

Vladivostok Sunrise

Mary Mother of God Mission Society Vladivostok Russia Modesto, California

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Reaching for the Light! Little Tatyana Duzheva receiving the Light of Christ at her Baptism on the Feast of the Ascension, May 12, 2013

Doing Something for Someone

By Brother Patrick Napal, C.J.D.

One day as I was working at the Hospice here in Vladivostok, I was making my rounds to each room when my attention was caught by an elderly skin- and-bones lady who was alone in her room, sleeping with her thick green blanket. I stopped for a while and just looked at her, and I called her softly by her name “Yelena” and she replied “Da.” I went to the kitchen and took some food to feed her, as she was already

incapable of feeding herself. As I was feeding her, looking at her, it came to me how difficult her situation is, being alone in the midst of many other patients, being alone from her relatives who abandoned her here. No one came to see her—she was literally alone. As she was chewing the food, it was a time of reflection for me. As she asked for more food, I tried to think of her past, even though I did not know this lady before. In the past she used to feed herself with delicious food: steaks, fried chicken, cakes, but now here she is being fed with food that maybe she didn’t like, but what could she do? Nothing.

As soon as she finished eating, I helped her lie back in her bed again, and watched as she was going back to sleep. I continued my reflection about her past, thinking that even though she is in a very bad situation this time, for sure she had a lot of fun when she was young, back when she still had her family with her, back when she was a child: She would play with her friends, she would dance, sing, and swim with her parents and relatives and friends, they would go for a walk, for a picnic and she would listen to stories that her mom was telling her. Then she would go play with her dog and cat. In school she studied many things, and after school she played with her classmates. They would go running and playing in the snow. She grew up and had a family, I could imagine. Maybe she had a baby. She must have been very happy, and she would do as much as she could to take good care of her family and especially for her baby. She worked hard, doing house chores, and all of the things that mothers do. She had

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.

fun in those days, as those were the days of poor Yelena!

Yelena and I became friends. Every time I was in the hospice, I would go to see her and to make sure she had her dinner. But one day she refused to eat. I began to worry about her, this time. I worried about her spiritual condition as much as her earthly body. I prayed to God for her, to look upon her in his Mercy, and I thought, she might not be baptized yet, so I asked the nurses in the hospice if Yelena had been baptized, and I got a “We’re not sure” as an answer. I asked Yelena if she wanted to be baptized, and she said “YES!” Yelena at this time, was shaking and was catching out her breath, she was crying and was saying the words “I am afraid” repeatedly, so I feared for the worse. I didn’t waste any time--I called Fr Myron and asked if I should perform an emergency baptism, and Fr Myron said yes. I asked for a cup of water from the nurse and together with two women from our “Caritas” as witnesses and assistants, I baptized Yelena. After Baptism I assured her that God loves her and that she need not to be afraid, because she is going to see God in heaven. That made her calm, so I left her and I made my way home.

On the following day, Yelena was still alive, so I called Fr Myron so he could anoint and confirm her, and on the following day, she died.

The hospice nurses work there, but our presence makes a lot of difference in the lives of these dying people. Perhaps Mother Theresa would say, “We share the same work, but the difference is that the nurses are doing it for something but we are doing it for someone.” As Yelena was dying, she was left alone in her room with no one else. How sad it was with no relatives, no friends, and even the nurses just let her be alone to die alone. They would just come to take her body when she was already dead.



Br Patrick shaving one of the Hospice residents

Our being with these old folks makes them feel that they are loved, that they have value, that they will experience the joy of being loved even in their death beds. We should try to prepare them for a holy and happy death.

Thanks a lot to our benefactors! Without you I could not have come to Vladivostok, and could not have the apostolate at the Hospice and could not have prepared Yelena for her way to God. A million thanks to all our benefactors, and I remember you in my prayers. Please pray for me, too, that I maybe a channel of God’s love.

Report about the Service of Parish Caritates for Year 2012

By Lily Silina, Director, Vladivostok

1. Soup Kitchen

Four volunteers, 76 days of service, 1696 persons served.

2. Grandma Mentoring

Nine volunteers, 94 visits totaling 376 hours, 36 times with snacks

3. Hospice

Eleven volunteers, 152 visits totaling 608 hours, including meals for 450 persons and donation of 1360 sandwiches

4. Sunday Club

Five volunteers, every Sunday tea or coffee and snack for parishioners and children

5. Help for the Needy

536 people received canned fish for a total of 2333 cans (46.5 cases)

89 people received canned redfish eggs for a total of 89 cans

90 people received 90 kg of honey

Surplus clothing was sent to the children in Romanovka, Russian Island, Lyubyanka and others.

