



# Mary Mother of God Mission Society

## Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactor,

December 31, 2017

Happy New Year! Our season's greetings to you in the form of a short message on Youtube. Try it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjSNq1OOEAE>

On Christmas we had a really full house for the "Midnight Mass" and the Christmas concerts were sold out, too. The kids did a really spectacular performance of the Nativity scene—We started that years ago before we had figures for a Bethlehem scene, and it is still a tradition, although we also have a "crib" now. Still ahead is the Christmas Festival of Christian Choirs, which we host after Orthodox Christmas on January 7. It is a time when we Christians don't argue about dogma, but celebrate the birth of the Savior! By the way, we often get the question here of just who is a Christian. My answer is pretty simple: A Christian is one who believes in the Trinity, in the Incarnation, and in the Redemption by the Cross! Without those three things, a person isn't a Christian. I also get the question why we decorate a Christmas tree, and the answer to that is that the tree is born about the same time as Jesus because in 33 years they will be nailed together. (OK, don't tell the atheists that the "new year's tree" is a Christian symbol!) Sorry I didn't get a good picture of the kids—Here is the best I can do.



The weather here has been exceptionally cold, with an ice storm when I was nine hours trapped in a car because the traffic just wasn't moving!—It made national news. Then we had a pretty, heavy snow storm, which was a joy for Bro Pradeep from India and Bro Rajnal from Pakistan because it was the first snow they have seen, and maybe more importantly, felt! By the way, at the "midnight mass" we had university students attending from all over the world: China, India, Pakistan, Africa, South America. The Sisters in Jesus the Lord held a Christmas party for foreign students at the St John the Evangelist Student Center (which is still woefully in need of repairs) near the university on Russian Island. Hopefully it helped them deal with the blues of not being home for Christmas.

On the back side of this paper you will see the grateful and happy faces of just three of the 60 very poor people who received our "Soup Kitchen" package of foods earlier this month for Christmas. Many thanks to all the benefactors who donated to the Soup Kitchen

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project, and to the Social Services Department of the City of Vladivostok for helping to choose the recipients and who made the food deliveries! And to Lily Timofeevna who chose the foods and oversaw the project. We are planning another “Soup Kitchen” for Easter, if not before, depending upon donations.

We will be able to visit the hospice and orphanages and the poor parishioners with the food packets, too. The sisters have been collecting a “kilogram of solidarity” from parishioners for the poor also. It could be a kilogram of any food that doesn’t need refrigeration. Thank you for your donation! We appreciate you help so much! I’d sure like to personally thank you, but a letter is all we can do for now.

Thank you for your help! We need you to carry on our work, and we need the young vocations to carry on our work. God bless you! Have a happy Christmas Season and a Happy New Year!

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

To read Sunrise 139, go here: <https://vladmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sunrise-139.pdf>

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

To watch our new video, go here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwiQLQzvDPY&feature=youtu.be>

Vladivostok Christmas Music Programs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjSNG1OOEAE>

