

Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

Issue Number One Hundred Ninety One September, 2026

Summer Spiritual Activities for our Parishioners

By V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

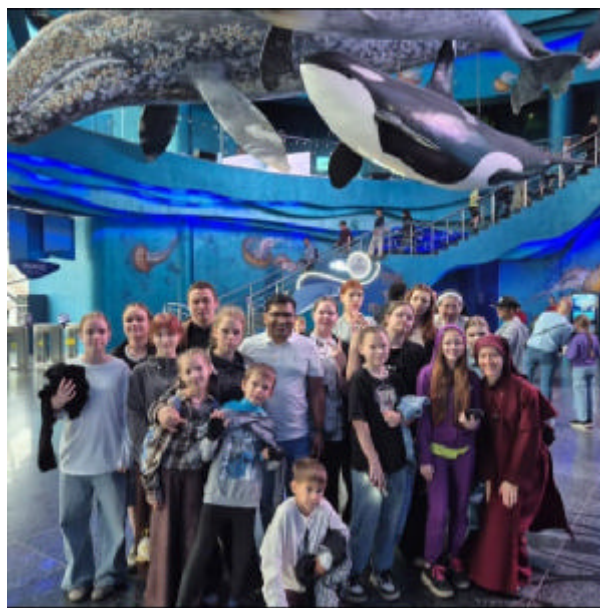
In the last week of June we had the first of our summer spiritual activities for our parishioners. Sister Veronica and Fr Stephen from Transfiguration Parish in Blagoveschensk brought kids from their parish to join kids from our parish for a retreat at the CJD Sisters' convent on Russian Island, here in Vladivostok. The retreat topic was "The Life of Moses and the Ten Commandments." But it also gave the kids a chance to visit our parish for Sunday Mass, and to visit the oceanarium and the nearby zoo to see the animals. (They don't have an elephant at the zoo yet, which was always my favorite when I was a kid. But they do have Siberian tigers and many other animals.) Our Fr Hubert was the chaplain for the retreat and our Bro Andrew was the captain for the boys.



Sister Veronica and kids with Russian Island in the background

We are planning for the events ahead including the retreat for the kids from Arsenyev, Ussuryisk, and

Lesozavodsk.—And then the really big event at the end of July--the **Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference** which already has 70 youths signed up from Siberia and the Far East! Biggest ever! We'll have to find more cooks for the event, and we hope the sisters' building on Russian Island will be big enough! The topic this year is Love and Marriage. It is scheduled for the last week of July.



The kids at the oceanarium

The 28th Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference

By Alina Baginskaya

The 28th Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference was held on Russian Island in Vladivostok From July 28 to August 2. Its main theme was "Love and Marriage According to God's Plan." The group of nearly 60 people was warmly welcomed by the Community of Canonesses, who had long dreamed of accommodating everyone in their home.

Participants came from various parishes: Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Arsenyev, Lesozavodsk, Yakutsk, and elsewhere. The guests and hosts of this meeting were staff members of the Family Center of the Transfiguration

Most Holy Mother of God Pray for Us

Diocese in Novosibirsk. Sr. Yuliana Gotkovskaya from the Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit in Kemerovo, and Mark and Alina from Baginskiye, Tomsk, Siberia, who are ministers of the "Marital Encounters" movement.



Gathering in a discussion group

The first day included introductions, conversations, and an introduction to upcoming topics. Alina and Mark shared their love story and spoke about their joys and challenges on the path to marriage. On the second day, Sister Yuliana presented on various topics. The most memorable was the presentation on "Spirit. Soul. Body," which focused on the idea that God works through the Spirit and that the task of a believer is to be renewed by the word of God. Then there was group work, where young men and women discussed their misunderstandings and then shared them.

After lunch, there was a rich program at the Vladivostok Oceanarium! In the evening, there was adoration, during which much reflection was made on forgiveness.



