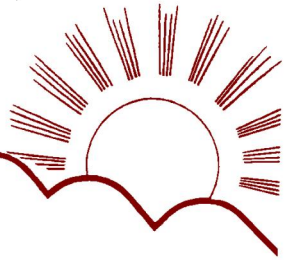


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society and Vladivostok Mission

Issue Number Eighty Seven May 1, 2009



Annunciation Religious Gifts – a New Division of Mary Mother of God Mission Society

By Vicky Trevillyan

Our mission office has a new home in Modesto, CA, thanks to Joan and Jerry Doll of Modesto. We have been given this blessing of office and retail space, rent free. This is truly a gift from heaven as our National office cannot possibly afford rent for office space.



Our benefactors Mrs Joan and Mr Jerry Doll

Mr and Mrs Doll and I had never met before, nor did they know much about our mission. However, after hearing we were looking for retail space, Joan contacted us. We met over coffee where Joan and Jerry offered to share retail space with us. We were reluctant at first as our priority was to find a place to set up our National office! Operating a retail store was secondary, and only to help support any costs it would take to lease an office.

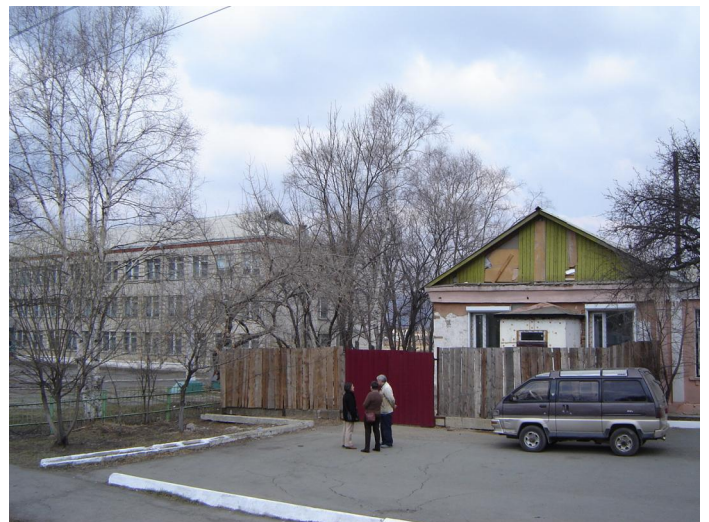
After relaying our actual intentions, it was wonderful to hear Joan immediately offer additional rooms in their building to accommodate an office. Joan asked how much room we needed, made sure that much space was available, and even provided chairs and a desk work station. (Continued on Page 2)

Sisters of Charity Build New Community Center for Romanovka

By Fr Daniel L Maurer CJD

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Ann of Vladivostok, are well along the way of renovating a building in the village of Romanovka for use as a multi-purpose parish center and community center. Romanovka, population 2,500, is a 90-minute drive north and east of Vladivostok by car and is situated near the shore of Amursky Bay.

Shortly after they became fluent in Russian the sisters began visiting Romanovka once a week on Saturdays to do pastoral and social work in the parish of the Most Holy Trinity. They immediately fell in love with the parishioners, who also fell in love with them. The more the sisters worked in Romanovka the more they learned about the desperate conditions in which some parishioners and other villagers live. (Continued on Page 3)



The Romanovka Catholic Community Center seen from the street front (green gable). On the left can be seen the Romanovka public school. Standing in the parking lot (l to r): local superior Sister Eugenia Lazaro Cardenas; builder in charge of reconstruction Sergei Ponomaryov; and Sister Alicia Gonzalo Lopez.



St Joseph's pastor, Fr Joseph Illo came to bless the office. Also in the picture benefactors, Malissa Souza, Donna DelNero, and Tom Fitzsimmons

I was deeply humbled to witness such generosity to our mission. I had to ask Jerry, "You're saying, 'No rent?'" Jerry's only requests were, "...pray for me when I die and take care of the store when I'm gone (on vacation)."

Jerry was anxious to launch his ministry of "The Light Book Shelf" which will occupy a small portion of the store. Therefore, within 10 days the store was set up and we began moving in office furniture and installing computers.

