



# Mary Mother of God Mission Society

## Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor

April 15, 2014

Happy Easter! May it be a joyful time for you! We are busy with all the preparations for the Triduum, as it isn't Easter here yet, and with the conclusion of the novitiate for our five novices. They will be heading home for a little rest before their seminary school year begins in June in the Philippines and in Indonesia.

Here is a photo of one of our recent baptisms:



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But besides wishing you a Happy Easter, I'm really writing to thank you for your support. There has been a lot of news about Russia these days, what with the Olympics and Paralympics in Sochi and the troubles in Ukraine. I'm glad you thought of us when you watched the news and games! I'm sure you have been praying for a peaceful outcome to all of that, as we have, every day at Mass. We are far away from those events—9 time zones--and life has been going on here as normal. I get to watch the news in Russian from Russian sources and in English from American sources, and it is amazing how they tell it differently! Who is right? Frankly, I don't trust the media on either side! Let's hope life goes on as normal, as we see many more interested faces in church these days—people inquiring. And more seminarians are soon coming. Thanks for your prayers!

In Russian, they don't say "Happy Easter"—They say "Christ is Risen". And the answer is "Truly Risen". But there will be Easter eggs and kulichki, which are special breads for Easter which are almost like tall cakes, usually with white icing and lots of sprinkles. They will all get blessed at the Easter Vigil.

We have a nice project going with the novices right now. We read a book together by a professor in the Catholic seminary in New Orleans, Dr Brant Pitre, "Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist". It is a wonderful book, and the Indonesians noticed that it hasn't

been translated into Indonesian so that it could be read by the many seminarians and parishioners in Indonesia. So they decided to translate it, and we'll look for a publisher there when it is done. They are also preparing some teaching units based on the book, which they could use later in Indonesia when they are called upon to give a talk at a retreat or in a parish setting. Last night we had a demonstration Seder Service to give the novices a taste of what Judaism is like, as there are few Jews in their countries, and I always found visiting a synagogue helped me to understand the Bible better. Translate the book to Russian? We don't have time just now, but perhaps a Russian novice can do it—when we have one!

We've got some other things on our plate just now: 1. We are hoping to convert the heating system to gas, which will be cheaper. 2. We have to work on the bells, to make their mounting safer. 3. The parish space in Lesozavodsk needs work before the next heating season. 4. We need to install a water softener here, as we spend too much money on broken water heater parts because of the hardness of the water. 5. I have to buy a new used car, as this one is about 20 years old, been through many accidents and bad roads, and is nearly worn out. 6. We are helping to build the new church for Our Lady of the Pacific Parish in Nakhodka. 7. We are working on a new video presentation. 8. New beds for the hospice. Of course, we will continue our work with orphans, with the hospice, and with the Women's Support Centers, and so on. Besides that, we have nothing to do!

Spring has sprung, and we've planted our garden of radishes, lettuce, and beans. Fresh veggies are my favorite. It's too cool and foggy here in the summer for tomatoes or cucumbers. Outside the city the weather is warmer and sunnier, so this will be maximum work time as people work in their dachas preparing for summer. The sisters are hoping for a big garden on Russian Island, too. Easter and Spring are times of hope.

God bless you! Happy Easter! Thank you so much for your help!

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.