



Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Sixty Eight November, 2022

The 24th Annual Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference

by Vladimir Alekseyev

It's a custom now in our Diocese of St Joseph in Irkutsk to have the annual Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference. After a two year lapse because of Covid, we gathered at the Nativity of Christ Parish in Ussuryrsk in the middle of August. The theme of the Conference this year was from the Gospel of St John, "And the Word Was Made Flesh." The Conference is for young adults.

To help us with the theme we had a special guest. Dr Oleg Voschreshensky, a Russian American missionary, philologist, master of theology, author of courses in Biblical archeology and Christian education. He is the co-author of the textbooks, *Basics of Orthodox Culture*, and *Basics of World Religious Culture*.

The most memorable moments of his talks, according to the participants, were his lectures about Biblical Archeology, his approach to studying the Bible as an historical document, comparisons of the Biblical text with other historical documents, including the texts of other religions, and internal evidence of the facts of the Biblical text. He sure convinced us that the Bible is a most credible collection of documents. The participants also liked the lessons about how to answer the objections of atheists of our day. We also got to know a lot about Christianity from our small group activities when we completed the activities that our professor gave us, delving deeper into the Sacred Text.

It was a symbolic moment when, during the Way of the Cross on the open square in front of the parish, right after the words "There was thunder, the earth shook, and a great rain pounded the dry grass and raised the dust", that we had a great downfall of rain.

The Youth Conference is a time of joint morning and evening prayer, lots of singing, daily mass, and nighttime adoration. But we also enjoyed sporting events, religious movies, our visit to the parish's chief charitable activity, the home for homeless m,en named "Tau", and our talent show. And we made trips to see the city of Ussuryrsk and

spend some time in nature. Of course, the local citizens were surprised to see a group of young people accompanied by nuns in habits. Some even came to our evening prayers. It was interesting that our Conference still had an international flavor in spite of the absence of the American students from "Focus", and it showed up in one of our talent shows. We sang the Marian hymn in various languages: Russian, Belorussian, English, Urdu, Slovak, Italian, and Spanish.

The Conference is a good chance for young Catholics, who are maybe not so many in their home parishes scattered in the Russian Far East, to meet with others their age. It is a help to them to open up the beauty of Christianity and to look at the world with fresh eyes. They find something new and interesting to help them grow with God in the faith.



The crew gathered in downtown Ussuryrsk

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

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us



The meeting room at the parish of the Nativity of Christ

Our Ordinations in Kazakhstan

[We are celebrating the joy of two members of our Vladivostok Community ordained in Russian speaking, and former member of the U.S.S.R., Kazakhstan. Thank you, benefactors for making it all possible. God bless you from Fr Myron.]

Greetings from Karaganda, Kazakhstan. Fr Agustinus Brusen and I would like to say a big thank you to the Fathers, brothers, sisters and the friends of CJD community wherever you are. Thanks to the prayers of all of you, we were able to see and experience God's wonder in our lives in the middle of the Kazakh Savanna. As you all know, we have waited so long for Ordination to the priesthood. The long wait finally reached its climax on Saturday 17 September 2022. At that time we were ordained as priests by Bishop Adelio Del Oro (Bishop of Karaganda). This moment of priesthood ordination feels very special to us, because of several reasons:



Bishop Adelio, The ambassador of Indonesia's secretary, Fr Myron, Fr Filipus, and Fr Patrick. (and unknown to me man.)

On 15th of September, we two deacons of CJD community accompanied Pope Francis at the Altar in celebration of the Pontifical Mass during the Holy See's official visit to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. We rejoice greatly in the Lord for being able to experience this rare

moment. At the end of our deaconate, we were given the opportunity to serve the successor to the throne of Peter before the Altar of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

After meeting with the Pope, when we returned home, we were already waiting by Father Myron, the founder of our community. We have not finished celebrating the joy of meeting the Holy Father, now we can feel the warmth love from the founding father who came from so far away. No party, no big welcome. Our togetherness takes place in simplicity with a cheerful heart. Our joy grew even more, because besides Father Myron who came to visit, there was also Fr Patrick Napal, C.J.D., from Atirau Diocese in Kazakhstan, who comforted and strengthened our faith. It was the first time after three years here in the mission country, only this time were we able to live and prayer together as a community of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord.

