

News Notes

by Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

- December 7, 1999, was an historic day in the history of our mission in Russia. The first Russian has become a novice of our new religious order, "The Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord". He is 37 year old Oleg Nicolaevich Yelchaninov. The clothing ceremony took place at first vespers of The Feast of the Immaculate Conception. It means that if he perseveres he will be able to take first vows next year on December 8 on the feastday. Brother Oleg nearly has a university degree in Art History, and his specialty is Gothic Architecture. He served in the Soviet Army and has years of experience as a businessman. He comes to us from the Parish of the Transfiguration in Blagoveschensk.

In addition to Brother Oleg, we are happy to have two seminarians and two prospective seminarians. Hopefully the first ordination will be this Spring when our parishioner from Russian Island, Evgenie Peregudov expects to be ordained a deacon.

The first young lady from our mission will soon become a postulant for our Sisters of Charity of St Anne. There are also five other women who want to join orders, including three who are determined that they will work as nurses for terminal cancer patients, and they will found their own order if they can't find one which will come here to Russia.

Please join us in giving thanks to God for these great gifts, and please continue to pray for our vocations.

- New parish in Lesozovodsk! Bishop Mazur has issued the decree forming a new parish in Lesozovodsk on November 4. It will be named The Catholic Parish of the Visitation of Mary with Elizabeth. Congratulations to the Catholics of Lesozovodsk who have been working to make this happen. The pastor will be Fr Myron Effing, and the Trustee Mr Alexander Pisarenko. Parishioners already have many charitable activities with the children and needy of their city. Lesozovodsk is halfway between Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, the main cities of our region.

- In Vladivostok we celebrated Christmas with a full church on Friday night. On Saturday there were many new faces in church. It seems most were Catholics that didn't know we existed yet, but saw news of our Friday mass on television. Parts of our Christmas mass were on national television, since we are ahead of Moscow in time. We also celebrated with three Christmas evening concerts of classical Christmas music with organ and several different choirs--again full houses. The final Christmas events will be the celebration of our parish feastday, January 1, the Feast of the Most Holy Mother of God. Then the second Annual Festival of Christian Choirs will occupy two evenings when we invite all the Christian choirs of the city to come to sing. Their parishioners are also invited. It is our main ecumenical event of the year, and a good time to join hands as

Christians, because Christmas unites us in Christian joy. We expect ten choirs to participate. Last year it was agreed that the Baptist and Methodist choirs were the best. This year, our choir is working with renewed determination.

Meanwhile our seminarians Evgenie Peregudov and Evgenie Balanov were home for Christmas.

- We now own a store which we are planning to call "The St Vincent de Paul Store", although the St Vincent de Paul Society doesn't exist here yet. Already we are giving away and selling used clothing there. We also have begun to manufacture wooden window frames and bookcases there. We are beginning a new program to working with women ex-prisoners, since their life is really rough in Russia. We will be able to give them temporary work in the store, and temporary lodging in a dormitory not far away. We want to open some classes for kids there, especially Sunday School, and our Sisters of Charity of St Anne are hoping to work there with the children. It is a long way from the church, so we are thinking to open the second parish in our city. There is plenty of room in the store for a chapel.

- We are getting more and more orders for our Russian Mass Hymnbook, "My Soul Magnifies the Lord". Fr Dan and our parish musicians have been working on it for eight years. We are getting ready to reprint it, because there are so many new parishes beginning in every state of Russia, and they all need hymnbooks and prayerbooks. Russians enjoy to singing, which is often part of family gatherings and celebrations. Fr Ed in Khabarovsk says that, of 60 hymnbooks the parish used to own, they are down to 16! Hopefully those missing hymnbooks are being evangelizers themselves in somebody's homes.

- I have new helpers in America and in Russia. Mr and Mrs David Sonnen from our sister parish of the Nativity of Our Lord in St Paul MN have opened an office for us in the Twin Cities as American headquarters of Mary Mother of God Mission Society. We think that they will be able to provide many kinds of services for our mission that we have here-to-fore lacked, including personally representing us to various foundations. Thanks to their efforts we already have a new bulk mail permit and a new address, which you see on the current issues of *Vladivostok Sunrise*.

