



Vladivostok Sunrise Russia Mission



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

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Our Church of the Most Holy Mother of God in Vladivostok as seen from a drone

A Reflection on the Blessed Virgin Mary

By Brother Agustinus Brusen, C.J.D.

First, I want to write the lyrics of a religious song.

“Lord, here I am. To answer your call.
Lord here I am to serve and love you.
I have left everything just to follow you,
Here is my heart, here is my mind, here is my soul,
Here is my whole self. I am for you and you alone.”

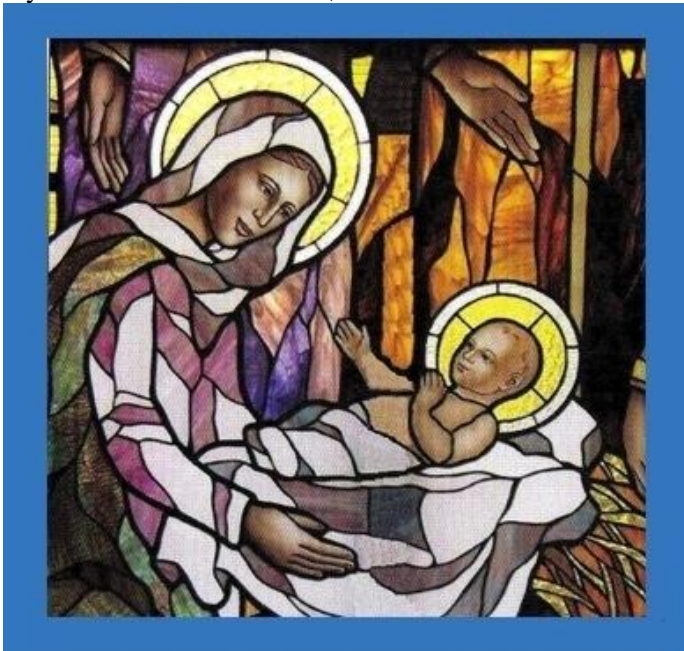
The Catholic Church throughout the world celebrates the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. The title, Our Lady of Sorrows, given to our Blessed Mother, focuses on her intense suffering and grief during the passion and death

of our Lord. Traditionally, this suffering was not limited to the passion and death event; rather, it comprised the seven “dolors” or seven sorrows of Mary. One of these seven sorrows of our Blessed Mother included the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt with the Baby in arms.

Every sorrow received by Our Lady, Mary Mother of God, is always confronted by her with complete trust in God. She always accepts what God wants to happen in her life. “Be it done unto me according to Thy Word.” These are very touching words to me, words that

surrender everything to the will of God, words that believe that God's will is the most perfect.

We are like Mary Mother of God. We are like refugees who need compassion from God through the good people in the world. Why do I say that? Because our life journey is like Mary Mother of God's. Every time we enter a new place to work it is not easy. Sometimes we are rejected. Then we move to a new place. Sometimes they say, you have to wait for a decision for a while. However, waiting for something that is uncertain makes us feel tired and desperate. No. We must be patient in this life. What does God want for us? When will God give us the promised land? And where? It depends on Him. We just keep on praying and praying. I have to say that we must learn from the life of Our Lady. Give everything to God's will. **BE IT DONE UNTO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD.** This is my reflection for Christmas, too!



Share Happiness with Our Augustinian Community

By Geraldo Ximenes Leite, C.J.D.

Our C.J.D. Augustinian Association of the Faithful of the Diocese of Maumere is now truly increasing both in numbers and talents. Since we were officially accepted on December 23, 2014, we already have four new priests ordained by the bishops of Maumere. It is truly a great joy for all members of the CJD community. Today on November 4 we now have one new priest, namely Father Yakobus Hubertus C.J.D. He was ordained together with two of his friends who are members of Diocese of Maumere.



Bishop Kherubim Pereira, SVD ordains Bro Hubert.