A special reception of thanksgiving and celebration was held the evening before our April 1st grand opening. We named our store Annunciation Religious Gifts in honor of our Blessed Mother and her example of perfect obedience to God. Fr Joseph Illo from our sister parish of St Joseph in Modesto provided the blessing of the new office and store while volunteers, guests, and well wishers prayed with us and enjoyed the celebration.

Visit our new store!

Grand Opening!

The Light Book Shelf

April 1,
2009

Annunciation Religious Gifts

Promoting increased awareness of the Catholic Faith, the Church, outreach to Catholics not attending Mass, and providing an opportunity for businesses to promote their goods and services through our collective efforts.

Mary, Mother of God Mission Society

"Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia"

A 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization
All proceeds from Annunciation Religious Gifts benefit the catechetical and charitable work of our mission in Vladivostok, Russia and throughout the Russian Far East

- Beautiful icons/statues - reminders of our Faith for your home and office!
- Spiritual, inspirational and catechetical books!
- Handcrafted items from convents and monasteries in the USA
- Hand crafted Rosary cases, book covers and markers from used priests' vestments and chapel veils
- FAIR TRADE/SERV USA and International hand crafts, coffee/tea-aiding the poor around the world
- Hand crocheted Baptismal gowns and blankets and icons from Russia supporting Pro-Life education
- Rosaries, DVDs, CDs, and much more!

Complimentary fresh cup of Mystic Monk and Fair Trade coffee or tea for our guests!

The Light Book Shelf

209-552-0567

jdolls@shelohol.net

Annunciation Religious Gifts

209-408-0728

mgf@godmission.org

www.godmission.org

3420 Oakdale Rd., Modesto CA

Store Hours: Monday - Saturday 9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Announcement and invitation to the Open House

The new MMOG office provides space for four computer work stations. Thanks be to God for the generosity of others who have asked to remain anonymous, we have three of the four computers

we need, and four copy machines, filing cabinets, and desks.

In addition to our five regular office volunteers, we have fifteen scheduled and on-call volunteers, plus six families who volunteer together. All volunteers help to operate Annunciation Religious Gifts in three hour shifts once a week, Mon-Sat. All are faithful and prayerful servants in Christ. Thanks be to God!

Proceeds from Annunciation Religious Gifts go back to the mission whether in more merchandise or to the mission in Vladivostok. (See Development Desk on pg 8.) Not only do we carry Russian icons, baptismal gowns and gifts from Russia, we have Mystic Monk Coffee, Fair Trade tea and gifts, books, CDs, DVDs, statues. We have hand crafted items from monasteries and convents throughout the US to help the religious communities while helping our mission.



Smiling faces will surely attract customers!

It's almost overwhelming to watch the blessings of our Father in Heaven unfold right before our eyes. Even though our best efforts fall short in following the example of our Blessed Mother, we persevere in trust and hope keeping her words close, "May it be done unto me according to thy word." (Luke 1:38) Thank you dearest Mary, Mother of God. Thank you Joan and Jerry Doll.

(Continued from Page One)

During the last 20 years Russia has suffered through the greatest cultural upheaval ever experienced by a country in time of peace. With the rapid change from a communist totalitarian society to a chaotic capitalist society many communities in the former Soviet Union have slid even deeper into degradation than before, and the cycle of poverty and ignorance seems to many who experience it to be irreversible. The same problems that affect life in the big cities of Russia have even more severely devastated the lives of countless villagers. The toxic combination of alcoholism, drug addiction, broken families, multiple abortions, child abuse, parent abuse, unemployment, malnutrition, teenage pregnancy, child delinquency, violence, crime, etc., has made a large segment of the rural population lose all hope for a better future.



Sr. Alicia Gonzalo in the main hallway facing the front door.

Ever since the sisters got to know the parishioners and the needs of the villagers they have wanted to do more to bring the light of Christ and His mercy in ways that would help the most disadvantaged to live better and to find a source of hope in Christ and in the charity of Christians. It was clear to them that weekly visits to the sick and the suffering would never be enough to bring the village out of its tailspin. They realized that it is necessary to serve the villagers daily in ongoing works of mercy, especially among the children and the elderly. Shortly after coming to Russia they began to think about the possibility of sending sisters to Romanovka to open a second residential community.

