

Chapter Seventeen

Sunday, June 21, 2015.

St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City.

As planned, Pope Nicholas had spent Saturday night in the Rome apartment of Father Ignacio Battista, who had a special papal invitation to come to the sacristy of Saint Peter's Basilica two hours before the consecration, and who was assigned to escort the Pope's old friend "Father Jacob." Before setting out at six o'clock Sunday evening for their walk across Saint Peter's Square, and into the famous basilica housing the central altar of Christendom atop the tomb of the Blessed Apostle Peter, Nicholas permitted himself a brief glance at the Sunday afternoon television news reports. More than one hundred Cardinals and bishops would be gathering in Saint Peter's Basilica for this evening's eight o'clock ceremony. Of some surprise to the media, Filaret III, the Patriarch of Moscow, had asked several Russian Orthodox bishops to attend as observers. Hundreds of Catholic priests and religious from the Rome vicinity had been granted priority seating, and tickets for lay persons had been distributed on a limited basis, including a lottery to ensure that several hundred "non-VIP's" could attend in person. Security would be very thorough and time-consuming, as at the most strict airports, so it was necessary for the crowd to assemble well ahead of the eight o'clock ceremony. The media felt this was understandable. A modest dress code would also be enforced, and there were notices in major Rome newspapers as well as signs posted about the public areas of the Vatican, explaining that at this ceremony in honor of Our Lady there would be zero tolerance for immodest or otherwise inappropriate attire. The media, naturally, took offense at this, claiming that this would discriminate against the poor and those wanting to express themselves in unique ways.

Tonight, mused Nicholas, Catholics notorious for their last-minute arrival at routine *novus ordo* Masses, would be spending an extended period of time in silence in the basilica. The Pope had issued an order, through his deputy Father Herald, for "Holy Silence" in the basilica out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament and the solemnity of the occasion. Those refusing to cooperate after an initial warning by the ushers, no matter what their worldly station, would be evicted by the security guards. Ample provision had been made for the worldwide media to televise the event, so that anyone who wished could watch world history unfold in their own home or at their parish church. Media comments were made disparaging the strict recording requirements imposed by the Pope on every participating Cardinal and bishop, so that their individual correct participation could be verified after the fact by Vatican officials. There were insinuations that this sort of "heavy-handed tyranny" had gone out of the Church during the long pontificate of the Pope's predecessor, who had preferred to rule by example and cordial invitation. Now "the sudden end of collegiality" was lamented, as the College of Cardinals and the National Conferences of Catholic Bishops were no longer being consulted for their

advice, but rather were being ordered, in minute detail, as to how they were to conduct themselves in this consecration. Nor was participation optional for any Catholic bishop. It was suggested that, whereas Nicholas' predecessor had learned to operate like a modern corporate CEO, Pope Nicholas was "reverting back to the style of a power-hungry medieval monarch."

Nicholas laughed at the ridiculous rewriting of actual history that made such vacuous comments seem plausible. He knew that the kind of mind-control and mounting suppression of politically-incorrect speech which typified modern public discourse was largely unknown and unthinkable until the "errors of Russia" had begun to spread throughout the world. To be sure, there had been some precedents of outrageous thought-suppression ever since the Protestant revolt.

Elizabethan England had outlawed the Catholic religion, and had subjected those who refused to practice the new-fangled Protestant religion to unprecedented penalties for incorrect thinking: the gradual loss of their property through draconian fines for failing to attend Protestant services, and if they continued to resist then eventually they would face the horrors of imprisonment, torture, and public execution. It was not until 2014, when Prince James, Prince of Wales, and his wife had become Anglican Use Catholics, that an embarrassed English Parliament had finally voted to lift the ban on any British monarch becoming or marrying a Roman Catholic. In Ireland, the occupying English empire had tried over several centuries to outlaw and suppress the Catholic religion, imposing Penal Laws that drove the Catholic Irish into poverty and eventual famine while their English overlords assumed control of the land and government. It took until 1960 for Trinity College in Dublin to admit its first Roman Catholic student.

In the United States, President Abraham Lincoln, who for years had openly advocated that the black slaves be rounded up and shipped off to a Caribbean island as unfit to live among whites, had freed the slaves in the south (but not in the north) as an act of economic warfare, and not because he believed in equal rights for them.⁹¹ He began to arrest and jail newspaper editors all across the nation when they publicly challenged his various tyrannical actions violating states' rights and taking to himself powers not granted by the Constitution. Lincoln had even jailed the Chief Justice of the United State Supreme Court when that justice questioned the legality of Lincoln's actions. Pope Pius IX sent a crown of thorns to President Jefferson Davis of the Confederate States,⁹² thereby recognizing which side actually represented the Catholic practice of subsidiarity (strong local rule and weak central government), and which side represented the growing tyranny of big money that would learn to benefit immensely from the inherent evils of an all-too-powerful central government. Yet, because history tends to be written by the victors of wars, Lincoln had gone on

⁹¹ Woods, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History*, pages 61-75. See Bibliography.

