

# Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Sixty Nine January, 2023

## Lent is a Time of Hope

By Fr Mark Dao, C.J.D.\*

### Dear brothers and sisters

Lent is a time to help us stay close to God. In other words, Lent is a season of hope, a season of grace. Each of us here knows well about the life of Jesus. More than 30 years on earth, but Jesus faced many injustices, suffered, and ended up dying as a thief. So where is the hope God gives us?

### My beloved! Hope in Jesus!

Look up at the cross. That is our hope Jesus gives us. Through the cross, the Lord shows us the way that living in this world must have hope, living needs to love and help one another, especially during this Lent season. God left the kingdom of heaven to come to earth and lived among us to help us live with purpose and to help us put all our hope in Him. Because he loves us more than we love Him, this is evidenced by his death on the cross.

### Cardinal Thuan's Witness of Hope in God.

For Christians, to live without hope means to know nothing about Jesus. To better understand man's hope in God, we look to Cardinal Thuan's Witness of Hope in God. The life of God's servant Cardinal Thuan, found the Lord's hope through injustice and suffering, or in other words of Cardinal Thuan, in suffering there is hope. As a young bishop--39 years old--he was taken to prison for unknown reasons. Thirteen years in prison, Cardinal Thuan was mistreated and suffered. Sometimes he lost patience with God but never lost hope in God. It can be said that in suffering is the time when we live true to our faith and hope.

Because suffering is a reality that is hard to describe in words, most of us, when faced with suffering, only feel pain and tears. Yet, for Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, every arduous journey is a joyful one. Through the hardships he had to go through, especially during his time in prison, we came to realize that he was a hero of faith and hope. We will not repeat much of Cardinal Thuan's life here, but with the true witness of Cardinal Thuan about his hope in Lord we realize



*Fr Mark, signing his final religious vows at the Vietnamese parish in New Orleans, Louisiana, on October 26, 2022.*

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us

that there is one God, and we never lose our faith and our hope even if we suffer.

### **Another witness of hope.**

I have a friend who is a priest. He shared with me about his journey of his vocation to respond to God's call. He has spent more than 20 years responding to the call to follow the Lord. How do we understand that a person has such great hope in God for more than 20 years? In 20 years, a person can do many good things or can be a doctor, master, or a father of some child. But my priest friend shared with me that, he wanted to be a priest. Even to follow the Lord is a journey of hardship, trial, and suffering. Many times one feels discouraged and wants to give up the call to follow God. Besides, many people also recommend that you choose another vocation in life. If we put ourselves in the situation of my priest friend, how would you decide, continue to hope in God that is to continue your vocation to follow God or listen to people's advice to choose another vocation to live? I think it's up to us to decide for ourselves. But I believe my friend has had the experience of hope that is the same as that of the cardinal, in that despite hardships, difficulties, or suffering, he never loses hope in God.

Through perseverance and hope in the Lord, our Holy Mother the Church has more witnesses of hope in the Lord, and more people serving the Holy Mother Church.

### **Dear brothers and sisters.**

God gives us hope through the witnesses of Cardinal Thuan and my priest friend. Through these witnesses of hope, how does it help us today? We are living in a family or a community, although we come from many different countries, different cultures and different thoughts, but we have one thing in common that is to seek God, and to hope in God. But do we actually live in total trust and hope in God? Or are we living for our own personal hope? On the occasion of this Lent, we take advantage of this time to reflect on ourselves, to re-examine our community life, because sometimes I find between us a lack of cooperation, lack of trust and lack of help. Instead of supporting each other, we offend each other and sometimes we bring each other suffering. Why do we do that?

### **My dears!**

Living together we can hardly avoid offending each other, or making mistakes with each other, but it is important that we recognize it and avoid repeating it. We are called to love one another as God loves us. We are called to build communities of hope. So we must never lose hope because losing hope means losing our faith.

With this little bit of sharing, I hope everyone is well this Lenten season and will remember to always put your hope in God and ask God to help you always live well with your

vocation and responsibilities. Whenever you are in suffering, remember the words of Cardinal Thuan: In suffering you will find hope and in hope you will always meet God. May God bless you with a season of Lent with God's grace and hope. Amen.

