

Section III: Christendom

“And the Gentiles shall walk in Thy light, and kings in the brightness of Thy rising.”

— Isaias 60:3, DRV

“And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.”

— Apocalypse 21:23, DRV

“Then Bethsabee came to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonias: and the king arose to meet her, and bowed to her, and sat down upon his throne: and a throne was set for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right hand.”

— 3 Kings 2:19, DRV

“The queen stood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing...”

— Psalm 44:10, DRV

Chapter Thirty-Two

The Alexander Palace.

Tsarskoe Selo, Russian Kingdom.

On October 1, 2016, when the second session of the new Duma opened in Saint Petersburg, Tsar Mikhail announced that Tsarina Mariya was now almost two months pregnant. It had been four and a half months since the royal wedding in May, and the royal couple's prayers to conceive a first royal child had been swiftly answered. While a standing ovation took place in the Hall of the Duma, church bells began to ring throughout the Russian capital, and in cities and villages all across the kingdom. The Duma members reported to their sovereign that much progress had been made in their local districts, as former secularist structures were being redesigned or replaced with systems based upon Catholic social teaching. There was excitement in the air about the launching of the new Russian Kingdom Ruble, at the New Year in just three months.

Numerous suggestions for policy revisions were offered, as various members explained how some policies, put in place six months before, were already proving to have unintended negative consequences. These were quickly rectified, since there was no toleration for paid lobbyists. This Duma consisted of men who actually ran small businesses back in their home districts, and understood how excessive kingdom (national) and principality (state) regulations would negatively affect them. Mikhail wistfully remembered the inevitable futility of elections in Western democracies, where paid-for politicians routinely spent huge sums to campaign against each other, not because they actually intended to change anything, but because they craved the power and the brief opportunity to enrich themselves by selling favors – and the interests of the voting public – to eager lobbyists.

Many Duma members reported increasing and extensive efforts by Western big-money interests to infiltrate the kingdom in various ways. Local officials were happy to cooperate with the Tsar's FSB security forces, because the Russian Kingdom was now cohesively Catholic. People seeking to obey the laws of Christ were not readily attracted by the siren songs of secular humanist agitators. Such infiltrators would try to entice people to demand rights to engage openly in sinful behaviors, but most often the infiltrators would find their subversive tactics reported to the police. In the Western media, complaints about the Tsar's "repressive police state" were widely voiced. But, because they loved Catholic truth, Russians living inside the kingdom appreciated being sheltered from evil forces intending to drag their souls down to hell. Tsar Mikhail reiterated his analogy that a kingdom is like a living organism. In order to live and thrive, it must continually defend itself against foreign invasion. Just as white blood cells prowl throughout the human body identifying and attacking any foreign microorganisms that may have slipped past the body's outer defenses, so the Tsar's police kept watch over the kingdom,

warning every time a culturally subversive intruder was identified.

In late October, Mikhail received an old friend of Father John Herald as a guest in the palace. Michal Potomik, from Prague in the Czech Republic, had come to Russia to investigate how a modern state could become Catholic. As a youth, Michal had been active in public demonstrations against Communist oppression. As a young father, he had won the right for parents in the new Czech Republic to home school their children. As a devout traditional Catholic, he published an independent newspaper in Prague that had helped to prepare the way for a Catholic revival. The former Bishop of Prague had excommunicated himself, at the time of the Pope's Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The new bishop, a young man chosen by Pope Nicholas, had encouraged a return to tradition in Czech, and now there was a large and growing movement of Czech citizens clamoring for the privilege of becoming the Third Millennium's second Catholic Confessional State. Tsar Mikhail agreed to provide such assistance as might help facilitate a Catholic government for Czech. Michal reported that Poland and other nations from the former Soviet block were likely to rise up, like a string of fallen dominos standing back up one by one, to join in the formation of a new Catholic Christendom.

