



# Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission

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

Issue Number One Hundred Ninety July, 2026

## Our Organ Concerts of Sacred and Classical Music

*By Rev Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.*

Although Fr. Myron and I grew up in the Midwest USA as members of Catholic parishes that had pipe organs, when we arrived in Vladivostok in February 1992 to begin the process of reviving the Roman Catholic Church in the Russian Far East on February 11, 1992, we had not thought about a future pipe organ for the parish. We still needed to try to get the Catholic Church building back from the government. After the persecution of religion, our church, built under very difficult circumstances from 1902 until 1922, had been confiscated and converted into the state government archive building – with the addition of three steel and reinforced concrete floors in the interior.

The second week we were in the city, Fr. Myron arranged for a meeting with the state governor to talk about the possible return of the church building and property. It was a large meeting, with the governor and other officials, state and city historians, the director of the state archive, and also the person who was put in charge of a 20-year-old, unsuccessful government project to replace the archive by turning the church building into a government-owned organ concert hall.

Some people at the meeting were in favor of the return; others were very much opposed. Fr. Daniel said that if the building was returned to the church, he would ensure that there would be an organ in the church within a year or a year and a half at the most, and the parish would be happy to have organ concerts for the public. Some people took note and were quite interested. Others were still very much opposed. It turned out that the governor was in favor of returning the building to the church. One year and eleven months after the meeting, on January 1, 1994 (the major feast day of the parish) we received the building and land back as our own parish church property on the condition that it only be used as a church and that it could have organ and sacred music concerts open to the public. It was the first pre-revolutionary Catholic Church building in Russia to be officially returned us Catholics.

For the first two years of Mass in our church (1994-96) we bought a small and later a medium size portable synthesizer -- with 6 organ voices that could only be played one at a time, not mixed together. In 1995 we received a surprise gift of a large, used electric Rodgers church organ (two manuals, full pedals, 32 stops) in very good condition, a gift from our sister parish of Epiphany Catholic Church in Coon Rapids, Minnesota (suburb of Minneapolis), which had acquired a pipe organ. They even took up a collection to raise money to ship their old organ to us. It was placed in our choir loft and “re-inaugurated” by our parish organist, Marina Shuyanova (later Omelchenko) at the Easter Vigil in April 1995.

Marina had studied piano for 17 years in Vladivostok in the highly regarded Soviet music school system, but the



*Fr Daniel and Marina Omelchenko and the  
Epiphany organ*

Epiphany organ was the first organ she had ever seen in her life. With it she prepared to play six sacred organ compositions at our first concert, in November 1996 – in honor of the return of our beautiful, historic, pre-revolutionary, three-quarter life size marble Crucifix.

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us



*The large crucifix used behind the altar in all three of our successive Catholic churches*

Around the 1940's the crucifix had been "loaned" by the communist government to the Vladivostok Art College for students to learn to draw the human figure. That was the first organ concert in the Russian Far East. It took the city of Vladivostok by storm. So, we held a second concert in early 1997, no charge. More than 300 people showed up, but we had only 230 seats. After the third free concert for which more than 500 people came, we realized we had to start selling tickets in advance so that we could limit attendance to the number of seats available.

It also became clear that we needed a more versatile organ in order to perform the huge inventory of spiritual and classical organ masterpieces. On a mission preaching visit to the parish of Stella Maris on Sullivan Island in Charleston, SC in 1998, I met the pastor, Msgr. Lawrence McNerny, J.C.L., who had just installed a new pipe organ in his church's choir loft. When he learned that our Vladivostok parish needed a state-of-the-art, 3 manual electronic organ, Msgr. McNerny approached some parishioners, who generously and immediately gave us enough money to buy a state-of-the-art, three manual, Rodgers Trillium 927 (150 stops!) It was installed in our church in the second-floor transept in 1999. With it, we



*Celwin Tagle of Diego Cera Pipe Organ Builders, Fr Trummer, Marina, and Fr Dan seated before the Diego Cera pipe organ.*

could finally invite highly talented organists from Russia and around the world for our expanding concert series.

