



Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Fifty Three May, 2020



Easter 2020 Baptisms

There are nine new members of our parish in Vladivostok that became Catholics at the Easter Vigil. Here is a picture of the three boys who were baptized, together with their parents and godparents, and Fr Myron and Fr Nikita. Fr Nikita conducted the inquiry classes this year for adults. The boys chose the baptismal names of Bernard, Benedict, and Anthony! The other six new members are adults. Bernard was prepared for baptism and first communion by Nadezhda Gulevich of our Sunday School. Benedict and Anthony were prepared for baptism by their parents.

New Deacon for America

April 15 was the live streaming of the ordination of our new deacon, Brother Kumud Nayak, C.J.D. He is from India, a member of our community of the

Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord, having studied with us in Vladivostok for two years. He was ordained a deacon by Bishop Donald Hying of Madison, Wisconsin where he has been working for some time at St Olaf's Parish in

DeForest. Hopefully he will be the first member of our second American community which will be located in the Madison diocese. Bro Kumud certainly has a fascinating history. He finished the seminary in India, and then for four years he was parish administrator in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, with many languages and situations in that Moslem country, one of the largest parishes in the world. He finished his novitiate here in Vladivostok and speaks Russian, too! He conducted retreats in India while waiting for his American visa, and visited other communities of Canons Regular in India at the same time. We were happy to be able to watch the whole ordination ceremony from Vladivostok, and so did our community in Indonesia. Small world! Congratulations, Deacon Kumud!



Holy Mother of God Pray for Us

The Way It Was

By Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

We've just celebrated the 28th anniversary of our coming to Vladivostok on February 11, 1992. We received our Russian visas on Fr Myron's birthday, February 7, arrived in the airport in Khabarovsk on February 10, slept overnight there on the benches, and flew on to Vladivostok in the morning. Here I would like to remember some of our benefactors who made it all possible in those early days many years ago.

First I would like to mention my parents, Mr and Mrs Roger Maurer, who donated the first funds for buying our flight tickets and renting our apartment in Russia.



Roger and June Maurer at the Peterhoff in St Petersburg after Fr Dan's ordination in 1992

Then I would like to remember Fr Joseph Fessio, S.J. and his friends. We stayed at Fr Fessio's office in San Francisco when we were getting our visas. At Easter in 1992 he was in Novosibirsk to help Bishop Joseph Werth with Holy Week services, but his return flight from Khabarovsk to San Francisco was cancelled, so he came to visit us for a week in Vladivostok. Seeing our poverty



Fr Fessio in his office at Ignatius Press

he decided to help: 1. He sent an appeals letter about us to his entire file of "Ignatius Press" contacts, (the largest Catholic publishing house in the USA at the time.) 2. He introduced us to the internet so that we could more easily communicate with America rather than using faxes. 3. He offered to return in the summer with volunteers to help us look for Catholics in our state, which he did, leaving behind for us two automobiles and a photocopy machine.



Archbishop Hurley opened a parish in Magadan.

We remember also that from the very beginning the late Archbishop Francis Hurley of Anchorage helped us very much by allowing us to use his archdiocesan address for our donations and his "Russian Desk" office assistant. He had already opened a Catholic parish in Magadan, USSR in 1991 and he had made the commitment to help it financially, as Magadan was the sister city of Anchorage. He said that he could not support our mission financially, because of Magadan, but he had engaged an administrator to help Magadan's founding, and he offered Fr Myron to use the address of the Archdiocesan office to receive checks for our mission support. Therefore, we published the Vladivostok Mission address in our very first newsletter—the address of the Archdiocese of Anchorage



-- and continued that arrangement for 6 years until the day when the Archbishop told Fr Myron, "You have gotten bigger than we can handle. You need your own office." The Anchorage Russian Desk was manned by Ray Rzeszut. He told me that 95% of what he

Ray, his son Michael, and wife Jeannie

did was for the processing of the Vladivostok Mission's financial donations because Fr Myron and I were always actively looking for benefactors, whereas the priest in Magadan, with the archbishop's financial support, did not have to look for benefactors.

Then in 1993 or 1994 Dr. E. Michael Jones, Ph.D., publisher of "Fidelity" monthly journal (now called "Culture Wars") wrote a story about us in his journal after his oldest son Adam came as a volunteer in our parish. It generated a lot of awareness of our mission among his Catholic readers.

In 1996 CBS Evening News with Dan Rather ran a four-minute human interest story about our mission on Richard Threlkel's Evening News program one Saturday. Mr Rather came to Russia to cover the first free presidential elections in Russia's history. [President Yeltsin.] He heard about us from a flight attendant on their Alaska Airlines flight, and decided to do the story about us.

