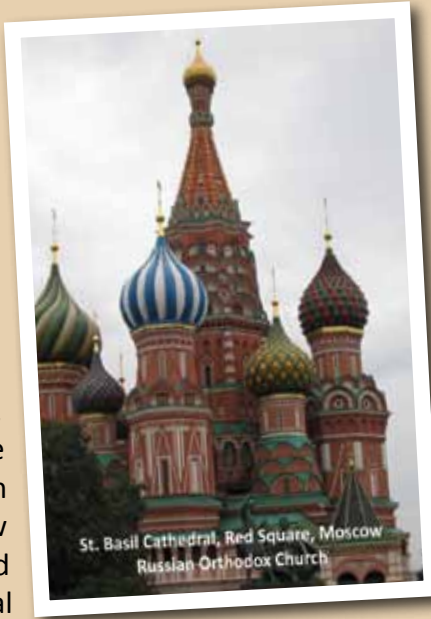




MSC'S Reaching Out giving hope to the Poor in Russia

The last century has brought much to the Russian people: Revolution, world war, oppression, labour camps and Communist ideology. Perhaps the worst thing they have endured for more than 70 years was enforced state atheism. This caused the people to suffer from immorality, high crime rates, alcoholism and corruption. The spirit of the people has been horribly damaged. They are now turning to alcohol, drugs and occultism to fill their spiritual emptiness.



MSC's are there to help and two MSC priests from the Irish Province, Fr. Con Doherty – a native of Thurles and Fr. Stephen Rogers – a native of Glasgow work with Fr Tomek Poterala MSC in the Caucasus region, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, which includes Chechnya and other small republics on the southern rim of Russia.

They depend almost totally on help from abroad, as communities are very poor.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, MSC missionaries were among the first Catholic mission to enter Russia with the underlying rationale to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the people, to develop and strengthen local churches, and to promote peace and understanding. At first three priests were sent in 1995 and they began by serving the Catholics whose priests had all been eliminated since 1939 and all of their seminaries closed.

The cost of living is rising and unfortunately poverty is increasing. We complain about rising prices here but in Russia increases are huge and often drastic. Poor people are suffering many of them can't afford to buy basic food. Fr. Stephen has a project whereby they provide food vouchers up to €50 per month to ten families similar to SVP in Ireland.

Today, many Russian people are searching for faith and belief in God. It is not uncommon for an adult to attend Mass as little as twice and then ask for instruction on how to become a catholic. There's a great spiritual need, a hunger for the meaning of life.



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MSC's have ambitious plans to develop parishes. Fr. Con is developing a building for multipurpose use ... Mass Centre, Prayer Chapel, Pastoral Centre and a Social Community Centre and he needs €40,000 to complete the project. He needs an additional €35,000 to finish a building which will be used by Sisters for accommodation and as a catechetical centre. MSC's need to recruit a pastoral assistant to help in the parish and this will cost €3,600 per year.



This Summer, will you reach out and help change the lives of the very poor in Russia?

Please Help Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Help as seeds start to bear fruit ...

As the people struggle to deal with poverty, our missionaries help in very practical ways. For example, they help families to buy seeds to sow vegetables and crops for food. Often they help them with the rent for a garden where they can sow. Temperatures in the region range from -35C to + 40C. Snow is common up to Easter, and after a 3-4 month growing season frost and snow sets in again in September. The people preserve their vegetables in vacuum sealed jars in the basement of their homes.



Help equip youth to be their best ...



Bishop of the diocese, Clement Pickel tells us “When Russian children look at you, you know that they are good children and that you could help them to become good people. When they finish school they can’t find work they start drinking and some girls are forced into prostitution by the parents so that the family can eat”.

MSC’s host Youth Catechetical Camps for 25/30 young people for 2 weeks to learn about their faith through lessons, role play and games. In Russia they are called “Holidays with God” and often this is the only time that these children are properly fed a well balanced diet.

Help with poor living conditions ...

The house where both MSC’s Fr. Con Doherty and Fr. Stephen Rogers live is in a poor state of repair. The foundations are cracking mainly due to the severe winters, reaching down to -35C which also results in huge heating bills as energy costs have doubled in the last two years. Their kitchen and dining room needs renovation and they badly need a new bathroom. Three parish Sisters who live together in a small house nearby desperately need a new heating system before winter begins in September.



Your Help and Support is Very Important

Help as travel distances are vast ...

Travel distances in Russia are immense. Roads are dangerous and often in a bad state of repair. The nearest Mass centre is a one hour drive and the next priest is then over 3 hours away again. Trying to keep in contact with small communities in the diocese is vital. Small groups need to meet other Catholics and participate in activities beyond their villages. MSC priests and other church workers need to meet and plan. Travel is very expensive and priests drive old and unreliable cars, and usually travel in excess of 20,000 miles each year.



Help us to develop more Churches and Social Centres ...



Churches in Russia are generally what we would call a small community hall capable of holding up to 100 people. Fr. Con is looking for funds to buy and convert a building into a church that would hold 50 – 75 people. Whilst in Lenninsky he needs about €40,000 to complete the conversion of another building for multipurpose uses such as a Mass Centre, Prayer Chapel, Pastoral Centre and a Social Community Centre.

Help students to stay in University ...

You can help us by assisting six university students to get cheap accommodation while they are away studying. Accommodation is very expensive and without help these students cannot continue to complete their studies. This is not a gift as the students who are practising Catholics give something back. These students help in the parish where they get the accommodation and also give 2 weeks of their holidays to help out at the Youth Catechetical Summer Camp.

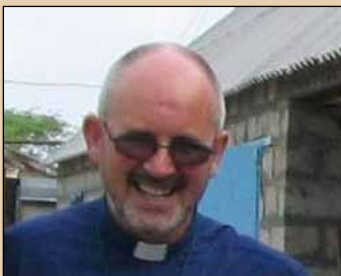


Please Help!

**Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
change the lives of very poor people in Russia**



Fr. Stephen Rogers MSC



Fr. Con Doherty MSC



Fr. Tomek Poterala MSC

Meet our MSC's in Russia

Our MSC's in Russia realise that demands on families in Ireland are now greater than ever.

Any help you can give will be deeply appreciated by Fr. Stephen, Fr. Con, and Fr. Tomek as they struggle in this lonely and impoverished part of Russia.

Above all they ask for your prayers as they reach out to people in search of God and the meaning of life.



*When we wrote to friends like you asking for help in Russia in the past you responded with generosity and understanding.
Thank you.*

Please complete the return slip attached to your letter and send your gift to:

**Fr. Michael O'Connell MSC,
MSC Mission Support Centre, P.O. Box 23, Western Road, Cork.**

**If you pay PAYE tax only, a donation gift of €250 or more in one year, could be worth an extra €62.50 to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart if you are a standard rate tax payer or €173.73 if you're on the higher rate.*

Charity Registration No. CHY 4783

**Call us now on +353 21 4545 704
to donate by credit or laser card**