*\*Fr Mark's sermon on March 19, 2022 at Most Holy Mother of God Church, Vladivostok.*



*The choir that sang at the vows mass.*

## **News Notes**

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

● Thanks to a wonderful benefactor we are in the process of repainting and cleaning all the interior of the church! It had really gotten smoked up with the candle and incense smoke. Several years ago during a deep freeze, the rain downspout on one area of the roof was blocked and then cracked by ice. When the snow melted and the rains came, they were directed into the wall, not out from the wall. We waited for several months to repair the interior wall and repaint, but we did not wait long enough. The wall was still wet inside and so the new plaster and paint also disintegrated. Maybe that part of the wall is not dry yet, but it seems to be holding up now. The church had not been repainted since we did the repairs upon getting the church back from the government so many years ago.

The stations of the cross are plaster as are the statues, so they require a different approach to cleaning. (I remember the good old "wallpaper cleaner" putty which made wallpaper look like new without water or without sticking to it.) Hearing about my search for cleaning putty, a benefactor sent me this website for instructions on how to make it.

[https://www.instructables.com Homemade Cleaning Putty : 5 Steps \(with Pictures\)](https://www.instructables.com/Homemade%20Cleaning%20Putty%20%3A%205%20Steps%20(with%20Pictures))





*Smoke darkens the plaster and exposes the lines where the plaster breathes.*



*While the church was being painted, we had daily mass in this “makeshift” chapel in the Slivovsky Room of the parish center. The Japanese Madonna and St Joseph were gifts from Archbishop Frank Hurley of Anchorage, Alaska many years ago. They are used in the monastery chapel.*

- A friend from Poland sent us a photo of our church taken by his ancestors. We didn’t have such a picture of the front before, where we see a rosette window over the door. Perhaps the picture was taken on the dedication day of the church. It is so great to continue to get letters from around the world from descendants of our pre-revolution parishioners.



- The Catholic students at the Far Eastern Federal University continue to have weekly meetings with Chaplain Fr Vicky Samuel, C.J.D. and with Sr Faustina Goedken, C.J.D. Most of the foreign students are in the medical school. Meanwhile the sisters continue the repair of their building near the university. It will be very helpful for all kinds of meetings and conferences and retreats. Our novices also attend the university in the Russian language department.



## Our Seminarians



**Brother Philip Le Minh Nhat, C.J.D.**

Brother Philip is studying Philosophy in Vietnam in preparation for priesthood. He is an accomplished musician and artist. Among his most recent creations was the designs for the stained glass windows of our new Our Lady of the Pacific Church in Nakhodka, Russia. The designs are just perfect for the church, a combination of modern and traditional art, just like the architecture of the church building itself. Here is a sample for you, the St Cecelia window:



- 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*

- It was a big joy for us to welcome four more young men to our **C.J.D. community** on December 7—at first vespers of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. We don't usually give out names of our novices, but three of these guys are from Vietnam and one from India. It is so important for us to have vocations, because America and Europe are in vocation crises, so we have to look forward to Asians for the next generation of priests for Russia. After novitiate they will go on to the seminary, hopefully in the Philippines or Vietnam. I know you will like to pray for our seminarians! You could meet them personally if you could come for a visit to Russia. Now there are two flights to Vladivostok—One from Thailand and one from Laos. You could vacation in Thailand on the way!! No flights from America or Europe because of the sanctions.

