

Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society and Vladivostok Mission

Issue Number One Hundred



Special Edition Issue: Highlights from *Vladivostok Sunrise*

By Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

December 1, 1989: **Mikhail Gorbachev and Pope John Paul II** meet in the Vatican and agree to work toward the reestablishment of the Catholic hierarchy in the Soviet Union and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Holy See.

March 1990: On Guam Fr Myron reads an article in an "Aid To The Church In Need" newsletter saying that soon there will be a great **need for Catholic priests** in the Soviet Far East. He begins to think about starting a new community in the Pacific port of Vladivostok, the largest city in the far eastern part of the Soviet Union. In April, he and Br Dan receive an invitation from Bishop Montrose of Stockton, CA to work in Modesto, CA. They move to Modesto in June.

December 1990: Fr Myron asks Br Dan to write to his friend, Fr Norman Meiklejohn, AA, the Catholic chaplain for the diplomatic community in Moscow, to find out where they can **apply for service in Vladivostok**. Fr Norman tells him to write to Msgr. Jean-Louis Tauran, Vatican Secretary of State for Relations with States.

February 20, 1991: Br Dan writes to Msgr. Tauran. Not receiving an answer, he writes again on April 13, coincidentally the same day that the **Roman Catholic hierarchy is officially re-established** in the Soviet Union with the appointment of 5 new bishops.

April 14: Fr Myron and Br Dan read in the local Modesto newspaper a short announcement about **the re-establish-**



November 10, 1991 Fr Myron's first mass in Vladivostok, on the street in front of the cathedral.

ment of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in the Soviet Union. Now they understand why it has taken the Vatican so long to answer their inquiry.

June 1991: We receive a letter from Msgr Tauran thanking us for our application to work for the Church in Russia

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.

and advising us to contact the newly appointed Catholic bishop in the “**Apostolic Administration of the Asian part of Russia**” in whose jurisdiction is Vladivostok.

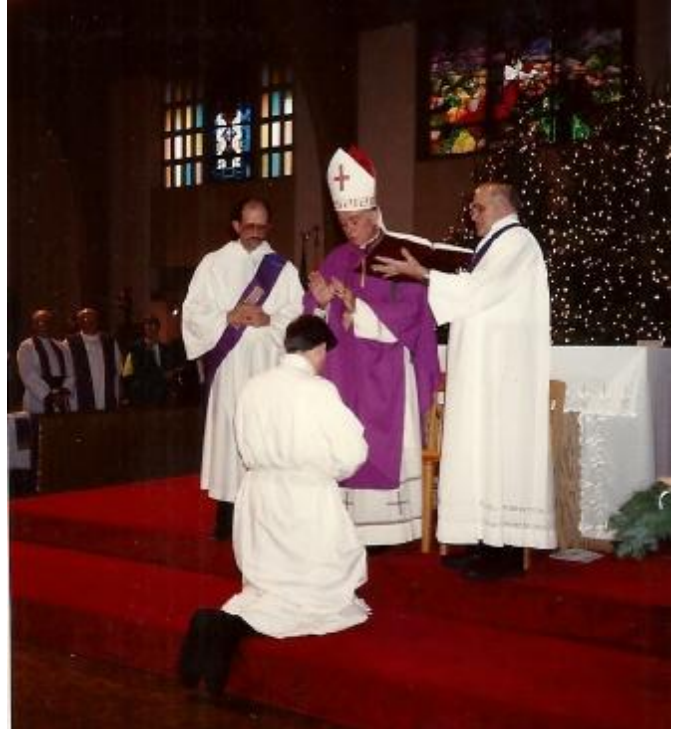
August 1991: **Fr Myron makes his first survey trip to Russia**, to find and talk to the new bishop. (VS #2, p 1), lasting two weeks and including meetings with people in Anchorage, Magadan, Khabarovsk, Irkutsk and Novosibirsk. In Anchorage he meets Archbishop Francis Hurley, who very generously offers to help provide our future mission with a US address and office help for development purposes. For the next 6 years in the Anchorage Archdiocesan Chancery **Mr Ray Rzeszut** is our US office coordinator. We are grateful to Archbishop Hurley, Ray and his entire family for their indispensable help during those first several years. (See special tribute to the Rzeszuts in VS #30, p 4).

Fr Myron meets Bishop Joseph Werth, SJ in Novosibirsk (in the heart of Siberia, (VS #1, p 1) and asks him if he needs our services, and if so, would he be willing to accept us in Vladivostok with permission to begin a new community of Canons Regular under his sponsorship? Bishop Werth responds that he has no way of knowing about the present situation of Catholics in Vladivostok because it is a closed “military” city. No one, not even Soviet citizens, can enter without a special permit. He tells Fr Myron that he recently received a letter from a group of people calling themselves the “Roman Catholic Community of Vladivostok” asking him to send them a priest in order to establish a parish. He also says that if Fr Myron can find his way into Vladivostok and if there really are Catholics who need a priest, he would erect a parish there and assign Fr Myron as pastor, and further allow us to work toward establishing the community of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord.

