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Vladivostok Mission
225 Cordova Street
Anchorage AK 99501 USA

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Letters without donations can be sent to:

Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Parish
Volodarskovo 22
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Frequently Asked Questions:

What do the letters “C.J.D” stand for that you Vladivostok priests use behind your names?

They are the initials of the Latin words for “Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord”, our proposed new religious community which we hope to found here in Russia if God gives us vocations. We already have our habit and our constitution, and the approval of our bishop to begin, so all that remains is to wait for men who want to join us. Basically canons regular are religious men who live in community at a major church where they minister to the needs of the people while living a religious life and while praying daily the Liturgy of the Hours in that church.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What calendar do you use in Russia?

The Roman Catholics in our diocese (all of Siberia and the Far East of Russia) celebrate feasts according to the Gregorian calendar, as you do in America. Catholics feel it is more important to celebrate with the universal Church rather than with the local Orthodox Church. The Russian media always cover both the Western celebrations (the Pope’s Christmas Mass, for example) and the Orthodox celebrations. Since the Communist Revolution the government itself follows the Gregorian calendar, and many people here don’t understand why the Orthodox Church doesn’t switch to the scientifically more accurate Gregorian calendar. We, of course, consider it the right of the Orthodox Church to celebrate as it wants, and we as we want. My people say they like it this way--they get to celebrate Christmas twice, once according to the Western style and once according to the Orthodox style, if they have Orthodox relatives, which most do.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Are your parishioners mostly Polish?

Our parish had 15,000 members before the Communist takeover of the Far East, mostly of Polish extraction, but with many Germans, and Ukrainians. There were also many foreigners, since there were many consulates and shipping companies in the city at that time, and even several foreign armies for a while. The Czech army helped build our church, since most of them were Catholics. The American military presence in the Russian Far East also consisted largely of Catholics since Americans of Polish extraction found it easier to deal with the Russian language. There were even American lay Catholics in the parish. Today we have Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Germans in our parishes, as well as Ukrainians and Armenians. We also have foreigners, like Koreans, Americans, Japanese, and Indians.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What language do you use for Mass?

Our liturgies in Vladivostok and the Far East are only in Russian and English. Everybody can understand at least either Russian or English. The farther West you go, the more people understand Polish or German. So in Irkutsk, for example, which is near Lake Baikal, there is a Polish mass on one weekday each week, but the Sunday mass is only in Russian. In Novosibirsk there is one Sunday mass in German, one in Polish, and one in Russian. By the time you get as far West as Byelorussia, even the Sunday masses are in Polish, and in Kazakhstan in German.

It was clear from the beginning that if the language of our mass was Polish, the parish would have no future, because the kids would consider it old-fashioned--Only a few of the grandmothers know their ancestral language. On the other hand, the children like English. Now only the sermon and the Gospel are in both languages. The rest of the mass is in Russian. For those who speak only Korean or English, the other mass readings are available on paper at the door of the church. All our music is in Russian or in Latin. We have prayerbooks available in Polish, Russian, German, and Lithuanian. It is interesting that an elderly parishioner once asked me why mass wasn’t in Polish, because she remembered that it was in Polish before the Revolution!! (You and I know that the mass was only in Latin before the Revolution!) She was disappointed.

From the beginning of our work in Russia, we made it clear that we were here not to serve nationalities and nationalistic aspirations, but Catholics--of every rite, nationality, language, and citizenship. There is a Polish Cultural Society in Vladivostok, with many elderly Catholic members. Their president is an atheist. They occasionally invite me to their meetings, even though I’m an American of Alsatian extraction. I believe in retracing and understanding our roots because it helps us to properly prepare for the future.

News Notes

by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

- Our Parish of the Transfiguration of Jesus in Blagoveschensk is waiting to receive a building which the state will give us to use while the Orthodox Church is using our historical church building.

For fifty years already our Orthodox brothers and sisters have been using our church which was confiscated by the Communists in 1935. They have also received from the government our Catholic hospital building, which is now the Orthodox chancery, and the former Catholic rectory, which is now housing for Orthodox seminarians. It will take years for the Orthodox to build their own cathedral in the Byzantine style, and meanwhile they must continue to use our building. We are glad that there is this special relationship between the Catholics and Orthodox in Blagoveschensk. Our parish there is still rather small, so it is better for us to have a smaller building temporarily, anyway.

When we receive the keys to our new premises, we will need to install a furnace, running water and bathrooms, upgrade the doors for security, add a phone, and take out a few walls to make room for the nave and sanctuary. Mr John Bold of Solana Beach, California, one of our benefactors who always responds to these special needs, has offered to help us with this project, as did the Parish of the Transfiguration located in Pittsford, New York. We are hoping that the parishes will be sister-parishes and continue to help each other by word and deed.

Does anybody want to be the parish priest in Blagoveschensk? You'd have a parish right on the Chinese border, in a city which was named by Saint Innokenty, the famous Russian Orthodox missionary to Alaska who later became Archbishop of Moscow. He is a good example of cooperation between churches, since he manufactured church organs in Alaska for purchase by Catholic churches and Franciscan missionaries in California. By the way, it only costs me four days per month to go on the train to Blagoveschensk and return. Can you imagine how difficult was the mission of Saint Innokenty whose diocese stretched from Irkutsk (Lake Baikal) to California!--200 years ago when there was no train or plane!

- Bishop Joseph Werth came to visit us on June 13. He also confirmed and gave and First Communion to some of our children from the Vladivostok parish, and also from Fr Dan's parish in Romanovka. In spite of the economic difficulties when many of our parishioners haven't received their paychecks for many months, there were beautiful flowers on the altar and a lot of baked goods for tea with the Bishop after mass.

