

Chapter Twenty-Six
National Referendum, Tuesday, December 8, 2015,
Feast of the Immaculate Conception.
Russian Federation.

Preparation for the Russian National Referendum had been underway since early August. The ballot contained two simple questions, each asking the voter to either agree with one proposition, or to write in an alternative suggestion. In the event that any proposition should fail to receive support from the required percentage of Russian voters, then the alternative suggestions would be collated, and a new referendum would be held including those suggestions that had received support from at least ten percent of the voters. The two propositions were as follows:

RUSSIAN NATIONAL REFERENDUM
December 8, 2015, A.D. – Feast of the Immaculate Conception
OFFICIAL SECRET BALLOT

I. (Mark only one)

- Professor Doctor Mikhail Nicholaevich Romanov, born in the Year of Our Lord 1981 in the United States of America and now a Citizen of the Russian Federation, being the only living male direct descendant of a Romanov Tsar whose line of descent remains uncompromised by any morganatic marriage, shall, by the popular will of at least two-thirds of the voters in this referendum, assume power immediately as the Tsar of the Russian nation.
- Alternative preference (Please print legibly. Use the reverse side if more space is needed):

II. (Mark only one)

- If at least fifty-one percent of the voters in this referendum shall approve any one of the following options, then the Tsar of the Russian nation shall hold power:
- As an autocratic Christian monarch, bound only by the law of Christ and the guidance and advice of Christ's Vicar on Earth, the Pope of Rome.
- As a monarch whose power shall be defined and limited by a written Constitution to be developed and approved in a subsequent referendum by the Russian people.
- As a ceremonial monarch in a Christian Republic, with the political power being wholly invested in an elected legislature, an elective executive, and a Supreme Court appointed by the executive and ratified by the legislature.
- Alternative preference (Please print legibly. Use the reverse side if more space is needed):

Demographics: (For research purposes only, please indicate your religion)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic, Orthodox Rite | <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic, Roman Rite | <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protestant Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> Other believer: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Judaic believer | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-believer (agnostic or atheist) |

The election was being held on a new national holiday, the Feast of the

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. December eighth had long been a Holy Day of Obligation for Roman Catholics, but this would be the first time that the Russian Orthodox Catholic Church also celebrated this feast. The Orthodox Rite hierarchy had developed a new Orthodox liturgy specific to this feast, in consultation with liturgical experts provided by Pope Nicholas. Vigil Masses would be celebrated on the evening of December seventh, and feast day Masses would be celebrated throughout the morning on December eighth. For this national referendum, a new rule had been imposed: only those who had been to Mass to keep the feast, and who had received Holy Communion and had their hand stamped, would be eligible to vote on a white paper ballot. They would have their hand stamped by a parish usher immediately after receiving Communion. The design of the required stamp was kept top secret until the evening of December seventh, so there would be little time for counterfeit stamps to be produced and distributed. In addition, of course, voters would have to present their Russian Federation voter identification card at their assigned voting site.

Russian citizens who did not receive Holy Communion, either because they were not in a state of grace, or because they were not Roman Rite or Orthodox Rite Catholics, would still be allowed to vote if they were registered voters. But, since they lacked a hand stamp, they would be required to vote on identical ballots printed on green paper. Also, only green ballots were available for those voters who qualified for advance absentee voting. Green ballot votes would count equally with votes on white ballots, but in the public reporting of the results, two separate totals would be reported to the world. One, the results of the referendum if only the white ballots were counted; and two, the results of the referendum after combining both white and green ballots. If there were any difference in the two results, the result according to the combination of both white and green ballots would prevail. In this manner, the world would see the results of the Catholic vote compared to the results of the vote including all Russian citizens. There could then be no claim that Catholics were using this referendum to unjustly oppress religious minorities.

The polls would open at one o'clock in the afternoon, and remain open until midnight. This was to help everyone to make Mass attendance their first priority of the day, and voting their second priority. It was hoped that the special grace obtained by these rules would ensure that the election had been guided by the will of Heaven. The real goal, according to Patriarch Filaret, was not to discern the will of the people, but rather to discern whether an adequate percentage of the people were now willing to submit to the will of Heaven.

The Russian government had placed a ban on campaign funding and advertising regarding the referendum. The government alone could advertise, and this was limited to encouragement for all eligible voters to participate. Rules for the election, and sample ballots, were widely published. Political banners encouraging participation in the referendum,

and religious banners announcing the new national holiday, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, were posted all across Russia. The clergy of the Catholic Churches (which now included both Roman Rite and Orthodox Rite) were allowed to express their opinion about the referendum openly, not only from pulpits and in parish and diocesan publications, but also in signed opinion pieces and in broadcast interviews. Non-Catholic publications, and businesses or individuals who refused to refrain from election campaigning, or who publicly opposed the referendum, were subject to censorship, and fines could be imposed for repeat infractions. There was a national toll-free “hot line” on which citizens could anonymously report violations of these campaign restrictions. Several newspapers owned by non-Catholic publishers attempted to publish articles decrying the new government “oppression,” and found their publications confiscated, fines threatened for repeat infractions, and their publishing facilities closely monitored by agents of the FSB. Certain television and radio stations and Internet websites experienced the same restrictions.

