



Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Fifty Eight March, 2021



Fr Myron's 80th Birthday!

By Tatyana Shaposhnikova

The celebration of the 80th birthday of our pastor, Fr Myron Effing, C.J.D. took place on Sunday, February 7 after Russian Sunday Mass. Besides the parishioners and religious, there were many guests who had many good things to say to express our love. A representative of the City of Vladivostok administration came to pin on him a medal for his "excellent service to Vladivostok." Usually this award is reserved for citizens, but Fr Myron has long been considered worthy because of his contributions to the social, economic, and cultural development of our city.

For his nearly 30 years of effort here in Russia Fr Myron gave rebirth to the Roman Catholic Church in the Russian Far East. He reopened the historical parishes here in Primorye, in Khabarovsk Krai, and in the Amursky Oblast, which became again members of the Vladivostok Deanery. We Far Eastern Catholics, after 60 years without the sacraments, were able to again practice our faith, attend open churches, and practice public charity. Fr Myron became the founder and coordinator of our charitable and social programs, including the Women's Support Centers and many children's programs.

It was on the Island of Guam in 1987 that Fr Myron founded the new religious community of "The Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord." When he came to Russia there were only two members, Fr Myron and Deacon Daniel Maurer, but today they number 13 priests who serve in Indonesia, America, Russia, and Kazakhstan. There are also five deacons, and one yet to be ordained in March for service in Vladivostok, where the novitiate is located and where its members take their first vows. Current novices are from Indonesia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Uganda, and East Timor. Five seminarians are studying in the Philippines.

One of the important projects for Fr Myron was the complete restoration and completion of the historic neogothic cathedral of the Most Holy Mother of God here in Vladivostok, and the construction of the new building of the parish center and monastery. The church building has become a real attraction of the City, a popular object for tourists; it is visible from far away and famous in the Far East for its organ concerts.

How did all this happen in the life of Fr Myron? What was the chain of events in the life of a child of an American farm family in Indiana that led to this result? Fr Myron says, "My parents were Catholics from families displaced from German-speaking European countries to the New World. I was born in 1941 when the Second World War began for us. My father worked in a factory that made refrigerators, but which switched its production to airplane wings for Russia during the Lend-Lease program to help Russia in the war. These wings were taken down the Ohio River from my home town, to the Mississippi, to Panama, across the Pacific to Vladivostok where they were transferred to the TransSiberian Railroad



Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us



Baby Myron and mother, Leota Effing

and shipped to Siberia to be united there with the locally made fuselages. So from early childhood I knew about Russia.”

Myron Effing began his studies in his local parish school of St Joseph in Vanderburgh County. He graduated from Mater Dei High

School in Evansville, and then from the University of Evansville with his degree in Physics where he studied the Russian language. Later he finished his master’s degree in Astronomy at Cornell University in New York. In 1962 the Second Vatican Council was the event that changed the direction of Fr Myron’s life. He entered the novitiate of the Canons Regular of the Holy Cross and began theological studies in Fort Wayne, Indiana and at St John’s University in Minnesota. He was ordained a priest in 1972 by Bishop Leo Pursley of Fort Wayne. Then he worked some years as a teacher of Physics, Mathematics, and Astronomy at seminaries in Indiana and Minnesota, and served a term as Prior of the religious community in Hastings, Nebraska. After years of hard work he took a sabbatical on the Island of Guam at Father Dueñes Memorial School where he served as teacher of Physics, Biology, and Religion. He was seminary rector and high school principal, and he also taught Astronomy at the University of Guam. After founding the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord with Brother Daniel Maurer, in 1989 they moved to Modesto, California where Fr Myron served as chaplain at California State University Stanislaus.

His life was always connected with Russia. “I always thought about Russia, so when perestroika began I proposed we go to Russia, a big country suffering from atheism. Why Vladivostok? It is a unique city on the shore of the Pacific Ocean near America, with a big future, and connected to the whole Asian region.”

Fr Myron came for the first time to Russia in 1991 as a tourist. He and Fr Daniel received their religious visas to work in Russia on Fr Myron’s birthday in 1992, and in April he was appointed Pastor by Bishop Joseph Werth who was Apostolic Administrator of Asian Russia. Fr Myron always says that he loves Russia and his parish, and that he wasn’t frightened even by the language or daily problems since it was all for parishioners and people trying to know God. “I think that religion is the source of



Siblings, Merle, Marlene, Baby Marilyn, and Myron below.

conscience for a people. It teaches simple but important things: Love your neighbor and value the family.”

