



Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Eighty November, 2024

Our Seminarians Studying for Russia Write...

I was sick and you visited me, (Mt:25:36)

By: Brother Jackson Malik, CJD

Introduction:

Having been born in Karachi and then pursuing my education at Karachi Seminary (Christ the King Seminary), Pakistan, I had experienced the bustling and fast-paced city life. Despite the chaos, I found solace and meaning at Daru-UI-Sukun, a place filled with compassion and love for the elderly. This center, run by the Christ the King Sisters, provides refuge for about 130 elderly people whose families cannot care for them at home. For three months, from March to May 2023, I had the privilege of regularly volunteering at this center every Saturday. It was heartwarming to witness the genuine love and care provided to the elderly residents.

Description:

Daru-UI-Sukun, which translates to "Abode of Peace," was established with a noble purpose in mind: to offer a comfortable and supportive home to elderly individuals who may have been abandoned or are unable to be cared for by their families due to different challenges. The residents at this center often come from families facing financial difficulties or living far away. Additionally, some may have developed health conditions that demand specialized care and attention. Daru-UI-Sukun offers a comforting refuge for these seniors, ensuring they receive the care and love they deserve.

Personal Experience:

My visit to Daru-UI-Sukun left a lasting impact on me, showing me that my presence could bring happiness to the elderly residents there. They eagerly awaited Saturdays to share their stories with me, and simply giving them my attention meant so much to them. Spending a few hours with them and listening to their experiences felt like a small act of charity, it brought immense joy to both for them and me. Volunteering at Daru-UI-Sukun gave me a

sense of purpose and fulfillment. It reminded me of the importance of contributing to the well-being of others and making a positive difference in their lives. As a person of faith, I saw it as a calling to embody the teachings of love, kindness, and service to others, especially those who may be in need.

Reflection:

Reflecting on Christ's love, my time at Daru-UI-Sukun mirrored His compassion for all, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable. Christ's teachings emphasized the significance of showing love and care to the elderly, the sick, and the needy. Through my service at the center, I tried to follow His example and spread His love among those I met.

As a Christian, I believe that every human being is created in the image of God. My time spent with the elderly residents, treating them with love and respect, was an acknowledgment of the divine essence within each person, regardless of their age or circumstances. Overall, my visit to Daru-UI-Sukun can enrich my priestly life, shaping me into a more compassionate, empathetic, and devoted spiritual leader. It can guide my actions, sermons, and pastoral care, allowing me to touch the lives of many in a meaningful and profound way.



Br. Jackson is greeting a man who has been using a wheelchair for twenty years.

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us



Group Photo with the wonderful people of Daru-Ul-Sukun



This man is sharing a light-hearted joke with Br. Jackson. He is truly jovial and joking man.



Mohammad Naveed revealed how, during days of wealth, his family, relatives and friends were surrounded him but now he has nothing and for ten years no one has come to see him.

You are the Salt of the Earth (Mathew 5:13)

By Brother Lazar Iqbal, C.J.D.

I am Lazar Iqbal, a simple professed brother of CJD congregation. I am studying philosophy in Pakistan in Saint Francis Xavier Seminary. My purpose of writing this article is to thank all the supporters of our congregation who are helping us to carry the mission of our Lord Jesus so that we may prepare people for the kingdom of God by preaching to them the Word of God.

One day I was meditating on that in the seminary. We are 54 seminarians who are studying philosophy together but I am the only one who is representing my congregation while I am in the Lahore diocese of Pakistan, so I was thinking that, as I am the only one among 54 seminarians, in a similar way our congregation, which has a lesser number of priests is still restoring the faith of those people who had lost their faith. Suddenly the passage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew came to my attention in which Jesus says "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and

trampled under people's feet" (Matthew 5:13), so I was thinking about how our congregation is restoring the taste of the salt, especially in Russia and other countries, about how it a good salt which has saltiness. I must admire my superior Father Myron Effing and his companions who have started the mission in Russia.