November 1991: **Fr Myron enters Vladivostok** illegally, although he had a valid Russian visa for Vladivostok from the consulate in San Francisco, gets caught by the Soviet militia, pays a small fine, and is able to meet with the “Catholic community” of about 10 members. He learns that before the Communist revolution (November 1917), Vladivostok was a large and active Roman Catholic center and a diocese, and that the pre-revolutionary church had not been destroyed, but only confiscated for the use by the Communist government.

November 10, 1991: Fr Myron celebrates **the first Mass** in 56 years at the Catholic Cathedral of the Most Holy Mother of God. Because the church building is occupied by the state archives, the Mass is held outside in the cold on the front steps, (VS #1, p 2).

December 1991: Fr Myron reports his findings to Bishop Werth, who agrees to accept us to work in the parish and also approves the ordination of Br Dan to the diaconate. “**Fr Effing and Br Dan To Vladivostok**” says the first headline of the first issue of the *Vladivostok Sunrise*, edited and published in Livingston, CA by Fr Myron as he and Br Dan wait for their visas to go to Russia. It was printed on plain paper with b&w photos.



Ordination of Br Dan Maurer to the diaconate by Bishop Paul Donovan of Kalamazoo, MI, December 20, 1991.

December 20, 1991: **Br Dan is ordained to the diaconate** at his boyhood parish in Benton Harbor, MI by the Bishop of Kalamazoo for service to the Church in the Asian Part of Russia, (VS #1 p 3).

December 25, 1991: **Mikhail Gorbachev** resigns as Secretary General of the Communist Party of the USSR.

December 26, 1991: The country called the USSR is formally dissolved. Its 15 constituent republics, including the Republic of Russia, become independent countries.

January 1, 1992: The legislature of the city of Vladivostok passes a law **opening the city** to all Russians. Foreigners still need to obtain a Russian visa to enter Russia.

January 4, 1992: In honor of the **first visit of Archbishop Francis Hurley** of Anchorage, AK to Vladivostok, the state officials approve the formal re-establishment of the Roman Catholic Parish of the Most Holy Mother of God as a registered religious institution. This step is necessary

to be able to invite foreign church personnel to Russia for religious activities, (VS #2, p 3).



Archbishop Francis Hurley, D.D. of Anchorage, Alaska visited us several times, here with Fr Michael Shields of Magadan.

February 11, 1992: “**At Last – Vladivostok!**” (VS #2, p 1). Fr Myron and Br Dan arrive in Vladivostok (pop. 750,000) to take up residence. They are the 4th and 5th foreigners to enter the city legally for the purpose of residing there (not as tourists). **Anastasia Potapenko** the lay leader of the parish has made arrangements for them to rent a small 2-room apartment with telephone for one year. Rental cost: \$400 a year, including utilities and maintenance. At that time fewer than 30% of the population of Vladivostok have telephones.



Attendees at the first Sunday Mass.

Sunday, February 16, 1992: The **first Sunday Mass** is held in the small auditorium in the basement of the “Palace of the Pioneers”, (the Communist children’s scouting organization). Around 35 people attend, of whom approximately 20 are Catholics. (VS #2, p 1).

February 1992: Fr Myron meets with Governor Vladimir Kuznetsov of Primorsky State and with the director of the Archive of Primorsky Krai (which occupied our church building for 60 years) to discuss the question of **returning the church building to the parish**. Governor Kuznetsov tells Fr Myron that he thinks this can be accomplished in about 18 months.

June 7, 1992: **Fr Myron performs his first baptisms** and confirmations in the parish when six adults complete their 8-week course of catechism classes, (VS #4, p 5 photos). Before Fr Myron and Fr Dan arrived in Russia to stay, two other Roman Catholic priests had visited Vladivostok to look for Catholics. While in the city they baptized ten people: **Fr Ignaty Paulus** SDS on Nov. 14, 1991 and **Fr Jan Sergei Gayek** on Jan. 3-4, 1992.



(r to l) Fr Joseph Fessio, S.J., Mr and Mrs Richard Schindler (early parishioners), Roxanne Lum and Donna Fong (Fr Fessio’s assistants), Anastacia Potapenko (parish secretary), Br Dan, Igor Davidov (interpreter), and Fr Myron—standing in front of the van that Fr Fessio bought and donated to us.

July 1992: “**Ignatius Press Comes to Visit and To Work**” (VS #4, p 1-3.) Fr Joseph Fessio, SJ with two members of the Ignatius Press staff and two others make a 3-week visit to the mission in Vladivostok. **Fr Fessio** brings as his carry-on luggage the mission’s first copy machine, and buys the mission its first two motor vehicles, a jeep and a mini-van. He introduces our mission to the internet, our most valuable tool, which was new at the time. His guest room while here is the 7-foot square kitchen in our rented apartment, where he sleeps on chair cushions laid on the floor.

