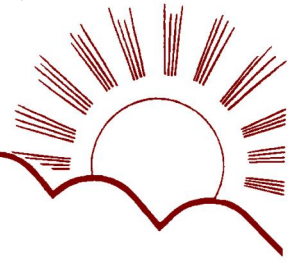


Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society and Vladivostok Mission

Issue Number One Hundred Four March 1, 2012



Christmas Festival of Christian Choirs

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.** With the foundations laid, additional priests and sisters are joining the work, and parishes are slowly growing and multiplying.



The Catholic Choir under the direction of Tatyana Lupach was the first to perform.

Rev Vitaly Teplov of the Methodist Church sang Armenian Christmas chants.



The choir from Central Baptist Church are always inspiring with heartfelt texts, with Irina Barinova, Director.

The choir from St Paul's Lutheran Church always performs with Germanic control and accuracy. The Church was PACKED.





Catholic Choir director Tatyana Lupach with Yuri Belozorov who led the festival.

Martina Omelchenko, the Catholic organist.

Sisters Stella and CatherineMarie on harp and flute, one of the highlights of the Festival.

The Presbyterian Choir.

The choir from the "Good News" Baptist Church, with accompanyist Marina Venyukova.



Sr Roberta Shakhova coordinated the whole event. Thanks, Sister!



Remembering Fr Bernard Reiser (1924-2011)

by Fr Daniel Maurer, CJD

Fr Bernard Reiser, a priest of the Archdioceses of St Paul-Minneapolis and MMOGMS friend, board member and benefactor passed away on December 27, 2011 at the age of 87.

We were introduced to Fr Reiser in 1995 by mission friend and MMOGMS vice president Mr Terry Kopp. Terry knew Fr Reiser when he and his family were involved in activities of Fr Reiser's parish of the Epiphany of the Lord in Coon Rapids, MN. Fr Reiser was the founding pastor of Epiphany, and served in that capacity for 37 years, from 1964 to 2001. After retirement until his death, Fr Reiser lived at "Epiphany Pines" the parish retirement home that he founded.

In 1995 Fr Reiser invited a representative of our mission to speak at all the masses at Epiphany for a second collection. This was a great opportunity for us in the early years because Epiphany is a large and generous parish of over 5000 families. I received the mission preaching assignment, and was very privileged to get to know Fr Reiser and the parishioners and staff of Epiphany.

On my first visit to the parish I happened to notice a large electronic organ standing unused in a corridor near the parish school gymnasium. When I asked Fr Reiser what it was doing in such an unlikely place, he replied that a few years earlier the parish had received a large pipe organ to replace it, and was still trying to sell it, but since it was "older technology" it was not worth a small fraction of what they paid for it, so they did not know what to do with it. Never bashful, I said that I knew what could be done with it. Immediately Fr Reiser offered it to us in Vladivostok, and made arrangements to take up yet another collection on the following weekend to get enough money to send it to us by ship container.

As longtime Sunrise readers will remember, it was the first organ ever in the entire Russian Far East, and became the foundation of both our liturgical music program and of our highly successful series of sacred music concerts. A hand-painted portrait of Fr Reiser hangs behind the "Epiphany Organ" in our choir loft.

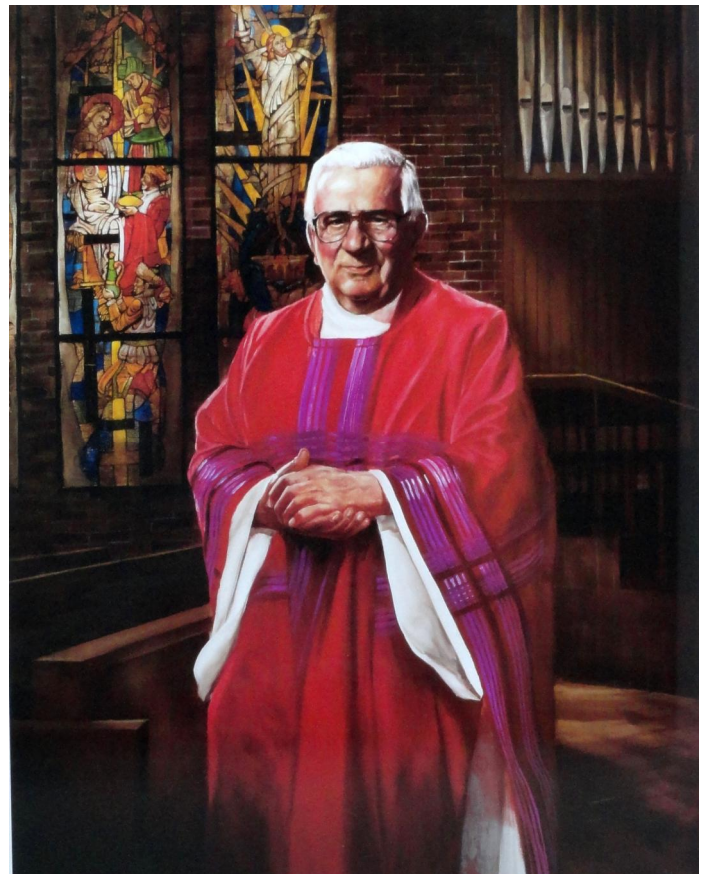
Thanks to Fr Reiser's vision, leadership, and tireless service Epiphany Parish became a powerhouse of prayer,

evangelization, ministry and social outreach, one of the most active parishes I have ever known.