And evening lecture

On the third day, we reflected on the gift of reverence and how we can give to others what we possess. And if we ourselves are God's gift to others, then it is important for us to master ourselves. In our group work, we discussed our ideal boyfriend or girlfriend and what we don't understand about the opposite sex. Lunch was on the beach at Cape Akhlestyshchev. Our plan to stay outdoors until evening didn't work out due to the weather, so it started raining almost immediately upon arrival, but it didn't stop the participants from having lunch, swimming, and even playing ball in the sea in the downpour. In the evening (after everyone had dried off), a prayer evening



On the mountain overlooking the city

was organized with hymns from various parishes.

The fourth day was dedicated to Mark and Alina's testimony, which covered the various facets of their marriage, the power of marriage in church, natural family planning, and much more. The central theme was that marriage is not a restriction, but a powerful opportunity to build a strong family on a solid foundation. This day also saw the beginning of a question-and-answer period, which participants submitted anonymously. The questions varied widely, primarily focusing on various aspects of married life and preparation for it. After lunch, there was a program in Vladivostok itself, including a tour led by Tatiana Shaporichka, the parish archivist and local Catholic historian, and Holy Mass at the Church of the Holy Mother of God.

On the penultimate day, Saturday, there was a presentation on the beauty of the world's creation and on feelings. The main idea was that people should be loved and things used, whereas in the modern world, the opposite is often true. The evening featured the long-awaited "Talent Show," which featured everything from a classical piece by Tchaikovsky to Pakistani dances. There were songs in a variety of languages, funny skits, and a performance by little Veronica, Mark and Alina's

daughter. Throughout all of this, the unity of the universal Catholic Church was felt—we are all different, but we are united with each other and with the Lord.

I would also like to note that each day began with Morning Prayer and ended with Evening Sermon. Each day included Holy Mass, as well as an opportunity for confession and spiritual conversation. Despite the busy program, there was time for fellowship, singing, and walks. After the main program, during the debriefing, participants were asked to reflect and answer two questions: 1) What were the main thoughts/ideas I took away from this meeting? 2) How am I feeling as I leave? It was interesting to listen to everyone's thoughts including: "It's great to have a vision of the ideal



marriage, but it's important not to let it become your 'god'; be prepared for anything." and "Love is more about choice than about feelings." - "Marriage isn't just about restrictions and work, but also about the joy of the relationship."

- "Nothing works if we don't pray, if we don't examine our conscience, if we don't turn to God for help."

- "Life is a gift from God, and understanding this, we must understand that we must take care of ourselves and not give it to everyone. Give ourselves to someone worthy."

- "If God is in a relationship, it seems to move in a more positive direction; that's the power of the sacrament of marriage."

The feelings with which the participants left also varied: from joy to a touch of sadness. Mostly, it's gratitude, inspiration, hope, and faith in love.

Huge thanks to everyone who supported the meeting prayerfully, organizationally, and financially. And to God for bringing such wonderful people together in one place. Next your ins Yakutia?

Vladivostok Sunrise Edited and produced in Russia by V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D. Printed in Modesto, California by Parks Printing.

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/>

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

First Holy Communion in Vladivostok Church."



Two boys and two girls made their first communion on the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Most Holy Mother of God Church, Vladivostok..

On the Feast of Corpus Christi we had four children receiving First Communion this year. Our children's catechetical program got a new boost from new premises and a new teacher, "Marina". She is a professional grade school teacher, and the kids just love her. She gets help also from the Spanish sisters who work in the social program in the Romanovka parish. Here is a photo of Sr Evegenia with the girls singing a hymn at their first communion.