Sunday, August 16, 1992: Outdoor Mass of the Assumption of Mary is held in the church yard. The parish choir, started by Br Dan in July, makes its debut under the direction of parishioner **Anna Gafurova** (age 20), a university level student at the 5-year Far Eastern Academy of Music, and a member of the first baptismal class two months earlier, (VS #5 p 3-4).

August 23, 1992: **Bishop Joseph Werth, S.J.** of the Apostolic Administration of Asian Russia **visits Vladivostok** for the first time. While there he confirms 5 parishioners at Mass in the lobby of the Palace of the Pioneers because the Small Auditorium was too small to hold all those attending the service, (VS #5, p 5 photo).

Sunday, September 21, 1992: **Br Dan's Ordination to the priesthood** (special edition with color photos). Bishop Werth flies to Vladivostok to ordain Br Dan, (VS# 5, p 1-3, 5), the second Catholic priest openly ordained in Russia since religious freedom was restored. Fr Dan's parents attend the ordination ceremony. Bishop Werth asks Anastasia Potapenko to organize a chapter of the international Catholic charitable organization **CARITAS** in Vladivostok.

October 21, 1992: Vladivostok parish evangelization director Dennis Bondarev begins producing, directing and hosting a 90-minute **weekly religious TV program** Saturday nights during prime time, (VS #5, p 5). (See also "Catholic TV Celebrates 1st Anniversary", VS #7, p 5-6.)

December 1992: Vladivostok parish secretary Anastasia Potapenko is received in a private audience in the Vatican by **Pope John Paul II**. (VS #6, p 1). He blesses her unborn son, subsequently named "John Paul".

December 1992: After 10 months the parish outgrows the 40-seat "Small Auditorium" in the basement of the Palace of the Pioneers. Fr Dan's Russian tutor helps us find a very nice auditorium on the fourth floor of the **Trade Unions Headquarters building** that seats 90 people. The parish signs an agreement and will meet there for Sunday Mass for 13 months, until their historic church building is returned. Photos of Mass in this hall are readily recognized because of the large bas reliefs of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin on the front wall on either side.

January 2, 1993: The **Legion of Mary** begins at the parish in Vladivostok with 8 young men and Fr Dan as spiritual director, (VS #6 p 2).

January 26, 1993: 500 miles north of Vladivostok, Fr Myron resurrects the pre-revolutionary **parish of the Immaculate Conception in the city of Khabarovsk** (pop. 650,000), (VS #6, p 5; VS #7, p 4-5) and celebrates its first Mass in over 60 years. Two people are baptized. Appointed absentee pastor by Bishop Werth, Fr Myron will visit this parish at least once a month for 6 years, traveling by train 14½ hours each way to do so, until pastoral care is taken over by the Maryknoll missionaries in December 1997.

May 1993: Fr Dan completes the first edition of the **parish hymnal**, *My Soul Magnifies the Lord* of 64 hymns and Mass parts, (VS #6, p 6). It is designed so that pages can be added as new hymns become available.

May 31, 1993: Bishop Werth establishes the **parish of St John the Evangelist in the city of Bolshoy Kamyen** (pop. 50,000; located 3½ hours by train from Vladivostok). He appoints Fr Dan as absentee pastor. Fr Dan visits the parish once a month on Saturdays.

June 1993: "**The World's Largest Diocese**" (VS #6, p 3-6). Reflections by our young American guest, **Janez Sever**, about all the parishes he visited during his first, long trip in Russia, including this about Vladivostok: "Along with shepherding five separate new parishes in and around Vladivostok Fathers Myron and Daniel have take on several other gigantic tasks... This is the very essence of a Christian community: selfless sacrifice of oneself and faith that God will provide the rest... In the space of an American living room, the pastor runs his parish office, celebrates daily Mass, eats and sleeps! Sunday Mass is held in a rented hall... He and Fr Daniel have already resolved to dedicate their lives to this ministry in Russia, but there is more than enough here for countless numbers of religious..." Janez, a West Point graduate, was ordained a Jesuit priest for Russia a few years after his visit to Vladivostok.

July 1993: **The Parish Grows Quickly!** During the first 1½ years the Vladivostok parish grows from 10 members to 180 members, mostly through baptisms but also by locating already baptized Catholics, (VS #6, p 6).

January 1, 1994: "**We Receive Our Church**" (VS #7, p 1-3). The historic Cathedral of the Most Holy Mother of God is returned to the Vladivostok Catholic parish, just in time to celebrate the Mass of the titular feast of the parish on the third floor. The restoration of the interior begins immediately with the removal of the 4th floor of wood and steel, which was added in the 1930's; the removal of two large interior brick walls separating the transept and the choir loft from the nave, and the repair of hundreds of broken window panes to keep the building warmer during the winter. (See also VS #8, p 5-7).