Two years ago, even though there were not enough sisters yet to live in Romanovka, they decided to begin a more frequent outreach to the village. They started with a program to help village children for whom there were no constructive, supervised activities after the end of the school day.

With funding from family and friends in Spain they hired the professional choir director of the Vladivostok parish, Maria Shurigina, who has a special talent of teaching children to sing, to go to Romanovka twice a week to begin a children's choir. For the last two years this choir has been the most successful extra-curricular children's program in the village. 15 girls and boys meet in a school classroom to rehearse twice a week, and several times a year they perform at schools, day care centers, a nursing home and other institutions in the village and surrounding area.

Working with the children the sisters learned more about the children's family life and the problems they suffer from, and they also came to know more about possibilities for future ways to serve them. It became clear that to do anything in an ongoing way it would be necessary to have a place of their own in the village, at least a modest building for groups to meet in, a kitchen to prepare food for the malnourished, and some kind of outdoor playground. The sisters began to think about buying a building in Romanovka where they could provide programs for children who are affected by deep-seated family problems.

In 2007 Sister Alicia saw a "For Sale" sign on a suitable building in Romanovka. This is a rare event since there are not very many buildings in Romanovka. It had been a



The center, on the left, can be seen as one of the four premises of the "Romanovka Mall".

housewares store in what is jokingly referred to as the “Romanovka Mall”, a group of four adjoining stores situated on the main street next door to the only public school in the village. It is also five buildings away from the central square. It is in an ideal location for a community center. The building has 1,130 usable square feet of floor space on the ground floor plus a tall attic with an identical amount of floor space. It comes with enclosed side and back yards which can be used for a playground and it has good parking facilities in the front. The sisters bought the building in late 2007 for the give-away price of \$9,000.

The Romanovka parish of the Most Holy Trinity has a sister parish in the United States, Saint Philip Benizi in Redland, Oregon. The parishioners of St Philip have been long-time benefactors of their sister parish in Romanovka.

Mary Mother of God Mission Society decided that helping to buy and renovate the building as a community center would be an excellent use of funds provided by Saint Philip Benizi. The sisters were overjoyed to learn that this money was available. They also received a pledge from the provincial headquarters of their congregation, located in the Philippines to help toward the reconstruction project.

To date \$80,000 has been spent for the center on the following: a comprehensive architectural plan to assess structural needs and to divide the space into the best possible configuration of activities rooms, kitchen, utilities rooms and hallways; strengthening the attic floor so that it can be used as a second story; insulating the entire building; installing new, triple-glazed insulated windows with outside roll-down security shutters; new reinforced floor, walls, septic tank, plumbing, and electricity; creation of a fireproof furnace room with an exterior door and the installation of an efficient, multi-fuel, German-designed furnace--It burns coal, wood, paper, or fuel oil; a new suspended ceiling throughout the ground floor with recessed electric light fixtures.

The first floor of the center has the following new room divisions: entrance vestibule and wide corridor; office room; small activities room; large activities room; large kitchen; furnace room; utility room; storage room; and stairway to the attic.

The attic is now one large room, and there are no immediate plans to divide it until more funds become available. In the future the sisters would like to add tall dormer windows, making the space lighter and more useful, and to divide it for use as more activities rooms such as an indoor play room and a library.

All of this reconstruction work has been done by local Romanovka builder Mr Sergei Ponomaryov. The sisters praise him a talented, economical and honest master craftsman. Members of the local parish recommended him to the sisters and everyone was surprised and delighted when it was learned that he had the time to take on such a large project.



The new furnace, builder Sergei Ponomaryov on left and Fr. Daniel on right.

Some work still needs to be done before the building will be ready for public use, including the following: kitchen and bathroom plumbing fixtures; kitchen and laundry appliances; a new exterior façade; and interior furnishings. The estimated cost to complete these final projects is \$20,000 for a total purchase and renovation cost of \$100,000.

For a very reasonable price the sisters will have an ideally-located, well-appointed, efficient, large, 2-story center to use for multiple religious, charitable and social events and projects.