The Boys receiving Holy Communion

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Sister Evgenia and the girls singing a hymn



Yulia and a girl doing the Prayer of the Faithfull

News Notes



Fr. Peter Nasmaba, C.J.D., the new Prior

- After Fr. Myron Effing's 85th birthday in February the Vladivostok community of the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord, at Fr Myron's suggestion, decided to **elect a prior** to serve as superior of the Vladivostok community. Fr Myron continues as the C.J.D. Superior General with communities in Russia, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Vietnam, and as President of the Mary Mother of God Mission Society. The election was completed on June 10 when Fr Peter Nasmaba, C.J.D. was elected Prior of the community. He is from Uganda but finished the seminary in the Philippines. He has been working in Russia after taking his solemn vows in 2023 and being ordained a priest in Vladivostok in 2023. Congratulations, Father Prior, and God bless your new ministry!

- Br. Jackson Malik, CJD, completed his theological studies at the National Catholic Institute of Theology in Karachi, Pakistan. He has been with the community since 2019 and made his solemn vows in 2023. He has recently arrived in Vladivostok, where he is actively participating in the Church's ministry and community life as he awaits ordination to the diaconate.



Brother Jackson Malik, C.J.D., is receiving his theological degree from Archbishop Benny Mario Travas of Karachi and the Dean of NCIT, Rev. Fr. Khan, OMI.

- Br. Joseph Thanh Nguyen, C.J.D., is from Vietnam. He completed his philosophy studies at Loyola School of Theology in the Philippines and his theology at Saint Joseph Jesuit Scholasticate in Vietnam from 2022 to 2026. He made his solemn vows in the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord on November 25, 2023. He has been in Vladivostok for a few months awaiting ordination to the diaconate. He is a great hope for the Vietnamese community in Vladivostok and eastern Russia. Meanwhile he is also serving the parish in Vladivostok as sacristan.



- On July 30 we had the annual meeting of all the volunteers at our **Women's Support Centers**. It was great to be able to congratulate the women for their work for the year. Here is one story I heard: "Situation: Mom was brought to us by a gynecologist at the AIDS Center in her third month of pregnancy. All her family and friends had tried to dissuade her from having this "late" child. "How can this be? You're already a 50-year-old 'grandmother,' you have grown daughters who will soon get married, why would you want another child?" they kept telling her. Her eldest daughter is 30, her youngest is 17. But her decision was final—the child would live! And so, in February of this year, a wonderful, healthy boy was born, whom she and her husband named Daniel. Mom is HIV-positive and cannot breastfeed, so at our center, mom and her baby receive regular assistance with baby formula and diapers. She also received a care package through our "Adopt a Mom" program."

Thank you, Benefactors for your donations and prayers for our Women's Support Centers. We can't do it without you!



- Khabarovsk Parish of the Transfiguration on August 30. No youth? They were all with their pastor in Vladivostok! "Dear Father Myron, The Lord has heard my prayers — yesterday we had a wonderful Mass celebrated by Father Marcus David, C.J.D. (rt, center above) I think he is one of your best **spiritual children** in the order; my soul was singing the *Salve Regina* just as if I were at your Mass many years ago. To me, you are the standard of a Priest, and your canonical order is the most wonderful thing in our Church. May the Lord keep you and your **spiritual children**! Always with love for you."—{A Khabarovsk Parishioner}

Another Story from the Women's Support Center

A 21 year-old girl came to the Center saying that she got married at 20 and her husband was a good man, but she wanted joy and fun.

At her friend's birthday party, she met a young man who was active and jolly so she decided to divorce and go with this one. Her mother stopped talking to her after that.

Soon she gave birth to a girl, but the new husband said he wasn't ready for family life and disappeared, leaving her without means for a living and a place to live. The Social Services Department gave her a room in the orphanage to live there with the baby, and they told her to visit our Women's Support Center.

When she came she was in a deep depression, cried a great deal and suffered a lot. The volunteers gave her material and moral support for a whole year, including food, diapers, and clothing. They helped her apply for child support, and when it came, she rented a room with a lady friend which was cheaper for her. Her life started to come together, but in a year the father of the baby appeared again, and they decided to be a family, but they had no place to live.