Chocolate Santas were donated to parish children on Christmas, and to Children’s Hospital #3 and to the Hospice on New Year’s Day

“Gerber” and “Nestle” baby food were donated to the orphanage in Artyom at \$193.

Canned fish was donated to poor and elderly folks on Lugovaya Square in October and November two times, for a total of 64 packs or 256 cans.

6. **The Caritas booth** in the church vestibule made a profit of \$856.48 from the sale of candles and religious articles. This money was donated to the parish, used for baby food for the orphanage in Artyom, for play items for

the children at Baby Hospital #3, and for the stationery and communication needs of Caritas.

7. There were two **seminars** this year for volunteer training, which were completely financed by Renovabis (German Bishops' Conference.)
8. All the canned fish, honey, and used clothing were **donated** by parishioners or by visiting guests.
9. Funding for the Soup Kitchen, Hospice, and Grandma Mentoring program are provided by **American donors**.

By Vladimir Pisorenko, Caritas Director, Lesozavodsk

1. The feeding program for **poor children** averaged 56 kids per Saturday for a total of 2912 meals. This program is funded 88% by American donors and 12% by Lesozavodsk businessmen, for a total cost of about \$3900.
2. Three parishioners continue to receive support for their medications through the **Project Hope program**.
3. We regularly provide used clothing from supplies that come to us from Vladivostok and Dalnerechensk.

[In addition to the Parish Caritates, the Caritas Women's Support Centers work in these cities, too, but that is another report.]

Soup Kitchen 2013

The certificate below expresses the State of Primorye's gratitude for the help our Soup Kitchen program has shown to the elderly and handicapped of our city this year. With the closing of so many cafes, we've had to change our tactics, and have been delivering meals and several week's worth of food supplies directly to the homes of the needy. This program is totally financed by specific "Soup Kitchen" donations from our benefactors, so the number of people we can help depends on donations received. See above a representative montage of receivers of this aid. "Thanks, benefactors!"--but I'm merely passing on the thanks we hear with every delivery. God bless you!



Appreciation Letter: The State Government Independent Department of Social Services, AKA "Primorsky Center of Social Services for the Population", expresses its sincere acknowledgement to the Director of "Caritas", a local religious organization, Lily Timofeevna Silina for the charitable help and mercy shown to citizens who found themselves in difficult life situations. May you be healthy, happy, with boundless energy, success in all your doings and beginnings! Director, B.A. Logachev, Vladivostok, 2013.



Here and on the next page, some beneficiaries of the Soup Kitchen Program



The "Adopt-a-Birth" Kids for the First Third of 2013

Sometimes moms are afraid to have children because of the cost of giving birth, so choose to abort. Sometimes moms come to the Women's Support Centers for encouragement, and we can often offer financial help to give birth, thanks to American and Canadian donors. These are the kids we helped already this year. Thank you, Donors!





Welcome New Novices!

Wednesday, May 8, we had the joy of **welcoming six young men to our novitiate**. It was First Vespers of the traditional date of the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord, the major feast day of our community of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord. Fr Myron who is novice master held the ceremony of first investiture in the canonical habit. Here is a little bit of information about each new novice (in the picture, working from the back row, l to r, and then the front row.)

Next to Fr Dan is **Br Agustinus Brusen CJD** from Maumere, Indonesia. He is 29 years old with a degree in Philosophy, and experience as a high school music teacher. He is a favorite soloist at community gatherings.

Br Harben Forte CJD, 33, is from Quezon City, Philippines. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with a major in Marketing and Religious

Education. He has experience with the Benedictine monks, but decided that a more active apostolate was better for him.

Br Jacob Dambe CJD is from Sulawesi Island, Indonesia, 32 years old. He has a degree in Philosophy, and worked for a year as a catechist in parishes in Papua, New Guinea. His hobby is gardening.

Br Yohanes Marinus CJD was working as the general administrator of a hotel business in Jakarta. His boss told him that it would be a sacrifice to loose him, but he should return to the seminary, as he could see his religious vocation. Also from Maumere, Indonesia, he is 29 years old. He is great at soccer, playing with the orphan team at *Parus Nadezhdi* in Vladivostok.

Br Bede Paquingan CJD, 27, is a registered nurse. He studied at St Vincent School of Theology in Manila to get some philosophy studies behind him while he decided which community or diocese to join after he decided on a religious vocation. He has lots of interests, but his most obvious talent is in making people laugh. Never a dull moment!—unless it is time to be serious, of course.

Br Ignatius Rino CJD is from Jakarta, born in 1984. He is the musician of our class, playing the keyboard regularly for the Liturgy of the Hours, and for recreation. He said that as a child he first considered a vocation to the priesthood when he was unexpectedly given Holy Communion from the cup.