In Russia my new secretary is Nicolai Vladimirovich Doródnov. He is a very active young man, a widower, with a black belt in Karate. He was baptised this past summer in his home parish of Comsomolsk-na-Amure. His hobby is pre-rock popular music. No job is too big for him to tackle.

- We are producing our newsletters *Vladivostok Sunrise* and mailing them in a new way. Thanks to Mr & Mrs Ray Rzeszut of Anchorage, Alaska, I have a new computer which allows me access to the Internet. So I can fully edit the newsletter "on screen", including pictures! Then I can e-mail the newsletter to Minnesota to our friends at Nativity Parish who print, collate, fold, and put them in envelopes. Meanwhile, I prepare the mailing list in Russia, and e-mail it again to Minnesota where our friends make labels, stick them on, and sort for bulk mail,

and finally mail them! It is a big process, but works very efficiently, thanks to our volunteers. The only hang-up in the process is that I'm too busy to meet the deadlines! Using the Internet with the new computer is much more efficient than the old system of physically mailing the newsletter on paper to Minnesota, and then physically sending the address list on diskette—the new method saves nearly a month of time!

- CARITAS has made its first adoptions of Russian children to American couples. It required a year of preparatory work to set up the process. We aren't an adoption agency, but a facilitator of the adoptions between American agencies and Russian realities. Our goal, as a religious charitable organization, is to have children adopted as young as possible and as cheaply as possible for American couple, in the belief that that is the best for child and parents. Anyone wanting information can contact us at any address, or use the direct CARITAS email address:

CARITAS@mail.primorye.ru

- Congratulations to CARITAS Primorye and to Anastasia Potopenko, the director, for the completion of one of their most ambitious projects yet. They teamed up with Healing the Children of Seattle to sponsor a week-long facial remedial surgery marathon for 30 Russian children with harelip deformity. The doctors shipped their equipment in advance, and CARITAS arranged for the operating theater and gathered the kids, and it took the personal intervention of Primorye's Governor Evgenie Nasdratenko to bring the medical supplies across the border in time for the event. At five operations a day it was quite a deal, with a new lease on life for the kids, of course. The medical team promised to return in a year to do the follow-up operations. Now that CARITAS has succeeded in this first attempt, they'll be bold enough to try some more!

How to Communicate with Us

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World Wide Web:

<http://www.pond.net/~jeffclang/mostholy/index.htm>

Money cannot legally be sent by mail to Russia. Donations of money should be sent to:

Vladivostok Mission
225 Cordova Street
Anchorage AK 99501 USA

Your donations are tax-deductible. You will receive any required receipt for IRS tax purposes by return mail.

Letters without donations can be sent to:

Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Parish
Volodarskovo 22
690001 Vladivostok RUSSIA

Please do **not** mail **packages** directly to Russia, since every package mailed to Russia costs us \$50. If you have items that you think we can use, please contact us by electronic mail or fax giving a complete list of items. If we accept your offer you will need official inventory information from:

Mrs Joan O'Rourke
PO Box 266
Hanford CA 93232
FAX (650) 871-2856
Phone (559) 582-4112

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Vladivostok Mission
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Sister Susan Wal
Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver
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Mary Mother of God Mission Society
1854 Jefferson St
St Paul MN 55105-1662

Address Service Requested

Mary Mother of God Mission Society
1854 Jefferson St
St Paul MN 55105-1662

Address Service Requested

Virginia E. Murphy
1906 Princeton
St Paul MN 55105-1523

**Remember
“Vladivostok Mission”
in your will.**

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- 11 - - 12 - - 13 - - 14 - - 15 - - 16 -

Dear Sister Susan,

Please send the photos, when you are done to:

Thanks. God bless you. --Fr Myron

Mr Jeff Lang
2095 Morning View Dr
Eugene OR 97405-1633

Christmas figures by parishioner Lilia Schevchenko.

The beginnings of the "St Vincent de Paul Store."

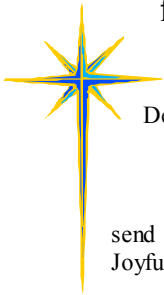
Children bringing the Christ Child at Midnight Mass.

Fr Myron, Br Oleg, and Fr Daniel.

