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“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”
(Luke 2, 14).

„On this sacred night of the birth of your Lord, may the angels come and rejoice with all of you and bring you peace on behalf of God...). They bring you the happy news that God has made peace with mankind. God has been born on earth and has made peace with you, oh soul of good will

It is no longer time for sorrow and weeping, but for happiness and joy; it is time for peace and jubilation. God has been born for you”.

Bl. Maria Celeste Crostarosa – Meditations for Advent

***Dear Sisters and Fathers,
Dear colleagues and friends,***

We will soon be celebrating Christmas, the most important event in human history! God the Father has fulfilled His eternal plan of love and has given us his Son, so that He can teach us to live in a divine way helping us to return to our Homeland.

In the midst of the uncertainty of our world, we can find in Him unshakeable certainty, peace, joy and hope, and even become a support for others, as He has commanded us. We wish you this very much. Contemplating the tiny Jesus in the nursery, let us thank Him for His closeness, for His humility, for His faithful love, for the transforming power coming from our encounter with Him.

During this difficult year, together with all of you, we want to thank God for having guided us and for helping us to grow in faith and trust in His paternal providence.

For us, the time of the epidemic began with a quite significant event. Shortly after the Lenten Retreat given by Fr. Zenon Gieniec of Tagliatti, a Redemptorist parish in Russia, one morning in March, we saw that someone knocked down and damaged the statue of Our Lady, in front of our church. The statue was willingly visited by the citizens, not only Catholics, often children. We found that Mary was the first to 'suffer' and that she took our sufferings on her. We prayed the rosary constantly and earnestly, recommending to Our Lady the whole humanity, our parish, all the people close to us whom we were worried about, our homeland, the sick and the doctors.

The renovated statue of Mary was consecrated by Archbishop Tomasz Peta on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the presence of the clergy from the deanery and our parishioners. It was the only such celebration with more numerous faithful participating, during this troubled year.

Despite repeated quarantines and restrictions, thanks to the Redemptorists, Fr. Peter and Fr. Anthony, we always had daily Eucharist. Even during their illness, priests from other parishes celebrated for us. For the first time since the beginning of our mission in Kazakhstan, the Paschal Triduum has been celebrated in our church. It was usually held in the parish church and this time, almost in conspiracy, the Fathers, the Sisters of Mercy and some parishioners entered the side entrance of the church to celebrate the Passover.



As a contemplative community, living its mission in one place, we have not experienced the effects of epidemiological restrictions so strongly. We sympathised with people in our city, but at the same time we were happy that there were not so many events and concerts around us, in the park, and that birds' singing and children playing were more audible than concerts and fireworks often shaking the monastery's windows. The faithful, yearning for the Eucharist, came anyway for Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, which at times took place behind closed doors. We had contact with many people by phone or via Internet, raising their spirit and praying for each other. Fortunately, all the Covid - infected have recovered, both fathers and parishioners. We have much to thank God for, because He brought some benefit for us even from the epidemic: Most foreign missionaries could not go to their countries, so the authorities extended visas on the spot. This year our community was strengthened by Sr. Maria Gajdosiková from Bielsko-Biala and we were pleased to have her stay with us for the next six months. Fr. Anthony stayed in our parish longer than had been planned.

Every day we alimented our hearts with the texts of our Blessed Maria Celeste, learning to trust in God from her. It turned out that Bl. M. Celeste helped also one of the parishioners. She shared, that when she was forced not to leave her flat, she was helped by Maria Celeste's texts, which we had published in Russian. She learned from M. Celeste humility and patience, and above all, trust in God.

We thank the sisters of the Service Board for another Viva Memoria, for the texts that deepened our spirituality, and also for the information about the life of Redemptoristine communities around the world, which we read with interest. We pray daily for our sisters, especially for the sick ones, for the monasteries in difficulties and for the renewal of our Order. We celebrated the Eucharist for the deceased sisters. We recommend to your prayer Ludmilla, our sister Irina's mother, who died early this year, as well as her family.

We were glad that the sisters from Bielsko-Biala published "Spiritual Exercises for the month of December" prepared by us with comments in a more popular form in order to share the thoughts of our Foundress.

We constantly pray for our countries, following the situation and waiting for more news from our loved ones. We implored God for the sick Redemptorists in Poland, in the whole world, for the deceased, for the doctors and chaplains who dedicate themselves to the ministry in infectious hospitals. We thank Fr. Provincial Janusz Sok and Fr. Tomasz Jakubczak, who remembers about us from afar in a practical way, specifically, for the unexpected help we received, which was a real gift from heaven for us.

The previous winter was lighter, it was warmer in the church, which allowed us to stay for longer prayers. The summer was extremely hot and required a lot of work in the churchyard and in the garden, but we gathered up a lot of supplies for the next winter and even shared some with others.



In these uncertain times, let us love Jesus more and more, only He is our Hope! ***In all things God works with those who love Him for their good!*** - Let us strengthen our hearts with this assurance of St. Paul. Let us trust in Jesus, Emmanuel, for he never gets tired of sick humanity, he continues to act and purifies us, to make us a new creation worthy of Him.

We wish you, dear ones, God's blessing for the whole New Year 2021. Thank you for your spiritual and material support for our mission. With prayer and gratitude,

Redemptoristines from Kazakhstan

Pietropavlovsk, Advent 2020