When the bishop was here we reviewed with him our activities, and it is clearly amazing how our benefactors have

made it possible for us to work here in Russia. Almost all priests working in Russia are members of religious orders who provide them with an annual budget. They don't need to be concerned about raising money but only about their pastoral work. We, on the other hand, must be concerned to raise all our funds, since we don't have a budget from a sponsor! Needless to say, without you, our reader, and our friends who help us, we'd be lost. But instead, we have one of the largest churches in Russia (even if it still needs repair), we have the best servers, best choir, best charitable work, and greatest interest in vocations in Russia. Thanks be to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to you! We especially need priests--good ones. Pray for us daily as we pray for you and for all our benefactors, and ask the Lord for workers for the harvest.

- The first Russian Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference was held in Khabarovsk from June 28 to July 5. We invited all the unmarried parishioners from our seven parishes who have already finished high school. Sometimes the youth can feel neglected among the mountains of work which we need to do. We already have children's camps every year, and now at last something for the youth. A team of four Americans from the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity came to help with the conference, including Fr Jim Kelleher from Immaculate Conception Parish of Skidmore TX, Sister Mary Katherine Malmros of Kansas City MO, Mr George Reiss of Kettering OH, and Mr Matthew Bowman of Wheeling WV, who paid their own expenses and even left a donation for the Khabarovsk Parish of the Immaculate Conception. At the conference we studied prayer, liturgy, the Bible, planning for marriage or a religious vocation, chastity, pro-life, and NFP. It was a great program, and we really liked our American team. Next year we hope to expand the program.

- We just had a major customs inspection after the government heard rumors that charitable organizations were marketing the humanitarian aid that they received customs-free. But the inspection turned out okay except that we had to pay a small fine because not all of our documents were up to par. We probably did get a little sloppy, since they hadn't checked anything for five years. I remember that earlier we never gave any aid to anybody without their signature and domestic passport number, but more recently it has just seemed easier to give and forget, not letting your left hand know what your right is doing.

The inspectors advised us to import in larger quantities, or not import at all, since small quantities are just as much work to import but a lot less beneficial. In other words we can't be a small operation: either get large or quit. We are thinking about it. Lots of mom & pop stores have disappeared in America, too, due to lack of efficiency, even though it was a wonderful social phenomenon. CARITAS is expanding. Maybe we have to try to enlarge our charitable work. ...Still thinking.

- I received a FAX from the Capuchin's Seraphic Mass Association in Pittsburgh. They proposed to their benefactors to buy one of our windows for us as a special Christmas present to our Lady and to Russia. The benefactors were very generous, so the Association will purchase our largest window: Mary, Mother of the Church! The Seraphic Mass Association has helped us from the very beginning--even before we came to Russia! They were one of the first to send us mass stipends and mass vestments for use in Russia. We are grateful to Fr Fugini of the Association, and we will be happy that there will be a permanent sign by the window: "Donated by Benefactors of the Seraphic Mass Association".

- Mr and Mrs Kopp and family (whose picture was in the recent *Sunrise*) notified us that they would buy the Annunciation Window--the other large one! Also, the Sisters of Charity of St Ann from Spain, who will be visiting us in August, wrote to say they wanted to purchase the Immaculate Conception window! It is appropriate for them, since the miracle of the Immaculate Conception took place in the womb of St Ann. So we are still looking for a donor for the window, The Marriage of Ss Mary and Joseph. This marriage created the Holy Family, and secured the normal legal place for Jesus among the Jewish people. There are still several windows available of the mysteries of the Rosary, too, in case you know someone who would be interested.

- Windows still available are:

Window	Cost
Nativity of Jesus	
3,780	
Presentation of Jesus in Temple	
3,780	
Finding of Jesus in the Temple	
3,780	
Marriage of Joseph and Mary	
4,320	

The "Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary" window still needs \$1297.22 before it can be purchased. We opened this window for those benefactors who wanted to participate in the Windows Project, but who didn't get the window of their choice, or whose means were less than the cost of any remaining unsold window. It's not too late to contribute to this window!

Victor Anisimov, the chief teacher for our correspondence courses, including “Introduction to Christianity”.

Our children posing after the Corpus Christi procession.

The proclamation of the Gospel in Vladivostok during Lent.

Our children at work in catechism class.

Father Christopher Zugger (front) and his deacons and parishioners in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Lifting the container over the wall.

The Twelfth Station from the new set of stations we received from The Church of the Resurrection in Clymer, Pennsylvania.

Our Marian statue on Easter Sunday, under the Relic of the True Cross which we received from the Propogation of the Faith office of St Paul and Minneapolis.

Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference

*by Yuri Byelozorov
(tr by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.)*

The Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference was held in Khabarovsk from June 28 to July 5. 25 youth from Blagoveschensk, Nakhodka, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and Bolshoi Kamen took part in the program which was hosted by Immaculate Conception Parish of Khabarovsk. A team of four Americans from Immaculate Conception Parish of Skidmore, Texas, and the Director of the Russian Far Eastern Division of CARITAS Japan also took part.

The purposes of the Conference were the following: to prepare group leaders for next years bigger conference, to acquaint the youth of our various parishes with each other, to help form vocations among the youth, whether to religious life, marriage, or to lay ministry, to provide some practice in theology and in prayer, to encourage chastity, and to struggle against abortion by providing a defense of the life of unborn children. Jumping ahead, I'd say that all the purposes of the Conference were achieved.

As for any conference, ours required a long preparation. It began with a letter from Fr Myron to the Immaculate Conception Parish in America which had been sent already in the wintertime. Father Jim Kelleher, the pastor, replied that he had long dreamed to come to Russia. After arrangements had been made between both sides we all began our work in prayer.

