

Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Eighty Two March, 2025

A Pilgrimage in Vladivostok

Second Station: The Home of Fr Yurkevich

The last parishioner to see the pastor, Fr. Yurkevich, alive was Brother Zachariusz Banas, OFM. Returning from Poland to Harbin, Brother Zachariusz made a short stop in Vladivostok, since he had instructions from the Vatican to definitely find the bishop. The record is taken from the notes made by the Franciscan on March 19, 1931. Brother, with great precautions, went first of all to the church. Suddenly, on the road going up, he saw Fr. Yurkevich and called out to him. Fearing the attention of observers, Fr. Georgy explained that he could not invite a guest to his house for fear of a setup, since the house where he lived was full of enemies. Then Father briefly informed Brother about the state of affairs in the Vladivostok parish and expressed the bitter assumption that he himself would soon be arrested. In anticipation of his imminent arrest, he tried to have as little contact as



Father Georgy Yurkevich



The house where Fr Yurkevich rented a room and where he was arrested.

possible with parishioners and acquaintances, so as not to bring trouble to people.

Father Yurkevich was arrested on charges of committing a crime December 2, 1931. The priest was in pre-trial detention for two months and seven days. He was accused of espionage activities and connections with Polish and Japanese diplomatic workers, as well as systematic work against the Soviet regime. In addition, Fr. George was accused of speculation in currency and gold. The documents of the criminal case of Fr. Georgy Yurkevich indicate that during the first interrogations he denied everything, but, apparently, the investigation was conducted using such harsh methods that forced Fr. George to admit almost all the charges. The investigation ended on February 6, 1932. The priest was sentenced by the "troika" to 10 years in a Siberian labor camp, with confiscation of property. Parishioners continued to receive letters from him for some time, but letters ceased after eleven years. The location of his grave is unknown. The priest's ashes rest somewhere in one of the many unmarked mass graves that litter the Siberian landscape.

After the repressions against priests, there was no one to conduct masses in the cathedral, but the most stubborn Catholics continued to come to church. In 1932, the amount of tax was increased many times. The decision of the Presidium stated that "due to the refusal of the community of believers to maintain the building, the contract for the use of the building is terminated." Church property and documents were thrown into the cathedral courtyard. Since 1937, a wave of brutal repressions covered the parish and parishioners. Faithful Catholics

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us



Parishioner Leopold Kulga

still gathered for joint prayers, but in their own homes. The five most active were arrested in 1937. Anton (60 years old) and his son Valeryan (24 years old) Gerasimukov, Sigismund Brzezinsky (46 years old), Martin Malinevsky (58 years old) and Jan Strudzinsky (60 years old) were accused of participation in a counter-revolutionary organization and were sentenced to capital punishment which was carried out in Vladivostok at 6 p.m. on February 3, 1938.

Parishioner Leopold Kulga recalls that terrible time: "In the 1930's, an atmosphere of fear was constantly present in the family. The danger was especially felt when the arrests of close relatives and parents of my friends began. I remember especially vividly one night in 1937 when I woke up suddenly. The room was dark, it was deep at night, but mom and dad were not sleeping, but stood at the window in a large room looking at the street. And there were cars driving around, engines purring, headlights flashing and knocks on doors in houses." (The Pilgrimage will be continued in the next Sunrise.)

Prayer: *"God Almighty, we ask You to be with us on this pilgrimage. Help us to see Your hand and Your presence now and throughout our lives. Today, lead us along the path according to Your will."*

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

God-Given Mercy: Maria Egorova Larova

By Tatyana Shaposhnikova

Quiet, attentive, with kind eyes--this is how parishioners saw her when they came to church for Sunday mass. This is how orphans from the children's hospital knew her.