⁹² <http://catholicism.org/blessed-pius-ix-and-jefferson-davis.html> downloaded on November 22, 2010.

to become one of the ‘gods’ of the official state religion of the American empire, with his Roman-style temple in the United States capital attesting to the modern theory that might makes right. By the end of the Nineteenth Century papal encyclicals issued forth from Pope Leo XIII warning against the evils of modernism – and also against “Americanism,”⁹³ which was essentially an early form of anti-Catholic secular humanism based upon the errors of Protestantism.

Nicholas knew that tonight he would be openly challenging the immensely powerful and wealthy secular humanist establishment that ruled the world. Like “the shot heard round the world” with which the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson described the first volley of the American Revolutionary War, the consecration of Russia would unleash a tide of world-changing events that future historians would remember as the night when the restoration of Christendom began.

For the final hour before their six o’clock departure for Saint Peter’s, the Pope knelt at Father Battista’s *prie-dieu* and sought strength from Heaven. He thought of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, sweating as it were great drops of blood. And he recalled how, when it was over, angels came and ministered to him.

Then the dreaded but sweet hour came when the Pope could no longer continue to hide from the world. At six o’clock, Father Battista and “Father Jacob” exited the apartment and walked down two blocks of a side street that would bring them out onto the *Via della Conciliazione* just a hundred meters from the opening between the arms of the colonnades that encircled Saint Peter’s Square. As they neared the end of the block, a small television news crew approached them, one holding a microphone with a logo indicating a well-known network, and the other holding a shoulder-style television camera.

“Good evening, Fathers. May we have a word with you?” asked the newsman. The camera lens was on them, with a red light illuminated. “Are you going to the ceremony this evening?”

“We are indeed,” said Father Battista. “Father Jacob and I have been asked to assist in the sacrity at Saint Peter’s tonight.”

“Then perhaps you would know something about the whereabouts of His Holiness? He was last observed in a remote Italian monastery two days ago, and so far there has been no official confirmation, from the usual Vatican sources, that he is back in the Vatican.”

“Pope Nicholas is an old friend of mine, from way back in our youth,” smiled “Father Jacob.” “In school he was always known for showing up in class at the last possible minute, even though he was never actually late. Perhaps he is still up to his old tricks.”

“There are questions from some quarters wondering whether the Pope has been kidnapped, or whether the pressure was too much for him as the whole world waits to see if he will really strong-arm the world’s bishops who refuse to cooperate.”

⁹³ Pope Leo XIII, *Testum Benevolentiae Nostrae*, 1899, and *Longinqua Oceani*, 1895.

“I am certain the Holy Father will prove to be present on time,” said Father Battista. “Does your network have any estimates as to how many Catholic bishops may refuse to participate in the consecration?”

“Our network polls in the last two hours suggest that as many as one-third of the world’s bishops may refuse to perform the consecration, many of them standing their ground on the principle that they have a collegial relationship with the Pope, and he can no longer just order them around. Some say they can’t believe that he would actually excommunicate them.”

“Well, they may be quite surprised,” said “Father Jacob.” “You know, some people think that the replacement of quite a number of more liberal bishops, by new men completely true to the Faith, is just what the Church needs. They say it is high time to weed out the ‘bad apples’ among the hierarchy. Maybe that is just what the Pope is thinking. It will all be very interesting.”

“Now, you see, we do need to make our way to our posts in Saint Peter’s for the ceremony,” said Father Battista. “If you gentlemen will excuse us.”

“By all means, Fathers. And thank you for your comments.”

In five minutes they reached the perimeter of Saint Peter’s Square, where a Swiss Guard confronted them.

“I am Father Battista, sir. And this is ‘Father Jacob.’ Now, you see, we have special clearance. Check your photos, please.”

The guard studied photos called up on a hand-held device, and then looked closely at each of them.

“Indeed you do. Proceed on to the next guard station over there, and I will radio him that you are on the way.”

Before long the two priests had passed through three more Swiss Guard check points, and were now inside Saint Peter’s Basilica. Two more checkpoints, one along the side of the church and one at the corridor leading into the sacristy, got them admitted to the sacristy where Father John Herald was waiting with twelve Swiss Guards. As the two priests in simple black cassocks entered the room, no one but Father Herald reacted.

