

Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society and Vladivostok Mission
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Kathleen MacLean, head organist at Denver Cathedral, and Marina Omelchenko at the first American concert

USA Concert Tour for Vladivostok Parish Organist

The Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

After the revolution of 1917, Siberia became a showplace of the new Communist era, a land without churches and without God. Under Stalin, all Catholic churches were confiscated, and many were turned into the most degrading uses imaginable. Two American priests, Fr. Myron Effing, CJD, and Fr. Daniel Maurer, CJD, arrived in Vladivostok in 1992 to help re-establish the Church in this region. **They founded or re-founded 11 Catholic parishes in an area covering over 500,000 square miles.** Additional priests and sisters are joining the work, and parishes are growing and multiplying. You can help provide for our mission and for our seminarians. Thanks!

By Fr Daniel L Maurer CJD

From July 12 to August 7 Marina Omelchenko, the main organist of our Vladivostok parish, performed five organ concerts of sacred music in five cities in the United States. It was her first concert tour in America and also her first concert tour after receiving her Master of Arts degree in organ performance from the University of Music in Graz, Austria in June. Fr Daniel Maurer, CJD was the announcer at all the concerts, reading short meditations related to the program of sacred music and giving some brief historical information about the selections.

The purpose of the concert tour was to show American mission supporters and friends how we use sacred music as an evangelization and catechetical tool in Vladivostok. Each year our parish hosts 18-24 concerts of organ, choral, orchestral and solo music, which have become our most popular way of reaching non-baptized, non-practicing Russians with the message of the Gospel. With a free-will offering taken up at each of the USA concerts, the tour was also a successful fund-raiser for the continuation of the parish music programs and liturgical music development program.

The first concert was held at the beautiful neo-Gothic Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Denver, CO on July 20. It was planned to be part of the preparatory festivities to celebrate the cathedral's 100th anniversary in October 2012, and also became part of the festivities surrounding the solemn installation of the new ordinary, Archbishop Samuel Aquila just two days earlier. The concert was followed by a reception at the Knights of Columbus Hall a block away. Marina arrived more than a week before the concert to get accustomed to local time and for her to have an opportunity to practice on the 59-stop Kimball-Morel (1911/1996) pipe organ. She was greatly aided in her rehearsals and performance by the kindness, professionalism and hospitality of the head cathedral organist Kathleen MacLean, whose motto is "Playing a mile closer to heaven". The concert was very well attended, exceeding the expectations of everyone involved in planning it.

From Denver we flew to Las Vegas for our second concert at our sister parish of Saint Joseph Husband of Mary. Pastor Fr Marc Howes began the concert with warm words of welcome and an introduction. Attendance was large, attesting to great planning work by the members of the local sister parish committee and to the close relationship of our two parishes over the course of more than 10 years. Both Marina and Fr Dan were highly impressed with the beautiful sounds of the custom made Rodgers four-manual organ. The oboe stop, featured on



Folks at the reception in San Francisco after the concert

the only Russian composition during the concert, was particularly impressive. After the concert many stayed to meet Marina and thank her for sharing her talent with them.

The third stop was Porterville, CA in the south east corner of the great central valley, where our oldest sister parish of Saint Anne's is located. At their new, large and beautiful Church of the Holy Cross Marina played the best attended concert of the tour. Back in March during the initial planning stages pastor Msgr. Scott Daugherty had said that in the past concert attendance in the new church had been disappointing, so we were delighted when more than 400 people came to the concert on Tuesday evening, July 31. Marina felt completely at home playing the large new Rodgers organ because it is almost identical to the Rodgers "Stella Maris" organ in our church in Vladivostok.

Marina played her fourth concert on Friday evening, August 3 at our active sister parish of Saint Joseph in Modesto, CA, the city where the American headquarters of our Mary Mother of God Mission Society is located. While in Modesto we attended a back yard barbeque with 40 other people in honor of the many mission volunteers from our sister parish and Mission Society. The new pastor Father Mark Wagner introduced me, saying that I needed no introduction and that I should be introducing him! At the end of the concert he also offered some heartfelt remarks to cement our sister-parish relationship during his coming pastorate. Marina was warmly received by all present with continuous applause. Afterward Mission Society National Coordinator Vicky Trevillyan and sister parish volunteers put on a beautiful reception in Fr O'Hare Hall attended by almost as many people as were present at the concert. Everyone had the chance to meet Marina, and many asked for her autograph.

