



# Mary Mother of God Mission Society

## Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor

June 30, 2024

Greetings from Russia! We've been able to take on **two more parishes** here in Russia: **Nativity** in Ussuryysk, and **Annunciation** in Arsenyev! I've asked Fr. Vicky Samuel, C.J.D. to take on these parishes. Fr Vicky is from Pakistan—Our first Pakistani priest and a good example for the Pakistani seminarians. Meanwhile we have also been helping out temporarily in Ulan Ude, Blagoveschensk, and South Sakhalin, in addition to serving our usual parishes, Vladivostok, Artyom, Lesozavodsk, Nakhodka, and Romanovka, and parishes in Kazakhstan! After 33 years in Russia some priests are retiring from old age, and who will replace them? (At 83 years old, I'm semi-retired, but I enjoy sending you thank you letters and editing our two newsletters.) And that is why our seminarians are so important. It also means we need more mass intentions and stipends.

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*Fr Dan was in America and Fr Nikita was in Blago-veschensk, but here is the rest of the Vladivostok CJD community present for Fr Vincent's profession of vows. Back row from left: Deacon candidate Peter Nsamba, Fr Vicky Samuel, Fr Myron Effing, Fr Patrick Napal, and deacon candidate Edwin Intan. Front row from left: Novice Hien, Deacon candidate Pradeep Mulupuri, Fr Vincent Pham, novice Hien, and novice Arslan. Missing were deacon candidates Lloyd Cabatana and Harben Forte who were not in Russia at the time. Missing priest members were Fr Augustine Brusen who was on vacation, and Fr Filipus Lasa who was tending his four parishes in Kazakhstan.*

One result of our need to travel, besides plane tickets to the faraway places, is the **wear and tear on our cars!** Last year you helped us to buy a new minibus, which is now in constant use. We have four other cars, two of which are getting to the end of their lifetimes. The little car is used mostly for in-town work, like shopping, doctor's appointments, etc., but it already has had a change of engine! The chassis is now rusting out. The Toyota Wish is also going on its last leg. It is used for long distance travel like going to Nakhodka, Khabarovsk, and Lesozavodsk. We have to replace these two cars, and we are looking for help! 😊 (Got any friends who could help, too??)

This year the plan is to have the **Youth Conference** in Yakutsk, a city built on permafrost up in the North, sort of like Alaska, including the native peoples. I haven't heard a proposal for the theme of the conference yet. But it is always important, and the youth are upper high school students and college students, so their future is ahead of them. We always speak about marriage and family life and about religious vocations, too. I'll give you some pictures after the event. The children's retreat in Lesozavodsk is also coming up.

Now the new **Women's Support Center in Ussurysk** is up and running! We've had the first "adopt-a" baby request from there, too. The "Adopt-a" program is popular with American benefactors, so we are somewhat behind in sending baby pictures. Actually maybe that is a good sign, as it means that the Russian government is more able to care for women in need. One of our parish families with five children just adopted two more! I promised help when and if they need it.

Sr Stella, C.J.D. and Fr Vicky, C.J.D. were busy with a **Rachael's Vineyard** Retreat in Ussurysk. It was well attended there, after so many abortions in the Communist era. Sister has been doing them all over Russia. Meanwhile their building here on Russian Island has been completely renovated, so now we will soon begin Sunday Mass there again for the University students who live just a mile away from there on the Island. Meanwhile the Friday night student program and supper here at the church is going strong with up to 40 university students from a variety of countries attending.

Meanwhile, thanks to Brother Edwin Intan, C.J.D., who is from the **Philippines**, we now have work with the Filipina nannies who are working here in Russia. Most are Catholic, of course. They have regular meetings in the Sputnik area of northern Vladivostok. We may be able to start a Sunday mass there soon.

I'm sorry if you have been waiting for a thank-you letter from me, but we had a problem with the American post office, and then our **computer system** for information in Modesto was undergoing an upgrade, and that took longer than we hoped! We used the old system many years already, but it will take time to get used to the new one. We are grateful to Jessica Trevillyan in Modesto for all the time and headaches involved with the new system. And thank to our board member, Tyler Kolden, who helped with lots of advice!

On June 25<sup>th</sup> we had the joy of Fr Vincent Pham's taking his final, lifetime vows here in Vladivostok. He is Vietnamese, and is a godsend for our Vietnamese parishioners. I estimate that at least 350 Vietnamese live in Vladivostok and Artyom, of which about 50 are Catholics. Meanwhile, Fr Vincent has received an appointment from bishop Kirill to be the chaplain of all Vietnamese in the diocese. Incidentally, we've had another request from an American diocese for a Vietnamese priest. We already have Fr Mark Dao, C.J.D. working at St Boniface Parish in Cleveland, Ohio, and a Vietnamese seminarian of ours has joined him there.

God bless you for your financial support, and for your prayers for us. We always remember our benefactors at mass and in our daily prayers!

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

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