They decided to have a second child in order to receive the government aid for a second child with which they could buy a room, but in her third month the father announced he was leaving again and left. The girl was again without means of support and no place to live and she once again fell into depression.

This time her sister allowed her to come live with her in her 13 ft square room. She got a job at a bakery, and she took the hard jobs so that no one knew she was pregnant, carrying the heavy bags of ingredients, but she was fired in her eighth month, which was possible because she did not officially work for the bakery but only informally, so she received no compensation.

A boy was born, but after the birth her depression increased, and the hospital staff were rough with her, maybe even because in birth hospitals here you have to bring all your needs and the needs of your baby along with you, but she had nothing.

When grandma heard that her daughter again gave birth, she took them in, but it means they live in a private home without facilities: No sewer, no water, and heat by burning wood. Grandma didn't work because she had an aneurism which could erupt at any moment, but now she found work to help support the grandchildren.

Three months after the birth the mom was still in depression, saying that all that time she simply lay with the child and cried. But caring for the children required

her to live further. She applied for her child support, but was refused because she didn't have proof of the father's income. So she was again without a way to live, and the social department could have taken her children.

So she again came to our Center to tell her tale, and she was always crying. We gave her moral support, and some financial support, and sent her to our volunteer lawyer.

Our Center is very important in these cases. Our volunteers always pray for our sponsors, and we hope we can continue our work with your help.

Goodbye and So Long to a wonderful parishioner: Nellie Gregorievna Fidenko.

Nellie was regular at Sunday Mass attendance. She always sat near the front, so I could always see her. We were about the same age, so standing was hard for both of us. She told me: "When you sit, I sit!" She never missed giving her alms in the collection. After mass she always gave a chocolate bar to the main celebrant, and then she attended the tea and coffee hour, often with her godmother "Martha".

This is how I got to know Nellie: On July 25th, 2002 I received a phone call that a Russian man was dying, and "demanded" to see a Catholic priest, even though he had no Catholic background. I went to baptize Boris Fidenko, anoint him, give him Holy Communion, as he was dying. He died on August 4. His wife was Nellie, who was baptized Orthodox. It was a mystery to her why her husband wanted to be baptized Catholic. Nellie decided to join the Catholic Church herself at Easter, 2004.

Nellie died on July 19, 2026, after having been anointed and receiving communion. Her funeral was on her birthday, July 23, 2026. She is survived by her children and grandchildren, and greatgrandchildren, and loving memories of our parishioners. Eternal Rest grant to her, O Lord, and to her husband Boris!



(Continued from page 8)

Rebecca continues to work as a self-employed travel agent and has provided the Sisters with travel support when needed.

We are so grateful for the support Michael and Rebecca have provided over the years and look forward to Michael's future involvement as a member of the board. Friends: Many blessings to you all!. ---Jessica Trevillyan USA Mission office usoffice@vladmission.org, 209-408-0728))

Opportunities



♥ Meet Br.
Francis Chabu
I am from
Zambia. I am the
third born in a

family of nine
children. I completed
my seminary
formation in 2023
with two Bachelor's
Degrees in
Philosophy and one
Bachelor's Degree in
Theology. I also hold
a Certificate in
Human Resource
Management and a
Diploma in Business
Administration.

I spent ten months learning the Russian language, and I found it very interesting. I believe that "culture is language and language is culture," so I really want to continue learning in order to ease my missionary service in Vladivostok as a CJD member. Currently, I plan to enroll for a Master's Degree in International Relations at FEFU in Russia.

I have been a member of the Congregation CJD for one year now. I was moved by the charism of the congregation to help revive the Faith in the Far East of Russia, specifically in Vladivostok. My goal is also to obtain permanent residency so that I can serve constantly in Vladivostok without having to leave the country every three months.

