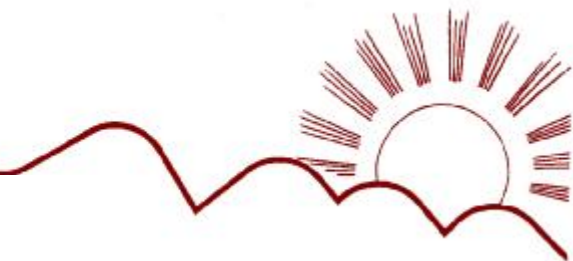


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society and Vladivostok Mission

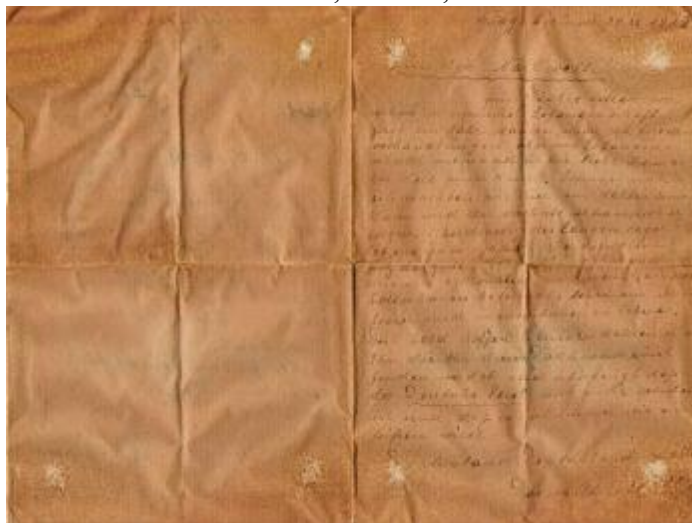
Issue Number Ninety One January 1, 2010



The Secret Letter

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

In July, when our workers were removing an old metal spire from the front façade of our church in preparation for replacing it with a new stainless steel one, they were surprised to find a letter hidden beneath it! It is a letter from the men who worked on the church building in 1919. The letter lay under the metal spire for 90 years! It was in German. They said that they were German prisoners of war (WWI) who were released to work on the church building. There is a list of names, including two men who fell from the scaffold on September 18, 1919 and were presumably killed. (We are grateful to God that none of the Chinese workers fell from the scaffolding when we built the steeples this past year.) There was also included a newspaper with Communist propaganda from 1917. It is all very fascinating for us, as we only heard that the Czech Army helped finish the church. Pastor Brokmann, the pastor of St Paul's Lutheran Church here in Vladivostok, German, translated the letter for us.



The letter as found.



Fr Myron and Seminary student Matt Brady working on the letter and newspapers.

The letter flattened and color enhanced to make it more legible.



The newspaper in which the letter was wrapped.



Vladivostok, September 20, 1919.*

To Posterity:

Already five years we are sitting in Russian imprisonment. Peace negotiations are already going on for one year, but nobody sends us prisoners back to the dear homeland to wife and children. Still we are languishing here in cold Siberia. When will the longed-for transport back take place? We are tired of the long camp-life under Japanese administration, in spite of the good food, and have already for two months taken part in the construction of this God's-house, to live a bit more free and human.

But we hope to return home soon. You, who will sometime find this document. Be convinced that the German Spirit has not yet died, and that once again it will be said: Germany, Germany over all**. God grant it! Amen!

Leader of the work: Geiling, Rolf. Borbeitekl, Vienna, First Lieutenant

The following prisoners:

Germany:

.....***, Georg, lieutenant, ... assessor
of studies in Berlin Sophien
Gymnasium

Kloth, Karl Officer aspirant architect
..... Schmalkalden

Teute, Alfred Officer aspirant ...
Merchant Kolmar in Posen

Schulze, Hermann Braunschweig

Wagner, Otto Wittenberge
Precipitated Sept 18, 1919***

Weise, Paul Doerpsen..

Austria-Hungary

Gaal, Hungary

Kern, Vienna

Hudribusik, Vienna

Kinkler, Johann Temeszwar

Kabay, Janosz Hungary

Galfi, Peter

Korthofer, Georg Vienna precipitated
Sept. 18 chest crushed***

B..., Hungary

Kaufstein, Hungary

*The letter as translated from the German by Rev. Manfred Brokmann, Nov 8, 2009:

**German humiliation in World War I was a major cause of the rise of Hitler and World War II.

***denotes unreadable text.

****Perhaps "precipitated" meant that they fell from the scaffold around the church?



The church surrounded by scaffolds. The only photo we have from the time of the construction of the church, probably from about the time the letter was written.

