



# Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Sixty Seven September, 2022

## Lesozavodsk Children's Retreat 2022



*Fr Vicky and friends enjoyed the annual retreat.*

*Kids making bread on the retreat, with Brother Lazar Iqbal, C.J.D.*



At last we've had the week's retreat for the children of Visitation Parish in Lesozavodsk and their friends, after two years of Covid!. These are super-poor kids from a depressed city, mostly children of single mothers— Dads have moved away to look for work. Moms and kids can't leave the city because there is no one to buy their apartments if they leave, so they would have no funds. Maybe you remember that it is in Lesozavodsk that our parish feeds 70 kids every Saturday, else they would be hungry with no free meal in school which they get on school days. Fr Vicky Samuel, C.J.D., from Pakistan was in charge of the retreat program. I know that our novices were a big hit with the kids. One novice is great at basketball, another is great at karate, and another has a magic show that the kids love. Of course, our sisters were there, too, especially to help the girls.

We would like to be of greater service in Lesozavodsk, but that is waiting for larger facilities, and a resident priest and sisters. An apartment next to ours is now for sale. We would dearly love to buy it to expand the Women's Support Center which is quite active all the time, and needs more space for a used clothing exchange.

The second event this summer for the Catholic kids of Lesozavodsk is their annual visit to Vladivostok where they will visit the parish, go to the circus, see the oceanarium, and ride the train for the first time in their lives. Those will be lifetime memories, and they will get to see their novice friends again.

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us

# A Special Historical Moment

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



I was so surprised when a young artist, Alexander Knelnitsky, brought us a **painting** that he made for his graduation from art school here in Vladivostok. The teacher's assignment was to pick a building in Vladivostok, and paint an important event in the history of that building. He picked our church, and now brought us the painting as a gift! The event he painted was the 1921 dismantling of the scaffolding that had surrounded the church for years, waiting for funds and personnel to finish it. It was finished (except for the steeples) by architect and WWI German prisoner of war Rolf Geiling, who left a secret letter among the bricks of one of the towers which we found when we repaired the church roof! Here is a copy of the painting! It is a wonderful addition to our collection.

“And in fact the church delighted the parishioners with an architectural perfection that is characteristic of basilicas – it had three naves, the middle one much higher than the others and with a separate roof. Groups of snow-white columns, decorated with capitals with a vine pattern, and the very beautiful lancet windows separated by narrow spaces – all lent to the solemnity and fine appearance of the interior. At the center, near the first group of columns, was the ambo, and at the altar stood a snow-white marble Crucifix, which was brought to the new church from the house of prayer.” --Miroslava Efimova

*Rolf Geiling showing the plans to Bishop Slivovsky and Fr George Jurkewicz, the last pastor, with Chinese workers busy in the background. Small crosses had been placed where the steeples should be, as the parish was out of funds.*

*Here is an actual photo of the church in scaffolds from about 2010 to 2021. The white building below is the Bishop's house, and also the shed for the horses to the left. The house is still there. I remember the shed, which burned down soon after we priests arrived in 1992.*



## Bishop Slivovsky's Personal Items

*By Tatyana Shaposhnikova, Parish Archivist*

In April more things arrived at our parish from the Stanko-Ivniitsky family in Tomsk, Siberia. The main item was the large trunk where the personal property of Bishop Karol Slivovsky had been kept in their apartment for those many years.

In her memoirs Regina Stanko (1922-2016) wrote about their family life, about the repression of the 1930's, about the Vladivostok Cathedral and parishioners, about Bishop Slivovsky and his death, and about the trunk and all the items in it which was given to her father, Stanislav Stanko, after the bishop's death and which was kept by the family all those years.



*Inspecting the items that had arrived from Tomsk.*

Here are a few quotations from her memoirs: "When the Bishop was exiled from Vladivostok to Sedanka, he was quartered in a home where a parishioner, Kasimira Piotrovsky lived. She took care of him until his death in 1933. When she then left for Poland it was tragic for our family even until today because when she left she decided not to take anything along. She put everything in the wooden trunk which had a metal sheath, The trunk was 51 inches by 28 by 22 and it stood until recently in our apartment in Tomsk.

