



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

Aug 31, 2011

What would you do if you couldn't buy pickle relish?--No egg salad sandwiches, no ham salad sandwiches, no liver salad sandwiches, no potato salad, no mashed potato salad, no bean salad, no thousand island dressing! I know, you'd make your own!! And that is what I was doing yesterday and today, since we are at the height of the pickle and onion season here. It was easy to get a good recipe from the internet, and I enjoyed the break from my usual worries. It was interesting when Bro Innokenti was helping me, he said, "Is that all there is to it?? No one in Indonesia knows how to can vegetables! If we have extra vegetables, we just have to feed the pigs. I'll have to show my mom how to do this."

It's "back to school" time, and our classes for adults and for children start on Sunday. We always have a blessing for students and teachers after Sunday Mass, and it is always amazing that the teachers outnumber the students! It means that many public school teachers and professors are our parishioners. Yuri Belozorov, a biologist who helps teach our NFP and pro-life classes, will be teaching biology at two schools this year, since there is a dearth of biology teachers (and I said "Great!" because it means there will be a pro-life man biology teacher in two schools. (Almost all teachers here are women, as are physicians—Remember that teachers and doctors were among the most poorly paid occupations in the Soviet Union!—as if health and education don't matter!)

Brother Patrick seems to be doing well in the seminary, and we now have three seminarians here with us, Brother Arnulfo, Brother Innokenti, and Edwin Intan who is flying in today. Fr Dan has also just returned from the States, so we'll have classes for the seminarians beginning soon, too. Our sisters from Kansas City were here for three months helping with all the summer activities, and many people will miss them. We hope they can return permanently in January. The elderly at the hospice and at the soup kitchen especially enjoy their visits and music. "Ave Maria" is always a hit!

I'm still reflecting on our summer work, especially the Children's retreat in Lesozavodsk and the Far Eastern Catholic Youth Conference in Nakhodka, which were completed with the help of sixteen American college students, members of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), and with the help of our Sisters in Jesus the Lord. The events were really great events, and I don't know how we could have done it without outside help! Even though it was hard work, and poor living conditions, they did a great job, and many said they would like to come back next year! I'm sure that especially the 24 kids in Lesozavodsk will long remember them. And we hope to have confirmed and strengthened the faith of our youth at the Conference. Here a photo of the boy's "command" from Lesozavodsk for you.

It was our first experience with a camp for children in Lesozavodsk, and it will hopefully be the first of a long series of such camps, as the kids really need it. But we aren't able to do it without people from outside who can help. These are the same children that the parishioners feed every Saturday when the kids don't get dinner at school. We've helped them several years already, but this is the first time we tried to do something extra. Some day maybe there will be a resident priest in Lesozovodsk, so we could work more at catechizing the children. Most are not baptized yet.

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Lesozavodsk kids and FOCUS men.

As soon as those events were done, I had to give two talks at the Lutheran Annual Seminar. “History of the Catholic Church in the Russian Far East” and “What is a Catholic?” It was enjoyable, and the Lutheran, Armenian, and Evangelical pastors gave similar talks, and a lay historian spoke about the Orthodox Church. We found out a lot about each other’s traditions.

But you are part of these big events, too, as we couldn’t do it without your prayers and support. You are what make it possible. Thank you for your donation! Your help is especially appreciated in the summer when we are counting our pennies, and hoping we won’t be abandoned while benefactors are on vacation. Thanks for all the kids that you help. Thank you that we can count on you. You are in our daily prayers, and we will continue to pray for you!

Concerning our special projects, the two roofs on the sacristies that had to be repaired this year are done. I’ll get you a photo. The main roof still needs financing, and we’ll hope to do it next year. Now we’ll start on installing the fire safety equipment that the Fire Department requires.

We’ll be praying for you, and for all your needs. Thank you, and God bless you!

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.