

MISSION ✠ RUSSIA

SISTERS IN *JESUS* THE LORD

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Winter, 2007

VOCATION TRIP TO CHICAGO APRIL 15-17: COME WITH US!



Some of you may remember reading last spring about our trip to Chicago for the National Meeting of the Institute on Religious Life (IRL) on Divine Mercy weekend. Youth and adults, 13 and older, are invited. It is an opportunity to meet many different orders of Priests, Brothers, and Sisters, and learn about their lives and work.

Any adult interested in fostering vocations would find this weekend a wealth of inspiration and information. Religious life is one of Christ's great gifts to His church, and this weekend helps participants to understand this vocation better.

We again have the use of a bus, and are looking forward to a large group. Check out our website for more details, especially the many wonderful speakers presenting throughout the weekend.+

WILL A MEMBER OF SISTERS IN JESUS THE LORD VISIT VLADIVOSTOK THIS SUMMER?

Please pray for us for the completion of the historic Catholic church building in Vladivostok, Russia. Our brother community has chosen the date of August 19, 2007 for the rededication of the

church and dedication of the rectory. We hope that at least one of our members will attend. It could happen if we get enough donations of frequent flier miles. This would be an opportunity to meet the bishop, and to look at potential places to establish our first convent.

Many of you ask us when we will send some members to Russia. We are still praying for our fifth member, so that three women can be the first group for Russia, while at least two stay in St. Paul to train new members. Thankfully, we know that God's timing is perfect!+

RUSSIAN GRANDMA PROGRAM— NEEDED MORE EACH DAY

Recently, in the Russian news, a story has been circulating that reflects the need for additional care for Russian orphans. Our Russian "Grandma Program" that is now underway is one answer!



L-R: Natasha and Yelena Hardcopf, our Russian language teacher. Yelena and Rick Hardcopf of Minneapolis, MN, recently adopted little Natasha from Vladivostok.

At present, three different orphanages at Vladivostok, Artyom, and Ussyrisk have the

program, which enables older Russian women to come each day to hold the babies, to play with the young children and take them outside to the park or downtown. With daily visits and loving attention from Russian women of grandmotherly age, they can be greatly aided in their development.

This program brings young and old together, to the great benefit of both. For \$60.00 per month, a Russian "grandma" can afford bus fare and other small expenses. The program is overseen by Fr. Myron Effing of Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Church in Vladivostok, Russia. See our website for more details!+

CONVENT LIFE... CLASSES



L-R: Collette, Sr. Maria Stella, Jane Rea, Sr. Julia, Sr. Catherine Marie studying the Catechism.

Every other Saturday, all four members, plus some friends of the community, are enjoying a class on Catholic philosophy and theology, based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The class is taught by Jane Rae, who has a Masters degree from Ave Maria University. On the other Saturdays, the members of Sisters in Jesus the Lord have been studying the Rule of St. Augustine, the rule that has been chosen. Many different communities follow this rule.

Collette and Sr. Maria Stella are working towards an M.A. in Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas, and Sr. Catherine Marie is studying for her B.A. in Catholic Studies. Sr. Maria Stella is in her fourth year of Russian at Macalester College.

Collette and Sr. Maria Stella are also receiving Russian tutoring from Yelena Hardcopf, a Russian Catholic from Vladivostok with a Masters degree in teaching Russian as a foreign language. She married a Minnesotan and settled here in Minneapolis.+

SILENT DESERT DAYS AT CONVENT!

We sisters have a Desert Day (23 hours of silence and prayer) once each month. We invite women ages 17 and older to join us here at St. Agnes convent, at no charge. In January, three women attended, one from as far away as Chicago. One woman came a day early to learn more about our community.

Our next "Desert Days" are February 24-25 and March 17-18. Please see our website for more details under "Desert Days." +

A NOTE OF THANKS TO:

- ❖ Susan Gray, longtime supporter of the Russian mission, who sent us several recorders. Thanks also to Elizabeth Martin-Hinton, a long-time volunteer, for a beautiful guitar.
- ❖ All who attended our first annual pre-Advent "Afternoon with the Sisters" on December 2—it was a great success!
- ❖ Ryan Whittier, brother of Sr. Maria Stella, for creating a beautiful new DVD on orphans from Vladivostok, promoting our milk and fruit and grandmother programs. Call for a copy!+

TO CONTACT SISTERS OR CANONS:

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1854 Jefferson Ave, St. Paul, MN 55105-1662
(651) 227-0208 www.vladmission.org
A lay mission organization supporting our brother community in Vladivostok, Russia.

