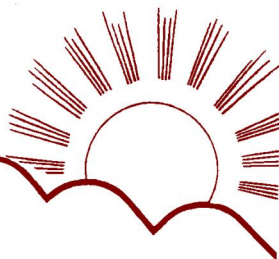


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society and Vladivostok Mission

Issue Number Ninety Six November 1, 2010



Lesozovodsk's New Sister Parish

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

I was delighted when I heard that **St John the Baptist Church in Edgar, Wisconsin**, wanted to be a sister parish to Visitation Parish in Lesozovodsk. Both parishes are in the center of their states, both are largely rural areas, both have a history of forestry ("Lesozovodsk" even means "wood factory."), and we could hope to have a wonderful relationship like St Philip Benizi Parish in Oregon has with Holy Family Parish in Romanovka. So I made arrangements to visit Edgar during my Fall trip to the USA. I was somewhat exhausted from my 12 hour flight across the Pacific, but really enjoyed the Fall colors in Wisconsin. (We don't have maple trees in Russia.) The parish was very welcoming, and even had special Indian corn Fall decorations for sale to benefit the sister parish. We'll look forward to a good relationship, and hope that visitors from the parish can some day visit us in Lesozovodsk. Naturally I took lots of pictures to bring back to Lesozovodsk.

Parishioner Maureen Knetter and Pastor Fr Robert Streveler welcomed me to the parish.



St John the Baptist Church is well cared for in the center of Edgar.



Indian corn to benefit the sister parish made by Maureen



Happy Thanksgiving, Everybody!

The St John the Baptist Church interior



Happy 70th Birthday Fr Myron!

By Paul Hasselbrinck

Well, we surprised Father Myron! He had no idea that we had organized a gathering for the celebration of his 70th birthday and to honor him for all his dedication and service to others. Fr Myron will celebrate his birthday again in Russia on February 7th, his actual birthday.



Birthday cake

Father drove from a speaking engagement in Cincinnati, Ohio to his hometown of Evansville, Indiana to visit his family on October 5th. As Father drove up to St Joseph School, where the surprise party was being held, he commented to his brother, Merle, that there must be a

basketball game tonight because of so many cars in the parking lot. In excess of one hundred friends, family, and supporters had gathered in the cafeteria to greet Father, singing, "Happy Birthday", to him. People from Arizona, Arkansas, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Missouri were in attendance.



Food line at St Joseph's School

childhood, grade school, high school and college graduation pictures of Father Myron were on display along with pictures of his priestly ordination and first mass said at St Joseph. There were books that contained articles written about his accomplishments. The food tables included finger foods, vegetable tray with dip, meatballs, pigs in blanket. The cake table included cookies and punch. Father Myron led us through the line as we filled our plates to eat. The noise of conversations, congratulations, and best wishes filled the air.

The Sisters in Jesus the Lord played the harp and flute as we sung Happy Birthday to Father again. The evening ended with the DVD showing of the Mass of Perpetual Vows of Sister Maria Stella of the Merciful Heart of Jesus, C.J.D. and Mass of First Vows of Sister Maria Damiana Lee, C.J.D.

We gathered the next morning with the reciting of the rosary preceding a mass concelebrated by Fr Myron and Fr Doug Grandon. Fr Myron's homily expressed the teaching and lessons he learned at St Joseph Church as a child. He has taken these lessons with him in his journey

of life. A meeting of supporters followed the mass. Sister Maria Stella opened the meeting, speaking about the history of the formation of the Sisters in Jesus the Lord. She expressed hope of eventually opening a convent in Russia and serving the Russian people. Terry Kopp (Vice President of Mary Mother of God Mission Society) and Fr Doug (Board member) told about the event or events that led them to the Vladivostok Mission. Father Myron told of the changes in the government in the last few years and what he sees in the future. The government is starting to provide some funds for programs that were started by Fr Myron. The government has invested 500 billion rubles in new infrastructure in the Far East. This will provide opportunities to Vladivostok in hosting the activities of the 2012 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. One of the major construction projects for the summit is the 100,000 student Far Eastern Federal University. Father's hope is to establish the Omega Project near this university to serve the university students. Father expressed the need for priests and religious in Russia.

Thanks to all who helped to make this birthday event such a success!



