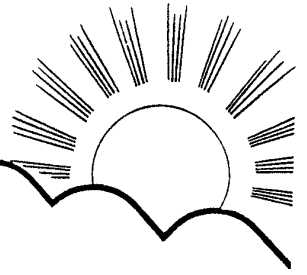


# Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia St Paul Minnesota

Issue Number Thirty Nine May 1, 2001



## May—The Month of Mary

During this month we would like to express our love and appreciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Patroness of our mission, and to express our gratitude to those benefactors who have donated windows and frames for our church building.

*Top: "Mary Mother of God", the rose window over the main entrance to the Cathedral of the Most Holy Mother of God, donated by the family of Fr Myron Effing to memorialize his 25th anniversary of ordination in 1997.*

*Left: "Seven Sorrows" in the South tower donated by Mrs Juliet Shepard of Smithfield RI. Right: "Pieta" in the North tower donated by Mr and Mrs Robert Flynn of Snohomish WA.*



## Voleslav's Funeral-- A Springtime Story in the Fall of Life

*by Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.*

In the early spring of the Jubilee Year 2000 the small, struggling Catholic parish of the Most Holy Trinity in the village of Romanovka found a rare treasure within its boundaries: a living, breathing, God-fearing, adult MAN, who was already a baptized Catholic!

The very Polish name of Voleslav Tichinski came to the attention of the parish lay leader, Ludmila Sidorenko. Ever on the lookout for new members for the parish, Ludmila and her mother Valentina often question villagers in order to find out if they know where there might be any Catholics in the area. In March 2000 one villager who was asked this perennial question replied that she worked with someone who often said that he was a Catholic. The villager told Ludmila of an incident which occurred at least 15 years earlier at work. It was during the last decade of the communist regime, and it was the first time that the villager (and probably anyone she knew) had ever heard the words, "I am a Catholic," spoken out loud: One of her co-workers had gotten very

angry with a new man on the job and had said some very harsh words to him. Completely unexpected, the new man answered, "Be nice to me. I am a Catholic!" It is not recorded whether this declaration calmed the other person's anger, but during the atheist Communist regime which forbade all religious practice in the village, it was such an unexpected answer that it was remembered by all those present for years to come.

After that incident the "Catholic", as he came to be known by those who worked with him, regularly talked openly about his Roman Catholic boyhood in the Ukraine. So when Ludmila was asking around for Catholics, one of this man's co-workers told her that she knew someone who at least claimed to be a Catholic, even back when it was not only unfashionable but completely unheard of.



*Father Dan and Ludmila, the parish trustee from Romanovka.*

Although I was not there at the time, I am sure that Ludmila beat a path directly to Voleslav's door to confront him with the rumor that he referred publicly to himself as a Catholic. He readily admitted it. When she explained who she was, and that there was a Catholic parish in the village, Voleslav replied that he was very happy to have been "found" at last by his Church. He had no idea that our small Catholic parish had been active in the village for three years, perhaps because we are so poor that we did not have a church or a chapel or even a door to knock on or a telephone number to call, and also perhaps because none of our parishioners lives in his immediate neighborhood. When her unique discovery was confirmed, Ludmila decided that it was worth a rare long distance phone call to me in Vladivostok to tell me that a real, live, baptized Catholic had been found within the territory of the parish.

Thus the parish came to know and love Voleslav "the Catholic", the only other known cradle Catholic in Romanovka besides Ludmila and her mother and her two daughters. Voleslav was born in western Ukraine in 1933, fourteen years before the Communist regime officially eradicated Catholicism in 1947. But Voleslav remembered that in his remote village, where over half the population was

Catholic and where the anti-religious activities of the communists were softened by the tenacious faithfulness of the populace, he had been able to attend church regularly until 1951 when he was drafted and sent to the Russian Far East, to the military base in Romanovka (closed in 1997). That was also the year that he attended mass and received the sacraments for the last time--until Ludmila's well-trained nose for Catholics sniffed him out 49 years later.

After we found him he became a regular monthly mass attendant. (*Sunrise* readers will remember that the Romanovka parish only has one mass per month and that on Saturday.) That first Saturday he confessed his sins before mass, and later, with tears rolling down his cheeks, he received Holy Communion for the first time in almost 50 years.