The final concert in the tour took place at the famous and stunning Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption in San Francisco on August 7 with Marina playing the amazing Fratelli Ruffatti pipe organ (69 stops, 89 ranks, 1971). (*Sunrise* readers remember that the 7 stops of real pipes on our organ in Vladivostok are also made by Fratelli Ruffatti. Ours is the only Ruffatti organ in Russia to date.) Thanks to publicity efforts by several mission supporters in the Bay Area the concert was well attended. As always, Marina played superbly, creating sounds of great splendor on the grand and beautifully voiced pipe organ. Several people came up to this author after the concert and said that although they regularly attend liturgies and concerts at the cathedral they had never heard the organ sound as majestic as it sounded with Marina at the console. After the concert there was a reception at the cathedral, again hosted by Vicky and volunteers from Modesto, who drove to San Francisco for the occasion.

At all the concerts we were able to offer copies of Marina's newest CD of organ music, thanks to the highly professional and very fast work of Sylvia Werner in Denver at Marina's first stop where she was the house guest of Matt and Sylvia Werner of the Queen of Apostles Mission Association. Marina brought with her from Russia a single master copy of a CD of our latest concert in Vladivostok. When Sylvia heard how beautiful it sounded she offered to have it duplicated and personally to produce all the graphic designs for the disc and the box. She got all the work done in two days! - 250 CD's titled "Music for Organ and Orchestra" featuring Marina on the organ and the combined members of the Beijing International Chamber Orchestra (18) and the Vladivostok parish's *Regina Angelorum* Ensemble (10), recorded live in our church in Vladivostok on June 15-16, 2012). The CD's went like hotcakes at all the concerts for a donation of \$15.00. They are available by mail order from our national office in Modesto for \$20.00 (including shipping and handling).

Marina and I want to take this opportunity to thank the many people who brought to reality the five concerts of this first American tour. More than 1300 people attended, and many others were involved in the preparations. Their efforts resulted in greatly surpassing the expectations we had last December when Marina first volunteered to perform a concert series in the United States for the benefit of our parish music programs. We are grateful to all who took part in this complex project. We have already received requests from other churches and parishes for Marina to play during her next concert tour in the USA.

Opportunities

- ♥ You can help support our priests. **Masses** will be celebrated in Russia for your loved ones. Contact the mission office for Mass cards or send your request on line. \$15 suggested donation for each intention. An eternal gift!
- ♥ Are you a priest who would enjoy speaking about the Vladivostok mission? Join our **speakers' bureau** and speak to Catholic parishioners about the Church in Eastern Russia. Contact the mission office for more information.
- ♥ Would you like **FREE** copies of our bi-monthly newsletter, *Vladivostok Sunrise* for your parish or an individual subscriptions? You'll receive the latest news about the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia. Call us.



- ♥ Project Guardian Angel and Project Guardian Angel--St George are two programs of the Mission where you may directly sponsor the poorest children in Russia. In the **Guardian Angel Project**, you may choose a child to help monthly as you receive a portfolio and picture for those in the program. You may write to your child through the mission and receive correspondence from them or the families in return. In the **Guardian Angel--St George Project**, you may become a prayer warrior for an individual child in one of our poorest villages. You will receive the name of the child who you are helping through prayer. Your \$20 monthly prayer stipend will go to the child's village lunch program to feed the hungry children. Contact the mission office for more details.

