



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

January 31, 2013

Happy triple Feastday! On Sunday, February 3, we'll celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple, but also the 5th anniversary of the re-dedication of our Church of the Most Holy Mother of God, and the 75th anniversary of the suffering of our Vladivostok Martyrs. Actually, I get the pleasure of celebrating the Presentation three times! Already last week we celebrated the feast in Lesozavodsk, then on Sunday here in Vladivostok, and then Sunday night at St Joseph's Parish in Artyom. I like to think of the feast as a celebration of grandmas and grandpas, as Simeon and Anna appear like grandparents in the Gospel of Luke. Their presence and prayers were important for the event that they were witnesses to—the return of the Lord to the temple in Jerusalem after all those years of exile. Like we have returned to the church here, after so many years of exile for our parishioners under the Communists.

So I'm writing to thank you for your constant prayers and support for us! May the Lord be equally generous with you in the New Year! We really appreciate your help, as I don't know how our needs will be covered: It is time to get the seminarians organized for their school year (which in the Philippines and Indonesia begins in the Spring.) We'll have a full house of seminarians in Surabaya, Indonesia, so we'll have to buy a van there for transportation to and from the seminary each morning and night from the monastery. The monastery, by the way, is a building being loaned to us free of charge by an Indonesian benefactor for two or more years! There is easily room for ten or more seminarians.

All of this is such exciting news for me, both as a religious, and as a pioneer here in Russia, because, with the lack of vocations in Europe and America, Russia will suffer without priests if we don't find or grow some. So it is exciting that there are so many vocations nearby in the Philippines and in Indonesia, and that some of these guys want to work in Russia after ordination, and others will serve in other countries (even in America?? Why not?) after their ordinations. But we'll have the expenses of their seminary training, but I know God will provide, and these seminarians are so terrific—I should know—I worked many years in seminaries and as a vocation director in the U.S. before my work here in Russia. I don't want to count my chickens before the autumn (as the Russians say), but the plan is to have two Filipino and 4 Indonesian novices this year here in Vladivostok, and that means 6 more guys in the major seminary next year. All these guys are from traditional Catholic families, and most of them are older and have their degrees and work experience already. Fingers crossed! Thanks be to God!

But my worry is paying for all the tuition expenses which going to the seminary entails. I don't mind telling you that some of them wanted to go to the seminary a long time ago, but were unable because of the poverty of their families. But we need priests, so please pray for them and please help me if you can with their expenses! Maybe somebody would like to be a "Guardian Angel" for a seminarian, and pay for his seminary expenses. God bless you!

But why not Russian vocations? There is some interest, and I received a letter recently from a Russian, but with 7 abortions per woman and 80% divorce rate there just aren't many kids in Russia! Europe is in the same pickle. And people want grandchildren, so where to get vocations except from larger families in still developing countries. I was amazed by the size and activities of the Indonesian parishes when I visited there, and the great number of children.

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It is about time to work on Vladivostok Sunrise 110. I'll catch you up on more news there. Wow, a lot of work still lies ahead. Pray for us. We prayed for you on the Feast of the Most Holy Mother of God, January 1! Happy New Year! God bless you.

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

P.S Here is a montage of photos of our seminarians.



Arnulfo



Inosensius



Artsin



Joseph



Lawrence



Ignacy



Levi



Cosmos



Yohanes



Harben



Edwin



Patrick



Gabriel



Bede



Augustine