

Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society and Vladivostok Mission

Issue Number Eighty Two July 1, 2008



Work with Kids

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

I decided to feature the kids in this issue. After all, they are our future, and there aren't enough of them in Russia after so many years of atheism and abortion, and not enough of them in Europe to stave off a major change in the history of that continent. And the major economic crisis in Russia was just 10-12 years ago, when the birthrate was its lowest, so there are even fewer children of that age now. So children are even more important.

♥ May 25 was the Feast of Corpus Christi, and also First Confessions and First Communions for the kids of our parish who have been preparing.



First Communion kids. They were part of the Procession for Corpus Christi and helped during the Holy Mass.

♥ We feed 40 kids in Lesozovodsk every Saturday! These are kids who have homes, but whose parents are

very poor, so that the kids don't get enough nutrition. I think we've been doing that five years already. Of course we would like to help them more, and especially I'd love to have a Scout troop there for the boys (many of whom don't have dads) but, so far, we haven't found anybody trustworthy with experience to be scoutmaster there. Of course the kids are happy that we care about them. Some of them take the catechism class from the parish, which gives them also some social activities on Saturday mornings. The kids are grateful for our help, which means they are grateful for your help!



In the summer we can give a picnic lunch in the park. Otherwise we feed the kids in the parish center.

♥ The kids at Sacred Heart Parish in Annawan, IL. Have really been doing a great job with our Kids-2-Kids program. With the help of their CCD coordinator, Carla Specht, they have held information and fundraising events in their parish to help the kids in Russia, especially at Christmas. The kids involved are Chloe VanOpdorp, Emily Vandersnick, and Sarah Specht. Their Pastor Fr Timothy Sauppe sent us the photo. Every year around Christmas we get lots of requests to help children, to provide a toy or something for the holiday party. Thanks, Kids-2-Kids!



Kids-2-Kids is not only fun, it is good for you!

♥ Orphanages are still full in Russia, and we are glad to help at several of them. Now, how can there be such a small birthrate, and yet there be so many orphans? The answer is that the children are not really orphans, but children turned over to the state after birth. Their mothers don't want them, and they "don't have" fathers. Usually it means the parents are not married, they can't be bothered with kids, and they are doing their own thing in life and don't want to have a family. Men suffer from infantilism, because many didn't have fathers of their own to model manliness for them. Meanwhile we continue to work in the orphanages with our "Grandma Program".



"Grandmas" teaching the kids how to slide at Children's Hospital #3.

Pope Benedict XVI's 81st Birthday and the Peoples of Russia

By Kelly Whittier (Sr. Maria Stella, CJD)

Since we are preparing for ministry in the Russian Far-East, one aspect of our community life as Sisters in Jesus the Lord is praying daily for the unity of all Churches, in particular the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. We also try to stay abreast of official dialogue between the Churches. One very positive sign came this year on Pope Benedict's 81st birthday, April 16, 2008. For the first time ever, a pontiff, Pope Benedict XVI, was permitted to give a televised greeting to the Russian people on the state-run Russian television. His greeting was preceded by a documentary on his life made by Aid to the Church in Need, an organization based in Germany. According to *Zenit* news service on April 16, the documentary was produced in St. Petersburg, Russia, through "close collaboration with the Moscow Patriarchate...and...the apostolic nuncio in Moscow."

Pope Benedict spoke of "the splendid light of so many martyrs -- Orthodox, Catholics and other believers, who perished under the oppression of ferocious persecutions in the 20th century. The love of Christ even unto martyrdom, which unites them, reminds us of the urgent need to restore unity among Christians, a duty to which the Catholic Church feels herself to be irrevocably committed. Both the Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church are moving in this direction."

At the end of his address, Pope Benedict said "I am delighted to be able to address myself, in the Russian language, to the people and government of this great land of Russia, so dear to me. I extend my warmest greetings to our beloved Orthodox brothers and sisters, especially to his Holiness, the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, and also to the Catholic bishops and their communities. To all of you I wish peace and well-being and a spirit of mutual love, and I invoke the blessing of God upon you all."

