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September 20, 2018

Dear Friends and Family, Prayer Partners,

We have great news! The purchase of the last available apartment in Dom Marii, Apt. 2, went through on September 12, the memorial of the Most Holy Name of Mary. Now, between Fr. Myron and ourselves, we own seven out of the eight apartments! We had been advised not to touch renovations until we had this last apartment. So, on Saturday, we were able to invite an architect to come. He's helping us find the professionals for the various official steps needed here. The first project is seeing if we can finish off the attic and raise the roof slightly to make a third floor, called a "mansard roof." Our next step will be to connect the rest of the building to the city's heat system before the winter comes...your prayers are bearing fruit!!

Once again this year we were joined for three weeks by a group of 11 members of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) who helped us with two children's camps and the Catholic young adult conference. Many of them commented on our pilgrimage day to the sites in the city where people were killed under Stalin.

After they returned to the United States, we had a little "in-house vacation" and enjoyed especially exploring more of the beautiful rocky beaches here on Russian Island. Now, things are back in full swing and that's good, too. We hosted our parish choir for a cook-out a few Sundays ago, and last Sunday had another cook-out for the Catholic international students from Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU) who aren't as comfortable with speaking Russian.



Parish Choir Cookout on Russian Island  
L-R Sr. Joanna Marie, Sr. Maria Stella, Sr. Catherine Marie  
Sr. Faustina Marie, and Maria (postulant)

Sr. Faustina, Sr. Joanna and Maria are working away on making the various materials for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The new school year began last Sunday, and both the children and the sisters are excited! The curriculum for this program, which uses the Montessori method for teaching the Catholic Faith, recently added a relief-map of Israel for the children to learn from. Right now the sisters are creating a puzzle of the map of Israel. Other

materials are ready for this year's classes including a mini tabernacle made by Ralph Hodapp, a parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes, Raytown, MO., and priests' vestments, altar clothes, etc. sewn by Mother Julia, Sister Maria Damiana, and a KC friend, Jo Jurado. Currently our sisters are teaching the 3-6 year olds on Sundays.

Sr. Catherine just returned from the diocesan sisters' retreat in Irkutsk, where our bishop resides (a four-hour flight from Vladivostok). We go whenever we can to this annual event, because in addition to the retreat itself, it is a great blessing to be with other sisters and to learn from their experience. There is a day or two before and after the retreat when the sisters have time to become acquainted with one another and share ideas. Soon the parish "Apologetics Group" will be starting again—the topic for this fall is the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

Please pray for our Rachel's Vineyard retreat for healing after abortion which will be October 5-7, 2018. For various reasons, It has been almost three years since our last retreat, and we are grateful that it is possible to offer it once again. We have five retreatants registered so far.

You are a vital part of our mission! Thank you for all your encouragement, support, and prayers.

In Christ,  
Sr. Maria Stella, CJD