



Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Eighty Six November, 2025



Participants in the Conference, with organizer David Byelozorov, bottom right

The 27th Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference

The 27th Youth Conference, held at the Immaculate Conception parish in Khabarovsk had the theme “Evangelization and St. Paul”. The participants from all over the Far East and even some from Siberia, Africa, India, and the Philippines. They learned about St Paul’s writings in the Bible and his method of evangelization with an eye to the need for evangelization among the youth of today. Participants were college age youth as well as experienced missionary priests and sisters. The leader of the conference was our Vladivostok parishioner David Byelozorov, a professional musician and talented organizer. Held the week of July 21, the annual event is a great experience for the youth of that age group who are often busy during the school year with their professional studies. Also included is a program by our Women’s Support Centers about marriage plans and natural family planning. As usual, some participants spoke about a possible vocation to the priesthood. We’ll look forward to next year’s 28th conference to be held in Vladivostok.

Lesozavodsk Kids Visit Vladivostok

The Lesozavodsk Parish of the Visitation of Mary with Elizabeth is a five hour drive from Vladivostok, so we can only have Mass there once a month. That isn’t much time to work with the ill parishioners and adults as well as the kids. Our solution is to bring the kids to Vladivostok for an intensive experience each year. Not only do they visit our parish for Mass and prayers, but it also gives them a chance for expanding their experience beyond the little town where they live. So here they also visit the oceanarium, the zoo, the ocean, the submarine, and even hear a pipe organ for the first

time. They also enjoy their first ride on a train, as they come and go by railroad. Thank you benefactors for making it possible for them to come to us and have a wider view of the Catholic church!



The Lesozavodsk kids and their parents and chaperones.

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us

My time in Romanovka

By Ivan Brewer

I am from Brampton, Canada--a city about 45 minutes west of Toronto. I proposed to join the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord in Russia in September, 2024, but departed this past June in order to rejoin the Seminary in Toronto. Among all the great people and memories that I made during my time in Russia, one of the main ones for me was in Romanovka, a town about an hour and 20 minutes east of Vladivostok. In that town they have what they call Tropinka. It is open between Tuesdays and Saturdays, where the local children gather for meals, games, socialization, or simply a home away from home. In my time there, some of the best memories I have are from playing sports with the kids of Tropinka.



Ivan (lower right) and Tropinka kids

During the warmer weather, we would play basketball or soccer at the local stadium and that stadium would then change into a hockey rink in the winter where we would play hockey or enjoy a nice skate. Playing together gave everyone a chance to get outside, get fresh air, and have a memorable time. I have played sports all my life.

The opportunity to try to be a witness to Christ in a small town in Primorsky Krai, doing what I love to do, with the people whom, I hope to serve as a priest one day in God's timing, was a dream come true. I am very grateful for having a chance to serve in Romanovka consistently throughout my time in Russia. I am especially grateful to the director at Tropinka for her hospitality and welcoming me there. The people there I will not forget, and I hope and believe I will see them again!

Remember Mary Mother of God Mission Society in your will!

A Pilgrimage in Vladivostok

Sixth Station: The Bishop's Grave



The cemetery chapel where Bishop Slivovksy's last rites were carried out in 1933, as it looked in 1991.

The bishop's last rites were carried out about a mile from his house in Sedanka's little cemetery chapel of St John the Baptist, and he was buried next to the cemetery chapel, which is on the territory of the Orthodox bishop's compound. Imagine the parishioners' shock when they discovered that the bishop's grave had been violated, and his crosier and ring had been stolen from his body! It was decided to rebury him in a different grave.

The last name, first name, patronymic and dates of life were written on the sign in Polish. Parishioners often



The bishop's wooden grave cross with his name and date of death, January 5, 1933.

visited the grave. But soon fate scattered them around the world.

With no stone tombstone, the exact location of the grave was forgotten, and the cemetery was overgrown with grass, and since 1924, it was turned over to a recreation and physical education center for schoolchildren, later to a club, and in 1929 to a “special purpose” school with a high double fence made of barbed wire was located here. All the old tombstones were removed and used in the foundations of the nearby buildings, as was common in the Soviet Union, since the tombstone often contained crosses, and, in any case, were a memorial to the deceased—The communists only wanted to plan the future, not to know the past.

The cemetery chapel of John the Baptist was in terrible very dilapidated condition until it was repaired by the Orthodox Sisters of Mercy whose convent now uses the old Orthodox bishop’s premises. Then the construction of the federal highway and low-water bridge in 2009 nearly destroyed the cemetery territory. There is no map of the cemetery that we can find, so Bishop Slivovsky's grave has been lost.



The chapel with our pilgrims in 2025.