There was an attempt to mount a “human rights” campaign in many of the Western democracies. It was alleged that the Russian government “was going back to the bad old days of the autocratic Tsars,” and was stripping religious minorities and non-religious persons of their rightful voice in the public square. There was an emergency meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council, at which a vote was taken condemning the Russian Federation for the ‘undemocratic’ manner in which the referendum was being conducted. The Russian government responded by resigning, not only from the Human Rights Council, but from the United Nations altogether. That included withdrawing from the UNESCO World Heritage Sites program, so that total control of all Russian historical sites would revert to the Russian government. Patriarch Filaret and President Polzin held a news conference in which they explained that Russia was about to become the modern world’s first powerful Catholic Confessional State, and that the purposes of the United Nations, being purely secular, were contrary to Russia’s new Christian goals. They noted that the rules of the United Nations were in many cases increasingly anti-Christian. Patriarch Filaret cited a passage from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians:

Bear not the yoke with unbelievers. For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God saith: I will dwell in them, and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.¹²¹

Filaret stated that the United Nations was a modern Tower of Babel, a project of men who mistakenly believed they could create justice on earth

¹²¹ I Corinthians 6:14-16, DRV.

through their own wisdom and work, without Christ.¹²² He cited the well known Psalm:

Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.
Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth
it.¹²³

President Polzin then explained that Russia was about to turn inward for a time, to reorganize its economy and society according to the teaching of Christ through the Catholic Church. Russia intended no harm toward any other nation, and had no plans to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. Russia still had sufficient military might, including its state-of-the-art nuclear shield, so that it could repel any aggression. In time, once Russia had put its own house in order, it would begin offering assistance to any other nations that might wish to correct their internal structure and affairs according to the same Christian principles. Eventually, it was to be hoped that the family of nations would all come to see that the Catholic Church, having its visible head on earth in the Pope of Rome, was God's plan for uniting all nations.

By the time of the Romanov Nobility Ball in November, Mikhail Romanov had arrived in Russia, and made a historic address to the nation, seconding many of the ideas being expressed by Patriarch Filaret and President Polzin. In Tsarskoe Selo, at the Romanov Nobility Ball, Mikhail and Mariya had been well received by the leadership of the Russian Federation. During the month of November, while the Peterson's returned to America to prepare for their eventual relocation to Russia, Mikhail had traveled the length and breadth of the vast Russian nation, meeting with local leaders and common people in every major city and in many small towns. All who made his acquaintance perceived his innate goodness, and his humility.

Finally, after the Russian Referendum took place on December eighth, the results were officially tallied within forty-eight hours. On Friday morning, December eleventh, the official referendum results were reported to the Russian nation and to world on full one-page flyers, a sample of which is reproduced on the next page.

Kiril, from the Cova rectory in Detroit, telephoned Mikhail in his room at the Hilton Leningradskaya Hotel in Moscow. It might be Friday late afternoon in Detroit, but that meant it was the middle of the Russian night.

"May I speak with the Tsar, please?"

"Rumor has it that he is here in this room. Until the phone rang just now he was sleeping, since it is the middle of the night."

"Are you alone?"

¹²² Lucas, *The New Cold War*, page 119. See Bibliography.

¹²³ Psalm 127:1, DRV.

Russian Referendum Results

	White ballots		Green ballots		Total
	Actual Percent	Weighted Percent	Actual Percent	Weighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Percent of all voters:	71	N/A	29*	N/A	100
Option:					
Romanov	97	69	19	6	75**
Other	3	2	81	23	25
Autocrat	73	52	5	1.5	53.5***
Constitutional	15	11	11	3.1	14.1
Ceremonial	10	7.1	80	23	30.1
Other	2	1.3	2	1	2.3

NOTES

- **White ballots** were used only by voters bearing a hand stamp indicating that they had received Holy Communion in a Catholic (Roman or Orthodox Rite) church for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. All other voters used **green ballots** with printed content identical to the white ballots.
- *Of the green ballots, 2% were submitted in advance by voters qualifying for an absentee ballot, and 98% were voted at polling places.
- **75% exceeds the required threshold of 66.7%, so by referendum of the Russian people, **Professor Doctor Mikhail Nicholaevich Romanov is the new Tsar**. It should be noted that even if the green ballots were not counted, the threshold would still be met at 69% and the final result would remain unchanged.
- ***53.5% exceeds the required threshold of 51%, so by referendum of the Russian people, **the Tsar will be an autocratic Christian monarch, bound only by the law of Christ and the guidance and advice of Christ's Vicar on Earth, the Pope of Rome**. It should be noted that even if the green ballots were not counted, the threshold would still be met at 52% and the final result would remain unchanged.

