



# Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Fifty Four July, 2020



Some regular volunteers of Caritas. (Lilia in gray coat)

## 25th Anniversary of Caritas of the Vladivostok Parish

by Mrs Lilia Timofeevna Silina

“Caritas” (“Charity”) is, of course, the international Catholic charity, and it has regional and parish affiliates. Our parish affiliate in Vladivostok is celebrating 25 years! Every jubilee is a time to look back at our accomplishments, and a time to plan for the future.

The rebirth of our parish in 1992 corresponded with a crisis period in Russia, a time of social and government changes, and great poverty. There were new problems in society and in our families. Caritas did not ignore these problems, as its goals are the furthering of charity and justice where it is needed most of all.

- Even today the big social problems of Russia are:
- The number of children who become “orphans” even though they have living parents, or children who go without supervision or discipline, and rejected children;
- Elderly folks, often abandoned or living alone and lonely;
- Problems involving refugees and migrants.
- and now the problem of addiction.

In 1992 we formed “Caritas Primorye”, a state-wide Caritas for dealing with wider social problems, the chief activity of which was and still is the five Women’s

Support Centers. The first volunteers were active members of the Vladivostok Parish. In 1995 we founded Caritas of Vladivostok specifically to deal with problems locally, and subsequently Caritas opened parish departments in Lesozavodsk, Romanovka, Arsenyev, Ussurysk, and Nakhodka.

The Dean of the Vladivostok Deanery, V. Rev Myron Effing was the leader of Caritas Primorye, in spite of his constant busyness of founding parishes. Besides his volunteer work and 60 lectures in state schools about the theory of alcoholism, he was also busy with finding funding for our various projects.

I am the Director of our parish’s Caritas of Vladivostok. My “main volunteer” is my husband Albert Silin. From the first our Parish Caritas was busy with work with orphans, rejected kids, kids from multi-child families, and kids with physical and mental handicaps. We worked with the special children’s home in Zavodskoi and in Ussurysk. We worked with elderly whose pensions did not cover their minimum needs, and we helped the handicapped and cancer patients.

The correctness of our decisions were confirmed by the local authorities and the health authorities that we worked with, including the Hospice at City Hospital #3, the Children’s Hospital #4, cancer patients at Hospital #6, and at the hospital on Popov Island. Besides our regular work, we also received grants for special projects. Here is a description of what Parish Caritas has been doing.



Holy Mother of God Pray for Us

**1, The Soup Kitchen.** The program was begun in 2009, and continues in various forms until today. The goal was not only food, but also social activities and even entertainment for those who live alone.



**2. The Hospice.** Begun in 2000 until today, we are of major help, not only to the dying and seriously ill patients, but even to the medical personnel who tend to be overworked and underpaid in this difficult work. We have provided water heaters, electric beds, and furniture, in addition to foods and various kinds of therapy for these patients.



**3. The Social Program.** Begun in 1992, as various kinds of humanitarian aid became available, we organize and distribute these things to the needy: food, clothing, shoes, garden seeds, bread, canned vegetables and sea foods have been donated to us for distribution. Nothing goes to waste. Tea and coffee after Sunday Mass is also furnish by the Social Program, and its volunteers help in the parish when we have a big celebration, like an ordination dinner or a wedding. Since 2013 we've been working with the government "Service for the Poor".



**4. The Boarding School Program.** There is correctional school where the kids from around the state need a broader sense of society than just their fellow pupils and teachers. Our volunteers go regularly to play with the kids, and socialize with them. Outdoor sports are especially important for exercise and vitamin D.



Another boarding school is for children who need temporary shelter, so they are feeling the loss of their regular family, at least temporarily, like in the case of family illness or incarceration. For them volunteers are needed especially for summer outdoor activities.





Another site is the orphan's hospital where we helped by buying new professional laundry equipment, and air conditioned an entire floor where people suffered from summertime heat.