Candles were lit and prayers offered by Fr. Daniel and the pilgrims near the chapel walls, not only for Bishop Slivovsky, but also for all Catholics buried without Catholic rites. (To be continued.)

“Merciful God, in the revolutions and wars of the 20th century, many of Your faithful disciples practiced their faith and tried to help their neighbors. They found themselves without the possibility of the consolation of the clergy or the service of church rites. Hear their prayers.”

Pre-Russia Catholicism in the “Russian Far East” (1845-1862) Part 4

We continue historical materials from Vladivostok Sunrise #185 about the presence of early Catholic missionaries in what is now the Amur region of the Russian Federation where Mary Mother of God Mission Society is helping today.

When the Russians were settling the coast near Waite Island in the early 1860s, they learned from the natives of the brutal murder of a French Catholic missionary. As Christian believers, they erected a cross on the small island where Labruniere's grave was and called it the Island of the Slain. This sign of sorrow became known to many Siberian travelers, who treated it with respect. Mr. Weber met several native children in Nikolaevsk who wore medallions and small crosses taken from the martyred missionary as jewelry, and the women adorned themselves with silver earrings made of crosses and crucifixes. One of the murderers subsequently sincerely



Gulak Men

repented of his deed and returned what remained of his share of the loot: jewelry, a silver vessel, the remains of a thermometer, and two compasses. In addition, Mr. Weber, together with Russian soldiers and three leaders of the Kilimi villages, judged the murderers. At the conclusion of the trial, a deed of reconciliation was signed, one copy of which was given to the Kilimi and the other to Mr. Weber. It read as follows: "In the thirtieth year of the reign of the Emperor Tao-Kuang, Mr. Weber and Ch'en Fu-Chou came to demand satisfaction for the murder committed in the thirty-sixth year (note: the calculation is apparently carried out according to the native calendar) of a missionary named Pao (name of Labruniere) by people from three villages: Arkong, Seiling, and Houtong."

Peace was concluded on both sides. The above-mentioned villages "undertake not to harm in any way the missionaries who come by boat in summer or by sledge in winter, and to treat them as brothers. The relatives and friends of the priest Pao, for their part, promise not to avenge the murder committed in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Tao-Kuang." The act of fulfilling these obligations was drawn up by both parties in the presence of translators who were responsible for ensuring their fulfillment. Then Signatures. Witnesses. Executors.

This was the end of the tragic story of the French missionary Paul-Maxime Labruniere, who fulfilled his missionary purpose to the end. He lived only 31 years, always moving forward, fulfilling the will of God and his duty. "Oh, poor and holy missionaries! The Lord saw your suffering in Manchuria and Russia, he counted your steps on the icy roads of the Sungari and Amur," Bishop Verol would later write.

"Dear Sirs, do not refuse my request to pray for me, standing before the altar in the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. Apostolic missionary Labruniere." The End.

*Translated from French to Russian by Alexander Litavrin
Text and editing by Tatyana Shaposhnikova; English
translation from Russian by Google.*

More than 170 years have passed since those distant events. Today's Catholics of the parishes of the Khabarovsk and Amur regions should not forget in their prayers the first missionary priests, whose selfless service carried the banner of Christ into this land, and which sometimes ended tragically.

-- Tatyana Shaposhnikova.

Baby Talk

From the Women's Support Centers



"Do you think Santa would take me on as a volunteer?"

Alice February 14, 2025

News Notes

- America is having a new experience with **Islam**, a situation somewhat similar to Russia's in the 18th century when, as a result of the war between Russia and the Ottoman empire, new territories and states were added to Christian Russia from the Turkish Empire. Perhaps the best known of those Moslem territories known to Americans are the Crimea, and Tatarstan with its capital city of Kazan where our saintly Bishop Slivovsky was pastor before he was transferred to Vladivostok. It would be interesting to know how religious peace was established in those territories in Russia at the time of Catherine the Great, as it might give ideas for America today.

Maybe we will be able to help! Our priest Nikita Kushnarev, C.J.D., is studying in Rome at the Pontifical

Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies. He finished his first study: “Bridges to the World of Islam: First Translations of the Quran in XVIII century Russia.” The first translations of the Quran into Russian were not always of the best quality. If you would like to read the English translation of his article, just send me an email: Myron.effing@gmail.com

- Most of Europe and America are facing a **vocation crisis**. We are blessed, however, that young men still write to us wanting to join our mission in Russia. Many inquiries come from India, Pakistan, and Africa, and we have also received good vocations from Vietnam, the Philippines, and Russia itself. This year three men from our Primorye parishes have expressed their desire for the priesthood. Our problem is seminary education: Where? Nearby seminaries are few. Travel is expensive. Tuition and living expenses have to be paid. The Russian language has to be learned. The war in the Ukraine keeps some men from being able to get visas for coming to Russia to study or to serve. Thank you, benefactors, for continuing to make priestly vocations possible for us!