I am also very grateful for the people who are supporting our congregation through their prayers and money. I always remember them in my prayers. I think they have been chosen by God for this mission because when we read the Gospel of Saint John where Jesus says, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." (John 15:16). I believe it is God's blessing for all of you who have been chosen to take part in the mission which Father Myron started to spread the good news in the world.

Jesus says "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing."(John 15:5) I believe that your generous heart and support shows that you abide with the Lord Jesus Christ because we are nothing without Him and we cannot do anything without Him. It is the spirit of God working in you that guides you so that you also spread the Good News in the vineyard of Lord. Once again thank you, dear benefactors!

Introducing Lola Minda: A Life of Resilience and Faith

By: Br. Edwin Intan, CJD

Lola Minda, whose full name is Luzviminda, is a 78-year-old widow and grandmother who embodies the spirit of the Philippines in more ways than one. Her name itself is a tribute to the three major islands of the country: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. This symbolic name serves as a reminder of her connection to the land and its people—a connection that is deeply rooted in her life story, filled with struggle, perseverance, and unwavering faith.

I had the privilege of meeting Lola Minda during my house-to-house apostolate, where her life became one of the most remarkable tales of resilience I have ever encountered. Living with her nine grandchildren, she shoulders the responsibility of raising them single-

handedly after her two daughters left their violent marriages, abandoning their children in the process. Despite the immense challenges she faces, Lola Minda carries on, relying on a strength that she attributes entirely to God.

Lola Minda's life has never been easy. Like my own grandmother, she did not have the opportunity to complete even elementary school, only reaching the fourth grade before she had to start working as a nanny for wealthy families. Eventually, she married, but tragedy struck when her husband died in an accident, leaving her to raise their children alone, who were only seven and eight years old at the time. Forced to become both mother and father to her children, she worked tirelessly as a household helper, sacrificing her own comforts to ensure their survival.



This is my 3rd visit to Lola Minda's humble abode

Throughout her life, Lola Minda has remained a devoted Catholic. Her faith has been her anchor through the many storms she has faced. When asked if she ever complained about her hardships, she simply smiled and said she couldn't remember ever doing so. To her, life is a journey of hard work and prayer. Even in moments of pain and struggle, she sees these as opportunities to connect more deeply with God. "Our life is a gift from God and should be cultivated no matter what," she told me. "If you are still in pain or struggling, do not complain because it is where you see God. It is still how God communicates with you." She added that she cannot imagine what would have happened if her life's path had been given to someone else who is weak and lacks faith in

God. Such a person, she believes, would have surrendered.

Raising nine grandchildren on her own is no small feat, but Lola Minda approaches this challenge with the same grace and determination that have characterized her entire life. She takes on part-time jobs as a street cleaner and house cleaner, while her eldest granddaughter, who now works as a sales lady in a department store, also helps with the family's needs. Despite the poverty that has marked her life, Lola Minda considers herself rich—rich in faith and in her relationship with God. She finds joy in the small things and sees every task, no matter how menial, as an act of devotion. “Whatever your work is, big or small, do it as if you are doing it for the Lord,” she explained.

Through every trial, Lola Minda's faith in God has remained unshaken. She firmly believes in trusting His process, no matter how difficult or overwhelming the circumstances may be. Her story is not just one of survival, but of unwavering faith and an unyielding spirit, making her a beacon of hope and inspiration to everyone she meets. Her life reminds us that true strength does not come from external circumstances, but from an inner wellspring of faith, resilience, and a heart full of love for those in her care.

In a world often overshadowed by despair and difficulty, Lola Minda shines as a testament to the power of faith and the enduring human spirit. Her life, like her name, is a beautiful reflection of the resilience and hope that defines the Filipino people.

Weekend “Priest”

September 2, 2024

Dear Father Myron,

This is just to let you know of a beautiful Sunday experience I had yesterday. I was instructed by my parish priest to go and lead the Sunday Service at one of our subparishes, so far from the main parish Church.

I took with me the Consecrated Eucharist as I was instructed by my parish priest. Upon arriving at the sub-parish station at eleven a.m. (The journey took me three and half hours on motorbike.) I was greeted by the people who were so happy and waiting, and they welcomed me because they thought I was a priest and they started calling me, “Father! Father! Father! -Your most welcome Father!”