Bishop Karol Slivovsky, Bishop of Vladivostok, 1923?

Maxim Germanovich at the beginning of the Jubilee Year.

Christmas Greetings from our Neighbor in Magadan



Christmas, 1999

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Magadan, in the Russian Far East. I send you my love and prayers for a most Blessed and Joyful CHRISTMAS.

In this Season of the HOLY FAMILY, I think of my family and of all families and what a blessing they are. Here in Russia, families have been so broken, that there are few healthy happy families. The communists attacked families in many ways. Children were taken away and put in day cares, or mothers were required to work, at the time when their children needed them to be home. All are hurt by alcoholism; all have some sort of broken relationships- mothers not talking to children and children not caring for their mothers. We have a family whose grandmother raised her granddaughter, but now won't talk to her children. Her own mother is sick and dying, far out west, but refuses to allow her to come and visit. Another of our elderly ladies, a decorated veteran of WWII, doesn't receive a pension adequate to live on, but her son refuses to help her. Instead he is suing his mother about who owns a room in her small apartment, which the granddaughter had lived in. Most families here consist of only a mother; there are very few men or fathers. We have had grown men tell us that they had no father of their own, that we are not only their spiritual fathers, but their father also.

We are also aware here of how precious is our health, or even being able to go to a doctor and receive treatment. People here lay at home without care, or in the hospital, (unimaginable by American standards) without means to get medicine or needed operations. One man needs a heart operation, which is only available in Moscow or Novosibirsk. AIDS is becoming epidemic here, while children are sick and dying in orphanages.

And most people here still aren't getting paid. Teachers still teach, doctors still staff clinics, watchmen still spend the night watching, labors still go to work each morning, our street cleaning lady still faithfully shovels snow from our sidewalks.... And yet they are receiving no pay, or being paid very seldom. There isn't even enough to pay all the pensioners, they receive their pensions on rotations. And others here are becoming millionaires.

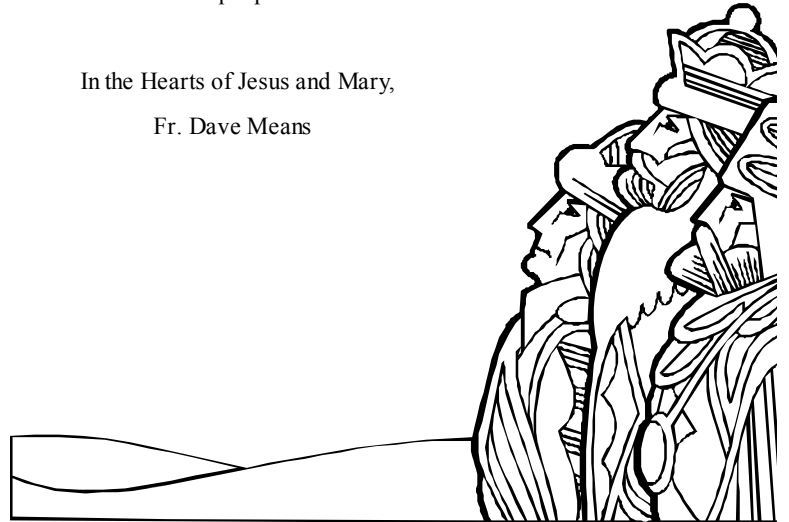
Yes, pray that the Newborn Child whose birth we celebrate, whose kingdom we proclaim has come, will rule in this land, and on the whole earth. Here in our little parish of THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, we will joyfully celebrate the Birth of Our Lord. Our poor broken people will find joy and light, will take it with

them out onto the streets and into their homes and work. And maybe some of that Peace that the CHRIST CHILD has brought to the Earth will dwell with them a little while longer, and fill them with peace.