Please continue to pray for the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. If you would like to receive monthly prayer intentions as a "prayer partner" for the Vladivostok mission, the priests, and the sisters, please sign up via our website, www.cjd.cc

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

News Notes

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

- On the last Sunday of April our parish **librarians** had a **housewarming** and open house for their new library space near the entrance to the church. It was a joyful even where they gave prizes to those who frequent the parish library. I got the prize for the “most beloved reader.” It was fun! Yelena Andreevna, the librarian noted that this was the sixth time that the library had moved, because of all of our building moves and floor removals. I told her not to get too comfortable in the new space, as it might also soon get too small! The parish library is more important than usual here in Russia because there is almost nowhere else that you can get theological texts, church encyclopedias, lives of saints, religious videos, and prayer books, after all the years of atheist propaganda. We have many students from the universities who come here to use the library. And then there is collection of historical materials about our parish, some of which you might have seen in our Sunrise articles about the blessing of the rectory and the re-consecration of the church.



Yelena Andreevna, parish librarian and readers.

- Our **internet** is costing us about \$600 per month, nowadays. The phone company has a monopoly. We are

thinking about going to one-way satellite service. It means that we would upload through the current system, and download through the satellite. I.e. the server would remain on the current system, as well as telephone service. The initial cost would be about \$2000, and the monthly cost should be reduced to about \$350, which is a cost savings of \$250 per month, which means that the change would pay for itself in about eight months. So we are thinking about it. We don't have the \$2000 now, but we can look for it.

- **Douglas Grandon**, a member of our board of directors, was ordained a Catholic priest on May 25 in Peoria IL. Five other priests were also ordained. Father Doug, is a convert from the Episcopal Church. He, his wife Lynn, and two of their six children have visited us in Vladivostok.

- Nearly 100 visitors stopped by our open house celebration in our new **California office**. We received many calls throughout CA and as far away as Washington and Arizona, asking questions and offering support and volunteer services. Thanks be to God! We can be so very grateful to the dozens of volunteers and benefactors who made this office a reality, most of all to our Father in Heaven for providing all through them. Vicky Trevillyan notes, “This is small potatoes to the breadth of work all of you and longtime supporters have brought forth to bring souls to Christ. I continue to be awestruck and humbled to see the constant flow of generous souls come forward to aid our church in Russia.”



Volunteer Nicki Miranda in the hospitality corner of the office in Modesto. Thanks for providing office equipment and furniture, mostly used but in good condition.

- A benefactor wrote, “Is there such a thing as medical or dental **insurance in Russia?**” Yes, and everyone has a policy for socialized medicine, but it doesn't cover much.

As the Russians say, "We have the most expensive free medical care in the world!"

For example, some time ago the government froze the price for some medicines that the elderly need that they can get for free on their policy. Perhaps the thought was that the rising prices were due to the guaranteed list of purchasers at government expense. The result was that the medical companies just stopped making it, so even though it was "free" you couldn't get any free! But the same medicine was for sale for the market price to anyone. So it was, buy at market price or die!

- I made a recent trip to the supermarket, and I thought maybe you'd like to know how **prices** are here now for the cheaper varieties.

- Oranges \$1.70/lb
- Bananas \$1.04/lb
- Apples \$1.18/lb
- Peanuts shelled \$3.12/lb
- Gasoline \$4.10/gal

- The **new visa regime** which the government initiated is a big problem, at least temporarily. It means that foreign priests have to leave Russia every three months, and most have to go to their home countries to renew their visas. Fr Sebastian is currently in India for a month to renew his visa, and Fr Daniel is currently in the USA to renew his. By the time you read this, I may be in America, too! We hope a solution is in sight, as we have all applied to the government for temporary residency status, and if it is granted, we can apply for a "green card" in two year. Meanwhile, I'm taking care of four parishes, and Sakhalin Island's three parishes currently have no priest.



Digging to make way for the new high-tension standards. An old one still stands nearby.

- Our visitors will recall that there are **high-tension electric lines** on two sides of our church (including many birds' nests). This spring the electric company has decided to replace all these old standards in the center of the city with new, bigger ones. It is just in time to help us with the beautification of the area around the church, which we have not yet completed after the restoration of the church (which is still not really completed since the steeples are not done.) They had to remove the illegal garages and change the lay of the land to accomplish this. Since they ruined some of the asphalt on our property, perhaps they will pay to replace it. Fingers crossed!

- It is a big worry—how to provide priests for our parishes. We have 15 parishes in our deanery (if you include Sakhalin Island.) And there are seven priests, but most of us have to be gone quite often, either to get visas or to raise funds. The result is that it is hard to cover all the parish needs. Especially in the summers we are stretched, and there are retreats and camps that need chaplains, too, so that we can take advantage of the summer weather to work with people when it isn't snowing and freezing! What a blessing it will be that Brother Oleg will be ordained a priest on July 20! We can add one priest to the pool. But vocations are such a big need. The same is true in America! Our friend Father Bob Stoeckig is the only priest at the 9000 family parish of St Joseph Husband of Mary in Las Vegas! Wow! Every Monday we offer a Holy Mass for vocations! Currently Fr Daniel and Fr Sebastian are gone to get new visas, so I'm taking care of four parishes.