So I told them, “I am not yet a priest. I am just one like you who has today been instructed by our parish priest do you a service of love, to present you the Eucharist I brought to you.” These people were so happy to receive Jesus in the Eucharist and their last words to me when I was leaving were “Please bring Jesus to us again all the



Fr Vicky teaching the kids in Lesozavodsk

time" and they still said “Bye, Father” but again I reminded them, I am not yet a priest.

Their sweet experience of Jesus made me so humbled in my vocation to priesthood and fueled my desire to be a man for others through which Jesus can be known and loved.

Yesterday, it was indeed a beautiful experience of service and Love for God's People. I am so happy when people come to a deeper intimacy with Jesus.

I feel so happy. Okay Fr. Myron. Have a blessed week ahead and I continue to pray for the decision of the seminary admissions committee to accept me.

In Jesus and Mary

Seminary Candidate Peter Egessa, Uganda

News Notes

● On September 5th Bishop Kirill Klimovich of our Diocese of St Joseph in Irkutsk appointed Fr Vicky Samuel, C.J.D. to be **pastor of two parishes:** Annunciation in Arsenyev and Nativity in Ussuryrsk. These parishes are about an hour or so away from Vladivostok, so Fr Vicky will be doing a lot of driving (See note about cars below!) These parishes were founded by Fr Myron Effing, C.J.D., Nearly 30 years ago, and were then served by Franciscans from South Korea. More recently they have been served by Franciscans from Europe, but their community is now suffering from lack of vocations in Europe, so they have to relinquish these parishes.

Fr Vicky has been serving as assistant priest in Vladivostok and Lesozavodsk, and as Catholic Chaplain for the Far Eastern Federal University here in Vladivostok. He is from St Mary's Parish in Sailkot,

Pakistan, and completed his theology studies at the National Catholic Theological Institute in Karachi. He served his novitiate with us and completed his seminary education in Pakistan. He was ordained a deacon and then priest four years ago. As my helper priest in Lesozavodsk he has been leading the annual children's retreat there, and hopefully can continue to do so. His English and Russian are excellent. He says, "The kids taught me how to speak Russian." But I said, "Watch out what you say, because some of those kids' Russian is pretty off-color! "



- All the **stained glass windows** in the new church of Our Lady of the Pacific in Nakhodka have now been completed. Here is the last one, the round window over the main altar. (The vigil light chain is suspended in front of it.) It shows the Holy Spirit coming down on the bread and wine to make them the Body and Blood of Christ! (As the priest prays at every mass: "May your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of Christ.")—called the "epiclesis".

- Our Board member, Fr. Doug Grandon (chaplain at FOCUS in Denver) and Vladivostok pastor Fr Daniel Maurer, C.J.D., were in the capital city of Indianapolis, Indiana for two days of talks and conferences about FOCUS and for three days of the 6-day **National Eucharistic Congress**. Fr Dan says, "The Congress was by far the best three days of my life in the past 45 years! (NO Exaggeration!!!) All of the liturgies, adoration, benedictions and talks were **AMAZINGLY CATHOLIC**: The liturgical music was superb (in English, Latin and Spanish). All the liturgical furnishings, vestments and backdrops were spectacularly beautiful and traditional; the main speeches and homilies were wonderful, holy, uplifting, informative and substantive.

Thousands of people were in tears of joy at the outpouring of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

"There were at least 65,000 people in the main stadium for morning Masses and evening adoration and benediction each day; and at the main Saturday Eucharistic procession through the streets of downtown there were around 80,000 people walking together. 2,000 consecrated religious (men and women) all in their habits; 1000 seminarians (all in black cassocks and white surplices), 600 permanent deacons (all in albs, stoles, and some in dalmatics); 2,000 priests (in albs and stoles), 200 bishops and 5 cardinals. - and many more thousands of people all along the sidewalks to watch the people and the Blessed Sacrament go by.