Maria Egorova Larova was born on March 8, 1937, in the small gold mining village of Semertak in the Amur region. The fate of the family was tragic. In 1935, a strong, hard-working, large peasant family was deprived of everything and sent from the Voronezh region to unknown Siberia. Having traveled through Siberia and having suffered a lot, they settled in the God-forsaken Amur region. Here they mined gold, built mines, settlements for workers and could find work. Her mother also came to this distant village to follow her fiancé. "My father got a job as a dragger at a mine, my mother did housework, sewed, knitted." She was a compassionate woman, always sharing her last piece with those who needed it more. There were 4 children in the family.



Maria as a student in med school

Churches were not built in gold mining settlements, and for many hundreds of miles around there was not a single church, not a single priest. And those were harsh times--the denial of God and the fight against religion. "But in our family - says Maria Egorovna - my mother remembered the words of prayers from memory and taught them to the children." She told us about her father, repeating his words: "God is kindness and mercy." The children never saw their grandfather, but they remembered his words forever.

The war reached the remote places of the Amur region. "In 1942, my father went to war and returned only in 1945, all wounded and sick. He took part in the battles against Japan near Khabarovsk, on Volochnaevskaya Hill, and was awarded the medal 'For the Victory over Japan'," continues Maria Egorovna, "My mother and I remained in

the village. All the hardships of wartime fell to our lot. During this difficult time, we lived with prayer, remembered the words of my grandfather and tried to live by his commandments. This nourished us with vitality and helped us cope with difficulties."



1990's parish Caritas volunteers with Maria

After the end of the war, Maria went to study at the village school. After finishing school, she got a job in the village of Tokur as a telephone operator to help her mother with the younger children. Her father died from severe wounds. "Since childhood, I have always remembered my grandfather's words: "We are needed by people who expect warmth, hope and love from us", recalls Maria Egorovna, "remembering this, I went to study to be a nurse at the Birobidzhan Medical School. After graduating from school, I returned to the village. I worked, gave people my warmth and care. Here in the village in 1958 I got married, children were born."

"In 1966 my family and I moved to the village of Kavalerovo," continues Maria Egorova, "my husband went to work as a hoist operator at the mine. There was always a desire in the family to do good, to be merciful to the weak, to the needy. After training, I mastered a new specialty-- I began to work as a seamstress, sewing clothes for people, acquaintances and all the family. And so my daughter, after school, decided to study to be a seamstress, graduated from college in Vladivostok. And my son studied at the Khabarovsk Institute of National Economy, now he works in Vladivostok."

"Everything would be fine, and the children grew up, and are healthy, and surrounded by kind people. But I realized that I lacked Faith, it was difficult to live without God, without God's mercy. In 1986, I came to Vladivostok to visit my children and was baptized in the Orthodox Church. And when I went home, it was hard without church. I started collecting books about God, copying prayers. But I missed live communication with priests and simply believers."

A year after her husband's death, in 1996, Maria Egorovna moved to her children in Vladivostok. She went to services in the Orthodox Church. But this was not enough, and "I so wanted to share my kindness, help, care. And God led me to a Catholic church," Maria Egorova continues. "One day, my neighbor Olga Voronina came and said 'let's go to a Catholic church for mass.' This was in 2000. I came and stayed! Every Sunday I went to classes, and carried out assignments for Caritas."



Caritas Director Lilia Silina with Maria and "her" hospital kids

"In 2002, I was admitted to the Church. I realized that this is my home, my family. Here I am next to God, next to selfless, sympathetic people who bring Christian love to all those in need." Maria Egorova was always there where it was most difficult, where patience, kindness and love, her life experience, were so needed. The sick, the elderly forgotten by their relatives, and small children deprived of their parents' love and care were waiting for her. "Our Baba Masha" is how her children affectionately called her. She had enough kindness and love for everyone. And



where did this woman get so much strength and mercy from?! Maria Egorova answered simply: "God gives to me, and I give to people." Not every good deed is a deed of mercy. Mercy is when good is done for the glory of God and for the benefit of one's neighbor.

She departed for God's Mercy on Good Friday, April 7, 2023 at 86 years of age.