My desire to become a priest comes from a call to serve God and His people, and to bring the Gospel to places where the Faith needs to be strengthened. The missionary spirit of our congregation, especially in Russia, confirmed this call for me. Although I have completed my studies, I am yet to be ordained. I am still waiting for that time and listening to God's wisdom through my Superior.

I enjoy learning new languages and cultures. The fun part about languages is that every language is difficult, but one just needs the interest to relearn the old and digest the new. I'm looking forward to deepening my Russian and to serving the community in Vladivostok.

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♥ We continue to fundraise for our seminarians throughout the year and are so grateful to have been able to raise \$30, 567 through our 3rd Annual Giving Day fundraiser. These funds help with our expenses of our seminarians including tuition, daily living and travel back and forth to Vladivostok. It costs the mission on average \$10,000 per year to support one seminarian for a full year. If you would like to sponsor a seminarian or support our seminarian program please note Seminarian with your donations.

♥ Our Mission Appeal Schedule for this year is jam packed! What a blessing it is for our speakers to be invited to so many dioceses to spread the word of our mission in Eastern Russia. Fr. Daniel Maurer, CJD, Fr. Doug Grandon, Marilyn Wassmer, and Alexandria Heck will be speaking in September and October in California, Indiana, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas. Check out our schedule below to see if they are visiting a parish near you. A special offering will be taken after each Mass for our mission.

Sept 5/6 Annunciation, Arcadia CA – Fr. Dan  
Sept 5/6 Holy Redeemer, Evansville IN – Marilyn  
Sept 12/13 St. Joseph, Redding CA – Fr. Dan  
Sept 19/20 St. Anthony, San Antonio TX – Fr. Dan  
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  
Sept 26/27 Sacred Heart/St. James/St. Patrick, Gonzalez TX – Fr. Dan

Oct 3/4 St. Elizabeth, Odessa TX – Fr. Dan  
Oct 10/11 St. Matthew, Mt. Vernon IN -Fr. Dan  
Oct 17/18 St. Andrew/ St. John Bosco, Lytle TX - Fr. Dan  
Oct 24/25 St Joseph, Krebs OK – Fr. Dan  
Nov 7/8 Corpus Christi, Evansville IN – Fr. Doug

♥ The mission will have a table at the Eucharistic Congress in Charlotte, NC on September 11/12 and the Christ Our Life conference in Des Moines IA on September 26/27. If you will be attending either of these conferences, stop by our table and visit our representatives who will be passing out literature and selling religious items. If you are interested in representing the mission at Catholic conference near you, contact Vicky Trevillyan at 209-408-0728 or [vicky@vladmission.org](mailto:vicky@vladmission.org).

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## From the development desk...

Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the newest member to the Mary Mother of God Mission Society Board, Michael Jacobsen. Michael and his wife Rebecca live in Little Elm, Texas, located about 30 miles north of downtown Dallas. He has a degree in Political Science specializing in Soviet affairs and the Russian language.

He began supporting the Vladivostok mission since the early 1990's after noticing a short article in Envoy Magazine about the restoration of the Catholic church in Russia. Michael and Rebecca have been married 12 years and visited Vladivostok for two weeks in September 2016 (see [Sunrise 133.docx](#)). Michael has occasionally been a speaker on behalf of the Russian mission at parishes and conferences. After moving to Texas in 2018, Michael and Rebecca joined the St. Martin de Porres parish in Prosper, Texas. Father Stephen Hauck, pastor of St. Martin de Porres, has been extremely supportive of the Russian mission. Father Dan has been to the parish three times, and Mother Stella with the Sisters in Jesus the Lord have also visited on several occasions. The parish has an active Russian Mission Support Group and members of the Group are now providing administrative and back-office support to the Sisters.



Michael retired after 46 years in the Federal government as a forensic accountant. Besides the Russian mission at the parish, Michael teaches OCIA, Adult faith formation classes, and volunteers in Knights of Columbus and Men's Ministry programs. (Continued on Page 7)