"I have great hope for the Eucharistic Revival that has been going on in the USA for two years and has one more year to go--of workshops, conferences, and retreats, adoration, and prayer. Our friend Fr. Doug Grandon (who visited us twice in Vladivostok) has been on the team of Eucharistic Revival preachers traveling around to many parishes to preach about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist after an opinion poll in 2018 commissioned by the US Catholic Conference of Bishops showed that, at that time, some of the Catholics in the United States did not believe that Christ is really present Body and Blood in the Eucharist."

- There is a possibility that a benefactor will match donations for the **new cars** that we need, as the old ones are getting to the end of their useful lives, and, of course, Russia is big and the parishes are far apart, so we use the cars a lot! In fact, we will need them even more soon, as we take over two more parishes, Annunciation in Arsenyev and Nativity in Ussuryysk, as the priests who have been working there are leaving Russia. If you want to donate for this purpose, just mark the check "For Cars." I just noticed on one of our cars how rusty is the trunk lid, and rust is all around the bottom of the doors and chassis—It already had an engine change. The other one, our "long distance" Toyota Wish, is really on its last leg, and now the air conditioner went out, and we are told by the mechanics that it can't be repaired because the car is too old and there are no spare parts for it. I tell the priests who are leaving for parish work to take some cash along, in case they have a breakdown and have to be towed.

- Why do we purchase **used, Japanese cars**? I'm told that the Japanese in Japan have to sell their cars after three years to avoid extra "ecological" taxes, but they are often used very little, so they are almost like new when they are imported into Russia. Little wonder that most cars in Vladivostok and in the Russian Far East are Japanese, even if the driver is on the "wrong" side of the car! You can get used to that! There is occasionally a movement to

outlaw cars with the driving wheel on the right, but the sheer magnitude of the number of such cars makes it politically impossible. Besides, we like our Japanese cars! And Japan is not so far away. One can see Japan from Russian Sakhalin Island.

- Thanks to a great benefactor, our two Vladivostok priests who are working in **Russian speaking Kazakhstan** have a Hyundai automobile. Here is a photo of Bishop Adelio, Bishop of Karaganda, blessing the car for them. Fr Filipus Lasa, C.J.D., is caring for three parishes, and Fr Agustinus Brussen, C.J.D. cares for the Basilica of St Joseph in Karaganda, the very first Catholic church that was built during the Communist power in the Soviet Union itself. Many Catholics had been exiled to Karaganda, some even kicked out of a train into the snowy winter with nothing to survive. They like to tell the story of how they survived only by the help of the local Moslem population.



Bishop Adelio blessing their car. The priests are in the background.

- September is the month when **new men join us** to be priests and members of our order, the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord (CJD). This year we are expecting six new members here in Russia. (Even more in Indonesia and Vietnam!) In December, the three who joined us last year in Vladivostok can take their first vows, and then move on to their final seminary preparation for priesthood. Currently we have four brothers waiting for ordination to the diaconate who can work in Russia. So we continue to need your help by prayer and financing for all these seminarians. More guys are writing me asking to join us here in Russia, and more dioceses are writing asking for priests! And more young men are writing to me to discern their future!

- We've renovated two **new classrooms** for our children's catechism classes in Vladivostok. They were storage rooms earlier, but we have less to store there these

days, since all the public stores are full of products—not like 30 years ago at the end of the Soviet Union. Of course, the poor still don't have enough money to buy, especially the lonely elderly and families with many children. Another room in the monastery has been converted into a living room, since our house is really full!

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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/>

Internet: English language: www.vladmission.org
 Russian language: www.catholicvl.ru
 Sisters in Jesus the Lord in English: www.cjd.cc

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

Baby Talk
 From the Women's Support Centers



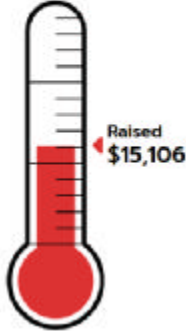
“I sure hope this dream comes true!”
 Arseny, June 20, 2024

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

Opportunities

♥ **March Giving Day Update!** Thanks to your help we have nearly half of the needed funds to purchase the space

Giving Day
\$35,000



in Artyom for our **Womens's Support Center**. We have been able to purchase 15 of the 30 chairs needed. The sisters on Russian Island are using them for the University Parish until we secure the space in Artyom. We have raised \$15,106 of the needed \$35,000 to buy the apartment wing. Thank you to everyone who has donated towards this important project! Might

someone help with support of \$50 or \$100 to assist us in reaching our goal, please? You may find out more details in the insert with this issue of the Sunrise. To help us with the new center please note "Giving Day" on your check or online donation. Thank you!