"My father took it upon himself to save the bishop's things. He brought what he could to our home which was 2/3 of a mile from the bishop's house—A dining buffet, different kinds of dishes, an old typewriter with Latin

letters, and the trunk with stuff inside. But in 1938 the most terrible thing happened to us, but not the last. In



*A "purse" with the Bishop's initials which came in the box.*

June they arrested my father. They trashed our apartment and threw everything around with papers all over the floor and pictures pulled out of our photo albums. The trunk was opened, though it was always locked with a key and the key hidden. My brother and I never saw what was in the trunk because it was never opened, since what was inside belonged to someone else. But now the stuff from the trunk was also cast around the floor. Twenty two things were taken to KGB headquarters, some of which were returned and currently located at the Catholic parish, but some were never returned."

In that September the family was exiled beyond the bounds of the Russian Far East. Regina says, "They gave us 10 days to gather our things and leave. We put lots of things into the big trunk to save them. Our own stuff we put in a smaller trunk that had been abandoned to the shed. Every trunk and box had to be carefully wrapped and addressed in a hurry."

The freight made its way to Tomsk in the cold weather on the railroad to the place where the family would live. Regina's brother did the receiving and unpacking. Dressed just in a fleece jacket and boots, he froze his toes and was ill for a long time, but the boxes and trunks arrived safely. In 1939 they freed Stanislav Stanko, and he joined the family in Tomsk. But in 1940 Regina's brother was killed in the Finnish War, and her mother, having such sorrow, became blind. In the 1950's they brought the trunk with them to a newer apartment.

Regina says, “Our family guarded the bishop’s things for many years, and the big metal-covered trunk which still today is located in our apartment. There were times when those silver items from the trunk could have bought a lot of food. But neither momma nor I ever took those things.”

In 2002 Regina Stanko gave the personal items of Bishop Slivovsky to the Vladivostok Parish. And this year the parish received the trunk which held the personal items of the Bishop, and Regina Stanko’s daughter, Margarita, sent along a package of several items belonging to the bishop or to the Stanko family. Now these items are located on display in the Church of the Most Holy Mother of God.

For our parish these things are valuable, not just because they touched the hands of Blessed Karol Slivovsky, but they also give us a chance to touch the living history of those terrible times.



*The Bishop’s smaller items on display in the Church*

## **The Theme of the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference**

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

By the time you read this, we will have had the 24th annual Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference, but the report will have to be in the next issue of *Sunrise*. I proposed the theme of the Conference: “And the Word was made Flesh” (John 1:14) which we say every day as part of the Angelus Prayer. It is a topic that interests me since I studied Hebrew in the seminary. “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.” (Genesis 1:2) “And God said, “Let there be light!” (Genesis 1:3) So first there was the “word” and then “light”. Without light, the world which was already made, was simply invisible to the eye. Without the Word, everything is unintelligible to the mind. Animals don’t have the word, so their lives are unintelligible to them. They live from day to day, not understanding anything. God decided to make man in his own image, i.e. He decided to make man with the word like himself, because everything is intelligible to God. I used to think that our likeness to God would be our deathlessness, but we missed out on this one when Cain killed Abel. After Adam and Eve’s sin, their word put them in shock at what had happened. They were shocked at their utter hopelessness. Animals don’t react that way. Mostly Adam and Eve lived by denial of their situation. They were ashamed that they disappointed the God who made them. The wreck of their situation was all around them and their children.

