

# Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Eighty One May 1, 2008



## Good News in Romanovka

By Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

There is good news about the Parish of the Most Holy Trinity in Romanovka. Our Sisters of Charity of Saint Ann, whose only community so far in Russia is here in Vladivostok, love the parishioners and villagers in Romanovka and continue to visit them nearly every Saturday of the month. In the future, God permitting, they would like to open their second Russian convent in Romanovka.

Because of their ongoing commitment and their desire to serve the people better, the sisters decided to buy a building in Romanovka near the parish chapel for use as a multi-purpose center for the parish's catechetical and social needs. They purchased a former store located in what I whimsically refer to as the "Romanovka Mall", a small strip of three stores. The building that they purchased is a former houseware and hardware store. It is located between the school and the post office on the main highway that runs through Romanovka, just two or three buildings away from the central square. The interior of the store has one large room and one small back room for a combined floor space of 1,110 square feet. It is about a five minute walk from the parish apartment.



The Romanovka "mall," with the new premises at the left. A mansard roof on a new 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, and windows will be added.

Before they purchased this building they had an architect friend inspect it. He said that the structure was in very good condition and that it would accommodate a second floor to be built on top of it which would double the space. When it is finished it will be suitable for catechism classes, children's and adult programs, a day care center and whatever the parish needs.



During the New Years Break a group of Vladivostok parishioners and the sisters of St Ann went to Romanovka to put on a play written by Sister Marina Malinina entitled "Three Princesses". It was a youth group project which required some costumes to be sewn, prepare props, prepare the sound track, and do practices with people who were already busy with the holidays.

The new building and its reconstruction and repairs have been funded by Romanovka's sister parish of St. Philip Benizi in Oregon City, Oregon. St Philip's carried out a building campaign some time ago, but a suitable situation for doing something major in Romanovka did not present itself until now when the store went up for sale. There were other collections and fund raising campaigns for Romanovka by St. Philip parishioners, all of which went into our "Romanovka Fund" which will be needed to add a second floor and to do necessary capital improvements, such as adding bathrooms to the first floor, a small kitchen, a separate room for coats and boots, and a small place for a watchman to stay overnight. The Romanovka fund will probably not cover the entire cost of these improvements, but it will give them a very good start. As

a rural village with high unemployment, Romanovka's building costs are much lower than in Vladivostok.

After it became clear that the parish could not build a free standing building as a combination church and parish center, "Plan B" was to try to buy the other three apartments in the stairwell where the parish apartment chapel is located and use them for various parish needs. But the owners did not want to sell, and that is how things have stood until now. Because of the sisters' continuing care and the commitment of the parishioners, we are happy finally to fulfill our responsibility to donors for the collected funds. There is still a lot of work to be done.



The play was geared to the handicapped children of Romanovka.

## Re-Starting Our Concert Program of Sacred Music

By Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

During the restoration of the inside of our historic church, our organ concert program was suspended from after Christmas 2005 until early October 2007. We returned to the inside of the Church for Sunday Mass on October 7, 2007. We originally planned to be able to have the solemn re-consecration of the church on that same Sunday, but the marble altar was not finished in time, so it had to be postponed to February 3, 2008. We did not postpone the two organ concerts planned for October because, after almost two years without concerts we were anxious to begin again since they are one of our most successful programs, and we are bound to have them according to the terms under which our church building was returned to the parish. We simply shifted the theme of the concerts to the "re-opening" of the nave of the church after 78 years of being divided into multiple floors

and rooms. On October 8-9 we held two sell-out concerts (540 tickets total) with the following performers:



Soprano Veronica Kasyanova is always a favorite.

1. Two excellent organists on the *Stella Maris* organ, Fr Johann Trummer, founder of the University Department of Church Music at the University of Graz, Austria; and our own Marina Omelchenko, who has been studying in Graz with a double major of organ performance and Church Music for the last two years
2. Our own outstanding Catholic Concert Choir of 26 members under the direction of Tatiana Lupach, the dean of the Choir Directing Faculty at the Vladivostok Community Music College
3. One guest solo vocalist, mezzo-soprano Elena Glushenko from the local Classical Opera Theater
4. A local violinist and a local cellist, who are members of our *Regina Angelorum* chamber orchestra.