Today, having lived 30 years in Russia, Fr Myron

pleasantly says, “Here in Vladivostok I’ve lived through a whole epoch. We began with searching for our parishioners—parishioners of the historical parish—and after finding them we baptized their children and grandchildren. The church building which was built by their ancestors was returned and repaired. Unfortunately for us many of our parishioners have left Vladivostok, looking for a brighter future in other parts of Russia, and even in many countries of the world. We keep contact with some of them. If we have completed the first epoch, now begins the second. The parish will be in the hands of younger priests to whom we’ll share our experience and knowledge, and they will have new methods including new digital technology. We started with long-distance telephone and electronic mail, but they have Zoom and What’sApp. So soon there will be a new pastor to whom I can entrust the parish and our parishioners. He will find it easier to work with the youth who are our future. It is they who will continue the history of the Vladivostok Parish.”



Henry and Leota Effing, Merle, Marlene, and Myron in arms (1941)



Sr Olga Nimchinova, SCSA presenting a gift, with parish trustee Victor Anisimov looking on, and Sr Catherine, C.J.C. and Sr Faustina, C.J.D. ready to present next.



My godparents, Mary and Clarence Keller, at my priesthood ordination celebration, 1972. It was always said that my godmother dropped me when coming out of church after the baptism because there was an extra step, maybe in the snow in February. That could explain a lot!

Dear Fr Myron, today we are observing your jubilee, so allow us your parishioners to express our sincere love for you. We love you for the courage that you showed for the invisible Catholic Church in unpredictable Russia. If you go, you will take nothing with you but the Word of God. We love you because you are a teacher of the Word where for many years in atheist Russia the Word was forbidden. We didn't know the prayers and the liturgy, we didn't sing any hymns, but we had to learn it all, and you carefully and patiently led us along the road of knowledge.

Speaking to you about love, we would like to speak about your endless mercy which was so necessary for us. Teaching and supporting us, you often came in contact with our sins which accompany every person in this life. But your patience and mercy helped us achieve peace and brought rest, cleansing our souls.

EVANSVILLE COLLEGE REPORT OF GRADES				
NAME OF STUDENT	KFFING, Myron C.		Sum	TERM 19 62
Course	Course No.	Cr. Hours	Grade	SCALE OF MARKING
Physics	209	6	A	A, Excellent B+, B, Good C+, C, Fair D, Inferior E, Failure Pd., Passed without grade Inc., Incomplete Spd., Suspend Wt., Withdrawn, Pending Wf., Withdrawn, Failing A credit hour is one hour of recitation per week for twelve weeks.
Math	251	5	A	

Not to be accepted as an official transcript REGISTRAR

STUDENT'S COPY

From the Women's Support Centers

At 16 "Magdalena" was still growing when a problem with her health began and the pediatrician and her friends thought it was just growing pains, but some thought it was cancer. To their surprise, it turned out she was pregnant, even though she was still a student in school. Her friend who was the father of the child supported her emotionally while she was getting ready for her school exams.

Three months after finishing her exams she gave birth to a son and everything seemed to be going OK. But the young father wasn't able to withstand his new role and left for another girl. The young mom was left with the baby. Her sister helped her, and so did her mother who herself had health problems. Magdalena started working at two jobs to support herself and the baby. The baby will be two years old in March and so he will begin kindergarten.

Not long ago Magdalena got acquainted with a man who was himself raised by a stepfather, and he took a liking to Magdalena's son. She is very grateful for the help she got from the Women's Support Center whose American benefactors helped her when she needed it.

News Notes

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

● We were directly hit by a **supertyphoon** on September 3, and the result is a lot of damage to the roof of the rectory. Then on November 19 we were hit by an **ice storm** that left 1½ inches of ice on everything, breaking down trees all over the city. The result for us was that the ice on the rectory roof sealed the shingles that were broken by the supertyphon, so we've had little leakage of water through the ice this winter. But as spring comes we'll have to **re-shingle the whole roof**. It would have been nice to just replace broken or torn shingles, but the present roof was done years ago with Soviet shingles which are no longer available and of a different size than any replacements that we can buy now. So we are looking for help with this project. Andre, our building superintendent, says it will cost \$14,450! If you would like to help us with this, putting **"roof"** on the memo of your check or bank payment should do the job! Thank you, if you can help!



The two couples, John and Anna Nguyen and Lee and Maria Dao, with Bro Joseph Nguyen, C.J.D. my interpreter, and Bro Vincent Bui, C.J.D., the server.