Of course none of this would have been possible without our benefactors! Thank you, benefactors, for all these people in great need whom we have been able to help. It is only through your generosity that we can do it! God bless you!!

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The color theme of this issue is from primrose flowers growing in front of the Vladivostok church.



**Baby Talk**  
From the Women's Support Centers

**Remember when?**  
[Sasha Birthday: October 1, 2018]

## News Notes

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



## How to Communicate with Us

### Internet

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

• May 23<sup>rd</sup> was the joyful day for the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord in Vladivostok. Five novices took their **first vows as religious**. (From left) Brother Jackson Malik, C.J.D., from Pakistan is a seminarian whose background was in hospital operating rooms where he was a surgeon's assistant. Brother Jefrianus Manek, C.J.D. from Indonesia is known as "Mister Congeniality" for his regular good humor and jokes. Brother Kiran Chinthapalli, C.J.D. is a seminarian from India who has served as the Dean of Novices, seemingly without effort keeping everybody's day organized. Seminarian Brother Peter Nsamba, C.J.D. from Uganda can usually be found where there is laughter. He likes to sing while he works. Brother Justino Marques, C.J.D., from Timor Leste served as sacristan and sometimes as cook for us, especially on Saturdays. (*News Notes Cont'd on Page 6.*)

## The Story of the Vladivostok Cathedral

*By V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.*

The first Catholic church in Vladivostok, a wooden building, was built by the first pastor Fr Razhdishevsky in 1892, but it burnt down on February 2, 1902--“Candlemas day.” The parish decided that they wanted to build a solid brick church to replace it, especially considering that the parish had grown and needed more space. So it was decided to build a temporary church to use meanwhile, because the new permanent church would take a long time to plan, to raise funds, and to build.



*The first church, “Nativity of Our Lady”*



*The temporary second church with pastor Fr Slivovsky*

When the parish established a building committee to plan the new church, the request was that it would be designed “like the one in Samara.” Samara is a city south of Moscow in Tartarstan, and it certainly had a grand church! Vladivostok’s church would have to be built on a somewhat smaller scale. Bishop Jan Cieplak came to Vladivostok from St Petersburg to bless the cornerstone in 1908—We found the stone underneath the floor of the vestibule when we repaired the that floor--But as



*Bishop Jan Cieplak of the Mogilovski Diocese*

construction was nearing completion, the Communist Revolution came to Vladivostok in 1922, and the church was closed. Construction stopped. The steeples were not built. The last part of the construction was done by German prisoners of war from World War I. When we were repairing the façade of the church in 2009, we found a letter that these workmen left wedged between bricks, and it turned out that the foreman of the crew, Rolf

Geyling, later became a famous architect in China!



*The crowd at the laying of the cornerstone in 1908*



*Second church seen from the back side when it had become the building for the “Vladivostok Seminary of St Charles Borromeo.” After the Communist takeover of Vladivostok, the seminary was moved to Harbin, China. Some of the seminarians were later ordained for dioceses in Poland.*





In the summer of 1921 Fr Slivovsky received permission to consecrate the building without the steeples. He was named bishop of Vladivostok and ordained in Harbin, China on October 28, 1923, and Most Holy Mother of God Church in Vladivostok became the cathedral. Bishop Slivovsky was placed under house arrest by the government in late June of 1930, and was forced to live on the porch of a house in Sedanka, a Vladivostok suburb. The cathedral was taxed, but what was left of the congregation after so many parishioners fled could not pay the tax, so it was confiscated by the Communist government on July 20 of 1935, and given to the government Archive Bureau on August 20 of that year.