The Americans got their team together, looked for funds for travel, got their visas which were given to them on the last day, and prepared their talks. Khabarovsk parishioners prepared to receive the many guests, renting rooms in an institute dormitory, made a deal with a restaurant for food, spoke to the Christian radio station about participating, arranged with the women's prison and the women's prison orphanage where parishioners from CARITAS Khabarovsk work. In Vladivostok we planned the program of the conference, prepared our talks, and arranged to receive the American guests who would spend a few days with us.

Father Myron had two worries that he shared with his helpers--after all he is the pastor of the youth. He worried about just who were these Americans coming to help us--were they committed Catholics who were prepared to share their faith with others, or would they be people who don't agree with the teachings of the Church and for whom the sacraments and teaching are just some kind of tradition and not a way of life. If the latter, it would be necessary for him to defend the faith of his parishioners against foreign odds. Praise God, this problem was resolved after Fr Jim's team arrived in Vladivostok when they included themselves in the prayers and practices of the life of our parish of the Most Holy Mother of God. They even defended the teachings of

the Church on TV when they were invited to appear on the Humanitarian Channel.

At the request of this author, George Reiss, one of our guests, even spoke at a conference about "Family Planning" which was organized by the Russian branch of Planned Parenthood. The organizers tried to convince their listeners that, thanks to contraception, we can be happy that there is a decrease in problems of abortion because of miniabortions, even though they complained about the catastrophic fall in the birthrate in our Primorsky State! Mr Reiss told the listeners how his Crisis Pregnancy Center in Dayton, Ohio, of which he is the president, helps pregnant women. The doctors and teachers at the conference heard for the first time that it is possible to give real help to women without killing their children, and for the first time they had to think about the fact that the fruit of the womb is already a person, even if unborn. May God grant that these seeds of love will not be choked by the thorns of cynicism, but give good fruit.

Fr Myron's second worry had to do with the possibility that some kind of "cult spirit" might infect the conference, with the result that the youth would close in upon themselves. The main goal was the preparation of leaders so that they would witness their faith to others in their parishes and cities. Many times he checked the themes of the talks, went over the schedule, and talked to the organizers. From this there was good fruit, because the conference didn't result in some kind of a cultic group isolated from other believers.

Finally Saturday, the 18th of June arrived when we all gathered at the train station, took our seats, and set out for Khabarovsk. The youth gathered in one of the compartments of the train, and decided to say the Rosary asking God to bless the work of the conference. The Americans really tried to pronounce the words on the prayer in Russian. One could say that the conference started already on the train.

On Sunday morning the joyful trustee of the Immaculate Conception Parish of Khabarovsk, Stanislav Yermak, met us on the platform. We all went to the little chapel of the parish which is located in the premises of a clothing repair shop owned by one of the parishioners. That is the usual place of prayer for the Khabarovsk parish.

We served Sunday Mass in two languages where the parishioners and the conference participants listened to the Word of God proclaimed from the altar. Then we all received communion, becoming one in the Body and Blood of Christ. The faces of the Khabarovsk parishioners were very happy to see for the first time so many guests in their parish. Then they settled us in the dormitory at the Building Construction Institute.

Since the lecture hall wasn't ready yet, the participants of the conference got officially acquainted with each other in the shade of a tulip tree which was located on the street in front of the dormitory. We stood and introduced ourselves, and

talked about our spiritual journey to Christ--and without noticing it, three hours flew by.

After supper we gathered in the lecture hall where Zhenya Balanyov spoke to us about the necessity of repentance, examination of conscience, and the Sacrament of Penance. Then those who were in the hall prayed the Rosary for those who went to the priests for reconciliation with God. After that we all joined to praise God in the Liturgy of the Hours. Many participants for the first time got acquainted with the breviary.

At seven o'clock in the morning we all woke up to the music of St Francis' Hymn to the Sun which I played on the guitar in the dormitory corridor. Then it was Morning Prayer from the breviary and Mass of the Day in which the youth raised fervent prayers to our Heavenly Father for the strengthening of the Church, for discernment of vocations among the youth, and for the growth and development of our Catholic parishes in Russia.

When the conference workday began with prayer, Fr Myron announced the special theme of the first day: The Liturgy of the Catholic Church. For three hours the youth listened attentively to the ways in which the Church expected the people to participate in mass. With the help of the Holy Spirit they understood the beauty of the holy service and prepared themselves to carry out every part of our role in the liturgy. They even began to understand that it's not a hindrance even to attend mass in a foreign language because everywhere in the world the same ritual is used in the Roman Catholic Church, with the very same prayers raised to God. They asked questions about how to serve mass together with the priest, and they received full answers to their questions.

After dinner, Zhenya Balanyov continued the theme of the day, speaking about prayer. He showed how to properly praise God in the Liturgy of the Hours. They learned how to compose and present the Prayer of the Faithful at mass, practiced reading at mass for the Liturgy of the Word. They lost their shyness to proclaim the Word of the Lord before the people of God. They learned how to clearly pronounce their words and how to proclaim the Word in loud, clear voices.

After supper we all sat in the hall to hear Fr Myron's lesson about the Bible which he held in his hands. We attentively understood the Word of God, and it became clear why God's chosen people collected the Scriptures.

Again in the evening there was the examination of conscience with a half hour of silence but the priests couldn't be with us as we prayed the Rosary because they were reconciling people with Christ in the Sacrament of Penance. That's how it was until the end of the conference because the youth liked confession and their new peace with God. Every evening concluded with the Liturgy of the Hours in which different people took the parts of leader, reader, and cantor.