“Your Holiness!” exclaimed Father Herald, as he knelt before “Father Jacob,” who drew the Fisherman’s ring out of his pocket and placed it on his finger for Father Herald to kiss, thus displaying his devotion to the office of Peter.

The Swiss Guards immediately took their cue, and surrounded the Pope, protecting him from all possible harm.

“Have I not arrived just as we planned, Father Herald?” asked Nicholas. Then to the altar boys he said: “Please assist me to remove this disguise, and to don the appropriate papal robes for the ceremony.”

At once several older altar boys, trained to assist in the robing of Popes and Cardinals for liturgical events, came to assist as “Father Jacob” underwent a rapid transformation into His Holiness, Pope Nicholas VI, robed in white and ready to obey the ninety-eight year old mandate of Heaven.

“What is the plan, Father Herald?” asked Nicholas.

“There will be a formal procession down the center aisle, beginning at the back. The pipe organ and a brass choir will accompany the Sistine Chapel choir as they lead the congregation in familiar Marian hymns. Four Swiss Guards will lead, followed by the Cross-bearer carrying the ceremonial cross, then the Thurifer carrying the incense. A statue of Our Lady of Fatima will follow next, borne on the shoulders of six laymen selected by my friend Father Gottschalk of the Fatima Herald apostolate in Detroit. Flag bearers carrying the Papal flag on the right, and the flag of the Russian Federation on the left, will be next. After those will come a dozen altar boys, followed by Four Swiss Guards, then Your Holiness and Father Battista and myself, and then four more Swiss Guards. Then about one hundred Cardinals and bishops, who are even now gathered in the back chamber waiting, will follow in procession. Everyone but you and Father Battista has been through a dress rehearsal this afternoon.

“I will be beside you both throughout the ceremony to keep you on cue. Once we reach the altar, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place, followed by The Litany of the Blessed Virgin. Then there will be another Marian hymn while you and all the bishops take their appointed places at special kneelers in the sanctuary for the consecration. Each will have a large-print copy of the required text, which begins with a reminder to turn on their lapel microphones and to clearly state their full name and the city of their cathedral into the microphone before the consecration begins. All will kneel before the Blessed Sacrament while the Consecration is recited.

“Afterwards, there will be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament concluding with a blessing of all present, followed by recessional Marian hymns while all recess out in the same order in which they first processed. The ceremony will be followed by a private reception in the Apostolic Palace for the bishops and Cardinals who participated, at which Your Holiness will try to personally thank as many of them as possible. There will also be a few private media booths adjacent to the reception, where those who wish can grant television interviews.”

“Excellent, Father Herald. I could not have conceived of any better plan myself. You are a faithful servant and devoted friend to your old and weary Pope.”

“I am also getting on in years, Holiness. But we may both rejoice to think that we have both lived to see such a day as this!”

Suddenly an older Swiss Guard rang the sacristy bell, signaling all to be silent and to pay attention.

“It is now time for everyone to proceed,” explained the Guard. “We will move silently down the side of the church, and gather in the back for the procession. The twelve Swiss Guards will surround the Holy Father until he is in place in procession at the back, and will then take their designated places in the processional lineup.”

In just a few minutes, the organ and brass music began to fill the vaulted arches of the vast basilica, and the choir led the people in the singing of praises to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The procession down the

aisle bespoke the renewed triumphalism of a Church that would no longer remain hesitant to proclaim its authority over errant bishops and nations. The ceremony proceeded exactly as planned, and was watched all over the globe on virtually every major network.

However, this was not to be the only such ceremony taking place at this time. In Moscow, Filaret III, the Orthodox Patriarch of Moscow, had determined to perform the consecration simultaneously with the Pope in Rome. So, at ten o'clock in the evening Moscow time, in the Orthodox Cathedral of Christ the Savior, President Polzin and about one hundred trusted believers heard their Patriarch explain that the Orthodox had always called Mary "All-Immaculate," and that this ceremony would simply invoke Heaven to heal the ancient schism and get the two apostolic branches of the Church working together against the enemies of Christ who run the secular world. At the very moment when a television monitor showed that the Pope was beginning the consecration prayer in Rome, all knelt to pray with their Patriarch as he offered to Heaven his sincere supplication, according to the required text of the consecration, for the conversion of his nation.

