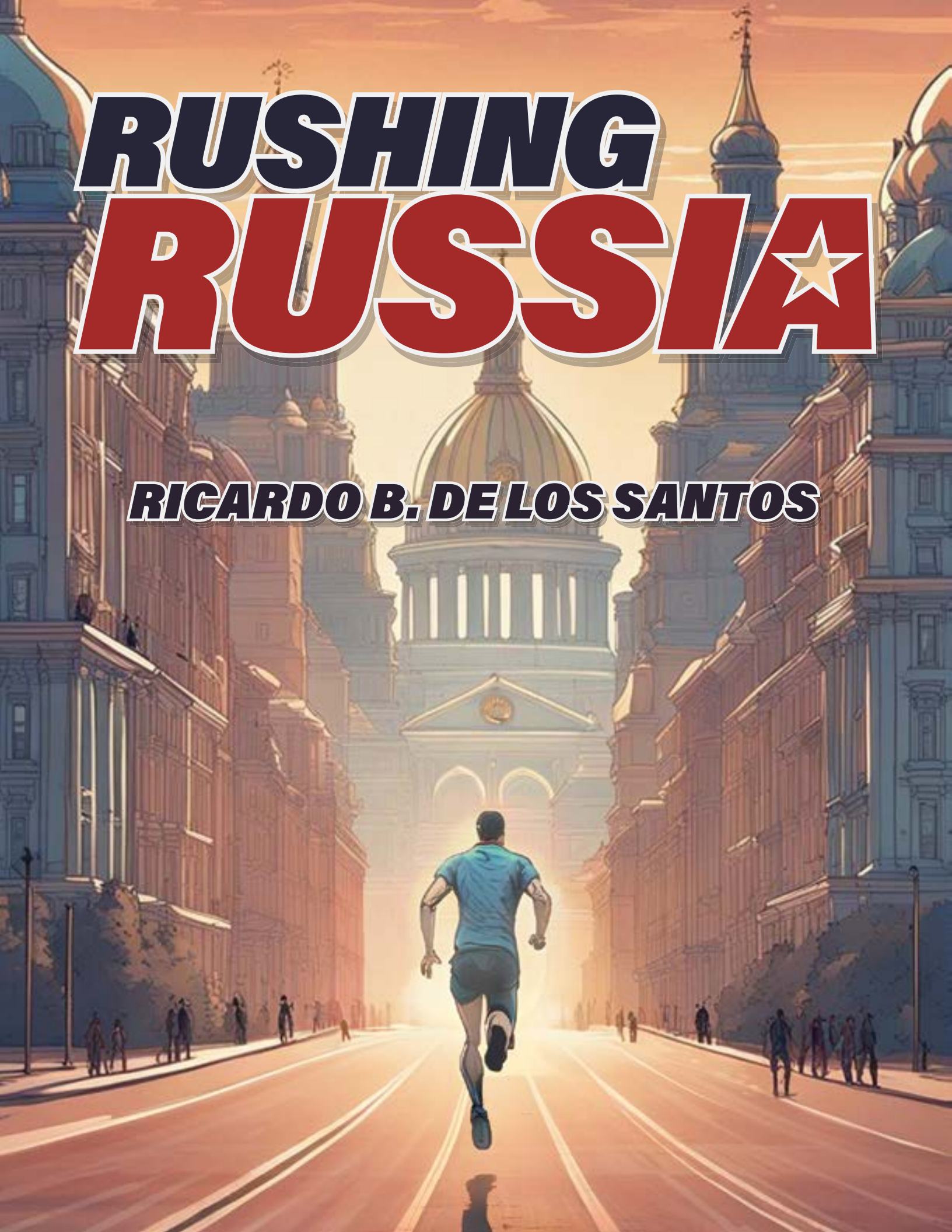


RUSHING RUSSIA ★

RICARDO B. DE LOS SANTOS



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BY RICARDO B. DE LOS SANTOS

The background of the page is a grayscale illustration. It depicts a runner from behind, running down a wide city street. The street is flanked by tall, ornate buildings with multiple domes and spires, characteristic of classical or religious architecture. The runner is in the center of the frame, moving towards the horizon. The overall tone is motivational and athletic.

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FALSE START

After the installation of the Blue Cross Rescue Group officers in the service of God and His people, the officers with the proposal of Marciano "Arci" del Sol, the brotherhood decided to meet every two months as a study group with Fr. Francisco Caluag, now the Chaplain and Spiritual Director spiritual matters concerning the world during the end times and the end of the world.

Being concerned with Eschatology, it was decided that after the Latin Mass to be officiated by the Chaplain, the readings to be made by the mystic this time will be focused on Russia as its participation was very prominent on prophecies which concerned France. Thus, the men were particularly excited because the war would be discussed again.

It would be futile to think that Russia simply emerged from its own native people as it would not be borne out by any recorded history. And even those recorded would be considered legendary and subject to suspicion, _ declared Fr. Frank, when he started the mystical reading, _ This is because we are not sure if the sources are referring to the same people or that because of some similarities they were concluded to be one. For instance, the Finns at one time referred to the Swedes as the Rustsi.

Are we referring to the beginning of Russia by identifying what people gave its name to it? _ asked Simon Dolor.

Of course, we are. Because usually the people, give the land they inhabit; their nation, their name. We therefore can assume that the original people of the land would give the nation its name, _ he said.

But you mention the Swedes, were they the original... _Robert Besana was leading.

No, the Finnic tribe only made a mistake on the Swedes. It's just like in the 60s, the people of Manila would refer to the beggars coming down about Christmas time and some would refer to them as Ifugaos, _the priest explained, _ But no, the Ifugao were embarrassed about this and explain that those who were actually begging were the Igorots.

Yes, just like the Badjaos now lurking in Manila avenues, _said Savitri, _ But I know they are just being used by a syndicate which makes use of them.

Let's go back to the Russians, _ Arci redirected.

Fr. Franco waved his hand and the first vision appeared and he annotated.

These are the Rus coming into the fertile body as they were invited to rule over the people there. The Slavs now being shown and the Krivichians, shown now; were the people who invited them to come over from the north. They were told, "Our whole land is great and rich, and there's no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us." This migration was recorded in the *Primary Chronicle* in 862. The Scandinavian Rus came as early as 840 marauding and raiding the people in the south. Because of their martial superiority and apparent strength and

larger stature, the natives could not fight them. And so, since there is only anarchy between the warring Slavic tribes and the Krivich, they thought of having these physically superior people to assimilate with them and provide the order. And the Rus welcomed this opportunity given them by these said people. For they were descendants of Gog and Magog, the Nord Nephelims.

I did a little research on the Russian people, _ said Rodrigo Diaz, _ And they are identified with the Kievan people. But yes, they are also said to be related to Sloveni, Krivichi and some Finnish tribes. The Russes are Varangians related to the Swedes, Normans, Angles and Goths.

When they came over to rule there were three leaders. These were Rurik who ruled over Novgorod, Sineus who took Byeloozero and Trevor who took Iztbork. _ said Zaida Tolentino, who was surprised to see them one by one as she spoke in the visions.

But the Rus, as a people can not be traced in Scandinavia, _ protested Jeff Utanes. _ There is no record of the Rus there.

Let's not rush into that, _ said the mystic priest, _ it was also hard even for archeology the presence of the Israeli people in Egypt where they were enslaved. Slaves do not live in fortified mansions but in shifty hamlets. And since all of them immigrated and since for the Egyptians they were an embarrassment why should there be any clues?

Yes, very logical indeed, _ affirmed Robert Besana, _ If the Rus, Russes, Rush or Ros left en masse then it will be very hard to find the evidence there.

But the Norman theory posited by some historians is also interesting. In this theory, they are also presented as Norsemen, akin to the Vikings. _ added Rodney Baynosa.

Do they eat all they can? _ asked Ronnel Reyes.

They don't have tin cans yet during that time, _ Karam Zingh explained.

It's serious talk gentlemen, _ said Misty Towers with her familiar dagger looks.

Patriarch Photius mentions an attack by the Rus on Constantinople in 860 AD, _ said Zaida Tolentino.

That's very plausible since they were already been known as marauders as early as 840 AD. _ rejoined Robert. _ But I do not agree that they are just Norsemen or Vikings at all. Because according to Arabian sources, their ways are Slavic such as they are said to swear to Slavic gods, have posthumous marriages for bachelors and they have wives committing suicide after their husband's deaths.

The old name of Volga River is Rha, _ said Ron Mendoza, _ And that is Slavic. Perhaps that can help.

There is no Norman influence on the Kievan side as well. Because they call their god of thunder, Antes and not Thor. That will also be Slavic. _ concluded Besana.

Oh, but we are having a false star. Let's not rush and mind the visionary graces given us, _ said Rodrigo Diaz.

I agree, _ said Simon Dolor, _ Or Fr. Caluag's joining us may turn to waste.

Actually, this is Perun, the god of thunder and lightning. He is the supreme divinity of the Antes or those Kievan Slavs who believe in Antes. Perun is Odin to the Vikings who also know Antes by the name of Thor. It is just like saying Mars and Ares depending on one's being Roman or Greek. And so if you are Romans and Greeks, how would you call the Perun?

If I were Roman, I will call him, Jupiter, _ said Christie Marie Reyes.

And if I am Greek, I will call him, Zeus, _ said Camille Mendoza.

If he has rhymed stories for children like me, he'll be Dr. Seuss, _ said Karam Zingh.

ON YOUR MARK

Rico del Sol had to worry again because a new foreigner has joined the solemn activity of the brotherhood. Cenrick de la Rosa had been telling him all along that he has nothing to fear because he was introduced by Fr. Richelieu Les Saintes as another priest, Monsignor Stanislav Walleski, a Ukranian at that. He had been doing some video footage already of the Filipino mystic priest, Fr. Frank Caluag who had reminded him that nothing will come out of it unless the Holy Spirit will allow. So far, he had been satisfied what he had recorded and was even showing it now to the French priest.

Karam Zingh had been telling his bother-in-law, Arci del Sol and his sister, Savitri that the number of priests joining them had been increasing and Vatican might get suspicious and worst, he had been entertaining in his mind lately, if he has the calling for priesthood.

Quite unlikely but that's an entertaining thought, _ Savitri said.

I wouldn't mind if Sarvan would have the calling, but you, no! I would worry about the priesthood then, _he remarked on the mark of Savitri's contempt of her brother.

But Savitri said, _A big no! We are already serving Him, the humble way we are.

Can you not take a joke? _Arci again her ferocious maternal instinct, _ What if your son himself considers it and God wills it?

The joke that went serious was stopped by the mystic's subtle waving of his hand, the mark of another set of visions.

Remember that the three leaders from the Rus tribe who accepted the invitation from them to rule and lead a rustic life of plenty; Riurik or Rurik, Sineus and Trevor. These three Rustsi men were given the mark of leadership for they have the ruddy skin, the rosh, as it has the color of the rose, as they say. And the Slavs and Krivich treated them as their princes and sovereigns. You must have guessed by now, that these were not ordinary men as to command awful respect as they were descendants of the Nephelim who have lusted for God's creation. As they were treated as sovereign princes, the Slavic and the Krivich people started to have more secure homes and territory. This is the start of the principalities and later, the appanages, small princedoms with their own sovereign rule which instead of being subjected to the usual threats from raiding and enslaving people are now considered threats. This would now mark the start of a Russian tradition of secured co-existence. This specially holds true in Kiev, where great princes ruled. The first one of them is Prince Oleg.

This is Prince Oleg who came in a legendary way, to occupy the land by the Dnieper and practically built Kiev. This city's renown has spread from the Varangians, that is, from Scandinavia to the Baltic region, the other Russian peoples, down to Constantinople. He was the first to correspond with Constantinople over advantage to trade while allowing culture and spirituality to come to Kiev.

This is Prince Igor, another Kievan prince who also corresponded well with Constantinople.

He won against the different nomadic tribes. He had always been victorious until he engaged the Greek navy which used its new incendiary weapon, the Greek fire which is an explosive encased in a copper pipe. This battle happened in 941 AD. The Turkic nomads called the Pachenegs or Patzinaks who raided from 915 to the time of his death were mostly checked by him. He was killed by the Driavliane while collecting tribute in 945. His widow, Olga, before her conversion to Christianity, harshly punished the Drevliane for assassinating her husband. She later was declared a saint after her death in 962 AD.

This is Kievan Prince Sviatilor. His campaign is recorded in history as the great adventure for he was not just a victorious warrior who conquered tribes on the banks of Volga down to the Caspian Sea and even reached Constantinople. He was a combination of a Cossack hetman or a Viking captain who unified the Eastern Slavs who conquered the Volga Bulgars and the Khazans.

Now, on the peaceful side, this is St. Vladimir of Kiev who introduced Christianity to

his people and converted the Russians to Christianity. This happened in 988 AD and according to the story, it has some remarkable uniqueness on how the Russians took the conversion. Accordingly, they took Christianity over Islam and Judaism because when they compared the advantages of the faith, they noticed that Islam prohibits drinking while the Jews are a defeated people with no state of their own. Apparently, the drinking of wine and liquor is the joy of the Russian people and with the drink they would continue having joys. Confronted with this peculiar situation, the prince had to make a homily against excessive drinking. An orthodox saint, Prince Vladimir introduced the Byzantine rite which originated from Constantinople. The Russian people considered him equal to the apostles which is why he is sometimes referred to as the Apostle of Russia. It is observed that many of the Russians, even if they have been baptized Christians still practiced dvoverie or the syncretism of two or more faiths as Chinese do, too. This russification never left its faith in Perun, the god of lightning and thunder and the gods of nature, animism and ancestral

spirits akin to those of the Japanese. After Vladimir's death in 1015 AD, a civil war ensued.

In this war, Sviatopolk, "the Damned", the eldest among brothers, to ensure succession killed his half-brother Sviatoslav, his Bulgarian wife and two other brothers, Boris and Gleb. Gleb in fact, was simply murdered because he does not want to participate in the conflict. The last two were also declared saints by the Orthodox Church. Later, Iaroslav, the Wise, of



St. Vladimir of Kiev. Photo from Wikipedia.

Novgorod (1019-1054) defeated Sviatopolk and ruled his dominion with his brother, Mstislav, the Brave of Chernigov in 1026. They put an end to the pagan revival at Suzdal had a decisive victory over the Pachenegs who were staging a comeback in 1037. He wisely, gave asylum to St. Olaf of Norway and his son, and cousin Harold Handrada.

This is Vladimir Monomakh who reigned from, the last great prince of Kiev is credited for defeating and killing 200 Polovstian princes who rallied against the primacy of Kiev in the battle of Salnitsa in 1111. It was also this time that the monks Nestor and Sylvester wrote the Primary Chronicle. From 1113 to 1125 he campaigned against those who would not renounce slavery. You may consider him the equivalent of Abraham Lincoln save that Prince Vladimir Monomakh participated in combat. Upon Monomakh's death, Kiev started its decline and consequent fall.

The fall of Kiev may be attributable to so many factors including its very decentralized system owing to long distances between its active institutions, the many social conflicts such that of the 170 years after Iaroslav, there was only 90 years of peace, the rest, or 80 years were spent on wars, and the sacking of Constantinople by the Crusaders of 1204. The constant attempt of toppling Constantinople by the Turks came not by them but through fellow Christians. There was also the gradual enserfment, a feudal system under which the princes would not want to invest on defense and rather have the serfs stay because it was more profitable to them rather than going to wars. And lastly, the destruction of trade because the trade routes had to be changed and not include Kiev anymore because of the wars which makes the commercial route practically marked with different active battlefields. At least, in Kievan Russia, the boyars or the retainers of the prince, druzhina, and the regional nobility, muzhi, started to exist. The curia regis is the дума composed of the high clergy. Russian justice started also in Kiev with liudi for the middle class, smerdy for the peasants who form the great majority, izgoi for the displaced elements. The Udel or the appanage system also started in Kiev where it is defined as the separate holding of a prince. The Prince, therefore, has his dominant private law over the public law.

The Mongols overran Kiev in 1240 and this was the legendary coup d' grace where the legendary bogatyri, the Kievan Russian defenders were finally defeated. That is how we start the history of Russia, on the mark of Kiev.

I want you to remember these individuals as we may refer to them, and his historical markers again. Now how do we make out of these visions?