We began appeals for financial help through our regularly published mission newsletter (*Vladivostok Sunrise*), the first issue of which was printed in November of 1991 and postmarked in America on December 23. Lee Larkey, a member of the Diocese of St Cloud Vocations Committee, was instrumental in communications for us, as he had a computer and internet connection. We sent the newsletter to a list of benefactors identified by Fr Myron and me, including an old mailing list that Fr Myron had from when he was editor of another publication. Tom Fitzsimmons in Modesto, California, handling hundreds of our email messages.

We received requests by several parishes in the USA to become "sister parishes" of the Vladivostok parish from the very beginning of the mission. St Anne Parish in Porterville, California became our sister parish in the summer of 1991 even before Fr Myron went to Russia on his first fact-finding trip, and they continue today.



Fr Dan and Fr Scott Dougherty, Pastor of St Anne's.

Nativity of Our Lord Parish in St Paul, Minnesota became our sister parish in the first year that we were here in Vladivostok. Eventually our stateside mission office was located there under the direction of Sandra Sonnen.

We sent letters to most parishes in America named for the Virgin Mary, and several became sister parishes. St Joseph Parish in Modesto, California started to contribute financially and spiritually to our mission work when Fr Joseph Illo became pastor in 2000. Not much later it became our sister parish, too, and today our mission office is there under the direction of Vicky Trevillyan.



Lee Larkey as St Nicolas with Sandra and David Sonnen at a fundraiser at Nativity Parish in St Paul.



Fr Illo and Romanovka parishioners with St Joseph Parishioners, Modesto, who came to Russia to help

That is the way it was. It is dangerous to say “Thank you” to so many people, because I might have left out someone important. But we have to say thank you to our benefactors and helpers who have made all that we do possible, from founding parishes here in Russia, founding the Women’ Support Centers, and doing so many charitable projects. And now helping with our many vocations to the priesthood. “Thank you” doesn’t mean we are done!—Maybe we are just getting started! Russia is still the least religious practicing country in the world.

News Notes

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



- On March 10 we heard of the death of a great member of our Board of Directors, **Father James West**. He was still a young man of 59, full of energy, and he was a great priest of the Diocese of Little Rock, Arkansas. He was a great supporter of our mission, and always encouraged his

parishes to help us. He died in the rectory at St Edward’s Parish in Texarkana, Arkansas, of natural causes. We will miss him terribly, but he will surely be able to pray for us from his new place in heaven. Eternal Rest grant to him, O Lord! May there be many more priests like him for the Diocese of Little Rock, and for the Church in America!



- **Brother Pradeep Mulupuri**, C.J.D. received the ministry of acolyte at his seminary in India on March 7. We will be glad when he can complete his seminary studies and return to help us in Russia!

- We’ve had **eight funerals** lately in Vladivostok for deceased who were Catholics but whom we did not know. We are so visible in the city now, because of the steeples on the church, but I guess we still haven’t found all the Catholics. The funerals are important, not only for the sake of the deceased, but also for those who attend—It may be the only time that many of them have ever been in church! At my age I can’t risk going to the Russian cemeteries in the winter—They are too hilly and snowy and overgrown, and I can’t risk a fall. So Fr Nikita has been doing the burials at the cemetery, but all three of us priests in Vladivostok take turns at saying the masses and preaching. I go to the crematory when the family asks. Vladivostok is located on a peninsula, so land is a premium, and the main three city cemeteries are full, so many families ask for cremation so that the deceased can be buried together with a spouse or relative in a preexisting grave.



- The Corona virus has travelled around the world. Here our seminarians in Indonesia are working as **volunteers** to deliver food packages to the poor.

- Vladivostok is fairly isolated as the capital of the Russian State of Primorye, with the Sea of Japan on the East and South, China and North Korea on the West with pretty wide zones between us, and so most of our contact with the outside world is by flights or in the North, by the highway to Khabarovsk. The government took early action to detect the **corona virus** at the airport, so we’ve really had very few cases of the virus as of this writing (April 17). We’ve had 40 cases with two deaths. We are isolated, and all churches, theaters, restaurants are closed. We now have internet streamed Sunday Masses with plenty of watchers. The Women’s Support Centers are very important as poor women with children come for aid.

- Here is a picture just for fun of our seminarians in Indonesia celebrating the **Jewish Seder meal**, as Jesus did at the Last Supper. Because there is no synagogue on Flores Island, they can't visit one to get a feel of Jesus' times. The Seder is good to enable one to experience something of what the Last Supper was probably like when Jesus instituted the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood.



