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Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

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Mar 12, 2012

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Maybe it would be good to let one of our parishioners express her thanks to you for a change: "I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Fr Myron, Vicky and all the benefactors who helped to buy medicine for me. I am suffering terribly from Asthma. I am a parishioner of Nakhodka's Our Lady of the Pacific Catholic Parish. I was born in Kazakhstan in a Catholic family. My mother and my sister too suffered from Asthma. It all happened during the time of Perestroika, during the fall of Soviet Union. They all died in their early age because of lack of treatment and non availability of medicine. My mother died at the age of 53 and my sister at the age of 39. I am the only one surviving in my family. I am suffering from asthma for about 14 years. Since I am handicapped, I am supposed to get free treatment and free medicine. Since last month of August the hospital is not providing me any medicine because of "lack of financing." That is the answer the hospital authorities give to me. One inhaler here in Nakhodka costs three thousand rubles and that is over \$100, but you bought it for me at \$27 dollars on the internet. I am not able to buy it for this amount here in Nakhodka, as I have to buy other medicines for allergy from which I am suffering. I feel your help came to me at a time, when I was just barely living and breathing without any lifesaving medicines. In fact I already started to feel the asthma attacks. A big and heartfelt thanks to you all because you help those who need help most. Your help gives us the courage to fight and get treated. Wish you all a very bright New Year, good health, long life and all the best. Yours truly, --Galina Adamovna" Then Fr Sebastian added: "I must add to this letter one more sentence. When I gave her the medicine packet, she was in tears, tears rolled down out of happiness. She was so happy to get this gift from you and from your friends and benefactors. She said she did not think that you could organize this so fast and get the much needed medicine for her so soon. She also told me that she always remembers how her sister and mother died due to unavailability of medicine. She said that you gave her a gift for an unknown person: It is indeed great and God bless you all and she is praying for you all. So God bless you all for all the help. Happy New Year to all of you. --Fr Sebastian, Pastor in Nakhodka.

I'm writing to say "Thank You!" too, for your prayers and support! Every day as I have to pay the bills I have a chance to thank God for your generosity! Thank you so much!! We will be praying for you daily.

Right now we are feeling a little "blue" as two of our seminarians left for the seminary in Manila, Philippines, making it a total of three. It is good news that they are going to the seminary!! The sad part is that we are without them here just now. Brother Edwin is still here with us, and we have our regular novitiate classes. Brother Inosensius skypes me, so we'll have electronic contact. He said that there was a fire in the building where he was staying, but no one was hurt. Brother Arnulfo is on assignment in the Philippines until the school year starts there in June. Brother Patrick's dad died recently, so he has been juggling between seminary studies and visits to the hospital and then the funeral home.

I wrote some time ago about the building of the new big bridges here in Vladivostok. Here is a dramatic photo of the bridge to Russian Island nearing completion. We can't wait to use it, as it will open up the new campus of the Far Eastern Federal University to us city folk. But it looks so spindley! People say they are afraid to cross it!



Our 93 year old parishioner Kazimira Feliksovna Talko passed away on January 27. She was baptized in our church by Bishop Slivovsky before the church was confiscated. I was happy to be able to give her the Last Sacraments. Only one of her relatives is a Catholic—a granddaughter. The rest of the family did not want any religious ceremony, so we had the Vigil at her house, and I will go bless the grave in the spring. So there remains, as far as we know, only three pre-revolutionary parishioners. Two of them have refused any contact for 20 years already, but we are still hoping. And the last one, Regina Josephovna, lives in Tomsk in Siberia. We have occasional contact by telephone. She is the lady whose father buried Bishop Slivovsky's body, so the whole family had to leave Vladivostok in the middle of the night to escape the KGB. She saved some of the bishop's personal effects, which she gave to us. You can see them in the church. I think I'll publish Kazimira's memoirs in the next *Vladivostok Sunrise* (issue 105).

I'm so happy that Lent is here!! We'll be praying for you and for all your needs. God bless you.

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.