At the end of October, in the closing session of the Duma, Grand Duke Vasily Alexandrovich Polzin, the Tsar's Prime Minister, introduced a special guest, Father Nicholas Gottschalk, from Detroit. The Prime Minister explained that for a decade he, as Russian President, together with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Filaret III, had secretly studied Father Gottschalk's publications, and the conferences hosted by his apostolate. By this means they had come to understand and to believe the entire message of Our Lady of Fatima. The Prime Minister acknowledged that the tens of millions of Rosaries, offered year after year by followers of Father Gottschalk's apostolate and by other traditional Catholic organizations, had surely obtained from Heaven the grace for the President and Patriarch to see the truth about Fatima. They had thus been inspired to send a personal, private pleading to the Pope in Rome, which had come to be called "The Russian Request". The Pope had responded by taking time for a private retreat, during which His Holiness had reached a decision to precisely obey the request of Our Lady of Fatima despite exceedingly strong opposition. Now, Russia had been miraculously converted and was enjoying the blessings of true liberty, peace, and prosperity. Father Gottschalk was a great Hero of the Russian Kingdom, and deserved to be decorated as such.

Father Gottschalk was a tall, thin man with a white beard and a balding pate. His meekness and kindness belied the towering strength of his character when it came to standing his ground against any and all adversaries of Our Lady of Fatima and Her message of world peace through obedience to Her simple requests. Father Gottschalk was dressed in a simple black Roman cassock and black shoes. His gray eyes peered

out from behind his wire-rimmed glasses, and he shifted nervously as the Prime Minister publicly praised him. The Tsar then stepped forward to enroll Father Gottschalk in the Order of Saint Andrew the First Called. Under the Romanov dynasty, this highest of Russian orders had been conferred very rarely, mainly on members of the royal family, a few heads of foreign states, and “exceptional servants” of the Russian Kingdom. A plaque honoring Father Gottschalk would be erected in each of Russia’s Catholic cathedrals, both Roman Rite and Orthodox Rite. He would be welcome to spend as much time in Russia as he wished, now that the objective of his life-long work as a proponent of the Fatima message had been brought to such an astonishing fulfillment.

Prince Luke Szczypiorski now conducted the Tsarskoe Selo Palace Guard Men’s Glee Club in a traditional Marian hymn of praise. When the *a cappella* singing ended, Father Gottschalk stood while the Tsar placed around his neck the ornate Chain of the Order of Saint Andrew. The entire Duma rose in a standing ovation, while Father Gottschalk, never one to seek personal recognition, humbly bowed. In himself, Father Gottschalk feared, recalling the words of the Savior: “Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets.”¹⁵⁷ But these were hardly all men: these were Russians, citizens of the only great kingdom on the face of the earth that at the present time officially confessed the Faith once delivered to the saints.

Indeed, in the world outside Russia, there was a growing furor as Russia announced an expanding program of just economic policies. Beginning in January 2017, when the new Russian Kingdom Ruble would become the legal currency of the kingdom, foreign buyers of Russian exports would be required to make payment either in goods and services of equivalent value, or to pay the difference in physical gold or silver. Since Russia was both the breadbasket of Europe and the major supplier of natural gas and oil to Europe, and was a debt-free kingdom that had long tended to export more than it imported, the constantly declining value of the Western world’s fiat currencies was going to begin to hit home to hapless citizens of European democracies. Naturally, their governments and media pundits would blame Russia, rather than focusing on the fundamental dishonesty of Western currency systems as the root cause of the problem.

One consequence was that a great many Western citizens, recognizing the personal benefits of living under a government that provided local autonomy and sound currency, were applying to enter the Russian Kingdom. The new kingdom could not process the applications rapidly, nor had a firm policy yet been decided about how much immigration to permit. Therefore, many individuals simply entered the kingdom illegally, and then hoped for the best. Those of Russian heritage often found that relatives in their ancestors’ home districts would welcome them, and make a local decision to permit their continued residence in Russia. But some who entered illegally were apprehended. The Tsar’s policy was

¹⁵⁷ Luke 6:26, DRV..

that illegal immigrants were to be returned to the kingdom border place of their choosing, given a small sum of money, and were to be released unharmed. In order to reward those who sought legitimate immigration, deported illegal aliens would be required to wait five years before they could reapply for legitimate immigration. Only the Tsar could approve personal exceptions.

On November first, the feast of All Saints, Mikhail and Mariya sat in the living room of the private royal apartments in the Alexander Palace, sipping coffee after morning Mass. The Duma had departed the day before, and Mikhail was relieved that another five months of quiet work in his office would now be his daily routine. Most days would consist of a series of meetings with government officials and with citizens who had obtained a private audience with their king. Prince Joseph Szczypiorski, the Tsar's fifteen-year-old errand boy, brought in a copy of his daily schedule. Joseph was the fifth of the six siblings in the Szczypiorski family, and together with his youngest brother Joshua, served the Tsar and Tsarina as personal palace messengers.