Surprisingly, it was the Ukrainian Monsignor who raised his hand first and when acknowledged, and unabashedly, in tears, said; _ I feel blessed that I was able to share these visions. I was born and raised in Kyiv. You know how much our country is suffering right now because of the Russian invasion. I am thankful to God, that miraculously, perhaps because of the faith of the people, we are still fighting the mighty Russian forces. And thank you, too, Fr. Frank , because as the instrument of God, we are able to learn these things in a special way through you, especially myself who is not well-versed in our history, as a people.

Thanks to God, Monsignor. But since you are here, we are especially indebted, too. But I want us to focus on Kiev once more, and let me ask this question. Why is it so important for Vladimir Putin to conquer Kiev?-the mystic asked, then called Cenrick de la Rosa from those who raised their hands,_ Yes, Mang Rick what do you think.

If I may surmise, two things Father. _he said, _ First, Russian ecclesiastical history happened in Kiev with St. Vladimir himself baptizing the people into Christianity. Second,

Russia's own history as a nation started here, too. Unfortunately, for him both can not be separated from the City of Kyiv which in Ukraine. As leader of all Russia, it would pain him to think that his being an orthodox Russian in faith and his being the exalted example of a Russian citizen both starts and are markedly rooted in Ukraine because of Kyiv. If I were Putin I will also try to get back Ukraine but as it is, it is enjoying its existence as an independent state.

You got it double, Mang Rick, _said Fr. Caluag._ Yes, Monsignor, _Anything to add to that? Actually in view of current events, that's all you need to know at the moment.

Yes, I think another thing which contributed to the fall of Kyiv is its sacking by Prince Andrew Bagoliubski of Suzdal in 1169 related to the earlier pagan revival. He left Kyiv but did not go far but what he did to the people of the city highly demoralized them. _he said.

This remark made Rico del Sol wonder because he said he doesn't know much about history. Before he could glance at Cenrick, he was already gazing at him.

GET SET

The Mongol rule of Russia which began after the Fall of Kiev was the time when the Russians thirsted for independence of the Fatherland. It was then, that time 1240 -1380 when the Russians started to get set being their own people. In fact, to some historians the nominal rule of Mongols extended up to 1480. For the "Gathering of Russia", the Muscovites; Ivan III and Basil II will have to be involved. _Fr. Frank Caluag introduced the new set of images as if he were a professor of either Russian or Mongolian History.

This is Temujin, his father died from deliberate poisoning so that he could be replaced as chief. He vowed to make the culprits pay and gradually rose to power as a chief and by conquering other tribes he became Jenghis Khan, leader of the Mongol army that swept across the known world as the Scourge of God. In 1151, he breached the great wall of China and started the Yuan dynasty making China's 100 million people subservient with only 100,000 soldiers under his command. Moreover, he smashed the Moslem states of central Asia and reached the Caucasus. After sending spies, which he always did, he started raiding Russia and Polovsty to test their strength. But it will be his descendants which will finally bring havoc to the Russian soil. First, it will be Kublai Khan who built Peking in 1260, will also take the outskirt appanages and then Batu Khan, the nephew of Ugedey will establish his headquarters at old Sarai, lower Volga area to establish the territory known as the Golden Horde. It should have been more aptly called the Golden Hoard as princes of Russian principalities and appanages have to pay humble obeisance to the suzerain.

In 1380, to everyone's surprise, Dmitrii, Grand Prince of Moscow defeated the Mongols in the celebrated battle of Kolikovo. He sought first the blessing of St. Sergius of Radonesh,

the builder of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity for himself and the Russian army before embarking on the engagement with the raiding Mongols. For the first time what they thought was an invincible horde had been defeated and the event had considerably given the Muscovites some respite.

A century later, another grand prince of Moscow started reversing the tide against the Mongols. This is Ivan III who in 1480 defeated the Khanate of Kazan, then in 1552, Astrakhan and in 1556, Crimea.

Going back in time a little bit, let us focus on the church this time. In 1439 in Florence, during the pontificate of Eugene IV in Rome, Byzantium struggled against the Turks for its existence. The Greek clergy signed an abortive agreement with Rome recognizing papal supremacy. The Russian Metropolitan Isidore was in attendance and participated. Upon his return to Moscow, he proclaimed the results in a solemn service and read a prayer for the Pope. Grand Prince Basil II had him arrested and imprisoned in a monastery from where he escaped into the west. A council of bishops in 1443 condemned the union, deposed Isidore and placed Archbishop Jonas as the new Metropolitan.

Ten years later, Constantinople fell to the Turks strengthening Muscovite xenophobia and self-importance of teaching these attitudes. The break between the Eastern and Western churches effected in 1054 will have a deeper wound and Moscow will never turn into the side of Rome again.

Meantime, going back to Ivan III, he continued broadening and developing Moscow into a great city through different means and everything seemed to favor his every endeavor towards this end. Even when he was just 22, during the time of Basil II his purchases and acquisitions led to bigger Moscow territory. In 1493, he sequestered Uglich from his brother Andrew because he failed to follow his marching orders as Field Marshall for him to fight with him against the Mongols. Around 1500, he inherited half of the appanage or principality belonging to Ivan Riazan while half of it also went to his son also named Ivan, and this included Novgorod and Tver. Muscovy has almost grown into a nation.

Alright, let us try to analyze these visions while they are still fresh from in your minds.

Is it alright to back to Kievan Russia? _asked Jackou Mauatan, and when Fr. Caluag nodded, he stated, _It seems to me that the classes were already distinguished even at that time because different juridical treatments were imposed on the different classes.

Yes, I remember correctly having heard of *liudi*, *smerdy*, and *izgoi* and even a different juridical body for the clergy, _ said Atty. Paz Magtibay with the mystic agreeing.

Wow, what memory! _exclaimed Fr. Les Saintes.

But Kyiv again had its own practical democracy practiced during the town meetings as



Ivan III. Photo from Wikimedia Commons.

they have the vecha or town meetings, _ Mons. Walleski was proud of Kyiv again.

Vecha by golly, wow!_ exclaimed Ronnel Reyes but no one took the bait.

Fr. Caluag saw Rodel Regino put up his hand and he didn't want to miss it and called him.

I liked witnessing the blessing made by St. Sergius on the army led by Grand prince Dmitrii before fighting the Mongols blessings are really important. _ he said.

Wow! He can speak it's a miracle!_ exclaimed Karam Zingh.

May I request the brothers to refrain from the jesting so that we can have more useful time, _Rodney Baynosa being marshall had spoken.

May I ask what is xenophobia? _ asked Joyce Alag.

It's the irrational fear of anything foreign, _ it was Jennilyn Masamoc who answered her.

What do you think would happen if the Florence accord was carried out and Prince Basil II did not interfere? _asked the ex-Jesuit and called on the King who raised his hand with Ferdie.

The Russian Orthodox Church would have been made Catholic and the implications would be too great to estimate. _ Ed Asaytona, the Manobo-Lapaknon King and priest said.

And may be communism would not take roots the way it did, _ Fr. Wilfredo Dela Cruz claimed, _ However, in prophecy, in the end, the Immaculate Heart of Mary will triumph, if only Russia would only be rightfully consecrated. As it is, in the latest attempt, Pope Francis still missed consecrating Russia properly.

Yes, I would say it's more politically-motivated as it included Ukraine, also, _ Fr. Richelieu Les Saintes, the French priest said, _ For others would say, why Russia only?

I am Ukrainian but I think you're right. He must have followed it simply to what was being asked, _Mons. Stanislav Walleski said.

How could these very bright people miss? _ asked Miss Misty Towers.

You can't help it because they are already too old, _ Rhenson Prestoza said.

But it's the Holy Spirit supposedly stirring them into action, _complained Nelson Dalisay.

READY?

Even if you hold a holy office but you tend to disobey God or you turn yourself away from Him, then you do not expect the Holy Spirit to rouse you nor give his outpouring of grace,_ explained Fr. Frank Caluag whose extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit is a the source of inspiration for everyone in the brotherhood. Then he subtly waved his hand and visions on Ivan III appeared.

As there is a covert infighting within our church today because of modernism and the

deep penetration agents which infiltrated the church, what would one expect from the secular world? Here as you can see, Ivan III, Grand Prince of Moscow is engaging the Novgorodians in battle. He is “gathering Russia” under Muscovite rule. You may be surprised at times when after understanding the moves of the queen when you play chess, you also have to reckon with the powerful bishops. Oh, yes, they have armies, too sometimes, under their sway during the medieval times. And this is what happened in 1471 when Ivan III attacked Novgorod. The Archbishop with an entire regiment under him refused to fight the Prince. Demoralized that the Archbishop’s regiment was not with them, the Novgorodians were defeated on the banks of Shelon River. They were required to pay indemnity and pledged allegiance to the prince but secretly they tried to get help from Lithuania again.

In 1472, Ivan III married Byzantine Princess Sophie or Zoe Paleologus, niece of Constantine IX who perished in battle. This marriage was sponsored by the Vatican with the two-headed eagle to join his family’s St. George coat-of-arms. But he declared himself an autocrat because he wanted Moscow to be ready as an independent state and that Russia is never to have another yoke imposed on her.

In 1478, Ivan III angry when he learned from his deep penetration agents that the Novgorodians are attempting to rebel again, he took a second campaign. The Novgorodian army split because the promised Lithuanian help did not arrive. The city therefore surrendered with any fight. This time, some were executed as traitors, and some were exiled and even boyar families were sent to other remote parts of the country. This is when Ivan III said, “The veche bell is my patrimony in Novgorod, a posadnik there shall not be, and I shall rule the entire estate.” He felt ready to rule the whole land.

In 1480, King Casimir IV of Poland and Lithuania formed an alliance with the Golden Horde Khan Ahmad but when the ice broke, the horde did not cross because news came that Sarai was being attacked as staged by the Russians and the Crimean Tartars. This was intelligence work done by Prince Ivan III. Apparently, he preferred to give diplomatic presents only and not tributes which angered the Golden Horde Khan.

In 1483, prince Michael of Tver also tried to get help from Lithuania with Casimir IV as King of Lithuania and Poland in agreement, but when Ivan III marched onto Tver, Michael repudiated the agreement and declared himself an obedient “younger brother”. His letters however, were intercepted and so, he had to escape when the town was besieged.

And finally in 1493, he assumed the title of Gosudar, Russian for Sovereign of All Russia. New defections from his enemies followed this definition as they felt intimidated to oppose him. And in 1500, in the crucial battle on the banks of Vedrosha, he captured the Lithuanian commander, their artillery and all supplies.

Now, may I have your ideas concerning these visions? Yes, Mon. Walleski since you are first to raise your hand.

I just observed, Fr. Frank that Novgorod is not treated fairly in the presentations. I can say this because Mstislav the Prince of Novgorod wasn’t mentioned at all. And of course, there was Alexander Nevskii who was victorious against the Swedes and he was also good in fighting the Teutonic and Livonian knights, _the Ukrainian said and when the Filipino priest remained quiet, he went on, _ The Novgorodians are also very democratic since they just don’t like being imposed upon. For example, in cases of the podesta which are only appointed to them, there was an incident in 1136 when they said that if “you come you should have two heads because you needed a spare one” They also wanted women to have equality with men, and in 1156, the

city was like a city-state electing its own bishop, too. There were many things not mentioned...

Rodney Baynosa, the Marshall had to cut him, _ Sir Monsignor, you are already privileged to join us but please do not dominate the discussion as the other brothers have their needs, too.

Perhaps, the Holy Spirit knows that you would be talking about them that is why He didn't include them in the visions. I'm sorry, Monsignor, but I must respect what the Advocate has programmed for us to learn if I may use the word, _ the aggregate finally explained, _ Didn't I ask you already Fr. Richelieu to orient any one you will be inviting to understand that I have no control over this except to request, plead and ask.

The two foreigners apologized and the mystic continued, _ Now, what could be the significance of Ivan III's declaring himself an autocrat or that he does not want any yoke imposed upon him as a ruler by any foreign entity. Karam Zingh whispered to Ronnel Reyes that it was like a chiding remark against the foreign priests and He nodded and so, Karam was surprised when Fr. Frank called on him.

It's as simple as saying that he wanted his rule of Moscow as independent as possible and that he won't be taken by any persuasion that has strings attached to sway his governance. _ he said, suddenly making Savitri del Sol suddenly very proud of his brother.

But Fr. Caluag also nodded to Ronnel and so, he had to speak, _ That word which means Sovereign of All Russia (Christie Marie whispered "Godusar") _ Yes, God's Czar means that he does not need any foreign intervention in the way he runs his government.

You are jumping ahead for we haven't seen any Tsar yet. But the answers are good enough. Then, how would you assess Prince Ivan III's performance as in his "gathering of Russia"? _ he acknowledges Ronald Mendoza.

I believe, Father, that he had performed very well even as a warrior and even as a prince. I think he would have made a God's Czar as Ronnel said, _ he said.

I wish he became Czar, _ Rodrigo Diaz said. Simon Dolor would have agreed but someone was a spoiler.

Zaida Tolentino declared, _ No, gentlemen, Ivan III was only a prince, Ivan IV was the one who was the first to use the title Tsar.

GOG!

The formation of Moscow as the capital city of all Russia did not happen overnight. The main means of its territorial growth were purchase, armed seizure, diplomatic seizure with the use of the Golden Horde which was finally subjugated and transformed into a service entity,

service agreements with appanage princes and also the settlement of population beyond the Volga River. The lifting of any foreign yoke had culminated the gathering of the Russian land. _ explained Fr. Frank Caluag as if he were a professor in Russian history.

Then with a subtle wave of his hand fresh visions appeared for his rapt audience.

The year is 1533, with Basil III dead, and his heir, Ivan IV only three years old, the Grand Princess Regent Helen ruled Moscow very much dependent on her veteran politician uncle, Prince Michael Glinsky. Haughty and arbitrary, Princess Helen would always disregard the boyars especially the nobility. In 1538, apparently poisoned, she died on her youthful lover, the Prince Telepneo Obolensky leaving the boy an orphan. He will now be used by relatives on both sides for their own ambitious plans for the most powerful appanage of all Russia, Moscow.

Thus, the rivalry between the Shuisky and the Belsky clans started making the very young heir confused as whom to follow and trust. This would leave an indelible mark on the boy as a suspicious person as both sides would inculcate in him not to trust anyone.

The boy actually was precocious, sensitive and at an early age would read church literature. Boyars outwardly formally give him utter respect in court but privately insulted, deprived and injured his person. He was deprived of friends and all favorite servants of the future Tsar are dispatched by them before he could use them against them. At thirteen, he turned to Andrew Shuisky because after several change of hands, the Shuiskys were able to dominate. The enemies were arrested and dispatched accordingly so that they can run the government as they please.

But at the age of sixteen in 1547, he decided not to be crowned only as a Grand Prince of Moscow but as Tsar of the whole of Russia. By this time, he already knew who the real enemies were and who were the impediments to effective reign and this understanding made them agog. Paying attention even to the most minute detail, he saw to it that his coronation will be majestic and awe-inspiring. Dismissing the prospect of foreign alliances in marriage, he chose instead a member of the great boyar Romanov family, Anastasia.

After the wedding, a great fire and rioting broke such that the belfry of Ivan, the Great collapsed. An uncle was killed by the mob which almost reached to harm him. With his young life imperiled, he took it as a sign that he was being punished for his sins. Repentant, he acknowledged his sins publicly in the Red Square and promised to rule in the interest of the people. Little did he know that his enemies, now suddenly deprived of power caused the arson and the rioting that followed.

Sincere with a just cause for his reign, he formed a chosen council of advisers composed of Metropolitan Macarius; Sylvester, a pious priest he believed was full of wisdom; and Alexis Adashev, a court official of low origin. In 1549, the full zemskii sobor was called. It was a gathering of the different estates and a new code of law was discussed alongside changes in local governance. It also ventilated opinions and complaints in order to address problems.

In 1551 Council of a Hundred Chapters, the privileged class lost their right to acquire land without the permission of the Tsar. He ordered the incorporation of Russian saints in the 1547 and 1549 single Church calendar. In his Sudhenik, he presented and was approved by the Church that it would participate in local affairs to do away with corruption and oppression.