News Notes

- Our Christmas "**midnight mass**" (actually at 8:00 pm) was really unique this year! All the electricity was out on Volodarskogo Street where we are located, so we had to have **mass by candle light** (and telephone flashlights)! Of course, the organ didn't work, so we sang to the tune of Sr. Stella's harp and a parishioner's violin! The church was packed to overflowing. It was really a unique event, but nobody cared—it was great! The children put on their skit well, too. Near the end of mass, the electricity came back on, so the Christmas tree lit up in time for the kids to get some candy beneath it from Pastor Fr Daniel Maurer, C.J.D. His sermon about our Christian vocation was very nice, too, so I repeated it at Christmas Day's daytime mass, which was also very well attended, even though it was a workday in Russia: December 25.

Then Fr Dan had **two more masses**, one in Spanish and one in English. They were also well attended, especially the English Mass. So, over all, it was the best Christmas mass attendance we've ever had here in our Vladivostok parish.

The Orthodox Church celebrates Christmas in January. Maybe our attendance was better because of the war??



Christmas kids at Annunciation Parish, Arsenyev

- **Fr Sebastian Dsilva** from Nakhodka checked into the Thousand Bed Hospital in Vladivostok on Christmas Day for a round of blood transfusions. He then checked into the Hillside Hospital in Nakhodka. We are hoping for the best for him. Prayers!!

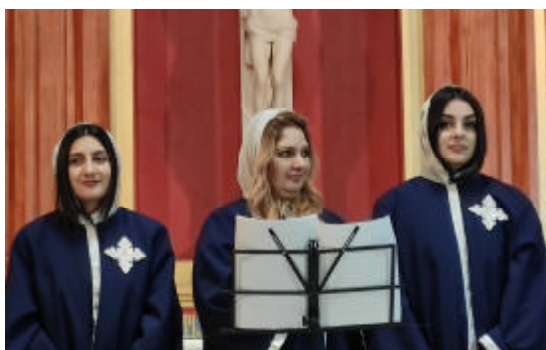


Christmas at Nativity Parish in Ussuryysk, with Brother Peter Nsamba C.J.D. and Pastor Fr. Vicky Samuel, C.J.D.

- We have a plan for the **Romanovka Parish of the Holy Trinity** which Fr Dan established 30 years ago. With pastor Fr Sebastian's illness, our Father Marcus David, C.J.D. has been serving the parish on weekends. Our Spanish Sisters of St Anne have been working with children there, daily, for 15 years, in an after-school program called "Trapinka" which the local population appreciates very much, since there are many single parents who don't get home from work until too late for the kids from school. The sisters own the premises where the program is held, but it can't be used for religious purposes because it is too near the buffer zone of the public school. We have two apartments in Romanovka and the Women's Support Center is located in one of those apartments, as is also the parish chapel in the other where mass is said, but now it is against government policies that chapels be in apartments. We also have a grassy field near the public market in the city center where we could build a church. So it seems that now is the time to build a church! See **"Giving Day"** below.

- Thank you, benefactors, for supporting our drive to **buy some used cars** for our work here in Russia! Donors, including an anonymous foundation, really came through for us, so we have accumulated the funds to buy three cars! Working on it! Stay tuned.

- January 11 was a good day for our parish and for the Christians of Vladivostok. With Covid mostly gone, we were able once again to host the **Christmas Festival of Christian Choirs**. Before Covid, it was always a happy event when Christians could get together to celebrate the birth of Jesus irrespective of their denominations. This year's choirs were from the Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches, and we were so happy that the Armenian Apostolic Church also joined us this year. The Festival was a roaring success with a full house of listeners from nearly every Christian denomination.