January 1994: "**New Parish in Nakhodka**" (VS #12, p 1-2). Fr Myron founds the parish of Our Lady of the Pacific in the city of Nakhodka (pop. 160,000) located on the ocean, a 5-hour drive by car from Vladivostok. Bishop Werth appoints him as pastor. Fr Myron will visit the parish once or twice a month for the next 11 years until two diocesan priests take over its pastoral care.

March 22, 1994: **“New Parish in Blagoveshensk”** (VS #8, p 2-4). Fr Myron resurrects the pre-revolutionary parish of the Transfiguration of the Lord in the Russian Far Eastern city of Blagoveshensk (pop. 300,000) with the celebration of the first Mass there in over 60 years. On June 28 Bishop Werth formally establishes the parish and appoints Fr Myron pastor. He will travel there by train – 36 hours each way - once a month for the next 5 years until priests from the Society of the Divine Word take it over on August 8, 1999.

August 1994: **“Priestly Formation Begins”** (VS #8 cover story). Two young men from the Vladivostok parish become its first seminarians. One of them, Evgeny Peregodov, is ordained on June 10, 2001 as the first Russian diocesan priest in Siberia and the Far East.



The Miracle Picture



Trustee Andre Popok supervising the removal of the middle added floor in the church.

October 18, 1994: **“Another Floor Removed”** (VS #9, p 1-2). The interior restoration of the Vladivostok church buildings takes a major step with the removal of the steel-reinforced concrete third floor; and the re-creation of the “grape and leaves” capitals on the 6 huge pillars and 18 pilasters. During the 14 months of this stage of the restoration the parish meets for Mass on the first floor.

Spring 1995: **“Miracle Picture”** (VS #11 cover story). Elderly parishioner Sophia Mihailovna finds and gives to the parish the original formal photographic portrait of her First Communion class which miraculously survived the persecution. The photo was taken inside our church in 1922 before it was confiscated. (The “Miracle Picture” is further explained in VS #17, p 8-9.)

June 1995: **“First Summer Camp”** (VS #12, p 8-10). Vladivostok parish holds its first summer camp for children. 27 children take part. The staff is comprised of parishioner Yuri Belozyorov and one sister and 15 lay

people from a parish in Yokohama, Japan.

October 1995: **The growing charitable work of CARITAS** is highlighted in VS #12. CARITAS has opened chapters in all the parishes that Fr Myron has founded or resurrected in the Russian Far East. Caritas director Anastasia Potapenko and Dr. Larisa Birukova supervise a growing list of parish volunteers and paid employees in several projects, a list of which include at this time:

1. Support of the Medical Center at the Far Eastern Teachers Institute to help them serve the poor
2. Home health care visits to the elderly homebound
3. Emergency relief programs
4. Medical check-ups for recipients of a government food program at a downtown cafeteria for the poor
5. Distribution of used clothing
6. Providing optometric care for citizens who live in regions where no such care is available

October 1, 1995: **The Missionary Sisters of Saint Peter Claver** begin to print the *Vladivostok Sunrise* in Minnesota. (VS #13, p 7; VS #22, p 5). Mr and Mrs Terry Kopp pay the costs. We are very grateful for the support of the sisters and the Koppes!

December 24-25, 1995: **Christmas Masses in Vladivostok** are celebrated in the newly restored church on the second floor, which is now the top floor. Two added floors removed and one more still to go!

January 1996: **“Musical Miracles”** (VS #13, p 4-6). The large, vintage Rodgers Cambridge 220-II electronic organ that was given to us as a gift by the pastor Fr Bernard Reiser and the parishioners of Epiphany of the Lord parish in Coon Rapids, MN is installed in our church. It is the first organ in the city, so its installation is covered by

numerous TV, radio and newspaper stories both locally and in Moscow.

June 15, 1996: **CBS Evening News at Vladivostok Parish!** Anchor Dan Rather and correspondent Richard Threlkeld broadcast a 3-minute report on the revival of our parish on Saturday evening, June 15, (VS #15, p 9). Mr. Threlkeld and a video crew came to Vladivostok a week early to cover the presidential elections in Russia (won by Boris Yeltsin).



Fr Dan and parishioners celebrate the return of the Crucifix to the church.

November 4, 1996: **“Historic Crucifix Returns to Church”** (VS #16 cover story). It had been confiscated and given to the Vladivostok Art School where it was used for 50 years as a model to draw the human figure. In thanksgiving for its return the first ever organ concert in Vladivostok was presented at the parish on the Feast of Christ the King, November 24 by parish organist Marina Shuyanova.

April 1997: **Pilgrim Statue from Fatima Arrives in Russian Far East**, (VS #17, p 2). In Vladivostok it was carried in procession around the church on Easter Sunday with the congregation reciting special prayers and singing the Russian version of the Fatima hymn.

June 13, 1997: **“Our Lady of Vladivostok Icon Blessed by Bishop Werth”**, (VS #18 cover story). It is the work of Fr Damien of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Redwood, California and a gift of Mr and Mrs Don Wozniak of St Paul, MN to the parish.