At a week-long Russian Catholic parish organist workshop in Moscow, Marina met the organizer, an amazing Austrian priest, Fr. Johann Trummer, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Graz, who was also the founder of the Music University in Graz and founder of the Diego Cera Pipe Organ Builders in Manila, Philippines. He arranged for us to order the pipe organ that we have today: the Diego Cera Opus 25 (two manuals, pedals, 23 stops). Paid for by donations from friends, family members and benefactors from Vladivostok and America, it was installed near the sanctuary, on the restored ground floor of our church's south transept in the spring of 2015. It was then and still is today the only pipe organ in the Russian Far East in a radius of over 2500 miles! With it, our concert series of religious and classical music has continued and expanded. We have hosted world-famous organists, instrumentalists, solo singers and vocal groups from around the globe, including Russia, Belgium, France, Vatican City, England, Spain, USA, Philippines, and Japan.

On April 25 and 26 we had our first concerts of the 2026 season. All the tickets were sold and what a triumph it was! World famous organist Hiroko Inoye came from Japan to Vladivostok, her third time with us, for the two concerts. She completed her doctorate in organ performance in Moscow. Hiroko amazed the audience, not only with her talent as an organist, but also with her choice of music! It was the first time many in the audience had heard music for the organ developed from Japanese themes, and it was truly amazing. The audience could hardly stop applauding!



*Organist Hiroko Inoye and pastor Fr Myron*

We congratulate our parish's first professional organist Marina Omelchenko, who originally recommended Hiroko to us 5 years ago. Marina has now been the titular



Alexei Parshin, 1957-2025

organist of the Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Moscow for more than 20 years, but she never forgets her introduction to organ playing here in our church in Vladivostok 31 years ago, when she became our head “organist” using a small 6-stop synthesizer! After 7 years here, she went on to study two advanced organ degrees in Graz,

Austria and then completed her doctoral degree in organ performance under the tutelage of the greatest organist in Russia, the late Alexei Parshin. For 20 years Marina has been the main director of the largest organ concert program series in the world – at the Moscow Catholic Cathedral, where she must find organists, direct and arrange three sold-out organ concerts each week (except during Lent and summer vacation). It is she who has recommended to us all the famous, stellar organists who have performed at our Vladivostok parish organ concert series. Thank you, Marina for your ongoing recommendations of amazing professional and highly talented world-famous organists. We also continue to invite Marina to come from far away Moscow to Vladivostok - 4000 miles away by air! - to perform concerts for us twice a year. And need we say that our organ concerts bring many people to the Catholic church who might never otherwise get acquainted with us?

## Gratitude to Our Dear Benefactors

*By Brother Sandeep Golla, C.J.D.*

I am Sandeep Golla, a seminarian of CJD, and I have just completed my first year of Theology in India. With a heart full of gratitude, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all my dear benefactors who have been supporting me in my journey of formation. Your generosity is not just a help to me materially, but it is a blessing that touches my life deeply. I come from a simple family, and without your support, it would be very difficult for me to continue my studies and formation. Through your sacrifice, I am able to receive good education, proper guidance, and spiritual formation. You are truly a part of my vocation.

Every day, as I attend my classes, participate in prayers, and grow in my spiritual life, I remember you. Your kindness gives me strength and encouragement. It

reminds me that I am not alone in this journey. There are people like you who believe in me, pray for me, and support me with love.

Formation in CJD is not only about studies. It is about becoming a person of faith, discipline, and service. Here, I am being trained to grow closer to God, to understand the needs of people, and to prepare myself to serve the Church with dedication. This transformation would not be possible without your constant support.

The mission of CJD is very effective in the areas where it is present, and I feel very happy and proud to continue this mission. It is a mission filled with love, service, and commitment to the people of God. In a special way, I am inspired by Rev. Fr. Myron, who is my greatest strength and inspiration. Through his teachings and guidance, I have learned many valuable life lessons. Being with him and learning from his example has helped me to grow stronger in my vocation and more dedicated to my mission.

Personally, I feel very blessed to be part of the CJD community. It is a place where I am learning not only theology but also how to live as a good human being. The community life, prayers, guidance from my formators, and the brotherhood I share help me to grow every day. I am becoming more responsible, more prayerful, and more committed to my vocation.

Dear benefactors, your sacrifices are great. You may be helping me by giving from your own needs. You may also be praying silently for me every day. Both your financial support and your prayers are equally important. Without your prayers, my formation would not be complete. I believe that your prayers protect me, guide me, and strengthen me in times of difficulty.

I promise you that I am using this opportunity well. I am studying sincerely, praying faithfully, and preparing myself to serve God’s people in the future. One day, when I become a priest, I will carry your intentions in my heart and prayers. Your kindness will continue to bear fruit through my ministry. I also pray for you and your families. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity. May He grant you good health, peace, and joy.

