



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

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A RUSSIAN MAN WITH A DEEP FAITH by Br. Hubert Yakobus, C.J.D.

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Br. Hubert reciting his poem, "Vladivostok, I love you."

Have you ever experienced a great blessing from God in a prayer? I would like to share with you a deeply moving experience that I will never forget in my life.

It happened when I was in Vladivostok last year. There was a man named Nikolai. He lived in a hospice, Russian hospital for poor people or any elderly sick people who didn't have family to take care of them. Nikolai was 28 years old and the youngest of the patients at the hospice. He was paralyzed because of his heavy alcoholism. He could not get up from his bed because the left part of his body and hand did not work anymore. This condition made him very hard to move his body when he was sleeping.

One Saturday in August 2015, I visited Nikolai and all the sick men at the hospice together with our sisters, Sisters in Jesus the Lord. The first time I saw Nikolai, he was so serious and little bit sad perhaps from the suffering. I tried to get close to him and talk even though my Russian vocabulary was very limited at that time. It was good that Nicolai understood most of what I was trying to say to him. Sometimes we just remained silent as I could not explain what I really wanted to tell him. It was difficult for Nikolai to speak so his voice was not clear. After our visit Nikolai asked me to come again during my next Saturday visit to the hospice. I promised "Yes, of course."

I fulfilled my promise to visit him again and again with each of my regular ministry calls to the hospice. Nikolai was so happy and said that I was his new friend. Moreover, he called me his foreigner friend. For him, having a foreigner as a friend and visiting him were blessings as he never experienced such a thing in his life. Nikolai had lived in a village near Vladivostok city and no foreigner could visit a man like him. Little by little our friendship grew. He started to tell his experiences to me and asked about my experiences too.

One day Nikolai asked me, "I want to know what is your religion and why do you come here almost every week?" I answered him with a long explanation about Catholicism, church, charity work, and especially about my vocation to be a priest. Then he understood and appreciated it. I asked Nikolai too about his religion. He said that he is an Orthodox but has not practiced his faith for so long. I asked him if he remembered any prayers. Nikolai said he knew "Our Father". I asked him to pray the Our Father together with me. While we were praying, he started to cry. After praying, I asked Nikolai why he cried. He smiled and said that it touched his heart so deep because that was first time for him to pray again. On that day, before leaving Nikolai, I decided to divide my rosary for him and for me too, so he could wear it with the holy cross on his hand and I could pray with another part of that rosary for his healing. He kissed the cross and cried again. Reflecting on this touching moment, I prayed in my heart for Nikolai's healing process, and especially for his faith. Nikolai promised me he would pray whenever he wanted to.



Nikolai in his bed.

Sometimes I was busy so I could not visit Nikolai and other sick men there in the hospice. When I went there again, Nikolai asked me, "Why did you not come and visit me? Do you still care for me?" I replied that of course I do care for him but I had much work to do too, so I couldn't come to visit him. Nikolai was dissatisfied and said, "I really want you to come because we can pray together again the Our Father!" I was really speechless hearing this statement. It came from a Russian man that I just knew a few weeks and before that he never practiced his faith. God really moved this little soul to Him. I believe that this poor little man really did what he promised to me that he would pray whenever his heart wanted to.

On September 14, 2015, I was on the way to the university where I was studying the Russian language. While I was walking, my mind remembered Nikolai, that poor man, so I took the rosary and prayed for his healing and especially for his growing in faith. Unfortunately, I really didn't know that on that day Nikolai passed away from this world. I heard the news from the nurses in the hospice several days after Nikolai's passing. When I heard that he died on that day, I said thanks to God that He listened to my prayer because Nikolai died on the Feast of the Holy Cross. I commemorate the moment that Nikolai kissed the holy crucifix and cried. I am sure that God had listened to his prayer and looked to his faith. Nikolai, a Russian man with a deep faith. May God accept him in his eternity. *Requiem in aeternum.*

Dear Friends,

Br. Hubert's story is just one of many I can bring to you. Essential to the news of the growing numbers of the community, are the stories of love, humility, suffering and conversion among the many seminarians who are serving in our order and the people we serve. The experiences and testimonies they can share represent the essence of God's purpose for calling our men to consecrated life, to bring God's people closer to Him. Correspondingly, they are the future priests to continue the work we are now doing and why your help to our seminarians is so very important.

I regularly write to you about our seminarian numbers, our monastery building progress, and our great need for financial support for all. I will continue to update you as surely it is imperative to keep you abreast of our growth. We cannot revive the Catholic Faith in Russia, provide the charitable works, and support the vocations that make up the future priests without your help. We are always thankful to you.

Our vocations program has now grown to 40 seminarians this year already! Our order has:

- **4 ordained priests**
- **2 deacons to be ordained as priests in 2017.**
- **Five seminarians will be ordained deacons in January and February of 2017.**
- **Some seminarians will serve in Russia, some in Indonesia, and some in America. Br. Jose and Br. Luis will be ordained deacons in January, 2017, in the Las Vegas diocese. We are very happy that our seminarians can help in America. We will be on 3 continents!**

Stay tuned for more on the people touched by our seminarians and their road to becoming priests. If you would like to help out a seminarian directly, you may sponsor an individual. Please see our website for our seminarians' annual education and living expense budget. Or you can send a general donation to our seminarian program in the envelope provided. You may also donate through our website, www.vladmission.org using a credit card or by Paypal.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are times when we all love to give. Thank you for your continuing prayers and support. Please pray for us as we pray for you daily.

God bless you.

Sincerely,



Very Reverend Myron Effing, C.J.D.