



Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



Mary Mother of God Mission Society: Reviving the Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Issue Number One Hundred Fifty One January, 2020

Relics of St Pope John Paul II given to Vladivostok parish

by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.



October 21 was a special day for Russia and for us in Vladivostok. Archbishop Mechlav Mokshitski of Lvov, Ukraine, together with our bishop, Kirill Klimovich, and Shistov Sviderek, Polush Consul, brought to us **first class relics of St Pope John Paul II**. It was a great day for our parishes: representatives from the parishes in Ussuryysk, Arsenyev, and Nakhodka also attended. Part of the ceremony was the planting of an oak tree on our land, grown from an acorn from St Pope John Paul's own oak tree. I was able to recall also for all how several times Pope John Paul was interested in us in Vladivostok, including two papal blessings, inquiries among others about how things were going in Vladivostok, and, of course, the fact that St Pope John Paul II himself consecrated our four bells before they were shipped from Poland to Vladivostok.

Archbishop Mokshitski had been the private secretary of Pope John Paul for seven years, and was able to tell our parishioners about the prayer life and daily schedule of the Holy Father. We were also interested to hear about his last days when he was so terribly ill and the whole world watched and waited for news.

The relics will be in the permanent possession of our parish. Six other parishes in Russia also received relics.

Archbishop Mokshitski presenting the relics



*Happy
New
Year!*



Bishop Kirill and Fr Nikita planting the oak tree

Farewell to Sr Alicia Gonsalo Lopez, SCSA

By Fr Daniel L. Maurer, C.J.D.

Ever since we arrived in Vladivostok in 1992 Fr Myron and I had been praying for sisters to come to help us in our ever-increasing charitable outreach to parishioners and to the wider city and area. Our prayers were answered in 1998 when **four Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne**, accompanied temporarily by the superior general Sr Julia Lumbreras, SCSA, arrived in



Sr Alicia and her Spanish students

Vladivostok to found a new local community of their congregation. The Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne are the oldest congregation of sisters in Spain founded to do charity work. The sister chosen to become the local superior of their new Vladivostok community was Sister Alicia. She and her three sisters were just what we had been praying for. They began immediately to study the Russian language, and learned very quickly, especially Sr Alicia, who had an advanced degree in French and Spanish philology.

Now, after being with us for 22 years Sr Alicia has been given another important task by her congregation: she was elected as general secretary of the congregation, one of the six members of the general council, and the one who works most closely and travels with the new superior general, Sr Carmen. And travel she must, because the SCSA have 246 local communities in 35 countries with a total of around 1800 sisters!

In the 22 years that I have known her, Sr Alicia has become a very dear friend. She took the initiative to begin serving my elderly and sick parishioners and other needy persons in the village of Romanovka, where I was founding pastor. It was her inspiration to open the after-school children's center in the same village so that children from troubled homes could have a safe place to play, relax and learn. As Spanish instructor at the Far Eastern Federal University she not only planned lessons

and taught full time but also initiated countless programs to help her students in their study of Spanish and culture and in other areas of formation of young adults. She has also taken an active part in the parish's programs of spiritual development for students and adults. Her friendliness and joyful witness of Christian charity have attracted many people to the parish.

Sr Alicia is one of the most caring, active, helpful, wise and kind people that I know. She knows how to make people feel comfortable in her presence. She knows how to listen and how to serve, how to share her many gifts in ways that are not just pleasant but uplifting. I will miss her friendship, counsel, creativity and tireless work.

It is hard to say goodbye to a person whom one has known and loved for so many years and who is going so far away. Everyone who knows her here in the parish and in her other many activities in the area wishes her "All the best!" in her new and important service to her sisters and to the wide world that they serve.



1992, when the Sisters of St Anne first came to Vladivostok. Sr Alicia is 2nd from top. Sr Evgenia, bottom right is with us in Vladivostok today

Hospice's Building Renewed

By Victor Anisimov

On September 26 the hospice at the Dalzavod Hospital was reopened after a long period of building repairs. There are only two hospices in the city—places of **constant care for extremely ill and dying patients**. Our volunteers have been working in the hospice for many years already, so we were waiting for the re-opening, together with the medical staff and relatives of the critically ill. The quality of the repairs is outstanding, with new comforts and equipment for serving up to 23 patients, although 30 could be accommodated. Some patients are those found unconscious with no documents, elderly who have no near relatives in the city, and those who can't stay so long at the regular emergency hospitals.