Fr Mario Stephano Yansen Da Cunha, Bishop Kherubim, Fr Yulius Heribertus., Fr Innosensius our CJD superior in Indonesia, and Fr Hubert



Father Hubertus is the youngest of his family and is known as a great organist, composer, and singer. Thanks be to God for the extraordinary talents that made him not more arrogant but more humble before God and us. He comes from Sikka, a small village in the southern part of Maumere. This village is historic for all Catholics in Flores, because the missionaries first set foot in this small village to proclaim the Word of God to all the people of Flores.

The motto of ordination taken by Father Hubert was also very suitable for him: "because He noticed the humility of his servant" (Luke 1:48). Father Hubert's vocation story is truly unique. The beginning of his adventure of calling was in a different order, but there he only did the first novice year and then chose to leave, but that did not dim his intention to become a priest. So in 2014 he began a new adventure in our CJD congregation. In spite of the many temptations and challenges that continue to occur, his heart is not in the least afraid because "God has noticed the lowliness of his servant."

In this thankful note too, we CJD confreres would like to congratulate Father Hubert for giving his life totally to God to be an evangelist in the midst of this tumultuous age. "We look forward to your carrying out your duties as a priest with the motto 'because God has noticed the humility of His servant' which certainly cannot be separated from your humble and joyful person." To conclude this paper, I want to write a poem for Father Hubert, which is about the journey of his calling.

LOVED THE INVISIBLE

It seemed that fifteen years had passed
 Like a dream,
 It didn't feel like fifteen years
 Love is invisible
 It doesn't feel like fifteen years
 To live against the flow of the Jordan.



Father Hubert's First Mass

It doesn't feel like fifteen years
 hated the world ...

All of that is only because of love,
 O, you are limited to the world of ideas.
 All intelligent beings
 Endlessly searching
 Your existence.
 But all these efforts are futile,
 because you are like blinking eyes,
 Like the wind coming from the four corners of the earth.

I never tired of looking for you,
 Even though your response is like an ant,
 But the steps of an ant will become
 meaningful,
 If the trip reaches the finish line,
 And I've never passed any millisecond
 But to think of you,
 Even before bedtime
 I let my mind be happy
 with you,
 O you who are invisible

I am considered a crazy human
 By most wise people
 Because I choose to love the One who doesn't
 Look,
 Compared to visible.
 However, not the slightest change,
 my decision to love you,
 Because the madness has changed
 my personality in totality,
 to love you secretly,
 With all the simplicity that I have ...

--Bro Geraldo Ximenes Leite, C.J.D.





The original group of Sisters: Alicia, Eugenia, Madvi, Mother Julia, and Rosario

Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne Mark 20 Years in Vladivostok!

by Rev Fr Daniel L Maurer, CJD

On Sunday, November 4 at our main parish in Vladivostok hundreds of people from the city and state gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the presence of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne (SCSA). Joining in the celebration were SCSA sisters who flew to Vladivostok for the occasion from their provincial headquarters in the Philippines, including Sr Rosario (one of the original four in Vladivostok!, now vice provincial and treasurer) and Sr Leena; priests, religious and lay people from the nearby Catholic parishes in Romanovka, Ussuryusk and Nakhodka.

Presiding at the 12 o'clock noon Mass was his excellency Most Rev. Joseph Werth, S.J., bishop of the Diocese of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Novosibirsk (3600 miles from Vladivostok). It was Bishop Werth who in 1997 originally invited the sisters to his Apostolic Administration of the Asian Part of Russia and asked them to serve in Vladivostok.



Bishop Werth presiding at the anniversary mass

On August 2, 1998 the first four sisters arrived here to begin the community: three from Spain - Sr Alicia Gonzalo-Lopez (founding local superior); Sr Maria Eugenia Lazaro Lahuerta; Sr Rosario Vicente Gonzalez; and one from India - Sr Madvi Menon, accompanied by the superior general of their congregation, Mother Julia Lumbreras from the Motherhouse in Zaragoza, Spain.

These four were the first sisters to open a Roman Catholic convent in the vast territory of the Russian Far East (2.4 million square miles) since all Catholic parishes and institutions in Russia were closed during the harsh persecution of religion that followed the Communist revolution of 1917.