The exact date of the blessing and grand opening of the center is not yet known. The sisters hope that it will be ready by the new school year, but that depends in part on the availability of the remaining necessary \$20,000.



The side yard and back yard in the background.



Dima giving a lecture at the Alpha Course

Progress in the Omega Student Center Program

By Dmitry Kamil

The Omega Student Program has more than 50 people involved in the various programs so far, and 50 more involved in their internet club. All of the programs have been running this year, including Alpha Course (they are on their third course already), Omega Literary Club, Vladivostok film club, Inquiry class, Language classes. We are planning an exhibit in May of student art and music, which should bring new people into the program, as we will pass out their literature and brochures there. We are also planning some special seats for students at our Easter organ concerts, with perhaps "meet the musicians" afterwards. We are planning a day's retreat in May at a camp outside of town. And it should also be noted that the Parish of Our Lady of the Pacific in Nakhodka has already began working on Omega programs, seeing our successes here in Vladivostok. Probably in the near future we will also begin working at St Joseph's parish in Second River for those students who both live and study in that distant district of the city



Alpha "students" learn about Christ.

About Alpha. Alpha is a course of 12 lessons. It is a practical introduction to Christianity which is offered by our Center as a direct evangelization program. Last year's experience proves that many students are interested in continuing their encounter with Christianity by participating in the Alpha Course. During this course students and their friends receive more profound knowledge regarding matters of faith, get answers to their questions given by young Catholics, get to know new friends among Christian youth, and participate in prayer meetings. A lot of people, who have graduated from this course want their friends to go through it as well. They offer help to organize the next courses. We hope that the natural result of our work will be their participation in the baptism preparation and active participation in parish life.



The Alpha Course includes supper.

Here are some comments made by Alpha students when they finished their course: "It was interesting. I liked to share my faith and exchange my experience with others. It was good to see new faces. I'm hoping that those who came several times will think over their lives and maybe they'll be coming back. I'd like to see more people get interested in Christianity." And "Alpha helped me to start a new approach to my relationship with Christ. The fact that the course is very practical is a big help to not merely think about Christ, but to live with Him and receive a lot of joy that I can share with others. I found a lot of answers to my questions, I listened to the opinions of others, and I have found new friends."

Future plans for Omega. We are trying to forecast our activities for 2010. We are planning to extend our work among the university students of Vladivostok and Russian

Far East. Besides keeping and extending all current programs of the both indirect and direct evangelization such as a movie-club, culture and literature club, and Bible studies, we plan on organizing an annual Christian-values oriented photo contest for students. We also plan to perform a pro-life play which would involve local drama students. Because of the youth's desire for an active lifestyle we are going to start some sporting events and hiking pilgrimages.



The walkbridge for students over the construction site of the new "Golden Gate" bridge in downtown Vladivostok.

Another grand plan is to begin to establish Centers in different cities throughout Russian Far East where there are universities such as Khabarovsk, Nakhodka, Ussurysk, and Blagoveshchensk. Our goal is not only an education in the sphere of morals and Christian values, but also preparation to a next step of our work, namely encountering with the basics of the Catholic Church's teaching.

In the beginning of October of 2009, our parish together with some protestant churches will hold a conference for parishes from all over the Far East in order to train young active parishioners who work with youth to organize an effective process of evangelization.

Thus, the Omega Student Center plans on a qualitative continuation of the educational process among students and of their encounter with the Catholic Church's teaching. Next year's objective includes geographical expansion of the program in the Russian Far East and launching at least four new centers.

КАТОЛИЧЕСКИЙ ПРИХОД ПРЕСВЯТОЙ БОГОРОДИЦЫ

АЛЬФА КУРС

Зачем верить в Бога? Кем был Христос? Как бороться со злом? Как Бог действует сегодня? Как общаться с Ним? Альфа курс для тех, у кого есть вопросы.

Приглашаем молодых людей,
желающих узнать больше
о христианстве,
поговорить и приобрести новых друзей
Вас ждут

- УЖИН
- изложение ТЕМЫ
- ОБСУЖДЕНИЕ, вопросы и обмен мнениями
- теплая дружеская АТМОСФЕРА

Alpha

каждую среду в 18:30
с 4 февраля по 1 апреля

по адресу: ул. Дальзаводская 25, кв. 2
(Вниз от остановки Дальзавод и налево, в помещении католического молодежного центра «Хуан Бональ»)



Advertising for Alpha that went up around the city.