Most ancient cultures were great at memorizing stories and retelling the past events of their peoples, but this oral tradition was subject to error, revision, and forgetfulness. There had to be another way. Just exactly where the great event happened, we don’t know. But the word became “flesh” when writing was invented. The written word on

clay tablets and stone monuments outlasted the living word, and so was a more permanent witness to people’s words. It provided a “group memory” that bore witness beyond the lives of people. So it was in this context that the “word” became “flesh” when the Word of God was written by Him on the stone tablets given to Moses for lasting memory, and placed in the arc of the Covenant to be read once a year publicly. What a great invention! The word is no longer just vanishing sound in the air, but now symbols scratched or written in a lasting substance! I remember as a child being fascinated by how beautiful music could come from scratches on black disks! Earlier, texts had to be read by a human, but now machines read them for us! Machines even translate for us!

That was the context when the covenant was made between God and Israel. Not just ten commandments but a whole contract between God and His people, including the terms and obligations of each side, and the blessing and punishments that would ensue if the covenant were kept or violated. Both sides agreed to the terms when the covenant was written in stone and ratified by the blood of a sacrifice, as was the custom in those days. Today we write our signature on contracts.

For us today, the best part of the Mosaic Covenant is the “concretization” of the moral law in the Ten Commandments. Whereas everybody can have opinions and “words” about what is right and wrong, the Ten Commandments are written in stone for all to read, like it or not. What a great breakthrough! Concrete words from the God who made the universe for all of us to read! Like it or not. But those tablets disappeared when the

Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem in 587 B.C. So we were back to your opinion and mine. The situation is will illustrated by the fights between the Pharisees and the Sadducees at the time of Jesus. Unfortunately, even words in stone can be destroyed, as can words on paper be burned, and memories on chips can be erased. Can the word ever be permanent?

Relief came when God sent his prophets to Israel, at least for the Israelites who could hear the word of God in this way, in which God showed his concern and love for Israel, if not for all mankind. Amos was the first writing prophet. Others followed, and we can read their translated words in Bibles today.

## News Notes

- With the end of the Covid epidemic in sight, our **seminarians** are returning to their seminaries. Except in Indonesia they had been attending classes by Zoom! In September we will have three seminarians studying in the Philippines in English. Seven in Vietnam studying in Vietnamese. Six seminarian novices studying Russian in Vladivostok. Six seminarians preparing for deacon ordination in America, two preparing for priesthood in Indonesia, two in Kazakhstan, one in the Philippines. And we have even more seminarians at various stages in Indonesia. Thanks, benefactors for your support of their studies, and your prayers for their spirituality!
- We've made the decision to invite six **new novice seminarians** to our community in Russia—Three Vietnamese, two Filipinos, and one Indian. Their novitiate will begin in October. The current six novices will finish their novitiate on February 2, 2023. Now that Covid is hopefully behind us, we can get on with our usual schedules. We will continue to say the votive mass for vocations every green Monday. You can join us in that prayer.
- Deacon **Marcus David**, C.J.D. is home on vacation in Pakistan, but he took time to teach catechism at his home parish. Here he is shown giving an explanation.



But God came to our rescue by taking yet another step: The Word was made Flesh! And this flesh was given eternal life which will never pass away! The flesh of Jesus is a permanent covenant between God and a man, between God and mankind. God has made a unity between His Word which became flesh and us who belong to Him. This is the great theme of the Gospel according to John. Jesus is the Word of God made Flesh, and He is everything God wanted to tell us, a permanent memory in flesh for all time and eternity. We should learn from Him, we should get to know Him, we should prepare to be with Him forever—A Word that does not pass away. He is the standard for all and for all times, like it or not.

## Baby Talk

From the Women's Support Centers



**"I thought I saw a puddy tat...!"**

[Ilia June 21 2021]

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

## From the Women's Support Centers

A 21 year-old girl came to the Center saying that she got married at 20 and her husband was a good man, but she wanted joy and fun. At her friend's birthday party she met a young man who was active and jolly so she decided to divorce and go with this one. Her mother stopped talking to her after that.

Soon she gave birth to a girl, but the new husband said he wasn't ready for family life and disappeared, leaving her without means for a living and without a place to live. The Social Services Department gave her a room in the orphanage to live there with the baby, and they told her to visit our Women's Support Center.