That is my prayer for you too. May the CHRIST CHILD fill you with Light and Joy and bring you great peace. Merry Christmas to you all. Please continue to pray for me, for Fr. Mike and all of our people and for Russia.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Fr. Dave Means



Bishop Karol Slivovsky: 65th Death Anniversary

By Mirosława Igorevna Efimov

*Archivist of the Parish of the Most Holy Mother of God
tr V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.*

[January 5 marks the 67th anniversary of the death of our Bishop of Vladivostok Karol Slivovsky. Here is an article written two years ago by our parish archivist who is working on the research necessary for the cause of canonization of our parish's Soviet era saints and martyrs.—ed]

Historical documents show how so many Catholics appeared in the Eastern reaches of the Russian Empire when many various groups of Catholics were deported from Poland who were participants in the Napoleonic wars and in the revolts for national freedom in Poland. French Catholic missionaries who were located in the northeastern parts of China were attracted to this large number of Catholics in eastern Russia, and quite naturally began to send workers to Catholics of the Amur valley. St Petersburg was extremely unhappy about this, with the result that in 1866 the Holy Synod sent a special Catholic priest of the Mogilev [Belorussia] Archdiocese. The choice fell to Father Kazimir Radzichevsky who formed the first Catholic parish in Nikolaevsk-na-Amure, the capital of the governor-general, from which he served his flock across all the Far East. When the governor-general moved to Vladivostok, the Catholic parish was also moved here in 1890, and which quickly grew so that already in 1900 there were 3500 faithful who couldn't be contained in the small wooden church. When fire destroyed the church, the slow process of construction of a brick church was begun.

In 1912 Father Karol Slivovsky became the pastor, and his fate was to play a special role in the life of the Catholic parish of Vladivostok. His biography is impressive. He was born into the family of a suburban Warsaw landowner on June 29, 1855, graduated from the Warsaw Gymnasium and then evidently studied at the Railway Institute in St Petersburg, where suddenly there was a change in plans. He studied in the Seini Seminary from 1875, and then from 1879 to 1883 in the St Petersburg Spiritual Academy. He received a master's in theology, and was awarded a cross-ring and ordination. Further in his curriculum vitae we could read: Assistant Pastor in Stanens, Dean of Stanens, Pastor in Lapel and a diploma from the Lapel City College, Dean of Lapel, Pastor of Kazan and diplomas from several institutes in Kazan. His service in Kazan from 1895 to 1912 was a period of flowering of his abilities which Father Karol Slivovsky generously gave to the Catholic community of Kazan, which earned the respect of the parishioners for whom he lived. In the government archive we can see the very respectful petition of the council of the Kazan parish in the name of all the parishioners to the Archbishop of all Roman Catholic churches of Russia. In that letter there is a list of all the priest's successes, all of his constant concern for the parish, the beginnings of the construction of the parish school, the

reconstruction and redecoration of the church, his irreplaceable service as chaplain—and all that without the help of an assistant pastor. The petition asks that their pastor be awarded the title of "Honorary Canon", [similar to "Monsignor".] The request was unsuccessful, but instead of a reward, Father Slivovsky received a new assignment from the archbishop of Mogilev, Archbishop Kluchinsky—to be the rector of the Vladivostok church. Maybe such was the reaction of the Department of Spiritual Affairs, Office of Foreign Faiths, when a letter was sent from the Minister of Interior Affairs to the administrator of the Mogilev Roman Catholic Archdiocese, Hierarch Stephan Denisevich which reported that "the religion teacher at the Kazan Rodionov Institute Father Slivovsky refused to sign a document proposed to all the workers of the Institute which would oblige them to take part in political parties, organizations, and trade unions." Refusniks were not forgiven.

In Vladivostok the new rector met with the very disordered construction of the brick church. There had been a change of priests, changes in the constitution of the building committee formed in 1902, so construction was at a standstill. The naturally energetic and decisive Father Slivovsky decided first of all to change the old parish council, and organized a meeting of the parish to choose a new one. He achieved his purpose, but on every side, church and civil, there were complaints about the new rector. What a sharp contrast it was with Kazan! Most of the thunder and lightning came from the well-to-do local, Bartholomew Karlovich Boroviks, who wrote large letters of complaint to the Archbishop, and all because the rector insisted on open nominations of candidates. A. Slovik, S. Viborsky, O. Matsovich, A. Banaskevich, and others supported Boroviks' complaints. But the pastor stubbornly pushed on in the attempt to finish the building and organize parish activities. Because the Polish colony in Vladivostok had a large growth after the Russo-Japanese War and again after the beginning of the First World War, there were many new parishioners, and pastor Slivovsky was busy with the education of the children. He supported the activities of the "Roman Catholic Society of Charity" which organized a Polish beginning school in 1907, and now prepared to add several classes. Besides that, the pastor dreamed of opening a minor seminary for religious boys from Polish families, but that good beginning took a long time because of the absence of appropriate premises. All the same, the children preparing for First Communion took a catechetical course from the parish.