June 28-July 5, 1997: The first annual **Russian Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference** is held in Khabarovsk. 25 young people attend from the parishes in Blagoveshensk, Bolshoy Kamyen, Khabarovsk, Nakhodka, and Vladivostok. One priest, one sister and three lay people arrive from Texas and Ohio to join the conference staff. (VS #18, p 2-6).

September 1, 1997: **Br Paul Brooks** of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Australia arrives to live in the Nakhodka parish and help with parish and charitable activities in the Nakhodka area. Among other projects, he begins an outreach program at a prison for juvenile delinquents near Nakhodka, (VS #20, p 6-7).

March 2, 1998: Two parishioners and members of the staff of the Vladivostok parish begin to teach classes in the **Christian Faith at High Security Prison #20** about 30 miles away from Vladivostok. Of the 1800 prisoners, 40 men attended the first lesson, (VS #20, p 4).

March 7, 1998: Fr Dan celebrates the first Mass in his **new parish of the Most Holy Trinity in Romanovka** (pop. 5,000) located a three hour train ride from Vladivostok. The Mass is celebrated in the large auditorium of the Air Force Officers Club.

April 1, 1998: **Vladivostok Sunrise to be published 6 times a year** (VS #20, p 5). At the request of the volunteer committee members of our sister parish of the Nativity in St Paul, MN, who sort and mail it, Fr Myron decides that the *VS* will be published 6 times a year rather than 4, and will have 8 pages rather than 12-16. In the new format it will be cheaper to mail and will update benefactors and friends more often about the mission.

June, 1998: **Vladivostok Receives its First Religious Sisters!** Four members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Ann arrive in Vladivostok from Spain to found a new local community of the congregation. Accompanying them is Superior General Mother Julia Lumberras, SCSA. The four sisters: Sr Alicia, Sr Madvi, Sr Maria Eugenia and Sr Rosario.

August 1998: Fr Dan publishes a **new edition of the parish hymnal**, “My Soul Magnifies the Lord”, (VS #23, p 6-7). It contains over 150 hymns. 600 copies of the text version and 200 copies of the accompaniment version are printed. The editing, printing and binding were paid for by a grant from Fr Dan’s grandmother, Florence Benson.

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



First group of Sisters of Charity of St Ann

September 30, 1998: **First Crisis Pregnancy Center Opens in Vladivostok** (and perhaps it is the first one in Russia!), (VS #24, p 7). In Russia it is called a “Women’s Support Center”). Director Christina Pavlova and parish volunteers were trained by a team of Americans from Dayton, OH and Seattle, WA, for a two-week training seminar: Rose Bucher, George and Joan Reiss, Dee Baltes and Dr Chris Kahlenborn, (VS #23, p 4-5). (See also issue #27, May 1, 1999). Eventually there will be seven Centers.

October 25, 1998: **Bishop Jerzy Mazur**, SVD, our new bishop of the Diocese of St Joseph in Irkutsk visits us for the first time, (VS #24, p 7).

December 1998: **Mission Share**, an organization founded by former missionary Fr John McGuire grants us \$24,000 to buy the small private home next door to the church to use the land to build a parish center and monastery. (VS #25, p 5.)

January 3, 1999 - Epiphany Sunday: The first ever **Vladivostok Christmas Festival of Christian Choirs** takes place in the church in Vladivostok, (VS #25, p 1-4). A total of six choirs take part, one Ukrainian folk choir

and 5 parish choirs from Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.

January 7, 1999: **New Parish in Arsenyev**, (VS #27, p 7). Fr Myron founds the Parish of the Annunciation in the city of Arsenyev (pop. 65,000) located 4 hours by car from Vladivostok. On this day the parish celebrates for the first time the baptism of new members. Fr Myron visits the parish for confessions, Mass and catechism classes once a month. Fr Christian Labanovsky, OFM takes over the parish in 2002.



Reception of the Relics of St Therese the Little Flower

April 30, 1999: **The major relics of Saint Therese of Lisieux arrive in Vladivostok** on their pilgrimage to Catholic parishes all across Russia, (VS 27, p 7; and cover story in VS #28, p 1-5). Fr Michael Shields from Magadan the organizer of the visit, and several religious from Lisieux are present to receive the relics and to participate in religious and educational programs, culminating in a special Mass and procession on Sunday, May 2. Russia is the first country to which the relics are sent. Saint Therese is patronesses of missions and also the main patroness of Roman Catholics in Russia.

May 1999: **Alcoholics Anonymous** start a weekly meeting at the parish in Vladivostok. Fr Myron has worked to help start AA groups ever since he came to Russia in 1992 and the parish can finally offer them a place to meet regularly, (VS #28, p 7).

