

Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

'DenduU Issue Number One Hundred Eighty Three May, 2025



Bishop Kirill Klimovich and the three new deacons. Deacon Pradeep Mulupuri, C.J.D. from India, Deacon Peter Nsamba, C.J.D. from Uganda, and Deacon Edwin Intan, C.J.D., from the Philippines. Also in the picture, Fr. Marcus David from Pakistan, Fr. Myron Effing from the USA, Fr. Daniel Maurer from the USA, Fr. Patrick Napal from the Philippines, and Fr. Vicky Samuel from Pakistan.

Deacon Peter (33) received his St.B. in Theology degree at the Loyola School of Theology in Manila, Philippines. He is currently one of the "movers" behind our ministry to university students in Vladivostok, including many medical students from Africa studying at the Far Eastern Federal University on Russian Island.

Deacon Edwin (52) is the most experienced who completed his bachelor's degree in Business Administration at San Jose Recolitos University in the Philippines, and then the seminary ABTheology degree at the Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay, Philippines. His life experience included years of work in Japan and in South Korea, so he knows those languages, too, besides English, Russian and several more languages. His passion when he is in the Philippines is working with charitable organizations to help the needy street people and those suffering from typhoon damage.

Three Deacons Ordained!

April 6, 2025 was a great day for us in Russia! Three new deacons were ordained for our work in Russia! Hopefully they will be ordained priests in several months. It was a first for all of Russia that three deacons would be ordained at one holy mass. Guests came from most of the parishes that we serve here, and Mother Theresa's sisters came from Sakhalin Island for the ceremony.

Deacon Pradeep (34) was born in Denduluru, India, and finished the seminary in Pune, India. When he is in India he enjoys working with orphans who live in an orphanage that his relative operates. When he is with us he often helps with driving for the priests as he is a good and experienced automobile driver.

It is interesting to note that both Brother Peter and Brother Edwin were orphaned as children, Brother Edwin parents having been killed in an automobile accident, and Brother Peter's during warfare in Africa. Bro Edwin was raised by his grandmother, and Brother Peter by another family in their parish.

Thanks, Benefactors, for your help supporting our new deacons during their seminary years. Pray for their soon ordination to the priesthood!



Some guests at the ordination celebration

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us

A Pilgrimage in Vladivostok

Third Station: The Mass Gravesite



Fr Myron saying Mass at the site, probably in 1993

This was at the site of mass executions in the suburbs of Vladivostok. This place is marked with a Memorial Cross and a Memorial Stone. The initiator of the installation of the Cross in 1992 was the historical and educational human rights society “Memorial”, created at the suggestion of our parishioner Jadwiga Zelinskaya, whose father and brother were repressed. The pastor of the Roman Catholic parish, Fr. Myron Effing and Orthodox Pastor Fr Valentine of the Pakrovsky Parish consecrated this memorial place. The graves of those executed remained secret for decades. It was only in the 90s that several places of executions and mass burials of those repressed on the territory of Vladivostok became known. And how many similar execution pits are still located along the old fortress roads of the 2nd River!

Unfortunately, the Memorial to the Repressed is not an object of cultural heritage and is not in the municipal property of the Vladivostok urban district. The pilgrims



Parishioners at the site in 2024

prayed for those who were deprived not only of their lives, but also of their resting place.

In 2009, a mass grave containing human remains with a distinctive bullet hole in the head was discovered near the monument during construction of a federal highway. Specialists from the Primorsky Regional Bureau of Forensic Medicine confirmed that the remains found belong to victims of political repression. On November 3, 2010, 495 people with a total weight of about 3.5 tons were reburied in 56 coffins in a mass grave in the northern section of the Forest Cemetery in Vladivostok. A cross was placed on the grave. In August 2013 A Memorial to the Victims of Political Repression was opened at the reburial site. In addition to the monument, the memorial complex at the forested cemetery included the Chapel of the Resurrection of Christ. Pilgrims lit candles in the chapel and laid flowers at the memorial. (To be continued.)

∴ “Merciful God and Father, we have gathered here to remember all those who became victims of political repression. We pray for them whose earthly remains are buried here, and for their families, relatives and loved ones who suffered injustice.”—Fr Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

Tea After Mass

By Deacon Peter Nsamba, C.J.D.



Tea after mass in Holy Trinity Parish in Romanovka, with Brother Peter in the background.

Tea after mass, known as “**Чаепитие**” in Russian is the power of Christian hospitality and community in fostering faith, unity, and a sense of belonging in the catholic parishes here in the Far East of Russia. It highlights how simple traditions, such as gathering for tea after worship, extend the spirit of the Church beyond the liturgy and into daily life.