Demographic results:	Number	Number Voting	Percent of voters	Percent of population
Total Population in Census	142,960,000	N/A	N/A	100
Total number of voters	106,075,000	N/A	N/A	74.1
Catholic, Orthodox Rite	90,000,000	88,000,000	83.0	61.6
Catholic, Roman Rite	500,000	495,000	0.50	0.35
Protestant Christian	330,000	315,000	0.30	0.22
Judaic believer	330,000	328,000	0.31	0.23
Muslim	15,000,000	12,000,000	11.31	8.39
Buddhist	100,000	48,000	0.05	0.03
Other believer	16,800,000	3,560,000	3.36	2.49
Non-believer	15,400,000	1,329,000	1.25	0.93

“Yes.”

“Where is your security, bro?”

“In the rooms on both sides of my room. I’m okay, Kiril.”

“Can you handle some bad news, Mike?”

“Let me guess: *The New York Times* doesn’t like me. And they probably don’t like the idea of an officially Christian Russia terribly well, either.”

“Right. But it gets worse, bro. Even the American conservative talk show hosts don’t like you.”

“Well, of course not. I’m an autocrat. They believe in democracy. Democracy is part of their Americanist state religion. So naturally they’re not going to be too fond of any Christian autocrats, even if they were put on the throne fair and square by a democratic public referendum.”

“What do you think drives these people, Mike?”

“They like to think they get their big funding because their ideas are popular with the little people. I don’t think most of them even realize how very useful they are to big money: they help divert people’s attention toward meaningless rigged elections, and away from the un-elected plutocrats who quietly run everything behind the scenes.”

“Probably right, bro. But you can’t talk that way here in America, or people will think you are nuts.”

“So what is the paper saying in the Tsar’s hometown?”

“The *Detroit Free Press* is trying to stay neutral, saying you are a good man but that the new Russian system could never work here in America.”

“Of course they’re right. For now, anyway. Have you found anyone outside Russia saying anything good?”

“Well, *L’Osservatore Romano* English Edition can’t say enough good about you.”

“That’s what matters, I guess: the Pope’s paper likes me.”

“The online editions of *The Moscow Times* and the *Saint Petersburg Times* like you too.”

“Of course. They market themselves to the people who just elected me.”

“What about *Pravda*? Their online edition is equivocal, like the *Free Press*.”

“They’re just about out of business. Nobody wants to read their tired old Marxist claptrap anymore, so they’ve tried to become a sensational tabloid. *Pravda* sells in the checkout lines at Russian supermarkets. Only people without a brain want to read a Communist publication anymore.”

“When do you have to report for your first day on the new job?”

“Whenever I say. I’m an autocrat, remember.”

“Good thing you’re a Catholic, then. The Church can keep you in line.”

“Kiril, I’m going to have to get some people I know and trust to come over here and help anchor my staff. I can’t do this all by myself.”

“Who did you have in mind?”

“Mariya and I have been talking about some of the good Catholic

families at the Cova that she respects so highly. We will need some of those outstanding families to move over here, to form the core of our palace staff. The Orthodox Russians are good people too, and we've made a list of Russian nobility and good public servants to help us run the government, but we'll need some traditional Catholics to help balance things. You know, like the last two Popes: each non-Italian Pope has brought household staff along with him from the old country to manage the Apostolic Palace."

"Most of the people at the Cova don't speak Russian."

"Neither did Tsarina Alexandra when Nicholas proposed to her. She was a German princess and only spoke German and English. She spent her summers at Windsor Castle in England with her grandmother, Queen Victoria. So the Tsar sent her a personal Russian tutor, and within a few months she was ready to move to Russia. Because of Alexandra, the daily language in the private apartments of the Tsar was always English. I may restore that tradition."

"Well, the economy here in Michigan has remained terrible for years, and American culture just gets worse every year. The last time I checked, the film office of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops had rated three-fourths of newly released movies as 'morally offensive.' The mainstream publishing industry is completely rigged by liberal big money, and won't publish anything that does not somehow – directly or indirectly – undermine or attack traditional Catholic values. The families in my parish almost all home school, and struggle mightily to form their children's minds and characters according to Christ and His Church. But it is a huge battle. We used to believe that most people should stay where God put them, in their native country, and strive to be quiet lights in the darkness. But it used to be that there was no truly Christian nation to which they could move, where things would be any better. Now, rather suddenly, that has all changed. I could hardly advise them against moving to the world's only Catholic Confessional State, if they have opportunity to be employed there at living wages, and if the expense of moving will be paid for them."

