



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Happy New Year to you and all of yours!

Dear Benefactor,

December 31, 2023

With the new year 2024, I want to wish you and yours a happy new year and say thank you for your prayers, help, support, and donations this past year! God bless you for your financial support!

Tomorrow is the Feast of the Most Holy Mother of God, our parish feastday, but we don't get many people at mass because the Russian tradition is to celebrate the new year from midnight to sunrise, so they sleep on the day. So we celebrate on another day, too-- August 15 as a special day for our parish, or the closest Sunday to that date--the feast of the Assumption.

In the spring, we may start a Tagalog mass, as the number of Filipino parishioners is increasing. They already have a social gathering on the DeFriese Peninsula (part of Vladivostok), and one of our Filipino brothers, Edwin Intan, C.J.D. will be going there regularly, too, to begin some prayers and spiritual recollections. Hopefully he will be ordained a deacon in the Spring, and then a priest. He finished the seminary several years ago already, and had been doing great missionary and charity work on the Philippine Islands, waiting for us to begin working there, which didn't happen so far because the bishops there say they have plenty of vocations. He speaks Tagalog (as well as Russian, English, Korean, Japanese, and Cebuano). It is never a dull moment around here as our vocations from many countries keep things hopping!

Right now I'm thinking of some of the big families that our Women's Support Centers help. Five kids! Seven kids! And winter here has been extra cold, so there is heat to pay for, and food expenses become larger as the kids grow! Clothing is not such a big problem, as the Centers also collect and provide used clothing.



A piece of news for you: Our Brother Peter Nsama, C.J.D. has received his minor orders in preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. Brother Peter is our first African vocation! He is really a great student, so great that the seminary in the Philippines that he is attending asked him to stay on when many seminarians were sent home in connection with the epidemic. He is from Uganda, and, of course already spent a year with us learning the Russian language. After ordination he will be welcomed by our parishioners from all over Africa who are studying medicine at the Far Eastern Federal University here on Russian Island where our sisters live. Congratulations, Brother Peter!

Recently we've had requests to open a Women's Support Center in Artyom, a suburb of Vladivostok. And I've been dreaming of opening a site in Artyom for St Joseph's Parish. St. Joseph's has existed for a long time already. We used to have Mass in the Second River section of northern Vladivostok. But when we finally had the historic church of Vladivostok renovated and opened, St Joseph parishioners preferred to attend the sparkling new church instead of Mass in an apartment. So we had St Joseph's Sunday Mass in a café owned by the father of a parishioner. The café was located closer to

Board

Bishop Cyril Klimovich DD

Rev. Joseph Fessio SJ

Rev. Joseph Illo

Rev. Robert Stoeckig

Mr. and Mrs. Terrence Kopp
KCHS

Mr. & Mrs. David Sonnen

Miss Mary Jo Peyton

Officers

Chairman and President
Very Rev. Myron Effing,
C.J.D.

Vice President
Rev. Doug Grandon, PhD

Chief Financial Officer
Rev. Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

Secretary
Mr. Tyler Kolden

Board Member
Mrs. Lynn Grandon

Board Member
Mrs. Susan Gray

Board Member
Prof. Robert F Moran, PhD

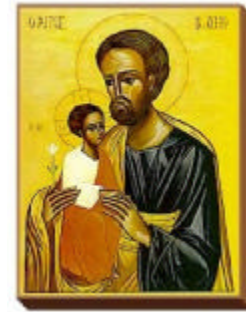
Board Member
Mr. Jeffrey Lang

Board Member
Mrs Vicky Trevillyan

National Coordinator
Jessica Trevillyan

Artyom. But when Fr Mark Dao, C.J.D. was ordained, we began having Mass in Vietnamese in Vladivostok, so all but one of the St Joseph's parishioners began attending the Vietnamese mass in Vladivostok—They were Vietnamese. So we began a monthly St Joseph's Mass for the one Russian parishioner as she was handicapped.

But now Artyom is growing rapidly, and also is the whole area around Artyom because the Vladivostok Airport is there, located on the continent instead of on the peninsula like Vladivostok (to avoid sea fog.) So land prices there are better than in Vladivostok, so many companies are locating there, so that the number of Russian parishioners is growing again. What I would like to do is to buy a commercial property on the first floor of a building in Artyom so that the Women's Support Center could be located there, and on Sundays we could start having Holy Mass there, too. No use thinking about a church building until the parish grows significantly. So we'll be looking for donors for the St Joseph's Parish in Artyom to buy such a premises. Currently Mary Mother of God Mission Society helps support five parishes, and offers priestly support to about seven more (depending upon the season of the year), in addition to the Women's Support Centers, and to seminarians who want to work in Russia after their ordination as priests. My home parish in Indiana and Fr Dan's in Michigan were both St. Joseph's Parishes. And St. Joseph's Parish is our sister parish in Modesto where Mary Mother of God Mission Society's offices are located. Maybe it will be our Giving Day project this year on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation. We hope St. Joseph will pray for this project!



St. Joseph icon from St. Joseph's Parish, Artyom

Thanks be to God that we have more priestly vocations, so I have proposed to our Bishop Kirill that we could take on more parishes now here in Russia.

On Saturday, December 23, I had an unusual experience! The Vladivostok Lutheran pastor died on December 15. We had both come to serve in Russia in February of 1992, so we became friends. He was older than me. He often asked me to perform his funeral service if he should die. So, even though there is another Lutheran pastor now, and even a bishop, they decided to honor Pastor Brockman's wishes, and invited me to perform the funeral service. It was the second time in my life that I led a service in a Protestant setting. The previous time was when I was a chaplain on-call at Castle Airbase in California. When all the airmen left for the Middle East, so did their chaplains, so I had to do all the services at the base. It was pretty difficult to stay focused with all the "Halleluiahs" and "Tell it like it is!" that were shouted during the sermon!

Thanks again for your great help! **God bless you in the New Year!** Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

P.S. I just heard Friday before Christmas that the second cross fell from the second steeple of the church, and fell on the roof! I don't know if the roof was damaged yet, but the fact that the second one fell suggests that the problem is inadequate mounting, as why else would two crosses fall within such a short period of time? We have to see what the building engineers will say. It seems that they suffered from wind damage.

To make a donation or order a Mass using your bank card, go here:
<http://vladmission.org/get-involved/donate/>

To read the November 2023 Vladivostok Sunrise 175, go here: <https://vladmission.org/s/175>