Six months later, for the parish's monthly mass in September, Voleslav led his wife, Valentina, a baptized Russian Orthodox Christian, into the room of the former Air Force Officers' Club where the parish meets for mass. It was obvious from the first time we saw them together how much Voleslav and Valentina loved and depended on one other. Her sight having been almost completely obscured by cataracts, it was very touching to see how carefully he guided her by the arm into the unfamiliar room, telling her about all the possible obstacles in her path. Surgery to remove one of the cataracts was scheduled for the next week, and since there was no Orthodox priest in Romanovka, she had asked her husband if she could go to confession in the Catholic Church before the operation. She had been baptized as a young adult but had not been able to practice her faith since coming to Romanovka many years earlier. The only Orthodox church in Romanovka was destroyed in the 1930's. No priest has been stationed there since that time.

After a successful operation to remove one cataract, Valentina recuperated at home, recovering sight in one eye. At that same time Sister Alicia Gonzalo, the local superior of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Ann in Vladivostok, began to visit the parish for a prayer service with communion on the remaining three Saturdays of each month. She would always visit Valentina and Voleslav at home after the communion service. In November 2000 Valentina requested to be received into the Catholic Church so that she could worship together with her husband. That same month Voleslav was diagnosed with inoperable cancer, which progressed rapidly. I went to Romanovka to administer the Sacrament of the Sick to him and to bless their marriage, which had originally been registered with the government but, because of the religious repression, had not been solemnized by vows before the religious representative of any Church.

By December the cancer had spread so quickly that Voleslav was beginning to spend more and more time confined to bed. Either Sr Alicia or I visited him and Valentina at home every Saturday, bringing them both Holy Communion. We got to know their grown son and daughter and all of their grandchildren, who were always there to help Valentina care for Voleslav as his condition worsened.

After I became a regular guest in their home I commented to the lay leader of the parish Ludmila that in Russia it was uncommon for me to see an intact family (mother, father, children and grandchildren) so united in their care and love for each other. She replied that it was not only uncommon, it was practically non-existent, especially an elderly married couple in their sixties. Usually by that time, she said, the man is dead. (The life expectancy for men in Russia is now 57.) Or, if he is not dead, she continued, he is usually a decrepit alcoholic who has mistreated his wife and children so terribly that they no longer want to have anything to do with him. He lives out his remaining days in squalor and despair, in one continual drunken stupor that numbs his pain. But Voleslav was a shining exception. It was very obvious how much his wife and children and grandchildren loved him, and how tenderly they cared for him through his long illness, cooking, cleaning, administering pain medication by injection, chopping wood for fuel, and taking care of his personal needs. Their home, though very poor by western standards, was rich in love and genuine affection.

By God's providence it was the same day that I celebrated the monthly Saturday Mass in Romanovka. After the mass Sr Alicia and I visited him at home at about 5:00 PM. He was sitting up in bed because it was difficult for him to breath lying down. I heard his confession and gave him and Valentina Holy Communion. On that night of March 31, 2001, very painfully, Voleslav "the Catholic" died at home, surrounded by his family. Later that same evening Ludmila called long distance again to Vladivostok, this time to say that he had passed away quietly in his sleep at 9:30 PM. But that is not the end of the story.

Sr Alicia, Brother Oleg, and I returned to Romanovka on the next Tuesday for the funeral. It was to be the first funeral for a baptized Catholic in Romanovka. In the seven years that Fr. Myron and I have been serving the believers in Romanovka there had only been two times when we were called on to celebrate the rites of Christian burial. Both of those times had been for Orthodox Christian relatives of our Catholic parishioners, and neither time involved the celebration of a funeral Mass.

In the absence of religious rites for the dead, some very strange superstitions have become universal among Russians, especially in poor villages. In the home of the deceased all mirrors and reflecting surfaces such as TV screens must be covered with black cloth. This is so that evil spirits, who can sometimes look through mirrors, do not steal the soul of the deceased before it has had a chance to get to heaven, which in Russian folk belief, cannot be earlier than 9 days after death. Friends and relatives had seen to it that all the mirrors in Voleslav's house were properly covered.