These concerts were very well done and very well received. Fr Trummer is a famous and highly respected organist specializing in baroque composers, especially J. S. Bach. He originally planned to be here for the re-consecration of the church, but when the date was postponed he wanted to come anyway at his own expense to play for these first concerts since Christmas 2005. During these concerts, for the first time in the history of Vladivostok were played two pieces for two organs. Marina played on the *Stella Maris organ*, the console of which was brought up into the sanctuary for the concerts, and Fr Trummer played on the old "Epiphany" organ upstairs in the choir loft. The audience loved them. Marina has grown in her organ playing by leaps and bounds since she is studying with one of the greatest living German organists in Austria.

The only problem with the concerts was that there were too few of them and people were clamoring for tickets, which went for 300 rubles (around \$12), more money than tickets for concerts of the local philharmonic orchestra downtown. It was my mistake to start the concert series too cautiously with only two concerts. I thought that after almost two years people might have forgotten about us. Usually we begin to give out tickets 4-5 weeks in advance and it takes them 3-4 weeks to be taken. But this time all tickets were gone in 8 days. We would have liked to add a third concert, but that was impossible because Fr Trummer had to return to Austria for the beginning of the school year. He teaches at the University and is the vice-rector of the major seminary. With the October concerts we have resumed our full concert schedule.

**Four Christmas 2007 Concerts:** The next concerts performed on the *Stella Maris* organ were our traditional four Christmas concerts, Dec. 25, 26, 27, 28. We raised the tickets to 400 rubles (\$16) with a \$2 discount for students and people over 60. Again all tickets were taken (total 1080). The list of performers was the similar to October. Fr Trummer was not here; but another guest singer was--our good friend Veronica Kasyanova, soprano from the Khabarovsk Philharmonic Orchestra (500 miles north of Vladivostok); and we had the full membership of our *Regina Angelorum* Chamber Orchestra (8 members) performing. These concerts were also very warmly received. Marina was hailed as a star, and the concert choir brought down the house each evening with a wonderful program of Christmas carols from around the world.

**Two Re-consecration Concerts, Feb 4-5, 2008:** Finally we were able to have two special concerts in honor of the re-consecration of the church. They were held on February 4-5 with Marina, Fr Trummer (who again paid for his own round trip ticket and refused any honorarium), our Catholic Concert Choir, who did a special, unprecedented third program of all-new songs in just 8 rehearsals, (usually they only sing for Christmas and Easter concerts for which they have 20 rehearsals each.); *Regina Angelorum* and the mezzo-soprano Elena Glushenko. These concerts were held just a month after our Christmas concerts. I was concerned that perhaps we were over-killing the market for organ concerts. At first ticket moved sluggishly, but with just a bit more advertising on TV (very cheap) all were gone two days before the first concert. After both concerts people came up to me and said that of all our concerts, these had the best program and narration ever. Remember, we have our Director of Evangelization, Yuri Belozorov, act as concert announcer. He gives a very short reflection before each piece tying the music in with the theme of the concert so

that it can be an integrated spiritual experience. The narration of this concert tied in the music with the entire history of the parish (1862 to the present) through its founding, initial growth, immigration and hard times in the Russian Far East, arrival of the Communists, persecution, annihilation, refounding, restoring, re-growth and future hopes.

**Three Easter 2008 Concerts:** The concert series for the 2007-2008 school year was brought to a successful conclusion with three Easter concerts, on the evenings of April 16, 17 and 18. The performers were our regular artists: Marina Omelchenko, the Catholic Concert Choir under the direction of Tatiana Lupach, the *Regina Angelorum* Chamber Orchestra; and soloists Elena Glushenko and Veronica Kasyanova from Khabarovsk. As usual, all 750 tickets were gone in advance. The musical program was one of the best ever presented in the 12-year history of our concert program, thanks to a world of new music that Marina has access to from contacts in Austria and Moscow. The first half of the concert was dedicated to the theme of the suffering and death of Jesus. It presented many pieces that had never before been heard in Russia. The concert goers were asked to refrain from applauding until after the final piece. The most dramatic moments of the concert were during the three last choral pieces of this first half, including a Russian language translation of "The Reproaches" (O My People, What Wrong Have I Done You?), and a very dramatic piece based on the Hebrew words *Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?* (My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?). Many people had tears in their eyes. The second half of the concert was a joyous celebration of the resurrection of Christ, with traditional pieces by baroque, romantic and modern composers. During the three evenings over 100 new people, who were here for the first time, signed up to receive information about next year's sacred music concert programs.

The Catholic Church is for everyone, so we are happy to have programs for the poor and uneducated, as well as for the knowledgeable and refined—and the rest of us in between.