At the time of Ordination many friends came from far away to participate in the Holy Mass. They came from Russia, Belarus, Poland, Georgia, Italy, Croatia, etc. Also present was the Indonesian Ambassador to Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, Prof. Dr. Fahjroel Rahman, along with his wife and staff. Also Mgr. Khaled Akhase, special envoy from the Vatican for dialogue between Christianity and Islam. Msgr Akhase is Jordanian by nationality.

Even though none of our families were able to attend this historic moment in our lives, the event was broadcast on Facebook so that everybody in Russia and Indonesia was able to watch. but the presence of many friends and the prayer support from CJD's brothers, sisters and friends really did strengthen us. After Mass we celebrated joyfully with Bishop Adelio and the priests, sisters and parishioners and invited guests. It was Kazakh version of Thanksgiving, enjoying a snack in the open air.

May the joy that we can feel be a blessing for all of us. Thank you all for your prayers and support. Let us pray and strengthen each other as brothers in the Lord.

Yours truly, Fr Filipus Lasa, C.J.D.



Fr Agustinus on the left. Fr Filipus on the right.

This is Fr Agustinus writing to add some words. I want to thank God because by His grace I have been ordained a priest in the Diocese of Karaganda, Kazakhstan. I am happy to be a priest. I believe that God chose and trusted me to serve His people. God has done a lot of work and goodness in my life. I feel that I am an object of God's mercy through the kindness of those who love, support and pray for my vocation. It is this experience of receiving God's grace that keeps me motivated while continuing to hope that in the days to come, I may be able to repay and emulate God's generosity through the holy calling that I have chosen through the people I meet. and serve. I believe I can find happiness in my duties and ministry as pastor of the people. My vocation to become a priest was certainly supported by many people. Therefore, I want to express my gratitude to Bishop Adelio and Bishop Evgeni who have accepted me into the diocese of Karaganda. They are always ready to guide and advise me. I also thank Father Myron, C.J.D. and Father Daniel, C.J.D. for accepting me as a member of the Order of Canons of Jesus the Lord.

Yours truly, Fr Agustinus Brusen, C.J.C.

Lesozavodsk Children's Retreat for 2022

By Brother Lazar Iqbal, C.J.D.

It was a very good experience for me to be a part of this retreat, which is why I was impatiently waiting for the day to come. When it started I was very excited and thankful to God for His blessing and specially for my vacation as a CJD brother. I was very inspired by the way Fr Vicky Samuel, CJD dealt with naughty children. I learned from him that doing things with affection and love gives a positive result. I appreciate Fr Myron and Fr Vicky for organizing such a kind of retreat for children so that they may feel the love of God in their lives and may become more faithful to God.

On 25th of July all the children from the parish and the city were invited to take part. Most of them belong to poor families or have but one parent. All the children were very excited to be there. More than 25 children took part in the program. Two sisters from America and brothers from Pakistan and Vietnam took part. During the week the program was about various parables from the Bible. Through PowerPoint presentation, examples, and through the participation of the children they learned a lot. The sisters taught them to sing. The children were involved making crafts and different handmade things. Through rubber bands they made bracelets and from colorful paper they made various designs. We also played different indoor games with them. After lunch we used to go to the big field to play football and volleyball. After coming back to

the parish house we ended the day with tea. Everyday we started our program at 9:30 with prayer and ended at 3:00 pm.

All the children were very happy to be the part of this program. They took part in every activity which we did.



Fewer children took part this year than last, partly because of Covid, and partly because there is some fear of foreigners, given the military action in Ukraine.

News Notes

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

- Never seen a camel or tiger before? The parish kids from Lesozavodsk enjoyed their visit to the **zoo** in Vladivostok just before the school year started.



- **Caption mistake!** An observant reader pointed out to me that the caption under the photo on page 2 of *Sunrise* 167 should read "1910-1921" instead of "2010-2021". We could fix the mistake on some copies. Thanks!

- **Dr Oleg Voskreshenski** from Minnesota gave a lecture to some of our parishioners, too, besides being the main speaker at the 23rd annual Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference. Here is his photo with parish ladies after his talk.



● I went to Kazakhstan for the **priestly ordination** of two of our deacon brothers: Agustinus Brussen, C.J.D., and Filipus Lasa, C.J.D. They are both products of our vocation work in Vladivostok. The ordination took place September 17 at the cathedral in Karaganda, and then the First Mass was on September 18. They asked me to speak at the First Mass, and I told them some of my experiences in the 50 years of my own priesthood. They are both from our community of Our Lady of Vladivostok in Indonesia, and now they belong to our Vladivostok community which is why their first masses will be here rather than in their home parishes!