Tea after mass beautifully illustrates how a simple act—sharing tea after the Eucharist—becomes a profound expression of Christian fellowship. This

tradition, deeply rooted in the early Church's agape feasts, reflects the timeless values of hospitality, love, and spiritual nourishment. In a world where individualism often isolates people, these gatherings provide a space for genuine connection. They welcome newcomers, deepen friendships, and encourage meaningful discussions on faith, everyday life experiences and challenges. More than just a post-Mass ritual, they reinforce the idea that the Church is not just a place of worship but a family.

This tradition reminds us that faith is not only about solemn rituals but also about everyday acts of kindness and communion. Through something as humble as a shared cup of tea or coffee, the spirit of Christian brotherhood is kept alive, offering warmth, encouragement, and a sense of belonging that transcends time and circumstance.

At its core, tea after mass is a call to embrace the small but significant ways we can live out our faith—through community, hospitality, and love. It is a testament to the enduring strength of Christian unity, proving that even in the simplest moments, the heart of the Church beats strongest.

Faith in the Midst of Suffering

by Brother Lazar Iqbal, C.J.D.

Philippians 1:29: *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.*

One day, I was watching reels on Facebook, and while scrolling, I came across a video in which a man was mocking Christianity. The video showed a pastor healing a sick person sitting in a wheelchair. On the other side of the video, Pope Francis was shown sitting in a wheelchair. The man who was mocking Christianity said, "Here he is, sitting in a wheelchair, while his followers are healing other people."

This video made me reflect that he is not the only person who thinks this way. There are many Christians who lose their faith because of this kind of mentality. They don't understand what it truly means to be faithful. They believe that since they believe in God, everything will go smoothly in their lives. But when things don't go according to their expectations, they lose their faith after watching such videos.

In order to be a true follower of Jesus Christ, this mentality must change. The life of a faithful Christian is not a bed of roses; it is full of difficulties. Therefore, one must not lose heart during difficult times. Instead, one

must remain perseverant. A Christian does not run away during tribulation; rather, a Christian chooses to remain faithful in times of suffering.

"Let us understand that God is a physician, and that suffering is medicine for salvation, not punishment for damnation" (St. Augustine) We must keep in mind our Lord Jesus Christ, who was tempted on the cross to avoid pain. But Jesus endured the pain to fulfill God's plan for our salvation. Often, we think that because God is with us, there will be no problems in our lives. But, my dear, even in the very presence of God, we face difficulties.

Mark 4:35-41: That day, when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down, and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Therefore, we need to make a choice: we must live by faith in times of suffering, and then God will save us from every harm. Maybe we are facing many problems in our worldly lives, but a time will come when we will be in the presence of God and there will be happiness. A faithful person is not discouraged by the tough times of life. Rather, they hope in Almighty God.

News Notes

● Note from Kazakhstan from Fr Filipus Lasa, C.J.D.:

"I received a new assignment from the Bishop, namely to handle one of the parishes whose parish priest had returned to Italy because he had entered retirement and his contract with the Karaganda diocese had expired. So, currently I am helping in three parishes at once.

Practically serving Mass in two different parishes every Sunday and serving in the Basilica on weekdays. This task is a bit difficult for me because I have to serve in three faraway places in one day.

"We lost two priests in this diocese. One returned to Poland last year to join one of the religious communities there. The other returned to Italy this month due to retirement age and the completion of his contract with the Diocese. (News Notes continued on bottom of page 4.)



2024 Adopt-a-Birth Babies

From the Women's Support Centers
Thanks, Benefactors, for your help!

There are more and more jobs, while there are fewer and fewer priests. We have difficulty managing time for our own needs in the community, such as cooking, washing, cleaning the house, etc. Father Augustine Brusen, C.J.D. was gone for June to arrange a permanent visa for Kazakhstan. While he is gone it gave me more jobs to do." Pg 5

[Maybe we will be able to send more priests to Kazakhstan from our seminarians? Pray for vocations, and thanks for supporting our seminarians.—ed.]

● On December 27th our **Sisters in Jesus the Lord** held their annual Christmas party for the **Vladivostok university students**. We hosted the party in our convent on Russian Island and the guests generously either brought their own dishes or helped us cook ours! We sang multiple Christmas carols in several different languages!

On January 1st, we showed **“It’s a Wonderful Life”** to the students and had a very fruitful discussion afterwards, as many of the students themselves had questions about life and God’s unique purpose for them.

Also, on January 3rd, we hosted our annual ice-skating event for them on the Island. This Christmas Season, we put on an informal music concert for the patients at a **mental hospital**. We were so touched when one of them begged us not to leave and even joined our ensemble for part of the concert!

We also we attended the New Year’s celebration at **Tropinka**, the after-school center in Romanovka sponsored by the Sisters of St. Anne. We sat with the children during a visit from Grandfather Frost (the Russian version of Santa Claus), ate lunch with them, and then played and sang with the children for the last several hours!