Before Voleslav died, I told Valentina and her adult children about the need for a funeral Mass and Christian burial, and I thought they had understood and agreed. But I learned that in a small, isolated Russia village, where communism has been the only belief for generations, and

where people think that things have always been done only one way, talking about such things as a funeral mass is as foreign as if a Martian were to try to explain his customs to an uninterested Manhattan taxi driver. Not one word I said about the funeral or burial must have sunk in. We arrived in Romanovka at 11:30 AM in order to prepare the hall at the Officers' Club for the funeral mass at 12:30, which was to be followed by the procession to the cemetery at 1:30 and burial at 2:00. As soon as we arrived, I was told by parishioners that Voleslav's widow and children were adamant that his body not be taken anywhere until the procession to the cemetery at 1:30 PM from the home of the deceased. So I went to the home to find out what was the matter.

What was the matter was that no one in living memory in this village had ever NOT been buried directly from home. No one remembered the time before the church had been closed. No one could imagine going anywhere else but to the home of the deceased for any kind of service. I would have gladly done the funeral mass at home if that were possible, but the home is a tiny three-room cottage which was already set up with borrowed tables for the funeral dinner (to be accomplished in five shifts) after the burial. Against their initial opposition softening slowly into confusion, kindly but firmly I insisted that it was Voleslav's right and his wish to have a funeral mass, and that the mass must be celebrated in the Officers' Club (the only possible place), which, in any case, was on the way from the home to the cemetery, about a seven minute walk. Valentina was worried that when neighbors and friends came to the home for visitation from 11:30 until 1:30, as is the custom in Romanovka, if they found that the body had already been taken away, they would refuse to go anywhere else to pay their last respects simply because it had never been done that way before, and they could not imagine that it should be done for Voleslav. She thought they would simply return home, shaking their heads in confusion about this newfangled practice.

When Voleslav's relatives did not want to move the body to the Officers' Club because none of his neighbors or friends would go there, I suggested that we could bring the body back home after the funeral mass so that the neighbors could do their leave taking at the home. I thought they were going to stone me to death. At least they looked at me as if to ask, "Is he really a priest? What planet does he come from? Doesn't he know anything? Didn't he know that once the body left the home it could not be brought back there?" No, I didn't. I asked why not. The answers, repeated time and time again: "You can't," or "It's just not done. We don't know why," or finally, "It's bad luck." They were adamant. We definitely could not bring the body back to the home once it had left. It took Sr Alicia and I over 30 minutes of patient insistence to get them finally to agree to put the coffin on the flat bed truck which in Russia acts as a hearse and start out for the Officers' Club.

While they were processing slowly to the Officers' Club behind the truck, Sr Alicia and I walked quickly on ahead to be there to greet the body and the mourners. Thankfully Brother

Oleg, acting as server, had prepared the rented hall, and was wondering where we had disappeared. About 30 minutes later, after a very slow procession, the "hearse" arrived at the steps of the Officers Club, and with it about 70 people on foot. The number of mourners had grown tremendously along the way. Everyone came into the rented hall for the funeral mass. It was the largest mass in the history of the parish and probably the first religious service ever for most of the people in attendance. They departed themselves very reverently and respectfully. Some even bowed and made the sign of the cross (right to left) whenever the 15-or-so Catholics said, "Amen."

When the mass ended, all of us except the widow marched behind the hearse-truck to the cemetery, a 30-minute walk. The widow Valentina lay down beside the open coffin on the flat bed truck and propped her head up with her left arm for the ride to the cemetery.

Afterward, back at the home during the funeral dinner everyone was complimentary about the mass and burial. The entire family was very proud that their relative had been the first in Romanovka to have such a funeral: with prayers, bible readings, sermon, candles, incense, the Eucharist, the blessing of the grave with holy water, more incense, the singing, the vestments, all the things that Catholics around the world take for granted. They went on and on about the entire event. They all agreed that it was an unforgettable day and that they would like to see this new "tradition" continue. Their paralysis of imagination of a few hours before had given way to the fervent wish that this kind of funeral would become the norm. They began to connect it to what must have been the traditions of their ancestors so long ago before the godless revolution had changed everything.