- ♥ Please support our seminarians! Our **2013 Seminarian Calendar** is available! Contact the mission office or see our website!
- ♥ Exciting **SHARES card** update! The mission received a quarterly check for \$2963.58, the greatest earnings yet! Thank you to all those in CA and NV who use the Save Mart SHARES card! Contact the mission office for your FREE SHARES card if you shop at Save Mart, Lucky's, FoodMaxx or SmartFoods. Present your card at check out and the stores donate up to 3% of your grocery bill to the mission. It costs you nothing!
- ♥ Cold weather is just around the corner. Time for a mission sweatshirt! Vladivostok, Russia is silk screened in Cyrillic letters on the front. These are 50/50 content,

medium heavy weight and come in child size 14 to adult 3X, navy, maroon or black. Contact the mission office for pricing and ordering.

Our 13 x 17 in. canvas tote is made in Russia, heavy

weight and great for back to school books or heavy groceries! Our Cathedral silhouette is silkscreened on the tote with Most Holy Mother of God Church, Vladivostok in Cyrillic letters. Totes are \$20 plus \$6 for S/H.

FOCUS-Lesozavodsk Retreat, 2012!



By Sister Catherine Marie Morse, C.J.D.

Fifteen American college students and a priest came to Vladivostok in July through the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS). One of their main projects while with us was to hold a camp in Lesozavodsk for children under the age of eighteen years old. This is the second year that the FOCUS group has put on the camp. About 45 children attended the camp; they came from families living in the apartment buildings surrounding the

Catholic Parish of the Visitation in Lesozavodsk. The camp was a great success.

The American students spoke only a few Russian words, and the children spoke very little English. The Americans and the children quickly overcame the language and cultural boundary with the language of love. What the children wanted was to be given undivided attention and to know that they were loved.

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



The staff included Fr Matthew Benjamin from the Diocese of Kansas City-St Joseph, our Sisters in Jesus the Lord, Mike Guenther During the camp the Americans separated the children acco, the chief missionary, Brother Edwin Intan, C.J.D., and our interpreter Victor Anisimov.

During the camp the Americans separated the children according to gender. The boys learned Boy Scout knots, played soccer, held drawing contests, flew paper airplanes, and swam. One day they made a visit to the Orthodox church. Another day they went to the Women's Support Center and learned about alternatives to abortion, for example, material support or adoption. They learned what it means to be a good husband and father. The girls learned about what it means to be feminine and what a good wife and mother should be like. They drew, made figurines and painted them, played games outside, swam, and simply enjoyed being together. The women from FOCUS shared their conversion stories with the girls; several of the women had much in common with the girls at the camp. We gave each girl a life-like fetal model and spoke about life before birth. The boys and girls loved being with the men and women from FOCUS--it was like having a new older brother or sister for the week.



The girls dressing up as princesses and having a tea party after talking about what it means to be a child of God and to be loved by Him.

The children changed a lot during the camp. When we started, the girls were shy, some of them did not like each other, and many of them seemed sad or lonely. By the end

of the camp the girls were joyful, played together without fighting, gave each other hugs, and some of them formed new friendships. The boys responded well to the affection from the American college students.

One little girl named Nastya, age 8, learned that Jesus loves her very much and that He died on the cross to save us. She picked up a crucifix and lovingly kissed the wounds of Jesus. She asked us why people would be so mean to Jesus and was sad to learn that it was because of our sins. She was very quiet and thoughtful when we told her that Jesus took our sins upon Himself and bore our punishment so that we could be happy with Him in heaven. She marveled at His great love. Day after day she looked upon the crucifix. On the last day of camp, Nastya drew a picture of Jesus on the cross and made an older girl write for her "Jesus don't cry, we love you." Nastya and her little sister left the camp with light in their eyes and smiles on their faces. Nastya stopped fighting with the other little girls and began to do kind favors for them.



Nadezhda Pisorenko, the local leader of the Women's Support Center, spoke to the girls about life in the womb, alternatives to abortion, and the role of mothers.

As we left Lesozavodsk, the children ran about giving us hugs. Several of them cried and said that they would miss us very much. We found it difficult to leave, but rejoiced because we knew that Jesus would remain with the

children and in their hearts, and He would take care of them.