In the 1550 Army Reform, artillery and engineering were updated and the south defense line was established giving way also for the regular regiment of the musketeers called the streletsy. In 1551, the new empire was engaged in war against the tartar Khanate of Khazan,

the Crimean Tartars and the Turkish jannisaries all aimed at Moscow, its capital. The defense line was breached. Michael Vorotynsky and Prince Andrew Kurbsky led the first detachment to re-enter Moscow. It took about five years to re-establish Russian rule in the capital. However, after this started winning. In 1554, Kazan in the middle of the Volga was defeated, and then Aztrakhan on the mouth of the river where its own candidate Khan was placed and the annexation was completed by 1556. In 1558, the Russians penetrated deep in the South steppe penetrating the Crimea peninsula, itself, an Ottoman suzerain.

Before I declare a recess, I want to hear your impressions, _he said, and called on Caridad Sol, _What do you think about his childhood?

Well, I believe he was unwell for having been exposed to such overwhelming pressures from two hostile relative parties, _he said, _I feel that it will have a future effect on his performance as an emperor. I mean, the symptoms are there already because for a teen-ager to confess your alleged sins in the most public place of the nation is something undeniably wrong. Well, yes, King David did that but endowed already with more maturity and of course, he is someone chosen by God to lead his people which I don't think is true with Ivan IV.

Very well said, _ affirmed the mystic and called Dr. Haidelyn Mallorca who was raising her hand.

She said, _ I really empathize with this character given such terrible circumstances. But look at how he surmounted those difficulties. I just hope nothing traumatic would occur again as this would really trigger a breakdown or bring about a dysfunctional personality as we call it in psychology.

I'm afraid you both diagnosed well under such limited info, _the Aggregate said, _Well, then other comments please...Yes, Fr. Dela Cruz.

As an adolescent, I believe that reading Christian literature at an early age had helped form him but the pernicious persuasions of those relatives wanting to use him have given him unnecessary guilt feelings that he should have not absorbed in the first place. The former I credit for his choice of advisers and the latter his misgivings, _Fr. Wilfred Ferdinand Dela Cruz said, _ You must have noticed that he had included two men of God and a very humble but efficient one for his close advisers.

The other comments which followed were those of :

Ronald Celada who said, _ I admire his sense of nationalism. Even if others advise him to have a foreigner consort, he preferred a bride of lesser stature for as long as she is a true Russian. As a democratic leader, he brought about democratic policies that would benefit the common man even if he was born with the silver spoon as they say. His modernization of the army was very wise indeed as it helped Russia defeat her foes afterwards.

Rodel Regino said, _ I admire his sense of creativity such as putting the details for his own coronation and especially he knew the vastness of Russia as a nation and therefore the word Tsar conveys that meaning at once.

Ronald Mendoza said, _ I am angry that so-called relatives, instead of helping him are the causes of his many pains. Even the servants that at least give him solace are removed just to deprive him. Well, I think that in the Philippines there are Russians among us.

Nelson Dalisay for his part said, _How I wish he was taught how to pray very well as this could very well make up for his deprivations. And to think that we think of the poor as very deprived persons. This is a classic example of one who is filthy rich and very deprived.

Christie Marie Reyes said, _ I'm afraid too much deprivation can lead to depravation.

And then the mystic priest declared a recess saying that everyone needs nourishment to prepare one's self for the next set of visions. It was during this recess that the two foreign priests apologized again but the rector had already told them that it was alright and there was nothing more to worry about. But Cenrick de la Rosa for his part, asked the Ukrainian more because he felt he was just too humble to acknowledge he knew much more. And then, before they became too excited, he called the session back and with a wave of his hand renewed the visions.

Ivan IV continued his many agenda for reforms. In 1547 he sent his agent, Saxon Slitte to bring new professionals to modernize Russia. He was successful to gather 120 of them



Portrait of Ivan IV by Viktor Vasnetsov, 1897 (Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

which included doctors, teachers, artists, technicians and draftsmen. However, agents of the Hanseatic League and the Livonian Order did not let them through. The Tsar outsmarted them by giving them means to come on their own with the same result but only with some delay. In 1553, an English explorer, Richard Chancellor found a new route to north Dvina and cooperating with the Tsar the port of Arkhangelsk was inaugurated as a port of entry and here, the Russian mission found specialists in medicine and mining. As early as 1550, the Tsar was enjoying the national growth and even increased the 20 service families to 200 boyar families manifesting a fast economic and social growth.

However, in 1553 he became very sick and thought he was already in the verge of dying and called the boyars to swear allegiance to his infant son, Dmitrii as his heir. Unfortunately, the Boyars answer was not positive. The boyars thought that Dmitrii being the son of a mere boyar, Anastasia Romanov is not worthy of the imperial crown.

They also thought that another reign by a minor, and actually under the sway of a mere regent who is just a boyar would bring catastrophic results to a new empire. Even his trusted Friar Sylvester and friend Adashev were against it. The Tsar was having nightmares by which on his deathbed, the devil was seducing him that his trusted men were all traitors especially the boyars he lavished with privileges. In the end, fearing death for his heir apparent and beloved wife once he dies, he gives himself to the devil and swear that every traitor would pay. And then he recovers as if nothing had happened but he had already known that the allegiance he required was instead given to Vladimir of Staritsa. He was caught trying to escape to Lithuania.

But the worst was still to come, the Tsarina Anastasia died unexpectedly in 1560 and the Tsar right away concluded that it was his friends Adashev and Sylvester who poisoned her on orders of the Boyar traitors. The devil has already warned him about this. Without the proper evidences, the priest was sent to a terrible exile, while Adashev was jailed to die within. His formal break with his own chosen council came with his Mestnichestvo with the hierarchical ranking of the boyar families as well as individuals. Wrath followed everyone in the council denounced as disloyal clergy or boyar, as even their families and relatives disappeared to be discovered dead later. Even the hero, Andrew Kurbsky escaped to Lithuania and his letters to the Tsar reflect the chaos of the period.

In 1564, he expressed his desire to retire from the throne. The nobles in consternation and with the people begged him to come back afraid that if he did retire anarchy will simply follow. Much obliged, he came back in 1565 on the condition that he will have oprichnina or the discretion to set apart people and punish them for their evil and to have the oprichniki to be always beside him to ensure his security. When he came back, he was very much a changed man with a tortured look with eyes dim and his hair and beard almost gone. He wasn't diagnosed of course but the evil spirit had already inhered to torment him even more. His black garbed gendarmes riding on black horses only numbered 1,000 at first but with every fresh discovery of enemies, they were expanded to 6,000. They struck with a Reign of Terror which is a foreshadowing of the purges during the French revolution. First victims were the relatives of Andrew Kurbsky who dared criticize him and then the relatives of Vladimir of Staritsa for his having been found more worthy of being Tsar than his own son. Metropolitan Philip who dared remonstrate against him was jailed and killed.

In 1571, with superb intelligence used in the chaotic city, Crimean Khan Davlet-Geray burned much of the city and carried an enormous booty of 1,000 prisoners. Making a comeback in 1572, it met disaster from the Russian army.

His six subsequent wives which followed Anastasia's demise only became exhaust of his episodes of lust and never benefitted him, for he was always having feelings of persecution, paranoia of betrayal, and horrid torture. His prayer now included blasphemies and his repentance with utmost cruelty. He can no longer tell which is which. Of the total Muscovite realm, only 1/3 was retained as the zemschina where the mystical leader Simeon reside. This resident evil in fact is the human-turned-demon Simon Magus who was enlisted by the devil to deprive the Tsar further of his sanity as he would pay homage to him.

In 1572, the dreaded Oprichniki was abolished after it made a strange purge against itself, an act of self-destruction. It didn't even have a showing when the Crimean Tartars burned Moscow, they just surrounded the Tsar as his security men. The Tsar no longer needed it.

In 1581, in a wild fit of rage, he struck his own son with a pointed staff and mortally wounded him. It is his last of involuntary sacrifice required by the devil. After this incident which was considered an unhappy accident of parental discipline to sanitize it, the Tsar had no more peace until his death.

Alright now, let us have your new views on Ivan IV, _ said Fr. Frank., _Yes, Dr. Mallorca.

Well just as I said, _the psychologist and physician said, _ The terrible things that Ivan experienced as a child can only bring about terrible results. But I must admit I didn't know about the supernatural side of it. I just know that mental illness makes a person prone to supernatural attacks.

Yes, in fact, Ivan IV is known historically as Ivan, the Terrible. _affirmed the aggregate before calling Rico del Sol.

I think Ivan, though he may be terrible is a classic example of what the existentialists and phenomenologists call as a "Victim of consequence". They may argue that he didn't choose to be bad and he just couldn't make himself good, _ he said, _But of course I do not agree with this philosophy as he still have his complete faculties as a human being.

And the other comments were as follows:

Arci del Sol disagreed with his brother poet and said: _The evidence is overwhelming,

he always had a choice. It's only a matter of pride as he had chosen not just to be called a grand prince but a Tsar at that with the approbation even of the Church. This was even before Russia could be worthy being called an empire. He followed his heart and not what the church had advised him to take as consort, I have read that somewhere, and so, if his bride will not be recognized that was his shot. He can't also blame the people if they are afraid of a regency like that of Helen, his mother was not a good example. If one is a prince, and he can't be his own; how much more if one chooses to be emperor. Tsar is a Greek word meaning Caesar. As it is, while showing himself never to be subject to any boyar or khan, he paid homage to a mere creature with no clear reason than to worship.

Rodrigo Diaz' rejoinder was also intense although curtly short:_ His actions show vindictiveness, a very far cry from what he manifested in Red Square after he was almost killed. He was a Saul who would be willing to kill a David friend or seek the witch of En-dor to seek a substitute spirituality.

And the same with Simon Dolor's: _ He didn't listen to the advice against a Romanov boyar that although still a princess, there were others more worthy as Filipino parents would say; the curse on the Kremlin Romanov family became obvious once more during the Bolshevik revolution.

Jeff Utanes was more practical, _But these my brothers, are supernatural claims. We can't prove them.

But Zaida Tolentino was more blunt:_ We don't have to. He wanted to be terrible and so he earned it.

And yet Karam Zingh was more sharp when he quoted the Writ:_ "By their fruits, ye shall know them."

HURDLES

Mons. Stanislaw Walleski, the Ukrainian priest sought permission to provide more inputs concerning Ivan, the Terrible's contribution to Russian history. He said that it wouldn't be fair to just remember him for his terrible acts like the killing of his son. He said that at least the vast appanage of Muscovy had joined the family of nations even as an empire worthy of admiration. He also said that instead of using superstitious theories such as in the case of Anastasia during its Smutroe Verenia, its Time of Troubles. And lastly, he said even before he died in March, 1584, he gained the respect of the enemies from Poland and Lithuania, down to the Khanates in the south and the Swedes from the north, none of them could check the growth of the empire and there was the upsurge of industry in Siberia making Russia in the update of modern industrialization.

The speech made by the Ukrainian did not elicit any response nor comment and so, Fr. Franco Caluag waved his hand simply and subtly. In Cenrick de la Rosa's mind, the concluding statements on the visions concerning Ivan, the Terrible sounded like a eulogy.

The mystic priest's voice annotated once again, _ This is Boris Godunov who succeeded Theodore or Fedor as Tsar of Russia after the son of Ivan, the Terrible left no heir as Boris' sister, Irene did not bear him any children. What was memorable only in Theodore's reign although it was comparatively peaceful when considered with the reign of his father was when Jeremiah of Constantinople allowed Russia to have its own patriarch, the highest position possible in the Orthodox Church. And this was also mainly the diplomatic work of Boris who despite his being illiterate has the charm of a pleasing politician who can make things look good even when they are not. Of course, Boris' friend, Job became the very first patriarch of the whole of Russia. To make matters worse, Ivan IV did not leave any Law of Succession even after the boyars frustrated him over the allegiance to his infant son. Also, in 1598, in the same year that Fedor died, Dmitrii of Uglich, the last remaining male child of Ivan IV was found with his throat slit in his courtyard. Investigation pointed to the fact that he was an epileptic and is fond of playing with knives. Therefore, foul play was ruled out as the accident could have happened in one of his seizures. But Boris was a russified Mongol from the many service boyar gentries created to serve the czar. The other boyars suspected him though since they knew that he wanted to become Tsar.

In the specially convened zemskii sobor, however, he used his charm again and was elected Tsar. In his defense over the suspicion, it was noted that even if Dmitrii of Uglich was the Czar's son, he could be considered illegitimate since only three wives are legally allowed the Tsar and he was born from the seventh, the crime would then be useless, according to some and therefore, Boris Godunov became Czar, the only one with a clear Mongol lineage. Lucky to have been made Tsar it seemed that he was not that lucky after all. After the honeymoon period of his reign where he showed much enthusiasm to improve the empire, he suffered some boyar resistance already. He would have wanted to establish a university but the nobility found it impertinent. He was just content sending 18 young men abroad to study. Then in 1601, there was drought and famine which affected the nation. In 1602, the crops failed again and in 1603, the famine was catastrophic. It was immediately followed by an epidemic. An estimated 100,000 died in the capital alone. Throughout the empire, the people were eating the bark of trees or the carcass of their dead animals and worst, people resorted to cannibalism. All of a sudden, people remembered that the Tsar himself was the suspect in the killing of Tsar Ivan's son and that he was not a real Russian but heathen Mongol who was only converted in order to serve in the court. God must be punishing the Russian people because they made a guilty Godunov Tsar.

Then the opportunity to depose him presented itself. There was one claiming that he was indeed Prince Dmitrii, Ivan's son as early as 1601. When he was to be arrested in 1602 for impersonating, he fled to the Cossacks. This false Dmitrii was actually Gregory Otriefiev who is the product of a conspiracy between Lithuanian Jesuits and Polish aristocrats. Some Russian boyars are involved in this plot to destroy Boris' rule and to install someone who will champion Catholicism. Despite the testimony of an uncle who positively identified him as Gregory Otriefiev, and threats of excommunication by Patriarch Job, the people believed that

he was the dead prince. And so, this False Dmitrii led some 1,500 Cossacks, Polish mercenaries and other adventurers to march into Moscow. Chernigov's people welcomed him and many of them joined the march. False Dmitrii found the people overwhelming and seemed to believe it himself. This was in 1605 and while this was in progress Boris Godunov suddenly died.

Theodore Basmanov who was tasked to crush this march to Moscow went to the side of the False Dmitrii thinking perhaps that Boris' sudden death is heavenly ordained and an omen that this Dmitrii was true. The wife of Boris and his successor, Theodore were deposed and murdered on July 20, 1605.

The False Dmitrii entered Moscow in triumph in July, 1605. In testifying for him, Basil Shuisky said that he only escaped and knew that another boy was killed instead. Martha, Prince Dmitrii's mother who became a nun, recognized him as her son thus corroborating the claim. And as if everything fell into its place, the controversy was settled. Patriarch job was replaced by Ignatius as Metropolitan and Philaret Romanov was exiled and ended up in a Polish jail.

False Dmitrii himself was described as having no waistline, with a large ugly nose and with an expression that wouldn't draw any sympathy despite the melancholia. But people who had been with him in the march or those that he met would attest to his courage, intelligence and the capabilities he generated. Those who are familiar with royalty however are surprised that he didn't attend church services, do not have afternoon naps and went around the Square and beyond dressed as a Pole. They thought that he must have acquired these habits when he wandered far even unto Poland after escaping the Boyar murder plan. Since he fell in love with a Polish noblewoman by the name of Marina Mnizech his engagement was represented for him by Athanasius Vlasiev as his proxy in Krakow in November, 1605. Everyone was dumbfounded though when upon being asked if he had plans to marry another woman, the proxy couldn't answer. When they persisted, he simply said that there was no instruction given concerning that. Marina came on May 2, the following year bringing with her many Poles. Marina married him on May 8, 1606 but she chose to remain Catholic. When False Dmitrii was reminded of his ultimate mission of introducing Catholicism, he evaded the issue and instead promised on the far-fetched plan of driving the Turks out of Europe.