As if all of that isn't interesting enough, we were told the following information about "Rolf Geiling", who was the leader of the final work on the church and author of the letter:

Rolf was born in Vienna from a family famous for church decorations. He received an education as an architect. After the tragic death of his daughter he enlisted in the Austrian army, and achieved the rank of senior lieutenant. He was sent to Siberia, but found himself arrested and imprisoned for five years by the Soviets. As an architect he was assigned to head a construction brigade. He built many buildings and participated in the building of the Vladivostok Prison. The prison director helped him with documents and he escaped to China where he lived in the city of Lyandzin where he reunited with his wife and where he was very involved in various construction projects and received an award of appreciation from the city officials. In China he had a daughter and son. The son, Franz Geiling, born in 1926, moved to America to Austin, Texas because of the revolution in China. A physicist by education, he worked in astrophysics and space sciences. His descendents still live in Texas.

News Notes

by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D



● A big event for our Modesto office was the showing of the movie *The 13th Day* at a local theater in November. Vicky Trevillyan says, "I'm back from our first afternoon showing of *The 13th Day* and couldn't wait to give you a

report! Praise and Glory to God, everything went far better than our expectations! It's safe to say everyone came away from the theater touched in some way upon being reminded of the love of our Father and Mother in Heaven. There was a wonderful applause at the end of the movie and many tears. One attendee said, 'I have not been to Church in a long time. It's time I go back.' How wonderful it is to hear this. Thanks be to God.

"We distributed scores of free 'How to Pray the Rosary' brochures and free rosaries from the local rosary makers. All brochures and rosaries that were put out were taken. Over 200 MMOG brochures and newsletters stuffed with Mass Stipend request forms and return envelopes were handed out as people walked in. I did not expect the response and we ran out well in advance as people came requesting their own copies!

"I spoke a few minutes before the start of the movie including thank you's, welcome, introduction of our mission and the message of Fatima. Fr Francis from Tracy, CA blessed the event with a brief encouraging word about the Fatima message. One of our sister parish volunteers led everyone in the Our Father and a decade of the Rosary. I announced the DVD of *The 13th Day* was available for ordering following the show. We received 20 orders at that time."

Later she wrote again, "We just finished the three day movie fundraiser with *The 13th Day* at the State Theatre! No words can describe how so many were touched by this movie. Needless to say, it was a great success in bringing people closer to God and to our Blessed Mother--our real treasures! Many tears of love and joy leaving the theater. There was applause after each showing. We received 81 orders for the DVD and are still getting calls for more. At each of the three showings we had two priests attending. I introduced our mission to the audience and we had one or both priests present speak briefly before the show and we prayed a decade of the Rosary.

"In all about 1000 people attended this showing. Five of our speakers want to show this movie in their cities throughout the US."

Congratulations, Vicky and volunteers!

● On November 29 I had the pleasure to install the new pastor in Annunciation Parish in Arsenyev. He is Father Eliot Maretski, O.F.M. Father comes from Poland, and had served earlier as pastor of a parish in Kazakhstan.



Fr Eliot reading his Declaration of Faith in the parish chapel.

- Fr Sebastian D'Silva's return to his parish, Our Lady of the Pacific in Nakhodka, after having been absent to work on Sakhalin Island for a year and a half, resulted in a flourish of activities by parishioners. The most obvious was the decision to put new wallpaper on the walls and ceiling of the parish chapel. When they took off the old paper, they found that the underlying plaster was in such poor condition that they decided to dig deeper and wound up replacing the ceiling totally, and some parts of the walls. They also created a niche for the tabernacle which would also save some floor space, as the chapel is way too small for the parish. They had plans to build a church, but had to give up on those plans when building costs went sky high before the economic crisis hit. Meanwhile, the parish owes thanks to its sister parish, St Mary's in Niles, Michigan, for financing some of the repair costs.



Wall to be repaired in Nakhodka's chapel.



Fr Milosh, visiting from Chita, Russia helped Fr Sebastian plan the tabernacle niche.

The repaired chapel as folks waited for the first mass there.



Repairs were needed in the kitchen, too.



- Fr Myron held a service for the Anointing of the Sick at the Visitation Parish in Lesozovodsk on October 3. The parish is getting ready for winter, which is significantly colder there than in Vladivostok. Fr Sebastian also held such a service in Nakhodka.



Anointing of the sick and elderly in Lesozovosk

Fr Sebastian's anointing in Nakhodka on November 22



- On December 4 our Bishop Kirill Klimovich celebrated the 10th anniversary of his episcopal ordination. All the priests and sisters of the Diocese of St Joseph were invited to Irkutsk in Siberia to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the celebration. The Bishop also used the occasion for a pastoral conference which was held at a tourist camp near Lake Baikal. Highlights of the conference included a talk by an Orthodox priest explaining the current Orthodox attitude about Catholics, and words explaining the Orthodox theory and practice of marriage, which differs significantly from Catholic practice. About 40 priests of our diocese gathered for the event.



Bishop Kirill addressing the priests at the start of the conference.

All the bishops of Russia attended the event. Here is Archbishop Paolo Pezzi of Moscow, Nuncio Archbishop Antonio Mennini, Bishop Klimovich, Bishop Clemens Pickel of Saratov, and Bishop Joseph Werth of Novosibirsk.