● On January 24 we had a **double wedding ceremony** for two Vietnamese couples of our parish! They didn't speak English or Russian, and I don't speak Vietnamese, so I had to do the wedding through an interpreter. The music in Vietnamese was wonderful, the flowers were fantastic, and the people were so happy for the couples. Many of the attendees were Buddhists, which was a first for us, too. Of course people were in masks, kept distances, and got their hands sprayed at the door.

● It seems that the virus has caused a rapid **expansion of the internet**. Students around the world have been using it, and we've had to add telephone and internet capacity

for our seminarians here who are now studying, not only in Vladivostok, but at various seminaries in the Philippines by Zoom every day. It is not as good as being there, but better than boredom.

● **Fr Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.** has also made use of the new possibilities by providing formation classes for our seminarians and members in Kazakhstan and America, while remaining in Vladivostok because of the lack of international flights.

● When we came to Vladivostok 29 years ago, we were some of the lucky few who had a home telephone in their living quarters. Long distance calls had to be ordered specially from the phone company, and you had to go to the phone office to use a phone in their office phone booths for long distance. (Of course, I'm old enough to remember when a telephone was a wooden thing that hung on the wall that you had to crank, and you had to scream into it to make a call of just a few miles away audible—in America!) Imagine my surprise when after Easter in 1992 **Fr Joseph Fessio, S.J.** who was our guest, was sending a message using our apartment phone to his office in San Francisco, but he wasn't using "long distance." It was a new-fangled thing called **"electronic mail"**. I saw that we needed it, too, and Fr Fessio told us that it was available in Vladivostok from the Russian Academy of Sciences! He immediately connected us to send and receive messages from our helpers in America—Mr Lee Larkey in Minnesota and Mr Ray Rzeszut at the Archdiocese of Anchorage!

● While I'm reminiscing, here is another story:

Ghennady Krestsov was my Russian helper for several years. He was always willing and creative! One time I had to go to Aldan in Yakutia for the dedication of their church. There were no roads to Aldan, not even a passenger railroad then, so you had to fly. On the return trip, when Ghennady and I got to the airport, the flight was full. I had things to do in Vladivostok and couldn't be late. What to do? Ghennady went and talked to the pilots, and we found ourselves flying to Vladivostok, sitting in the baggage compartment on the luggage. No seat belts there!

● Another time, I had finished a meeting in Siberia in Novosibirsk with Bishop Werth. I was to take the train to Novokuznets afterward. When we got to the station, it turned out that tickets on the train were sold out. Ghennady went to speak to the train master to ask for space for us. Sometimes the train master will even sell his own bed if you pay enough! No dice! As we looked around for what to do, a train came in. Ghennady said, "I wonder where that train is going?" He went to speak to that train master. It turned out that the train was going to Novokuznets **totally empty** to deliver the cars to be

repaired at the factory. So we rode in style to Novokuznets—the only passengers on the train, and without bedding or towels or tea or heat. Beggars can't be choosers!

- To refund the parish of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in **Blagoveschensk** I had to travel there about 80 times (five years x 12 monthly masses). Usually I took the train from Vladivostok to Khabarovsk to Immaculate Conception Parish, and continued on to Blagoveschensk. I could make the return trip by air, because there was a flight crew whose home base was there, but who flew an international flight from Vladivostok. So I could fly to Vladivostok with them. Sometimes I was the only passenger on that leg of the journey.

- On a more serious note, once I received a letter from **Comsomolsk-na-Amure** from a Catholic who asked me to come there to baptize his son. It was a long trip by train, but, as usual, I put an ad in the Comsomolsk newspaper saying I was coming to town, and where and when I would be there so that any other Catholics might find me. When I arrived, there was a huge protest against me from the Orthodox parish, including the priest. They were carrying banners and shouting and threatening. Finally I got to speak to the priest, telling him that I had come for the Catholics, not for the Orthodox, and that I'd be leaving soon after the baptism. I had a "Belgian Bible" to give him, which is in the Orthodox Synodal translation, which he accepted, and they left us alone. I performed the baptism before leaving. Since then, Holy Family Parish exists in Comsomolsk.

- **Celebrating Fr Myron's 80th Birthday--Wishing You Peace** by Ted Lewis

I wish peace and serenity to you Fr Myron. I think back, now 20 years, and the manner in which our paths crossed. It all began sitting across from Fr Matt McGinnes in his office and he handing me a copy of the *Vladivostok Sunrise*. My heart was in right praise at that exchange of information and God's providence answered my longing in ways unimagined. My friendship, should I say, our friendship, Mona, my wife's and my friendship, with you and Fr Dan and the Mary Mother of God Mission Society family is a treasure and we celebrate your birthday with Masses, Adoration hours, and works of Mercy.