They also served the palace priest, Father Kiril Romanov, as altar boys for daily Mass. Having long been like little brothers to Mariya, Joseph and Joshua fit in very well in this role in the royal household. Because it was a national feast day, only two or three urgent matters were listed. One of them read as follows: "An appeal to His Majesty for clemency, by Alexander Petrovich Kuznetsov, illegal immigrant." Mikhail frowned as the paper was laid beside his place.

"What is it, my love?" asked Mariya. "You look troubled."

"I am to meet today with a man whose name I can't quite place, though it sounds all too familiar."

"What does he want?"

"He wants to appeal his pending deportation. He entered the kingdom illegally."

"You know you have to treat everyone by the same rules, Mikhail. You can't show undue favoritism."

"Joseph, can you come here please?" asked the Tsar. Prince Joseph had been standing in the corner of the room, until the Tsar decided whether any changes would need to be made in his schedule.

"Find out from my secretary, Prince Joseph Shoemaker, whether we have any information about this man, Mr. Kuznetsov. Then report back to me."

"Yes, Your Majesty," said the young prince.

In just five minutes, Prince Joseph Szczypiorski returned, and presented to the Tsar a wrinkled and tattered business card. On its face, the card read:

Romanov Medical Clinic

Nazareth, Michigan

Capt. Mikhail Nicholaevich Romanov, M.D., USMC (Ret.)

Family Practice

As Mikhail turned the card over to read his handwriting on the reverse, he suddenly and clearly remembered the day when he had written: "Alexander Petrovich Kuznetsov is my friend, and is to be afforded every kindness and consideration. Mikhail Nicholaevich Romanov. July, 2015."

"Prince Joseph, will you please summon my personal legal counsel, Prince Andrew Shoemaker? I need his advice this morning before I meet with this man."

"At once, Your Majesty," said Prince Joseph.

"Mikhail, why ever are you crying?" asked Mariya. "That isn't like you."

"This is a man who once came to my clinic in Nazareth to threaten my life. Later, he became my friend, and presented me with the very exquisite icon of The Black Virgin of Russia, which hangs in our bedroom. It was he who first introduced me to the Patroness of the Romanov Dynasty."

"And now he has entered your kingdom illegally, and is asking for your help?"

"Yes. He has my old business card, with my handwritten request that he be shown every kindness and consideration."

"Then he has earned the right to be granted an exception. He is the sort of man you need in your kingdom. We must ask Prince Andrew to find a legal way to grant him an exception."

The morning meeting took only half an hour. The Tsar had appointed Mr. Kuznetsov, formerly a street thug serving certain rogue members of the Romanov Nobility Organization, to serve as assistant to Prince Luke Szczypiorski, the Athletic Trainer and Coach for the Royal Palace Guard athletic teams. It couldn't hurt to have someone accustomed to street fights to balance the gentlemanly kindness of their coach.

Prince Luke, the second-oldest child of the Szczypiorski family, had long been like an adopted brother to Mariya. In many ways Luke closely resembled his older brother Mark: he was tall, trim, well-muscled, and blue-eyed. But he kept his dark brown hair cut short in military style, hinting that the youthful wild streak which was so strong in Mark had been more successfully tamed in Luke. However unfair it might be, Luke had noticed there was a certain advantage in being able to learn from an older brother's mistakes.

Luke was a superb athlete and music director, but didn't have a mean bone in his body. The Palace Guards also needed someone to teach them how to "kick butt" when necessary. That afternoon, when the Tsar met his personal tennis coach, Prince Luke, for their daily tennis match, he explained the circumstances that resulted in Mr. Kuznetsov's appointment as assistant trainer for the palace guards. Feeling challenged by this, Luke played with much more aggression than usual, and soundly defeated his sovereign. Mikhail, though exhausted, felt this was a very good sign. He needed to have a tough corps of guards who could protect his family under the worst of circumstances.

