

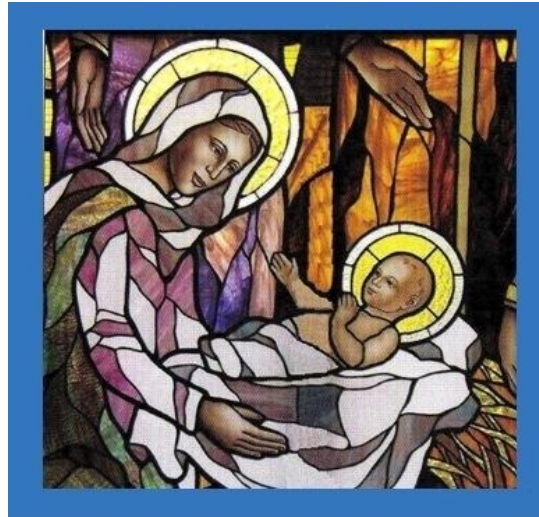


# Mary Mother of God Mission Society

## Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

December 15, 2019



Merry Christmas!! I hope you get this letter by Christmas time! We are grateful to you for your donation, and pray for you in return. We know that our rewards are “out of this world”!

It is so exciting that we have many good young men in line for the seminary in the new year, and so many ordinations to the priesthood! We are working on their future ordinations and assignments!

*Nativity Window from our church in Vladivostok, given to us by Nativity of our Lard Parish in St Paul, MN*

Meanwhile, here is a picture of our new novices who entered religious life on the Feast of Christ the King—six new guys in the front row. Five of the novices who entered in March are in the second row, and five of us in Vladivostok who are in vows are in the last row. We hope they will persevere to the priesthood. The six new novices are from Vietnam and Pakistan.



Yesterday we held our parish Advent retreat here in Vladivostok. In Russia, given the 70 years of atheist Communist rule, Christmas was just another workday, and besides, the Orthodox Church celebrates Christmas on January 7, which is December 25 in the Julian calendar. So we try to have a retreat on Saturday—not a workday—when people can come together to consider and pray about Christmas. I even notice that the “Franciscan”

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nativity scene is not popular in Russia. What IS popular is the New Year's Tree, which, of course is also the Christmas tree. Almost all homes have a New Year's tree and every city square has one, too. We also try to have a big Christmas tree in church for Christmas (about \$50). Besides our "Midnight Mass" (7pm, as the buses don't run after 10:00 and people wouldn't have a way home) our Christmas Concerts will also be full, full, full! So we are looking forward to all that. The brothers couldn't wait, so they have really beautifully decorated the monastery, and the decorations in the church will be done this week. Businesses are busy selling New Year's gifts, as is the tradition. When the canon is shot off at midnight on December 31, everybody wants to be at home with a lavish meal and all their best clothes with gifts to open. That is the way the Russians like to bring in the new year.

*Christmas scene in our monastery, 2019*

Thank you for your donation, and for helping support our seminarians! Thank you, too, for all your prayers for us during 2019, and let's hope we will see a lot of better things in 2020! Maybe you can share our need with some friends?—we need more income. Seminary education is expensive. We will be happy to include you in all our prayers in 2020—every day!

God bless you in the new year!. Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

To read *Vladivostok Sunrise 150*, go here: <https://vladmission.org/s/150>

To read *Vladivostok Sunrise 151*, go here: <https://vladmission.org/s/151>

To make a donation or order a Mass using your money card, go here: <http://vladmission.org/get-involved/donate/>

**Special Needs List:**

1. In January we will have a bill for \$13,500 to pay the tuition of our seminarians in Russia. (Gulp!!) I hope benefactors will come though again! **"Tuition"**