Elsewhere in Moscow, at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the Most Reverend Nicholas Bogmolov, Catholic Archbishop of Moscow, would also perform the consecration simultaneously with the Pope in Rome. The cathedral was filled to standing room only with Catholic faithful and others, and, having consulted by telephone with Father Herald in Rome, Archbishop Bogmolov had arranged for a smaller-scale ceremony quite similar to the one planned for Saint Peter's Basilica. Like his Orthodox counterpart, the Archbishop waited until a television monitor showed the Pope begin the actual consecration, and then he led the Moscow congregation in consecrating their nation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in union with the Pope and all the bishops of the world.

Later, as the exhausted Pope began his duty to thank the Cardinals and bishops at the reception in the Apostolic Palace, consecration ceremonies would also be ending in time zones all around the world. In some places the consecration had been done in the middle of the night, in other places in the morning or afternoon. But all obedient Catholic bishops in the world had completed the mandate of Heaven, simultaneously with the Pope in Rome.

Back in New York, at the Brown Group condominium atop the Waldorf=Astoria hotel, Mikhail and the three Petersons were driven to a private airport early Sunday morning, where the Brown Group jet was waiting to fly them back to Detroit. By eleven o'clock they had landed at Detroit City Airport, and a Brown Group limo drove them up Gratiot Avenue to the Cova rectory, where they were to meet Father Kiril for a trip downtown to Detroit's Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. There, at two o'clock in the afternoon, they would attend the consecration ceremony performed by the Archbishop of Detroit, using VIP tickets that Father Kiril had managed to obtain. The third and youngest Romanov brother, Vladimir Nicholaevich, would also join them along with his wife Olga Gavrilovna

and the two oldest of their six children, ages ten and nine. Vladimir, who was often mistaken for an identical twin of his older brother Kiril, was a well-known Detroit organ builder, and was proud that a historic instrument he had recently refurbished, the four-manual Austin organ at the cathedral, would be heard during today's ceremony.

After the Detroit consecration, the Romanovs and Petersons traveled the short distance to the Peterson's downtown Detroit condominium adjacent to the Wayne State University campus, where they began to watch and discuss the television news reports. The Papal consecration story dominated the news, but occasional brief reports about the Romanov Nobility Ball were interjected, especially since they blended so well given the overall focus on Russia.

Mikhail Romanov was described as a surprise guest, a Michigan doctor who turned out to be a secret Russian prince and who had dominated the ball and won the hearts of many of the Romanov nobility. His date Mariya Peterson was presented as a young Detroit music student who had recently won international acclaim by her award-winning performance in a Moscow competition, and her repeat performance in the Apostolic Palace for the Pope's birthday. She too was a secret European princess, and, like Prince Mikhail, had easily captured the hearts of the Romanov nobility. There were brief clips of Mariya's parents, Prince George and Princess Katarina, who had accompanied her to the ball. They too were descended from European royalty, lived in Detroit, and were both professors, he at Wayne State University School of Medicine and she at the University of Michigan School of Music. Both couples were shown dancing to the wonderful waltz music, and there were clips showing Mikhail and Mariya playing the piano and organ while leading the singing of the traditional hymns, and performing the Tchaikovsky excerpts from *The Nutcracker*. The scene of the youthful couple bowing to thunderous applause and shouts of "Bravo!" was used to close the segment.

Overall, the impression was given that the charming young couple, newcomers to the annual event, had completely taken over the Romanov Nobility Organization, simply "stealing the show" by their attractiveness, talent, and wit – combined with the fact that, by family dynastic rules, Prince Mikhail would be considered first in line for any restoration of the Russian throne.

Mikhail suddenly realized that he was quickly losing his privacy when the television aired pictures of his little Nazareth medical clinic, showing piles of flowers surrounding the "Romanov Medical Clinic" sign in the front yard, flags of the Russian Federation and the House of Romanov hung between double poles, and signs reading "We Love You Prince Mikhail!", "Michigan's Russians Love You!", and "Long Live the Next Tsar!" George was sufficiently concerned by this that he decided to peek out the condominium window. Nothing was visible in the courtyard below, but this was, after all, an inner city gated complex. They entered through a secure garage portal off the back street, and then ascended inside

the secure area to their condominium entrance. So they had not actually been out on the Woodward Avenue public sidewalk that ran alongside their complex. The fitness center windows did overlook Woodward Avenue, so George excused himself long enough to have a look. To his dismay, it was just the same as at Mikhail's clinic in Nazareth: there were piles of flowers, Russian flags, a few candles, and various signs which he could not read from his vantage point, except for one which said "Detroit Russians Love Princess Mariya!"

"My friends," said George upon returning. "We have a problem."

"Flowers, flags, and signs?" quipped Mikhail. "Those can't hurt you."

