



# Mary Mother of God Mission Society

## Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

March 14, 2011

I just got a call from the trustee of our Parish of the Visitation in Lesozovodsk. It seems our parishioner Emily fell and broke her hip more than two weeks ago during a minor snow storm. That was 4:00 am as she was trying to catch a bus! We didn't hear about it until just now. I'll visit her in the hospital today.

We are praying in great gratitude to God for our benefactor Murial Lee from our former sister parish of the Annunciation in Washington DC. She left us in her will, and the funds are just so timely, as our financial situation is still quite scary. So we are also grateful to you, too, for your help. 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, and we will continue to pray for you and for Murial!

When Bishop Klimovich was here on February 20, he confirmed 5 adults who were baptized last Easter. Here is a photo for you.



Brother Patrick has been accepted into the St Francis Xavier Seminary for the school year beginning in June in the Philippines. He has one year to go to finish his B.A. degree so he can go on to the higher seminary. He is planning to take his first vows here on the Feast of St Joseph, March 19, and we have ordered his new habit, which is a tradition in religious life, that people get new habits at their first vows. As a novice he wore hand-me-down habits refitted to his size. It is fun to see how Brothers Arnulfo and Innocence are beginning to speak Russian! I think they are surprised

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themselves, sometimes, that Russian words come out! The university does a great job of teaching Russian.

We are gearing up to see if we can 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 is hoped that adoptive parents themselves will contribute toward the program. It will take us a little while to get it organized. And we'll let you know what is happening. Meanwhile we've had several adoptive couples coming to mass on Sunday. It is fun to see their joy as the court awards a child to them.

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, and fresh faces every Sunday. We have to plan better for summer when there will be a lot more tourists. One of the tourist companies called to ask us to reserve five dates on which luxury liners will be visiting Vladivostok, and the tourists will want to come to our church. These tourists can be from anywhere in the world.

We finally received permission from the cultural department to house the marble crucifix permanently in our church as soon as we have the fire safety equipment in place. It continues to be considered an important cultural object for the state archive, so so far the law does not allow it to be simply returned to our possession. (It is the same situation as the church building itself.) Many other projects are still waiting for the Fire Safety fund, too. For example we can't "live" here until it is done. Officially the seminarians and I and Fr Dan live in another building that does have the fire safety code fulfilled, even if I haven't been there for months.

God bless you! Thank you very much for your help!!

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.