Sister Faustina has continued giving **catechism lessons** to a Nigerian student who was a Pentecostal, as well as to an Indian student who wishes to convert from Hinduism, and also to a Downs pupil.

● News of the Parishes of Ussurysk and Arsenyev

By Rev Vicky Samuel, C.J.D.

January in the Catholic parishes of the Nativity of Christ in Ussurysk and in the parish of the Annunciation in Arsenyev was associated with the final departure of the Franciscan monks of the Order of Friars Minor of St. Francis of Assisi. The service of the Franciscans was replaced by priests of the community of Canons of Jesus the Lord from Vladivostok. By the decree of the Ordinary of the Diocese of St. Joseph, Bishop Kirill Klimovich dated September 5, .2024, I, Father Vicky Samuel, C.J.D. was appointed new pastor of these parishes.

Father Vicky was born on February 25, 1986 in Jamke-Chima, Sialkot, Pakistan. He received his primary education, was enrolled in a state high school and after graduating took a philosophy course at a Franciscan monastery. Then he spent 4 years of theological studies at

the Catholic Institute of Theology in Karachi, Pakistan. Inspired by the work and mission of Fr Myron in Russia, Vicky came to Vladivostok in 2018. Here he entered the novitiate and took his first monastic vows. In April 2021, he was ordained a deacon by Bishop Kirill Klimovich at the Cathedral of the Holy Mother of God in Vladivostok and then to the priesthood in August of the same year.

The parishes in Ussurysk and Arsenyev were registered in 2000 by the Apostolic Administration of Eastern Siberia (Bishop Jerzy Mazur) and became part of the Vladivostok deanery. Fr. Myron Effing C.J.D. was appointed first pastor. The first parishioners were elderly Catholics baptized in western Russia.

Since 2001, Franciscan monks have been serving in the parishes. A little history. The order was founded by one of the greatest saints of the Catholic Church - St. Francis of Assisi (John Francis Bernardone / Giovanni Francesco Bernardone). When Francis heard the Gospel about how the Lord Jesus sent the Apostles to preach about their life in poverty, he found his own calling and mission in these words. He girded his tunic with a white rope and began to preach conversion. Soon others began to join him. In 1209, the brothers, led by Francis, went to Pope Innocent III for approval of their way of life. That year is considered the beginning of the Franciscan Order. The brothers began their apostolic service in wanderings, which was new for the Church. Franciscans were sent to various places to serve the Church, thus giving rise to missionary charism.



Arsenyev Parishioners

The first Franciscans in the Primorsky Krai in modern times were brothers Dominic and Peter from South Korea. In 2001, the parishes of the Nativity of Christ and the Annunciation were registered with the justice authorities and the Franciscan Fr. Christian Lobanovsky was appointed pastor. Two years later, Fr. Dominic returned to Primorye as a priest and was appointed pastor, having received the blessing of Pope John Paul II for service and

charitable work. With the service of Fr. Dominic, charitable work based on prayer, humility and love was widely developed, so in 2005 the implementation of the main project began - the construction of a shelter for the homeless "Tau" in the city of Ussurysk. The parish house, where the shelter, chapel, monastery and living quarters are located, was blessed in October 2007 by His Grace Bishop Kirill Klimovich. Franciscan Brother Stefano Invernizzi, a man with many virtues, was appointed manager of the shelter and the parish. The Tau Charity Center has become an open gate through which God embraces a person in need of help. He sends him his Mercy through lodging, food, medical and social assistance. The Franciscans have also implemented Christian charity programs: "Social Canteen" for low-income pensioners and disabled people; the annual festival-competition for people with disabilities "Autumn of Hopes with Tau", projects for schoolchildren and disabled children "After School". Interfaith meetings and spiritual seminars are held in the Ussuri parish.



Ussurysk Parishioners

In 2012, Fr. Raphael Nevolnik was appointed rector of the parish, in 2014 Fr. John Gibbons, in 2016 Fr. Cyprian Vishnevsky, since 2018 the last Franciscan priest Fr. Gracian Piotrowski has served. The Franciscans created the Christian spirit of the community, united by faith. Using the example of the successful work of the shelter, they showed the true love of Christ for the needs of the disadvantaged. With the departure of the Franciscans, the spirituality and traditions that have lived in the parish for many years will be preserved by the new rector Fr. Vicky Samuel and multiplied by Christian virtues.

- We have a wonderful volunteer who is writing and preparing a **new website** for the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord (C.J.D.) who head our Russian mission as well as missions in Indonesia and Vietnam. But she isn't familiar with the technical side of making a website. We would be grateful to a volunteer who knows the technical side to help her and us. You can write me at Myron.effing@gmail.com.

Baby Talk

From the Women's Support Centers



"Now I lay me down to sleep!"