*The brick church as we found it in 1991—broken windows, no heat, neglected, with archive inside*



*The Samara Church of the Sacred Heart is larger than our church, has a full basement, two-storied sacristies so that the priest could live there, and a larger choir, including two side choirs which could handle an overload of parishioners for feast days. It is built in a river valley. The steeples are very spidery to be made of bricks, and I didn't like their orientation. The steeples are open to the weather, and no bells are visible. The building had been well cared for and was used as a library during the Communist period, with additional wooden floors added inside which were easy to remove.*



*The Vladivostok Church of the Most Holy Mother of God had no basement because the church was built on very hard, solid volcanic rock on the side of a hill. The new steeples (2010) are enclosed by steel nets to exclude pigeons and four bells are located in the left steeple. There are no side balconies, and the sacristies are single-storied. There are only two main entrances, instead of three as in Samara. The church had been converted into an archive, with three concrete and steel floors added inside which were difficult to remove. The steel was actually the former rails of the first streetcar tracks in Vladivostok, and reused in the new parish center.*

When we had the chance to design the steeples to our own liking, but in somewhat similar style to Samara's, we turned them by 45° and eliminated the flying buttresses which would be a maintenance problem in our sea climate and so high in the air. The change also allowed a thinner profile, which better matched the smaller size of the building. We received the building on January 1, 1994, thanks to the State of Primorye Duma, and thanks to American and Russian benefactors who helped us remove the floors, repair the building, and build the steeples. We dedicated the new steeples to those who wanted to build them but couldn't, especially to Bishop Karl Slivovsky and the five last martyrs of our parish, who are candidates for canonization as saints.

Now we have asked Rome to designate our church—the cathedral of the former Diocese of Vladivostok—a minor papal basilica, especially seeing that the Diocese existed until 2004--all during the Communist period as the only Roman Catholic diocese ever to exist in Russia itself. The diocese once covered a gigantic part of Russia and all of Turkestan, which is now five independent countries. Two of our current four bishops in Russia were born in the Diocese of Vladivostok. The Bishops' Conference of Russia has approved the plan, and forwarded our request to Rome. Now we are waiting for the answer.

### News Notes Continued

- May 16 was the happy day of the **wedding** of Dmitri and Ekaterina Legostaev. It was a long awaited event as they live far from any parish. Actually, they are parishioners of Nakhodka's Our Lady of the Pacific Parish, but it is easier for them to travel to Vladivostok from their distant village. Congratulations! It was fun to have your wedding. God bless you!



*Fr Myron, Dmitri and Ekaterina, Fr Nikita, and Bro Vicky.*

- **Brother Rajnal Rehmat, C.J.D.** is our seminarian in Pakistan. Because of the corona virus, he is at home from the seminary. It hasn't kept him from being apostolic and



finding good work to do. He has gathered all the neighborhood kids who are also out of school and at home, for catechism classes. He sent me this picture.

- **Brother Pradeep Mulupuri, C.J.D.**, our seminarian currently in India, is an eyewitness to the tragedy of many Indian migrant workers who can't get home and who have nowhere to live, walking home, and sleeping in public places. Meanwhile in Russia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, we have not heard that any of our brothers or seminarians have suffered from the virus. Holy Mother of God, pray for us!

- The **Women's Support Centers** have been very busy. The Russian government has sent a stipend to every mom who has kids—depending on the number of kids—but since many people are out of work, our centers are busy helping also with food and clothing, medical needs, and much advice. People are “sitting at home”, so we don't know what effect that may have on the birthrate yet. We have had an increase of requests to help moms with “Adopt-a-Mom” donations to help deal with their medical situations.

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



## Opportunities

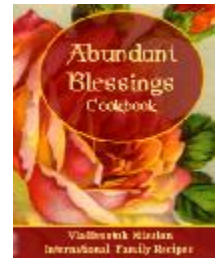
- ♥ Please **pray** for our mission and our world.
- ♥ Want a way to make a difference that costs you nothing? By distributing newsletters at your parish, you will bring the important news of our mission to other Catholics. May we send 5 copies of our bimonthly newsletter, the *Vladivostok Sunrise* to 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](mailto: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.
- ♥ Please help us keep the Women's Centers open. **Adopt-a-Birth** or **Adopt-a-Mom**. 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 to keep or pass on of the newborn you helped to save. Over 3000 babies have been saved from abortion to date! Your \$125 gift to the **Adopt-a-Mom** 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 80<sup>th</sup> birthday next February and Fr Dan will celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.vladmission.org). Thank you.