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

## News Notes

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

● Our **Boy Scout Troop 1864** recently visited the hospice where our volunteer Brian works on a regular basis. Brian said, “We spent a few hours talking with the folks and distributing juice, cookies and cigarettes. I know it sounds bad, but the men there act like it's Christmas morning when they get cigarettes. Sadly it's probably the highlight of their week. Most of the people were open and engaging. It was a great experience for the boys to do a good turn there although they were a little stunned at first by the conditions in which these people live. Many of them have been abandoned by their families and have nowhere else to go. The boys commented on the smell, the deteriorating building, the stray cats and the people who just cry out of pain or loneliness. But our visit really brightened their day, and I hope it's not the last time we are able to visit.”

The Scouts also made their annual winter trip to Arsenyev, but they didn't have enough money for the ski lift or skis, so they made the best of having fun in the snow and sliding down hillsides. For city boys, even that is important! Meanwhile they also stayed a day at the “Little House on the Prairie”--the log cabin built by a Catholic family in the village of Lubyanka. It was great for the city kids to be with the farm animals and to see the work of farmers.

Schools will have week-long break at the end of March, so the Scouts are planning another campout, probably on Russian Island.



*The Scouts “snug as a bug” in a homemade log cabin. Yes, that is a computer—the kids don't have to write on the back of shovels.*



*Scouts studying the home-made sawmill equipment with which the house was built by Yuri Kolomeitsev.*

*Snow in the woods! There was little snow in Vladivostok itself this winter.*



● Our parishioner **Dima Kamil** is studying for his master's in Theology of the Family in Gaming, Austria, preparing for more work with our Omega Program for University Students. His course of studies this semester is:

- 1) Ecclesiology (especially Vatican II and its premises and consequences)
- 2) Nature and Grace (Karl Rahner and Henry de Lubac)
- 3) History and Truth (about Time and Being in Aquinas, Hegel, Kant, Heidegger, etc)
- 4) Natural Philosophy: motion and order--mostly Aristotle
- 5) and then his thesis, which is going to be about revelation as the Word of God and ways to answer it. “It's not defined yet,” says Dima. He'll be home for the summer, hopefully!

- Our Sister Parish of St Joseph in Modesto, California has generously offered us office space on their campus! Thank you St. Joseph! This means we will have a **second office** which will extend our presence and develop more awareness of our mission and the Church in Russia on the West coast! However, this also means we need to equip an entire office from scratch! Catholic Charities of the Stockton Diocese has helped us by donating a used desk and file holders. Parishioners and friends have donated a copy machine, coffee maker, and chairs. We still need a computer and better quality color printer. Contact Vicky Trevillyan at 209-408-0728 for details. Thanks!

- Progress on the **steeple**s: Recently I had to pay a bill of \$3500 for airfare for the Vietnamese workers who have done most of the work on the steeples after the Chinese went home for the Chinese New Year. Their visas had expired, so they are already home, too! Luckily there is a direct flight on Vladivostok Airlines to Hanoi, which makes the tickets somewhat cheaper.

Soon after they left, the four bells were raised onto one of the half-completed steeples! Here is a photo for you. The bells have stood patiently waiting for ten years! They were personally blessed by Pope John Paul II for us, and brought to the Russian Far East from Poland by a truck driven by the Boy Scouts! They can't ring, of course, until they are finally hung on their mounts which will happen only after the completion of the steeples. The topmost parts of the steeples are in the planning stages now. You can see that we have a long way to go (up!) Donations are welcome!



- For Holy Week we were privileged to have four **American seminarians** visit us. They made a deep

impression on our people, especially because they joined with our choir for all the Holy Week services. Some things they new already—the Latin hymns that we sing, but other things Fr Dan prepared for them the Russian words in English letters. They said that it was the policy at St Paul Seminary, that all seminarians had to experience a foreign mission as part of their seminary training. Wise idea! The seminarians were from St Paul, Green Bay, and Joliet. It helped a lot, too, that we have a new choir director. She is great, and our choir never sang better. And we were in our newly reconsecrated church in all its glory!

*The seminarians visit Brian and a friend.*



- Everybody is scrambling to solve their visa problems following upon the new Russian law about visas. The new law is a mirror of the European Union's law about Russians who travel to Europe. But it is big problems for priests and sisters who work in Russia. It will mean that we have to leave Russia and return to America every three months, if we can't solve it—that is an expensive proposition. We are scrambling to get a Russian green card, as we have lived in Russia 17 years already. With these problems, the number of priests is decreasing, and some traditional parishes may be without priests. Pray for vocations in Russia!