For example, "George" was found on the streets in January. The diagnosis was stroke. After a long time in the regular hospital he was brought to the hospice. Now he is beginning to speak and walk again, and welcome guests to the hospice.

Elderly "Elizabeth" had Alzheimer's, and was brought by someone to the door of the hospice and simply thrown out of the car, and they left. No documents, no idea who she was.

"Rose" was dying fast, and asked for baptism. Our Brother Patrick was volunteering, and he called me with her request. I said, "Brother Patrick, baptize her!"

Especially difficult is working with the bedridden. Day and night there is at least one nurse on duty, and two orderlies. Volunteers are especially needed at mealtime, and we have provided some electric beds so that patients can eat without getting soup in their lungs—a problem for those lying down to eat.



Lilia Silina, Caritas Director, and members of the parish, giving a bouquet of flowers at the opening to Dr Zhana Yakshitas, head doctor of the hospice department.

The hospital's head doctor, Yelena Novitskaya, has been recruiting more help from the city community to help care for the sick and help provide proper nourishment, as many of the patients are indigent. Volunteers from our parish, both lay and religious, have for many years already been regularly serving the patients under the banner of "Caritas." We have also provided hot water heaters, beds, a shower, a washing machine, and other items. Frankly, before the repairs, it was somewhat dangerous to work there, because the floors were caving in and water leaks made the building moist and moldy.

But we not only give hands and hearts, but also foodstuffs to supplement what the hospital provides. When patients see our volunteers, they can expect a tasty sandwich or a beautiful song.

Diego Cera Organ Builders: 25th Anniversary Concert in Vladivostok

by Fr. Daniel L Maurer, CJD

During the week of November 4–11 we had the great pleasure of hosting honored guests from the Diego Cera Organbuilders Co. (DCO) of Las Piñas, Metro Manila, Philippines. Vladivostok Sunrise readers will remember that this unique company built and installed the pipe organ in our church four years ago, inaugurated in November 2015. It is still the only pipe organ in the Russian Far East in a radius of 2000 miles.

The occasion for their visit was a gala concert in honor of the **25th anniversary of the founding of DCO**. The concert was performed on our Diego Cera organ, opus 25 on November 8 by the virtuoso head organist of the unique and famous Las Piñas "Bamboo Organ" Professor Armando Salarza. Accompanying him to Vladivostok for the concert were his wife Leonore Salarza and DCO head administrator Mr. Jowell Cruz. It was their first time to come to Russia.



Catholics in the world after Brazil and Mexico, and

The concert was the first in a year-long series of concerts to be played on pipe organs that DCO has either designed and built or completely restored since the company was founded in Las Piñas 25 years ago as the first-ever organ building company founded and chartered in the Philippines. The Philippines has the third largest population of

followed by the USA in fourth place and then Italy in fifth.

DCO originated the idea of the anniversary concerts, did all the planning and made all the travel arrangements. Our parish simply took care of the advertising and sold the tickets, and then rejoiced in the talent, honor and joy that the event brought to us.

“Dear Cealwyn, Jowell, Armando, Leonore, Kenneth, Dexter and all our friends at DCO! A great big THANK YOU for the wonderful 25-Anniversary concert here last week! Everybody is still talking about it. And thanks again to Prof. Armando for playing at two of our four Sunday Masses so that our parishioners could enjoy the fruits of your great talent and hard work!”



Organist Armando Salarza in the center with the crew.

News Notes

by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

- I remember when the bishops of Indonesia complained to the Holy Father that they would never have priests if there were not a **married priesthood**. The Holy Father refused. Now Indonesia is a tremendous source of vocations! The Divine Word Seminary in Maumere, where our students attend, has 1000 seminarians—That’s just one seminary!--and Indonesian priests serve all over the world!
- Keep your fingers crossed for us! We have sent two **petitions to Rome** which had been approved by our Bishop Kirill: One is to have our Church of the Most Holy Mother of God in Vladivostok declared a papal basilica. This makes all the more sense considering some things I recently found out, that the Diocese of Vladivostok once included not only the Russian Far East, but also half of Siberia and all of what was then Turkestan—today five independent countries including Kazakhstan, where three of our brothers are working.