June 9, 1999: **CARITAS** of Vladivostok begins to serve a hearty **midday meal to 40-60 people twice a week**. Funding is provided by benefactors in the USA. (VS #30, p 1-2). Parish volunteers coordinated by parishioner Lilia Silina organize this new outreach. This program becomes one of the most successful and long standing programs of CARITAS, helped for many years with a grant from the European Economic Community obtained through the Sisters of Charity of Saint Ann.



Alexei Ivanovsky installing the Coronation of Mary window, donated by Coronation Parish in Missouri.

August 24, 1999: **Large New Window Frames Arrive** for our future stained glass windows (VS #31, p 6) from J. Sussman Company of Jamaica Plain, NY. They were specially designed to allow the stained glass to be inserted at any time after the installation of the frames. They are installed over the course of the summer with the two outer layers of sealed plate glass separated by argon gas. Meanwhile the parish orders the construction of the two largest windows, the Annunciation and the Pentecost, in the north and south transepts of the church.

August 1999: **The Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation** of Modesto, CA gives us a grant to purchase the second piece of property next to the church on which to build a parish center and monastery, (VS #31, p6).

January 2000: **Sandra and Dave Sonnen of St Paul, MN**, from our sister parish of the Nativity of Our Lord, become the first US coordinators of the **Mary Mother of God Mission Society** founded by Fr Myron and incorporated in the state of Minnesota to help with the development needs of Vladivostok Mission. They introduce themselves to *Vladivostok Sunrise* readers in a cover story in Issue No. 32, March 1, 2000. They will continue to coordinate our US efforts for ten years, and do a superb job!

January 5, 2000: **Bishop Karol Slivosky**, the first (and only) bishop of the Diocese of Vladivostok is remembered in a special article published in conjunction with the 67th anniversary of his death, (VS #31, pages 2-6). Included in the article is the text of the only two letters that the Vatican received from Bishop Slivosky during his exile in 1930 and before his death in 1934.

January 28, 2000: **Vladivostok parishioner Yadviga Fransevna Zelinsky dies at age 83**. She was baptized in the Vladivostok parish in 1917, and was a part of its rebirth from the very beginning of the gathering of the “Vladivostok Catholic Community” in 1991. Her older brother Stanislaus was one of Bishop Slivosky’s last altar boys. He was later shot by the Communist government as a “Polish Vatican spy”. Her life is featured in *Vladivostok Sunrise* Issue No. 32 with a tribute from Fr Myron on page 3 and special article by parish historian Miroslava Efimova on pages 5-6.

February 6, 2000: **“New Parish in Ussuriisk”**, (VS #32, p 2-3). (Pop. 158,000, located 60 miles north of Vladivostok.) Fr Myron names his new parish “Nativity of Christ” in honor of the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ. (See also VS #37, p 1-3). The Franciscans took over the parish in 2002.

May 1, 2000: **Special Jubilee Year Issue** (No. 33) featuring:

- Jubilee Mass of the Annunciation of the Lord on March 25 at the Vladivostok parish, including the unveiling and blessing of the **first stained glass window**.
- the two artists from Belarus who created the window
- the visit of mission friend and benefactor Terry Kopp and his children. The Koppes donated the window to the parish.
- Diocesan Catechetical Conference held in Vladivostok in conjunction with the Jubilee Feast
- the performance of the play that Fr Myron wrote to celebrate the 2000th anniversary of the Incarnation.

October 12, 2000: **Bells for Our Lady in Vladivostok!** (VS #36, p 1-3). The set of 4 large bells cast in 1997



Detail of the first window, The Annunciation, gift of Mr & Mrs Terry Kopp and family.

especially for the Vladivostok parish in Gdansk, Poland, and anointed by Pope John Paul II on his second-to-last trip to his homeland arrive in Vladivostok. Marek Wolosz and Przemyslaw Maciazek, two young men, who are active in the Boy Scout program in Poland, drive the bells from Poland, through Ukraine, across European Russia and all across Siberia into the Russian Far East to deliver them.

March 2000: Fr Myron's "**Introduction to Christianity**", a 12-lesson correspondence course which has been used for 8 years to prepare adults living far away from Catholic parishes for baptism or reception into the Catholic Church, becomes available on line on the parish's Russian language website, (VS #38, p 5).

August 2001: **Saint Joseph Parish is started** in a northern residential neighborhood in Vladivostok. In April 2002 a large 5-room apartment is bought and renovated specially for a chapel, a Sunday School room, a vestibule, and a room for a crisis pregnancy center. Saint Joseph Parish in Modesto, CA decides to become a sister

parish, (VS #41, p 7). (See also the cover story in May 1, 2002).

March 21, 2002: **Bishop Mazur confirms 28 adult** members of the main parish in Vladivostok when he comes to our city to celebrate a special Chrism Mass. Because our diocese is the largest in the world, and travel to the cathedral would be impossible for priests here in the Far East, Bishop Mazur decided to hold two Chrism Masses, including the one here in our church, which is the cathedral of the vacant diocese of Vladivostok, (VS #45, p 3-4).