When she came she was in a deep depression, cried a great deal and suffered a lot. The volunteers gave her material and moral support for a whole year, including food, diapers, and clothing. They helped her apply for child support, and when it came she rented a room with a lady friend which was cheaper for her.

Her life started to come together, but in a year the father of the baby appeared again, and they decided to be a family, but they had no place to live. They decided to have a second child in order to receive the government aid for a second child with which they could buy a room, but in her third month the father announced he was leaving again and left. The girl was again without means of support and no place to live and she once again fell into depression.

This time her sister allowed her to come live with her in her 13 square ft room. She got a job at a bakery, and she took the hard jobs so that no one knew she was pregnant, carrying the heavy bags of ingredients, but she was fired in her eighth month, which was possible because she did not officially work for the bakery but only informally, so she received no compensation.

A boy was born, but after the birth her depression increased, and the hospital staff were rough with her, maybe even because in Russian birth hospitals you have to bring all your needs and the needs of your baby along with you, but she had nothing.

When grandma heard that her daughter again gave birth she took them in, but it means they live in a private home without facilities: No sewer, no water, and they heat by burning wood. Grandma didn't work because she had an aneurism which could erupt at any moment, but now she found work to help support the grandchildren.

Three months after the birth the mom was still in depression, saying that all that time she simply lay with the child and cried. But caring for the children required her to live further. She applied for her child support, but was refused because she didn't have proof of the father's income. So she was again without a way to live, and the social department could have taken her children.

So she again came to our Center to tell her tale, and she was always crying. We gave her moral support, and some financial support, and sent her to our volunteer lawyer.

Our Center is very important in these cases. Our volunteers always pray for our sponsors, and we hope we can continue our work.



● Our Vietnamese parishioners had a special celebration for Fr Myron's 50 anniversary of ordination to the priesthood on May 29. This followed the regular parish celebration and dinner on that day.

● **Every Sunday** in Vladivostok we have three masses: Russian, English, and Vietnamese. The Russian mass is the "high mass", usually with choir and many ministers, and followed by tea or coffee, and it is also attended by Korean parishioners. English mass is mostly attended by Filipino and Indian parishioners who do not speak Russian. Vietnamese mass is the most musical. For some time now, since Fr Sebastian D'Silva, pastor in Nakhodka, suffered a stroke, we have also been saying Sunday Mass in Romanovka (usually on Saturdays).

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## 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:

<https://vk.com/public211190633>.

### Internet

English language: [www.vladmission.org](http://www.vladmission.org)

Russian language: [www.catholicvl.ru](http://www.catholicvl.ru)

Sisters in Jesus the Lord in English: [www.cjd.cc](http://www.cjd.cc)

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

Fr Myron: [myron.effing@gmail.com](mailto:myron.effing@gmail.com)

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[Mary Mother of God Mission Society is listed in the official Catholic Directory under the Diocese of Stockton, CA.](#)

## Opportunities

♥ The Vladivostok parish maintains an emergency fund for parishioners and others who are known to us who are dealing with unexpected and dire situations. Donations of any size to this fund are always welcome. Please note, **“Emergency Fund”** on your check or online donation.

♥ One of the best evangelization programs in Vladivostok is the **music program** created by Fr Dan. Featuring beautiful Christian music and outstanding musicians, the concerts are routinely sold out. Christians and non-Christians alike are moved by the music and return again and again, each time learning more about the Faith and all it offers. Christmas concerts held in the church are being planned now. But printed music is not cheap. Even a donation of \$20 or \$30 can help us purchase music and keep this program going.



*Fr Dan (far right) with some of the music concert musicians*

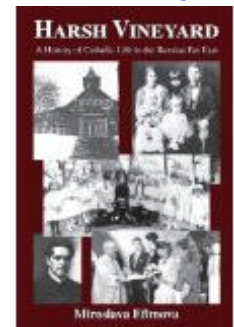
♥ Would your parish or apostolate like to help prepare our **bi-monthly Vladivostok Sunrise newsletter** for mailing?