May your lives be filled with His grace, just as you are filling my life with hope.

Once again, thank you for your love, support, and prayers. You are not just my benefactors you are my partners in this beautiful journey of formation.

With gratitude and prayers,  
Sandeep Golla, CJD  
Seminarian



# Historic Moments...

## January 17, 2000

*By Alexei A. Gartmann*

"For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20

On January 17, 2000, six faithful Catholics, including myself, became the official founders of our still-active Catholic Parish of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in Khabarovsk, Russian Federation.

Our establishment of the Catholic parish in Khabarovsk on January 17, 2000, was preceded by several years of regular meetings, baptisms, confessions, and Holy Masses, conducted by Father Myron Effing, who regularly traveled to Khabarovsk from Vladivostok.

It was Father Myron who inspired a group of like-minded people to revive the Catholic parish in Khabarovsk. It was thanks to him, guided by the Holy Spirit, that the still-active Khabarovsk Catholic Parish of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was founded.

From an early age, as far back as I can remember, I was drawn to Christ, even though I still unconsciously felt myself within the bosom of the Catholic Church, never wandering or seeking another embodiment of Christian identity. Back in the distant 1970s, I listened at night to the "radio voices" that proclaimed the Word of God through the crackling static, reading chapters from the Divinely inspired Book—the Bible. I put what I heard onto paper, drawing biblical stories from the creation of the world to Golgotha.

And then, in the mid-1990s, my grandmother Antonina saw a newspaper ad about a Catholic gathering and Father Myron's next visit to Khabarovsk. Thus began my journey to Christianity, my El Camino Real. On April 12, 1996, I received the Sacrament of Baptism through Father Myron and became an active member of our Christian group, and subsequently one of the founders and permanent members of the parish.

January 17, 2000, became the official date of the establishment of the Catholic parish in Khabarovsk. It had in fact been founded by us and sealed by Father Myron long before that date—back in the first half of the 1990s, as soon as the revival of the Catholic Church in Russia became possible.

Of those six founders, only I remain a permanent participant in the life of the parish today. Two have already died, and the rest have been scattered throughout the world. But both we and our first priest, Father Myron, will forever be inscribed in the history of the Khabarovsk Catholic parish as its founders, who, during the difficult years of the end of the last century, stood at the origins of the revival of Christianity in the Russian Far East.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND MANY YEARS TO YOU,  
KHABAROVSK CATHOLIC PARISH OF THE  
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN  
MARY!

Christ is Risen!

Today I renewed the vows that I made in Baptism in the Name of the Lord through you 30 years ago.

Thanks be to God that I found YOU and the Church in my life...

Always yours in Jesus the Lord

Alexei with LOVE



*Alexei today in the Khabarovsk church*

## Ussuryk on February 6, 2000.

"Thanks to Fr McGuire's Mission Share of Kentucky we have funding to buy a parish apartment in Ussuryk. The city is near the Chinese border and so it is a major transportation center between Russia and China. It is the second largest city in our state, but we are just starting the parish there because we had to start the parishes further away from us first--in an emergency Ussuryk people could come to Vladivostok. We've had the first two meetings and the first mass there. There are ten Catholic families that we have found so far with which to begin the parish.



*Some of the attendees at the first mass in Ussuryusk, February 6, 2000. Alexei A. Gartmann in the middle.*

“But an interesting thing happened in late February. One of the Lutherans from Ussuryusk called me to ask for an appointment. When he came on Thursday, he came with his pastor. They said that they and 18 other Lutherans want to become Catholics! The pastor had studied in Rome at the Lateran University and is a Russian citizen. His parents have themselves become Catholics, and now he also has decided. Most of his parishioners were baptized earlier as Orthodox, so technically, if they become Catholics they will belong to the Eastern Rite.

“This should speed the development of the parish in Ussuryusk for which I have proposed the name "Nativity" in honor of the 2000<sup>th</sup> birthday of Jesus when the parish is being founded, and in honor of Nativity of Our Lord Parish in St Paul, MN, which has been our most active sister parish for many years already. Among the former Lutherans there is already a choir director and an organist. The Office to Aid the Church in Eastern Europe in Washington has offered to buy a keyboard/organ for the parish. With your prayers and God willing, the parish will develop quickly.”\*

\*Quotations from the original *Vladivostok Sunrise* 32 article. Historically the Catholic church in Ussuryusk had thousands of parishioners, most of them were Polish soldiers served by Polish army chaplains who were here to defend the railroad and the territory during the revolution.