"Yes, but with all this television news exposure, people will start to recognize us. And how can we go to work anymore, knowing that our patients will be completely distracted by all this royal ball hysteria? Will it even be safe for Mariya to walk the campus anymore?"

Mikhail pondered whether this would be a good time to tell them about the thug in his clinic who had delivered what seemed to be a Romanov family threat. He decided this was not the right time. His decision deadline, after all, was still twenty-nine days away.

"We are probably not in any physical danger," said Katarina. "We may have some people asking for autographs or photos with us, but, if Russia converts and then restores her monarchy, we may be called upon to learn to live graciously in the spotlight. We may have to accept this as our new vocation."

"Well said, Katarina," said Father Kiril. "Just as the Pope could not know with any certainty how things would unfold following the consecration, neither can you know how the disclosure of your status among Russian nobility will play out. You just have to keep the Faith and trust Heaven."

"I'll be the most isolated, all by myself in Nazareth," said Mikhail.

"You won't be as alone as you think. You remember from your catechism how each soul has a guardian angel, but priests have two?"

"Yes."

"Well, kings and crown princes also have two guardian angels."

"Good. I'll need them," said Mikhail.

The initial television interviews conducted inside Russia were particularly striking. Comments from people on the street were routinely positive, both about the consecration of their nation by the Pope, and about the fact that an American doctor had suddenly emerged as the rightful heir to the Romanov throne. Announcers asked loaded questions, seeking desperately for negative comments about the Catholic assault on the Orthodox Church, or about the American-Romanov family plot to destroy democracy in Russia. But no Russians could be found who would speak negatively about these issues. Most Russians seemed to feel that if the Holy Mother of God wanted to obtain special graces for Russia, they should be the last to complain. And, they said, most people in Russia quietly longed for a restoration of the dignity, elegance, and order of former Russian society under the monarchy, and the moral and cultural leadership

that a Christian Tsar would provide. To have a Christian monarch was in the very soul of the Russian nation. Holy Mother Russia could never be her true self again without a Tsar to lead and protect her. Americans were spiritually impoverished by the fact that they had no history of a Christian king. So, probably they would find it difficult to understand. But Russians were Orthodox, and since Heaven itself has a Monarch, why shouldn't Russia have one? And if the Pope should be converted to be able to oversee the Orthodox Church without modernizing its liturgy, well, he is a monarch too, and what could be wrong with that?

People on the street in the Muslim regions of southern Russia also failed to be negative. Even here, where an anti-Catholic animus was expected, there was striking enthusiasm for the consecration. The Muslims inside Russia noted that they always did have a profound respect for the Virgin Mary. Also, the town where Mary had appeared to the shepherd children was named for Mohammad's daughter, Princess Fatima,⁹⁴ back when the Moors had ruled the Iberian Peninsula. Maybe, they said, there was a reason Mary chose that town for Her visit to earth. Maybe Heaven wanted to bless the Muslims too, when Russia converts or if Russia gets a good king. The media had to resort to interviews with Muslims outside Russia in order to obtain the negative comments they desired.

Interviews with Jews in Russia also resulted in surprisingly positive comments. The Orthodox Jewish believers simply said that it was none of their business if the majority of Russians, being Christians, wanted to pursue rapprochement with Rome or to explore the restoration of Russia's traditional form of government. The Reformed Jews said that, as loyal Russians, they could hardly complain about or oppose the will of the majority, and they would simply continue to strive to be faithful good citizens of their beloved nation. One or two rabidly atheistic Jews, prominent in business, did make some slightly negative remarks, but even they were subdued. And anyway, several agnostic or atheistic Gentile business leaders had already sounded exactly the same. Indeed, the media had unintentionally demonstrated that the determining factor in one's attitude toward the consecration and the idea of restoring the monarchy was not whether one was a Jew or a Gentile, or a Christian or a Muslim. Rather, what mattered was whether one was a believer in God or an atheist.

Reeling in shock from the impossible attitudes of Russians on the street, the international media had eventually resorted to repeatedly-aired interviews with a handful of atheistic, expatriate Russian scientists in London, Paris, and New York, who were willing to speak out against the consecration and against the notion of a restored monarchy. Their irrational hatred of faith and of cultural tradition was palpable. And for the moment, on this signal Sunday night in June, they were the darlings of the secular world media.

⁹⁴ More precisely, the town of Fatima was named after a Moorish princess who converted to the Catholic faith when the Christian knights took back Portugal from the Moors. She lived in that region and took the Christian name of Irene. Her name Fatima was given to her by her Moslem parents in honor of Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed.