



Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Sixty One September, 2021

My Time in Chita

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

On March 9, 1997, there was going to be a total eclipse of the sun in Asia where the sun's shadow would magically follow the Trans-Siberian railroad for many miles across Asian Russia. The temptation was too much for me, an astronomer, especially since the path of totality would begin near Chita (Chitáh) in Zabaykalsky Krai, a city with a big historical connection with Vladivostok-- The original Trans-Siberian railroad went from Vladivostok to Harbin, China, and then to Chita, across Manchuria. Only later was the Trans-Siberian completed around China, avoiding Manchuria altogether. So I wanted to go to Chita to see if there were Catholics there, and what historical connections there might be to Vladivostok. I had not heard that any other priest had been there yet.

When I took the train, I was amazed how cold it was as the train went around the north of China. Arriving in Chita I found a hotel room and began inquiring about Catholics. I found out that the old Catholic church was still in existence, but was being used as the Orthodox church. Of course, that would be a good place to start looking for Catholics. When I arrived at the church I was shocked to see that they had just had a fire in the old wooden church, so it was roofless and full of ashes and damaged items.

I learned that the Orthodox bishop was at home next door, so I presented myself, and he said, "We've got Hare Krishnas, and now we have to have Catholics, too!" I made a pretty quick exit, but stopped again to look at the damaged church. Suddenly two big Cossacks grabbed me and threw me off the property! I continued to inquire about Catholics in other parts of the city, but found none.

Next morning, I said Mass in the Hotel and hoped to see the eclipse. Unfortunately, the sky was overcast but fairly windless, so there would be no hope of seeing the eclipse in Chita. I thought that if I get on the train going East, I might outrun the clouds, so I took the next train going East. Hallelujah, when the time for the eclipse was

near, the sky was clear, so I got off in the snow at the next station stop. I didn't know where I was! It turned out that the locals didn't know that there was going to be an eclipse, so I announced it to anyone who would listen and we gathered near the tracks to watch the show. It was fantastic, and it grew very dark in the clear Siberian air. Stars became visible, and even Comet Hale-Bopp was visible.

After the amazing event, I asked when the next passenger train going East would stop, so that I could return to Vladivostok. "Tomorrow on the same train you arrived on." Where was I going to spend the night?? One of the local men who watched the eclipse with me invited me to stay with him at home for the night. I could sleep on the couch. The next day I was ashamed that I didn't have anything to give him as a "thanks" but an American cigar.

The old Catholic church was repaired by the Orthodox, and is again an Orthodox church today. The Divine Word Missionaries now have Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Parish in Chita.



An angel from the old Chita Catholic church. The angel is in the Chita city archive.

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us



The old Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic church, built in 1898 with Orthodox roof and cupolas.



The old church with new roof and siding today (Smithsonian Collection)



Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Chita today

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



Children outside the oceanarium on Russian Island.

Children's Conference on Russian Island

By Sr. Faustina Marie Goedken, CJD

Eighteen children from the cities of Blagoveshchensk and Svobodni, Russia, traveled 26 hours by train to attend summer activities hosted on Russian Island, Vladivostok by our CJD sisters on July 14-20, 2021. Two Dominican sisters and a Society of the Divine Word (SVD) brother chaperoned the kids on the train and led the activities, assisted by Deacon Vicky Samuel, CJD and our Sisters in Jesus the Lord. Children from our parish in Vladivostok joined us as we focused on the parables of Jesus. Each day consisted of morning and evening prayers, morning exercise, a catechism lesson, an afternoon outing, and an evening of fun and games. The children swam in the nearby bay, saw a dolphin show at the oceanarium, and got to walk inside an old submarine. Many of the children had only attended Mass in a former apartment converted into a chapel, so they were impressed by the sacred beauty of Most Holy Mother of God Catholic church, where they attended Mass three times during the week. The children also had the blessing of attending Mass on Russian Island when Fr Myron came one day to celebrate the Eucharist.

The children got to be the first to use the newly-renovated conference room, kitchen, and dining room at the convent. Right up to the day the children arrived, doors and sinks were being installed, cement was cleaned from the windows, and construction materials were carried away. The conference room was used daily for catechesis, prayers, and meals. Breakfast and supper were prepared in the kitchen. Children helped wash dishes, peel potatoes, and fill tea cups. During the event, the dining



Children play a name-learning game.

room was used as the sleeping area for the boys, as renovations continue on the guest rooms on the second floor. The future chapel of St Paula, also awaiting renovation, was used as the sleeping area for the girls.

The children formed close bonds during the week. When it came time to say good-bye at the train station, older children exchanged contact information and shed many tears. We thank God for all the graces poured out during the program, and we pray that the fruits may continue to grow and multiply in the hearts of the children who came.



Fr Myron says Mass in the newly-renovated conference room on Russian Island.