The Armenian Choir



Our Choir, directed by Oksana Nam



The Presbyterian Choir

- **Giving Day** for Mary Mother of God Mission Society is on March 25, the Feast of the **Anunciation** when the Blessed Virgin Mary became the Mother of God. This year the feast will actually be on the 25th, as Easter is so late in April. Our goal this year is for funding to build a small church for Holy Trinity Parish in Romanovka, Russian Federation. For 30 years already the parish has had its chapel and offices in an apartment. But now the Russian government has a law restricting group religious services from being in buildings designated as "residential". Years ago already the parish purchased land to build a church, so we have that already. The land is in the center of the village. So now we want to build a church there—Not a big fancy church, but something more suitable to the parish. Hopefully it will be a church with an attached social space for meetings and tea/coffee after mass and for celebrations like baptisms and marriages. Maybe an outbuilding for the mowing machine and snow removal equipment. We aren't sure yet of the sum needed, since planning is still underway, but our goal for Giving Day is \$60,000.. Meanwhile, the present apartment can be used for the priest, or for sisters, or for a maintenance person. Although Romanovka is a village, nearby are the cities of Balshoi Kamen and Fokina where Catholics live who also belong to Holy Trinity Parish. Mark your donation "Giving Day"! Thank you!

● **Fr. Joseph Stephen Hasieber**, a priest of the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana passed from this life on October 26th, 2024 at his home in Alexandria. Born in 1941, Fr. Hasieber was always proud of his Polish-Czech roots. He finished his seminary education at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Seminary and was ordained a priest on May 12, 1973. He served in many Louisiana parishes, and in the Louisiana National Guard and at a variety of hospitals before his retirement from active ministry in 2010. He was a great benefactor of Mary Mother of God Mission Society, having donated a large library of books to our seminarian program in Vladivostok. He was also a great donor of mass stipends for our priests in Russia. Eternal rest grant to him, O Lord!



Fr. Joseph Stephen Hasieber

A Short Story:

Fr Dan asked one of our employees to go to the train station to buy a ticket for him to Khabarovsk. “Oh, it would be impossible” was his reply. “My mother tried to buy a ticket yesterday and she had to stand in a long line and there simply were no tickets.” Disappointed, Fr Dan went to Ghennady to ask him to buy a ticket to Khabarovsk. In 30 minutes Ghennady was back with the ticket.

Vladivostok Sunrise Edited and produced in Russia by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D. Printed in Modesto, California by Parks Printing. Assembled for mailing by St Joseph Parish, Modesto, California. Color theme this month: Blue from the pants of Maria Egorova’s “hospital child” on page 3.

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

Office in Russia: Phone +7-423-226-9614
Fr Myron: myron.effing@gmail.com
Fr Daniel: vladcanonsregular@gmail.com
Office in California: Phone: +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.

Baby Talk

From the Women’s Support Centers



“Don’t tell me you’re not ready for Spring!”

Elizabeth May 17, 2024

Opportunities

♥ **Day of Giving!** As we celebrate the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on **March 25th**, we also celebrate our third **Day of Giving!** Our first year we reached our goal of purchasing a much-needed van for our Vladivostok parish, and last year we reached almost 60% of our goal to establish a new Women's Support Center in Artyom. This year our goal is to begin funding for a small **Church for Holy Trinity Parish** in Romanovka. We hope to raise **\$60,000**. Please see our Day of Giving insert for additional information.

♥ Fr. Myron celebrated his 84th Birthday this past February 7th and Fr. Dan will celebrate his 74th birthday on March 5th. As our priests get older, we continue to prepare for their future with our **Priests' Health and Retirement Fund**. If you'd like to help care for Fr. Myron, Fr. Dan and our growing priest community in Russia in their retirement years, please note, "Priests' Retirement Fund" on your check or donate online at www.vladmission.org under the "Priests' Health and Retirement" dropdown.



♥ Looking for something new to add to your next Easter Dinner? Look no further, because we've got you covered with our **Abundant Blessings Cookbook!** Try a new recipe from the hundreds offered in our heirloom cookbook including *Easter Borsch* found in the Europe Main Dish section. And don't forget St. Patrick's Day! We have a great recipe for *Corned Beef and Cabbage* also in the Europe Main Dish Section.