Fr Myron's sisters and brother—mission volunteers, naturally—Marlene Hasselbrinck, Merle Effing, and Marilyn Wassmer

New University Buildings Going Up in Vladivostok

“It was a spectacular sight to say the least!” said Vicky Trevillyan after we toured the new **Far Eastern Federal University** building site on Russian Island. “Multi-storied buildings in the framing stages cover acres and acres where just a couple of years ago only dense forest stood.

Major multi-lane streets are being graded all around the island. The bridge construction from Vladivostok to Russian Island can be seen extending from both shores, soon to be joined at the middle.”

We've mentioned Russian Island many times in these pages, as we have had many retreats there, and AA uses it for their rehabilitation programs. Now the new Far Eastern Federal University will be there, about a mile from our facilities. Naturally we are hoping to open a Women's Support Center near the university, and provide spiritual and evangelization programs for students. Chances are good that there will be many Catholic students at the university, as it is expected to draw students from all over the Pacific, including the more Catholic countries of the Philippines, of South Korea, and even South America. We have to get ready.



A map showing the new campus of Far Eastern Federal University. The red zones are new buildings.

Dormitory buildings





Central Administration Building

The gigantic size of the buildings shows by comparison with the four huge cranes used for construction.



Our Benefactors:



Susan Gray is one of the many wonderful members of our sister parish of the Immaculate Conception in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Susan is always gracious and dedicated in her work for the mission, serving as a mission speaker at parishes, handing out literature at conferences, as a regular mission traveler, or crafting rosaries for our many events. Susan serves another important role for our mission as the Secretary on our Board of Directors. While serving as our grant writer for many years, Susan's thorough and meticulous work ethic has secured many gifts from foundations. These gifts have helped every level of our effort to revive the Church in Russia. On top of all that, you can always find an upbeat and positive attitude from Susan that makes Susan a joy to be around! She keeps us all in stitches with her marvelous sense of humor! You can always find a kind word too, from her warm and friendly personality! Where would we be without the gracious help, dedication and encouragement of people like Susan? Thank you Susan!

Here is a bit of Susan's history with us her own words: "I first met Fr Myron in early 1993, when he visited the Catholic parish at the Little Rock Air Force Base. During that visit, he talked about his work in the Russian Far East and the fledgling Catholic community there. He also spoke of the needs in Vladivostok for just about everything—food, clothing, aspirin, soap, hymnbooks, vestments, you name it!

"A couple of months later, I started a new job as a grant writer at the medical school in Little Rock. As I researched foundations and granting agencies, all I could think about was 'that poor priest who needed everything!'

"Not long after that, I contacted Fr Myron via e-mail, and soon we were putting together grant proposals, seeking funds for some of his projects. That was 18 years ago and I'm still writing grant proposals for the mission society today!

"My first visit to Vladivostok was in 1996. Things were certainly different back then. The church windows were covered with plastic sheeting and many of the panes were missing. Breakfast consisted of dark bread with butter. The big department store downtown had very little merchandise. I remember that one of its glass display cases featured a bar of soap and a tube of Gleem

toothpaste for sale. During a walking tour of the city, Fr Dan and I stopped at a shop that sold beverages. We had our choice of warm apple juice or warm orange juice. The place was poorly lit and hot, with nowhere to sit. We stood there in the dark, drank our juice, and handed our glasses back to the attendant. By the end of that trip, I had a real appreciation for the priests and religious who moved to Russia in those early years.

"I've visited Vladivostok four times now, and have seen vast improvements. I've been fortunate to get to know the Russian staff and parishioners, many remarkable supporters in the United States, and two incredible priests."



Fr James West of our sister parish of the Immaculate Conception in North Little Rock, and other members of the parish (and some others), and Susan, who was instrumental in establishing the sister parish relationship.

News Notes

by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D

- An American foundation is interested in helping us fund the installation of **fire safety equipment** in our church and monastery. It isn't that we've been negligent in this—It is just that the equipment has only recently become available in Russia, and it is already required by the fire department! The foundation is willing to give us 1/3 of the cost if the Russians benefactors will give 1/3 and American benefactors will give 1/3. Sounds like a great deal! So how much is the "American 1/3"?--\$9233.00. If you'd like to make a donation for this, mark it "Fire Safety Account." The deadline is March of 2011. We'll let you know how we are coming along.
- They called from **Children's Hospital #3** to say they only have enough food for their 80 children for ten days, so could we make our usual monthly donation in advance a bit. Thanks to our benefactors like you, we could! The problem is that the US and Russia are still negotiating how they will handle adoptions, and so some of the direct

funding from adoptive parents for Hospital #3 has been cut off, pending further developments.

- The community of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord in Vladivostok increased to four members with the addition of two novices recently. Bro Patrick and Bro Arnulfo are studying the Russian language at the Far Eastern State University's special program for foreigners. Perhaps this program will also be moving to Russian Island to the new Far Eastern Federal University. Meanwhile, the brothers also participate in the programs for orphans, and work around the parish.

Two more seminarians have arrived in Vladivostok, one from Indonesia who nearly finished the seminary already in his home country, and another from the Philippines. They arrived just after I left for America, so I haven't met them yet. So we currently have four seminarians. I'll try to get you a picture when I return to Russia in November.

Vicky Trevillyan, our mission coordinator in the US who visited the mission this summer had this to say about the seminarians: “Patrick and Arnulfo are wonderful and devout young men! They wear their black and white habits wherever they go. They are wonderful witnesses to the presence of the church in the area. People have stopped them on the street and asked them where the church is. Patrick and Arnulfo live in community with our priests, as is the charism of the Canons Regular. Their day is structured and disciplined. Each day they pray together with Fr Myron and Fr Dan, help with preparing meals and daily chores, and attend the university on the weekdays. Patrick and Arnulfo are wonderful cooks and very efficient workers! On Saturday, they visit the orphanage to play with the children. The orphans are all smiles when they see Patrick and Arnulfo and run to greet



Fr Daniel, Bro Patrick, Bro Arnulfo, and Fr Myron

Summer visitors Dr Gerri Kelley, and Caleb Brown, with the novices and orphans.



them with open arms! There’s time for community recreation in the evenings. What a treat to experience authentic Philippino cuisine while in Russia!

“Coincidentally, Patrick and Arnulfo are from the same area of the Philippines. Patrick from Sasa in Davao City, and Arnulfo from Ualas. They speak the same dialect of Bisaya. All here are amazed at how quickly Patrick has picked up on the Russian language in the 6 months he has been here. Patrick speaks 7 languages fluently. Arnulfo is quiet and reverent and always has a big bright and friendly smile for everyone! Arnulfo has a degree in the Philippine languages. Thanks be to God for these fine young men!

“Our mission provides the expenses for our seminarians. We take care of their meals, clothing, education, travel, documents, and anything else they may need. Expenses for each seminarian are over \$800 per month, including their travel and education. With the blessings of more seminarians joining our mission our efforts for fundraising will be ever greater as we focus on supporting their vocations to the priesthood.”

- Caleb Brown, the traveler who is a film maker from Hollywood, CA joined a weekly **Omega Film Club** meeting. Caleb lectured on how to watch a movie and find its meaning through the music, colors, filming techniques and more. Typically, the Film Club’s movie critiques have had a spiritual message or origin. Both the Culture Club and Film Club gatherings are meant to introduce spirituality to those who are not aware. Caleb likes to work on horror films, and teaches about their spiritual meaning.

- More from Vicky: “The **Women’s Support Centers** are doing very well. The work the volunteers and staff are accomplishing in transforming and saving lives is nothing short of miraculous. An 8th Women Support Center has been in the planning stage. Fr Myron received the approval this week from Baby Hospital #3 for a Women’s Support Center there. What a perfect location! However, as always, Fr Myron can only move forward if funding is available. Currently, the mission cannot open the center without additional monies. I met with Olga Berdnikova, the Development Director of Caritas. She is actively meeting with local businesses and developing new local funding sources and volunteer support. The concepts are new to Russians, so response is slow.” The funds needed to operate the WSC’s continues to grow. Expenses are nearly \$3000 per month to run the 7 support centers.

- **Hospice**—It is a true delight to witness the metamorphosis in this 60 bed facility! With the Russian government providing more funding to the hospital, many improvements have been made in the hospice. The old Soviet atmosphere is disappearing with new vinyl

windows and doors replacing old rotting and broken ones. The decayed and warped wood floors were replaced with smooth cement and covered in linoleum. The cracked and chipped walls of the patients' rooms are in the process of being smoothed out and painted in soft, cheerful colors. Caritas supplied hot water heaters to this facility many years ago, and more recently has provided new beds, and an industrial washing machine and dryer. Large white tube rail bed frames replace the chipped and rusting iron frames. Some of the beds still have only thick, worn pads for mattresses, but many of the patients' now sleep on two pads instead of one. The Hospice's one and only pre-WWII era transfer gurney has been replaced with a new modern padded gurney. The Hospice Administrator was notably pleased and proud of this new piece of equipment as she demonstrates it to guests--how it could adjust to different heights--a welcome convenience for the attendants and patients.