The new priests are living at St Joseph's Basilica, the first Catholic church ever built within the Soviet Union! Of course, everything here is in the Russian language, so it is easy for me to participate. It is also interesting to note that a lot of our music in our parishes in Russia is from the old parishes here in Kazakhstan where the Catholic church survived among the many deportees from Russia. When Pope Francis was in Kazakhstan, Deacons Agustinus and Filipus served the Holy Father at his main mass. Here is a photo--not such a good one, unfortunately. Bishop Adelio Del Oro of Karaganda, Kazakhstan, begged me to send more Asian vocations to his diocese.



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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

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

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

● This is a photo of our **live-in community** in Vladivostok. Those in white are novices, those in black deacons, and those in purple are priests. Besides these members, we have three priests in Kazakhstan, and seminarians in Vietnam seminaries and Philippine seminaries. When I was in Kazakstan the bishop begged me to send more priests. And he mentioned that the bishop in Tajikistan also asked him to tell me to send him priests!



Deacons Agustinus and Filipus serving the Holy Father Pope Francis in Kazakhstan, September 15, 2022

- For the beginning of the university school year in Vladivostok on October 1 we were expecting five new novices. Three from Vietnam, one from the Philippines, and one from India. They study Russian while they are with us, and we hope they will want to work in Russia as priests after finishing the seminary, as the number of European priests gets less with the old age of us guys who came 30 years ago and the vocation crisis in Europe. There was supposed to be another Filipino novice, but he was in a terrible auto accident in Manila, and was hospitalized. We hope he will be ready to come for the next round of novices.



Marilyn Wassmer with her grandchildren in the background.



Mother Theresa's sisters congratulate Fr Agustinus after his ordination in Kazakhstan.

- Our **Father Luis Van Dam, C.J.D.** is doing a really great job as the main priest on call for visiting the sick and dying in the beautiful city of Las Vegas, with many elderly retirees and many hospitals and nursing homes. He said he averages 100 miles a day in sick calls. He is very popular, and just about everybody knows him for his work, let alone the Vietnamese community. I told him that when his time comes to go to the Lord, he'll have a crowd of people up there waiting for him and cheering for him! What a great ministry!



I had to preach sitting down. Too weak!

- **I went to Indiana** to visit my sister and to celebrate my 50th year of priestly ordination in my home parish of St Joseph in the County in Evansville on October 9. It was a great celebration with many priests attending, and was planned by my sister Marilyn Wassmer who is a long time volunteer of our mission, doing mission preaching throughout the Midwest. Her grandchildren also prepared a photo display of my life. It was also fun to see some of my grade school classmates whom I hadn't seen for many years.



Marilyn and I receiving guests. My chair was a wedding present to my parents from my Aunt Rose Schmidt, oh, so many years ago.

● The beautiful and spacious **new seminary building in Maumere**, Indonesia is nearing completion. Here are some items still needed:

Bedroom for 1 seminarian = \$670 for all furnishings, linens, pillow, towels, waste basket, lamp (need 24)

Bedroom for 1 priest or guest = \$750 - same as seminarian room + book case or extra table & chair (need 4)

Storage room = \$1,200 for shelving and cabinetry

Library = \$4,200 for shelving, chairs, tables, desktop copier

Office = \$2,400 for desk, office chair, 2 additional chairs, file cabinet, bookshelf, computer, printer, software, storage cabinet, lamp

Meeting room = \$2,200 for tables, 32 chairs, white board

We are so happy that **vocations** in Indonesia continue to grow, but it also means new facilities and tuition for us. Our seminarians attend the Divine Word seminary which is located next door to our dormitories, kitchen, and chapel, and to our gardens where our seminarians work to sell produce that they themselves grow and harvest.



The new seminary building nearing completion

Our Seminarians



Brother Jackson Malik, C.J.D.

He is attending the National Catholic Institute of Theology in Karachi, Pakistan. He joined us on 23 February 2019 in Vladivostok, and made his first religious vows on 23 May 2020. He began his Philosophy studies for the priesthood at Loyola School of Theology in the Philippines on June 25, 2020 and graduated May 25, 2022. He intended to go to the Philippines for Theology studies but could not get a visa, so he enrolled in Pakistan with the recommendation of Archbishop Benny Travas, Archbishop of Karachi. He is living at Christ The King Seminary where our Brother Rajnal Rehmat, C.J.D. finished last year, and who is now working for the Diocese of Madison in Wisconsin. Our best prayers and wishes are with you Bro. Jackson and all our seminarians!