- The priestly ordination of our Brother Oleg Yelchaninov, C.J.D., is scheduled for July 20 at the Cathedral of the Diocese of St Joseph in Irkutsk. He will be the second priest ordained from Most Holy Mother of God Parish in Vladivostok. I'm sure he will appreciate your prayers! Maybe someone would like to buy his new alb and vestments?

- With such high real estate costs in Vladivostok, many charitable organizations and voluntary organizations can't

find places to have their meetings. Many meeting rooms and stairways and corners are rented out to mini-businesses to help pay the bills. With our new rectory and with our St Joseph Parish premises in Second river we can offer folks an opportunity to meet. Currently **AA and Alanon** meet in both premises, and recently the leaders of the community voluntary organizations of Soviet County were able to use our St Joseph's premises for a meeting to plan a general strategy for their work.



*Sorry the photo isn't in focus, but it gives you the general idea of the meeting at St Joseph's.*

- Construction continues on the liturgical elements of our church as designed by Matthew Aldermann. Here is a photo of our parishioner Lydia Nam, a teacher of Graphic Arts, as she paints the images on the ambry. An ambry is a cabinet or safe for the holy oils.



*Lydia Nam painting the Holy Spirit, and the carpenter who has made all of our liturgical items, Shuping Zhang.*



*The completed ambry, open for anointings. The lid on the baptismal font is still not complete.*



*The first baptism in the new font at the Easter vigil of 2008, Mrs. Svetlana Loboda. The godfather was Yuri Belozorov, and the chief server was Dima Ovcharenko.*

- The “Grandma Program” continues to be very important for the orphans of our region. Even though caregivers at the orphanages try their best, there is still nothing like grandma for a treat for the kids.



*Our “Grandmas” and their charges with the chief doctor of Children’s Hospital #3 in Vladivostok.*

- In January the prayer group “Mothers in Prayer” had its retreat, using the Our Lady of Fatima Rectory facilities. Organization members from both Most Holy Mother of God Parish and St Joseph’s Parish participated, and Fr Dan served as chaplain and they all reflected on the meaning of the Incarnation for moms. Besides the retreat program the group was able to attend the Christmas Festival of Christian Choirs, which is an annual ecumenical event for Most Holy Mother of God Parish.



*“Mothers in Prayer” who made the retreat. Their groups gather to pray, especially for their children, every Sunday before Sunday Mass.*

## Opportunities

- ♥ The Women’s Support Center in Arsenyev sent you this nice photo of a mom and her child to remind you that you can donate to this important program.



## How to Communicate with Us

### Internet

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

English language: [www.vladmission.org](http://www.vladmission.org)

Sisters in English: [www.cjd.cc](http://www.cjd.cc)

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Or you can **donate from your credit card** through our web site. Your donations are tax-deductible. You will receive any required receipt for tax purposes by return mail. Please be assured that we do not sell our mailing list or any other donor information to other organizations.

**Donations in kind.** If you have items that you think we can use, please contact Mrs Vicky Trevillyan at the Mission Office in Modesto giving a complete list of items.

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## From the development desk...

Dear Friends of Vladivostok Mission,

It has been a wonderful blessing and privilege to take on the duties of National Coordinator for our mission. Sandie Sonnen has accomplished incredible work and I am very humbled and thankful to have her as my mentor. I invite you to contact me at the mission office with any questions, ideas, suggestions or just to have a chat. I'd love to hear from and get to know all our kind supporters.

- My immediate focus is to bring support to the **WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTERS**. With the average number of abortions per woman in Russia at eight during her lifetime, the seven WSC's continue their ever important work to reach more women. In their first eight years, the WSC's saw over 10,000 first time visitors, with over 8,700 making return visits. To reach out to even more women we must, by one means, utilize technology. Equipment such as lap top computers allow the programs to be more portable and do power point presentations when we are invited to group events and schools. The computers are an important tool also in communicating

information from one center to the other. With the vision to open more WSC's in the future, and therefore help more women and babies, we face the great financial need that it takes to get there. Can you help us with this? If you'd like please visit our website for more information about our Women's Support Centers:  
<http://vladmission.org/charitableworks/carwsc.htm>

- Sandie Sonnen and I started our journeys with Mary Mother of God Mission Society through our Sister Parish projects within our home parishes. We became more and more involved as we found this to be a wonderful way to help our priests and brothers and sisters in Russia. **Being a sister parish** can be a big project, or just a very humble and simple one. No matter how great or small, your parish can share in the work of "*Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia*". Ask your pastor. Please contact me and I will be happy to send an introductory packet that will show you what is involved.

Please keep our mission in your prayers! They are a powerful source of help!

God bless you, Vicky Trevillyan (209) 408-0728