News Notes

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

- July 2 was the important day for four of our novices in Vladivostok who took **simple vows** on that day. These are four Vietnamese brothers who joined us in early 2020, not knowing what a difficult year it would be, and what a packed house we would have, since the group of novices from before them were not able to leave us for their seminaries because of the cancelled flights and lack of visas. Even now three of the newly professed have elected to stay here until Fr Mark is able to arrive from Saigon, in order to help care for the Vietnamese parishioners.

Brother Vincent Pham is regularly studying his theology courses on-line, but is available on weekends. Brothers John Bui and Joseph Tran (with the Russian name “Sasha”) will begin their Philosophy studies in the Fall in the Philippines (if the Philippines opens), and so will Brother Joseph Tran Ngoc (with the Russian name “Nicolai”).

It is interesting that Vietnamese are usually baptized with the Christian name of their parish, so there are many “Josephs” and “Johns” and “Vincent” and “Marias”. There are also fewer family names than in the West, so keeping track of our brothers by name has been a challenge!

Congratulations, Brothers on your religious profession!

From the Women’s Support Centers

“Sveta” came to us when her situation was very complicated. Her “boyfriend” wasn’t working, but a baby girl was born. They lived in terrible circumstances in an old broken down house where there were no utilities and no income either. She didn’t have relatives or friends to help her. Her boyfriend started to drink more often and leave her home alone with her child. Then the owner of the house threw them out, and Sveta went to live with her “mother-in-law”. The father was usually gone with his friends and led a debauched life. The “mother-in-law” began to complain about Sveta to her son who started to abuse her. The poor woman often came to us in tears or called us crying. When the baby was a year old, Sveta left the house and started to look for a job. The father was jailed for hooliganism. But recently Sveta visited us, and it was wonderful to see that things were going well for her. She had met a serious man with whom they formed a family. The child goes to kindergarten and lives without all the commotion and fights. I suggested she could look in our closet to take what things she might need, but she refused, again saying that everything was okay with her now. Such stories always give us joy, and we are grateful to God that we have a Women’s Support Center where needy women can find help. We are always hearing from women about their gratitude to our sponsors and helpers.



Brothers Dominic, Joseph, Vincent, and John Baptist—Those are their baptismal names!



Brother Dominic cutting weeds in Vietnam

- With many good vocations from Vietnam, some of whom would like to stay and work in Vietnam, we have decided to see if we can open a **house in Vietnam**. That would also help us find Vietnamese vocations for working with the many Vietnamese parishioners in the various cities of Russia! Fr Luis Van Dam, C.J.D., formerly working in Las Vegas, has volunteered to be the pioneer of this project. Bro Dominic Kien, C.J.D., [see photo] who has finished the seminary and is waiting for ordination will join him. Other members of the house for now will be seminarians who are studying in the seminary in Vietnam. If God wants it, it will happen!



- Another piece of good news: The first five of the **stained glass windows for the Church of Our Lady of the Pacific** were installed on June the 24th! Here is St Nicolas. So we can proceed to making the next ones. They were designed by our Brother Philip Le, C.J.D., and produced by a company here in Vladivostok. They are

a mix of traditional design and modern, which is a perfect fit for the church, as it also is a mix of two styles—traditional shape, but modern materials. By the way, there are still some unfunded windows in case you are interested to fund one!

- Thanks to the **Lynch Family Foundation**, we have a new on-line printer and copier! We use a lot of copies for all our concerts, evangelization programs, parish bulletins, and thank-you letters. Our old printer was so worn out that the company who maintained it said that there was no life left in the old machine! The old Ricoh did such a great job, we bought a Ricoh again. Thanks, Mr Lynch!



The new printer--smaller in size but more powerful. Our parish trustee Victor Anisimov manages the machine for us.

• A great benefactor of Mary Mother of God Mission Society, **Mr Donald Lynch** of North Carolina died on June 16, 2021. His list of support for us is very long! He helped us with fire safety equipment for the church and rectory, he put a new stainless steel roof on our church, he bought us a copy machine which we totally used up and then bought us a second one. He bought our elevator and our clothes dryer. He bought complete laundry equipment for an orphanage here in Vladivostok. He bought a minivan for our novices which is still in use every day. He gave several donations which significantly covered our seminarians' tuition at the university and their living expenses. He sponsored seminars for the Women's Support Centers, WSC pro-life publications, and an ultrasound machine. He was a blessing to many, many people on all the continents of the world. I first met Mr Lynch when he took me to the airport after my weekend assignment at his parish in North Carolina. Eternal rest grant to him, O Lord! "Well done, good and faithful servant!"