Much love, Ted and Mona Lewis."

Ted Lewis and his associates filmed and produced our two mission videos. These professional videos have helped spread awareness of the mission in countless miraculous ways. Our videos are aired on EWTN regularly and are posted on You Tube. We are deeply grateful to Ted, his family, and associates for their sacrifice, love and dedication, and expertise in their fields,

to bring our mission to the world through media. God bless you, Ted!



- February 15 was the Lunar New Year, a big, big feast for China and Vietnam. Our Vietnamese parishioners also gathered to celebrate after the 8:30 pm Sunday Mass in Vietnam. Happy New Year, everybody!

How to Communicate with Us

Internet

Russian language: www.catholic.vladivostok.ru
www.catholicvl.ru

English language: www.vladmission.org

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

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The color theme of this issue is from the ribbon of Fr Myron's City of Vladivostok award on Page 1.

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

Lenten Project?

Parishioners in Nakhodka are still using temporary stack chairs for Mass. Pews are estimated to cost about \$500 each. **Would you like to donate for pews?**

<http://vladmission.org/get-involved/donate/>



Stack chairs on the new floor in Nakhodka

Baby Talk

From the Women's Support Centers



“What if my mom didn't want me?”
[Eve August 27, 2020]

A Lenten Reflection:

Persecution for Being a Follower of Christ

By Seminarian Elia Gill, C.J.D., Pakistan

When the word persecution comes into our mind, the first things which strike our minds are killing, rejection, hatred, mocking, and taunting. So, at the very beginning, we must know we are going to face these things. Jesus never taught that He was going to be a king like the earthly kings, those who have worldly power, money, and fame. But, rather, it is written, “Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Mt 16:21).

So, if we have decided to follow Jesus Christ, the first thing which we have to understand is that we will be persecuted and rejected as our master Lord Jesus Christ was rejected and persecuted. The way to eternal life is surely not easy to follow. We have been taught to love

our enemies and people who persecute us and forgive them for the hatred they keep in their hearts for us. It is written “But I say to you, love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you” (Mt 5:44). Sometimes it becomes very hard to bear, but we have to be focused and always remember that we are the followers of Christ the Crucified.



Brother Elia

Christian face these persecutions in our daily lives. Sometimes it is from our family or relatives or friends! It is hard to digest the sad realities of the present day that there are many people who are persecuted or rejected by their loved ones, but they have peace of heart in their lives that this persecution and hatred for the sake of being the follower of Christ will not disappoint them. We know deep in our hearts whom we are following and that after this persecution he is going to make us His heirs, and we will remain with him in the paradise where there is no hatred and persecution. “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice! And be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Mt 5:11-12).

Now we have to choose for ourselves which path we want to follow, the one which has hatred, rejection, and persecution but in the end will lead us to the eternal life, or the path which has fame, money, and enjoyment but leads us to eternal disappointment.

Opportunities

♥ Most of our **Vladivostok novices** come from countries with much warmer climates. Thus, they arrive unprepared for the bitter cold and the icy streets. Our departing novices usually leave behind their winter coats, scarves, and snow boots for the next class. But when winter comes, we still need to supplement the hand-me-downs. We also provide habits for these young men. In 2020, \$2,051 covered the clothing needs for all our novices. Can you help?



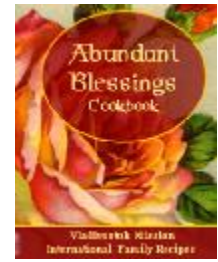
♥ Our **Indonesian seminarians** are real go-getters! Not only have they cleared land for their own community, they have also built temporary buildings and started their own farming and livestock enterprises. They provide much of their own food and sell the rest. However, they still need help covering other **groceries, their medical and dental care, clothing, and incidentals.** That comes to almost \$2,700 a year per person. If you would like a glimpse of some of our seminarians in Indonesia and what they have accomplished, you can view them on Br Desideratus' heart rendering music video. The featured song, *To Eternity*, is written by Fr Yohanes CJD and accompanied by Fr Yakobus Hubertus CJD. It is a deeply moving melody about discernment to the priesthood. Here is the link to the video. <https://youtu.be/IWjXsuG7X4U>