After the burial, during the funeral dinner, the widow Valentina, Sr Alicia, Br Oleg and I were among the second shift to eat in the tiny cottage. All of a sudden an elderly lady came in and wailed, "You forgot to set aside a glass of vodka and a piece of bread for the deceased." I thought all the Russians in the room (about 15) were going to die immediately of heart attacks. Then a woman seated at the table next to me said, "No, we didn't forget. Here they are right here in the middle of the table." And there they were, a small glass of vodka and a piece of dark Russian bread on top of it. The relief of everyone in the room was palpable. I wondered what they would have done if they really had forgotten. Would they have had to start everything over again from the beginning? But that, too, is probably prohibited by some other superstitious belief. Perhaps things have always been this way in small Russian villages where no one has received a higher education, but I think that it is made more acute by the lack of the light of the Gospel since the communist revolution.

Voleslav "The Catholic", Holy Trinity Parish's newly discovered treasure, was a member of our parish much too short a time. In life he was a loving husband, father, and grandfather, a steadfast Christian, and a faithful witness to

his Church. And even in death he gave his family and friends and fellow villagers a priceless gift. With his funeral mass and Christian burial in a village where, not so long ago, others had tried to obliterate the very idea of God, he helped to bring back the memory of Russia's Christian hope in the resurrection from the dead. Fifteen days after his burial Russian Catholics and Orthodox celebrated their belief in the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead on Easter Sunday. Because of Voleslav's faith the people of Romanovka understand better the hope of all Christian believers in their own resurrection from the dead. In the fall of life, springtime is just ahead.

## How to Communicate with Us

### Office in Russia:

**Phone:** (011-7)-4232-26-96-14

**FAX:** (011-7)-4232-26-96-16

**E-mail:** [myron@eastnet.febras.ru](mailto:myron@eastnet.febras.ru)

[daniel@eastnet.febras.ru](mailto:daniel@eastnet.febras.ru)

[CARITAS@mail.primorye.ru](mailto:CARITAS@mail.primorye.ru)

**Internet** Russian language: <http://www.catholic.ru>

Please do **not** send any **donations** of any kind directly to Russia. For donation information, see below.

**Letters** without donations can be sent to:

Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Parish

Volodarskovo 22

690001 Vladivostok RUSSIA

### Office in America:

**Phone:** (651)690-5139

**FAX:** (651)690-5139

**E-mail:** [RussianMission@juno.com](mailto:RussianMission@juno.com)

**Internet:** <http://www.vladmission.org>

**Donations** of money and **letters** should be sent to:

Mary Mother of God Mission Society

1854 Jefferson Ave

St Paul MN 55105-1662

Or you can donate from your credit card through our web site.

Your donations are tax-deductible. You will receive any required receipt for IRS tax purposes by return mail.

**Donations** in kind. If you have items that you think we can use, please contact Mrs Sandra Sonnen at the Mission Office in St Paul giving a complete list of items.

**Vladivostok Sunrise** Edited and Produced in Russia by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D. Printed by the Sisters of St Peter Claver, St Paul, Minnesota. Assembled for mailing by Nativity Parish, St Paul, Minnesota. Mailed by Mary Mother of God Mission Society, St Paul, Minnesota. Authors are noted if other than the editor.



## News Notes

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

- On March 5 Father Daniel Maurer, Pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Romanovka and of St John the Evangelist Parish in Bolshi Kamen and co-founded of our Vladivostok Mission, celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Happy Birthday, Fr Dan!



*Father Dan Receiving birthday presents from parishioners of Vladivostok*

- We are all looking forward with great excitement to the priestly ordination of our first seminarian, Evgenie Peregudov. The ordination is scheduled for Trinity Sunday, June 10, in Irkutsk. Then Fr Peregudov will be coming to Vladivostok for his First Mass on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 17, and our little tots will be making their First Communion at the same time—from the hands of the new priest. I know Deacon Peregudov will appreciate your prayers for him on his special day.