Over the course of the last 20 years six other sisters of the same congregation have served in Vladivostok. From Spain: Sr Puri Bellido (2000-2003); from India Sr Gloris Francis (2011-2016); from Costa Rica Sr Dora Chincilla (2013-2016), and from the Philippines Sr Elma Arellano (here since August 2013), and Sr Maria Lourdes (Malu) Lenso (here since February of this year). And of course, since 2000 our own local Vladivostok parishioner, Sr Olga Nemchinova, who joined the congregation in 2000.

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne were founded in the city of Zaragoza, Spain in 1804 by Blessed Maria Rafols (1781-1853, beatified 1994) and by the Servant of God Father Juan Bonal (1769-1829) to do active charity work and offer hospitality to the poorest and neediest. Their first work was to serve the sick and poor in an institution in the city of Zaragoza called the Royal Hospital of Our Lady of Grace, which had more than 6,000 residents (the largest institution of its kind in Europe at the time). The meaning of the word "hospital" today is far from what it was then. In the early 19th century, hospitals in Europe were places where all kinds of needy were isolated: sick, anti-social, outcast, abandoned, addicted, retarded, disabled, mentally ill. This hospital's administration was also plagued by official corruption. A community of religious sisters selflessly giving their lives to the service of needy residents was not welcome by all, but they persisted and grew, opening other communities in surrounding towns to serve the needy, especially orphaned and abandoned children.

Three years after their foundation, the entire region of northern Spain was beset by starvation caused by the French invasion, civil war and war of independence of 1808. Especially devastating was the siege and blockade of Zaragoza. The ranks of the suffering were increased by wounded soldiers, civilians and prisoners of war. The hospital buildings were completely destroyed in the bombardment. A terrible epidemic of cholera broke out. By the time it was over, 12 sisters had died of exhaustion and starvation. Only four survived in Zaragoza, although other sisters survived in outlying communities. 100 years

later, during the centennial remembrance of those horrors, the government of the city bestowed posthumously on Mother Maria Rafols the title, “Heroine of Charity”. In 1898 the congregation was approved by Pope Leo XIII and permitted to take a special fourth vow of “Hospitality”, which is common to several orders and congregations dedicated to serving the poor.

In the first several decades of their existence the sisters expanded to many hospitals and started homes and schools for abandoned children throughout Spain. In 1890, with the vision and direction of the dynamic superior general, Mother Pabla Bescos, the congregation opened its first missionary community outside of Spain - at an isolated leper colony on the Venezuelan island of Providence. Communities on other continents followed: Asia 1951 (India); Africa 1970 (Ghana); Australia (1985); and in Papua New Guinea (1992), Philippines (1996) and the latest one in Kosovo (1999). Now there are more than 2000 sisters in 37 countries on 5 continents and in Oceania. The local community in Vladivostok belongs to the vice-province of St. Francis Xavier with headquarters and several communities in the Philippines and with other communities in China, Papua New Guinea, Australia and Russia - the one community in Vladivostok.



Children from Romanovka express their appreciation for the sisters' work with children in Romanovka

The four Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne currently in the Vladivostok community are: Sr Alicia, Sr Olga, Sr Elma and Sr Malu. They are active in: teaching Spanish at the Russian Far Eastern Federal University (35,000 students); Vladivostok City Treatment Center for Drug and Alcohol Addiction; the *Tropinka* (Little Path) Children's Center in the village of Romanovka (90 minutes by car from Vladivostok). Since the very beginning they have taken an active part in the life of the parish in Vladivostok - in the parish choir and music programs; planning and giving parish retreats; volunteering in all programs of the parish Catholic Charities organization; visiting and consoling the sick and

needy members of the parish; and helping parishioners and others to know and love God more deeply.

Our sisters have also played a major part in the spiritual and humanitarian outreach of the parish of the Most Holy Trinity in the village of Romanovka (where this author was the founding pastor for ten years) and where their children's center *Tropinka* has become a model for the entire state.

The sisters also regularly take part in the meetings and programs of the Institute of Religious Life in Russia (CORSUM) and in the ongoing development of their communities and apostolates throughout their vice-province.