Immediately upon hearing about the needs of the Catholic Church in Russia, Fr Reiser became a very generous benefactor of our mission, and asked the Epiphany parish council to support our outreach to the poor and our liturgical music development program with ongoing financial help.

We will always be grateful to God for Fr Reiser's generous support of our mission programs. He was a great and holy priest, pastor, founder, servant, benefactor and friend. Those wanting to learn more about this wonderful servant of the Lord can access this feature article about him on-line at the St. Paul Archdiocesan newspaper: <http://thecatholicspirit.com/featured/father-bernard-reiser-longtime-epiphany-pastor-dies/>

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him!



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

News Notes

by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D

- It was the **first production of the Vladivostok Sunrise in Modesto, CA**—January 21. “And it was a successful and fun experience considering it was the first time and we had a few challenges crop up with the print delivery and our work room under remodel. We began our day with Mass. 32 people come throughout the day to help, 18 stayed all day! All volunteers were very upbeat and joyful servants. The more challenges, the more determined they were to complete God's work! Two families brought their young children to help and they stayed most of the day inserting envelopes and labeling. They did so well and were such good workers! I presented them with the Kids2Kids tee shirts and explained how their work was so important in helping the kids in Russia! It was an honor and blessing to have a veteran from the St Paul newsletter crew among us! Betty Grundner gave us some great tips! Betty also helped us in our evaluation at the end of the day to see how we can do even better next time. Sue and Ruben Castaneda, our lead organizers for the newsletter team did a great job getting everything going for our first time! It's a huge task to process our 15000+ newsletters. Thanks be to God for so many joyful helpers!” --Vicky

- Ruben and Sue Castaneda are our new *Vladivostok Sunrise* mailing crew leaders in Modesto, CA. Ruben and Sue have been involved helping the mission through our sister parish at St Joseph Parish in Modesto for many years. They visited and worked at the mission in Vladivostok with the sister parish mission team in 2006. Ruben is a retired electrician with the City of Modesto and Sue is a retired school teacher. Ruben and Sue are very organized and hard working, always ready to give a helping hand. They are involved in several apostolates at St Joseph. Sue teaches catechism too! We're grateful this wonderful couple will organize our bi-monthly newsletter mailing! Thanks Ruben and Sue!

- In early January, in time for the Christmas Festival of Choirs, **Sisters in Jesus the Lord** arrived in Vladivostok (but their baggage didn't!) Sr Stella and Sr Catherine will be here for three months. Everybody is happy when they are here. Their first plan is to visit the Hospice to visit those who are most sick and with no families to console them. Then there is Children's Hospital #3 and Sails of Hope House that is always ready to see them, as are the folks at the Soup Kitchen. St Joseph's Parish and Visitation Parish also are inviting them to come visit. So they will be busy. And they want to make what initial arrangements they can to make their next visit permanent,

taking up residence on Russian Island when the bridge will be completed in May.

- I received a very interesting letter recently. You may recall that I wrote earlier about the new Russian martyr **Evgenii Radionov**. He was the Russian soldier who refused to convert from Christianity to Islam during the Chechan War. The letter said, “A while back in one of your newsletters, you wrote about a young man named Evgenii Radionov. We were really moved by the story. So I told my wife I was going to pray for Evgenii's intercession and sainthood for help in a couple of difficult situations for our boys in the Navy. This letter, and gift, is in thanksgiving to God for favors received through Evgenii's intercession. He is very present, and very helpful!” Thanks be to God! Here is a photo of Evgenii.



Evgenii Radionov, a candidate for sainthood in the Russian Orthodox Church.