"Well done, Luke," said the Tsar, as he shook hands at center court with the young prince. "You defeated me fair and square, and it's a very

good thing for a Tsar to be put in his place from time to time. Otherwise, the king is at risk for mistaking the deference shown to his office for some much undeserved deference to his person.”

Luke beamed with the appropriate pride of a talented youthful athlete. In his heart he thanked God for bringing him to Russia to serve such a noble king, who just happened to be the brother of his family’s beloved pastor, Father Kiril.

Before supper, Mikhail and Mariya walked, hand in hand, in the Alexander Palace gardens. Although it was the first of November, there was no snow on the ground as yet, and a bright moon had already risen even while the clouds in the western sky glowed in red and gold from the setting sun. A gentle breeze stirred in the barren limbs of the birches, and a few nervous squirrels scurried across their path with some final Fall nuts to stash in their winter nests in the oak trees high above.

“My mother Katarina is very excited,” said Mariya. “Her proposal to form a special program for University of Michigan organ students to study with her at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory has been approved. They can begin with the winter semester in January.”

“What about your father?”

“Oh, the Saint Petersburg University Medical School is only too happy to have him on their faculty full time. He has been upgraded from Distinguished Visiting Professor to a Full Professor of Psychiatry.”

“And are you happy, my dear, living in this huge yellow building where the floors creak and the winter winds will howl, and the world will be watching us as if we live in a fishbowl?”

“Oh, yes, Mikhail! I feel as if I have everything I want. I have the Faith, I have you, I have our baby growing inside me, I have many of my dearest friends from the Cova, and I have my music. It is all almost too perfect.”

“Mariya, I have asked Vladimir and Mark to build their next new pipe organ for the Alexander Palace. Not only will you and I have a place to practice, but the students of the Tsarina’s Mother may occasionally give command performances for the king and queen.”

“Oh, that’s wonderful! With all you have to worry about, I did not want to ask for anything so special. But ... Mikhail, are you happy?”

“Every day I have to pinch myself to be certain I am not dreaming. I spent so many years telling everyone, including myself, that being the crown prince of Russia would not even get me a discount at Starbuck’s. Telling my family story was like reciting a fairy tale that everyone loves to hear, all the while knowing that such things can no longer ever happen.”

“And now, here we are. Back in Detroit I used to feel that when I entered the grounds of the Cova parish, I was entering a little island of peace and true Christian civilization. It was a place of refuge from the cold and crass world that is either too busy to remember God, or too proud to submit to the one true Church founded by Christ. Now, I live in a kingdom where every city, every town, nearly every person I meet, create

that same feeling in me: this entire kingdom seems more and more like a giant Cova parish. So I can't feel homesick at all."

"I have noticed the same thing, my love. But just as we always had to leave the Cova and go back out into the world, so we will have to deal with the world of nations, who will be opposed for the most part to what we are doing here in Russia. I don't know yet what forms the opposition may take, but we have already been warned that there are men in high places who would like to put a stop to Our Lady's miraculous work here. Those who strive to live according to Christ's commandments may sometimes and for a time enjoy many temporal blessings. But earth is not our home, and earthly kingdoms are not our true country. We are always going to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth, seeking for a better country, that is, the Kingdom of Heaven."¹⁵⁸

Hand in hand, they walked in silence for a while, breathing deeply of the fresh cool air, and noting the first stars begin to twinkle in the twilight sky above them. Mornings would come, and then dark nights. Joy would be interwoven with sorrow. Every day there would be the cross. Sometimes it would be hidden from others, and their suffering would be secret and silent. Other times, the whole world would see their tribulation, as they sought to do justice and maintain peace in a world whose dark prince hated souls and their salvation. But together they would fight the good fight, and with God's help and the special graces obtained by the Queen of Heaven, they would persevere, growing old together in hope and faith and faithfulness.

They would be forever grateful for the Russian Sunrise, which had happened in their day, and for their vocations to play a central part in that great and miraculous Christian revival. But always they would remember that the best kingdoms on earth offer but a foretaste, a small hint, of the glory that awaits those who, by carrying their cross with diligence, day after day, obtain entrance at last into that Eternal Sunrise, the Mystical East, the kingdom where Christ is King and Mary is Queen, where the saints and angels are gathered together in eternal bliss around the very throne of God.

¹⁵⁸ 1 Peter 2:11; Philippians 3:20.