• Taking their first example from our Sisters in Jesus the Lord in Vladivostok, our **Indonesian Sisters in Jesus the Lord** continue to grow. Six sisters recently took their first vows in their chapel near Jakarta, with the icon of Our Lady of Vladivostok before them. Sr Marthina Tongli, C.J.D., Provincial Superior, is standing in the center. The sisters of the Province of St Monica are already working in four dioceses. They have an orphanage, run catechetical programs in parishes, work in hospitals.

• It is the custom in Russia that on **Trinity Sunday** people bring green branches to church. It is a symbol that



spring has come and that Divine Providence has again given us what we need. Here is Deacon Vicky Samuel, C.J.D. with his green branches. Brother Vicky is scheduled for ordination to the priesthood on August 22, after the editing of this issue of the Sunrise.

How to Communicate with us

To make a donation or order a Mass using your money card, go here:

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

To watch our Russian Sunday mass, (8:00 pm Central Time Saturdays) go here: [facebook.com/parishvvo](https://www.facebook.com/parishvvo)

Internet

English language: www.vladmission.org

Russian language: www.catholicvl.ru

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

Office in Russia: Phone +7-423-226-9614

Fr Myron: myron.effing@gmail.com

Fr Daniel: vladcanonsregular@gmail.com

Office in California: Phone and FAX: +1-209-408-

0728 Mary Mother of God Mission Society

1736 Milestone Cir

Modesto CA 95357

usoffice@vladmission.org

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The color theme of this issue is from the St Nicolas stained glass window of Our Lady of the Pacific Church in Nakhodka. See page 4.

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To watch our Russian Sunday mass, (8:00 pm Central Time Saturdays) go here: [facebook.com/parishvvo](https://www.facebook.com/parishvvo)



Fr Dan, Deacon Kline and Mrs Kline

My One Story

In the fall of 2012 my wife and I had the opportunity to check-off one of the items on her "Bucket List"--a trip to China to see the Great Wall and the Terra Cotta warriors. To make it more interesting we decided to cruise there, so we boarded a ship in Alaska and sailed across the northern Pacific stopping at a number of port cities before arriving in Beijing. Vivian likes to tell people that we took the proverbial slow boat to China.

One of the ports we visited was Vladivostok, Russia. The cruise line did not offer a wide range of excursions there but we saw that one went to a newly built Orthodox Seminary and to THE Roman Catholic Church. Being a deacon for 36 years at that time and thus in the God business, so to speak, they both sounded interesting.

Well, the Seminary was very impressive, but THE Catholic Church was amazing. We were met at the front door by Fr Dan Maurer (Fr Myron was in the US, I believe) and for the next hour and a half to two hours the 25 or so people on the tour were amazed and enthralled by the story of Mary Mother of God Church and its rebirth--rebuilt physically but more importantly spiritually.

I was so impressed by the work of these two men and their associates over the years that as soon as we returned I contacted the Mission Office and asked how I could be of help. And I have been trying to help this ministry in any way that I can for the past nine years. I have spoken a number of times to raise awareness and financing for the Mission and hope to be able to do so again shortly when the Covid restrictions are lifted.

My long-term goal always has been to return to visit Mary Mother of God Parish, but that has not been possible. I continue to hope and pray that it will happen some day.

--Deacon Patrick Kline

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Society in your Will.**

Opportunities

♥ **Fr Myron** will be in the USA in October and November speaking during weekend masses about our mission. If you are near one of his stops, we hope you will come and say, "Hello!"

10/10	St Alphonsus	Chicago, IL
10/17	St Matthew	Mt Vernon, IN
10/24	Holy Redeemer	Evansville, IN
10/30	St Phillip	Mt Vernon, IN
11/6	to be announced	
11/14	Holy Spirit	Crown Point, IN

♥ We have a wonderful network of speakers in the USA who assist Fr Myron and Fr Dan by speaking at parishes about our mission during masses. If you are a priest, deacon or lay person and would like to join our speakers' bureau next year, please contact the mission office. We will be very grateful for your help! Bilingual in Spanish is especially helpful, but not necessary. We provide a written presentation, if you need. Here are some parishes and locations where our speakers will be presenting the mission this fall if you wish to visit with them.

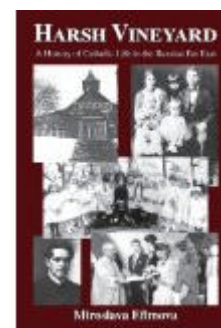
9/12	Annunciation	Port Austin, MI	Fr D. Grandon
9/12	St Isadore	Hollandale, WI	Fr S. Bauer
9/12	Assumption	Fairport, NY	Dcn. P. Kline
9/12	Perpetual Help	Caseville, MI	Fr D. Grandon
9/12	Corpus Christi	Evansville, IN	Mrs Wassmer



♥ **The CJD community in Maumere, Indonesia,** continues to grow. Right now, the community includes more than 60 aspirants,

postulants, seminarians, deacons, and priests. Their own gardens and farm animals supply much of their food. Nonetheless, they still need to buy fish, some produce, oil, rice, and other staples. An average month's food costs for the *entire* community add up to about \$974, which is an incredible bargain by anyone's standards.