The Roman Catholic parish received a lot of support from a new organization, "Polish House". Thanks to the participation of its members in activities of the city дума, it was possible to receive a subsidy in 1917 from the city treasury for the long awaited opening of the four-grade Polish school for 120 pupils with three teachers.

In 1920 the Mogilev Archdiocese founded the Vladivostok Deanery, encompassing the Catholics of Amursky, Khabarovsk, and Primorsky territories. There were already five priests and nearly 11,000 faithful in the deanery. Father Slivovsky was appointed the first dean. In June of 1921 the representative of Pope Benedict XV, Bishop de Guebriant, arrived to look at the activities in the Vladivostok Deanery and left very satisfied.

When he arrived in Harbin he made the following announcement: In recognition of the achievements and the development of culture and religious activities in the Far East, the Apostolic See has decided to make a Catholic Diocese in Vladivostok, and a Polish bishop would soon be found for the diocese.

In time the long process of construction for the church in Vladivostok came to an end, and the solemn dedication was held on October 2, 1921. In spite of the fact that it was not possible to really complete the church according to the original plans due to the lack of means—for example it was necessary to forget the steeples—the church was grand and beautiful. As soon as the parish moved to the new church Dean Slivovsky opened the minor seminary in the former temporary church (now #1 Skipera Geka Street), and appointed a priest from Silesia, Marius Kluge to be the rector. Soon there arrived news from the Holy See that the Congregation "Propaganda Fidei" had decided to separate the Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Omsk, Tomsk, and Tashkent deaneries from the Mogilev Archdiocese, and make of them Apostolic Vicariates. The next news came from the Vatican on February 2, 1923, a Papal bull establishing the Vladivostok Diocese including Primorye, Amursky and Khabarovsky Territories, and part of Sakhalin Island, and that Dean Karol Slivovsky, under the title Apostolic Vicar of Eastern Siberia, was to become the Vladivostok Bishop. Because the arrival of a Papal Delegate in Vladivostok was unpleasant for the local authorities, the solemn ceremony of consecration of the bishop was held in Harbin, on October 28, 1923, when the special mission of the Papal Delegate Bishop Celsius Constantini arrived. Present in the Church of St Stanislaus were Polish and French priests, and the most respected members of the European colony in Harbin, pupils of the Henry Senkevich Gymnasium, and students of the minor seminary.

After his return to Vladivostok there begins a new page of trials for this already golden age. First he just barely made it back to the territory of his diocese, thanks to the help of a stationmaster to whom he had earlier given financial aid. Secondly, it became known that the border with Manchuria would be closed, and, as a result, the Bishop would no longer be able to communicate with the representatives of the Siberian Vicariates.

Not much is known about the life of the Bishop at the end of the 20's and the beginning of the 30's. There are two postcards in the archive of the Polish Primate A. Glond from the Vladivostok bishop, one from January 23, 1928, and one from January 20, 1929. These communications of Bishop Slivovsky were notes of thanks written in answer to the Cardinal's Christmas letter. By sending the letters Cardinal Glond wanted to underscore that Bishop Slivovsky was not forgotten in Poland, that they were interested in his life and pastoral activities. During this time Bishop Slivovsky was awarded the "Star of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland" *in absentia*—earlier he had been awarded with the Order of St Stanislaus, Third Class, under Papal authority. These letters and awards made his situation worse. There was an article in *Izvestia* which chided him because he "helps a bourgeois neighbor" although he was a citizen of the USSR. But the newspaper also remarks that the

bishop isn't arrested, isn't condemned, due to the great patience shown him by the Soviet authorities.

After the closing of the minor seminary and the confiscation of its building, authorities also took from the Vladivostok Diocese the rectory, the home of the organist not far away, the guard's home, and the auxiliary buildings. Bishop Slivovsky had to live outside the city in the little summer village of Sedanka at #6 on Vereshagina Street because of his health. There he was cared for by a Polish lady named Casimira Piotrovsky. Sunday Mass at the cathedral was served by the young vicar George Yurkevich who often visited the ailing bishop, and he performed the necessary rites for the sick. After the arrest of Father Yurkevich in 1930 the spiritual life of the parish came to a standstill.