In the picture is also Fr Dan, Br Patrick, and Fr Myron. Br Inosensius will be ordained a priest on August 15, and Brs Arnulfo and Edwin are attending the seminary in Manila.

Our Parishioners

Feb 3--Memorial Day for the Vladivostok Martyrs

The Memorial Day for those priests and parishioners from our parish who suffered during the Stalin Repression is February 3. 75 years ago, on a cold and windy evening of February 3, the court sentence was carried out: Five parishioners of Most Holy Mother of God Parish were executed by gunshot. Here are their names:

Martin Malinevsky, 58
Sigizmund Brezhinsky, 32
Anton Gerasimuk, 47
Valerian Gerasimuk, 23
Jan Strudzinsky, 59

Their crime was simply that they believed in Christ... In the 1930's there was a wave of bloody persecution that overtook Vladivostok. The cruel activities of the KGB were especially directed at those of a "different" nationality or spirituality—arrest, loud public trials, and death by gunfire.

In 1930 Vladivostok Bishop Karl Slivovsky was arrested and exiled to the little village of Sedanka. In 1931 the pastor of the Parish, Fr Giorgi Yerkevich was arrested and sentenced to ten years in a Siberian camp. He died on June 4, 1942 in the New Ivanovsky Camp in Marinsky County of Kemerovsky State. The arrest and banishment of the priests caused fear and panic among the parishioners. The death of Bishop Slivovsky in 1933 left the Parish and the whole Russian Far East without a priest.

Because of the fear of the Communist regime, parishioners stopped coming to church, but some continued where they held common prayer and read religious literature. According to a decision of the Council of People's Commissioners of April 8, 1929 "About religious organizations", the community of the faithful were obliged to pay taxes for the use of their own churches, and the amount constantly grew.

On June 7, 1935, the commission for the consideration of religious questions of the Primorye State Communist Party made this determination: "Nullification of the contract with the group of believers at the Roman Catholic Church and the liquidation of the church activities." The document said that the "group of believers has disintegrated" so the building was given over free for the use of the State Archive Bureau.

But the Catholic parishioners did not deny their faith in Christ, continuing to pray in their homes, and sometimes even gathering together. That was noticed by the authorities, and soon the most active Catholics were

arrested. By a decision of the KGB of the Soviet Union dated December 30, 1937, the group was accused of being part of a Polish religious-nationalist counterrevolutionary organization and of taking part in spying for Japanese agents.

There was little interrogation... They denied their guilt, although they admitted that they participated in home prayer. They were shot, their bodies destroyed, but their faith in the Lord for which Jesus also suffered was alive and full.

On June 30, 1959, the decision of the KGB of 1937 was annulled and their case dismissed for lack of evidence. They were all vindicated.

In today's parish the names of those who suffered in the political repressions are remembered and respected. For us, the 3rd of February is considered the Memorial Day of those repressed. In our church we now have the "Chapel of the Vladivostok Martyrs". We maintain contact with relatives of those who are the new martyrs. Materials concerning the life and death of our martyrs was given to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Moscow for the canonization of the new Catholic martyrs of the Soviet Union. And Bishop Kirill Klimovich has given us permission to always include the "Vladivostok Martyrs" in our Litany of the Saints.

If anyone knows where there might be pictures of our saints, we would very much like to have copies.

News Notes

- The winner of the **North Carolina Beach House** drawing is a long time benefactor from Sauk Rapids, MN! I hope their family has a very nice vacation. Thank you to our anonymous benefactor who provided the vacation home. Thank you everyone who entered the drawing. Better luck next time!

- **Professor Alexei Parshin** of the Tchaikovsky Music Conservatory in Moscow returned to Vladivostok to play three **organ concerts** in our church on June 5, 6, and 7. His first concert trip to us was in the summer of 2004, just several months after we received the Stella Maris organ, the gift which has enabled us to invite great organists from around the world to play organ concerts for the public. This last concert trip was his sixth time to play concerts on the Stella Maris organ.

Professor Parshin is considered to be one of the greatest living organists in the world, an opinion which this author understood from the beginning. With his 18 concerts he has built up a large and loyal fan base in Vladivostok. For each trip he performs a new concert program. This year's



Professor Alexei Parshin

program was called “Masterpieces from Three Centuries” featuring compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach and other even earlier composers of the 18th century, Brahms and several composers of the Romantic School of the 19th century; and also some post-romantic pieces of the 20th century. As always his playing was received enthusiastically, with standing ovations and requests for several encores.

Apart from his organ playing it is also a pleasure to have Professor Parshin as a guest in our parish center, where he entertains the monastic community and the parish staff at the midday meal with fascinating stories about the world of organ music.