On the third day Fr Jim spoke to us about the Mother of our Savior, the Virgin Mary, and showed how she has tremendous love for each of her spiritual children. He helped us to see how and why the apostolic churches respect the Mother of God. By his many faceted presentation, translated by Victor Anisimov, he showed his listeners the Blessed Virgin's maternal heart full of love for them.

The height of the conference was reached in the middle of the third day. The difficulties of getting accustomed to the variety of personalities and of adapting to our situation were past, and so we spent the second half of the day on the shore of the great Amur River where we took an excursion on a riverboat, looking at the city from the middle of the river. The fresh river breeze renewed us, and the sun peeked out from behind the occasional clouds. It was a time of peace.

The next morning I woke everybody with a song, "Teach me, God, to Love," the words and music having occurred to me on the previous evening. We began with the Morning Prayer from the breviary and received again the Holy Body and Blood of Christ at mass. The theme of the day was announced by Sister Katherine Malmros: the vocation to the religious life. We understood that monks aren't people who are running away from the problems of the world, but those who follow the call of the Lord to more fully experience His love already in this earthly life. The theme concluded with some remarks from our priests about their own vocations, about the difficulties of not misinterpreting their call at the beginning of their spiritual journey, and about the necessity of completely trusting in the will of God, and how a person must give oneself to a vision of one's vocation. It was all new for many of the listeners, but they really did want to understand so as to know the will of the Almighty concerning their lives. I was happy to read in the questionnaires after the conference that two people decided their vocation, and may the Lord bless them on their way.

Then Olga Nemchinova and Victor Anisimov told us about the lives of two modern spiritual leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, Mother Theresa of Calcutta and Pope John Paul II. Their lives underscore the truth of what Fr Jim said, that if we don't do through faith any "crazy-to-the-world" deeds, then God won't do any miracles through us either.

On the following day a video machine appeared in the lecture hall. We considered the vocation of the laity and the married life. George Reiss, with characteristic simplicity, told us some things not apparent to the world: how blessed from God is the couple with children! How the world is terribly accustomed to consider children to be a curse. Rather we have to see how sad is the couple with no kids.

I showed the attendants the mystery of the conception and birth of a child by video. I tried to give them a sense of love for children to save them and preserve the lives of people from conception to natural death. When the participants were able to demonstrate to themselves that in fact a person is

really a person from the moment of conception, we showed the reality of society's treatment of the unborn using the film, "Silent Scream". Tears appeared in the eyes, with waves of anger and compassion alternating in the hearts of our youth. The truth of the reality hidden behind the words "interruption of pregnancy" became clear. There was a heated discussion about how to free society from the evil of abortion. Then we began to talk about chastity, and this discussion also helped us understand that we need to fight for the right to life beginning with ourselves. George spoke about the Crisis Pregnancy Center, and tried to show us how such a center is organized.

For the first time the conference divided into two groups, one of which visited the Children's Home located at the Women's Prison where Fr Myron baptized a prisoner and her son who were prepared for Baptism by the Khabarovsk parish. May God grant them to grow in faith and the love of Christ with humility.

The other group went to the radio station, "Association of Christian Broadcasting", where two times in the course of the day our Christian brothers broadcast live our chats concerning the themes of the conference. They fielded phone calls from listeners and lovingly answered the queries. The participants in the conference shared their faith and spoke about the spiritual riches of the teachings and life of the apostolic churches. God grant that the listeners felt a thirst for the Eucharist, and may they experience the freedom of the children of God.

Friday was the last day of the conference. We began to hear how people were sorry that the conference was ending. Friday was a fast day, but two things indicated that maybe we ought to get dispensed from the fast: It was the end of the conference and it was the 4th of July, American Independence Day. The priests decided to exchange the fast for special prayers added to the evening mass asking God to save the lives of unborn children.

Next morning we again dealt with the ministry of the layperson. We also got acquainted with the works of CARITAS Khabarovsk by Tatyana Yermak and of CARITAS Japan by Mika Mizuno, and then again returned to the theme of the struggle against abortion, hearing about the work of American Matthew Bowman and his friends, who demonstrate against abortions near abortion clinics. They are prepared to give up their freedom for the sake of saving the life of even one child whose mother is preparing to kill it. Their way of protest is to pray at the clinic and dedicate their lives to the will of God. Praise God, that in the arsenal of the organization which fights for the unborn lives is their dedication to help in the difficult situations of the lives of the women with problem pregnancies. They draw it all together with prayer, knowing our vocation to bring the light of the Gospel to the dark problems of this world.

The morning also brought to light another prayer intention of the Khabarovsk parish--the return of its pre-Revolutionary church building. This building is now the venereal disease clinic. The parish was closed on October 1 during the Repressions in the '30's. On the same date in 1993 the parish was reborn with its new official act of registration. On October 1 the Catholic Church celebrates the feast of St Therese of Lisieux. Fr Jim had brought with him a little picture of St Therese. He is convinced that she helped the Americans receive their visas in time for their trip. So the Khabarovsk parishioners and the other participants in the Conference prayed daily to the "Little Therese" for the return of the Khabarovsk church building to the Parish of the Immaculate Conception before October 1 of this year. The prayer goes like this: "O little Therese of the Child Jesus, I ask you to choose for me a rose from the heavenly gardens and bring it to me like a sign of love. O Little Flower of Jesus, ask God today to give me this mercy which I now pass into your hands: the return of the building of the parish of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in Khabarovsk. Holy Therese, help me always to believe as you believed in God's great love for me, so that I can imitate your 'little way' every day. Amen."

Suddenly it was time for mass and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. And again in the prayer of the faithful we prayed to God for help for the defense of the child in the womb of its mother.