Dmitri being anointed with chrism at his baptism

- **About our champion** Our Primorky Krai karate champion Dmitri, the grandson of our Lesozavodsk parish trustee Vladimir, was recently baptized on Easter Sunday in Vladivostok. Now Dmitri has been invited to Japan for the international karate championship.

• **About our work with youth**

Dear David,

I am thinking that your analysis of the **needs of youth today** is probably very good, as you are a youth and I am an old man. If I look at our situation, this is what I see:

- We have our every **Friday night program** for university students, and we get up to 40 people for a program and then supper. Some of the attendees are not Catholic or even Christians. The C.J.D. American sisters started this program.
- There is the **Thursday night program**, attended mostly by youth parishioners, but others are welcome. The Spanish sisters started this program.
- We do an annual **retreat for children** from Lesozavodsk and Arsenyev—5 days-- and the Youth Conference every year.—6 days.
- There are restrictions on what we can do based on the Russian **law against missionary activities**. What we do on our own property is okay.
- Some parishes are totally **deficient** in evangelization work. We need to help them get started.
- Our Spanish sisters run the **Tropinka program** for after school activities for children in Romanovka for probably 20 years already, but they are forbidden to do anything religious because the building is owned by the government. We are planning to build our own building there so we can do religious work with kids.
- Our Vladivostok children's **Sunday School** is now running okay with new leadership and more investment of resources.
- From the very beginning of our work in Vladivostok we paid attention to **music** and its meaning in religion. Fr Dan wrote our own hymnbook so that it would be dogmatically correct and yet fun to sing. We also have the public organ concerts, and helped other parishes to get good organs and organists. We helped train musicians for other parishes. We sponsor the ecumenical Christmas and Easter concerts. We have invited volunteers and seminarians from other countries to help us. We had our own concert choir until the government paid more for public choirs than we could afford to pay.
- We have not been handicapped by lack of interest or lack of ideas, but my rising costs, **competition from government agencies and government schools**, and lack of personnel

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: Black in mourning for the many parishioners who died or were killed during the Russian Soviet revolution.

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

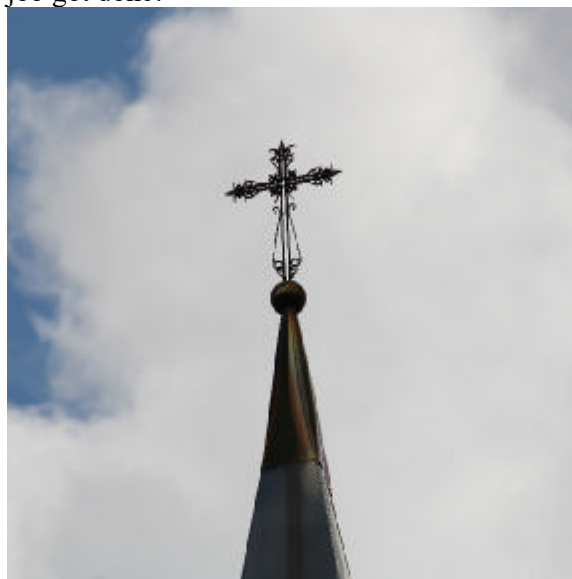
PO Box 576216

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.

job got done!



A photo of the crane

● **“Lift High the Cross!”** September 14 was the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Our new **steeple crosses** to replace those which fell to the ground last winter were blessed on the Feast, and prepared for installation. Here is a photo of them laying before the altar with our relic of the True Cross between them. It was a gift of the Archdiocese of St Paul and Minneapolis many years ago, formerly the property of a deceased “Father True”. They were installed on September 23! Here is a photo of one of them! What a process to put them up! Two men in a box on a long crane did the job! They were hampered by winds, and by the remains of the old crosses which still lay on top. But the

● Pray for our priests! Fr Sebastian DSilva, Pastor in Nakhodka and Romanovka is doing better after receiving a pacemaker. Fr Markus David, C.J.D., Assistant Pastor in Vladivostok, has been hospitalized for a difficult internal infection. And pray for our three deacons as they prepare for ordination to the priesthood, hopefully before Christmas. We need priests because we now care for all the Catholic parishes in our state of Primorye, the size of Wisconsin—Seven parishes.

Opportunities

♥ **Giving Day!** Thank you to those who have supported our 2025 Giving Day goal of raising funds for a modest **church building** for our parishioners in **Romanovka**. We will continue to accept donations as we navigate through Phase I of our project. We continue the work to rezone the land and do architectural designing.