It was these strange ignoble ways he had which made people started doubting the False Dmitrii and since the Poles were haughty and loud in his court, the Russian boyars started to get restless. Basil Shuisky who profited much from the deception had to act right away because if there will be a retribution, he must reverse the situation right away and be the whistle blower. And so, taking up courage and for the sake of Mother Russia, patriot Basil Shuisky started circulating around the secret that False Dmitrii is an impostor and that he is just a Polish-Jesuit ploy to infiltrate Russia. It wasn't hard for Shuisky to convince the agitated boyars since the nun Martha had been already been possessed by Belial to retract her testimony so that the evil spirit can at least tell something truthful to merit chaos. Hence, False Dmitrii was finally exposed with Martha testifying that she only gave a false testimony recognizing him as her son because her life was threatened by the Poles. And the new hero Basil Shuisky pleased the boyars by having him denounced and burned at the stake. The purge that followed left around 3,000 dead including the turncoat Theodore Basmanov. Metropolitan Ignatius who had just started enjoying feeding the Russian flock had to be deposed. The retribution that happened had been too intense for the Russians such that in a remorseful reaction Dmitrii of Uglich was canonized in 1606. Basil Shuisky, the new Czar as part of his inaugurals promised the people, as

Feodor I, the Blessed.



Boris Godunov



a decision of his royal Duma that there will be no execution for those who were hoodwinked by the great deception, and that family members of those found guilty and punished shall no longer be persecuted for the sins they have never committed, and that there will be an investigation first before someone could be denounced and that all false informers will be punished. These pronouncements were like compasses points which pointed to the involvement not only of the Poles for that was already obvious, but more apparent, of the boyars and in due time it was realized that they themselves are to be blamed for such deception to endure and injure. And thus, opposition to government started to foment into uprisings. Gregory Shakhovskoy and Ivan Bolotnikov started a big one in the Southern Russian cities. Even the Finnic-speaking Mordva took the opportunity. A False Peter for some time made a following but the Cossacks not to be outdone produced many pretenders to the throne. What False Dmitrii had achieved had been a classic model for Russian political opportunists.

Therefore, it seemed natural that a new False Dmitrii was revived even after canonization. According to this new False Dmitrii, he was actually the one who removed the Godunovs. Strangely enough, Martha recognized him as his true son and not quite strangely, Marina Mniszech recognized him as her real husband. Obviously, the Russians like the Filipinos are suckers for staged dramatizations akin to the moro-moro and the zarzuela. Apparent also is the fact, that they have short political memories like them. These were enough to make the multitudes follow him. And so, in a little while he had his own army approaching Moscow angry at Basil Shuisky, the new Czar for helping create a grand deception. In 1608, this False Dmitrii defeated the army which the Czar has dispatched and made its

headquarters in the village of Tuschino of suburban Moscow. Here, being more credible perhaps than Basil Shuisky he held court as the real Tsar. Here, he received ambassadors, received taxes, execute new laws granted titles and lands, judged and rewarded. His performance was so effective that even the boyars would come to seek favor from him and show allegiance but of course, covertly. The Russians had proven to the world that you can serve two masters at the same time and please them both. The devil had in fact, gotten hold of his soul so much that he had his own holy Duma which settled ecclesiastical affairs. And since a new Kremlin was being established, he came to be known to the legitimate boyars as "the Felon of Tuschino". However, the felon's army couldn't advance any further because Prince Michael Skopin-Shuisky was able to defend the city for the second time. Hailed as a hero, he was rumored to have the qualities of a real Tsar just in case Basil died without a worthy heir. And just as the Fatherland needed him most, he suddenly died leaving rumors that the wife of Dmitrii Shuisky, unpopular after he suffered defeat from the Polish commander, afraid of his being rival to her husband for the

throne, had actually poisoned him. And yet, some surmised that it was Nana, the Felon's gypsy mistress which used witchcraft on him for obvious reasons.

Then, the felon had the devil's inspiration. His holy Duma gave him the advice that the whole of Russia will rally behind him if he could take the Monastery of the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius and seriously, he took it into his heart to ask the monks to give him their support as his venture was God-ordained. The monks did not accede to the monkey business and their Abbot Dionysus flatly said no. Hence, the Felon of Tuschino launched an attack but it withstood the siege of 30,000 men with a measly 2, 500 defenders for 16 months.

Basil, having lost his champion and in desperation made a rush agreement with the Swedes for them to bring in 6,000 seasoned warriors under the command of Magnus de la Gardie on the condition that Russia will have an eternal alliance against Poland and abandon all its claims to Livonia. Having heard of the Swedes coming, the Felon returned to his home base in Kaluga where he was groomed by the Cossacks as a pretender. Tuschino, on the other hand, having lost the Felon sent emissaries to Poland and asked Segismund III of Poland to allow his son, Wladislaw, who was only sixteen to occupy the Russian throne. The king however, was the one interested and agreed to the proposal and only used his son nominally. The heroic defense of Smolensk had been futile after all. When the Polish commander marched his troops to Moscow, the Felon returned to Tuschino, mindful of the opportunity in July of 1610. The Boyars, the gentry and even the common people united in deposing the Tsar they have installed for his incompetence in the same month. What followed was an interregnum which lasted from 1610 to 1613. Actually, an impressive embassy was sent Smolensk for the Polish to consider sending Wladislaw to rule Russia but in the end Segismund III slighted that he was not the invited to rule instead but his inexperienced son rescinded the agreement seeing also the risks involved as the Swedes were already threatening Novgorod. What came to the Russians at this time was their proverb, "There is no evil but it brings some good." In December of 1610, the Felon was killed by his own men over some personal accounts. His pretension was finally over but in Kaluga with the Cossacks, Marina was introducing the little felon which was the son of second False Dmitrii.

Patriarch Hermogen of Moscow, afraid that the national church might be under Uniate jurisdiction of muscovite territories tried his best to rouse the people in freeing the capital for the Poles have entrenched themselves in the Kremlin. Having read his manifestoes, Ivan Sarutsky leading the Cossacks, Procopius Liapanov of Riazan and Prince Dmitrii Trubetsky heeded his call and engaged the Polish forces entrenched in Kremlin. Unfortunately, enemy Cossacks killed Liapanov in July, 1611 and the Capital couldn't still be



False Dmitriy I



Vasily IV

freed. Meantime, the Polish army razed Smolensk and it was reported that the inhabitants numbering 80,000 was reduced to only 8,000. As if there was not enough for the Russians to hurdle, the Swedes swept over Novgorod and another pretender rose in Pskov.

Stirred by Patriarch Hermogen, Abbot Dionysus of the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius abbey joined in the campaign to liberate Moscow. Prince Dmitrii Porharzky was joined in by Kuzma Mirin who is just a butcher but with many practical talents served as his adviser and quartermaster. With prayer revival and fasting, their second army besieged the Kremlin whereupon part of the Cossacks joined in such that the liberation of the capital was finally made in early November, 1612.

In 1613, the zemskii sobor which now included level-headed peasants started reviewing candidates for the Russian throne. They deliberately did not include those who may have foreign relations or those with records of foreign collaboration and considered also how the respective families responded to critical times. They remembered one Nikita Romanov who as a boyar dared to defend victims of the war. They recalled Nikita's son, Philaret was in exile and that he has a son, Michael who has no record of being influenced by anyone in politics and neither had served any foreigner as well because he was only 16 years of age. Beginning in February of the same year, they have started asking mother and son to accept the son's acceptance of the crown. According to the nation's notion, God Himself by purging Russia from its sins had selected someone worthy of being sovereign and when Michael Romanov was crowned Tsar, all the Russians exulted and rejoiced.

Fr. Caluag then asked the audience of their views and opinions concerning the visions. This is how they responded:

Janis Mendelsohn said: _ I am amazed that a woman, a nun at that, and a noblewoman at that; could actually perjure themselves and attest to the veracity of a person as son or husband, respectively.

Cenrick de la Rosa said that such excesses are possible if the women were under duress, meaning that life is threatened as in an intelligence operation or that they were promised to be rewarded or both.

Mon. Stanislav Walleski said that he was surprised at the involvement of the Jesuits. Fr. Caluag declared that he was an ex-Jesuit and then smiled offering no explanation.

Jeff Utanes was confused why the Cossacks would kill Liaponov of Riazan when the Cossacks were also part of their following. Rodrigo Diaz clarified that the Cossacks are opportunists and Ivan Sarutsky, their leader is not a real patriot and a classical Cossack.

Joyce Alag wanted to know why Philaret was exiled. Fr. Caluag assured her that it was just because he was a political threat to Godunov especially for placing Ignatius as Metropolitan.

Mar Bustamante who had been taking pictures since Mass and the preceding interactions was suddenly tasked by Fr. Caluag to ask a question or give his comments. And so much obliged he asked if Prince Michael Skopin-Shuisky was in fact poisoned or bewitched before he suddenly died. "See that? _ said Fr. Caluag, _ This guy's really listening. Whatever it was, or even if both were applied simultaneously from both sides, because the Paraclete is silent about it, remember that pharmakeia or the practice of it as taught by the Nephilim makes use of alchemy, or changing of matter which includes toxic materials and other harmful ones which now falls under witchcraft and poisoning."

Misty Towers wanted to know why the first False Dmitrii renege on his mission of introducing Catholicism in Russia. Jackou Mauatan opined that the Holy Spirit did not allow him to introduce it because it is based on truth and he was false. Nelson Dalisay thought that he simply lost heart because he was not a real apostle or confessor of the Church to have the merit to do it. He was just not worthy for so great a task. Fr. Frank agreed with them.

Monsignor Walleski made a rejoinder, he said:_ The Russians believe that the hat of Vladimir Monomakh was originally the one worn by St. Vladimir, the baptizer. They say that hats like this were once worn by Roman emperors and that the princes of Russia particularly St. Vladimir inherited their powers and nobility. Prus who settled in the banks of the Vistula inherited this regal heritage. Riurik was 14th generation of while St. Vladimir is 4th generation of Riurik. St. Andrew is the originator of Christianity in Russia and as such there is no necessity for the Russians to still clamor for any claim of apostolic succession.

Then because of this remark, Fr. Frank engaged him and told the audience, _ Why, I am surprised at this Russian surprise. First, perhaps, I would like archeological evidence of the sort concerning this hat because sometimes such is an important symbolism. I recall having seen the Jacobins making Louis XVI wear a Phrygian cap which is important in the brotherhood of Mithras. My greater surprise is the claim that St. Vladimir would get their noble character from the Roman emperors because the Caesars were the ones who persecuted the Christians. Would this be the reason for the title tsar which came from czar which derives from Caesar? Miss Kingsley?

Yes, etymologically correct in terms of derivations, _said Miss Kingsley. And the character Prus gave his name to Prussia which in the Emmerich account is the place where the rebellion would start. _ said the ex-Jesuit.

And there's one thing more, _ said the Ukrainian priest, _ Philoteus or Filofei, the Abbot of Pskov when he wrote to Basil III in 1510 described three Romes. The first Rome fell because of its heresy and Constantinople was brought down by the infidels but the their one, Moscow will remain faithful to the end. It is phenomenal that even in Catholic prophecy like in La Sallette we find Rome to be going back to its pagan ways and therefore would be punished. Well, we already know what happened to Constantinople.

Karam Zingh was telling Ronnel Reyes, _ First, we have tocino but that's Kapampangan.

And now we have pamaypay or Falayfay, _ he shot back. With his clairaudence, the Rector heard them both but simply ignored them because Rodney Baynosa might shut them up. I have a problem with that, too. _said the Aggrege, _ We don't even have a private revelation on Moscow's becoming the third Rome in Catholicism. And Filifei isn't even canonized. But researchers find a link with Gog and Magog, Rosh and Meshech; Russia and Moscow but I'm not saying it is conclusive. What is true however is Russia's spreading of its false teachings which is the reason why Our Lady is asking for Russia's consecration to her Immaculate Heart. And these are the hurdles that must be overcome. Vladimir Putin, I think believes Moscow is the Third Rome.

DASH

There won't be any man in Russian history worthy as a dashing prince except the young Peter, the Great. Originally chosen to be Tsar at the age of ten in 1682, her strong-willed half-sister had a different idea. She came up with a streltsy coup and placed his own brother Ivan V only a bit much older than Peter to act the Tsar, and Peter only co-Tsar and away from reigning so that she can act legitimately as regent in 1696. This is an offshoot of the struggle between two families which emerged from Tsar Alexis two subsequent wives, Mary Miloslavskaya and Nathalie Naryshkova. After some change of hands in power, the Miloslavskaya prevailed with the members of the Naryshkova clique being murdered. Peter witnessed some of these crimes himself. Peter, demoted to Junior Tsar was the son of Nathalie while Ivan V was the son of Mary. Unfortunately, Ivan did not really show any capability to rule and so, Sophia actually ruled until his death at a very young age. Sophia, on the other hand to depend on her court favorite, Prince Basil Golitsyn, _Fr. Frank Caluag annotated the new visions, _ Golitsyn being a modernist made reforms in the penal code, abolished serfdom and improved education in a large scale. He was instrumental in forging with Poland, a treaty of "Eternal" peace in 1686 which would somehow stage Russia's involvement in wars. Golitsyn made two campaigns against the Crimean Tartars which proved disastrous. The Russians travelled great distances and were deprived much from water sources and there was even a time when the Crimeans only had to set fire to the very dry grassland in order to avert the Russian offensive. The regent Sophia and Golitsyn had to step down from the reign because of these obvious failures and give in to the demands of the people that Peter had to start his reign as Tsar

Actually, the Junior tsar kept away from state affairs had been deprived of formal education as Sophia thought that she would be reigning for throughout his lifetime, but he himself immersed himself in learning everything practically possible that the deprivation in fact had given him advantage. For instance, he taught himself how to build a boat from scratch and this would prove helpful to him in building his own navy. He would associate himself with all kinds of people where he would learn to be street smart such that from the use of liquor to different ways of gambling, he would learn from his associates and be mindful of their pitfalls. The special assistants in his reign included characters from unlikely origins. For instance, the Gen. Iaguzhinsky used to be a swineherd, the police chief, De Viere came in as a Portuguese



Portrait of Peter the Great by Jean-Marc Nattier, 1717

ship's cabin boy, Prince Menshekov which he trusted so much used to sell pies in Moscow, Vice-chancellor Shapirov used to be a clerk of a small store and Kurvatov made Vice-Governor of Arkangel was the one who invented the stamped paper and Ostermann, a son of Westphalian pastor. He even made Menshekov a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and was continually proven to be corrupt, but no matter how many times he was punished, he was able to keep his post as he would always tell the truth to him when already confronted and was willing to accept any humiliating punishment. Of course, there are also those coming from the gentry like Field Marshall Count Boris Shemetev and Senator Prince Dulgoruky.

His determined patience with things would always pay off. For instance, when he couldn't take Azov because of its continuous supply from Turkey from the sea, he built a fleet of 30 sea-going vessels with which he besieged Azov from both land and sea until it surrendered. Turkey couldn't back it up anymore. Seeing here, the importance of having a navy, he sent 50 young men to study the rudiments of building more modern ships in Holland, Italy and England upon whose return, he examined them individually by himself and immediately given tasks in shipbuilding. Then he assigned Lefort to lead an embassy of 250 men to learn more from other lands by way of observation and to invite professional foreigners. He himself went with this group incognito for 18 months disguised as Peter Mikhailov but there are times when his brilliance is so obvious that the foreign hosts would identify him as the Tsar himself. From this journey, 750 foreigners will be invited from almost every nationality or race, most of which were Dutchmen, except the Jews which Peter considered to be parasites. He must however, had to return right away because of a reported coup attempt by the streltsy, again! -The mystic priest emphasized, _ Who do you think, it is, again? (Rodrigo Diaz guessed it right.) Yes, it's Sophia, her half-sister again! Upon his return, he didn't forgive the musketeers this time but ordered the torture and execution of about a thousand of them. Sophia was forced into becoming a nun or be executed as a traitor. The same thing happened to his wife Eudoxia, who sympathized with the rebels. Another influence of these European wanderings was the adoption of new ways of dressing from the continent. Peter ordered the wearing of new European fashion not only for his courtiers but for those who served government as well and even the militia had to be issued new impressive uniforms alongside their reorganization. Even the calendar had to be synchronized with the January 1st beginning and not the usual September one. Tsar Peter transferred his seat of government from the Kremlin in Muscovy to St. Petersburg by the mouth of river Neva and fortified the Kronstadt for its protection.