♥ **Harsh Vineyard** --a book about the history of the Roman Catholic Church of the Russian Far East, up to and including the time of Fr Myron's arrival, is available from our office or online store, www.store.vladmission.org **Harsh Vineyard** was written by our church historian, the late Miroslava Efimova. For many years Mrs Efimova worked to collect any information from the archives in St Petersburg, Moscow, Minsk, Warsaw, Lublin, Krakov, Khabarovsk, Blagoveschensk and Vladivostok connected with the activities of the Vladivostok Diocese. She used the historical documents and photos that she found to write **Harsh Vineyard**. Translated from Russian to English by Geraldine Kelley. Cost is \$16, plus \$3.99 Shipping and handling



♥ Want to schedule a fun activity and fundraiser for our mission this fall? Ask your pastor if you may host a Russian Icon sale after masses at your parish. The mission office provides all the merchandise needed. Sell Russian and Greek icons and gifts, statues and other religious goods for Advent and Christmas and help the mission! Please contact Vicky or Jessica 209-408-0728 or usoffice@vladmission.org for details.

♥ **We are asking for your stories.** Over the years, thousands of people have come to Vladivostok and joined us in prayer and various activities. Most leave with dozens of stories, including a few that were especially eye-opening or made deep impressions. If you could encapsulate for us just one especially meaningful story about your visit, what would it be? Tell us in no more than 350 words and we might publish it in a future *Sunrise*.

♥ For a special girl in your life, consider giving one of our sets of **matryoshka (little mother) dolls** from our online store. www.store.vladmission.org These nested dolls are all delicately hand-painted. Sets come in different sizes and some include wood-burned details. No two sets are exactly alike and each collection would make a truly unique gift. You can contact the mission office for greater selection. usoffice@vladmission.org



Please consider our missionaries when you wish to request **Masses for your loved ones:** They could be celebrated by our priests in the order of **Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord**. You are giving great support to our priests and mission. Unless otherwise noted, we will gratefully send Mass cards to the originator of the requests. Suggested stipend is \$15.00.

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Mary Mother of God Mission Society
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Modesto CA 95357-0835

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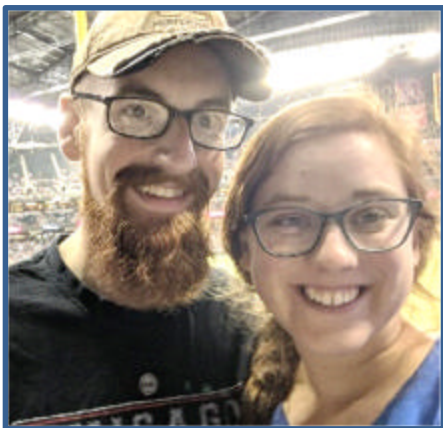
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From the development desk...

Dear Friends,

We've been blessed with a dynamic duo!

Please meet Kyle and Ivy. In June I received a call from Kyle inquiring about **sister parish** activities for their parish of **St Henry in Buckeye, AZ**. When still a seminarian, their pastor, Fr William Kosco, met Fr Myron. His parish has now been with us for about 10 years. Fr Kosco suggested to newly married Kyle and Ivy that they might get involved with our Russia mission. Kyle and Ivy are excited to be part of bringing awareness of our "universal church" around the world and how we are all of one family. Even before I could email them information,



Kyle and Ivy were off and running full speed ahead! They scheduled a meet and greet after masses in July to acquaint parishioners with the mission. They used a recipe for Russian tea cakes from our mission cookbook,

Abundant Blessings and handed them out with our literature.

Here's what Kyle, wrote: "We were set up outside for three English Masses and two Spanish Masses. We don't speak Spanish, but we shouted "Galletas gratis!" and then gave parishioners the Spanish pamphlets with the cookies. While handing out cookies, we kept up a monologue about the seven women's centers, the over 3000 babies saved, feeding the poor, sending seminarians to the US, etc. A lot of people seemed interested. We handed out at least 300 cookies!"

"We recruited one of the altar servers who speaks Spanish to help up spread the word and help out with future events. For August, we're planning on doing an hour of Eucharistic Adoration followed by a rosary to pray for the Church in the Far East (I want to call it 'Vladoration', but Ivy won't let me. -K). We're not sure yet what we'll do for September and October, but on November 7 there is going to be a Christmas gift sale at the Church, and we got permission to set up a booth and sell Russian icons."

Thank you Fr Kosco, Kyle and Ivy! Keep up the great work! God bless you.

Vicky Trevillyan, Mission Coordinator
usoffice@vladmission.org; 209-408-0728