- We received an urgent letter from **Brother Patrick Napal, C.J.D.** It seems he was pick pocketed on a jeepney in the Philippines on his way to the seminary! He says, “There were only 5 passengers in the jeepney, 3 on the left side, where I was, and two on the right side. On the left, there was a girl, then me, from somewhere, a man entered and sat in between of me and the girl, I was wondering why has he to sit between us, since there was enough space for even 7 people. Then we continued our journey, until all of the sudden, he knocked on the ceiling of the jeepney and said, “Stop! stop! I will go down here!”..I didn't pay attention to it, since that is the common scenario, but what I noticed, was when he left, along with him my wallet in my pocket vanished. I saw him running, so I waited for the chance that the jeepney could stop properly, so I also stopped and tried to run after him, but I could no longer see him, I tried to report to the police, but there was no one around in their police outpost nearby, I

didn't know what to do, I was left only with 10 pesos, that is less than a quarter dollar, I used that 10 pesos to come home here, and just 5 minutes ago, I called a TV report channel, asking for help, they already called the police for me, I also called the bank, to freeze my account. My wallet was stolen, with money on it about \$200 and my ATM card was with it. Imagine, I was dressed in my religious habit, and still the thief had no shame to take my wallet. I do not know what to tell you. Now I am waiting for the police to call me to report the incident.”



Joseph and Mary bringing the child Jesus while the angels watch—in our Christmas pageant at “Midnight” Mass.

- On Christmas Day **Elena Andreevna**, our parish librarian, was heading down the stairs from church to Skipera Geka Street on her way to visit her daughter, who was in the hospital. At the foot of the stairs was a woman standing, not moving, with a bag of things at her feet. As Elena descended and got closer, the lady said to her, “Are you the one I’ve been waiting for? I collected these foods for the poor at the hospital, but can’t go there myself.” Elena was flabbergasted as she didn’t know who the woman was, but admitted that she was in fact going to the hospital. The lady said she just wanted to share some things with the needy on Christmas Day, but she just had the feeling that someone coming down the stairs could help her complete her charitable task! So she had been waiting in the cold for just the right person! Elena happily took the bag along and shared it with the folks she met at the hospital. She joyfully told us all the story when she returned.

- Now that you’ve got me telling stories, here is another one: Yuri, who lives with his **farm family in Lubyanka** said that recently his cow didn’t come home at night with the others belonging to the neighbors. He went searching for it, and spent the whole next day walking and looking

—Yuri doesn’t have an automobile or snowmobile. Everywhere he saw people, he gave them his phone number, in case they would see the cow. No one called. He decided to go to the police. Of course Russians fear the police and don’t expect to get much help from them. The old officer was gruff in the Soviet style and obviously could care less. Suddenly two young officers entered and struck up a conversation with Yuri. One of their questions was, “What is the value of the cow?” Yuri said, “Look, I’ve got four children at home, another on the way, and you want to know the value of the cow!” They got the point, and invited Yuri to go with them in the police car to look for the cow. They checked in the village of Shuryaevka, watching the people scatter as the police car entered the village. Then the police radio announced that someone had called Yuri’s home saying they saw a stray cow in Shuryaevka, and gave the address. Sure enough, they found the cow at that address. But the cow wouldn’t budge from its place. They didn’t know what to do, but then Yuri’s mother, who usually cares for the cow, arrived with a bucket. She calmed the cow, and then milked her as usual. Then the cow was ready to walk home. It seems she was painful from being unmilked for the day. Now the cow is again home, to provide milk for the children, and the young policemen and Yuri are now good friends.

- Got time for one more? Here is a story from Julia, the leader of the **Women’s Support Center** here in Vladivostok: “I’ve known [Masha] already three years. She came to our Center three years ago when she was hurting after an abortion. It seemed to her that her life was ended and there was no future after her boyfriend left her when he found out she was pregnant. After her abortion her boyfriend didn’t come back to her and she was afraid she would never have a child again. Our volunteers supported Masha during those difficult times, and she gradually returned to a normal life. Then she met a new man with whom she wanted to live her life and have a child. But Andre said that if he married Masha, he categorically didn’t want a child.

When Masha got pregnant she was worried that again she would lose her man. Our volunteers tried to help save the family and the life of the child. They spoke to Masha many times, and then began to talk to Andre. At first he opposed any attempt at conversation, but after he saw a photograph of his child taken with the ultrasound he began to soften. It became clear from the conversations that he was afraid of financial problems, but mostly he was afraid to accept responsibility for the child. He was afraid that his wife would give more attention to the baby than to him. Such an infantile and egotistical 40-year old was difficult to convince. But all difficulties were finally cleared away, and on December 5 little Andre was born, the spitting image of his father. The birth was difficult,

requiring extra medical care and extra food. Thanks to the Adopt-a-Mom program we were able to supply the meds. Of course we'll help them further."

- Our staff has begun to work on the **Fire Safety Equipment** that we need to install in the church and rectory.



Electrician Grigory Korsak changing all the receptacles in the church and rectory to the grounded type, as demanded by the Fire Department. When we built the buildings, grounded receptacles were not available anywhere in the city.