Then there was a banquet, and we toasted our gratitude to one another, after having prayed to our Heavenly Father. The image of Our Lady of Fatima stood in the center of our fraternal dinner, where she radiated to her children maternal and spiritual love.

Then it was time for the sad departure of our American friends who were to fly back to their homeland. We all expressed our hope to meet again next year, on the 19th of July, the day we decided to begin the Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference next year--but with an even larger group of youth.

Please pray to God, brothers and sisters, that our plans for the conference for 1998 will be realized according to the will of God. With that I'll finish my report about this year's conference. Please pray for me, the Assistant for Evangelization to the Pastor of the Parish of the Most Holy Mother of God of Vladivostok, Byelozorov, Yuri Andreevich.

“Even The Sparrow Finds A Home” (Ps 84: 3)

by Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

At the risk of being called “Quasimodo” I would like to tell our readers what a joy it is finally to be able to live in church. On March 18 I moved from the apartment that my parents bought where I had been living for the past three and a half years into a newly prepared room in the south tower of our cathedral. (Thanks again, Mom and Dad, for your generosity. The apartment was a great place to live.)

“Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise!” (Ps 84: 3b-4) Moving into the church brings with it many reasons to be joyful. For one thing the vocation of “canon regular” is a style of religious life connected with an actual church building. It is the privilege and duty of the canon to sing the praises of God throughout the day in a public church for and with the people of God. Most communities of canons live in a “canonry” built next to their church, usually with a passageway that connects their cloistered residence to the public church. But I am even closer to my church. I am in it. What could give me a better opportunity of fulfilling my canonical vocation than that! We canons like to trace our roots all the way back to the Old Testament choirs of Levitical priests in the Jerusalem Temple who sang the praises of God in the place He had chosen to dwell: “These are the singers, the heads of the families of Levites, dwelling in the chambers of the temple free from other service, for they were on duty day and night.” (1 Chronicles 9: 33-34)

What a privilege (even a luxury) to be able to stop by the Blessed Sacrament chapel for a visit at any time of day or night; to get up from my desk, walk a few feet and pray before our marble crucifix or any of the many icons and statues of the most holy Mother of God, the beloved patroness of our parish; to gather with Fr Myron and our parishioners and colleagues for morning and evening prayer in the presence of the Lord. It is also a great joy to be reunited again with Fr Myron in a truly communal, canonical life. For our first three years in Russia we lived together in successive apartments where we also celebrated daily Mass and prayed the Liturgy of the Hours together. After we received the church building from the State and a room was made ready for Fr Myron, he moved there in May of 1995 to fulfill his life-long desire to live closer to the Lord in church and also to supervise more closely the restoration process. But for many practical reasons I was not able to move with him, so for the past two years we have been living separately, celebrating daily Mass together and praying the Liturgy of the Hours together in church as best we could considering that the apartment where I lived and worked is four blocks away.

Fr Myron has said that the New Testament figures Simeon and Anna are prototypes of canons and canonesses - constantly in the Temple praying and proclaiming the praises of God to all who would listen. When Fr Myron began our new group of Canons Reluglar of Jesus the Lord in 1988 he chose as one of our major feast days February 2, the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, because it is precisely on that day that the dreams of all who prayed in the Temple were fulfilled when the “Long-awaited One” finally appeared in his own home. Imagine praying in church and having the Messiah show up after waiting thousands of years for Him. Some day it will happen again. And I hope to be as ready as Simeon was when he proclaimed:

“O Lord, now you can dismiss your servant in peace; your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of all peoples:
a light to reveal you to the Gentiles
and the glory of your people Israel.” (Luke 2:29-32)

Being faithful to the original intent of the charism of canons regular also means living a life of stability of place. That is, originally and through most of their history canons stayed put. They do not move around from house to house as do the mendicant orders, such as the Dominicans and Franciscans, and the newer apostolic congregations founded after the Reformation, such as the Jesuits and Assumptionists. (For our Crosier friends who are our readers, note that since the restoration of your order in 1840 you Canons Regular of the Order of the Holy Cross were exempted by Rome from your traditional life of stability of place for particular, historical reasons.)

Like the Benedictine monks, the first community which a canon joins by his religious profession of vows remains his community for the rest of his life. A canon can move only if his community (called a chapter) founds a daughter house, in effect a new chapter. In that case canons can be asked if they want to be part of the new foundation or if they want to remain in their original chapter. The process is strictly voluntary. No canon can be ordered, even under the vow of obedience, to leave his chapter because that would violate the principle of canonical stability. The church building of each chapter of canons has always been the symbol of this canonical stability for it is to the church that the canons are “attached.”

Canons and monks both structure their community lives on the principle of stability of place, but their charisms are not identical. The original and defining differences between them are simply that canons are clerics (usually priests), while monks are usually laymen; and that canons usually live in urban areas at a cathedral or another large, public church where they can fulfill their priestly service in a variety of ways, but monks often build their monasteries in rural areas removed from the cares of the world. These differences, as

you can imagine, have a big influence on how and with whom they pray.

In a kind of metaphor of canonical stability, I now live in the church tower, the most stable part of a very stable building. The walls of my tower-fortress are two and a half feet thick. My room is located on the second floor off the choir loft and above the parish library. My window is the tall, narrow Gothic-arched window on the far right of the main facade. When I am sitting at my desk it provides a perfect view of all who come and go, of the children who play in our churchyard, and of the beautiful and colorful sunsets over the hills of the downtown area to the west. Even though I have been living here four months it comes as a surprise to me each time I step out of my room and see that I am in the main church.