Surely it was one of the largest dioceses in land area in the history of the world. Our church was the cathedral of the diocese.



The Cathedral of the Most Holy Mother of God in Vladivostok

- The second petition was asking Rome to make us Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord an **independent religious order**, since we now have three houses and 12 priests working in various countries. That would make it much easier for us to work with seminaries and to get our men ordained. Thanks for praying for these intentions when you get a chance. Of course, we continue our commitment to our work in Russia where it all started 28 years ago.
- Congratulations to the Sisters in Jesus the Lord of Indonesia. They now operate **two orphanages**, one of which has a new building, and one an expanded building. This is in addition to work in parishes and other charity projects. The sisters are totally funded by benefactors within Indonesia, and do not need to be supported by the Mary Mother of God Mission Society.
- The number of our **Vietnamese parishioners** in Vladivostok has now reached 50. With such a huge number we need a Vietnamese priest, as many of the parishioners do not yet speak Russian. Bishop Kirill has agreed to the ordination of our Brother Mark Quoc Minh Dao, C.J.D., for work in Vladivostok. He finished the seminary in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, studied the Russian language in Vladivostok, and is now ready for ordination to the diaconate. We are trying to schedule a date for the event in his home parish in Vietnam. Later the ordination to the priesthood will be in Vladivostok. I know he will appreciate your prayers for him.



*Brother Mark Dao, C.J.D.
He loves the English word "amazing."*

- Often mothers come to the Women's Support Centers after they have been **beaten by their "husbands."** Often these women come from alcoholic families where screaming and blows were the norm. How many times they come with black eyes! Sometimes they come just to talk, or they just sit in silence, or talk about anything else just to get out of their feeling of isolation. Mostly these women don't know their legal rights, nor do they have any sense of personal value. Because they are from dysfunctional families, they think that their situation is normal. In our isolated villages in Russia there is a lot of pain which is just taken for granted. Thanks be to God that we can help heal, and especially to defend possible unborn life in these women. Thanks to our sponsors for their support of our Women's Support Centers, we can often help in these situations. God bless those who generously give us the means to work with these poor families to give them hope.
- The **Sisters in Jesus the Lord from Kansas City** celebrated **10 years** of their working in Vladivostok, Russia on November 24, the Feast of Christ the King. Fr Myron recalled how Sister Julia Kubista, a Maryknoll sister working in St Paul, MN, asked him what the mission needed. He said, "Sisters!" She began looking for vocations, and so the C.J.D. Sisters were born under her direction. Later they were officially established in the Diocese of Kansas city, Missouri. Fr Myron said that he is especially grateful for the sisters' work with Rachael's Vineyard, with the parish music program, with various Caritas projects, and with the university students. Meanwhile the C.J.D. sisters are expanding into Indonesia, Vietnam, and Pakistan. Thanks, sisters, for coming to us! God bless you!



Four C.J.D. sisters working in Russia, Sr Joanna, Sr Faustina, Sr Catherine, and Sr Maria Stella.

- Our **seminarians who are studying in Maumere, Indonesia**, try to earn their own way as much as possible, including the tons of tomatoes that they raise and sell in the city market. Now it seems they have expanded their offerings. They now have 40 swine, 130 laying hens, 30 ducks, 140 broilers, and one goat. They are selling meat and eggs at the city market now, too. They are talking

about expanding their offerings even more. You can find a video about our seminarians in Maumere on youtube: “Perkembangan awal Canonici Regularis A Jesu Domino-Indonesia.”

- The **color theme** for this issue is an indigo from the New Year’s Epiphany greeting on page 1.
- Here is a picture of our **new novices** who entered religious life on the Feast of Christ the King—six new guys in the front row. Five of the novices who entered in March are in the second row, and five of us in Vladivostok who are in vows are in the last row. We hope they will persevere to the priesthood. The six new novices are from Vietnam and Pakistan.



Christmas scene in our monastery, 2019



- On December 15 we held our **parish Advent retreat** here in Vladivostok. In Russia, given the 70 years of

Baby Talk
From the Women’s Support Centers

I’ve won the jackpot?!!
[Alexander May 1 2019]

atheist Communist rule, Christmas was just another workday, and besides, the Orthodox Church celebrates Christmas on January 7, which is December 25 in the Julian calendar. So we try to have a retreat on Saturday—not a workday—when people can come together to consider and pray about Christmas.