♥ Give the eternal gift of a **Mass Intention**. Masses celebrated in Russia may be requested for loved ones, living or dead. **Mass stipends** support Fr. Myron, Fr. Dan and our priests in Russia. Please send your special intentions or Mass requests to the mission office. Mass cards will be sent to you or designated persons. You can also request masses online on our website, www.vladmission.org, through the Donate drop down section, Mass Intention. Suggested stipend is \$15 per Mass.

Please offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the following people or intentions:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Please mail acknowledgement card(s) to:

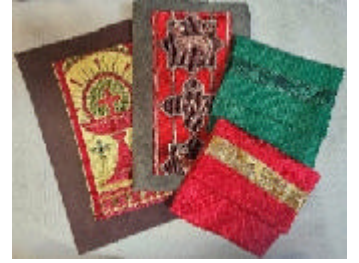
1 _____

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♥ In the last issue of the Sunrise, we featured some of our **web store's** exclusive gifts of book covers, rosary cases, totes, and more made from recycled priest vestments.

Many thanks to all who have responded and purchased from our online store! The vestment gifts are not only exquisite, but most are one of a kind. We will continue to add more vestment items to our website as we receive worn out vestments and as fast as our talented seamstress can make them! Our **Gifts of Faith** brick and mortar store shares the space with our National office in Modesto, CA. Our retail sales are an important fundraising source to support the mission. More distinctive gifts online and in-store include icons made in Russia, Greece and Ukraine and handmade rosaries and jewelry.



Just in time for unique faith filled gifts for Christmas, we have a **free shipping** special for all online orders through November 30! Enter ROSARY24 as the coupon code. www.store.vladmission.org



♥ Our most sincere gratitude to all who volunteered to speak on behalf of the mission during weekend Masses this year! Our priests can only cover so many weekends during their visits to the USA. They greatly depend on your help to share the work of our mission. We have one more mission preaching assignment this year. If you are in the area, we hope you can attend Mass the weekend of **December 14/15**, at **St Mary or Sacred Heart West Brookfield MA**

Our Mary Mother of God Mission Society board of Directors member, Fr. Doug Grandon, will be speaking.

♥ Interested in volunteering? You can be a mission speaker at parishes or a booth representative at Catholic Conferences. Please contact the mission office in CA for information. 209-408-0728.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas to All!

Vladivostok Mission
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From the development desk...

Dear Friends:

I'm helping Jessica with her Development Desk this month while she juggles work and the recent birth of her twin daughters, Emery and Eisley! Congratulations Jessica and Mason!



Above: Fr. Myron updates volunteers, Chris and Dawn Powers, with mission news.

> Bro. Edwin visits with volunteer Carol Scarpinati in Modesto, CA.

Fr. Myron and Br. Edwin Intan visited the mission office in Modesto, CA in early October. It was wonderful to see them again! Br. Edwin was able to meet the mission office staff and volunteers and experience the mission office operations from ground zero. Long time volunteers from our sister parish of St. Joseph Parish in Modesto gathered to greet Fr. Myron and Br. Edwin in the home of Don and Lulu Holm. Our sincerest thanks to Fr. West, Pastor of St. Joseph, Mr. & Mrs. Holm, and all the volunteers in Modesto for their hospitality and warm welcome!

It was a busy month for Fr. Myron! From California, Fr. Myron and Br. Edwin sped off to attend the annual Mary Mother of God Mission Society's Executive Board meeting in Chicago. Fr. Myron then continued on to speak at weekend parishes in Pennsylvania and Connecticut.



Thank you for all your prayers and support for the Vladivostok Mission!

God bless you.
 Vicky Trevillyan, USA
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