Living high up in a tower provides not only security but solitude, at least for the time being. Until it can be made more secure, the main church hall on the second floor is open to the public only on Sundays. On weekdays only the first floor is open to the public. There are located the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, the receptionist and parish offices, the library, the kitchen and dining room, Fr Myron's room, and the workshops and storage areas for the workers and artisans engaged in the church restoration. I usually have the upper, main church and choir loft all to myself except when my colleagues in the Liturgical Music Society of Saint Augustine are working with me on a project.

Besides religious reasons for the joy of calling the church my home, there are some mundane reasons as well. No longer do I have to walk up and down six flights of stairs to get to our apartment, (99 steps each way, and after three and a half years how well I know each one of them!) No longer do I have to stumble up the steep hill to the church in the early morning darkness for daily Mass, or down the hill in the early winter nights, slipping on the ice after a long day's work. Many of the steps of the crumbling, wooden, public stairway leading down the hill have completely disintegrated. From one day to the next you never know how many more will be missing. With my long legs I can, so far, manage to stretch over most of the empty spaces in good weather. In bad weather - rain, snow and ice - which predominate in Vladivostok from November through July, it is impossible. Taking the main road to avoid the stairs adds five minutes to the trip and is an even greater challenge. The pavement and road bed have been dug up by two different work crews over the past three years and never re-graded or re-paved. The continuous flow of unchanneled ground water insures the presence of either mud or ice all year round. Since I now live in my "ivory tower" I don't have to worry about all that.

It reminds me of something from what seems like a former life on another planet. When I lived in Brookline, MA I would occasionally drive through downtown Boston on the freeway. There on a new, residential building was a billboard advertisement directed at the hordes of harried commuters

pouring out of the city and heading home to the far-flung suburbs as much as two more hours away: "If you lived here, you'd be home by now." For some of us there are even quicker ways of getting home from work.

Another mundane reason for living in church is that here we finally have a constant supply of hot running water, something unheard of and even undreamed of in Russia. Readers who have spent even a short time in this struggling country know that hot water cannot be taken for granted in Russian cities. The manufacture of individual home hot water heaters was never part of the Communist economy's five-year plans which controlled every detail of Soviet economic activity. In other words no one has ever heard of them. Even when I describe them to Russians they cannot believe that they exist. They shake their heads and look at me as though I must have been hallucinating. Every year the city-wide hot water system is turned off for at least one month for repairs (and for vacation time for their workers.) But often it stays turned off for much longer than that. The first year we lived in our apartment (1993-94) we were without hot water for more than five months.

Fr Myron suffered here at the church for two years without hot water at all. (In regard to that, our bishop recently said that he is a true martyr.) He had to walk to the apartment for a shower (when the system was working). But in preparation for my arrival we installed a water heater which works in conjunction with one of our three American furnaces by piping water through a special, instant on-off burner activated by the flow of water through the pipe. We now have a trustworthy, unlimited, cheap supply of hot water at the turn of a faucet. To western readers that may not sound like such a big deal. But after five years of never knowing from day to day if there will be hot water or not, it approaches the level of ultimate decadence. So what if we have to live with a tinge of guilt from the fact that we, with a vow of poverty, suddenly live more comfortably than any of our parishioners, at least in one way!

Our bishop Joseph Werth intuitively understands the joy we feel to be able to live in church. On his recent arrival in Vladivostok to celebrate Fr Myron's silver jubilee of priestly ordination we gave him a grand tour of the church which he had not seen in almost two years (before the removal of the third floor and the restoration of nave and choir loft.) After demonstrating our beautiful and powerful "Epiphany Organ", I pointed to a door a few feet away from the organ console and said, "And here is where I now live." With surprise and delight he said, "You must certainly be a happy priest. So many people throughout history, including the saints, have longed to live in church." It was an especially poignant remark, remembering that millions of Russians were killed during this century of darkness defending their churches and their faith.

The Christian Faith holds within itself an invitation to all the baptized to embark on a great adventure of God's love.

This is particularly true for the vowed religious life which shows forth in the clearest way the love God has for His chosen ones. We Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord are living our adventure of God's love within the tradition of our ancient charism but in a way which responds to the needs of the Church today. There had never been canons regular in Russia until we arrived five years ago. Responding to one of the greatest needs of the Church, we brought the stability of our canonical life - liturgical prayer, fraternal community, and priestly service - to Vladivostok in the Russian Far East. Here we pray and work and await the new vocations that the Lord will send us. This is His adventure more than ours.

Daily we place the future of our order in His hands. Catholic family life which is the seed bed of vocations was completely destroyed in this part of Russia. In fact the entire Catholic Faith was wiped out, so it will take more time than I originally thought to sew and reap the seeds of native vocations to the diocesan priesthood and the religious life. A number of young men in our various parishes have already expressed serious interest. Are there others in the West, perhaps you, one of our readers, or someone you know, who is discerning a call to the canonical life? Do you, like the psalmist and saints throughout the ages, find yourself praying,

“ My soul is longing and yearning,
is yearning for the courts of the Lord...
My heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God”? (Ps. 84: 2)

Fr Myron Celebrates 25 Years of Priesthood

by Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

In late May and early June Fr Myron C. Effing, C.J.D., together with his Vladivostok parishioners, pastoral team, Russian friends and guests, celebrated the completion of his first 25 years of priesthood. He was ordained a priest on May 27, 1972 by the Most Rev Leo Pursley, D.D., Bishop of Fort Wayne - South Bend for the Canons Regular of the Order of the Holy Cross (Crosiers) in the Crosier major seminary chapel in Fort Wayne, Indiana. (Incidentally, he wrote a letter to Bishop Pursely on the day of his anniversary. The bishop is 95, and living in retirement in Huntington, Indiana. His mind is still very active and he recently answered Fr Myron's letter with news of his own 70th anniversary of priesthood!)

