



# Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

December 16, 2007

We are getting ready for Christmas, and I suppose you are, too, although you probably won't receive this letter until into the new year. So Happy New Year! May God bless you and yours throughout the year. No doubt 2008 will be a significant year for all of us, what with elections in Russia and in America, and with the re-consecration of our church and the blessing of our rectory in Vladivostok. Bishop Kirill has agreed to bless the rectory on the evening of February 2, The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord Jesus in the Temple. What could be better than that? And then he will re-consecrate the church building itself on February 3, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of our martyrs—1938 during Stalin's time. Also, the consecration will take place exactly 100 years from the blessing of the first cornerstone for the church, which was done by Bishop Cepliak in 1908. We've made a stone to commemorate the event. Here it is:



Meanwhile, we've started work on the steeples! We won't have them done by February 3, of course, but we'd like to have at least some of it done! We're only halfway on the financing, but we are relying on God (and benefactors) to provide. Here is a photo of how the workers removed the first metal covering on the first steeple where the bells will be, and temporarily covered the opening with blue plastic for the night. Already

now that visible framework has been removed from both steeples placements and they are getting read to pour a concrete floor, after which the bricks will start rising! We are praying that no one will fall from the scaffold!



Fr Daniel made a quick trip to the bedside of his dad in Florida. He are hoping for good health, but it still isn't clear what direction things are going. I'm sure he would appreciate your prayers. We are expecting Fr Dan back for Christmas, God willing, because of the feastday itself, but also because of the Christmas concerts and the Christmas Festival of

Christian Choirs—our major ecumenical event of the year.

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It is a pleasure to thank you for your donation! We know that God can't be outdone in generosity (and I'm counting on that for myself, too!) We think that our presence and work here is very important for the future, so thank you being a part of it. And God bless you on the feast of the Most Holy Mother of God, January 1!

The Russian Duma has again passed a law that makes it more difficult for us foreign priests to work here, and the final result isn't in yet. Everybody is concerned. Russian vocations are very important for the future. Meanwhile, there are attempts to find a solution for priests and sisters working in Russia. We are still trying to resolve the problem, and I'm sure that the bishops and government authorities are also working on it.

Recently I traveled to Khabarovsk to install the new pastor in the parishes of St Benedict and Holy Trinity. He is Fr Marcelo Brandan, from Argentina. He is a member of a new religious order called the Society of the Incarnate Word. This is their third place of service in Russia. They have many vocations in Argentina. Fr Marcelo told me that their founder says that they have many vocations because they take the most difficult assignments. (So now you know: Russia is a most difficult assignment. J ) The parishioners are glad to have a priest at all. The former pastor, Fr Joseph McCabe was called to serve in the Vatican. It was fun to be in the parish that I founded so many years ago already, and to get reacquainted with some of the people that I baptized. Once again work is steaming ahead in Romanovka and Nakhodka, too. So there is still plenty for us to do.

Thank you. God bless you throughout the new year. Thanks for all that you did for the poor this Christmas. I have to complete the Sunrise newsletter this week, so please look for more news in there. Most Holy Mother of God, Pray for us! Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.