Regina Stanko who now lives in Tomsk, in her written memoirs, recalls how she often brought fresh milk to the ailing bishop, and her father Stanislav Stanko came to provision the bishop and to converse with him.

At the end of the 20s a frequent guest at the house in Sedanka was the French missionary from Harbin, Father Zachary Banash, and in the early 30s Vladislav Pelts, an oriental studies student, managed to see him while on the way to Beijing. He brought money for the bishop. According to his words the bishop looked very old and was very frightened by the visit. Tersely thanking him for the help, the bishop asked that no one write him and no one visit him, because it was dangerous for him.

Karol Slivovsky, Bishop of Vladivostok, died on January 5, 1933 from heart paralysis. Casimira Piotrovsky intended to take the body to Poland, but the authorities did not allow it. Maria Svitetsky, whose mother worked as a cook for the bishop, the simple burial of the bishop took place in the young woods of the Sedanka Cemetery, the service being performed in the little chapel nearby from the burial place. He was buried in a white chasuble with a golden beret on his head. On his hand was the episcopal ring, and at his side the shepherd's crook. The German consul attended the burial. In two days the grave was robbed, the ring and the crook were stolen. They reburied the bishop in a wooden casket in a grave between the chapel and the [Orthodox] school not far away. As long as Casimira Piotrovsky lived in Sedanka she took care of the grave above which stood a simple wooden cross with an inscription in Polish. Regina Stanko tells in her letters how she and Casimira visited the grave and took care of the flowers. It continued until Casimira left for Poland.

News of the death of Bishop Slivovsky shook the Catholics of Harbin. The Harbin Vicar-Delegate Vladislav Ostrovsky, wanting to honor the memory of the deceased bishop, decided to erect a large crucifix in front of the Church of St Stanislaus dedicated to the bishop where the memorial service was to be held in his honor. The sad event took place on Sunday, February 5 at 4pm. The Church was filled with a large number of faithful who wanted at least from afar to honor the memory of the deceased Catholic spiritual leader. In the middle of the church, among flowers and burning candles, lay the Cross, and on it symbols of the episcopal office. During the funeral mass the

Cross was blessed, and after mass Father Ostrovsky, the clergy, and the faithful carried the Cross from the church and stood it in the prepared place. A big part of the attendees cried, and all prayed earnestly to the Almighty for the soul of the bishop who died far from his homeland.

Many decades passed before the Roman Catholic parish in Vladivostok was restored and before the authorities gave back the cathedral. In tiny steps we can gather and piece together information about the dramatic events of those terrible years. Today, searching for the Vladivostok bishop's grave are parishioners, historians, and reporters, using bits of memory collected from elderly people, former parishioners of the bishop. But sixty-five years have taken their toll; thick woods have grown on the former country cemetery, hiding things without a trace. But hope hasn't abandoned the searchers.

Two letters of Bishop Slivovsky

*tr Miroslava Igorevna Efimov
and V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.*

February 18, 1924

Vladivostok, 18 February 1924
To Bishop de Guebriant

Your Reverence can't even imagine the great joy your friendly, benevolent letter brought me! I am very moved by the endless goodness you show me and deeply respect Your Reverence's great heart, and your interest in the parishes that you personally visited, in the midst of your various activities.

Your Reverence knows, of course, that on the 28th of October I received the Sacrament of Consecration from the hands of the Apostolic Delegate in the presence of Bishop Gaspaisa. I was moved to the bottom of my heart, and I have to say that it was the best day of my life. At the same time I feel my imperfections and the inactivity against my own will which calls forth from me great gnawing of conscience. My solemn entrance [into the cathedral in Vladivostok] took place on November 18. God gave me great weather which is very rare—15 degrees[C, or 40F], and so the church was full to the last place.

Winter has been very cold this year which results in few people in church. All-the-same, when I held the Christmas services, and then again at mass on the Epiphany, the cathedral was full.