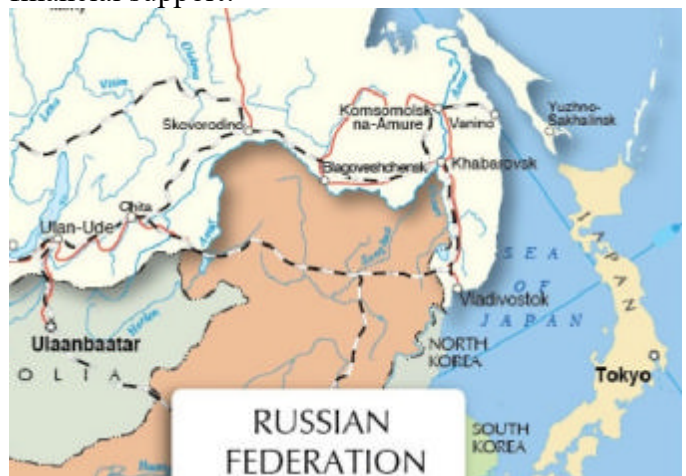


*New novices in white. In black, Fr Vicky Samuel, myself, Fr Nikita Kushnarev, Deacon Vincent Pham. The service was in the parish center chapel, since the church was under paint repair. The Japanese statues of Mary and Joseph in the background were gifts from the late Archbishop Francis Hurley of Anchorage.*

● From *Vladivostok Sunrise* #58, 2004, p5: “On June 13 we finished the first **Rachael’s Vineyard retreat**. This first retreat was sponsored by the Donald D. Lynch Family Foundation of Raleigh, NC, and was surely a wonderful success. It is a retreat to help heal women who are suffering from post-abortion syndrome, which most Russian women are, as the abortion rate has been an average of eight

abortions per woman (Men, too!) Speak about genosucide!—when a nation kills itself in the womb. No wonder Russia suffers so. The Russians say that the situation here is so bad that they have to have abortions. I say that the situation here is so bad BECAUSE they have abortions.” “Diane Szurleys came from Ketchikan, Alaska, to lead our [first] Rachael’s Vineyard retreat. Our parishioners are very anxious to continue these retreats here in Russia. They have already done the first one of their own at St Joseph’s Parish in Second River.” Our sister C.J.D. have continued these retreats and spread them in Russia, finishing one recently in Moscow.

● Now that we will have more priests in Vladivostok we are able to help out more widely **here in Russia**. Especially Fr Nikita likes to travel. His most recent distant trip was to Ulan Ude, and before that to Chita, both on the other side of China from here. Those cities are west of us. He has also been to Sakhalin, east of us. Otherwise, if the priest has to be gone for health or vacation, their parishes can’t have mass—No priest! That is why we have been working so hard on vocations and seminarians! We are still working on it, with your help and prayers and financial support!



## Baby Talk

From the Women’s Support Centers



**A-One, ana Two...**  
[Yuri October 19,2021]





● **“Happy House”** is the program for children with social problems that share a building with us in Karaganda, Kazakhstan. Frs Filipus Lasa, C.J.D. and Agustinus Brusen, C.J.D. live here at the Basilica of St Joseph, and work in neighboring small parishes. For the second semester of this school year two more of our seminarians will be living with them to perfect their Russian language. Russian is an official language in Kazakhstan, as well as Kazakhi.

● **Lee Larkey** was a Knight of Columbus and a member of the Diocese of St Cloud Vocations Committee when I met him. I was a teacher at Crosier Seminary in Onamia, Minnesota, and he and his wife Bernadette lived in Avon, Minnesota. We were both interested in personal computers, which was a new thing in those days. So when Fr Dan Maurer and I came to Russia, and Fr Joseph Fessio, S.J. introduced us to the internet, I knew it is an important thing for us to have, because mail communications in those day were very slow, and telephoning to the US involved a trip to the city center and standing in line for a phone line.

But with whom would I communicate in the US?—Of course, with Lee Larkey! So it was Lee who was instrumental in helping us get letters to donors and in getting our newsletter, *Vladivostok Sunrise* edited, to the press, addressed, and mailed. We eventually opened an office in Anchorage, and then in St Paul, Minnesota and then in Modesto, California, thanks to the help of our sister parishes in those cities, but Lee continued to be a great support and constant benefactor. We would be selfish if we wanted him to stay with us, but God took him to Himself on December 15. Thanks, Lee! Pray for us!