*Is this the historic church in Ussuryusk? The address is correct, based on archival documents. It is certainly not a*

*normal house. The building does not match the foundation on which it sits.*

## News Notes

- Sorry for the late news, but December 7 in 2025 was a happy day for our CJD community in Vladivostok. Three men joined our community as **novices**. With the vocation crisis in America and Europe (including Russia!) we need vocations to provide for the Catholics of the huge territory which is the Russian Federation today. Novitiate lasts one year, during which time they live and work with us as they consider their vocation in our religious community and learn the Russian language. After the year they can take their first vows, and then go on to attend a seminary to



*Novices Francis Chabu (from Zambia), Jose Vipin (from India), and Meinrad Andrew Tindwa (from Tanzania). They all have their bachelor's degrees in Philosophy, and Brother Francis has completed the seminary already. He is helping us by teaching adults in our parish who speak English.*

prepare for priesthood. Naturally, before priesthood they will be ordained deacons. These new novices already have some years of seminary behind them, so we wish them well during their novitiate program and then to finish the seminary.

- **The Bishop's House** Father Karl Slivovsky, the pastor of Most Holy Mother of God Parish in Vladivostok, was named bishop of the Vladivostok Diocese on February 2 in 1923. His diocese covered the whole Russian Far East, with parishioners mostly of Polish heritage, but actually people from many European lands. He oversaw the construction of the Vladivostok cathedral during the post World War I era, and then, when the Communist revolution scattered his flock and many died by firing squad or were shipped off to prison camps to die there, overworked and under-nourished, finally, he himself was exiled outside of Vladivostok and forced to live in a one-room addition to the former home of the Japanese Consul in the village of Sedanka. He dared not

have any public services and had no source of income, except a few Catholic families who dared to help him. He was found dead in his room on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1933 by a neighbor. A few parishioners dared to pray around his rough coffin in the nearby tiny cemetery chapel and they buried him, only to have his grave robbed for his ring and crosier. His body was then re-buried in a different grave. Although we have his grave certificate, we don't know where his grave is, because we haven't found a cemetery map. That is why we are so interested in the house and the room where he died all alone and without the benefit of sacraments.

located on land which would make a beautiful place for a future "St Joseph Parish" church.



*The painting "Dacha of the Japanese Consul on Sedanka" was painted by Vladivostok artist Gennady Pronsky in 1991, probably from a photograph. "Dacha" means "summer home."*

More recently there was a fire in that house, so it needs major repair, but both it and the surrounding grounds are now for sale. Parishioners would like to buy the house and land, and make it a place of pilgrimage since we don't know where his grave is. Parishioners consider him a martyr for the faith, since he had been abandoned to die without medical help or consolation or sacraments. We need to make a decision, and where would we get the money to buy the home and repair it? Actually, it is



*Photo of the bishop's house from the 1990's*

**Baby Talk**  
From the Women's Support Centers

**"This eye works better than the other one!"**

**Gabriel December 28, 2025**

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

## Opportunities

### ♥ Meet Br. Jackson Malik CJD



I am from Pakistan. Recently, I completed my final examinations at the National Catholic Institute of Theology in Karachi. At the moment, I am waiting for my results, and my graduation is scheduled for June. I am currently in the final stage of my formation before priestly ministry.

I have been part of the CJD community since February 2019. I was deeply inspired by the missionary spirit of the congregation and its dedication to serving people with faith, love, and compassion.

I believe that life without purpose is meaningless. For this reason, I chose to follow Jesus Christ in order to discover the purpose that God has placed in my life and to understand what I have been created for.

I come from a strong and devoted Catholic family. My father served as an elder in the Church, and my siblings have also been actively involved in different church ministries and activities. Because of our family's close relationship with the Church, priests who visited our area often came to our home. From childhood, I grew up in an environment of prayer and faith.

As I grew older, I noticed the deep commitment of my parents and family toward religious life, especially through their faithful participation in Holy Mass every Sunday and other parish activities. Gradually, I also became involved in Church programs. Since childhood, I have had a special devotion to the Holy Rosary-- inspired by my grandmother, who faithfully prayed the Rosary every night before going to sleep. Her example left a deep impression on my spiritual life. Through prayer, the loving support of my family, and the guidance of priests and religious, I gradually understood that God was calling me to the priesthood.