Opportunities

♥ Travel to Vladivostok in Leisurely Style September 19-October 5 2009 Steamship "Diamond Princess"

HOLD SPACE FOR JUST \$300.00 PER PERSON DEPOSIT. Take advantage of this unique occasion to cruise from Alaska to China including a full day stop in Vladivostok, Russia. A special tour of the mission has been arranged. This is an incredible opportunity to visit our chapel without the necessity of a Russian visa. Travel to Asia to see the treasures of the Far East; Sapporo, Japan Pusan, South Korea, Qindao, China, Dalian, China and end in Beijing! The total price for the cruise starts at \$1590.00 per person. Please consider making a reservation soon as

our group space can change at any time. For info please contact BarbaraHouplinGarcia@aaawin.com or 866-756-1049.

News Notes

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

♥ Airline travel groups are heading to Vladivostok in June, July, and August, from Arkansas, Indiana, and California. It is not too late to team up with a group to visit us for three weeks.

♥ Order your *Harsh Vineyard: A History of Catholic Life in the Russian Far East* by our parishioner Miroslava Efimova with translation by Dr Gerri Kelly from our Modesto office or our website and receive a discounted price of \$18.00 plus S/H.



Miroslava admiring the English version of her book.

How to Communicate with Us

Internet

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English language: www.vladmission.org

Sisters in Jesus the Lord in English: www.cjd.cc

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- Happy Easter!! On April 13 we raised the first major spire to the top of the first steeple! It was a great day for us, following on the Easter Vigil which was just super, and the Easter Sunday's.



Two television crews were here to film the event—another “evangelization” event. There was a five minute report on local television.

- The abortion rate here in Russia has risen in recent months. Prices have gone up and young moms are concerned about the economic situation, but it seems to me that the Russian government is doing a lot of the right things to make sure the economic situation stays stable, especially for families and pensioners. Meanwhile our Women's Support Centers are doing all they can to encourage women to give birth rather than abort.
- The lack of priests has put a drain on our finances as we struggle to support two parishes in Vladivostok, one in Nakhodka, one in Lesozovodsk, and three on Sakhalin Island! That's also a lot of extra travel expenses and wear and tear on our cars, and on us, because most priests have to go back home every three months to renew their visas! Fr Sebastian left for India recently, leaving Sakhalin Island without a priest until he returns in late May. Fr Daniel is off to America to renew his visa, and will be gone six weeks.
- The children's death rate in Lesozovodsk has increased 31% between 2000 and 2007.

Vladivostok Mission
Mary Mother of God Mission Society
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Praying for you this Pentecost!

From the development desk...

Dear Friends of Vladivostok Mission,

What a wonderful Easter Season! Wow, have we been busy in the mission office since our last newsletter (See Page One!

Sister Parishes are critical direct links of help to the individual parishes in Russia, to getting the word out to others about our mission, and providing volunteer help. Sales of Russian icon are just one of any number of projects that can be done to raise funds. Simply distributing the newsletter in the parish bulletin can help tremendously too! Involvement as a sister parish can be as small or great as you wish it to be. Can you become a sister parish? We need much help in the small and poor community of Lesozovodsk. Please contact me for more information about becoming a sister parish.

Here a great way to help in a down economy: Collect among your parishioners used cell phones, used ink and toner cartridges and recycle them in to help the mission and our landfills!

California supporters have used their SHARE cards when they do their grocery shopping at supermarket chains, Save Mart and Lucy Stores. When the card is swiped like a credit card at the check out stand, 3% of your grocery sales is donated to the mission by Save Mart Stores. It costs you nothing! The mission began participation with this program from Save Mart in late December and the number of card holders is growing! Every penny counts. As of March 31, the mission has earned \$812! Thank you all who are participating. If you'd like to have a card for you and your friends in California, please contact the mission office! It's free!

God bless you and your families!

Yours In Christ, Vicky Trevillyan
209-408-0728

Praying for you this Pentecost!