

Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Seventy Five January 2024



The Blessing of Nakhodka Church: A Symbol of Growth and Unity

By Brother Edwin Intan, C.J.D.

“A parish is more than just a physical building; it is a spiritual home and a vibrant community that brings people together in faith and fellowship. It serves as a haven where individuals find solace, support, and a deeper connection of our Roman Catholic Christian beliefs. (*”Bp. Kirill of the Diocese of St. Joseph in Irkutsk in his message to the people during the blessings of Nakhodka parish Oct. 14, 2023.*)

Nakhodka (pronounced: Nah-HOD-ka), population 158,649 (2012), is a port city on the Pacific Ocean in the southeastern most part of Russia. It is one of the main Russian Pacific shipping ports, and is located 120 miles east of Vladivostok (about a four-hour drive).

The Roman Catholic parish of Our Lady of the Pacific, Patroness of all who live and work on and near the Pacific Ocean, was canonically established by Bishop Joseph Werth, S.J. in Nakhodka on

November 15, 1994 as a mission of the Catholic parish in Vladivostok. The founding pastor of this parish, Reverend Father Myron Effing, C.J.D., was also pastor of the Vladivostok parish. In January 1995, Fr. Myron celebrated the first Mass in this new parish. And in 2012 Father Sebastian D’Silva was



The First Mass in 1995

installed as the third pastor of Nakhodka parish.

The establishment of Nakhodka parish is akin to witnessing the birth of a beacon of hope and community. It carries the promise of a fresh start, as the city of Nakhodka did not exist before the Communist revolution (1917) and religion was a deliberate policy enforced by the ruling communist

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us

The Apostolic Nuncio and Bishop Kiril Klimovich anoint the altar top.

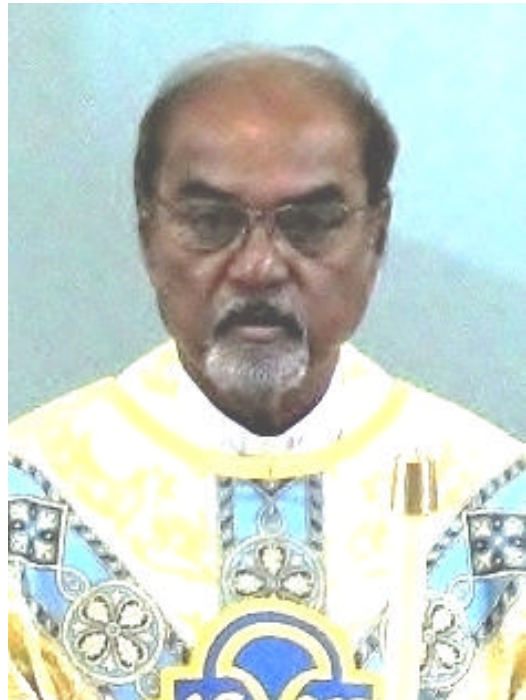


no churches or even religious groups were allowed to exist in the city, as they believed that the absence of religious and beliefs would promote development of a purely materialistic and scientific outlook among citizens.

The Nakhodka parish begins with a vision, under the leadership of Rev Fr. Myron, C.J.D. in 1995. He began seriously to study the possibility of building a church in 2004, including facilities for offices, parish hall, religious education and Catholic charities. The city of Nakhodka cooperated with the project by making available a beautifully located plot of land and it was finally acquired on August 26, 2015 and the ground breaking took place on April 3, 2017. American benefactors became interested in the project. And after several years in the process that involves considerable effort, planning, and fundraising, the construction of the parish building was completed and this serves as a testament to the determination and unity of the community it will serve.

The consecration of Nakhodka parish happened on October 14, 2023 spearheaded by the Papal Nuncio to Russia and Uzbekistan Archbishop Giovanni d'Aniello with his secretary Rev Fr Igor Chavanov and Bishop Kirill Klimovich of the Diocese of Saint Joseph in Irkutsk with all the guests, the lay faithful from Vladivostok and Nakhodka signifies the birthing of a new chapter in a community's spiritual journey. The whole liturgy was planned by Fr. Nikita Kushnarev, CJD., of Vladivostok's Most Holy Mother of God Parish.

The church on the hill.



Pastor and church builder Fr Sebastian D'Silva, a missionary from India

Nakhodka parish priest Father Sebastian D'Silva, who also undertook the construction of the parish building, with all the parishioners and benefactors in Nakhodka, are very appreciative to Fathers Myron Effing, CJD and Daniel Maurer, CJD, Vicky Trevillyan and to all the benefactors of the Mary Mother of God Mission Society in the USA, who, through your heartfelt prayers and financial support, have made the construction of a real church in Nakhodka not only a possibility, but now a reality! They would never have been able to think about such a huge project without your generosity.