But what is believed to be Peter. the Great's greatest trial is when he was pitted against Charles XII who ascended the Swedish throne only at the age of 15. In Sweden's war with Denmark, as a military genius, he quite unexpectedly ordered the attack into the heart of Denmark cutting through unexpected territory causing the latter to surrender at once. In the November 30, 1700 Narva siege, he led 10,000 Swedes in routing 30,000 Russians in the battle where 10 Russian generals surrendered and with their army abandoning its artillery. In the war with Poland's Augustus II, Russia's involvement had to make him decide melting church bells for making cannons as the Swedes had advanced into Livonia and Estonia. Charles XII could have in fact, conquered Russia earlier had he pursued his advantage over Peter's army but as it is, he turned his attention to Augustus II who he thought was more dangerous opponent. His biding his time for the Russians enabled the fast-learning Peter to prepare for the next hostilities. In Dorpat or luv, Peter assembled his northern fleet which was useful in

amphibious and naval operations. Likewise, his new, more responsive artillery guns were used effectively by the better learned fresh Russians. Retaliating, Charles XII crossed the Vistula with 50,000 men and advanced to Moscow. Peter was ready this time for he had already his elite regiment, the Russian very own produced flintlock and his innovation, for defense, the bayonet.

On July 8, 1709, in the battle of Poltava, the Swedes which numbered from 22,000 -28,000 could not anymore depend on their seasoned mettle for the 40, 000 Russians are now better prepared. Generals who couldn't cross the river had to surrender with their troops. Earlier in October, 1708, a reinforcement of 15,000 men were intercepted by Peter in Lesnaia. The troops waiting for them had to spend a dismal cold winter in Ukraine. Charles XII's usual dash and daring couldn't be used anymore against the Tsar as he had studied them very well. The king and his trusted Hetman Ivan Mazepan had to make a dash to Turkish territory in order to evade capture. Charles XII had to understand to the Cossack classic attitude as Mazepan was only able to add 2,000 Cossacks to this adventure. In a minor engagement in Norway, Charles XII was killed and Ulrica Eleonora succeeded in the Swedish throne. Frederick I who married her concluded the treaty of Nystadt which finally brought peace. As a result, Livonia, Estonia, and other minor territories were added to Russia. Finland would recover the areas he lost but it would have to pay 2 M rix dollars. The Finnish borderland particularly the one overlooking St. Petersburg overlooking the Gulf of Finland was acquired by Russia.

Of his reign, it is sometimes shown that it was only in 1724 that the year enjoyed no war and in addition to this there will only be thirteen months of peace. His greatness indeed is seen in how he fared as a military strategist including his reforms in conscription of draftees and the use of military manuals for both gentry and serf who would like to advance in rank. It will however be unfair if one would only look at his military achievements as he had modernized and westernized Russia as a respectable emerging modern nation if not an empire to behold in the changes he brought to all sectors of society.

When he was having some problems with the Orthodox Church, he didn't approach it in an open conflict as the reactionary patriarch, Metropolitan Hadrian had been expecting. In 1700, when the Patriarch died, he subtly called for a synod to oversee the church. This Holy Synod was led by Metropolitan Stephen Iavorsky and from the original membership of ten it was enlarged to twelve. Anyway, even before its creation as it lasted until 1917, he had the support of Archbishop Theophanes, or Feofan Procopovich in his political colleges.

Alright, we can have now your comments concerning the colorful reign of Tsar Peter, the Great. The priest saw right away the t Rose Ann Migalang raised her hand and nodded at her.

It just strikes me strange, Fr. Frank, that the Tsar will treat his wife like that. _she said, _ I could understand about his half-sister, Sophia but Eudoxia...

I can understand your feelings on that. But there was no real love between Peter and Eudoxia for it was arranged by their parents. Actually, Peter's elders thought that Peter would change his ways if he will get married but no, he was a really man of the world. On the other hand, Eudoxia felt not only neglected but scorned and she hated him for that which is why he sympathized with the coup plotters.

During those times, one can be forced into becoming a nun? _ Jenny Masamoc asked to which the mystic answered in the affirmative adding the modifier however that this happened in the Orthodox Church.

May I ask why the Cossacks always change their allegiance? -asked Ron Mendoza. The Ukrainian Monsignor volunteered to explain and the Rector allowed him.

He said: _ Cossacks are a diverse group of nomadic people who adhere to their own customs and traditions. They are very good horsemen and because of this, they often fight as a cavalry. However, they do not have to follow a certain prince or king as they have their own form of independent governance under a chief who is known for his prowess and gallantry in battle. (Then, after he thought he had already answered Ron Mendoza's question, he added, _} But since I thought that the Holy Spirit will be teaching now, the complete truth, I would like to add that Peter also learned the art of lovemaking from his lower rung associates, even with prostitutes which the nobles shun.

Why Monsignor, I don't think that will still be necessary to discuss that..._ Rico del Sol said.

Come on, we can't afford to be so parochial nowadays, _ the Monsignor argued, _ Even the Kama Sutra is part of the realities of this world.

Lower rung associates, Father such as the prostitutes are also people. _Janis Mendelsohn said.

Exactly,_ said the Ukrainian, _Naturally, Peter would also learn from such people. And one more thing, I noticed that at least three Czars are not addressed by the visions. They reigned before Peter, the Great. Why is that Fr. Caluag?

Perhaps, again the Paraclete knew beforehand that you may discuss them. So, do you mind? _he in turn, asked.

The first one was partly mentioned, Mikhail Federovich (a vision appeared upon his mention) he ruled during the time when the government was in terrible crisis, as it had no money at all. The young Tsar asked the zemskii sobor not to leave and help him govern first. Poland wanted to put Wladislaw on the throne while Sweden wanted Philip to reign. Wladislaw's campaigns reached Moscow in 1617 and 1618. It was good that after a payment of 20,000 rubles he withdrew his claim. The Peace at Stelvo came also in 1617 with Gustavus Adolphus on the Swedish throne. Zarutsky and the little felon were arrested with Marina in Aztrakhan. The former two were executed while the latter died in jail so that the pretensions came to a close. Mikhail's father, Philaret came home from exile in Poland and helped him with his reign. Because of his great help in governance, Mikhail would refer to Metropolitan Philaret as his Great Sovereign. He died at age of 40 in 1645.

Tsar Alexis or Elijah Milalovsky (He appeared in the vision.)was the father-in-law of Mikhail who reigned from 1645-1676. The people reacted with hostility to Morozov under his reign who imposed the salt tax and tobacco which the Orthodox consider as something which should be considered illegal. His reign experienced a number of uprisings like those of Stefan Razin 1670-1671 and by the Don Cossacks who moved up the Volga promising freedom from the landlords. Also, during his reign, in 1596, The Union of Brest brought about the existence of the Uniate Church which was linked to Rome but retaining its Eastern Orthodox rite in Slavonic. The Uniate Church was supported by the government but the Eastern Rite supported by the masses. Also, there was the occurrence of the Sech or Sich in Ukrainian, a separate government of the Cossacks in an island which has its own peculiar society which both military and democratic, it served as protector of the Orthodox Church. In 1562, the Patriarch Nikon

was given the title the Great Sovereign by Alexis who was imitating Michael's reverence to his father. This strong, domineering peasant character of this patriarch made for his assumption that the church is superior to the state for when he was questioned on the papacy, he said, "And why not respect the Pope for what is good?" With his quarrel with Tsar Alexis, he was twice tried in 1666 and 1667 and finally deposed and defrocked. The raskol or schism of the 17th century came about because of him. How could the Holy Spirit fail in giving these to you when they are spiritual in nature?

And finally, before Peter, the Great was Theodore III in whose reign came the abolition of the Mestnichestvo in 1682 which was a cumbersome and defective system for service appointments in the government. The Tsar Theodore allowed it to be burned so that it will no longer cause trouble in governance. Peter should be thankful that this was abolished before his time since it would likely give him troubles when he asked his low born advisers to occupy government positions. So, anybody would want to ask a question?

But nobody obliged and the Monsignor gave a great sigh releasing carbon dioxide into the large room.

Had you been a Russian I would gladly ask you._ Cenrick de la Rosa said.

But I majored in... The Ukrainian was about to say something but Camille Mendoza wanted to ask the mystic priest, _ Fr. Caluag, what was that raskol about?

Fr. Caluag waved his hand and showed the vision on Patriarch Nikon, _ This is Patriarch Nikon which you saw earlier. And this is Archpriest Avvakum, watch them make the sign of the cross before the altar, what do you notice?

The mystic called Jenny Masamoc, _ I noticed that the Patriarch used three fingers while the archpriest used two fingers as they crossed themselves.

Correct, _ said the mystic priest, _That's only one of those differences which brought about the great schism in the Orthodox Church in Russia. Patriarch Nikon was introducing the three fingers to inculcate the Holy Trinity among the faithful but the old believers like Archpriest Avvakum consider it an unnecessary novelty which breaks faithful tradition from the very beginning of the Russian Church. This is a very simple sample but there are definitely much deeper reasons causing deeper wounds. Patriarch Nikon wanted corrections made on the translation made from the Greek Scripture and even errors in copying Greek to Greek but the old believers do not want any of it. Even when church dignitaries from Constantinople were suggesting them there was nothing done because of the general ignorance inertia.

Just the difference in numbers? _Fr. Les Saintes was shocked.

Yes, whether you say Hallelujah twice or thrice! _ came the reply.

Aleluia! _exclaimed Mons. De la Cruz to which Fr. Caluag said that it was only done once and wouldn't pass during those times, _ My goodness, it's just the numbers.

Fr. Ferdie, precisely the numbers, look at this, and with a wave of his hand the visions revealed:

From 1672-1691, an estimated 20,000 old believers burned themselves in 37 different localities thinking that they would rather die than be subjected to the teachings of the anti-Christ. It was taught to them that the new teachings of Patriarch Nikon are from the devil and the Patriarch himself is the Anti-Christ. This is the reason why Tsar Alexis quarreled with the patriarch which he revered so much at first because he wouldn't relent for what he believed was true even when the people were suffering too much. In fact, the popovsty had priests

but the old believers have none and were called bespopovsty. The old believers' belief even reached the time of the revolution in 1917 as espoused by Andrew and Simeon Denisov.

I think this is frightening! _ exclaimed Fr. Richelieu, _The Traditional Latin Mass people are also losing their priests...

That analogy is unfair, Fr. Les Saintes, _ said the Ukrainian monsignor.

But we allow different kinds of crossings in our church, _ said the Filipino monsignor.

SPRINT

Before Catherine, the Great, there was a string of impassioned rulers who sprinted across Russian history in a time some historians would call "when lovers ruled Russia," _ annotated Fr. Frank Caluag, _ before waving in a fresh set of visions.

This is Catherine I, who was installed by Peter, the Great when he felt that he was going to die soon. He was his second wife and was made empress or czarina according to his desire. She practically ruled with Prince Menshikov who only came to power because of Peter's trust and tolerance. She ruled only for a period of two years and three months. She would only be remembered for creating the Supreme Secret Council which took matters only of exceptional significance such as succession. In this council she included Peter II, and his aunts, Anne and Elizabeth. She died in 1727 and was succeeded by Peter II.



Empress Catherine I

This is the young Peter II. The overly-ambitious Prince Menshikov tried to manipulate him into marrying his own daughter. He even made him stay in his residence so that the teener can be seduced by his daughter. However, he had a natural enmity with the opportunist and also began to despise his daughter. He would imagine in her someone who is only fitted for selling pies on Moscow streets, the first job of the prince before making Peter the Great's acquaintance. Finally, he had himself rescued by the young Prince Ivan Dolgoruky who in turn made Menshikov arrested and exiled to Siberia. Right after, he was engaged to the young Princess Dolgorukaia in 1729. However, Peter was not anymore able to marry her because he died of smallpox in 1730 without reaching the age of 15.

This is Empress Anne. She was placed on the throne by the expanded eight-member

Supreme Secret Council which stipulated many stifling prohibitions for her to act on her own before she can sit on the throne as czarina. Some of these are; that she can't commit state funds nor levy taxes, confiscate lands, nor promote rank higher than colonel for both guards and gentry. She accepted all these impositions upon her but when she was already tsarina, she simply did not concur to them and practiced her power as an autocratic empress as she wished. She gave the Russian people the black memory of the German party from Courland. Distrusting the Russian nobility which gave her power, she installed Ernst -Johann Biron or Biren and gave him unlimited state police power which brought about the infamous bironovshchina. This police persecution and political terror rounded up suspected people hostile to the rule of the czarina and cause the death of thousands and brought exile too an estimated exile of from 20 to 30 thousand people to Siberia. Most of the victims were just Old Believers and just common petty criminals and were never politically-inclined. This would also involve some members of the cabinet and the senate which had been defunct. In 1740, the two-month-old infant, Ivan who could also have been a legitimate heir to the throne was also exiled. He was the great grandson of Ivan V, and grandson of Anne's elder sister, Catherine. Finally, Biron was also overthrown by Munnich preparatory to the coup made by Elizabeth, Peter the Great's daughter.

This Tsarina Elizabeth who promised everyone that she will bring back the glorious days of Peter the great's reign. Although personally indolent and easy-going, she allowed the comeback of Peter's senate, removed capital punishment but it was in her reign that serfdom grew. Once seeking entertainment, she fell in love with the singer, Alexis Razumovsky, who was first heard and discovered singing as a swineherd to his herd of swine. This Cossack who never learned Russian and only spoke Ukrainian was promoted to a General Field Marshall, and Count of the Holy Roman Empire. He was however known to be honest and endowed with a lazy noble character, he therefore dodged all state affairs afraid that he may again be surprised to be given undue attention. His younger brother, Cyril received better education abroad and became president of the Academy of Sciences, and Field Marshall and Hetman of Ukraine. The brothers Shuvalov also performed very well with Peter responsible for the establishment of the University of Moscow for which he was made Count while his brother became head of the State police but with them and the Czarina both corruption and opulence grew as well. The luxurious but very expensive Winter Palace was built and Elizabeth became infamous for having 15,000 dresses. It is said that her opulence brought about a financial crisis such that her Paris-based milliner had to cut her credit line because her court could no longer pay for her extravagance. Elizabeth died in 1761 believing that she had ruled well like the first Tsar.

This is Peter III who was nominated as early as 1742 as successor and who at 14 was already in Russia. But he was installed after a coup in



Peter II



Empress Anna of Russia



Elizabeth of Russia



Peter III

1762. He had a crude and violent temper and despised anything Russian. He always had Prussia and Frederick II as his ideals and never adjusted to becoming Russian. He is known for having abolished the compulsory service of the gentry. Mentally-limited, he ordered the removal of icons from the churches and the priests to dress up like Lutheran pastors. This the Russian Synod wisely did not follow. His withdrawal from the seven-year war brought a crushing defeat to Russia's allies and yet, Frederick, the great couldn't give him anything in return. Peter III had a series of love affairs and would have wanted one of his favorites but married only someone from the small Principality of Anhalt-Zerbst named Catherine. In the midsummer of 1762, in another palace revolution which was obviously becoming a tradition, Peter III was deposed. Consequently, but not coincidentally, in a drunken brawl with Alexis Orlov who was one of the insurrection leaders, he was stabbed and killed. The one who masterminded the coup was no less than the neglected wife, Empress Catherine who with absorbing intelligence had won the hearts of the Russians for her sympathy and tactful adjustments to the realities of the Russian court. Paul who was born in 1754, her son with Peter and already proclaimed heir was bypassed by Catherine.

And this, ladies and gentlemen, is none other than Catherine the Great. You can see her wearing men's clothing which is said to made her more appealing than in ordinary women's dresses. She is said to be looking best in men's attire. She was born in the time when many European courts were influenced by everything French such that the first set of books she would read will be French books. In 1744, at the age of 15, she married Peter of Holstein-Gottorp. The period from 1744-1762 would be very hard for Catherine. Her mother's exposure as an agent of Frederick II forced her out of Russia and made Catherine isolated and in a precarious situation. Having learned much from her readings of Montesquieu and Voltaire she would contribute much in court intrigues and influence radical minds but she would be clever enough to cover her tracks. In the 1762 coup deposition and death of her husband, she would not be accused of any culpability. Her ascension to the throne was very timely as she was to known to be more understanding of the people's plight. The new Empress, Catherine II would be known not only for her high intelligence but for her remarkable practical sense, and not only for her iron will but for her energy to spare as well. Skilled in propaganda, she fed on vanity-fed ambition. Her determination is said to be ruthless against long standing traditions. She is known to have 21 lovers. Among them were Gregory Orlov, brother of the other Orlov who killed her husband, and who is also conspirator of the palace coup; Stanislaw Poniatowski whom he made King of Poland; and Gregory Potemkin who many believed married her. From 1776 to 1789, her lovers succeeded one after another almost every year, and confirmed in this position by Potemkin himself who manage the male harem.