Opportunities

♥ Might you consider a monthly sponsorship for a seminarian? Our seminarian numbers are growing with more answering the call to become priests! What blessings from God. We need help to support them as we now must turn away new candidates due to lack of funds to provide for them all! You can become a **seminarian’s Guardian Angel**. Contact the mission office.

♥ Please help our seminarians **get on the bus!** Our seminarians need to purchase a used 28 passenger bus. The large bus is needed in order to transport their growing numbers to and from school and to community charitable works they provide in the area. Thanks to many of you already, they have raised \$20,747 of the \$34,500 needed. Can you help our seminarians? Please see our website for more details to track their progress! www.vladmission.org

♥ Please pray for **Br Inocensius Hetu, CJD**. His ordination to the priesthood is August 15th!

♥ Our lovely benefactor in NY continues to make beautiful Swarovski crystal rosaries to help our seminarians! Julianne Immordino wants to give her gift of a beautiful handcrafted crystal rosary or crystal rosary wrap bracelet to each supporter who gives \$500 or more to help our seminarians. God bless all our benefactors.

♥ **S.H.A.R.E.S.** card users reached yet another milestone in earnings for the mission! The mission received a quarterly earnings check for \$3,362.79. Thanks and glory to God. We can continue to earn by passing these FREE SHARES cards to your friends, family, co-workers and ministry members. Encourage them present the card at Save Mart, Lucky’s, FoodMaxx or SmartFoods grocery stores. The mission will receive 3% of your grocery bill. It costs you nothing. It’s a great way to help. Call or email the mission office and let us know the number of cards needed. (Available in CA and NV only) Thank you. Great work everyone!

♥ By popular request, an **Our Lady of Vladivostok pendant** has been created.



Fashioned by Bliss

Manufacturing, these medals

have the detailed image of Our

Lady of Vladivostok on the front and the

Most Holy Mother of God Cathedral on

the back. “Our Lady of Vladivostok, Pray

for us” encircles the Icon on the front.

Medals come 1 in. with a 24 in. chain, or 3 /4 in. with an 18 in. chain. Both sizes come in Sterling Silver or Pewter with stainless steel chains. Each medal and chain comes in a velvet jewelry box. Pewter medals are also available without chains and boxes. Fr Myron has the same medal inscribed in Russian available in Vladivostok. Please contact the mission office for more information.

♥ 2013 USA **mission preaching schedule for Fr Dan**, who is available to speak to ministry groups and schools, and is available for news and radio interviews on the weekdays.

Fr Dan: July 13/14- St. Mary’s Parish, Eugene, OR

July 14 - 4:00 pm Central Lutheran Church, Eugene, OR

Organ Concert with internationally renowned organist, Marina Omelchenko

July 20/21 – St. Joseph Parish, Salem, OR

July 22 – 7:00 pm St. Joseph Parish, Salem, OR

Organ Concert with Marina Omelchenko

July 27/28 – St. Bridget’s Parish, Las Vegas, NV

August 3/4 – St. Leo the Great Parish, Winston-Salem, NC.

Please contact the Modesto office to schedule our priests in your area, 209-408-0728, usoffice@vladmission.org

Vladivostok Mission
Mary Mother of God Mission Society
1736 Milestone Cir
Modesto CA 95357-0835

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends,

Each year, our mission priests and representatives speak to scores of Catholic communities in the USA and Canada about the catechetical and charitable work being done to revive the Catholic Church in Russia. Each year, most of the people we speak to are still shocked to hear that women in Russia have an average of 6-8 abortions in their lifetime with some women having even more.

Fr Myron wisely addressed this crisis when first arriving in Vladivostok in 1992, by opening the first Women's Crisis Pregnancy Center in Eastern Russia. Today, Fr Myron operates 5 Women's Support (Pro-Life) Centers (WSC). Each center provides crisis pregnancy counseling, food, clothing and medical assistance for babies and mothers, facilitates post abortion Rachel's Vineyard retreats, Natural Family



Planning education, pro-life lectures in schools and colleges, and much more.

Two important projects of the WSC's are the **Adopt A Birth Program** and the **Adopt A Mother Program**. \$25 will save a baby from abortion through our Adopt A Birth Project. This meager amount can make the difference for a destitute mother choosing abortion vs. paying the delivery cost of having her child. \$100 to our Adopt A Mother program helps moms get on their feet in the first few months after delivery, many of whom need vitamins for mom and baby. To date, over 1500 babies have been saved from abortion through education and assistance from our Women's Support Centers. If you'd

like to find out more of the tremendous work being accomplished by our priests, please see our website and how your help is so important. www.vladmission.org

Have a blessed summer! God bless you and your families. Sincerely,

Vicky Trevillyan, Mission Coordinator. 209-408-0728