Baby Talk

From the Women's Support Centers



You mean the sun isn't coming
back for a while?

[Polina January 11, 2017]

Opportunities

♥ What a great blessing for so many vocations! Supporting our many **seminarians** is our **greatest need**. The average yearly expense for one seminarian for tuition, clothing, school supplies, food, transportation and some travel is \$10,700. Perhaps even more now with the inflation of just about everything. Any amount of help would greatly support our young men to the priesthood!

♥ Did you know you can set up automatic monthly donations via credit card or bank account? Save time, costs for mailing! Contact the mission office.

♥ Give the gift of eternal life this Christmas! **Request Masses** for your loved ones or special intentions. Masses will be celebrated by our Canons Regular In Jesus The Lord priests. You or your designated recipient will receive a Mass card and prayer card. Suggested Mass stipend is \$15.

Fr Dan explains the meaning of the liturgical music as attendees enjoy live concerts at the mission. Many hear of Jesus for the first time.



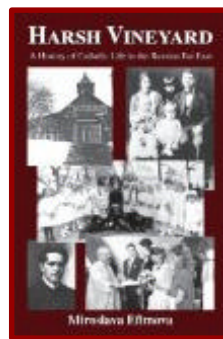
Fr Dan explains the meaning of the liturgical music as attendees enjoy live concerts at the mission. Many hear of Jesus for the first time.

happening. Printed music is not cheap. Even a donation of \$20 or \$30 can help us purchase music and keep this program going.

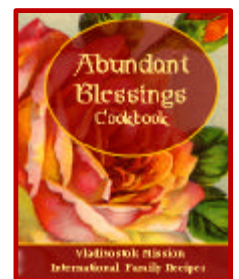
♥ Christmas giving resources for your parish! Want to schedule an enjoyable activity for your parishioners and a fundraiser for our mission this year? Ask your pastor if you may host a weekend Russian Icon sale after Masses at your parish. 'Tis the season! The mission office provides all the religious 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 for details.

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



♥ **Easy! Easy! Easy!** Only four ingredients stand between you and a delicious no-bake dessert from our **Abundant Blessings** cookbook. Among its 494 recipes, you'll find Chocolate Chinese Noodle Candy, Grandma Della's Rocky Road, and No-Bake Strawberry Cookies. And delicious Butterscotch Wonders require only three ingredients! Recipes come from all over the planet, from mission supporters, priests, nuns, and seminarians. To get your copy, order online at www.vladmission.org/cookbook or at www.store.vladmission.org under Miscellaneous > Kitchen, for \$33.99. The price includes shipping and all sales go to benefit our Women's Support Centers and our CJD seminarians.



♥ 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.

♥ Correction to *Vladivostok Sunrise* 167 Development Desk. Fr Dan celebrated his **30 year** jubilee as a priest on September 20, 2022.

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends:

A very merry Christmas to you all!

We're always looking for volunteers who would like to put their talents to use for the Vladivostok mission. Here are a few ways you can get involved and become missionaries at home. The mission needs your help!

- **Mission speaker** – Speak at parishes or ministry meetings about the mission
- **Conference representative** – Distribute literature at Catholic Conferences
- **Fundraiser** - Hold a cookbook, icon sale, or other fundraiser at your parish
- **Newsletter ambassador** - Ask your pastor to distribute a few copies of our bi-monthly newsletter at your parish.

Of course we provide any training and resources you need.

We continually strive to keep up current ways to communicate and interact with our mission families. Technology these days helps us to reach many more of you. Please join us on Facebook and Instagram. These site are linked to our mission store, as well



@MARYMOTHEROFGODMISSIONSOCIETY

Mission Website – www.vladmission.org

Mission online store – www.store.vladmission.org

If you wish to donate, you can do so via:

- Our website – www.vladmission.org using credit card or Paypal
- Venmo - @MaryMotherofGod-Mission Society
- Mail a check to our mission office in Modesto

Convenient automatic monthly donations may be set up via your bank or calling our mission office.

Please feel free to contact me at the mission office.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity. God bless you and your family.

Sincerely, Vicky Trevillyan, USA Mission Desk
usoffice@vladmission.org, 209-408-0728



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