- Our Correspondence Course "Introduction to Christianity" is now available on the internet in English. We have been using the course many years already in the Russian language. We've had many people throughout Russia take our course, and now that it is on the internet, Russians are signing up for it worldwide. Then we received requests for the lessons in English so that those who were working with Russians to prepare them for baptism could know what the Russian were studying, so it made sense simply to put the English course on the internet, too. Now we have students from around the world taking the English course. You can join us in praying for them. Sometimes they are people from countries where Christianity is forbidden—we know already from the Russian version of the course. The course is managed by our helper Victor Anisimov, who corrects the tests and answers questions that the students may have. You can find the course at:

<http://www.intro.atfreeweb.com/english.html>

- Dr Sergei Yakovlev and I have been trying to do what we can to deal with alcoholism in our state. Besides Vladivostok where AA existed long ago, there are now working AA groups in Nakhodka, Arsenyev, Ussurisk, and Lesozovodsk. Dr Yakovlev and I have also been giving lectures on alcoholism and drug abuse at many schools and colleges in all those cities.

These problems are of massive proportions in Russia—the chief reason why the country is so backward. We hope our talks will help a lot of the young people who have never heard alcoholism described as a disease, complete with symptoms, early warning signs, cycle of development and treatment methods. There is a lot of advertising of false treatment methods and fake cures of alcoholism here, all for big money, most of which are guaranteed to work by those who sell the products.

We've already spoken to more than 50 school and university classes, which is already good public relations for the Church because it is the first time most of the students have met a Catholic priest. We have also already incorporated a local organization to deal with rehabilitation by twelve steps—it is a branch of a Moscow organization call "No To Alcoholism and Narcotics". I'm on the Board of Directors, and we recently started to plan our first two rehab programs. We are hoping to do a month-long seminar for 12 people in July at a spa, and another one in September, which will be a "rough it" sort of camp in the wilderness on Salvation Coast near Vladivostok. The idea is not only to start something in the way of rehabilitation from alcoholism and drug abuse using the twelve step method, but also to get experience with this sort of thing in the Russian culture and context.

- On March 26th, Fr Benedict Zweber passed away from bone cancer at Maryknoll in New York. He had been an American missionary priest in Russia since 1997. When he first arrived in Russia, he lived for three weeks with us in Vladivostok before our bishop assigned Maryknoll to Khabarovsk.



Fr Zweber was born into a poor farming family of ten children in the town of New Market, Minnesota, on January 7, 1932.

When he was in the fourth grade, he heard a missionary priest speak about his work in Papua New Guinea. Although Fr Zweber was attracted to the idea of foreign missions, he attended the diocesan preparatory high school, Nazareth Hall. While there, he met a resident faculty priest who was a member of the newly founded Maryknoll society. This priest, Fr Norbert Rans, used to leave old copies of Maryknoll magazine in the seminary library, which helped to increase Fr Zweber's desire to go to the missions. After completing his high school and first two years of college at Nazareth Hall, Fr Zweber graduated and went on to the St Paul Seminary to complete his last two years of college. It was then that Fr Zweber discerned that he was called to be a Maryknoll missionary. Fr Zweber met much opposition to the idea from his father and from his professors at the seminary. His father wanted him closer to home and as such would not give him any money to travel to Maryknoll-on-the-Hudson in New York to visit. It was then, on the advice of his spiritual director, that during his winter vacation Fr Zweber hitchhiked in the cold all the way to the Maryknoll headquarters to ask to be accepted. He was, and was ordained in 1959.

His first assignment was in Korea. He was most particularly happy to go there because one of his brothers had died in the Korean War. Fr Zweber stayed in Korea for thirty very fruitful years in which he was instrumental in opening many new parishes, until he was called back to the States by Maryknoll to raise funds and recruit vocations.

While in the Holy Land in 1994, Fr Zweber offered Mass at the altar of the Annunciation in Nazareth. Archbishop Francis Hurley of Anchorage, Alaska, was just finishing his mass there, too. The Archbishop asked if Maryknoll had any volunteers for Siberia, where he was pioneering a mission effort. Fr Zweber answered him, "Yes. At least one!" In the same spot where the Virgin Mary had declared her "fiat" to God's will, Fr Zweber declared his own "fiat" for a second overseas mission career in the Far East. In 1997 he arrived in Russia at 66 years of age.