Opportunities

♥ The mission office in Modesto is looking for a group of volunteers to help process our bi-monthly *Vladivostok Sunrise* newsletter. If your parish or group is interested, please contact the mission office in Modesto.

♥ Our priests are getting older. We've set up a **Priests' Medical and Retirement Fund**. If you'd like to help care for Fr Myron and Fr Dan in their retirement years, please note, "Priests' Retirement Fund" on your check or donate online at www.vladmission.org.

♥ Shopping on Amazon? Please remember to type in **Amazon Smile** in the search bar and select Mary Mother of God Mission Society as your charity of choice. Amazon will donate **0.5% of your cart** total to the mission at no cost to you! To date the mission has raised over **\$2600** from Amazon Smile.

♥ Ever thought of taking a **mission trip**? You may visit Vladivostok and serve in the mission. Short or long term volunteers welcome!

♥ Please consider **supporting our vocations programs**. We have many qualified candidates and the costs for education and living expenses are growing. We have seen 13 priests ordained in the order of Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord. We currently have over 30 seminarians in various levels of education and formation in the Order. They need your prayers and financial help to continue their journey. Yearly costs are \$10,700 for each seminarian so you can see the need is very great. Please go to our website www.vladmission.org for more information about our seminarians.

♥ A generous benefactor continues to offer a free beautiful hand crafted gift of a **Swarovski crystal rosary**, valued at \$100, for anyone who donates \$500 or more to our **seminarians' education**. Thank you!

♥ Please help us keep the Women's Centers open. **Adopt A Baby** or **Adopt A Mother**. Your gift of \$50 to the **Adopt A Birth** program will pay for the medical supplies needed in the hospital to deliver the baby. Often times, the cost of these supplies is the deciding factor for a mother to have an abortion or let her child live. Fr Myron will send you a picture of the newborn you helped save to keep or pass on. Over 2900 babies have been saved from

abortion to date! Your \$125 gift to the **Adopt A Mother** program will provide help to the mother and baby in the first weeks supplying them with nutritious food, formula, diapers, baby clothes vitamins and medical aftercare. General donations to the Women's Centers will help us continue to serve women in crisis pregnancies, children, and men and women suffering from post-abortion syndrome, and many other services offered to families.

♥ Volunteers are needed to distribute mission information at **Catholic Conferences**. Have fun and help the mission! Please contact the mission office for more details.

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Baby Talk

From the Women's Support Centers



Merry Christmas!

[Kirill May 1 2019]

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

The new year begins with ever more international and stateside activity for the mission. I hope you enjoy following the many happenings in Fr Myron's bimonthly newsletter, the *Vladivostok Sunrise*. Did you know you can not only receive the Sunrise by mail, but you may receive bi-monthly issues by email and occasional emailed updates from Fr Myron. If you would like to receive the Sunrise by email, please send us your email address. Invite a friend to receive our free bi-monthly newsletter too, so they might learn about the blessed work of the Catholic Church in Russia. Be assured we never share or sell your information.

Each issue of our Vladivostok Sunrise is lovingly packaged and mailed by dedicated teams of volunteers. For the first 16 years of our publications, volunteers from our sister parish Nativity Parish in St. Paul, MN gathered for a day of



comradery and potluck while putting together the mailing. Following in the footsteps of the Nativity crew, volunteers from

Modesto volunteers prepare the Sunrise for mailing.



our sister parish, St. Joseph Parish in Modesto, CA have faithfully prepared and mailed the newsletter

Resurrection Parish, Evansville, IN volunteers

for the past 7 years.

The number of subscribers to the Sunrise has increased over the years. Additional volunteers from Resurrection Parish in IN, joined in the labor of love to share the duties of the mailing with our Modesto team. Many hands make light work!

Sadly, due to the passing of one of the lead volunteers in our Evansville team, they are no longer able to help out. We are in need of another volunteer group who would like to help with our newsletter. If your ministry or parish would like to help us out, please contact the mission office for more information.

We are deeply grateful to all of our stateside volunteers in their many important roles to help the mission. God bless you all.

Sincerely, Vicky Trevillyan, Mission Desk 209-408-0728