20 years of charity, prayer, witness, communal life and parish life! What a great gift they are for the Church – as a local community, and each member sharing talent and devoting energy to helping the needy, and as witnesses of the love and holiness of God to all.



Today's Sisters of St Anne with Bishop Werth

News Notes

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

- A member of our Board of Directors, **Dr Robert F. Moran**, has published a technical book which he dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God, and to our missionary society. “The ABC’s of ABD’s: A Cyclopedic Dictionary of the Testing Terms Used in Critical Care,” published by Momentum Press. He says that when patients are brought in for urgent care the professionals use all kinds of terms based on the alphabet. This dictionary will be of help in such situations.
- I like to tease that all the kids in the jungle in Indonesia have **smartphones!** It is true in Russia, too. Fr Dan and our parish staff have just completed a project to collect all the electronic phone numbers of our parishioners in

Russia so that we can send mass SMS's about parish schedules and events. I hope it will be very successful!

He used this method earlier to announce coming organ concerts, which has been more successful than posters in the city. Next maybe we'll open a You-Tube site for the parish for the same purposes. Thanks go to Mr Lee Larkey of our sister parish of St Anne's in Santa Anna, Minnesota, and to Fr Joseph Fessio, S.J., of Ignatius Press in San Francisco for introducing and helping us to get internet service already 26 years ago when it was still largely unknown!

- “A Kilogram of Solidarity” is the name that our Sisters of Charity of St Anne give to a food collection for the poor of the village of Romanovka every year at Christmas. Sr Alicia is the originator of the project, seen here at our “Thanksgiving for the Harvest” mass in October.



- Four **new novices** were vested in Vladivostok on October 2 as they begin their novitiate. In the group are three Vietnamese and one Filipino. Welcome, Brothers, and we hope you can complete your novitiate successfully and then take your religious vows, and then continue on in the seminary toward the priesthood!



New C.J.D. Brothers Mark, Dominic, Peter, and Lloyd.

- How can we encourage the **Catholic foreign students** who are studying in Vladivostok to become “churched”? We think it can be solved if we can have a facility near the university where we can have mass, meetings, and social events for students in the variety of languages—English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, as well as Russian. Meanwhile our sisters who live near the university are encouraging students to participate in parish events. Here is a photo of a recent meeting of the sisters with some foreign students of the Far Eastern Federal University.



Foreign students who attended the Fall meeting

How to Communicate with Us

Internet

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English language: www.vladmission.org

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

Opportunities

♥ We're praying to meet the funding needs to purchase the **land** on which our rectory is built. We now rent the land from the city. Once we own the land we will be able to register the rectory as an official building and thus register to live on site. The city has proposed an excellent price for the land here in the center of the city, \$34,250 for the 1.436 acres. Legal fees will cost \$6850 for a total of \$41,100. Thank you to those who are helping with this critical need. We are far from our goal with **\$2955 raised**.

♥ Can you **sponsor a seminarian** in his journey to priestly ordination? In a few short years we have seen 7 priests ordained in the order of Canons Regular of Jesus The Lord. We currently have 39 seminarians in various levels of education and formation in the Order. They need your help to continue their journey. Might you prayerfully consider sponsoring a seminarian? Yearly costs are \$10,700 for each seminarian. Please contact the California mission office for budget information or see our website www.vladmission.org

♥ A generous benefactor has offered a beautiful free gift of a **Swarovski crystal rosary**, valued at \$100, for anyone who donates \$500 or more to our **seminarians' education**. Rosaries will be distributed before Christmas. Thank you!

♥ Give an eternal gift. Masses celebrated in Russia may be requested for loved ones, living or dead. **Mass stipends** support Fr Myron and Fr Dan. Please send your special intentions or Mass requests to the mission office. Mass cards will be sent to you or designated persons. Suggested stipend is \$15 per Mass.

♥ You are helping save lives! Thank you to all who are keeping the doors of our Women's Centers open through your generous donations. The operating budget for each of our 6 Women's Centers costs \$7500 per year. Our programs within the centers include our long running **Adopt A Birth** program.