Sisters in Jesus the Lord is a new private association seeking to "bring people to Jesus and Jesus to people" (John Paul II), starting with reviving the Roman Catholic Church in the Russian Far-East. For now, the members may use their religious names and wear the habit in the convent only. Two Roman Catholic American priests, who are Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord, are working in Vladivostok, Russia, and we will be their sister community.



Future missionaries? "Deacon" Frank (9) and "Father" Ross (7), young sons of one of our faithful volunteers, love playing Mass almost every day. Pray for vocations...

ENGIYOU— FOREVER FRIENDS

Sister Julia Kubista, M.M.

The task of introducing Christ to people who have not heard of Him can seem daunting. However, quite often God has happy surprises waiting, for He has been at work preparing them for a long time. Sometimes a whole nation of people has traditions that are a preparation, albeit small, for their reception of the Good News.

One outstanding example of this happened in my work with nomads in Eastern Africa. I had for over a year come frequently to their thorny kraal in the evening to discuss various lessons from the Old and New Testaments, in preparation for baptism. It happened on a night when the balmy evenings were most soothing; the moon was full, which helped one see each face clearly, as members of the village sat on the sandy soil just outside the kraal.

Our schedule of lessons was approaching Christ's institution of the Eucharist. His passion, death, resurrection, and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It was always awesome teaching these lessons to those who did not have any previous knowledge of the Gospel story.

The lesson that evening was from the New Testament on brotherly love. About three-fourths of the way through the discussion, the head of the kraal suddenly stood up, picked up his staff, and said, "Sister, I have something to tell you." In their

Coming Soon...

A Vocation Discernment weekend, June 22-24, 2007. Includes prayer, talks, time to reflect, opportunities to talk with a sister. Consider attending, and/or encourage a friend ☺

form of government, he had an office comparable to a senator. The fact that he held his staff meant that he was going to speak officially. His actions got my attention, and rightly so, considering what he proceeded to describe.

He said, "Every man in our nation must celebrate an initiation ceremony of friendship with a male friend whom he chooses. It is the most important ceremony of his life. After this initiation, these two will be *Engiyou* (forever friends). We know this friendship is forever, but how it can be so, we don't understand. Only through this initiation does one become truly a member of our race. Whatever one friend asks of the other, must be given. The two of them will be one in spirit."

The leader paused, turned toward me, and said, "I have yet to explain the most important part of this friendship, but you will not understand." Then he sat down. My heart sank. What he had told so far was an amazing stepping stone for faith in Christ, and especially for the upcoming lessons. I quickly prayed that he would go on. I only later found out that all of what he was sharing was never to be told to outsiders like myself.

After a few minutes, he rose and said, "Sister, if I explain it in the following way, you just might be able to understand. The most important part of the covenant of friendship is that if one friend visits his *Engiyou*, they must share food. Let us say that throughout our land, there was a terrible famine, such that our herds were dying out (each family had its own herd of cows, and lived almost exclusively on milk). Even in such a time of crisis, if one friend visits his *Engiyou*, the latter must find at least a few drops of milk to sprinkle on the foot of the other. This sharing of food must be done, so as not to break their covenant."

What a boost this revelation was to our preparing them to receive the gift of faith. Thanks be to God!+

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Sisters in Jesus the Lord
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**Vladivostok: Our First
Mission Destination**

~ HOW CAN I HELP? ~

**BE A PRAYER PARTNER
WITH SISTERS IN JESUS THE LORD!**

We believe that God wants us to get to Russia as soon as possible to help the growing Catholic Church in the Russian Far-East with Father Myron Effing and the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord. We are eagerly preparing for the day when we can join them.

Please pray that young women who have a vocation to the missionary life will come, and that our community will develop according to God's plan. We send a list of prayer intentions via email each month to all our prayer partners.

Please, will you join us in this endeavor? If so, please email us at sisterjulia@cjd.cc, or send us your address.

ADOPT A SISTER!

No gift is too small! All donations are tax-deductible.

Make donations on-line at www.cjd.cc or



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Sisters in Jesus the Lord
Send to:
Sisters in Jesus the Lord
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WISH LIST:

Frequent Flier miles for a round-trip for two to Vladivostok this year so we can attend the rededication of Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Church.

An oboe.

A serger for our sewing room.