Our Lady of the Pacific, statue in the Nakhodka parish

Celebrating 30 Years of Dedication: The Remarkable Journey of Viktor Anisimov

By Brother Edwin Intan, C.J.D.

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing work environment, it is rare to find an employee who has dedicated three decades of his life to a single organization. However, there are those exceptional individuals who not only commit themselves to their work but also become an integral part of the organization's success story. In this article, we celebrate the remarkable journey of *Mr. Viktor Anisimov* originally from Vladivostok, Russia, born on October 18, 1973, who has worked tirelessly for 30 years with us, leaving an indelible mark on the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia. Since then-and

with the mission society's help- we have founded or re-founded 11 Catholic parishes, have developed numerous charitable initiatives and have created a variety of catechetical programs and much more.



Viktor helping Fr Myron say mass at the mass gravesite of victims of the Communist terror. 1992

Thirty years ago, when Viktor first walked through the doors of our Church, he was only 19 years old but very inquisitive about Catholic doctrine as he was a member of the Seventh-day Adventists at that time. He asked Fr Daniel Maurer CJD "why Catholics do not believe in observing the Sabbath on Saturday as a day of rest and worship, in accordance with the Ten Commandments?" Little did he know that the small conversation with Fr. Dan would pave his way to become one of our most trusted staff members. Fresh-faced and full of enthusiasm, we hired him as an interpreter as he spoke good English at that time so that soon he embarked on a journey that would span three decades of unwavering commitment.



Viktor with his daughter Alyona overlooking the city.

Throughout his tenure, Viktor has witnessed significant changes within our city, to Mary Mother of God parish and to the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord who work in our mission. He has navigated through the development of our mission here in Vladivostok, and adapted to new occupational

strategies. His ability to evolve and grow alongside the priests and staff and the parish here has been instrumental in our continued missionary success. When asked about his motivations to work, he answered: *I'd like to think that my work is essential for the Vladivostok parish. I know that someone else could do it, but I am thankful to God to have a privilege of working for this community. When I see that my work helps other people it motivates me to continue. Sometimes I get motivated by the complexity of the goal I need to achieve; other times deadlines push me to do so.*



Viktor the marathon runner

Over the years, Viktor has become a respected authority in his field. His wealth of theological knowledge and expertise has made him an invaluable resource for colleagues and even to all parish staff members. He has willingly shared his insights, mentored the aspirants and novice CJD brothers. As our office manager, his guidance and mentorship have also fostered a collaborative and supportive work culture. He added: *"I have met and worked with many priests and brothers who carry the CJD charism, which seems to me like bringing together good people who really are doing great things for God and the Church. Sometimes I even felt like I am one of them."*

One of the remarkable qualities that sets Viktor apart is his unwavering dedication and strong work ethic. Through the highs and lows, he had consistently demonstrated a commitment to excellence, going above and beyond to meet deadlines and deliver good results. And he said: *"When there is too much work I ask for help. When I don't understand how to do something I ask for help. When I encounter a complicated task, I do it step by step and it works--the job is done! It is not about*

working hard that much but trying to do what needs to be done."



Viktor the mountain climber

The impact of Viktor's contributions to the mission here in Russia cannot be overstated. His dedication, expertise, mentorship, and strong work ethics have left an indelible mark on us. He has played a key role in shaping our parish culture, driving novelty, and achieving milestones. His legacy will continue to inspire and motivate us. A good thought to take note from him is: *"Remember that one's work is needed, and God allows and helps us to bring some more good things into this world. This is our chance."*

Now, the 50 years old Viktor is happily married to Natasha with three children, Kirill, Alyona and Veronica. Viktor is also a sports enthusiast. He runs marathons and ultramarathons. In fact, he was a finisher in the 42-kilometer Vladivostok International Marathon in 2021 and this year as an achiever of the 100-kilometer marathon in Ussurysk, Russia.

What can we say but "Thank you, Viktor!"

News Notes

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



● Our Russian community priest has just been made **pastor** of St. Nicolas Catholic church in Saran, Kazakhstan. Congratulations Fr Agustinus Brusen, C.J.D. on your first pastorate. Fr “Gus” is originally from Indonesia and he made his novitiate with us here in Russia before completing his

seminary education in Indonesia. Meanwhile he continues as Assistant Pastor at the Basilica of St Joseph in Karaganda, Kazakhstan.



The repaired fallen “old rugged cross”

● A funny thing happened in August (or was it September—No one saw it happen!) One of the **crosses** from our two steeples was found on the ground! Nobody knows how it happened that such a heavy cross could jump from its high place! One theory was that it was struck by lightning, But why would lightning cause it to fall from its perch? Another theory is that the vibration of the bells shook it loose and it fell. We don’t know, but, now that the cross itself is repaired, we’ll have to remount it on the steeple. That will take either a tall, tall crane or a helicopter. Our building manager says it will take about \$2,000 to fully repair the cross and remount it on the steeple. Stay tuned.