After working for a time in Khabarovsk in the Vladivostok Deanery, he transferred to Sakhalin Island when Japan could no longer supply a Korean priest for the South Sakhalin Parish of St James, most of whose parishioners are of Korean ancestry. Not content to just relax in a parish where he was already the third pastor, he immediately began to plan a new church building in the center of the city taking the name of the historic parish, Annunciation, which existed there before World War II when the Japanese held the island. He also began to open two more parishes on the Island, and to serve the growing American community there who are involved in the production of natural gas on the ocean floor near Sakhalin. The new building is expected to be dedicated on August 15, 2001, with Polish Father Yaroslav Vishnevsky acting currently as administrator of the parishes.

In Fr Zweber's own words he recently said, "...my suffering hardly compares to what the Russians endured for the Faith.

I don't know what the future holds, but I thank God for the privilege to link my suffering to that of the people, and their suffering to that of Christ." Fr Zweber will be remembered for what he was, an indefatigable, happy, holy priest. We will miss him. The funeral was in Maryknoll, New York. His Minnesota memorial mass will be held on May 15 in Lakeville. Eternal Rest grant to him, O Lord!

- We received the sad news that one of the priests of our diocese was murdered, probably on Easter Sunday morning. The body of Father Jan Frantskewicz was found tied to his bed near the chapel in the village of Yartsevo near Norilsk in North central Siberia. He had been beaten to death about the head. The motive for the murder is not known, but police have arrested a man who had already been imprisoned four times. Fr Jan, a citizen of Canada and Poland, was 77 years old. He had been ordained in the Catholic Melkite Rite only in 1986 in Lebanon when he was 62 years old. He was known for his rugged individualism and self-sufficiency which allowed him to serve Catholics scattered in villages throughout North central Siberia. Eternal Rest grant to him, O Lord!

- We've had a streak of bad news lately! On March 22 my new car was totaled! (See the last issue of *Sunrise* where we spoke about buying it!) The road was unexpectedly icy after a brief snowstorm in an otherwise clear and dry day. The wind was blowing as my driver neared Lesozovodsk to pick me up after several days of my working in the parish there. Suddenly a big gust of wind spun the car around several times on the road and then flipped it over on its top in the nearby field! My driver, Anatoly, who was wearing his seat belt, was not hurt or even scratched, but the damage to the car on all sides means that it is beyond repair! He was in shock, but since the car would still run, he returned to Vladivostok with a friend, and I came back by train. Today he got the estimates, and, basically, the car is a total loss. We sold it for spare parts.

Then on Saturday March 31 our old car was in an accident in Bolshoi Kamen! On a four lane city street with parking, some guy who had been drinking decided to make a U-turn from the parking lane, and suddenly pulled right out in front of our car, which as in the left lane being driven by my secretary, Nicolai Dorodnov. He couldn't avoid the accident because there was an oncoming car approaching in the next lane left. Apparently the drinking driver was some police magnate (even though he broke many laws) so the policemen were trying to make out that no one was at fault in the accident, which would mean that the magnate wouldn't have to pay us a cent or even pay a fine! Nicolai had his camera along, and there were witnesses, so he is going to pursue the matter further. Otherwise the magnate will be free to do it again, and someone could be killed! The old car, too, was totaled!

The cars were not insured because car insurance is still not well developed in Russia--as most normal businesses are not. So we have to buy cars. We've had other accidents before, but this is the first time that a relatively new car of ours ('94 Toyota Mark II) was totaled. Not a bad record considering that Fr Dan and I have to visit our seven parishes every month,

plus lots of city driving. Thanks to our guardian angels we haven't suffered personally from a crime or accident yet. To correct the record, Mr and Mrs Terry Baltes of Dayton OH, who purchased the new car for us, belong to Incarnation Parish, not Immaculate Conception as reported in the last issue. They have sent another donation to help toward the purchase of yet another car in this emergency situation. We have also received a donation from the Missionary Vehicle Association (MIVA) of Washington, DC. These two donations will allow the purchase of one car. We have already selected it: a '96 Toyota Mark II. Thank you, benefactors!