- In April the Women's Support Centers had a **training seminar for new volunteers**, and a meeting of all volunteers with a guest psychologist from St Petersburg, Svetlana Chernyaeva. The topic was Post-Abortion Syndrome, and especially "Family Life, Psychological Effects of Abortion". Seventeen volunteers attended. The highlight of the event was Mrs Chernyaeva's lecture at the Vladivostok Government University of Economics and Services where the students were especially attentive, and probably heard about post-abortion syndrome for the first time. My personal conclusion is that our Centers are ahead of the understanding they have in St Petersburg.



New moms picking up supplies at the Women's Support Center



Mrs Chernyaeva at the seminar for WSC volunteers.

VGUES university students listening to the lecture.



say why, but we know of her work to develop the Polish Cultural Society in Vladivostok, and of her books about the history of the Catholic Church in the Far East, which included Poles as the majority membership. Congratulations, Miroslava!



The award was made by Mrs Longina Putka in the rectory dining room, with friends ready to celebrate.

Miroslava with Mr and Mrs Gorbachev several years ago.



- On the first of May a representative of the Republic of Poland came to Vladivostok to present **Miroslava Igorevna** with an award from her government. The award had been made already on July 5 of 2004, but it was only now delivered! The award reads, “By order of the President of Poland this Golden Cross of Service is awarded to Mrs Miroslava Teresa Efimovna.” It doesn’t



- In May we had five **funerals**. **Yadviga Yakimovna** was 87 years old. She lived on the 6th floor of her apartment building where there is no elevator, so she didn’t get out very often. She would always come to church for holy days, even if she couldn’t make it every Sunday. She

always sat in the very first pew so as to see and hear everything. Her nephew always brought her, but never himself came into the church. When I would visit her at home, she always greeted me with three kisses, a sign that she was greeting Christ in me. She was always cheerful and helpful, and always promised her prayers for us and for the parish. Her daughter and granddaughter came to the funeral mass, and both said that they felt at home in

the church where “mom” had been at home. We hope they will begin to follow her example, and I’m sure she is praying for them and for me from a better place in heaven.



Bozhena Frantishek was born in Czechoslovakia when it was part of the Communist block. She fell in love with a Russian soldier, and came with him to the Russian Far East. He became the head of the “RadioPribor” factory in Vladivostok which made a variety of radio equipment. She became the head of the factory archive where she served until her death. As is usual in Russia, the funeral began with a wake at the factory where about 100 of her fellow workers and friends gathered around the coffin. (There are no funeral homes here, and it is hard to carry coffins up stairways in apartment buildings.) Fr Dan had the wake service there in the open air, where he was careful to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to folks who perhaps have never heard it before. Bozhena’s Catholic faith impressed her husband, who also was baptized and received the last rites at his death several years ago. Bozhena has a son and grandchildren who still have not been baptized. Hopefully the funeral helped them to “seek the Lord while He may be found,” too.



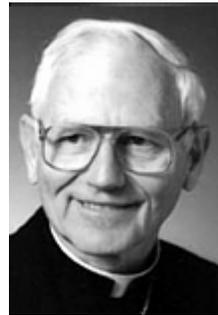
Malvina Stanislavova was 76 years old. She was a regular churchgoer, and suffered greatly from the death of her only child, a son, several years ago from brain cancer. She died working in the garden at her dacha, which she dearly loved. She always brought us canned vegetables from her garden, carrying huge, heavy gallon containers on the bus through the city to bring to us, and then climbing all the way up the hill with them. I decided to use the Gospel which read, “As long as you did it for the least of my brethren, you did it for me!” God give her a reward for her labors!



Lydia Pavlovna (72) was ill for some time, although she died suddenly. She always received the Sacrament of Anointing every Fall when we offer the Sacrament for those seriously ill, but who are still able to come to church and are not bedbound.

All four women had to live many years without the Church and without the sacraments. We

are happy to be here for them, and for all the elderly Catholics who hope and pray for their children, that they, too, will accept the faith. I’m sure many of our benefactors have the same prayer intentions!