*Lee Larkey. Eternal Rest Grant to Him, O Lord!*

● From a **letter of Bishop Slivovsky of 1921:**

In spite of numerous difficulties, thanks to the efforts of the Building Committee, the construction of the church was approaching an end, and indeed in the autumn of 1921 it was finally completed. Of course a church without bell towers looks rather sorrowful, but the Catholics were nevertheless happy that they would finally be able to worship in their own beautiful church, under whose lofty arches would resound their prayers and hymns. The solemn dedication of the church took place on October 2, 1921, and the event was reported as follows in the local newspaper, *Slovo* [The Word]:

“The architecture of the building is beautiful. Made of brick, the building is spacious and very majestic. Despite the very difficult time in which we are living and a complete lack of funds, thanks to the efforts of the Building Committee, which included energetic people dedicated to their religion and their national heritage, the church has successfully been completed. The local Catholic community can be proud of its new religious acquisition.”

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

## Opportunities

♥ Feb 7th. Happy 82<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Fr Myron!

♥ Two important projects in our Women's Support Centers are the **Adopt-a-Birth Program** and the **Adopt-a-Mother Program**. \$50 will save a baby from abortion through our Adopt -a-Birth Project. This humble gift can make the difference for a destitute mother choosing abortion vs. paying the delivery cost of having her child. \$125 to our Adopt-a-Mother program helps moms get on their feet in the first few months after delivery, many of whom have



just turned away from having an abortion, buying baby formula and clothes, and vitamins for mom and baby. Over 3900 babies have been saved from abortion through these programs.

♥ Do you know of a **Catholic conference** near you? Please let us know! Contact Vicky at the mission office. We will arrange to attend a booth to have our representatives share the news of our mission.

♥ Would you like FREE copies of our bi-monthly newsletter, *Vladivostok Sunrise* for your parish? Written by Fr Myron, you'll receive the latest news about the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia. Email us, [usoffice@vladmission.org](mailto:usoffice@vladmission.org).

♥ Our greatest need now is to support our **Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord (CJD) seminarians** who are or will be working in Russia. We have 8 priests, 2 deacons and 11 CJD seminarians. The yearly cost to support 1 seminarian averages \$10,000 per year. Can you help us form these young men to the priesthood? Please pray for us.

♥ **Double Your Donation.** Check with your employer to see if they offer a **"Matching Gifts Program"**. Companies that do, will match the amount of your donation to your favorite charity. Typically, the matched funds from your employer are submitted at the end of the year. The name of the program might differ slightly from company to company. This is a great way to double your help to the mission!

♥ For your convenience, you can now make a donation using **Venmo**,  
@MaryMotherofGod-Mission Society

♥ Read more about the work of our Women's Support Centers and our order of Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord in our website [www.vladmission.org](http://www.vladmission.org)

♥ Follow us on **Instagram** and **Facebook**!



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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)

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## From the development desk..

Dear Friends, Happy New Year!



- We're happy to introduce David Nall, our new member of the MMOG staff. David is a recent convert to the Catholic faith having had to persevere during the Covid shut down to learn all he could about our faith. He is a student working toward

an English degree with the hope of teaching high school and junior college. David is an avid reader. His favorite author is J.R.R. Tolkien. David's key role with the mission is developing our social media platforms, and our mission online store. David also serves as one of our representatives at Catholic conferences. Here are a few words from David. *"It was quite invigorating for me when I joined the mission office, as we all have so much to give in the great efforts of the church. With that, I am thoroughly excited to help the mission grow and represent its efforts in my work, whether that be digitally or in person. Please keep us in your prayers!"* Welcome

to the Vladivostok mission family David!

- Check out every growing number of products in our mission's online store [www.store.vladmission.org](http://www.store.vladmission.org)
- By now you have received our letter announcing Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord (CJD), outside of Russia, has established their own corporation and 501 (c) (3) non-profit status. Fr Myron founded the order some years ago and the member numbers are booming. The new non-profit will help the CJD members outside of Russia to gather needed support. Mary Mother of God Mission Society (MMOG) operates as a separate non-profit from CJD and any CJD members in Russia are supported by MMOG. If you missed the address for the new CJD non-profit and wish to support its growing number of seminarians, and receive their periodic newsletter *CJD World*, written by Fr Myron, you may contact them at:

**Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord**  
**2915 Lake East Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89117**

- Thank you all for your kindness and generosity. God bless you and your family.  
Sincerely, Vicky Trevillyan, USA Mission Desk  
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