Seder foods prepared for the Seder meal.

How to Communicate with Us

Internet

Russian language: www.catholic.vladivostok.ru

English language: www.vladmission.org

Sisters in Jesus the Lord in English: www.cjd.cc

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Mary Mother of God Mission Society is listed in the Official Catholic Directory under the Diocese of Stockton, CA.

Baby Talk

From the Women's Support Centers



"I want my dinner NOW!!"
[Ivan January 11, 2019]

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The color theme of this issue is form a bouquet of roses honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary for the Month of May

Opportunities

- ♥ Please **pray** for our mission and our world.
- ♥ 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.
- ♥ Want a way to make a difference and cost you nothing? By distributing newsletters at your parish, you will bring the important news of our mission to other Catholics. May we send 5 copies of our bimonthly newsletter, the **Vladivostok Sunrise** to your parish or group? Ask your pastor. We will be happy to send the number of copies you need to keep your group informed of our work. Call us 209-408-0728, email usoffice@vladmission.org or text 209-613-8121.
- ♥ Seems like everyone is shopping online these days. 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 **\$3000** from Amazon Smile. You are helping our mission and it costs nothing extra to you.
- ♥ Our mission store in Modesto is temporarily closed due to the stay at home mandate. We have added a huge assortment of Russian icons, gifts from Greece, great Catholic books and bibles and other Catholic resources to our mission's **online store**. Proceeds help the people of our mission. If you haven't visited our web store recently, please shop at www.store.vladmission.org. 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 3000 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.
- ♥ Give an eternal gift. Remember loved ones in this special way. Masses celebrated in Russia may be requested. **Mass stipends** support our priests. Please send your special intentions or Mass requests to the mission

office. Mass cards will be sent to you or designated persons. Suggested stipend is \$15 per Mass.

♥ Our priests are getting older. Fr Myron will celebrate his 80th birthday next February and Fr Dan will celebrate his 70th next March. 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. Thank you.

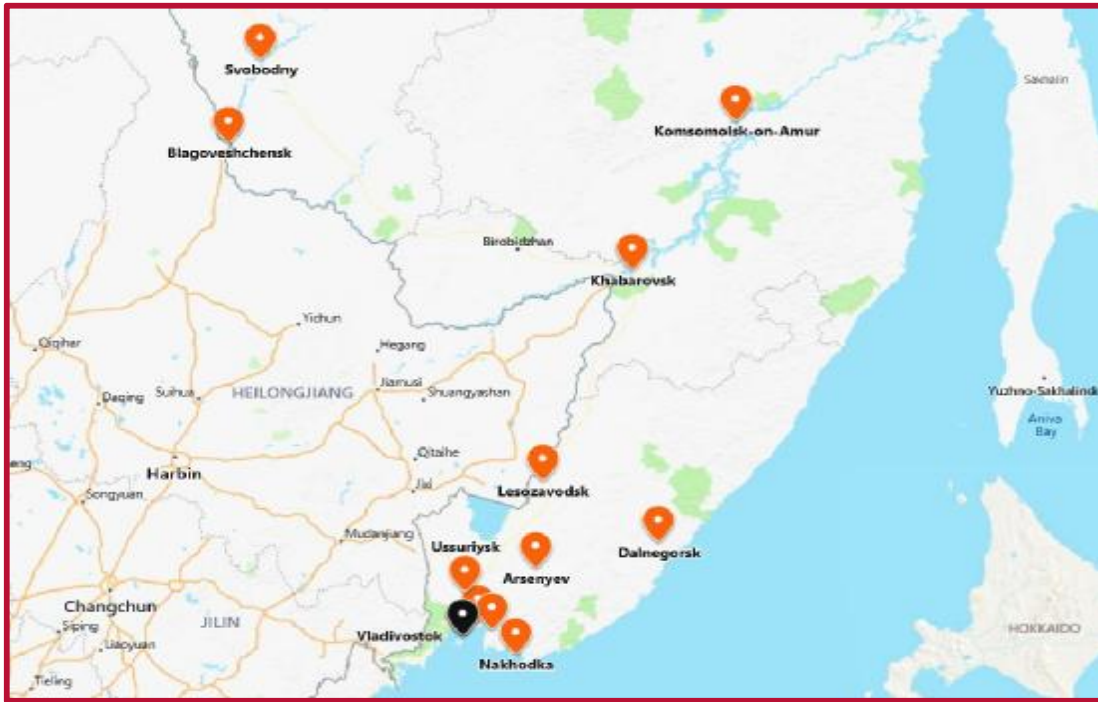


♥ Let's get together! When we are able to gather again in community at our parishes we can celebrate with a **Russian Icon and Religious gifts fundraiser**. Our mission office will provide the supplies you need including beautiful Russian icons, Greek tapestries, and re-purposed priest vestment articles. What a fun way to bring much needed help to our mission families such as in the Women's Centers, Soup Kitchen, Project Hope (medical aid) and more. Contact Vicky or Jessica at the mission office in Modesto, CA for more details. 209-408-0728