On Sunday, June 1, 1997 the parish of the Most Holy Mother of God and many of Father's Russian friends gathered at the church to help him celebrate the occasion of his 25th Jubilee on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, the feast on which the Universal Church celebrates the gift of the Eucharist given by Christ to the faithful through the ministry of priests. Also part of the celebration, though not present, were his family, friends and Crosier confreres in America and around the world. Many of them sent messages of congratulations by both conventional and electronic mail for the occasion.

The beautiful Mass was followed by Eucharistic adoration at the main altar during which the choir sang one of Fr Myron's favorite hymns, the Guamanian anthem to the Sacred Heart, "Atan Jesu Cristo" in the original Chamorro language. They had been practicing it quietly for weeks in order to surprise him on his important day. Adoration was followed by the traditional Eucharistic procession around the church, stopping four times at stational altars for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The fourth and final benediction was given back inside the church at the main altar.

Immediately after Benediction those present began to come forward with gifts, flowers and words of congratulations and gratitude. Among the many who spoke were representatives of all parish organizations, CARITAS, Catholic Relief Service, the Interfaith organization for the Rememberance of the Victims of the Repression, and from our neighboring parish to the north in Magadan (2000 miles away) Fr David Means came to represent the clergy of the diocese. The children of our Sunday catechism class prepared a special song which they sang accompanied and directed by their teachers, Hiroshi and Takako Nishina of CARITAS Japan.

After the many messages of love and affection, all present went downstairs to our first-floor parish hall for champagne toasts, delicious sandwiches, deserts, icecream (donated by parishioner and former employee Ghenna Krestsov from his

new job with a New Zealand food import company), tea and coffee.

Three parishioners, Elena Andreevna, Miroslava Igorevna, and Yevgeny Balanyob, worked all week to make a photo display of the first 25 years of Fr Myron's priesthood and religious vocation, including captioned pictures his first religious profession of vows in Hastings, Nebraska where he was later prior; at his ordination in Fort Wayne; at his first Mass in Evansville with his parents Henry and Leota, brother Merle, and sisters Marlene and Marilyn; working at Our Lady of the Lake Seminary at Lake Wawasee, Indiana; Crosier Seminary in Onamia, Minnesota, Father Duenas Memorial School on Guam, and California State University in Turlock. They did a great job with photos that I had "obtained" from his personal file and with some of my own, and with maps and color post cards of all the Crosier houses where he has been stationed. He rarely shares his personal life publicly, so everyone was fascinated to see pictures of him as a young frater and priest and pictures of his parents, brother and sisters. We hung the large display in the newly renovated vestibule of the church with spotlights on it where it quickly became one of the main attractions of the day.

Bishop Joseph Werth had planned to attend the June 1st celebration but was delayed by a bureaucratic tangle. He would not be deterred, however, because of his admiration for Fr Myron and because he considers silver jubilees of priesthood to be very important milestones in the life of the Church. He was able to fly to Vladivostok for a special Jubilee celebration with Fr Myron on Thursday evening, June 13 on his way back from Japan. His Mass on that occasion also was the setting for the Confirmation and reception of First Communion of parishioners from Vladivostok and Romanovka. It was the first pontifical Mass to be celebrated in the renovated 2nd floor church, and many parishioners worked long and hard to make it a memorable occasion. The bishop was especially complimentary to the alter servers, three of whom had ridden four hours from Fr Myron's parish in Hahodka to serve their first mass for a bishop. Again after mass, as on Sunday, all present gathered in the parish hall for toasts and treats prepared by parishioners.

A 25th Jubilee of priestly ordination is a time for a priest at the peak of his life to reflect back on the roots of his vocation and on the service that he has rendered to the people of God. In conjunction with this article, I asked Fr Myron a number of questions and, even though I have known him for 24 of these past 25 years, I learned some new and interesting things about him. Here are some of his answers.

•Q: When did you decide to become a priest?

Fr Myron: In 1972 on my ordination day. I always thought that if God wanted me to be a priest he would make it happen, so I wouldn't be sure I should be a priest until I was ordained. I can't say it is something I sought. I had planned to be a teacher.

•Q: Well, then, when did you decide to join the religious life?

Fr Myron: When I was in graduate school at Indiana University in Bloomington. I was studying astronomy. It was then that I decided to pursue the possibility of becoming a religious. I have always thought that being a religious is something that a person chooses in response to God, but being a priest is something that God chooses.

•Q: What has been your most amusing pastoral experience?

Fr Myron: When a cat walked down the aisle at a Sunday Mass I was celebrating in a parish in Duluth, Minnesota. The church was very big and very full. It was during my homily. There had already been a lot of trouble with the loud speaker system. It kept going on and off, on and off, all during my homily, so of course the people and I were very distracted. I finally asked, "Does anyone here know how to fix the amplifier?" and someone got up, and went to the sacristy to fix it. He had just gotten back to his place when in walked the cat, with a bell around his neck, making lots of noise, right down the center aisle. As he went, all the people on the ends of the pews behind him jumped out after him. They all missed him and landed sprawled all over the aisle floor. The whole center aisle was full of people who had tried to catch the cat. The cat meanwhile made it up the entire length of the aisle with people falling after him, and got away through a side door by the sanctuary. Of course, no one present, not even me, remembers what that homily was about! It must have been something the devil didn't want said.

•Q: What has been your greatest challenge?