Before entering religious life, I studied in the medical field and had the opportunity to assist doctors during surgeries. Because of this experience, I still feel a special closeness toward sick and suffering people. Even today, I enjoy visiting hospitals with priests to meet patients, encourage them, pray for them, and help prepare them to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

I enjoy spending time with people, participating in parish activities, and reading biblical and theological materials. I also enjoy playing basketball, living community life, and working with youth in pastoral ministry.

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♥ If you would like to help **sponsor a seminarian**, please contact our mission office!.

♥ **Giving Day** This year our Giving Day fundraiser is in support of our wonderful seminarians like Br. Jackson. We have raised **\$27,428.52** so far to help with our seminarians' tuition, living and travel expenses back and forth to Vladivostok. As a reminder, it costs us ~ \$10,000 per year to support one of our seminarians for a full year, which is a fraction of the cost for support of a seminarian in the US. If you would like to help, please note **Giving Day** with your donations!

♥ Take a look at our **Mission Appeal Schedule** for this year. Come out and hear our speakers share about the struggles our Catholic Church has overcome and still face in the Russian Far East. A special offering will be taken after each Mass for our mission.

**July 11/12** Holy Spirit, Maryland Hts MO – Fr. Doug

**July 11/12** St. Joseph, Evansville IN – Marilyn

**July 18/19** St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington IN – Fr. Doug

**July 18/19** St. John Neuman, Mt. Laurel NJ - Bruce

**July 25/26** St. Philip, Mt. Vernon IN – Marilyn

**July 25/26** OL of Las Vegas, LV NV – Fr. Luis

**Aug 1/2** St. Peter Claver, St. Louis MO – Fr. Doug

**Aug 22/23** Saint Joseph, Dallastown PA – Fr. Doug

**Aug 22/23** Holy Child Jesus, Chicago – Fr. Vincent

**Aug 22/23** Sacred Heart, Irvington NJ – Bruce

**Aug 22/23** Immacolata, St. Louis MO - Tyler

**Aug 29/30** Saint Peter, Elizabethtown PA – Fr. Doug

**Aug 29/30** Saint Paul, Ramsey NJ – Bruce

**Sept 5/6** Holy Redeemer, Evansville IN – Marilyn

**Sept 19/20** St. John Paul II (Our Lady of Good Hope /St. Henry / St. Mary of the Assumption, Miamisburg / Dayton / Springboro OH, Fr. Doug + Ally

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**190 ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS**

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Organ Concerts           | Page 1 |
| Gratitude to Benefactors | Page 3 |
| Historic Moments         | Page 4 |
| News Notes               | Page 5 |
| Baby Talk                | Page 6 |
| Opportunities            | Page 7 |
| Development Desk         | Page 8 |

## From the development desk...

Dear Friends:

Summer is here and so begins our 2026 Mission Appeals!

Every year our mission society applies to the dioceses within the US for participation in their yearly Propagation of the Faith, Mission Cooperation Plan. We send out our request letters, fill out applications, and send in any documents required for consideration. This year we have been invited to speak within 18 different dioceses and visit over 35 parishes! What a great blessing to be able to connect parishioners throughout the US to our Catholic Church in the Russian Far East. We use this opportunity to request prayer and financial support for our charitable programs, seminarians, and funding for our Women’s Support Centers.

Fr. Dan will be quite busy this summer preaching at parishes throughout the US, many of which will be in California. Check out his schedule to see if he will be at a parish near you!

### 2026 Mission Appeals Fr. Daniel Maurer, C.J.D.

|      |                |                                      |
|------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 7/5  | Los Angeles CA | St. Francis of Assisi                |
| 7/12 | Rio Vista CA   | St. Joseph                           |
| 7/19 | Allendale NJ   | Guardian Angel                       |
| 8/2  | Chicago IL     | St. Vincent de Paul                  |
| 8/9  | Harrisburg PA  | Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament        |
| 8/16 | Fort Lee NJ    | Madonna Parish                       |
| 8/23 | Stockton CA    | Cathedral of the Annunciation        |
| 8/30 | North Hills CA | Our Lady of Peace                    |
| 9/6  | Arcadia CA     | Annunciation                         |
| 9/13 | Redding CA     | St. Joseph                           |
| 10/4 | Odessa TX      | St. Elizabeth Ann Seton              |
| 9/27 | Gonzalez TX    | Sacred Heart, St. James, St. Patrick |

More dates and speakers can be found in the Opportunity section!

Many blessings to you all!  
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