• The retired Catholic **Bishop of Stockton, California, Donald W. Montrose**, died on May 7, just after midnight. He was a member of our Board of Directors, and a regular benefactor. Bishop Montrose was installed as the fourth bishop of Stockton on February 20, 1986 and served as bishop until his retirement on January 18, 1999.

Bishop Donald W. Montrose was born on May 13, 1923 in Denver, Colorado where he lived until 1936 when his family moved to Glendale, California. He attended Catholic school and entered seminary training in 1938. He graduated in 1943 from Los Angeles College, the Junior Seminary. His final six years of theology and seminary training were completed at Saint John’s Seminary in Camarillo.

He was ordained to the priesthood on May 7, 1949 for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He served in parishes as a parochial vicar and at Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana as a teacher and principal from 1950-1964. His post-graduate degrees were in Spanish and education and he was appointed Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese from 1964-1977. He was also pastor of Resurrection Parish during this time.

Montrose was appointed by Pope John Paul II and ordained a bishop on May 12, 1983 by Timothy Cardinal Manning. He served as an auxiliary bishop for Los Angeles. In 1986 he was installed as the fourth Bishop of Stockton. During his tenure in Stockton, he was actively involved in two areas of greatest concern for him - Catholic education and issues related to Hispanic peoples in the USA.

When people recall the life of Bishop Montrose, they note his gentle spirit of humility, and those close to him always appreciated his sense of humor and story telling. He was a man of personal prayer and participated actively in the Charismatic Renewal movement. His devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe guided his choice of motto on his coat of arms in Spanish: “Esclavo Soy”, which recalls Mary’s response to the Angel Gabriel, “I am the handmaid of the Lord.” It is appropriate that so many of the important dates in his life occurred in the month of May, which is dedicated to Mary.

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

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Opportunities

♥ Now that summer is here, if you work in your parish CCD program, this is a good time to begin to think about our Kids-2-Kids program. It will give your kids an interesting program for the missions, and help with their understanding of world geography. (And besides that they'll get a nice red tee-shirt!) Contact address above.

♥ 2033 A.D. will undoubtedly be a Holy Year, the 2000th anniversary of the Redemption. Wouldn't it be wonderful

to celebrate that year in Christian unity between the Catholic and Orthodox churches? Only 25 years left to prepare for it. How said it will be if we reach the year 2054 without unity!—That would be 1000 years of schism.

• **Better late than never dept:** Here is a photo of our parish choir at the **Christmas Festival of Christian Choirs** which was held this year once again in our church. Our choir is doing very well. We are now the strongest church choir in the city (and I'm not prejudiced, you understand!)



• Recently a young man came to the rectory to say that he was a student journalist and had been given the assignment to report on a local church. He went to an Orthodox church, and they told him that if he didn't even know the Our Father he had no business being there. "Goodbye!!" So he came here. He was shocked and wide-eyed to see how well we received him, but what amazed me more was what a wonderful young man he turned out to be! Dare I hope he'll come back sometime, and attend Mass? I'd sure like to find more young people like him! And what a loss for the Orthodox Church. We hear these stories all the time about how people are treated there, so it is no wonder that people look elsewhere. And then we get accused of "proselytism" if somebody becomes Catholic. I wonder if "**Marketing**" shouldn't be a required course in Orthodox seminaries.

• The new bridge to Churkin is approved and funded. The construction company was just picked this week. Traffic will come out of a tunnel under the funicular, after coming up the valley on the other side of the mountain in front of the VGUES (university). On Churkin it goes directly to the Children's Park. It is supposed to be one of the longest bridges in Russia, and will make Vladivostok more like San Francisco than ever.

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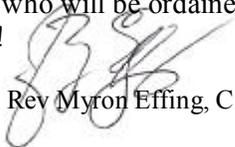
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From the development desk...

Dear Friends of Vladivostok Mission,

Perhaps some folks think that with the completion of the rectory and the dedication of the church we don't need financial help. Actually, it is the opposite! We had to finish those projects or lose the property to the government! And it took so long because of lack of funds. They were finally completed with funds that were specified for that purpose by donors. Meanwhile, our work with orphans, the elderly, students, Crisis Pregnancy Centers, and evangelization continue, and we still need regular financial support for all these things. . Thank you for your spiritual and monetary help, and please pray for vocations!

And pray for Brother Oleg who will be ordained a priest on July 20. God bless you!


V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

The cutest kids come to church in Vladivostok.