In July of 1764, Basil Mirovich liberated Ivan VI who had been isolated since childhood and never grew up mentally and emotionally. Guards following long standing standard operating procedures killed him. Catherine ordered the execution of Mirovich for causing the uproar. From 1763-1764, she divested the church of real estate secularizing church lands. This elicited a violent opposition from Metropolitan Arsenii of Rostov who did not stop short of excommunicating those who were involved in this new policy. Fortunately for the Czarina, the other hierarchs did not support him and after two trials, Catherine had him defrocked and imprisoned for life. In late 1766, she was ready to bring Enlightenment to Russia through her Legislative Commission which was to codify the law further as it was last accomplished still in 1646. Although, she did not want her subjects to have a constitution, she believed that the work

Empress Catherine II of Russia, known as Catherine the Great.



of the commission will go a long way in the Russian way of life. For eighteen months, she wrote the *Nakaz* or *Instruction* which was based on the thoughts of the enlightenment particularly of Jurist Beccaria and Montesquieu whose *Spirit of the Laws* she considered her prayer book and her chief guide in her political theory. The liberalism prevalent in her writings made a great impression in a number of European countries which led to its being banned in France.

In the autumn of 1773, Emelian Pugachev, a Don Cossack veteran of several wars but also a war deserter saw an opportunity in the general dissatisfaction of the Ural Cossacks and led a revolt by proclaiming himself as “Peter III” and even alleging that he had escaped a plot of his “wife” Catherine to assassinate him. Establishing his own imitation court copying the one in St. Petersburg, he was able to convince a great following through his systematic propaganda promising many changes for the oppressed serfs and the Old Believers. In late 1774, after a string of defeats and following his escape to the Urals, he was handed over by his own men to government troops and was brought to Moscow to be executed in an especially cruel manner.

Catherine's greatness is accentuated by her able generals and field marshals. In the First Turkish war, Rumantsiev scored impressive victories against Bessarabia and the Balkans inspiring the Christians to rise against the Turks. Alexis Orlov brought the Russian fleet from the Baltic and sank the Ottoman Navy in their own waters in Chisme. This was in July 6, 1770. However, he did not pursue anymore to force into the straits because of logistics. In 1774, Turkey was ready to make peace and hence, the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji was reached giving Russia strategic territorial gains. In 1783, Russia annexed Crimea establishing its fleet in Sevastopol.

Proud of her achievements, Gen. Potemkin her most loyal lover allowed her to tour the new vast Russian territories with Emperor Joseph II of Austria and King Stanislaw Poniatowski of Poland, who is also another lover and whom she placed on the throne. This tour of 1787 is famous as the tour of “Potemkin villages” which are only imitation villages utilizing facades of what seemed to be progressive and inhabited villages but are nothing more than staged settings.

This is not the only thing that Potemkin had wanted for Catherine. Together they dreamt of the “Greek Project” wherein the lands gained from the Turks would comprise another empire set up with Constantinople as its capital. For this, Catherine had named her second grandson Constantine and had her nursed by a Greek nurse so that he could learn the language naturally. She also had coinage struck with the picture of St. Sophia. Joseph II agreed on this for as long as compensation will be paid to the Balkans and that it will totally be a separate empire. This is one dream that they would not be able to realize.

In the Second Turkish War in 1790, Suvorov scored brilliant victories against the Turks on land especially in the seemingly impregnable fortress of Ishmail. Mikhail Kutuzov, hero of the 1812 war was also the first one to break into the fortress. Soon, Suvorov would be marching already towards Constantinople. These victories brought the Treaty of Jassy on January 9, 1792

wherein the fortress of Ochakov and the Black Sea shoreline up to the Dniester River was gained by Russia. Significantly, too, the Ottoman Empire recognized the annexation of Crimea.

Catherine's influence and decision-making would prove vital in the partition of Poland and in the alliances made in the different wars where Russia participated. This time, Russia has regained an international stature that commands renewed respect as in the days of Peter the Great. While admiring some qualities espoused by French thought as a libertine, she saw the senseless evil in the French revolution. Ascending the throne only at the age of 33, she died still showing some energy, and even wanting to join an anti-French coalition, so characteristic of her, even at the throes of death. She died in 1796, a few years before turning seventy..

This is Paul I; deprived much of his chance to rule Russia, he hated everything which related to his mother who acknowledged for her greatness. Her act would be too hard to approximate and would be impossible to surpass. Reversing or undoing what his mother has done will be the salient point of his reign. For instance, he had completely changed the drill and the uniforms of the Russian army to the utmost minute details such that participation in military reviews evoke terror among participants. Moreover, his autocratic ways would demand unchallenged focus on palace festival dances and even in saluting. He would free political enemies of his mother but he will have more in time. He promoted serfdom in New Russia (Southern Russia) and granted lands faster than his mother. In 1797, he tried regulating the work of serfs to only three days per week for their lords and allotted three days for the peasants to use for their own with the last day sanctified for the church. But the gentry did not want to follow this arrangement and simply told their fiefs what to say if ever they were interviewed. Because of his disappointment with the gentry, he returned the corporal punishment for their kind. Paul would be remembered as trying to reverse Catherine's warlike qualities at first but involving Russia later in the same coalition which he didn't like. Hence, the Russian navy under Theodore Ushakov sailed through the straits and took the Ionian Islands from French control. He also accepted election as grand master of the Knights of Malta and therefore added it to his rule. The same General Suvorov participated in the alliance with his Russian troops and drove out the French in the course of five months, defeating them in three major battles and about a dozen lesser engagements, capturing 25 fortresses and around 80,000 prisoners.

Suvorov had wanted to invade France but due to the defeats of the other allies and because of the changes in the allied high command he just made a tactical retreat across the Swiss Alps which was then in strong French control. His successful management of this retreat is considered one of the greatest feats in military history. Already seventy and still leading troops, he died shortly after the Swiss campaign and is recognized as the ablest military commanders Russia had produced. Eccentric and unpredictable, he included heavy reliance on speed and thrust and a great psychological rapport with the men under him.

Paul, on the other hand, disgusted with Austria and Great Britain for their failure to support Russian troops in Holland abandoned the coalition. Instead, he sided with France as he saw in Napoleon stability and the end of revolutions. Russia now became Great Britain's enemy and Paul, in a fantastic move sent the Don Cossacks to India, an unchartered territory just to get back at the English for capturing Malta. Paul was killed in a palace revolution in march 1801 with his son, Alexander recalling the Don Cossacks just in time. Paul's rudeness, unpredictable behavior and violent temperament helped in the conspiracy to grow against him among his most trusted associates and also within his family. His preference to isolate his own troops in

his own estate in Gatchina alienated even the guards. And even his reneging Russia's friendship with Great Britain produced new enemies. Count Nikita Panin, the vice-chancellor and Count Peter Pahlen, St. Petersburg's military governor led the conspiracy with Grand Duke Alexander, his own son and heir giving assent to the plot. He never thought that Panin and Pahlen would bring pains on two counts.

Now, let us analyze, the visions, ladies and gentlemen, lovers and haters...

These were the statements and opinions made spontaneously and not in order by the mystic priest's audience:

The Ukrainian Monsignor was grandstanding again and he said: _ Why does Catherine have to be treated alongside what historians usually consider to be the time of lovers when she is considered a great empress, which is why she has this appellation of being called the Great? (To this the Aggrege simply smiled and said that she had 21 lovers after her husband, the emperor.)

Robert Besana wanted to know why Pater the great would entrust his empire to someone as weak as his wife, Catherine. (To this the Mystic simply said may be because 'Love is blind.' Moreover, the creation of a Supreme Secret Council is not proof of weakness, he said.)

Misty Towers commented that palace revolutions and coups are surprisingly Russian legacy to the world. She even said that the Russian style is more sophisticated than that of the Romans. To this Karam Zingh had to say that the legacy is still Roman as claimed by those Russians who ascribe their nobility from the Caesars and also according to Ronnel Reyes, it's in the Romanov bloodline.

Jen Masamoc was curious as to what may have happened if the "Greek project" of Catherine had been completed. To this Rodrigo Diaz made an analogy of the two-headed eagle with their beaks targeting each other's eyes. To this Simon Dolor added the artificial Japanese-sponsored empire of Manchuoko (Mongolia) where Pu Yi, the last Chinese emperor was deployed and he said that anything that hollow and which has no strong foundation wouldn't last and could even vanish fast.

Dr. Haydielyn Mallorca thought it was normal for Catherine to hate her husband as she was a woman scorned knowing that he would have wanted to marry another and it was normal for Paul to hate his mother for depriving him his reign during the prime of his life but added that it was still spiritually wrong to contemplate parricide or to hate one's parent.

Rhenson Preztosa expressed sympathy for Peter II who should have had everything and had nothing with his life cut short by smallpox just as when he was about to marry the girl he loved.

Rico del Sol was baffled about Empress Anne's feigned innocence when in fact she was a scheming. Arci, the host, added to his brother's amazement that there are indeed Russian rulers who preferred foreigners than their Russian subjects. Cari del sol, in a rare time when all three bothers agreed with one another named Peter III and Empress Anne as examples.

Joyce Alag wanted to know why Tsarina Elizabeth would want 15,000 dresses when she wasn't born deprived. Jackou Mauatan ventured a guess that it was her expression of feminine greatness since she would always have wanted to be identified to be as great as Peter the Great. The Mystic said it was a substitution by way of overcompensation.

But Ron Mendoza was more baffled with Peter III's wanting to remove the icons and having the priesthood look like Lutheran pastors. As the Emperor of Russia, he was more protestant and Prussian than Muscovite and orthodox, his wife Camille added.

The Ukrainian monsignor was restless, for he couldn't get everybody's attention and so

he said, - I just wonder why the paraclete wouldn't want us to see the complete truth, say for example, the 21 lovers of Catherine the Great, why are they not shown us even in action so as we could have the complete picture.

The Filipino monsignor couldn't keep his contempt, _ Why, Monsignor, I am myself surprised that you would still yearn for that. I feel that the Holy Spirit doesn't see any need for us to see these graphic events. Would the Third Person involve Himself in porn?

The Ukrainian felt slighted, _That was not my motive. I was after "the Complete Truth" as promised. That was quite malicious and impertinent!

The French tried to intervene, _Please, let us not bicker over this and be content on what is given us. And let us avoid uncharitable remarks.

But I was speaking about a prophetic promise, _ insisted the Ukrainian.

Then, let us be content with a partial fulfilment even if I personally believe we are given more than we deserved, _said the mystic, _It's just a matter of being content. For instance, we are already content with what you have given us to know you, Mons. Stanislav Walleski. For instance, we didn't see your x-ray nor your curriculum vitae and as such we don't have the complete truth about you, yet. And yes, what I say may be preposterous, as I also believe such were unnecessary at the moment.

Everyone avoided the Ukrainian's hurt gaze after Fr. Caluag's remarks.

But who's this Ivan VI, was he ever enthroned tsar. I don't seem to remember him? _ it was a good thing that Jen Masamoc asked, bringing back the normalcy in the proceedings.

It was the same two-month-old infant sent to exile by Empress Anne and Biron to secure the throne as they wished in 1740. He was never enthroned as Tsar. He never grew up normally and was emotionally depraved for having grown up within a cell of exile in Siberia. He was only called Ivan VI to show his link to Ivan V and the succession to the throne._ explained the Aggrege.

Just then, Savitri, Sarvan and Perlita came in to call everyone for lunch. It was a long day for rushing to discuss Russia, and a sumptuous meal can serve its purpose very well.

Cenrick took the opportunity to talk with some men in the intelligence community while Monsignor Dela Cruz waited for the opportunity to reconcile with the Ukrainian. He was busy talking with some people on the phone over some ecclesial matters. Ronald Celada called the men manning the seminary, as they couldn't come and he was the one only representing them.

On the table, Fr. Richelieu chose to sit down beside Fr. Caluag for his concern, _ You know, Fr. Frank, I regret having invited Mons. Walleski over because he seems to be difficult at times, I realize now.

Oh, don't you worry about that, Fr. Richelieu. Some things are bound to happen since God allows them so that we can exercise more charity, _ said the mystic priest.

Well, if that is how you put things in perspective, _ said the French. Cenrick by then, had joined them and Fr. Caluag suddenly remembered something.

Oh, well, Fr. Richelieu, do you know that Blue Cross is not only a Marian study group but a rescue organization as well? _ he asked. _Ask Cenrick here.

Oh, that would be interesting as I myself have trained in Algiers from the Foreign legion but only on WASAR; that is water search and rescue.

Then you would know how to free yourself from the clutches of a drowning person,_ he said.

Of course, _ he said in return.

Then that could help you a lot in the future trying to save someone.

I hope so. _ he said.

The two monsignors headed for the other end of the table where they sat. The Ukrainian frowning at first embraced the Filipino. They were already enjoying the lunch when Fr. Dela Cruz suddenly fell. Reyes was first to respond and ruled out choking. It must be poison, said Cenrick and Arci, Rico, Cari and Ronnel took him right away to the hospital nearby. Mons. Walleski was pointing to the Ceviche. But Savitri couldn't believe it.

About three days ago around two nautical miles from the coastal town which has two Chinese-built piers, operatives from a Chinese fishing trawler were launched from two rubber boats and dived in their approach to the town. The sand and limestone rocks from dead corals from this town were the ones which supplied one of the artificial islands which the Chinese built in order to secure the Spratleys preliminary to the retaking of the Philippine Islands, a province of China. And yet, the operatives didn't look like Chinese. If one sees them, it is very easy to identify them as Caucasians. People in the municipality are grateful to the Chinese. They can easily sell merchandise to the soldiers manning the artificial islands. They even acquired two piers in so short a time and the Chinese promised to replace the steel posts once they get eroded. Some people from the barangay guard the vicinities for the Chinese and thanks to government corruption there are no Philippine Coast Guard patrols plying the area as it has been clearly stipulated by the honorable mayor that no illegal fishing ever happen there. Cenrick de la Rosa had reported about it but he is no longer of the same credibility as before his resignation, at least locally.

RELAY

After lunch, and after an inspiring prayer for Fr. Dela Cruz' quick recovery, Fr. Frank Caluag, the mystic Filipino priest went back to his visions and annotations which he introduced by saying; _I want you to focus on how the following rulers react to the things which occurred during their reign and later on, I want you to analyze them in accordance with the results.

After a wave of his hand, the fresh visions ensued.

This is Alexander I. Many consider him an enigmatic czar. In his growing up years, he was always on the crossfire of his grandmother, Catherine the Great and his father, Paul I. you can imagine the dilemma of a young prince being groomed by the empress to bypass his father and a son whose father hates his mother for not allowing him to rule even as an assistant. It is under these prevailing conditions that the young Alexander learned flattery, dissimulation,

and hypocrisy in court life was both grandmother and father would try to influence him both under their wings. These are the reasons why he is referred to as a crowned Hamlet for he was full of striking contradictions. There are even stories told that he didn't actually die and staged his death so that he can just follow the life of a hermit under Hermit Theodore of Siberia and remove the burdens of his office. This accordingly, was the reason why the physician wouldn't want to sign his death warrant.

Starting with his reign, wonderful things started to happen. 12,000 prisoners were restored to freedom. Publishing houses opened anew and the censure and entry of foreign books were relaxed. Even the obnoxious ban to travel was lifted. He had his unofficial committee with him to discuss and execute these matters. The committee which has been given the fun name of Committee of Public Safety to link it to the "Jacobins" in jest, was composed of Count Paul Stroganov, patriot Prince Adam Czartoryski, Count Victor Kochubly and Nicholas Novosiltsev. Usually, they discussed reforms over a cup of coffee and even touched on the abolition of autocracy and serfdom. He would soon abandon this committee.