May 31, 2002: Sr Julia Kubista, MM in St Paul, MN writes the constitutions for a proposed new group of sisters for the Russian Mission. The community is to be called the **Sisters in Jesus the Lord**. The first candidate, Kelly Whittier arrives in July 2003. By July 31, 2010 they have 4 members and a postulant, and receive their official designation as a public association of the faithful from Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City, MO. (VS #52, p 3)

September 2002: **The Vladivostok Concert Choir is born**. Svetlana Naumova, the director of the parish liturgical choir starts a concert choir for our yearly Christmas and Easter concerts. It has 24 singers, most of whom are solo voice majors at the Vladivostok Performing Arts Institute, (VS #45, p 6). The Choir soon becomes the best choir in the city, performing 7-10 concerts a year in our church, all sold out in advance! Their repertoire is chosen entirely from sacred music. The choir has been featured at more than 60 of our parish evangelization concerts.



Fr Sebastian D'Silva

May 11, 2003: **Welcome to Vladivostok, Fr Sebastian D'Silva!** He is a diocesan priest from Meerut, India who heard about the rebirth of the Church in Russia and who asked his bishop for permission to work here, (VS #52, p 3). He arrived in Irkutsk in October 2001 for language studies, and then helped in parishes on Kamchatka and in Chita before coming to work in Vladivostok. On April 15, 2007 he becomes pastor of the Parish of Our Lady of the Pacific in Nakhodka.

June 15, 2003: Pope John Paul II appoints our **new diocesan Bishop Kirill Klimovich**, who has been the auxiliary in Minsk, Belarus, (VS #52 cover story).

December 2003: Through the solicitation of Msgr. Lawrence McInerney and the generosity of his parishioners at Stella Maris Church on Sullivan's Island in Charleston Harbor, we receive a new state-of-the-art digital electronic organ, the **Stella Maris Organ**. This is a huge step for our liturgical music program and our concert program of sacred music. (VS #55, special cover story).

January 2004: Special thanks to **Mr Ted Lewis**, producer, director, cameraman and editor of our 2002 informational video, which has been extremely well received in the USA, being shown frequently on EWTN, and in many parishes around the country. It is a tremendous help in our mission development efforts, (VS #55, p 7).

February 21, 2004: The **Omega Program** for evangelization of university students begins in Vladivostok with guest speakers Dr. Vladimir and Ludmila Izranov from the Catholic cathedral parish in Novosibirsk (4000 miles away!) (VS#57, p 5).

April 14-15, 2004: **First Ecumenical Easter Concerts** are held in the Vladivostok church featuring a combined choir of 60 people from 6 different Christian confessions (VS #57, p 3-4).

June 13, 2004: The **first Rachael's Vineyard retreat** for women suffering from abortion is held in Vladivostok, sponsored by the Catholic parish and directed by Diane Szurleys of Ketchikan, Alaska, (VS #58, p5).

September 2004: **The full restoration of the old brick exterior of the church building is completed**, (VS #59, cover story). It was accomplished over a period of three summers by a team of 30 Chinese workers, (See also VS #58, with many photos of the work in progress.)

January 2005: Vladivostok parish volunteers help **CARITAS feed street children for four years**, (VS #61, p 2). (See also cover story in VS #46, July 1, 2002, and an update of special volunteers for this program from the USA in VS #67, p 5 - Jan. 1, 2006).

Winter 2004-2005: **Fr Myron is recovering from serious injuries suffered in an auto accident** on December 4, returning from Lesozavodsk on icy roads. He broke three ribs, a leg, and had 14 stitches in his head. During recovery he suffered complications from pneumonia and a staph infection under his cast. The car was totaled, (VS #61, p 6).

September 1, 2005: With Issue No. 65 the **Vladivostok Sunrise** begins to be printed with all color photos, reflecting developments in digital printing technology.

May 2006: The **Grandma Mentoring Program** of orphanage volunteers begins. Sponsors pay \$40 a month for one of our senior citizen parishioners to visit one of the orphanages here in the Vladivostok area 12 hours a week, (VS #69-70). This helps the orphans receive more attention and it supplements the very meager pensions of the elderly volunteers.

May 2007: The **seven Women's Support Centers** that we have started in conjunction with our pastoral work celebrate the **10th anniversary** of the opening of the first center, (VS #75).



Sierocznice Sedance z opiekanką p. Marja Miecznikowska.
The orphanage at Sedanka with the tutor miss Marie Miecznikowska.

Bishop Slivovsky collected orphans all along the transiberian railroad during the Revolution.

November 2007: **Harsh Vineyard: The Story of the Catholic Church in the Russian Far East** is published in Russian and in English, (VS #78). Longtime Vladivostok parishioner and parish archivist, Miroslava Efimova wrote it in Russian and Dr Gerri Kelly of Denver, Colorado translated it into English. It gives a fascinating overview of the presence of Catholics in the Russian Far East from before Vladivostok was founded in 1860 until the present.