One of the great lessons that we learned during the camp was that if you give to God the little that you have, He will do great things. Even though the American students could not speak Russian, God used their presence and their love to heal the hearts of those children and to help them to know how much God loves them and to give them hope.

News Notes

by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D

- **Roof repairs update.** Blessed news! The roof is done and the church sparkles as a beacon of hope in Vladivostok! We are deeply grateful to the many benefactors who helped us reach our year 2 goal of \$88,260! Thanks be to God. An additional \$12,633 collected has taken care of most of the inflation costs since the first estimate was written. All glory to God. Many thanks to all of you!



- On the **Feast of the Assumption** we had our annual Assumption Day Mass with procession, and lots of extra prayers and hymns. In fact, we must have sung all the Marian hymns in our hymnal. Our actual parish feastday is January 1, but the weather is usually bad at that time—too cold for a procession—and Russians are up all night on December 31 to January 1, so they aren't in much condition to pray. So we make the Assumption our "adopted" feast day. It usually gives us beautiful weather and lots of flowers for the procession.

- The **new bridges** are open! The bridge to Churkin is just down the street from us, so a trip that formerly took an hour now takes 5 minutes. And the bridge to Russian Island and to the site of the new university is now open, the longest span of its type in the world ('cable stayed'), and they say they cost \$1.1 billion dollars. To get to the

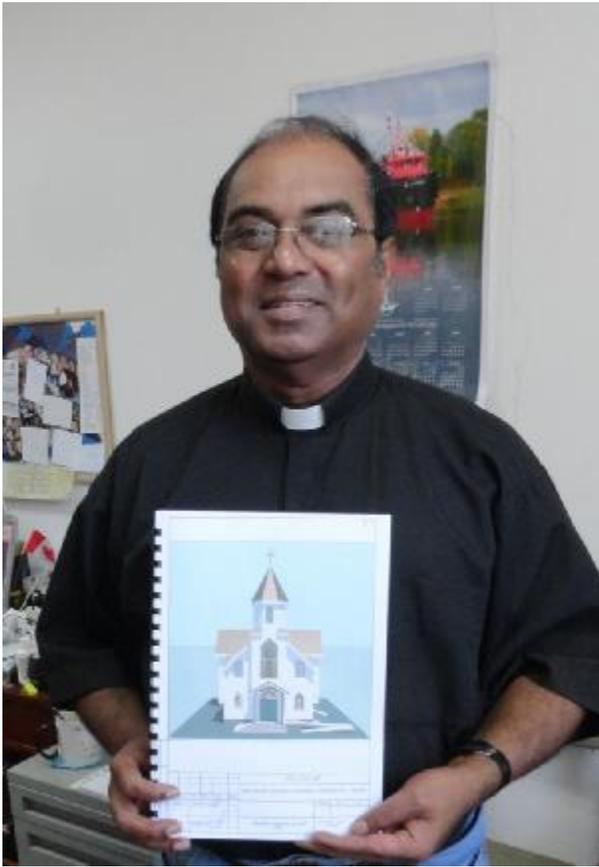


The bridge to Russian Island. It looks spindly, but feels strong when you are on it.

island we used to have to rent a private ferry, so the trip there and back cost about \$50 and basically took the whole day. Now we can be there in 15 minutes! We think it will be a whole new day for our city. We had to celebrate our first trip on the bridge to Russian Island. And when the bridge to Churkin opened, the government had two days of "pedestrians only", so the whole city walked the bridge. It was a big public holiday. Now pedestrians are not allowed, and it is six lanes of auto traffic! Incidentally the new bridge to the airport is also finished, so it will hopefully cut off lots of time standing in traffic jams when we have to go to the airport. Our sisters who are planning to work at the university on Russian Island are very excited!

- The Asian Pacific **Economic Summit** which will take place here next month. We are expecting visitors from all over the Pacific area. Brother Edwin has a job as an interpreter at the state capital, since he speaks six languages fluently. He is planning a Praise and Worship service for the Feast of Christ the King, and also planning some lessons at the university for his classmates about Russian religious vocabulary.