Fr Myron: It has been difficult trying to be a leader in the Church during these last 25 years when there has been so much unfaithfulness, which is often called liberalism. You don't want to be too conservative and hold the Church back because the Church is always called to go forward. On the other hand, you suffer from the unfaithfulness of the super-progressive wing of so-called liberal Catholics, many of whom don't believe in some of the most important doctrines of the Church, yet they wield a lot of power, and nobody calls them on the carpet.

•Q: What has been the hardest thing you have ever done?

Fr Myron: Emotionally the hardest thing I ever did was to leave Guam. Physically the hardest thing that I have ever done is to work here in Russia. I don't find it emotionally difficult at all, but it is physically exhausting.

At both of the public celebrations of his 25th Jubilee of priesthood the Vladivostok parish choir sang to Fr Myron the traditional Russian blessing, "Mnogie Lyeta!" (Many More Years!). I am sure that all the readers of the *Vladivostok Sunrise* join them and all of us in Fr Myron's five parishes in the Russian Far East, including the hundreds of people whom he has baptized and confirmed, in praying that the Lord will prolong his priestly ministry among us for many, many more years, and through him will extend the love and mercy of God

to hundreds more people in this country filled with tragedy and hope.

Prayer to St Joseph

by Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

On Sunday August 10 our bishop Joseph Werth and all the priests of the Diocese of the Asian Part of Russia will gather in Novosibirsk for the solemn mass of dedication of our new Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Our bishop has said that he considers this to be the most important spiritual event of the first six years of his administration. He has invited pilgrims from every parish and region of his vast territory (nine time zones from the Ural Mountains to the Pacific Ocean) and from many other countries to be present for this special occasion.

In spiritual preparation for the dedication, and for the intentions of all benefactors who have contributed to the construction of the cathedral church and to the diocese in general, Bishop Werth has asked all Catholics of the diocese to pray to Saint Joseph, patron of the Universal Church, each Wednesday until August 10. In fulfillment of his request the following prayer to St Joseph, which is a traditional Russian prayer with some additions by our pastor Fr Myron, has been distributed to all our parishes in the Russian Far East. Here we provide an English translation of it for you, our dear benefactors, so that you can pray it with us, and also so that you know that we are constantly praying for you. Your generosity to our mission in the Russian Far East is also a great gift to our bishop, to all the people of our diocese, and to the universal Church. Rejoice with us in this great blessing of a new cathedral!

Prayer to St Joseph for the Benefactors of our Cathedral and Diocese

We hasten to you, blessed Joseph, in our difficulties, and as we have called out for help to your most holy Spouse, so too do we hope in your patronage.

Though the love which united you in matrimony with the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, and through your fatherly love for Jesus, we implore you, look mercifully on us, the heirs which Jesus Christ obtained by the price of His blood, and help us, powerful patron, in our needs.

Wise guardian of the Holy Family, help our families to be united in love, like your Holy Family. By your example lead parents in the correct upbringing of their children. Lead our teachers and students of all levels of education, for you were a good teacher to Jesus.

Protect the chosen people of Christ, and as once you saved the Child Jesus from mortal danger, now likewise guard His Holy Church from the wiles of enemies and from every misfortune. Ask of the Lord a blessing on our bishop Joseph

and on our priests. With your patronage come to the aid of the benefactors of our diocese. Give us more religious vocations among our children, and more marriages united in Christ and strengthened by the Spirit.

Loving Father, guard us beforehand from all harm, all error, all pitfalls in the struggle which we wage against the forces of darkness. Help the people of Russia to grow in true values. Beseech the Lord to save our people from the evils of alcoholism, delinquency and abortion. Through your intercession may God give us civic leaders who love and serve the people.

Spread your mantle of safety over each one of us, so that we may, with your help, lead honorable lives that end peacefully and so that we may gain the eternal happiness of heaven. Amen.

Our Lady of Vladivostok

Bishop Joseph Werth blessed the new icon of Our Lady of Vladivostok which hangs in our church on June 13, 1997. The icon was painted by Father Damien of Holy Transfiguration Monastery of Redwood Valley, California. The icon is a gift of Mr and Mrs Don and Angela Wozniak of St Paul, Minnesota in honor of Mr Wozniak's parents, Mr and Mrs George and Anna Wozniak.

Our Lady of Vladivostok

Some of the youth gathering in the restaurant for dinner.

Father Jim talking about Our Lady of Guadalupe. Yuri Byelozorov is seated in the white shirt.

George Reiss relaxing with new Russian friends.

Khabarovsk parish Elder Stanislauv Yermak. Fr Myron translated Russian talks into English for the Americans.

Sister Katherine speaking about religious vocations. All the English talks were translated to Russian by Victor Anisimov.

Olga Nemchinova speaking about Mother Theresa.

CARITAS Khabarovsk director Tanya Yermak and her daughter, Lena, setting out with George Reiss on an Amur riverboat.

Baptism of Mom and boy in the Women's Prison in Khabarovsk.

Matt Bowman speaking about abortion clinics.

Mika Mizumo, of CARITAS Japan, helped us to summarize our conference.

On the Amur waterfront in Khabarovsk.

Fr Myron at baptisms, summer of 1997.

Fr Myron with a band of angels.

Our children singing a song for Fr Myron on his 25th.

Fr Dan, Bishop Werth, and Fr Myron with First Communicants.

Yadviga Frantsevna presenting Fr Myron with the traditional Russian bread and salt.

Bishop Joseph Werth, the Apostolic Administrator of Asian Russia congratulating Fr Myron on his 25th.

Regina Iosephovna reciting a poem for Fr Myron. Fr David Means from Magadan also came for the event.

After mass it was tea in the church hall.

Languishing "Nativity" window waiting for a donor. We could call it the "Christmas" window--would make a nice gift to a loved one for Christmas of 1997!