*My driver Anatoly and friends with the new new car.*

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

*(Continue from Page Eight.)*

to 26, 2001, visiting Nagasaki, Vladivostok (1 day), Pusan Korea, Shanghai and Dalian China, returning to the States by air from Beijing. Please see [www.maryspilgrims.com](http://www.maryspilgrims.com) or e-mail: [jesus@maryspilgrims.com](mailto:jesus@maryspilgrims.com) or call 1-800--847-6279.

- We have been invited to 23 parishes for mission coop **preaching this summer**. We will have speakers in the dioceses of Lacrosse, Ft Wayne/South Bend, Tulsa, Saginaw, St Paul/Minneapolis, Sioux Falls, Orlando,

Trenton, Metuchen, and San Antonio. Father Dan will be in the US during July. He will be in Orlando, Port Charlotte, Washington DC, McLean Va., Benton Harbor and Hastings Michigan, Chicago, Tulsa, Las Vegas, Modesto, Porterville, San Diego California and Salem, Eugene and Portland Oregon. He will fly into Atlanta and out to Vladivostok from Los Angeles. See the web site for the dates or call the mission office. [www.vladmission.org](http://www.vladmission.org) or 651-690-5139 for details.

- We now have on line **credit card donations**--See our web site. Please help us build our rectory this summer! Your donations are vital. If you visit Vladivostok you will see why! Donation by credit card is actually a savings for us in the case of donations from outside the USA.

- We had 413 names for the **Easter drawing** for the gifts we offered.

**1st gift:** the condo in Ft Myers Beach FL went to John Lawler of Baltimore MD.

**2nd gift:** the framed picture of Our Lady of Vladivostok went to Agnes Doth of Blaine MN.

**3rd gift:** the Russian-English blessing went to John and Gretchen Healy of St Paul MN.

**4th gift:** the double wooden cross made in Vladivostok went to Anthony Sinatra of Dearborn MI.

**5th gift:** Our Lady of Grace music box went to Pat Regan of St Joseph MI.

**6th gift:** two hand crafted pens by a mission supporter went to John and Barbara Tarutani of Wooster OH.

A special **thank you** to all for your donations.

God love **you** and your family,

Sandra Sonnen  
National Coordinator  
[russianmission@Juno.com](mailto:russianmission@Juno.com)



*Sandie Sonnen in the bomb shelter in Lesozovodsk. The parish is hoping to use the bomb shelter as a cold storage unit for frozen foods. It is an economic development project for Visitation Parish of Lesozovodsk.*

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### From the development desk...

Dear Mission friends,

- Words can not begin to describe **the trip** my husband and I took to Vladivostok in February. Father Dan and Fr Myron have always said, Come to see for yourself. We wish we had come sooner. Please consider a trip. It is safe, convenient, and rewarding.



- We have set up a straight trip with only 2 short stops. It's **Delta/Korean Airways**. The planes are beautiful,

and safe. Flights from Los Angeles are best as they go to Seoul in the morning and then the flight to Vladivostok leaves at 10:00 AM. Father has an itinerary in place to allow a visitor to see the mission and the work done in Vladivostok and sister parishes. You would be busy from 8:00 Am to 8:00 PM with a driver and translator. It is very safe. The accommodations are the best Vladivostok has to offer and also very convenient, safe and comfortable.

- We are asking visitors to come during the 10 days we have set aside for **work teams**. The priests can better serve the parishes if visitors are there at the same time each month. Please see our web site for dates. Its usually the third week in each month. The cost for airfare is about \$1000 to \$1500. Expenses in Vladivostok are \$350. for the 10 days, covering accommodations, transportation and translator/host. If you are unable to come, send a member of your family or parish.
- We recently heard about a trip to Vladivostok on a **Princess Cruise** ship departing Osaka Japan from Oct 13  
*(Continued on the previous page.)*

*Father Myron, Parish Trustee Vladimir Pisorenko, and David Sonnen at the entrance to the new parish facilities in Lesozovodsk.*