♥ Help prepare for the Lenten and Easter Season with **religious items** from our online store. We carry many books, rosaries and icons to help you reflect deeper during

15% OFF Sitewide

this prayerful time. Think ahead for Easter gifts as well with ideas based in our Faith. Check out our online store, **Gifts of Faith**, by visiting www.store.vladmission.org. Easter gift? Use the coupon code **LENT** to save.



♥ As we reflect on Jesus' sacrifice and the first mass this Lententide, let us also remember our loved ones who have passed. You may **Request Masses** for your loved ones or special intentions during this Lenten Season to be celebrated by a Canons Regular In Jesus the Lord priest. You or your designated recipient will receive a Mass card. The Suggested Mass stipend is \$15.

My Name _____

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

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

♥ We have a few conferences coming up that we would like to attend, but still need volunteers to help man our merchandise table or pass out mission literature including this very newsletter. If you are interested in any of these or if you might know of a conference near you, please call Vicky at our Modesto CA office at 209-408-0728.

- 4/25-27 IRL National Meeting, Mundelein IL
- 4/4-5 Ignited by Truth, Raleigh NC
- 4/25-26 Marian Conference, Hendersonville TN

Continued from Page 8: We are deeply grateful to the dioceses, parishes and parishioners for all the support they provide our mission through our parish visits. If you would like to know more about becoming a sister parish or would like a visit from one of our priest or missionaries please contact our mission office in Modesto, 209-408-0728. God bless you.

Jessica Trevillyan, US Mission Office
usoffice@vladmission.org

Vladivostok Mission
 Mary Mother of God Mission Society
 1736 Milestone Cir
 Modesto CA 95357-0835

Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Modesto CA
 Permit No. 19

Return Service Requested

182 ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Vladivostok Pilgrimage #2	Page 1
God Given Mercy	Page 2
News Notes	Page 4
Baby Talk	Page 6
Opportunities	Page 7
Development Desk	Page 8

From the development desk...

Dear Friends:

Every year Fr. Myron and Fr. Dan visit parishes throughout the US to inform parishioners of their works in Eastern Russia. When possible, we love to schedule visits to our Sister parishes as well, to give a personal update to those who have been such a great support both spiritually and financially over the years. Last year, Fr. Dan was able to visit three of our Sister parishes where he concelebrated Masses and updated parishioners on the latest from Vladivostok.



Fr Dan reuniting with a parishioner he baptized in 1994. They drove 5 hours to see him.

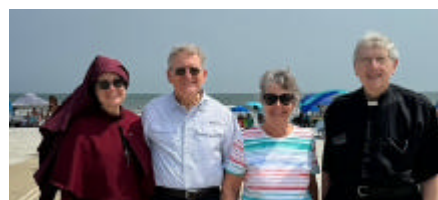
His first visit of the year was to Immaculate Conception, (IC) in North Little Rock which is the home parish to one of our board members, Susan Grey. IC has been a great support to the mission for the last 20 years! Fr. Dan's first visit to their parish was

in 2005. Since then, IC has been instrumental in the growth of our mission with consistent financial and prayerful support to their "twin" parish, Most Holy

Mother of God Parish in Vladivostok, as well as hosting plaza sales where volunteers have sold Russian icons and gifts sent from the mission office, becoming missionaries right from their own parish. Several IC parishioners have traveled to Vladivostok to serve.

Fr. Dan's second visit was to St. Martin de Porres in Prosper, TX which is our most recent sister parish and home to Michael and Rebecca Jacobsen, who are long time supporters. They have visited Vladivostok on a mission's trip. This blossoming sister parish has a special interest for the Sisters in Jesus the Lord since their US convent is relatively close. Their second collections often help support the Sisters joint work in Russia too.

Fr. Dan's concluding visit was to St. Gregory the Great in Bluffton, SC where Mr. and Mrs. Whittier, parents to



Fr Dan at Hilton Head during his visit SC with Mother Stella and her parents

Mother Stella, reside. Because of the connection, Mother Stella was also present during this weekend visit- luckily too as Fr. Dan was unable to finish his talk due to Covid.

Continued on the bottom of Pg 7.