- Our Lesozavodsk **parishioner Vladimir** needed to fly to Korea for a cancer operation—He came through the operation just fine, but now the extra good news: The two tumors were not cancerous! The doctor said that it was extremely dangerous anyway, and could be fatal if it had burst accidentally. He has returned home. And he says that for the first time in 57 years he feels normal! Most of his life he has lived with fever and high white cell blood count. He wants to write a personal letter to all those who helped him with the operation. The donations for him from America came to just over \$5000. Donations from the Russian side came to \$3500. Most of this came from the active work of the parishioners of Visitation Parish in Lesozavodsk. Congratulations everybody! Thanks be to God!



Fr Sebastian and the book of plans for the church.

- **Nakhodka** is a port city on the Pacific Ocean with a population of 173,500 (in 1995). It is the chief shipping point from the Pacific from Russia via the Trans Siberian railroad and oil and gas pipelines. The city is about 100 miles east of Vladivostok. In January 1995, Fr Effing celebrated the first Mass in Nakhodka. He named the parish “Our Lady of the Pacific.” Currently the pastor is Fr Sebastian D’Silva from northern India. Mass is celebrated in an apartment-chapel in the center of the city, and there are now about 50 parishioners. There is a second apartment a block away where the pastor lives. CARITAS has a Women’s Support Center in the parish premises, and the parish has volunteers who work with orphans at the local orphanage.

Earlier in these pages we spoke about Fr Myron’s plans to build a church, as the City of Nakhodka had allotted land. Although plans were rather far along, due to the inaction of the following pastor the opportunity to get the land expired, and things stood still until Fr Sebastian has again begun to make plans. Preliminary official plans are again completed, and the question is again before the city authorities. If a land grant is made, then the parish will have two years to finish the plans and to lay the foundation.

- A lady in Lesozavodsk made a complete **baptismal set** for a child’s baptism and sent it to us to give away to an American child who will be baptized. She said that when she really needed help with the birth of her child, an American gave her help through the Women’s Support Center in Lesozavodsk, and this is her way of saying thanks to the anonymous donor! Have more kids—Have more baptisms!

How to Communicate with Us

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Vladivostok Sunrise gives you up to date information about the Church in Eastern Russia. Contact our office for your free bi-monthly copy.

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in Vladivostok. Many thanks to all our conference volunteers for their time and dedication and to the countless patrons who visit us! If you’d like to invite us to your parish event or you would like to help as a conference representative for the mission, please contact me at our mission office in Modesto! usoffice@vladmission.org or 209-408-0728.

God bless you! Sincerely, Vicky Trevillyan

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends,

An important method to spread news about our mission throughout the US and Canada is to have a mission booth at Catholic conferences, social gatherings, and parish festivals. We've met many wonderful people at these events who have remained long-time dedicated friends of the mission. Patrons stop by our booth to pick up information, ask questions and spend a little time to hear about our work in Vladivostok. Subscriptions to our Vladivostok Sunrise newsletter increase approximately 15% each year as patrons take the opportunity to sign up for our free newsletter when they meet us. Expenses that might be incurred such as travel, registration fees, and meals are paid for when we offer religious goods for sale or, through the kind offering of our representatives attending these events. Religious goods include our book, Harsh Vineyard, mission sweatshirts and bags, Russian icons, and donated handmade crafts. We have available rosaries, crucifixes and other items to promote devotion to our Catholic Faith. Patrons have the opportunity to offer donations to the mission, too. Those donations are applied directly to the intended mission program. In 2011, merchandise sold at conferences and other events came to



Our mission booth at Catholic conferences and events helps us spread the news of our mission.

\$27,832. Fees for registration and additional expenses were \$11,507 and replacement costs of goods sold were approximately \$6858. Less than 25% of gross sales are needed for religious goods replacement as many of our items are hand made and donated, thanks to many crafters! (Capital for our start up merchandise was provided by our sister parish members of St Joseph in Modesto, CA several years ago). In 2011, net proceeds from religious goods were \$9467, all the while providing us means to attend many more events to share the work of our mission
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