- A member of the city administration told us how she drives to work every day and looks forward to seeing the steeples of our church gleaming in the sun. She said that our building is a truly unique gift for the city. I told her that we were hoping to complete the **roof restoration** by summer time, and certainly in time for the meeting of Asian Pacific countries that will be held here in Vladivostok in September. We just purchased the metal for the rest of the job, and are now looking forward to making a contract with the construction company for the work. But we are still short of funds to complete the roof. Hopefully the work can be done in April.

Opportunities

- ♥ Mission travel teams are forming! Visit our mission to see first-hand and participate in the work to revive our Catholic Faith in Eastern Russia. You can spend time playing with and giving important big hugs to the children and babies in the orphanages, spend time with the elderly at the soup kitchen and hospice hospital, visit the huge new university on Russian Island where we hope to have a Newman Center soon, help in minor construction projects and visit our outlying parishes. Contact Vicky at the mission office for information. So far we have seminarians from Rome visiting, FOCUS from the USA, and Friends of the Mission, Inc.

- ♥ SHARES card update! SHARES card users earned \$2809.11 for the mission last quarter! The greatest quarterly earnings yet! Thank you! When you do your grocery shopping at Save Mart, Luckys, Smart Foods or Food Maxx, simply present your free SHARES card at the

checkout. Save Mart stores will donate up to 3% of your grocery bill to the mission! It costs you nothing! Contact the mission office for your free cards!

- ♥ The new conference and parish speaking season is just beginning! If you would like to attend Catholic Conferences to pass our mission information and/or speak at parishes about our mission during weekend masses, we could use your help! Priests who would like to speak a weekend or two are especially needed.

- ♥ Our Vladivostok hooded sweatshirts are available in navy, maroon and black, sizes child medium –adult 3X. Costs are \$28 - \$36, plus shipping. Email our mission office for ordering, usoffice@vladmission.org

- ♥ The mission is participating in the used ink, toner and cell phone recycling program. We earn cash or office supplies credit vouchers for turning in these items. Please contact the mission office if you would like to help us. We'll send you a pre-paid postage paid label from the participating store. All you do is box up the recyclables, place the label on the box, and mail! No cost to you or the mission, and we'll receive our office supply credits!

- ♥ Contact the mission office for more information on our opportunities! 209-408-0728 or email us.

How to Communicate with Us

Internet

Russian language: www.catholic.vladivostok.ru

English language: www.vladmission.org

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

Office in Russia: Phone and FAX: +7-423-226-9614

myron@catholic.vladivostok.ru

daniel@catholic.vladivostok.ru

Office in California: Phone and FAX: +1-209-408-0728

Mary Mother of God Mission Society

1736 Milestone Cir

Modesto CA 95357

usoffice@vladmission.org

Sisters in Jesus the Lord: +1-816-353-2177

7049 Blue Ridge Blvd

Raytown, MO 64133

www.cjd.cc

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Mary Mother of God Mission Society
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Modesto CA 95357-0835

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends,
A blessed Lent to you!

- Spring is just around the corner. This year it means – ROOF REPAIRS! Thank you to all who have helped to complete the first phase of the roof repairs so far. Fr Myron has already purchased the metal using the funds raised so far. We are praying for the \$39,808 still needed in order to complete our final stage of the repairs. Can you help? You may find the budget and fundraising progress on our website, www.vladmission.org

- Many thanks to all who contributed recipes for our Mary Mother of God Mission International Cookbook! When the book is published, we will use the funds for our Women's Support Centers and support our seminarians. Stay tuned!

- Speaking of seminarians, as you may know we have 4 now! All are fine young men who are studying hard towards their vocations. Here's what Fr Myron recently wrote about them: "**Br Patrick Napal, C.J.D.** took his first vows, March 19, 2011, the Feast of St Joseph. He is now studying at St Francis Xavier Seminary in the Philippines. He is expected to finish his B. A. degree this

month so he can go on to the higher seminary. **Br Arnulfo Undona, C.J.D.**, took his first vows last August 2011, the Feast of the Assumption. He will go on to seminary in Manila in June 2013. **Br Inosensius Hetu, C.J.D.** took his first vows in December 2011. He has actually finished the seminary already, but his ordination has to wait until his final vows in our order. Meanwhile he will study for a higher theology degree so that he can be part of the formation of future seminarians. **Br Edwin Intan, C.J.D.** entered the novitiate in December 2011 and expects to go to Seminary in June of 2013."

Fr Myron is responsible for the formation of the seminarians for the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord. We wish to provide every opportunity to help these young men complete their seminary education. We support their education, room and board, and travel expenses. The average cost to support each seminarian is \$695 per month. Could you consider sponsoring one of our seminarians?

- Thank you for your prayers and providing for the work to revive the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia! God bless you. Sincerely,

Vicky Trevillyan Mission Coordinator, 209-408-0728