♥ **Catholic Conferences** We are always looking for inspired ideas to fund raise and spread the word of our mission in Eastern Russia. One way that has greatly helped with both of these goals is attending **Catholic conferences**. Our representatives pass out literature and man tables or booths at Catholic conferences throughout the United States. They pass out our mission literature or sell religious goods



including Russian items, like icons, to help support the cost of attending each conference. They are able to speak to so many fellow Catholics about our Church in Russia. Sound like fun? Great! Because becoming a representative is as easy as contacting our conference coordinator, Vicky at vicky@vladmission.org. We are only able to attend conferences with your help! Know of any near you or maybe you're close to one listed below we hope to attend.

- Nov. 7-9 Marian Conference – Gaylord, MI
- November 20-22 National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), Indianapolis
- December 6 Bethlehem Market – Turlock CA
- January 1-5, 2026 FOCUS SEEK Conference - Denver CO
- February 19-22, 2026 Archdiocese of Los Angeles Religious Educators' Congress – Anaheim CA

♥ **Abundant Blessings Cookbook on Sale!**

An exceptional Christmas gift for the kitchen, coffee table or library. Your holiday buffet table will be a hit year after year. Your guests can travel around the world with lip smacking Indian cuisine of homemade **Garlicky Humus** (p 3) paired with **Guarani Indian**

Bread (p 193). Then scoop up some **Italian Mini Meatball Soup** (p 45). Move up the Irish coast to savor **Potato Farls** (p 98) made in the old Irish tradition. Whip up creamy and delicious **Bolivian Huancaína Sauce** (p 194) to smother over your favorite white fish. How about **Costa Rican Tilapia?** (p 191). Head further north for generous scoops of **Texas Wyoming Mexican Casserole** (p 255). Soar across the Pacific with **Jumbo Shells Seafood Fancies** (p 204) on your plate! Your strawberries will never taste better when served with **Russian Cream** (p184) or as **Strawberries Romanoff** (p 185). Visit the African coast for delicious **Apple Flappen** (p 140). Still hungry? Don't stop there! You have 484 more international recipes to prepare from our *Abundant Blessings* cookbook. Plus, our book is filled with pictures of our mission, many pages of cooking substitutions and guides, and many helpful hints for the home.

A unique gift! Just in time for your Christmas giving our *Abundant Blessings Cookbook* is on sale for **\$25**. That's up to an \$8 savings on each book you order! This price includes shipping and handling in the continental USA. Proceeds go to support our Women's Support Centers and our Seminarian program. Get your copies for friends and family this Christmas! Order through our online store store.vladmission.org, by check/cash or call our mission office to order by phone, 209-408-0728.

♥ Offering a mass is a great way to support our priests. You may **request Masses** or special intentions for your loved ones that will be celebrated by our 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 _____

Vladivostok Mission
 Mary Mother of God Mission Society
 PO Box 576216
 Modesto CA 95357-0835

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

Return Service Requested

186 ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

2025 Youth Conference	Page 1
Lesozavodsk Kids	Page 1
My Time in Romanovka	Page 2
Vladivostok Pilgrimage #6	Page 2
Old Russian Far East #4	Page 3
News Notes	Page 4
Baby Talk	Page 4
Opportunities	Page 7
Development Desk	Page 8

From the development desk...

Dear Friends:

As we head into this Advent Season, I can't help but reflect on all the wonderful people our mission has to be grateful for including our board members, volunteers, and of course you! All the hard work, generosity, and prayers offered for the mission and our community in Vladivostok are seen and felt through the works being done in Eastern Russia.

This year our annual board meeting was held in Modesto, CA where our national office is. Six members were able to meet



Board Members: Fr. Steven Bauer, Tyler Kolden, Fr. Daniel Maurer, CJD, Terry Kopp, Jessica Trevillyan and Fr. Doug Grandon

in person while the remaining members, including Fr. Myron, joined via Zoom. This year was a little different as Fr. Dan was able to participate in person. Fun Fact: this was Fr. Dan's first ever in person board meeting.

Having our board meeting in Modesto allowed for some of our newsletter volunteers from our sister parish, St. Joseph, to gather with our board members for a potluck. A special thank

you to our hosts, Don and Lulu Holm for offering their home for our activities as well as hosting our board members and meeting at your home.

Your hospitality is deeply appreciated. We are so glad for the opportunity to gather and hear all about the updates in Russia first hand from Fr. Dan. Please keep him, Fr. Myron, and the people of the Far East in your prayers. Thank you all for your continued support and many blessings to all of you!

Jessica Trevillyan USA
 Mission office
usoffice@vladmission.org,
 209-408-0728



Board members and sister parish volunteers



Fr. Dan