A Bird? A Balloon? A Plastic bag?

● December 7 was the date when our candidates for religious life took the habit of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord here in Vladivostok to **begin their novitiate**. Meanwhile on December 8 four novices who had been with us for a year already, took their **first three-year**



Three new novices, two from Vietnam and one from Pakistan, with Fr Daniel and Fr Myron

temporary vows. All of them seminarians, they will be leaving Vladivostok for seminaries in their home countries to study in their native languages. Meanwhile, they all learned Russian during their novitiate, and there is hope that after ordination they will want to return to us to work in Russia. Now that more than thirty years have passed since Catholic priests were allowed to work in Russia to open parishes and work with Catholics, we are 30 years



New religious: Andrew from Vietnam, Sandeep from India and Joseph from Vietnam

older, so we need the new generation of young priests to carry on our work. Thank God there are some young Russian priests, but not enough yet to cover all the parishes. Meanwhile, five Russians have become priests from the parishes that we Americans founded in the Russian Far East.

And finally, on December 8 Fr Marcus David, C.J.D. from Pakistan took his final lifetime solemn vows. Ordained a priest already last year, he has been working as assistant to Fr Sebastian in Nakhodka during the busy time of the construction of the church there.



Fr Marcus and Fr Myron

Baby Talk

From the Women's Support Centers



"We are from France!"

[Sophia June 23 2022]

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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

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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 mission office in Modesto is looking for more volunteers to help process our bi-monthly **Vladivostok Sunrise** newsletter. If your parish or group is interested, please contact the mission office in Modesto. No group, just you? No problem we have take home and in office volunteer opportunities.

♥ Our priests are getting older. We've set up a **Priests' Medical and Retirement Fund**. 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.

♥ Please help us keep the Women's Centers open. **Adopt A Baby or Adopt A Mother**. Your gift of \$50 to the **Adopt A Birth** program will pay for the medical supplies needed in the hospital to deliver the baby. Often times, the cost of these supplies is the deciding factor for a mother to have an abortion or let her child live. Fr. Myron will send you a picture of the newborn you helped save to keep or pass on. Over 2900 babies have been saved from abortion to date! Your \$125 gift to the **Adopt A Mother** program will provide help to the mother and baby in the first weeks supplying them with nutritious food, formula, diapers, baby clothes vitamins and medical aftercare. General donations to the Women's Centers will help us continue to serve women in crisis pregnancies, children, and men and women suffering from post-abortion syndrome, and many other services offered to families.

♥ Give the gift of eternal life! **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.

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

♥ Are you interested in helping us spread the news of our mission at **Catholic conferences**. Pass out our mission literature and sell religious gifts from our

booth and even get to hear great Catholic speakers! If you are in driving distance of any of these conferences, we ask for your help!

- 2/15-18 LA Congress, Anaheim CA
- 3/2 Man Up Philly, Springfield PA
- 3/16 Men's Conference, Worcester MA
- 4/5-7 IRL National Meeting, Mundelein IL
- 4/20 Men's Conference, San Antonio TX
- 4/26-27 Ignited by Truth, Raleigh NC
- 4/26-27 Marian Conference, Nashville TN
- 5/10-12 Marian Eucharistic, Ave Maria FL
- 5/17-19 Marian Conference, St. Louis MO



Office member David at a parish sale in Turlock CA

♥ Would you like a **Russia icon** or **nesting doll** for your home or office. Perhaps a gift for your pastor or parish staff? Head over to our online store to get yours now. We are adding more and more Russian items weekly! We carry icon rosary boxes, wall art, and nesting dolls! Use the coupon code below to save.



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From the development desk...

Dear Friends:

Happy 10 years, Gifts of Faith!

On December 1, 2013 we opened the doors to our mission store, ***Gifts of Faith!*** The store was blessed by Fr Francis Arakal, with about 30 guests present. Boy, have we added a few items since then! Over the last 10 years we have been able to add some of these items to our online store as well! What a blessing to be able to serve our Catholic community and some of our Protestant brothers and sisters while helping to revive our Catholic faith in Russia. The need for spiritual support is so great in Russia, and here in the US as well.

Gifts of Faith supports itself including wages for staff, and maintaining merchandise. It not only pays for the rent and utilities for the storefront, but also our US mission office which is located in the back offices of the store. It also pays for and supplies the merchandise we send out for conferences and parish plaza sales. All net proceeds go toward the mission and it has served as a great ongoing fundraiser.



Gifts of Faith staff in Modesto, California

Many blessings to all of you in the new year!
God bless you!

Jessica Trevillyan, USA Mission office
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The Gifts of Faith website: store.vladmission.org