"The last time I checked with the Tsar, he indicated that the Russian government would cover all expenses for relocating any families he chooses to hire for his staff. The Catherine Palace at Tsarskoe Selo contains more than one thousand rooms, and there are hundreds of unoccupied apartments that could be renovated as residences for our staff. Mariya and I plan to live next door at the much smaller Alexander Palace."

"It's an interesting idea, Mike. I'll have to do some praying about it. But what if some of them have extended families that want to come too? You know, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and so forth."

"No problem. The Tsar will take care of them too. As we re-structure Russian society, we will try to encourage family cohesiveness and the practice of multiple generations staying close together. We want people to be able to stay put in their home towns, and not have to move all over

the place just to stay well-employed. We should set the right example in palace life.”

“Maybe it will all turn out to be a very great blessing for some good Cova families, Mike. But I feel sad to think of dear Mary Moretti not being here to witness all this. She would have been so excited by these developments, even while insisting she was too old and too unimportant to be included.”

“She probably already knows, and rejoices, Kiril.”

“Uh, Mike, speaking of people I miss ... am I right that you will probably never come back here to Michigan?”

“I am struggling to grasp that reality, Kiril. But, yes, now that I am a foreign head of state, I won’t be able to go anywhere anymore without a lot of hoopla. It will be years before the new Tsar could consider a state visit to the United States. So I’ll need you and Vladimir and Mariya to help close out my business back home. Of course, the Russian government will send staff to do all the packing and shipping.”

“Of course we’ll do it for you, bro.”

“Oh, and one more thing, Kiril.”

“What now?”

“I’ll need you to be the Roman Rite priest, spiritual director, and confessor for the Tsar and his household.”

“I see.” Ever the proper priest, Kiril pretended to be businesslike about it, even while his heart exploded with joy, and tears flowed. He knew Mikhail had stalled on mentioning this one final detail, just to get a rise out of him. Brothers were like that.

“Mike, I am a parish priest under obedience to my bishop, who is the Archbishop of Detroit. He is a good man, and will not oppose your request to move me to Russia. But the proper protocol is for the bishop overseeing Saint Petersburg, Russia, to invite me to come into his diocese.”

“That would be the Archbishop of Moscow. Russia has only three suffragan Catholic bishops, and the Archbishop oversees all assignments for foreign priests.”

“Then you will need to ask Archbishop Bogmolov to make the arrangements. It will take about two months for me to get free here. I can’t begin to orient a new pastor for the Cova until mid-January.”

“I’m so glad, Kiril. Now I can live with being stuck over here. But look, if you’re going to be moving to Russia, some of those Cova families will be lost without you. If we offer them a chance to move here too, and continue as members of your new parish here at the palace, some of them may give it serious consideration. So you’ll need to talk to them, and try to sell them on the idea.”

“If you and Mariya can draft invitations for the families you would like to bring over there, I can have a meeting for them and explain all the details and ramifications. Most of them will also need at least two months to prepare.”

“We’ll do it, Kiril.”

“So does that mean the new Russian autocrat is actually going to start working?”

“Cool it, bro. His Royal Majesty, the Tsar of All the Russias, hereby officially informs his spiritual director, Father Romanov, that he plans to begin work in just two days, on Monday, December fourteenth. At nine o’clock in the morning, right after Mass. I’ll start in an office at the Black Virgin of Russia Ministry of Catholic Social Reorganization, next door to the Catholic cathedral here in Moscow. My first official act will be to ask Archbishop Bogmolov to put in the request for your transfer to Russia.”

“So I probably won’t be seeing you for while, Mike.”

“Well, if you can sneak away anytime for a couple of days, think about flying over here for a quick visit. It’s only a ten-hour flight from Detroit. I’ll spring for your ticket, and I might even be able to get you a Russian visa on short notice.”

“Okay, I’ll think about it.”

“Gotta go now, bro. Time to finish sleeping. You waking me up in the middle of the night is getting to be a pattern.”

“The Pope said you were fabulous, Mike, the day I woke you up in the middle of the night to practice the Rheinberger. See how I make you look good by pushing you just the right distance beyond the limits of human endurance?”

“They say that behind every great king is a good woman. But no doubt it also takes a good and demanding priest.”

“God bless you, Mike,” laughed Kiril.

“God be with you too, Kiril.”

“Oh, and Mike – one more thing: God save the Tsar!”