



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

September 2, 2008

I hope you enjoyed the Feast of the Assumption! We celebrate it on Sunday so more people can attend. We had the usual procession with special prayers, and a highlight of the event was the attendance of five officers of the French Navy in full uniform. They even volunteered to carry the crosses for the procession! It is always a treat when military people in uniform attend mass and go to communion here, because it was forbidden to Russians for so long that military people would be religious. Their ship was not far away in the Golden Horn Bay—soon to be graced by a new bridge.

In Russian, the feast isn't called the "Assumption" but the "Falling Asleep" and I preached on how if we compare the "falling asleep" of Mary with the death of the martyr Stephen as in the Acts of the Apostles, we see that it must have been a very joyful moment for the Blessed Virgin to see her Son coming for her! And since she was not touched by original sin, we see that she needn't have felt the pains of death either at the time. So we rejoiced with the Virgin, and asked for her help with our troubles.

Sunday we had the blessing of students and teachers for the beginning of the school year. I was amazed at how few students we have, but what a large group of teachers in our parish! The number of students is low because of the Russian economic crisis which was about ten years ago, and all those times of changes and uncertainties. But the large number of teachers in the parish bring hope for the future! By the way, Baby Boom in Lesozovodsk! The birthing department of the city hospital has asked us for a major purchase of cloth diapers. It seems that up to 17 kids a day are now being born there! The hospital can't keep up. You recall that we purchased special baby-monitoring equipment for them in the past, so they are coming back to us for help. Of course it all depends on benefactors. Is it too much to think that the baby boom is due to the nine years of work by our Women's Support Center there in Lesozovodsk? They have been teaching pro-life values in all the schools in Lesozovodsk all this time, so the young moms have heard our volunteers speak, probably many times, when they were in school.

By the way, I always give a nice juicy apple to all the kids and teachers after their blessing. I guess it is the American in me.

Thank you for your donation! It's back to school time, and we've had lots of requests for children's clothing and school supplies. I'm glad we can help, thanks to our benefactors like you. Thank you very much for your help for people whom you probably will never see in this life. Meanwhile we'll pray for you and your intentions.

Imagine my delight when we discovered another parishioner who was baptized and made her First Communion in our church before the Russian Revolution came here. She is 86 years old, born in 1922, the year our church was dedicated the first time! Evgenia says she remembers her First Communion well enough, but doesn't remember if she was confirmed or not, so I confirmed her conditionally, gave her Communion and anointed her. She died in her sleep several days later after I brought her communion a second time. There were few at her funeral, as she never married, and most of her generation preceded her in death. She served as a medic in the Second World War and had lots of medals and awards to prove it. Later in life she worked as a dentist. It's always a royal day when we find one of our old parishioners.

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Here is a photo of the poster announcing the first concert on the “new” used pipe organ that we installed from Minnesota. The organist, Aleksei Parshin, is probably the best organist in Russia, and is a professor of organ at the Moscow conservatory. He is scheduled for four concerts, and it will probably be a full house as usual. Meanwhile Marine Amelchinko, our organist is planning a free concert for parishioners and their friends also in September.

God bless you! Thanks for your help! We’ll pray for your intentions at Mass today.

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.