students and members lost their home to Katrina, but we have received so much love from others that we wanted to share it with those less fortunate. After receiving your newsletter and reading it, I carried it to school everyday, waiting for the opportunity to share your stories with our board. Our only holdback was waiting for the word to hold fundraisers at school again.

After getting the go ahead, we had a weeklong fundraiser with class competitions. We are giving to you the full profit from our competition. It came out to be \$82.81. I do not have the contact address to send the money to the Russian orphanage programs, please forward this to the right place. We wish we could do more financially but know that our prayers go out to you as you continue to do the selfless work that you do.

Sincerely,



Katherine Lingenfelder
D'Iberville Key Club President

♥ We mentioned that Miroslava Efimova's book on the history of the Catholic Church in Far Eastern Russia is ready for publishing. Helen Kelley has volunteered to translate it into English. Would you like to help with the costs of printing and distribution? Or maybe help with a translation and publication in Russian or Polish?

♥ We need the help of a cabinet maker as we work on the rectory and church buildings this Autumn and Winter. Any volunteers?

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

**Details of the Conference
(Save this page)**

Las Vegas Weekend Conference with Fr Myron for Family, Friends, and Benefactors (Special Track for ages 16 and under: Angela Kopp and Chad Arnold)

(Speakers subject to change, or call us if you would like a topic discussed that isn't here.)

Date and Location: October 20-21-22, 2006 at St Joseph, Husband of Mary Parish in Las Vegas NV

Accommodations: Holiday Inn Express 702.256.3766 120.00 per night. Alternative motel down the street: La Quinta 702.243.0356 132.00 per night. If you wish to share a room, please notify us. We will notify you of the name and phone number of a roommate so that you can arrange your own hotel room. Private homes are available for those who might wish to stay with local supporters.

Transportation: Airport shuttle provided by us to hotel, or host will pick you up at airport. Please notify office as to arrival time and flight number. Please try to arrive no later than 3:00 PM on Friday Oct 20 unless you rent a car. Transportation will also be provided from hotel to St. Joseph's.

Cost: We are guests of St Joseph's parish. The only conference cost is for 5 catered meals, refreshments all weekend at conference site: \$ 50. Children under 16 are no charge.

Friday, Oct. 20 all day pick up travelers at Las Vegas International, notify office as to carrier, flight and arrival time

4:00 PM - Van leaves hotel for St Joseph's for registration

5:00 PM - Dinner and Mass at St Josephs with Fr Myron

7:00 PM - Fr Myron "History of arrival, start up, working with the bureaucracy in Russia." "Are charitable works easy or difficult?"

7:30 PM - Sr Julia and Fr Myron: "Religious orders, Canons in Jesus the lord, Canonesses in Jesus the Lord"

8:00 PM - 10 minute DVD "Rescuing Street Kids" by Fr Benedict Groeschel.

Fr Myron and Sandra Sonnen: "Social programs: rescuing street kids, grandma mentoring, milk and fruit program, STD clinics in our women's support centers, 5 ultrasound machines sent to Russia, dental clinic needed. What about an orphanage?"

Registration for Weekend Conference with Fr Myron in Las Vegas NV

Please register as soon as possible

_____ Yes I (WE) will be at entire conference with 5 meals for \$50 each.

_____ No I (we) will be attending only part of the weekend _____ Fri Eve _____ Sat _____ Sun

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

Flight plans _____

Need airport pick up? _____ Accomodations with local supporter needed? _____

Please make your own reservations if you need our shuttle service, at: Holiday Inn Express 702.256.3766 120.00 per night
Alternative motel down the street: La Quinta 702.243.0356 132.00 per night.
Reservations fill up to capacity so please make your reservation as soon as possible.
If you rent your car and wish a Casino hotel we recommend Suncoast Casino or Red Rock Casino.

& -----

9:00 PM - Social hour and discussion on travel to Vladivostok and the Far East of Russia-Speaker to be announced.

10:00 PM - Vans start shuttling guests to hotel.

Saturday, Oct. 21

6:30 AM -First van leaves hotel for St Joseph’s parish.

7:30 AM -Mass at St Joseph, followed by recitation of the rosary.

9:00 AM - Full breakfast

9:30AM – “Adoptive parents” Don Prendergast (Detective, New York City Police Dept)

10:00AM – “Kids 2 Kids (K2K) program what is it? How to get it started in your parish” Chad Arnold Seminarian from Wichita studying at Mt St Mary’s Seminary, Emmittsburg MD.

10:30AM- “Ways to help our youth grow in Catholic Values: Boy Scouts, LCI program in Gaming Austria”

11:00AM- “Fundraising” Rosemary Strange, former head of Catholic Charities USA

11:30AM – “Sister parishes” speakers to be announced

12 noon- “Speakers Bureau” speaker to be announced. 4 point talk-speakers packet. How do we get there-background-practice session speaking-stories from the field.

12:30 PM – “Adoption and orphanages” speaker to be announced

1:00 PM- - Lunch

2:00 PM – “Trusts, investments for the future, wills” speaker to be announced

3:00 PM - Susan Gray (organist Immaculate Conception N Little Rock, AR) and Fr Myron: “St Augustine Music Society, Russian Concerts, Why a Pipe organ?”

3:30 PM - Fr Myron: “Obstacles, openings, and in between with the Russian government. Family home loan program, desperate family fund, seminarian fund assistance and sponsorship”

4:00 PM - personal interview(s) with adopted young person(s) who could have been street kids, adoptive parents tell their stories (with K2K group)

5:00 PM - Holy Hour or rest time

6:00 PM - dinner out at casino

Sunday, Oct. 22

6:30-8:00 AM Vans shuttling to Mass

8:00 AM - Parish Mass at St Joseph

9:30 AM - Continental breakfast

10:00 AM - Fr Myron and Sandra Sonnen: “past, future for Russia and the mission.” Brain storming with ideas, and suggestions from participants

11:00AM – “Catholic Conferences, Catholic Parishes, are you ready? Whats the difference for a speaker? How important are these?” Speaker to be announced

11:30 AM Box lunches. Farewell to all our friends. K2K skit or presentation. Blessing by Fr Myron. Participants bless Fr Myron. Evaluation sheet to return.

12 Noon Shuttles begin to airport or casinos

**Vladivostok Mission
Mary Mother of God Mission Society
1854 Jefferson Ave
St Paul MN 55105-1662**

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From the development desk...

Dear Vladivostok Mission supporters,

- Gather your spouse, children, friends, make your plans, and **book your flights!** Come join other benefactors, speakers, supporters, and interested persons in **Las Vegas, Nevada** on World Mission Sunday weekend--October 20-21-22, 2006. This our annual conference will be held at the invitation of the Parish of St Joseph Husband of Mary of Las Vegas. St John Neumann Parish of North Las Vegas, our sister parish, will be there, too! **See Page 7 for details.**
- Ask your college kids about a priest from our **speakers bureau** visiting the campus to speak about vocations in Russia, about mission work teams, and long term volunteers to Russia. Consider calling the Catholic Chaplain in the campus ministry office.
- Please see our web site for **lesson plans** for your K through 12th grade students.
- Start a **k2k club** with your children--See our web site.

- Contact me if you spot a **Catholic conference** we should attend.

God love you and your family,
Sandra and David Sonnen
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See you in Las Vegas!