This program has helped **save well over 2700 babies from abortion**. And the number of babies saved continues to grow as long as our Center doors can remain open. Mothers will receive the help they need to keep their babies pre- and post-delivery with your donation of \$50 to the **Adopt A Birth** program. With this, you will pay for the medical supplies needed in the hospital to deliver the baby. Often times, the cost of these supplies is the deciding factor for a mother to have an abortion or let her child live. Fr Myron will send you a picture of the

newborn you helped save! \$125 to the **Adopt A Mother** program provides help to the mother and baby in the first weeks supplying them with nutritious food, formula, diapers, baby clothes vitamins and medical aftercare.

♥ Thank you for sending us news about a **Catholic Conference** in your area! Your eyes and ears help us a lot in extending our outreach to more and more Catholics. We still get comments from people who don't know the Catholic Church is alive in Russia. Let's get the word out!

♥ Our priests are getting older. We've set up a **Priests' Medical and Retirement Fund**. If you'd like to help care for Fr Myron and Fr Dan in their retirement years, please note, "Priests' Retirement Fund" on your check or donate online at www.vladmission.org

♥ Be a missionary right where you are and help spread the news of our mission in Russia. Ask your pastor to place our bi-monthly **Vladivostok Sunrise newsletter** in your parish. We'll be happy to send you 5 copies every two months. If you need more, just let us know.

♥ Some unique gifts for Christmas giving! **Our Lady of Vladivostok Pendant** with Most Holy Mother of God Cathedral on the back of the medal. Finely detailed! Text reads,



Our Lady of Vladivostok, Pray for Us

3/4" Sterling Silver medal w 18" stainless chain \$65

3/4" Pewter medal w 18" stainless chain \$35

1" Sterling Silver medal w 24" stainless chain \$79

1" Sterling Silver medal w 24" stainless chain with text in Russian \$79. Prices include S/H in continental USA

♥ Shopping on Amazon? Type in **Amazon Smile** in the search bar and select Mary Mother of God Mission Society as your charity of choice. The mission will receive 0.5% of your cart from Amazon at no cost to you! To date the mission has earned \$1848 from Amazon Smile.

♥ **Bequests – A Lasting Legacy**

A **will** is the easiest and most effective means to ensure that your assets are distributed as you wish. Bequests, or gifts by will, both large and small, provide long-term support for the ongoing work of Mary Mother of God Mission Society and the mission in Eastern Russia. You can leave a specific asset, a percentage of your estate or the remainder of your estate after you have taken care of other beneficiaries. Additionally, you may specify that your bequest be used for the general purposes of the mission or for a particular area of interest. Any bequest provision can be altered during your lifetime to change the legacy you will leave behind.

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From the development desk...

Dear Friends,

A happy and blessed New Year to you and your families!

December was the 5th anniversary of our mission gift store, *Gifts of Faith*, in Modesto. Our national office of Mary Mother of God Mission Society shares the store space. The gift store has been growing in sales each year and has been very successful in covering the national office expenses including rent, maintenance, insurance and utilities. Donated funds to the mission do not have to be spent on these operating costs. At the same time, we are able to help local Catholics grow more deeply in their faith by providing authentic Catholic resources. Bibles, books, DVDS, and many beautiful reminders of our faith such as saints' medals and statues and icon art adorn our store for customers to reflect on and purchase. We have many blessed opportunities to speak about our faith to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, who visit the store.

In addition, our Russian icons and religious gifts sold at conferences have paid for conference registrations and travel expenses, thus affording us to attend 10 times more conferences than before to share the news of our mission in Russia. Conference sales, as well as sales at parishes and boutique fundraising events run by volun-



teers have provided yet another source of income for our mission work in Russia. We hope and pray each customer is transported just a little bit, or a lot, closer to knowing the love of Jesus and our Blessed Mother through their purchase.

Many thanks to all our patrons and volunteers who make it all happen and for supporting the mission store, sales at conferences and parishes, and even our online gift store. You are making a difference yet again.

God bless you and your families! Sincerely, Vicky Trevillyan 209-408-0728, usoffice@vladmission.org.

Web store, www.store.vladmission.org