♥ Fr Myron just celebrated his 80th birthday and Fr Dan will celebrate his 70th birthday March 5th! We've set up a **Priests' Medical and Retirement Fund.** (Not that either of them plan on slowing down anytime soon!) 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 for responding to our call to help us keep the **Women's Centers** open. Well over 3000 babies have been saved from abortion since our 6 centers first opened, men and women are counseled in Natural Family Planning and how to care for their children, mothers and babies are provided food, vitamins and clothing for healthy beginnings. Mothers and fathers receive important help

through Rachel's Vineyard for post abortion trauma and stress. Each of our six women's centers cost an average of \$800 per month to keep open. Costs fluctuate with the number of visitors who come to the centers each month. Thank you for your support!

♥ Order our beautiful ***Abundant Blessings Cookbook!*** Receive a FREE copy (up to \$14 value) of one of our **Vladivostok Ecumenical Easter Concert CDs** with your purchase of our cookbook while supplies last. Beginners to seasoned chefs will savor 494 local and international recipes from our priests, seminarians and mission families. 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. Order through our online store or email our mission office, usoffice@vladmission.org



♥ If you are looking for an inexpensive, truly unique gift for a Catholic friend or even for yourself, consider one of our hand-crafted rosary cases made from priests' vestments. Some with simple designs and some with brocaded fabric, all are one-of-a-kind artworks designed to fit your rosary or pyx. Check out our **online store** <https://www.store.vladmission.org/rosary-holder>

29 Years Ago—from Vladivostok Sunrise #2:

At Last--Vladivostok!

by Brother Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

We're here! Our flight from San Francisco stopped in Khabarovsk on February 10, where the temperature was -8F! We could not leave for Vladivostok until 6:00 pm the next day. Hotel rooms for foreigners cost \$113 (more than most Russians make in one year) so we spent the night at the Khabarovsk airport. After a short flight to Vladivostok, we were met at the airport by Andrei Popok the chairman of the Vladivostok Catholic Community, Alexei Kurochkin the driver, and Andrei Jarygin an interpreter. They drove us to an apartment which they had found for us that same day. The temperature was milder than in Khabarovsk, +34F when we arrived. At our apartment we were greeted by more members of the community with their spouses and children where they had prepared a delicious supper for us. Our apartment has an odd collection of chairs, stools, a very small table and even a few plates and pans and kitchen utensils. There is no refrigerator, so we keep food outside on the balcony. We have plenty of heat from hot water radiators. We needed to pay \$400 rent for our apartment for the year--an immense fortune by Russian standards--apartments are scarce!

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157th ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS	
Fr Myron's 80 th Birthday	Page 1
News Notes	Page 4
Baby Talk	Page 6
Lenten Reflection	Page 6
Opportunities	Page 7
29 Years ago	Page 7
Development Desk	Page 8

From the development desk...

And Happy 70th Birthday to Fr Dan!

Dear Friends, Anyone who knows Fr Daniel Maurer, knows what a joyful and engaging story teller he is and he has nearly a permanent smile on his face!



Fr Daniel Maurer, CJD and Fr Inocencius Hetu CJD in Surabaya, Indonesia

Fr Dan was born on March 7, 1951, and raised by his parents in western Michigan. He has a twin brother and an older brother. He graduated from high school at Our Lady of the Lake Seminary, Syracuse, IN in 1969; received a B.A. from Michigan State University in East Asian Studies in 1973; and an M. Div. from the Jesuit Weston School of

Theology in Cambridge, MA in 1983. He did further studies in biblical theology and Church history at the Pontifical University of Santiago, Chile in 1986-87 and at St Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, CA in 1989-90. He was a member of the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption from 1983-1988. Fr Daniel has worked in

Catholic high schools and parishes in Chicago, Mexico City, Guam, and Modesto, CA.

In 1988 Fr Dan joined the new religious community of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord (CJD) being formed by Fr Myron Effing. It was to further that project that they went to Russia in February 1992 to be part of the rebirth of the Roman Catholic Church in Vladivostok, Russia

In Russia, Fr Dan has worked as associate pastor of Most Holy Mother of God Catholic Parish, and is Director and President of St Augustine Liturgical Music Society, the mission's sacred music programs. Fr Dan is co-founder of the of Canons Regular of Jesus The Lord (CJD), serves as Assistant Novice Master and a member



of the General Council of the order. He is Chief Financial Officer of Mary Mother of God Mission Society.

We wish you a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY Fr Dan!
 God bless you. Vicky Trevillyan, Mission Coordinator