In 1802, the "Proclamation of the Charter of Rights" almost approximated republicanism but he hesitated, disillusioned at what had happened in France. He transformed Peter the Great's ruling colleges into ministries. In 1803, his "Law Concerning Free Agriculturists" emancipated the serfs. In particular, 384 masters emancipated 115, 734 serfs and their families. From 1807-1812, with his talented Minister Michael Speransky, he was able to obtain alliance with France. Speransky was a poor village clergy but he was responsible for influencing him with *Rechtsstaat*, a monarchy based on law and procedures. Hence, in 1809, Speransky would propose that the people will be subdivided into three categories, namely; the gentry, people of middle conditions, and the peasants, the working people. For these, there would be general civil rights enjoyed by all, exemption from service, and political rights as main features. During his reign, the *volost* started which is the government for cantons and towns, districts and provinces-at-large; the *duma* or legislative assemblies and the *duma* for the whole of Russia. This would then influence the *zemstvo* reform of 1864 and the national legislature Duma of 1905-1906 with the *volost* reaching up to 1917. He would however hesitate and fail to implement this in 1809 being sensitive to his being accused as a Francophile and copying it only from the French departments. He would then also abandon Novosiltsev's "Constitutional Charter of the Russian Empire" for twelve provinces which he contemplated for so long in 1825.

In 1815, in fact, laden with mysticism, he proposed the Holy alliance devoid of any religious coloration. This document was signed on the same year on September 26 by Prussia, Austria and Russia and subsequently by the great majority of European powers. This document simply appealed to the rulers of Europe to live as brothers so that peace in Europe could be preserved. Rooted in Christianity and international law, it does not however have any machinery for application or enforcement. It was described therefore by Castlereagh as a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense. Even the Pope Pius VII had to remark drily that the papacy had always had in possession the Christian



Napoleon, Alexander, Queen Louise, and Frederick William III of Prussia in Tilsit, 1807

truth and needed no new interpretation about it.

Prior to this, Russia had joined the Third coalition of Austria, Sweden, and Great Britain against France and Spain and experienced a crushing defeat at Austerlitz from Napoleon on Dec. 2, 1805. In 1806, Russia chose to continue fighting on the side of Prussia but Lightning strikes by Napoleon on Jena and Auerstadt and with a major defeat at Friedland, the treaty of Tilsit was reached in July, 1807 wherein Prussia became a second rate power. As early as 1801, the eastern part of Georgia was annexed as a result of the Turko-Persian war and later after the Russo-Persian war, the Treaty of Gulistan ceded Daghestan and Shemakho to Russia. All in all, Russia's diplomatic prowess made a mark of gains and wise concessions making even Napoleon remark on Tsar Alexander as the "cunning Byzantine". As a whole also, the Russian Army under his reign performed very well in spite of the limited logistics. In the bloody battle of Borodino where scores of generals and thousands of officers died, the patriotism of the Russians was awesome.

Napoleon's Grand Armee suffered more in its attempt to grab Russian lands. The 67-year-old Prince Michael Kutuzov and Peter Bagration egged the French inner into Russia where they were incessantly raided and lost the advantage of the offensive. On March 31, 1814, Napoleon abdicated and was exiled to Elba. The Czar's diplomacy paid up in the Quadruple and Quintuple Alliance even if his angelic stance with the holy Alliance was later scoffed at.

Quick to irritation by criticism, he would have his hands full with the designation of Gen. Alexis Aracheev as his prime minister for he had a way of imposing his will on the Tsar, even by being too prompt in his unquestioning execution of his orders. As early as 1810, his plan of a military settlement where the soldier also tills the soil and which would assure a child to be born within, as a future soldier clashed with the idea of an artificial paternalism such that even those involved defied regimented hygiene and sanitation. To make things worse, the czar also assigned fellow mystic Prince Alexander Golitsyn, the President of the Bible Society as Minister of Education. Golitsyn believed that everything was in the bible already and with his assistants like Michael Magnitsky flooded universities with bibles and transformed, for example, the University of Kazan dorms into monastic barracks. Even students were made to spy on one another whether they are attending to their religious and bible studies even as books which exemplified the age of reason were purged.

In 1825, the Decembrists who were campaigning for a conservative constitutional monarchy made known their demands under the leadership of Nikita Muraviev. They also would like Russian justice to be run along with the central government along "Jacobin" lines. With the sudden death of the czar in southern Russia, the mob gathered in the square even became aggressive and varied. It consisted now of the liberals espousing the basic freedoms, those who sought to abolish serfdom, radicals who wanted regicide, the Second army from Tulchin, poor army officers and the united Slavs to mention a few.

The visions and Fr. Caluag's annotations came to an abrupt stop when Savitri came in with glad tidings.

Fr. Dela Cruz is well. He has made it! It was indeed a case of food poisoning, _ she said in tears. _And I'm sorry. Arci wants everybody to know that he was saved in the nick of time.

Everyone felt relieved as many couldn't concentrate much on the annotations until the good news on Fr. Ferds relayed to them.

Let us thank God that all is well. _ said Fr. Caluag and then waved his hand gently to resume the visions. During lunch as the monsignor was being rushed to the hospital, Cenrick snatched from Savitri's hand the bowl of Civiche which Mons. Walleski identified as the culprit. Cenrick sent the bowl and its content to Dr. Virgilio Avestruz, a toxicologist based in UP. Cenrick told Savitri it's not her fault and asked for more of the Civiche which he and Jeff consumed with beer while listening to Fr. Caluag.

A few technicalities had to be overcome as the question of succession had been raised. The Grand Duke Constantine should have been successor except that he chose to marry a Polish aristocrat who isn't a noblewoman and had renounced his claim as early as 1820. Nicholas, the third brother, had to publish a manifesto and Constantine's uncompromising manifesto to become Czar. Tsar Nicholas I didn't want bloodshed to inaugurate his reign but the mob wouldn't budge believing it was propitious time. Seeing that even with the arrest of Col.

Paul Pestel, the most radical of the leaders and author of Russian Justice the mob grew more. Nicholas I had a terrible dilemma. Then on December 26, 1825 when the guard regiments were to pledge allegiance to Nicholas as Tsar, the Northern Society Decembrists leaders misled the men of their units and brought about 3,000 of them also to the Senate Square on the instructions that they were to uphold Constantine as the legitimate Czar. The government though unprepared had the guards right there which were several times their number. For several hours the two forces were facing each other until the light artillery came in and the guns were fired. Less than a hundred men perished but the arrests made were plentiful. Col. Paul Pestel and the poet Conrad Ryleev were executed. This was Nicholas I inaugural of blood.

Nicholas I had no psychological paradoxes. He manifested determination, singleness of purpose and an iron will. His great interest is in engineering defenses which was very obvious since his governess and nurse would only occupy buildings with him when they have gun defenses in case of a sudden raid. When he married a Prussian princess, he himself inculcated in her official nationality which is determined by his orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality. He was therefore, first in defending government and dynasty and looked at revolutions as unnecessary events and would exert his

effort participating in arrests, investigations, trials and punishments of rebels. The Decembrists were first to taste this kind of executive power. His reign is characterized by militarism and bureaucracy as he was always surrounded by military men resented formal deliberations. When a committee does not function in the way he wanted it, he would form ad hoc committees by the numbers until he was satisfied. He always worked in secret and checked on the progress of the committees himself. The Committee on Serfdom alone reached nine ad hoc committees from Dec. 6, 1826 to 1832. The second department was on Codification of Laws, the third was on the gendarmes. In 1828 another department was established for the Empress Dowager Marie's efforts in education and charitable works. The fifth was created eight years later for the



Nicholas I of Russia

reform of the conditions of the peasants which two years later became the ministry of public Domain. And the last one, the sixth, for the administration of the Caucasus.

The third committee which was the political Police was to report all occurrences without exception. Count Alexander Bukendorff and Prince Alexis Orlov taught their men suspiciousness and had weekly burnings of useless denunciations. All suspected political plotters were jailed or exiled before they can cause trouble. The military settlements which were begun during the time of alexander became breeding ground for cholera. Some aid had been given by the government in terms of relaxing taxation, more allotments for the poor, some self-government Copied form the Speransky plan and some health assuages in the villages. But Pagodin got the essence of it all when he wrote: "the quiet of the graveyard, rotting and stinking both physically and morally."

The fourth partition of Poland made the Poles resent any link with Russia and 9 months later, Russia has reconquered Poland because the nationalists did not have the support of the peasants. In 1832, Nicholas I became Prince of Warsaw and administered in a brutal and authoritarian manner, making Marshal Paskevich his viceroy. Mohammad Ali of Egypt having been denied Syria as promised by Turkey in 1832, took Syria and Anatolia and because of its treaty with Turkey, Russia sent a naval squadron to Constantinople. The Convention of Kuthahia was made in haste to prevent further hostilities and thus, in the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi on July 8, 1833, Russia became protector of a decaying enemy. Nicholas I had also the prestige of being the protector of conservative power in Europe especially with his dealings with the Hapsburg Empire. He helped in the 1846 revolution which led to the downfall of Louis -Philippe which he considered to be a traitor and usurper to the legitimacy of power. Russia acquired Moldavia and Wallachia defeating the Rumanian nationalistic movement and then again in 1849 with an appeal from Austria about the Hungarian revolt, Russia, the "gendarme of Europe" preserved Hapsburg hemogeny in Hungary in 1850. The Crimean war became very costly for Russia despite the valor of men like Admiral Vladimir Kornilov who died in combat. The Russian forces left Sevastopol on September 11, 1855. Nicholas I died in March and froze Russia for at least 30 years.

This is Alexander II who at 37 years ascended the throne of the Czar and who would be given the adage Tsar-Liberator. In the initial phase of his reign, people enjoyed much freedom. They were free to travel and there were more students entering universities. The landlords on the other hand have been having more problems since they can no longer feed their serfs and therefore there were more bitter uprisings. In Lithuania, the serfs were being set free but without lands. He thought that to really be free, they should also have lands given them. This made him say that serfdom should be abolished from above to really be effective. Thus, on March 3, 1861, he abolished serfdom and 12 days later its manifesto came out. However, the implementation of his decree also met resistance and setbacks because of the unwillingness of the landlords. For instance, there would be landlords who have so many serfs and there would be deliberate attempts to defeat the purpose of emancipation by not allowing the emancipated serf access to the forest areas or the sources of water necessary for agriculture. Sometimes, too the regulations are impossible to execute and rather than for individuals, emancipation was done through communes. A quarter of the land tilled became the known as the pauper's allotment and yet there were really serfs who did not receive land because there was not enough acreage. The Zemstvo system was finally in place in January of 1864 depending on land, country, or people

with representation proportional to land ownership. Education, medicine, veterinary service, insurance roads and food reserves. The 1870 township had a decisive break with the past. Even the judiciary, which was considered worst became one of the best in the civilized world taking after the French model. In military service, by 1874, conscription was already drawn by lots and elementary education was required for soldiers and specialized military schools were also established in accordance with the plan made by Dmitrii Miliutin. The same was done in the navy by grand duke Constantine. Valery Tatarinov created a single State Bank for credit and finance. Actually, a constitutional monarchy would have solved so many problems except that Alexander and his trusted friends wouldn't want to go that far.

Russification of other cultures particularly that of Poland did not do good. Poland lost its autonomous positions because of her nationalistic tendencies. The use of Polish was forbidden and the property of the Catholic Church was confiscated. In 1874, the Uniates were reconverted to orthodoxy. Too much repression was made even in Russia by the "iconoclast intelligentsia" such that Vera Zauslich shot and wounded the military governor of St. Petersburg, General Theodore Trepov. This started the trend that political cases would be withdrawn from the regular cases. The Will of the People movement targeted the emperor from the very start but evaded assassination attempts by sheer luck. On March 13, 1881 Administrative Commissioner Michael Loris-Melikov promised to end terrorism but also sought reforms. On the same day, Tsar Alexander indicated his willingness to consider the proposal but later that day, he was finally killed. He was assassinated by populists.

This is Alexander III who reigned from 1881-1894. He revived the orthodoxy-autocracy-nationality motto of Nicholas I and therefore you would be expecting another reactionary. He placed on the seat of power, Constantine Pobedonostsev, a noted jurist from the University of Moscow for he was a brilliant man. Unfortunately, he was not really brilliant as he seemed to be because he shared with Alexander III hatred for the industrial revolution which for some grain of truth brought ugliness to the countryside. In fact, they do not want people to be "inventing things" which would clutter beautiful Russia. In 1881, having just started, his reign, he found his officials being hounded and criticized by the press. He therefore remedied the situation by making his "Temporary Regulations". This would bring about a partial martial law in Russia especially in the cities where there is some unrest and criticism for his counterreforms.

In the university from where he came from, Pobedonostsev would only allow students to have rights as "individual visitors" and as such they do not have any residence rights at all and could easily be expelled anytime. Therefore, there was no room for student activism and thus, no association of any kind could flourish. Of course, students are also taught to spy on each other. Among the peasants, the zemskii nachalnich have the land captain censuring any kind of behavior which would deviate from what the government wanted. This bureaucratic creation checked the peasants and buttressed the central government from their uprising.

The right to vote was also limited in 1892 to property requirements. Hence from the original 21,000 voters, only 8,000 was left to have electoral rights in St. Petersburg and in Moscow, from 20,000 to only 7,000. From these two cities alone 26,000 people are disenfranchised and they will hate central government for that.

And there is the primacy of the Orthodox Church. His reign censured other religions. In mixed marriages, those belonging to other religions are required to convert to orthodoxy. Pogroms or violence against the Jews were allowed. To the Jewish problem, the Russian

solution was threefold: first, they can convert to orthodoxy, second, they can emigrate to other countries and third, they can die. In some areas, Alexander III was more despotic than Nicholas I who was known to be the pure despot and which he idolized. In fact, as the First Nationalist on the Russian throne he saw to it that Russians will have good education but the rest are only given quota from the Georgians, Armenians and even the loyal Finns. It is said therefore that many celebrated his death in 1894.

Now, let me see if you can follow the instruction I gave you. Let me hear your ideas. _ said Fr. Caluag.

Nelson Dalisay took on Alexander I. He said that given the polarity between his grandmother and father who both hate each other he couldn't be blamed for his ambivalence over issues and his being suspicious concerning those around him even abandoning his unofficial committee.

Dr. Haydielyn Mallorca was glad that he didn't develop a bipolar complex and still functioned as a czar and even as a maverick diplomat.

Mons. Walleski would like to know if he was indeed a mystical angel of sort or did he really stage his death in order to become a Siberian hermit. Perhaps it was the beer or the toxins still in the Civiche which made Cenrick engage him when he said, _ Sometimes we ought to listen very well to the annotation for there was no real claim from the Paraclete and the Pope has already given his opinion. If I were Alexander I, I should have staged my death in St. Petersburg or any place closer to Siberia rather than Southern Russia.

Fr. Les Saintes noticed that the monsignor has marked Cenrick well because he saw that same expression when the Ukrainian said that Fr. Ferds had met his karma when he was taken to the hospital. Interesting to note that a Catholic monsignor would believe in a Hindu tenet.

Ron Mendoza took on Alexander II and was delighted in his attempt to emancipate the serfs. It was just that he did not have enough time to really make the reforms he was considering to do before he was assassinated.

Robert Besana liked what he did for the peasants but also saw how hard land reform is especially if the gentry will do anything to protect their greedy interests.

Christie Marie Reyes was sad that the "iconoclast intelligentsia" did what they did to the priceless icons just to prove their intelligence which ironically for her was foolishness.

Mons. Walleski said that Alexander II, in fact, is greater than Abraham Lincoln.

Simon Dolor took on Nicholas I and said he was amazed at his being "Gendarme of Europe" because he had already many problems in Russia and still would find time to police European nations.

Similarly amazed at Nicholas I was Rodrigo Diaz who found his definitions of orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality as too discriminating and narrow for an emperor of a vast empire. In fact, he said, as Watchdog of All Europe, he should have been more open and warm to other cultural currents.

Misty Towers find his acuteness to soldiering and engineering an offshoot of his boyhood days when he would imagine himself a trench engineer and sentry soldier. Dr. Mallorca complimented her on this.

About this time, Cenrick had a call and had to rise. It was Dr. Avestruz from nearby UP, and he said that the poison was only on the surface. The doctor even had a taste of the ones

below because he missed the Waray delicacy. His man will be back soon.

Atty. Paz Magtibay did not touch on the emperors per se but was mad at Pobedonostsev and Golitsyn for their suppression of academic freedom in schools. I don't understand, _she said, _ Why educated emperors would be assigning morons like them!

Zaida Tolentino for her part said she found the Third Department of Gendarmes reprehensible as well as the Temporary Regulations as they both meant terror for the people. Imagine the Nicholas I's police, persecuting the citizens rather than protecting them and the temporary regulations permanent throughout Alexander III's reign?_ she said. Atty. Magtibay complimented her for that because they were laws meant to oppress.