We are experiencing a huge deficit of priests. Throughout my diocese there remains only Father Yerkevich and Father Mirzhvinsky. Excepting Harbin [in Manchuria], the churches in Nicolaevsk [Ussyrisk], Khabarovsk, Blagoveschensk, and on Sakhalin Island does not have pastors. Exceptionally difficult is our material situation: the faithful have become much poorer, so there aren't any mass offerings for many months already, and only with great difficulty are we able barely to pay expenses. You see with what difficulties my pastoral service is carried on. Only unwavering faith and hope, which I lay at the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, support me and keep me from breaking down.

In June Father Marius Klyuge went to Harbin where he is directing the seminary where ten clerics are studying. Among them are seminarians from Vladivostok—Maltsulevich, Mateushek, Samoilo, Volanski. The first two, at last, must continue their studies in Europe, though the decision about that is moving very slowly and not without complications. These poor young people have lived already three years in complete uncertainty.

Again I ask you to receive my gratitude for all the courtesies which Your Reverence has shown, and also for the "pope's" present. I am happy that I may express to you my respect and deep gratitude.

United in prayer, your most dedicated and humble son in Christ,
Karol Slivovsky

July 1926

Vladivostok, 4 July 1926
To Bishop de Guebriant

Your Reverence! My most dear and most beloved friend!

Please don't think that I didn't write for such a long time because of laziness, or because I forgot. The most important reason was the impossibility to write a truthful and candid letter. All my letters, unfortunately, are being censored. Not until today did I find an occasion to pass on this letter.

Your Reverence very well knows our general situation. They have taken away all our church property. We have to pay taxes, for example, on the land on which the church stands, 600 yen on the parish social hall where I live. But, thank God, I have complete freedom to hold church services in the cathedral.

The biggest sorrow, both for me and for the faithful is that all of the parishes, with the exception of Vladivostok, aren't open. In Blagoveschensk pastor Father Kaminsky was arrested, and then they sent him to Poland. Khabarovsk was deprived of its priest because of Father Vladislav Mirzhvinsky, who scandalously refused to obey his bishop and for three years already has been shifting around various villages wasting time. Look at the kind of end that unfortunate earned who spent his life in lies and falsehoods, sadly. It seems that relative to him Your Reverence was sadly misinformed, but I didn't want to get mixed up in the matter and expose the whole truth if you didn't ask me about it. Father Mirzhvinsky lived near me twelve years, so I had the possibility to know him well. He was a person especially prideful. The tiniest little fatherly suggestion brought him to open rage; he liked fights, and used the most terrible curses. His visiting villages gave him an excuse to meet with people for personal reasons and didn't have any kind of missionary meaning. Because of his departures from faith he brought indescribable evil to the faithful. At the present time I have only Father Gregory Yurkevich from Khabarovsk with me.

To speak of Nikolsk about the church in which Your Reverence served holy mass, because of the lack of hurry of Catholic parishioners who didn't turn to the authorities in time to ask permission to have meetings there, now the church is used by Orthodox priests. Blagoveschensk, where there are many Catholics—up to 1500 persons, has a chapel.

Atheistic propaganda is resulting in a huge devastation, especially among young men in the nonfunctioning parishes. Thanks be to God we still have sizable attendance on Sundays and holy days.

In May I made the canonical visitations in my diocese. I visited Khabarovsk and Blagoveschensk where I did pastoral work for a week. My trip took a whole month. Besides pontifical mass, I spent a lot of time in the confessional, at times until late evening, but good Jesus overdid himself by giving me a large number of people who came to me. Among them were those who didn't go to confession already for many years. In general and as a whole

the trip was successful and brought much good results. Only God knows if it will be possible to continue further.

Not a few times already the Cheka called for me, but so far I'm alive. God is protecting me because I am the only bishop left in Russia—Europe and Asia.

Now Your Reverence knows our situation, so I express my more venerable respect and with all my faithful I hope in the prayers and blessings of Your Reverence. In unity of effort. Your most dedicated and humble brother in Christ, Karol Slivovsky.

P.S. Next week Father Yurkevich will go to Sakhalin Island, and then, after he returns he will go to the neighborhood of Blagoveschensk where there are many Catholics who have a chapel. The number reaches 1500 people.