Yegor January 3, 2025

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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/>

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Russian language: www.catholicvl.ru

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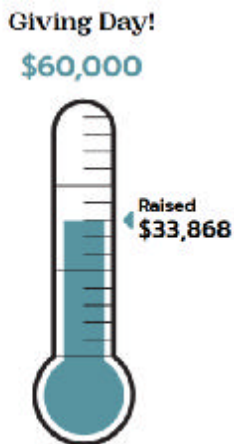
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Mary Mother of God Mission Society is listed in the Official Catholic Directory under the Diocese of Stockton, CA.

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

Opportunities

♥ Thank you to all who participated in our third annual **Giving Day!** We are so grateful for your kindness and generosity in helping the parishioners of **Holy Trinity** parish in **Romanovka** build a modest **church building**. So far, we have raised over half our goal. Hooray! Fr. Myron can continue Phase I of our project: Selecting a Builder, the Design & Planning, and of course Permits & Approvals. You may continue to help us with our endeavor by noting GIVING DAY with your mail in donations or donate online by selecting Giving Day, the fourth drop down option under Designate your Donation.



♥ We are continuing to fundraise to establish a Women's Support Center in Artyom. We have reached 56% of our goal of \$35,000 so far. If you would like to donate please note **Artyom WSC** on your checks or in the note section of your online donation choosing Women's Support as the designation.

♥ Make a donation in honor of **Mother's Day** by designating your gift to help support our current



Women's Support Centers in Vladivostok, Nakhodka, Lesozavodsk, and Ussurysk. Each center averages just under \$1,000 in expenses per month. Our Women's Centers provide counseling, medical referrals, vitamins, and other assistance to women seeking an alternative to abortion. In addition, we provide information on a range of topics including fetal

development, post-abortion syndrome, family values, and breast feeding. Our Centers also provide support to mothers at the time of birth as and care directly after. Through our Women's Support Centers we

have been able to help save the lives of over 3,000 babies.

♥ Would you like to help spread the word about the mission by manning a table at a **Catholic conference** near you? Pass out mission literature or sell religious items, including: Russian icons, handmade rosaries, and book covers and tote bags made of retired vestment. The sales made help offset the cost of attending conferences and is a great way to bring attendees to our table. For more information on becoming one of our conference representatives contact Vicky at our Modesto office by phone, 209-408-0728, or email, vicky@vladmission.org. Here are a few upcoming conferences in need of representatives. Will we see you there?

- **May 24-25** NCRC, San Francisco CA
- **June 21** A Day of Recollection, Fremont CA
- **August 16-17** SCRC Convention, Anaheim CA
- **Sept. 5-6** Eucharistic Congress, Charlotte NC
- **Sept. 25-28** Catholic Answers, San Diego CA
- **Oct. 11** Catholic Women's Conf., Lansing MI
- **November 7-9** Marian Conference, Gaylord MI

♥ Offering a mass is a great way to support our priest. You may **Request Masses** for your loved ones or special intentions to be celebrated by a Canons Regular of 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, include the address you would like your card sent to:

1 _____

2 _____

♥ Visit our online store, **Gifts of Faith**, at www.store.vladmission.org

for the perfect Mother's or Father's Day gift. Use our coupon code **FAMILY15** to save 15% off your cart!



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From the development desk...

Dear Friends:

Fr. Dan is coming to the United States next month!



Would you like to meet him and hear how current events are affecting life and the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia? How about an update on our programs including our Women's Support Centers and our Seminarian Program! You may

have already heard, three of our brothers were ordained to the diaconate on April 6th. Our deacons will be ordained to the priesthood before we know it!

Every year Fr. Myron and Fr. Dan return to the US to visit parishes throughout the country. Their visits serve as a great way to spread the word of their works in Eastern Russia in a personal, face to face way. Whether their parish visit is an assignment given through the Missionary Coop Plan of a diocese or an invitation from a sister parish, these visits allow our priest to reach parishioners, who otherwise would not know about our growing Faith in Vladivostok and its surrounding towns.

Fr. Dan will speak during all Masses during seven weekends and special offerings will be made. Will he be visiting a parish near you?

- **June 8** All Souls, S. San Francisco CA
- **June 15** Immaculate Conception, North LR AR
- **June 22** St. John of the Cross, Vero Beach FL
- **June 29** St. Philip the Apostle, San Francisco CA
- **July 13** Sts. Peter and Paul in Petersburg, IN and Blessed Sacrament in Oakland City, IN
- **July 20** Coronation of Our Lady, Grandview MO



Our long time Board Member, **Fr. Doug Grandon**, of the Arch-diocese of Denver, will also be speaking about the mission this summer! Mark your Calanders.

- **July 20** St. Joseph, Princeton IN & Holy Cross, Fort Branch IN
- **Aug. 3** St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Hellertown PA

Many Blessings to all of you!

Jessica Trevillyan USA Mission office
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