

MISSION RUSSIA

Sisters in *Jesus* the Lord

Vol. 12 No. 2

WWW.CJD.CC

Christmas 2016

SHARING LIVES

By Marissa Emmerich



Marissa Emmerich with 6-year-old at Children's Gathering.

From the moment I returned home after my first FOCUS mission trip to Russia in the summer of 2015, I knew I was called to go back. One aspect of this month-long mission that God continued to put on my heart was the Lesozavodsk Children's Gathering that takes place every year during the first week of August. I cannot emphasize enough how influential and important this week-long Children's Gathering is. It truly changes the lives of everyone involved.

The children I met in the poorest area of town are not free to be children. They live in modest housing (a tiny, one-room apartment that functions as bedroom, bathroom,

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Student Ministry Blossoms on Russian Island

Since September, Catholic university students have been gathering weekly with the sisters in Dom Marii to enjoy a home-cooked meal, hear an inspiring spiritual talk, and support one another in their Faith. Members of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord help provide music and prepare the talks. Six to ten students come regularly, and a real spirit of virtuous friendship has developed among the students. We are so grateful to have a place where these students can gather to grow in their relationship with Christ together!



Catholic university students gather in Dom Marii on Russian Island.

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and kitchen), collect cigarette boxtops as toys, and come to you every day with new and infected bruises, cuts, and sprains from the latest fistfights they have fought. Some of the children do not get to experience what a loving community looks like, and they frequently attack each other verbally and physically. Some have even experienced in their family suicide and/or abortion. I am convinced that the only way to help this situation is by sharing with these children that Jesus can be their role model, that He understands their suffering, and that He died to be their Friend.

So how does this Gospel message get shared in such a short amount of time? Saint Francis of Assisi once said, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words." Our FOCUS mission team shared Christ's love through our actions. We shared meals with one another, created crafts with one another, and played sports with one another. By entering into the children's lives, we shared in their suffering, and they shared in our love. This kind of love is demanding, and I now understand what 1 Thessalonians 2:8 means when it says, "So we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well." I gave all of my love to these children. I gave my very self to them.

Through this sharing of lives, not only did the children encounter Christ in us, but we also encountered Christ in them. With the help of our Mother Mary, I saw



A child shows the picture of Jesus she drew at the week-long summer children's gathering.

Christ crucified in these children every day. I saw Him suffering through living their daily struggles. I saw Him being persecuted through their speech and action with one another. I saw Jesus hanging from the cross and crying out "I thirst," in each one of these children as they longed for love, attention, and authentic friendship. This cry continues to break my heart.

As we preached the Gospel using actions, it soon became necessary to use words. Using the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, we gave a Gospel presentation to the children. We shared how Jesus suffered immensely, how He knows what kind of suffering they take on daily, and that He wants to be their Friend. That day, many children prayed to have Jesus come live with them in their hearts forever.

It is safe to say that the FOCUS mission teams that have come for the last five summers have impacted the lives of these children – many of the kids have testified that the Children's Gathering is their favorite week of the entire year. But this impact goes both ways. The children of Lesozavodsk have taught me what Saint Teresa of Calcutta meant when she said that the meaning of true love is to give until it hurts. Through these kids, I encountered Christ crucified, and it made me go back to my college campus and pour out my life and my love to my fellow students. It is because of these children that I find myself at the foot of the Cross daily, listening to Jesus' thirst for a relationship for me, and encountering His thirst in others on my campus.+

NEWS NOTES

- BIG NEWS! We've bought three more apartments this year!! Soon we can start renovating Dom Marii.
- All three sisters serving in Russia will be in the U.S. in February and March at home or at the Motherhouse in Raytown, MO. Sr. Maria Stella will be in Virginia and South Carolina, Sr. Catherine Marie will be in Iowa, and Sr. Faustina will be in Missouri.
- For the fifth year, the sisters in Missouri taught "On Mission with Christ," a week-long vocation educational program for 6th graders, to Catholic students in Kansas City in November.

Contact Sisters in Jesus the Lord

www.facebook.com/sistersinjesusthelord33

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Sr. Catherine Marie with members of the Catholic Apologetics group at the Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Church in Vladivostok. Four members received certificates for completing the first level of the nine-level course, which Sr. Catherine leads weekly at the parish. They all love learning more about their Faith and how to share it with others!



Participants in the 20th annual Young Adult Conference. The conference was held in Dom Marii. The youth enjoyed daily Mass, talks on the mercy of God, all-night Adoration, volleyball, swimming, and a cookout by the beautiful bay on Russian Island.

We need your continued financial support!

See the enclosed updated pamphlet.

God bless you for your generosity.

Let Christ Give Us Merciful Hearts A Reflection for the End of the Year of Mercy

By Mother Julia Kubista

One of my favorite pictures in our convent is that of Jesus walking on the water and calming a storm for His disciples. It is not an artistically great picture, but for me a spiritually great one. I try daily to hold onto what Christ taught us when He did that. In our world today we face numerous storms, some small and some life-threatening. Christ wants us to help Him calm these storms, storms that each of us meet in our day-to-day relationships, and as we live the mission that Christ has assigned to us. In this jubilee year we received a golden key as to how to face and work toward the calming of each and every one of these storms: mercy. As we enter a new year, let us beg Christ to continue to meld our hearts with His Merciful Heart, so that we can have the courage and trust to 'step out of the boat' and conquer these storms.



Sr. Maria Stella with her godson Pavel at his baptism in August. This year, the sisters in Vladivostok were blessed to become godmothers to six newly-baptized parishioners. May these new Catholics grow in their likeness to Jesus!

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Sisters in Jesus the Lord
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Merry Christmas from our convents
on Russian Island and in Kansas City!

How can I help?

BE A PRAYER PARTNER

We send a list of prayer intentions by email or regular mail (if no email) each month to our prayer partners. To become a prayer partner with us, send us a note, or email us at cjdprayerpartner@gmail.com.

Is God asking YOU to be a priest or sister for Russia?



Many missionaries are needed! Please join us in praying for vocations to serve the Roman Catholic Church in the Russian Far-east. See our websites for more information: www.cjd.cc and www.vladmission.com.

Photo: Sr. Maria Stella with a child in Russia.

SEND A SISTER TO RUSSIA

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

Make donations online: www.cjd.cc

Make checks payable to:
Sisters in Jesus the Lord

Send to:
Sisters in Jesus the Lord
7009 Blue Ridge Blvd
Raytown, MO 64133-5629

Wish List

Frequent flier miles: Capital One, any amount; other types, preferably 25,000 miles or more at a time.

Mission Travel: Help us get to our mission. It costs approximately \$2,000.00 per sister to fly roundtrip from Kansas City to Vladivostok.

Handbell set for playing at Midnight Christmas Mass.