



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

February 12, 2011

I just celebrated my 70th birthday! The Bishop will be here on Sunday to celebrate with me and the parish. It seems to me we are all getting older and set in our ways, but the world is still changing! Like someone suggested that we should have a Facebook page. I think we should have a Facebook page, even though I still have no idea what a Facebook page is!! All the kids know, so it might make sense to get some kids or youths involved in doing it. Maybe especially vocations materials would be good, and spiritual matters, since that is appropriate for the young. I should take a sabbatical and learn about all the stuff I am missing. (Currently I'm reviewing calculus, since I have a good textbook that a math teacher gave me at our sister parish in Porterville, CA but I don't have a textbook for all the new stuff I need to learn.-- Wait a minute: Needing a textbook is probably old-fashioned, too!)

Thank you for your donation! It is no secret that income is way down for many charitable organizations—and for us, too--but we have to stay afloat! You are in our daily prayers, of course, and I wish I could do more for you for your generosity! God will have to take care of it. Sunday our class with the RCIA folks was on tithing, and I was happy to say that there are many tithers among our benefactors, as is clear from the odd sums of money that they sometimes send. Thanks for your help.

And right now I'd like to tell you how blessed we are with our seminarians! I mentioned them in the *Sunrise*, but I live with them day by day. What a blessing! They are such mature men, with great backgrounds, and with a big desire to give Russia and the Church in general as much as they can. We are expecting one more at the end of the month, and he seems to be a wonderful man, too, so we are hoping! Brother Patrick has been accepted into the seminary for the school year beginning in June in the Philippines. He has one year to finish his B.A. degree so he can go on to the higher seminary. He is planning to take his first vows on the Feast of St Joseph, March 21, and we have to order his new habit. It is fun to see how Brothers Arnulfo and Innocense are beginning to speak Russian! I think they are surprised themselves, sometimes, that Russian words come out! As I'm celebrating my 70th birthday, I do have to think about who will follow me and Fr Dan in our work in Russia!

We are gearing up to do more at the orphanages. Adoptive parents in America and elsewhere want more work to be done with the kids so that their physical, social, and psychological health will be better at the time they are adopted. It will take us a little while to get it organized. And we'll let you know what is happening.

But the topic of the news here this week has been the Russian child adopted in Alaska, and how his mother fed him hot sauce and gave him cold showers when he misbehaved. So again there was a loud call to stop adoptions to America! Naturally it is all very hypocritical! If the Russians cared more for their children, there

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wouldn't be kids to be adopted by Americans! Plus the daily mangling in the womb of Russian children by abortion, as there are still more abortions here than live births! Our Women's Support Centers continue to work with pregnant women to encourage them to give birth, and we are still speaking in the schools and colleges about the life and family issues. Let's hope for a new day in life and family issues in America, too!

I heard this story from one of the pastors: A parishioner with several children was pregnant, and had some complications, so she was in the hospital for tests and a check-up. After several days an old doctor came to her at night and said, "Dear, are you reading what medicines the doctor is giving you?" "No, why should I?" "If I were you I'd read those packages before I took them!" Being forewarned she read and found out that the doctor was setting her up for a miscarriage! Naturally, she stopped the medicine and went home. That is socialized medicine, where the doctor makes decisions about who lives and who dies. I told the pastor to find out the contact information for that old doctor, and I'd find some way to acknowledge that she saved a baby's life.

We are trying to gear up to open the Newman Center at the new Far-Eastern Federal University, with its 100,000 students to be opened in 2014! We have a lawyer working on clarifying the ownership situation of the building on Russian Island where we have an apartment, with the hope to buy several other apartments there to make room for the Sisters in Jesus the Lord who will be coming to work with university students. Naturally, we don't know where the funding will come from, but we are counting on God to provide if he wants us to have this program at the university.

Meanwhile the church is still a popular tourist attraction here in the city with tour groups every week. We have to plan better for summer when there will be a lot more tourists.

Our soup kitchen for the elderly poor was saved by an American benefactor who donated support for the program for the whole year! So we spent some time reorganizing the program to make it more effective and useful. The folks are so grateful that somebody cares for them! You know, probably, that the Russian pension is so low that most elderly people have to continue to work. Yesterday a parishioner told me that she happened to be on a very early morning bus, and it was full of elderly, sometimes handicapped people who were returning from work as night watchmen. She was amazed.

God bless you, and thank you very much for your help!! We'll be praying for you during the whole new year! I hope I can count on your prayers, too.

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.