♥ Please consider **supporting our vocations programs**. We have many qualified candidates and the costs for education and living expenses are growing. 10 new priests have been ordained in the order of Canons Regular of Jesus The Lord. We have 29 seminarians, 3 Deacons and 3 Brothers and we support them all. 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!

**Remember
Mary Mother of God Mission Society
in your will!**



Continued from page 8)
 When Fr Myron and Fr Dan arrived in Russia to begin their missionary work nearly 30 years ago, all of Russia was one huge diocese. You can see from the colored territories on the smaller map how Russia is today divided into four massive Roman Catholic dioceses.

God bless Fr Myron and Fr Dan for the great blessings they bring to the people of Russia and to us. Thank you and God bless you

Mr Meng for calling us with your ideas to help promote our work to revive the Roman Catholic Church in Russia. You are making a difference!

We can use your help too. If you can join Mr Meng to pass out our business cards, brochures or newsletters, please contact me. I'll look forward to hearing from you. We are praying for you and your families to stay well.

God bless you. Sincerely, Vicky Trevillyan, Mission Coordinator, 209-408-0728 usoffice@vladmission.org



Prayer through the Intercession of Our Lady of Vladivostok

God Our Father! Your people come to You with praise and thanksgiving that You answered our prayers and the prayers of our patroness the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Mother of Jesus, and Mother of the Church, that You have established freedom of religion in Russia. We open our hearts and minds that You may give us faith in Jesus Christ, Your only begotten Son. May our sins be forgiven, the burdens of our times be lightened. May our children learn virtue and our hopes be filled with Your

From the Women's Support Centers

"Masha" became pregnant with her fifth child. She felt shame and fear and proposed to do an abortion. Her friends didn't understand why she had this child, as she was already a grandmother! She came to our Center and we had several talks with her, and she decided not to do the abortion. A baby girl was born, though the birth was difficult as mom was already 40 years old. Thanks to help from our Center the family got through the difficulties, and we will continue to help and support mom and her new unexpected daughter.

---WSC, Romanovka

praise. Deliver us from the evils which still punish us, especially abortion, divorce, and indifference to the needs of others. Help us to strengthen our families. Give us peace, love, and unity between our Apostolic Churches so that all Christians may grow as members of one body, children of one Father and one Mother, so that we may live in hope of Your kingdom, where You live forever and ever. Amen.

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter! How blessed we all are to have the faith, hope and love of Easter during these challenging times!

The USA mission office is closed, so Jessica and I are continuing the work of Mary Mother of God Mission Society mainly from home. We look forward to your emails, phone calls and letters to keep in touch.

I was delighted to receive a call and chat with Mr Bill Meng from Iowa. A long-time friend of the mission, Mr Meng explained his wonderful idea to pass out our Mary Mother of God Mission Society business cards to people as he speaks to them about our mission. Our business card is a great reminder of our work as there is a story about our mission on the back of the card. Mr Meng asked for 25 business cards to begin passing along to friends!

To find out more of our mission’s important beginnings, Mr Meng asked about the “500,000 square mile area” where Fr Myron and Fr Daniel “founded or re-founded 11 Catholic parishes.” It’s hard to imagine such a great area. So, thanks to Mr Meng, I’m picturing this map with the parish locations for all of us to see.

The Roman Catholic Church was re-established in the Eastern territory wherever Catholics could be found due to the missionary spirits and grace of Fr Myron and Fr Dan. Actually, there are 12 parishes Fr Myron and Fr Dan re-opened or founded. *(Text continued on Page 7)*

Vladivostok--Most Holy Mother of God
Khabarovsk--Immaculate Conception
Blagoveschensk--Transfiguration
Lesozavodsk--Visitation
Arsenyev--Annunciation
Nakhodka--Our Lady of the Pacific
Ussurysk--Nativity
Artyom--St Joseph (formerly in Second River)
Romanovka--Holy Trinity
 *Comsomolsk-na-Amure - Holy Family
 *Dalnegorsk – Presentation
 *Svobodny - Divine Mercy
 * Our priests started these parishes but other priests took over before they had them organized.

