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A DOZEN CONVICTS BAPTIZED IN RUSSIAN PRISON



A joyous event took place in Penal Colony No. 20 in the North Ossetian village of Zavodskoy earlier this month, as a dozen convicts were baptized into Christ in the holy Orthodox Church.

The washing of regeneration was celebrated on January 21 by the local clerics Archpriest Sergei Biryuk and Fr. Alexei Ovchinnikov, reports the Diocese of Vladivostok.

The Baptisms were served in the prison’s Church of St. Anastasia of Sirmium, which is in the final stage of construction, “but is already functioning and is already a spiritual island for those who have stumbled and want to get on the path of correction.”

There are more than 640 churches and chapels and more than 390 prayer rooms in Russian penitentiaries, with another 40 under construction, Patriarch Kirill said in May.

The convicts resolved to convert to holy Orthodoxy after speaking with priests, reading literature in the prison church library, and speaking with other prisoners who are Orthodox. Before celebrating the Sacrament, Fr. Sergei held a public talk about the Christian life and the need for repentance, and the meaning of the feast of Theophany.

In 2018, OrthoChristian reported on Baptisms at a prison in Tatarstan in a font built by the prisoners themselves.

In America, the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry has sent thousands of icons, Bibles, and spiritual books to spiritually-seeking prisoners throughout the pandemic.

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