January 2008 - **The USA office of Mary Mother of God Mission Society begins its move from Minnesota to California**. Sandra Sonnen of St Paul retires as our longtime National Coordinator. Mrs Vicky Trevillyan, sister parish coordinator at St Joseph Parish in Modesto CA, assumes the role of US National Coordinator. By the start of 2009, operations for the national office are up and running in Modesto.

February 2-3, 2008: Bishop Kirill officiates at the **blessing of the Vladivostok parish center**, named in



The completed steeples, with the new rectory nearby.

honor of Our Lady of Fatima, and the following day at the **re-consecration of the restored church** and the consecration of the new main altar during a solemn Sunday Mass. Nine priests and one deacon, hundreds of guests from area Russian parishes and foreign countries gathered for the great occasion, (VS #80).

October 12, 2008: Caritas in Vladivostok celebrates **16 years of Charity** with a special Sunday Mass in the parish followed by a dinner for Caritas leaders, volunteers, parishioners, and staff members of the many organizations that Caritas has worked with over the years, (VS #84).

November 2009: The **Guardian Angel Program**, started recently by Fr Myron, is gaining sponsors from America and Western European countries, (VS #90). Its goal is to keep families intact. "Guardian Angels" are financial sponsors of children in Russia who help the family to keep the kids at home, so that they do not become wards of the state at overcrowded, under-staffed orphanages because their parents cannot take care of them.

November 17, 2009: **Pathways Children's Center** opens in Romanovka, the first such center in our entire state (comparable in size to the state of Wisconsin), (VS #92).

Built, funded and directed by the Sisters of Saint Ann, with help from the sister Parish of St Philip Benizi in Oregon. Members of the staff are parishioners from the Catholic parish of the Most Holy Trinity.

March 21, 2010: The **blessing of the new bell towers and steeples** by Bishop Kirill takes place at Sunday Mass attended by hundreds of parishioners, benefactors, guests and well wishers, (VS #93). After the blessing there were two sold-out organ concerts to celebrate the completion of the exterior restoration of the church.

July 31, 2010: The **profession of final vows of Sr Maria Stella, CJD**, the first member of the new religious congregation of the Sisters in Jesus the Lord, took place at the parish church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Raytown, MO, (VS #95). Bishop Robert Finn of the Diocese of Kansas City received the vows and was the main celebrant of the solemn Mass.

March 19, 2011: The private **first profession of simple vows of Br Patrick Napal, CJD** of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord took place at Saturday morning Mass in the church in Vladivostok. Br Patrick is from Davao, Philippines, (VS #99). He will begin his final year of university level seminary studies in the Philippines.



Brother Patrick Napal, C.J.D. with orphans.

December 8, 2011 **First profession of religious vows of Brother Inosensius Hetu, C.J.D.** Brother Inosensius is interested in the development of our community and has organized a pre-seminary program in Indonesia for young men who want to join us.



August 15, 2013 **Priestly ordination of Fr Inosensius Hetu, C.J.D.** After ordination Fr Inosensius continued his work as religious superior in Indonesia, working with our seminarians there.

March 8, 2014 **Solemn vows of Bro Patrick Napal, C.J.D.** Bro Patrick will continue his seminary

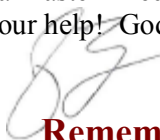
education in the Philippines.

May 9, 2014 **Five novices take first vows.**



5 members' first vows, with 4 novices, and 3 professed members of our sisters' C.J.D. community in Russia, with Fr Myron and Fr Daniel.

Dear Benefactor, Maybe you didn't find your name in the *Sunrise*, but for sure it wouldn't have been possible without YOU! As we look forward to the future with so much in store working with orphans, the elderly, young families, and especially the new opportunity to work at the new Far Eastern Federal University, we are still counting on your help! God bless you, and Thank you! Yours truly,

 --Fr Myron

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

Opportunities

We are always looking for volunteer help. Maybe this is for you?

- ♥ Volunteer to work with our websites.
- ♥ Priest and lay speakers for our Speaker's Bureau. We provide training.
- ♥ Long term volunteers to go to Russia and help with the work with orphans, youth, and elderly.
- ♥ Vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
- ♥ Short term volunteers for three weeks in Russia.
- ♥ Translators from English to Russian for our various publications, especially about life and family issues.
- ♥ Residents of California and Nevada can get free SHARES cards from our office in Modesto, CA. Present these cards every time you shop at Save Mart, Lucky, Food Maxx, or Smart Food stores and Save Mart will donate up to 3% of your grocery bill to the Mission. It costs you nothing!
- ♥ Ask your pastor to place a small number of Vladivostok Sunrise newsletters at your parish.
- ♥ Hold a fundraiser to benefit the Mission. Contact our mission office for ideas.

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Vladivostok Sunrise gives you up to date information about the Church in Eastern Russia. Contact our office for your free bi-monthly copy.