♥ Christmas Giving Resources! Want to schedule an enjoyable activity and fundraiser for our mission this year? Ask your pastor if you may host a weekend Russian Icon sale after Masses at your parish. ‘Tis the season! The mission office provides all the religious goods needed. **Russian and Greek icons and gifts**, statues, rosaries and other religious goods for all the sacraments while bringing awareness of the Vladivostok Mission to your fellow parishioners. You and your team may also designate where your fundraising efforts go, i.e. Women’s Centers, Adopt a Mother, Seminarian Education, Emergency Fund, General, etc. Please contact Vicky or Jessica 209-408-0728 or [usoffice@vladmission.org](mailto:usoffice@vladmission.org) for details.

♥ As you know, we host novices of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord in Vladivostok each year. Many of them come from countries with much warmer climates. They arrive in Russia without winter coats, hats, mittens, socks, or boots. Usually, the departing novices leave their winter clothing behind for the incoming guys. But this only works so far. **New winter clothes** for one novice can easily add up, so donations of any amount are so helpful.

♥ **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](http://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. Free gift wrap upon request. Cost is \$20.49, (includes \$3.99 S/H)

♥ **Attention, Seafood Fans!** Check out our **Abundant Blessings** cookbook for delicious and easy seafood recipes. Whether it’s Seafood Alfredo, Shrimp with Garlic and Guinness, Shrimp Ceviche, or Jumbo Shells Seafood Fancies, you’re sure to find a seafood recipe to fit your tastes. A great Christmas idea! The cookbook features almost 500 recipes from around the world and sells for only \$33.99 (includes S/H)



Order through our website

[www.vladmission.org/cookbook](http://www.vladmission.org/cookbook) or our store [www.store.vladmission.org](http://www.store.vladmission.org) under Miscellaneous > Kitchen, and help support our seminarians and women’s centers.

♥ Here’s an easy way to help the mission! Share this newsletter with your pastor. Request permission to place a few copies of our bi-monthly **Vladivostok Sunrise newsletter** at your parish.

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## From the development desk...

Dear Friends:  
Peace to you and your families!

Fr Daniel Maurer, CJD, our pastor of Most Holy Mother of God parish in Vladivos-tok, will celebrate his **40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination on September 20<sup>th</sup>**! Congratulations Fr Dan and thank you for your 40 years of priestly service!



Fr Myron Effing, CJD will be *Fr Daniel Maurer, CJD* in the USA soon. There will be a **special reception** held in his home parish of St Joseph's County Parish Evansville, IN for his 50<sup>th</sup> priestly anniversary. Fr Myron will celebrate the 10:30 Mass and speak about our mission. The reception will immediately follow. We invite all of you who can attend to join us in his celebration!

**Date:** Sunday, October 9, 2022  
**Time:** 10:30 Mass with reception immediately following in the school cafeteria  
**Place:** St. Joseph County Parish

**RSVP:** 600 W St Joe Rd., Evansville, IN  
Marilyn Wassmer (Fr Myron's sister)  
812-985-3261, or the mission office  
209-408-0728

Fr Myron will also speak during all weekend Masses at the following parishes during his visit to the USA. We hope you have the opportunity to hear Fr Myron speak and visit with him after the Masses.

- Oct 2 Blessed Sacrament, Oakland City, IN
- Oct 2 SS Peter & Paul, Petersburg, IN
- Oct 9 St Joseph County Parish Evansville, IN
- Oct 16 St Teresa, Campbell, MO
- Oct 16 St Ann, Malden, MO
- Oct 23 St Marie de lac, Ironton, MO
- Oct 30 Sacred Heart, Poplar Bluff, MO

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of our Vladivostok mission. Your help is important to us. If you have any questions regarding our work, please feel free to contact me at the mission office in Modesto, CA.

God bless you and your family.  
Sincerely, Vicky Trevillyan, USA Mission Desk  
[usoffice@vladmission.org](mailto:usoffice@vladmission.org), 209-408-0728