♥ We are short in raising the funds needed to purchase the rectory land. We have raised \$14,374 of the \$41,100 needed. Can you help, please? More information on our website, [www.vladmission.org](http://www.vladmission.org)

♥ 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](http://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!

♥ A beautiful and useful gift! Receive a FREE copy (up to \$14 value) of one of several **Vladivostok Concert CD's** with your purchase of our mission's **Abundant Blessings Cookbook**. 494 International recipes from our priests, seminarians and mission families fill the pages!



Proceeds from our cookbook go to our **seminarians' education fund** and our **Women's Support Centers** helping pregnant women and families. **\$30 per cookbook** covers cookbook, CD, and shipping in the continental USA.

♥ **Our Lady of Vladivostok Pendant** with Most Holy Mother of God Cathedral detailed on the back of the medal. Finely detailed! Text reads, *Our Lady of Vladivostok, Pray for Us*



3/4" Sterling Silver medal w 18" stainless chain \$65

3/4" Pewter medal w 18" stainless chain \$35

1" Sterling Silver medal w 24" stainless chain \$79

1" Sterling Silver medal w 24" stainless chain with text in Russian \$79. Prices include S/H in continental USA

Contact the mission office at [usoffice@vladmission.org](mailto:usoffice@vladmission.org) to order or visit our mission web store,

[store.vladmission.org](http://store.vladmission.org).

♥ More beautiful and unique gifts! Magnificat, missal and bible covers, rosary cases and more made from discarded priest vestments. Russian and Greek items! Shop our Vladivostok mission store, [www.store.vladmission.org](http://www.store.vladmission.org)

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## From the development desk...

Dear Friends,

Our mission society constantly searches for ways to fund our work so we can bring the word of Christ to the people, minister to the poor and needy, and build up His Church. **YOU are important members** of our mission family. Your prayers and generosity are the primary reason we can keep our work continuing. We are humbled and deeply grateful for your kindness.

Grants are another important source of funding for our programs. We apply for grants from foundations that have an interest in various areas of our work. Applying for grants require meticulous research and follow up reports on the projects being presented for funding. Our mission society has been greatly blessed to have for the past 27 years, **Susan Gray of Arkansas**, as our top notch grant writer. Due to Susan's thorough presentations and timely detailed follow up reports, she has built a respected relationship with several foundations on behalf of the mission. As Susan has been such a dear friend to work with and an incredible talent for the mission, I am sad to announce after 27 years Susan will be retiring within the next year. Before Susan officially leaves us, we will honor her and the many areas where she has been an integral part in developing the mission. Stay tuned to read more about

this intelligent, faithful, funny, and all around super human being!

In the meantime, we begin our search for a **new grant writer**. If you have grant writing experience, or know of someone who has, and would like to apply your talents to help the mission, please contact me or Fr Myron. We will be happy to hear from you. Here are some of the qualifications we are looking for.

1. Should have at least 3 years grant-writing experience
2. Be self-directed and able to mostly work alone.
3. Be able to research foundations' giving histories and priorities; write coherently; make deadlines; work online with people in the US and other countries; write up project budgets; follow-up with project directors on activities and expenditures; report/respond to foundations on time.
4. Become familiar with the operation of the mission society and the activities in Russia and elsewhere.
5. Write/edit other pieces for the mission society, editing fundraising letters, writing website material, etc.)
6. Cover own office expenses.

Thank you all for being an important member of our mission family!

God bless you. Sincerely, Vicky Trevillyan  
Mission Coordinator  
209-408-0728 [usoffice@vladmission.org](mailto:usoffice@vladmission.org)