The Cathedral in Irkutsk



Some of the priests and sisters posing in the snow on the shore of Lake Baikal, the largest fresh water lake in the world.

- Sandie and David Sonnen, who until recently ran all our operations in America, now have more time for their grandchildren. You'll see how important that is when you look at this picture!



Dave, Sandie, and their 18 grandchildren!

- Anya's Foundation is named after a Russian girl adopted by American parents. The purpose of the Foundation is specifically to help Russian orphans. So it is natural that we could work together, and we submitted a proposal to help Children's Hospital No. 3 in Vladivostok with laundry equipment for its 80 orphans, including the AIDS kids. We asked for nutritious food and drink supplements, age-appropriate toys to aid neural, intellectual, and physical development, and for commercial laundry equipment that will allow the orphans to live in a clean, healthy environment. Laundry is always a problem in the damp summer environment of Vladivostok when clothing does not dry in the air, or, if it does, it takes so long that it is moldy already. The antediluvian equipment which the orphanage had was always on the fritz.

What a joy when the grant was given! Here are some photos of the installation of the equipment. Thank you, Anya Anding, for remembering those kids who are in need as you were! Happy New Year! But wait! The Lynch Family Foundation chimed in with more good news. They provided a commercial dryer and a commercial ironer to complete the assembly! Thanks, folks!



Unloading the big cartons.

The old centrifuge and the new one.



The Caritas team supervising the installation, and the head doctor of Hospital #3.



The new washer

The beneficiaries are the kids at Hospital #3, one in the arms of our volunteer "Grandma Valeria."



Opportunities



mission office for sizes and colors!

♥ Many thanks to Susan Gray for creating our new Vladivostok hoodie (sweatshirt) in Cyrillic lettering! These hoodies are made of heavy weight, 50/50 fabric. Contact the

♥ Can you help? We have the opportunity of attending the following conferences if we can find volunteer representatives to attend our booths. You will be serving

the mission in a great way by passing out information about our mission. Meet other wonderful members of our Catholic community and sell special religious articles for the mission. Couples and families are welcome to serve together. Please contact the mission office for more details. If you know of a conference not listed, please let us know!

1. St. Louis Marian Conference, St. Louis, MO, Jan 15 – 17
2. Marian Retreat, Modesto, CA, Feb. 6,
3. 2010 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, Washington DC, Feb 7 – 10
4. Living The Catholic Faith Conference, Denver, CO, Feb. 25-27,
5. Boston Catholic Women's Conference, Boston, MA, Feb 27
6. Stockton Diocese Ministry Day, Stockton, CA, March 6
7. Dioceses of Arlington Catholic Men's Conference, Herndon, VA, March 13
8. Catholic Men's Fellowship of Greater Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, March 20
9. Marriage Conference 2010, Saskatoon, SK, Canada, March 19-20
10. National Catholic Education Association, Minneapolis, MN, April 6 - 8
11. Boston Catholic Men's Conference, Boston, MA, April 17
12. Diocesan Council National Council Of Catholic Women, Sacramento, CA April
13. Northwest Catholic Family Education Conference, Seattle, WA, May 21-22

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Happy 2010!

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year and a Blessed Feast of the Epiphany!

Each year, several groups travel to Vladivostok. You too may experience first hand the work of Fr Myron and Fr Daniel. Witness the dedication of the many wonderful lay staff and sisters on the front lines of reviving our Catholic Faith in Eastern Russia – become part of it! Teams visit our Women’s Support Centers, orphanages, hospice



Kathryn Nunes from California helps out at the hospice

hospitals, parishes and local culture. Cuddle and romp with the orphans to give them much needed love and attention. Hold the hand of a terminally ill elder. Pick up a paintbrush or shovel to help in renovation projects. Attend Mass in the Most Holy Mother of God parish with local parishioners and

break bread with our priests and sisters. Carry over much needed supplies for the priests and programs. We can help you form mission teams through your parish or university or join with another group. If you are a

professional or lecturer in an area that might assist any of our charitable programs, let us know! Travel to Vladivostok is a life changing and most rewarding journey. We are grateful to all who come to serve and thank our Heavenly Father and Mother for these blessings. You may find out more about mission travel by visiting our website at www.vladmission.org or contact the mission office.

Recent showings in California and Virginia of The 13th Day have been successful not only in fundraising for the mission but reminding us of the importance of the messages of Fatima and praying the Rosary. Other showings are upcoming. Our deepest gratitude to all the volunteers helping with these events. In the documentary portion of the DVD, Fr Andrew Apostoli, CFR, speaks in depth about the messages of Fatima and the many challenges faced in Russia from over three generations of communism. Please contact the mission office if you would like to hold a showing in your parish or local theatre, or if you wish to purchase a copy for yourself.

Love and blessings to you and your families.

Vicky Trevillyan
209-408-0728