Presently, the diet provided to the elders is improved as well. Open sandwiches spread with fish eggs and pate were served to them while we were present. As the mission funds are available, we continue to ensure nutritious foods are provided for the elders.

- **Omega Project** – Members of the Omega Project are reaching out to the youth. It is encouraging to see some of what they are doing. We were able to sit in on a couple of the Omega students' projects. Our parish young adults are active in their outreach to university students and other young people in the community through such programs as the Alpha Program and Culture Club. The Culture Club meets weekly and invites all who are interested to attend their social meetings. The meeting is focused around critical thinking and discussion of a variety of topics. The topic last week was *What Is Self-Sacrifice?* Next week's topic is *What Does God Mean To You?* Discussion is open. Participants are given the floor to speak their thoughts without criticism or disagreement. The meetings leave the participant contemplating the topic of discussion.

Opportunities

- ♥ **Smart Giving – A Double Tax Break.** By donating stock, you could effectively get a double tax break: You not only receive a charitable deduction for the amount of your gift, but you also avoided having to pay taxes on any gains since you'd bought the stock. This combination can give high-income taxpayers nearly 50% in savings. But now that the market has fallen sharply, you have to be careful with gifts. In particular, watch out for these pitfalls:

- Short-term gains. Giving away stock you've owned for less than a year doesn't give you a full tax break. If the value of the stock has gone up, you only get to deduct what you paid -- not what the shares are now worth.
- Losing stocks. If you have a loss on your shares, it's smarter to sell them and give away cash. That way you keep the benefit of a capital loss.
- Donate. Consider donating appreciated stock that you've held for over one year for the potential of a double tax break.

Donation of stock is quick and easy--two phone calls: Call Vicky Trevillyan at the mission office (209) 408-0728. She'll be happy to give you the short instructions, then simply call your broker. More questions? Please call Hugh Dillon at (763) 923-2239

- ♥ **Guardian Angel Project** – The mission facilitates one-on-one help to the poor children of the parishes and surrounding areas through the Guardian Angel Project. This program not only allows sponsors to provide direct support to children, but it has enabled families to stay in their homes. Many of the families are single mother homes. When the mother cannot care for her child or children, they often end up in the orphanage. To date 27 children are receiving direct help from benefactors in the US through our Guardian Angel Project. More children are waiting for sponsors. If you are interested, please contact the office for a brochure. It was created by our benefactor Bruce Gnatowski to help with this project.

How to Communicate with Us

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

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Dear Friends,

We are called to serve and build up our one Church. Whether we serve Christ in our home, neighborhood, city, a bit farther in another country, or all of the above, we are still one Church in Christ, and we serve one another as one body.

The primary goal for Mary Mother of God Mission is to promote education and awareness of the work Fr Myron and Fr Daniel are doing to revive our Catholic faith in Russia. It has taken much dedication by many local volunteers and others around the world to keep the wheels of the Church turning. Through prayer, presence at conferences, talks in parishes and among our local Catholic communities, help and support are brought to our priests in Vladivostok. We give thanks for the many people, religious and laity alike, who answer the call to help, and who work so hard to bring support to the Church in Eastern Russia.

If you feel called to be one of the many who are already "out in the field" for Fr Myron and Fr Dan, we would be very grateful! We need you! Here are some suggestions that make an important impact on spreading awareness of our mission.

- Pray for our Church!

- Ask your pastor if you may place a few copies of the bi-monthly Vladivostok Sunrise in back of the Church. The mission office can send as few or as many as you need.
- Submit an article about the Vladivostok mission in your parish bulletin or diocesan newspaper.
- Request an information packet and DVD from the mission office for your pastor.
- Invite one of our local speakers to your ministry or apostolate meeting or conference, or ask your pastor if you may have a speaker after Mass.
- Be our eyes and ears for Catholic Conferences and let us know when they are in your area.
- Attend a conference booth for us.
- Decide to hold a fundraiser for the mission.

We continue to pray for all of our readers and supporters. We are one family in Christ and we need your wonderful help. We look forward to hearing from you!
THANK YOU!

A Blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas to you and your families!

Vicky Trevillyan
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