I know this is contrary to your direction, _Camille Mendoza said, _But I'm curious about this Prince Orlov. Was he the same one during Catherine the great's time?

Yes, he was, _said the rector, _Some people die hard.

Just then, the mystic's phone rang and he placed Fr. Ferdinand on the speaker phone. _ I want to tell everyone especially Savitri that I am well and alive. Please don't worry anymore over me as the doctor already said I'm safe. But if I were to die perhaps it's because Sir Ronnel here keeps me laughing. I'm sending him away already but he said the commandant wanted me watched because there might be another attempt. What a joke! As you see, it was my fault. I forgot to say grace before partaking of the kilawin because I've been busy apologizing to the monsignor for my lack of charity.

Okay, well-taken. We have to go back to our unfinished task now. Roger and out._ he turned off the phone and remarked, _As I was saying some people really die hard!

There was mirth rippling across when he closed the set of visions.

RUNNERS STUMBLE

Karam Zingh ran across the lawn and stumbled so he could open the gate when the Del Sol brothers arrived. Fr. Frank Caluag had to suspend the activity so that the excitement would die down. Arci being the host, announced that it was really a case of food poisoning. A spoiled chunk was in the Kinilaw which Fr. Dela Cruz ate and he was promptly taken to the hospital for the anti-toxin procedures. He is now doing well, he said, but needs more time to completely recuperate. Rose Ann Migalang requested that a simple thanksgiving prayer be said in the priest's behalf and everyone obliged after which Arci and Savitri promptly disappeared. Cenrick de la Rosa knowingly saw them arguing in the kitchen with Sarvan almost in tears as his parents would very seldom have a quarrel. The presence of Cenrick brought them peace

especially when he mentioned that he can prove very soon that Savitri is without fault. He even said that he had asked for more of the Criviche just to disprove Savitri's fault and invited Arci to have it with beer.

But, sir, please understand my situation as I am the host._ the usually gentle Arci said.

But sir, he was the one who bought all the seafoods. _Savitri said.

Being host doesn't necessarily mean being hostile like the gendarme. Host means being victim, too. _ he said leaving them time to reflect for themselves with an aside, _ By the way, Arci, we need more of Kilaw, as we still have some beer.

While they were gone, the Ukrainian monsignor was asking the French priest who the commandant was. Was it Fr. Caluag or the boastful man just back from the kitchen. Fr. Richelieu said he didn't know and was surprised at himself for not telling the truth. He even said that perhaps it was Rodney Baynosa because he seemed to be the one disciplining the jokers. He felt relieved when he nodded. Platito Toorinkaya volunteered to provide some entertainment with Dale St. Oz and they danced the Greek dance of thanksgiving after which they smashed some plates courtesy of Savitri. Dale invited everyone to a toast so that the broken china would prop up the Irish isles from sinking someday while Platito toasted for dear Russia and Greece at the same time. Janis Mendelsohn couldn't help but express indignity over the male bravura.

That's the spirit, _ said the mystic priest, _Not because a runner stumbles, the race would be declared over. The fallen runner may always rise up again and rejoin the competition. _ Then with a gentle wave of his hand, the mystic priest presented new visions. His naming of the person in the vision has caused some reaction in the audience.

This is Nicholas II who reigned from 1894 to 1917. He was the last Tsar of Russia. Born in 1868, he was known for his simplicity, modesty and devotion to family life. On the contrary, he married the German Princess Alexandra who is the willful, hysterical and reactionary power behind the throne. Aside from her natural characteristic, the Czarina was a student of Constantine Pobedonostsev who oppressed people in his role as Alexander III's assistant. Unfortunately, for Nicholas II, he extended and seemed to have made permanent the Temporary Regulations made during the time of Alexander III while the zemstvo reforms suffered more curtailments in 1900 to more bureaucratic difficulties for the people. The temporary regulations reacted worse to press freedom and education under him. The Tsar himself heavily influenced by Pobedonostsev relied much on other reactionaries like Dmitrii Sipiagan and Viacheslav Plehve. Above all these is the utmost reliance in the Ober-procurator of the Holy Synod which greatly affected government policy concerning religious expression. The zemstvo gains made proved ineffective again because taxation was rigidly fixed and just like in 1900, the stockpiling of food from emergencies was transferred to the bureaucracy.

The 1905 revolution should have served as a clear warning that modernization of Russia should have been proportionate to the growing needs of the Russian society whereby a greater middle class had grown and the peasants and workers made to suffer more with



Nicholas II, last Emperor of Russia

the resultant reactions from the czar's government. Russian society had been graced with so many new professions and provided with new and fresh technologies which should have made more impact if only given the proper government support. The 1880s and the 1890s brought rapid industrialization which brought about eventual social changes and tensions. The likes of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great should have made giant strides which could have made the empire more vital as a world power. At least, the Tsar had Sergei Witte whose financial stabilization scheme, heavy industries development and railroad building schemes had brought Russia in the growing European context. But Nicholas II's complex simplicity focused only on his immediate family needs and not of the country as a whole. Like Moammar Khadafy, he never played his role as the decisive commander-in-chief as Idi Amin comically portrayed because he usually came to parties garbed as a slim, bearded colonel with no lofty ambitions to tell but spoke only on how war should be stopped or deterred. Whatever decorations he wore were never fantastic as a Haile Selassie would wear or assume a pose like Napoleon would as he would never in modesty that he is the embodiment of Russia as the French emperor could say he is France.

On January 22, 1905 the "Bloody Sunday" unique to Russian history unveiled. Actually, a covert police operation to identify radicals, it was Okhrana's ploy to uncover radical elements inciting a revolution. Police chief's Sergei Zubatov's plan to infiltrate the radical ranks made use of a priest and adventurer, George Gapon whose "police" union which in fact, incited a great demonstration in front of the Winter Palace of all kinds of Russians as children begging from their Father, the Tsar the much-needed reforms so that the great sufferings of the people could be addressed. Only the portraits and icons were there being guarded for the imperial family was vacationing elsewhere. Quite ironically, the put-up rally aroused many participants and the radicals found an opportunity to lash at government from all known sectors. It was too late to abort the operation because the authorities inadvertently called the militia because of the mammoth crowd that had gathered. An estimated 130 participants died in the ensuing unnecessary massacre. On that day even the remaining workers still loyal to the tsar polarized to become anti-government. This ghastly episode demonstrated clearly the incompetence of the government.

Nicholas II's man, Ivan Goremykin proved inutile to the challenging times. The dissolution of the two Dumas created more havoc as the Battle Organization of the Social Revolutionaries and the Social Revolutionaries- Maximalists split from the main party and tried to outdo each in terrorism. These two were responsible for around 1,400 deaths in 1906 and about 3,000 in 1907. We will call them terrorists because their victims include many innocent bystanders. Peter Stolypin who took over Goremykin had the Duma under his control and started a pacification and reform campaign right away. However, in 1906, his suburban residence was bombed by the Maximalists killing 32 people and wounding many others including two of his own children. All these only strengthen the resolve of the effective prime minister.

Stolypin acted with willful severity. In fact, by the end of 1906, 82 areas within the empire had already been placed under special regulations and ceased being areas of rebellious concern. Publication of 206 newspapers who allowed themselves to be used for propaganda were closed and about 200 editors were brought to court. On the other hand, military officers without juridical training and which tried those accused of terrorism and rebellion were themselves court martialed within hours or two days at the most, bringing back the trust of the

people to their government. These courts martial only lasted for two months because Stolypin never submitted a law backing them up, and when the Duma has finally met, Stolypin's necktie as the noose came to be called, led to the execution of a thousand abusive individuals.

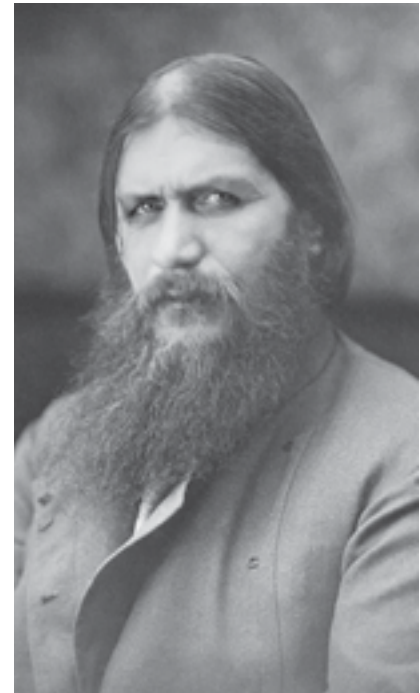
Two bigoted approaches by the Tsar's government spelled clearly the reactionary resolve of his reign, they are orthodoxy and russification. Authorities do not confirm election into the zemstvo or even as an employee if there is an impeachable reason such as lack of orthodoxy or lack of Russian descent. Of course, this is already a form of religious persecution on one hand, and discrimination, on the other. If Russian sectarians do not perform their military service for the empire, they are exiled to distant areas such as the Caucasus. Such that that, as a result of said government policies, they emigrate en masse as what the Dukhobory did. Or the estates and charity funds are confiscated as what happened to the Armenian church. The Jews were treated the harshest as they are prohibited from acquiring any real estate in the empire except in cities and settlements of Jewish pale. But the pogroms against them, literally violent purges, are allowed by authorities. Their treatment is nothing short of Islamic for a Christian state to espouse; either they convert, emigrate or get killed. Russification, on the other hand is worst exemplified in Finland. As an Autonomous Grand Duchy, the Finns received the more rights than when it was under Sweden as the tsar was its grand Duke. But when Gen. Nicholas Bobrikov became its Governor General with Viacheslav Plehve as Secretary of State for Finnish Affairs in 1898, the once contented Finns became alienated from Russia and the peaceful rapport between the two peoples was finished. This was followed by the publication of the statutes for military service by Finns for Russia. Overnight, the People of Finland became hostile to Russia. In 1902, Bobrikov was given the power to dismiss Finns as officials and judges to be replaced by Russians and in 1903, the Temporary Regulations came to Finland for reasons of state security. In 1904, Bobrikov was assassinated and in the year that followed, opposition in Finland became part of the revolution.

Nicholas II proved useful when he is allowed to be independent. For instance, in 1899, he called the First Hague Conference which was attended by some 26 states. As a pacifist, he didn't succeed in any agreement on disarmament or compulsory arbitration of disputes but the provision which did not allow the use of "projectiles thrown from balloons" was a noteworthy achievement especially that the Hague became a permanent court of arbitration, the International Court of Justice. At least, the Commander-in-Chief content to be in a colonel's uniform has some military mind. He foresaw the dangerous bombardment which aviation has inaugurated through balloons.

When Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was assassinated, Russia decided to side with Serbia and joined shortly after joined the war. The Tsar's government's rapprochement with the people was shot-lived and fleeting and did not produce the necessary effect to rally the people behind them in the cause of war. When the outbreak of the war was announced, Nicholas II and his ministers had the support of the people but this did not last long. Instead of utilizing the rallying spirit of the people, the Tsar and his ministers relied on their entangled bureaucracy to mobilize national resources and in the process oppressed religious and ethnic minorities in areas they have won temporarily from Austria as they have done habitually at home; such that said people, in turn, returned their allegiance to the Austrians. What difference would it make when the Russians are more indifferent than their former masters were? Such that the military mistakes were magnified by political mistakes and

as a result in August, 1915, after a short session of the Duma, Gen. Vladimir Sukhomilov and three of his colleagues had to resign. The war effort now went back to the people and their resources for the war to be continued. The Zemstvo Union and the Union of Towns under Prince George Lvov and the War Industry Committee under Chairman Alexander Gukchov.

It was under this backdrop that Nicholas II would leave his responsibility to reign to his wife, Tsarina Alexandra and their trusted friend, Gregory Efimovich Rasputin, so that they will be totally in control of the capital. The rapprochement had turned sour between the government and the public and the Tsar couldn't believe that the public had the effrontery to reproach him after all his sacrifices. He could not therefore, co-operate with the newly-created progressive bloc of the Duma under the historian, Paul Miliukov which included the entire membership except the extreme Right and Left. And so, the woman you now see, is the Empress or the last Czarina also known as Aleksandra Federovna whose greatest concern is the health of Crown Prince Alexis who unfortunately was afflicted with hemophilia which was always life-threatening because his blood would not clot whenever he has a wound or cut. And this Orthodox "monk", a peasant wonder-worker who is known as a staritsa (holy man) is Grigori Rasputin who was the only one who was able to stop his bleeding from so many healers, including true physicians. We will not dwell much on the German princess, Princess Alix of Hesse-Darmstadt who became the Tsarina for as her ladies-in-waiting would attest, she can't be blamed for her definitive loyalty to the charismatic leader for he alone can be entrusted with the future of her only son.



Grigori Rasputin

Rather, we will study in focus the character of this psychic healer whose healing prowess made him one of the most influential and controversial figures of Imperial Russia. In fact, some historians say that he was the real reason why the Bolshevik revolution succeeded and why the Romanov Empire came to a close. Rasputin's original name is Gregory (can be Gregori) Efimovich (can be Yefimovich) Novykh but the appellation Rasputin meaning "the debauched one" was found more apt for his person. Born in Jan. 21, 1869 was from Petroskoye, Tyumensky Uyezd, in Tobolsk and received his calling during his "pilgrimages". At the age of 19, he married Proskovya Fyodorova Dubrovina and had four children by her, one of which was Maria whom he had presented in St. Petersburg and later became a lion-tamer in the circus after she fled. Implicated in a horse theft, he left the village to become a pilgrim. He had first visited St. Simeon of Verkhoturye inspired by the student theologian Melity Zaborovsky where he heard first the mysterious voice, and then the Holy Znamensky Monastery at Abalak but it was in Tobolsk Cathedral that he was converted with no less than the "Virgin of Kazan" telling him how to change his ways. Humbled by a holy monk, Makary who taught him a life of piety, he became a true strannik not Satanic. Upon his return to his village, he indeed was a changed man for he had become a vegetarian and shunned alcohol and would now pray openly before the icons. But he had complaints, too about monastic life and said it was too coercive and there is no freedom to express oneself in terms of one's faith. Worst, he said there was the practice

of homosexuality within.

Apparently, his life as a pilgrim had brought him to different places but no, he didn't go to Constantinople nor the Kievan roots of Orthodoxy but to Jerusalem and the center of Orthodox monasticism, Mt. Athos. There it was on Mt. Athos or Thanatos in Greece where the voice of Lillith disguised as the "Virgin of Kazan" instructed him to go and where Bacchus, Pan and their sylvan minions feted and intoxicated him to the glory of the orgy. It is therefore, a different gospel he brought when he returned to his village where he had his basement church built singing strange mundane songs which entertained the pious women of his cult. Although professing to be a Khlysty, a self-flagellant, his whip couldn't possibly hurt a fly which found refuge at his back from the open fly of his trousers. His time is almost preoccupied with accompanying prayers he did with needy women and his time to purify himself is when he is bathed by his women followers before the sacred services. And his communion with God is the passionless moments of utmost exhaustion after an orgy with his devoted followers. So, who says debauchery is sinful? Not with Rasputin.

Charming enough to dupe even servants of God, he first made an impression with Archimandite Andrei and then asked for a recommendation from, and was given by Bishop Chrystanos, for Bishop Sergei, to the Alexander Nevski Lavra where he met Archimandite Theofan, confessor to the imperial family. And it was here that he learned to be more literate, for it wasn't true that he was illiterate like Mohammed, as some would claim, because he had written to the children of Nicholas and Alexandra so that they wouldn't miss him so much. He would soon be a welcome addition to the St. Petersburg society for he was already acquainted with the black princesses Militsa and Anastasia of Montenegro who were married to the grand duke cousins of Nicholas II. It is said that his first meeting with the Tsar and the Tsaritsa was on All Saints' Day in 1905 at Peterhof Palace where the Czar himself had an impression of him as a man of God as he wrote in his diary. They heard of him first through the black princesses.

The times were propitious for strange things. Before the start of the century, Madame Helena Blavatsky, a Russian, introduced spiritualism to the world. St. Petersburg, with its gentry not having anything serious to do, rushed to study new techniques in necromancy such as the seances and Ouija boards. Occult studies was the fad and very soon, out of sheer despair, peasants and the workers will join in too, to allow the devil more channels into their lives. Anything out of the ordinary could provide excitement and easy following such as a "monk" who never was, the Christ in miniature, or His reincarnation and going about Petrograd comforting and giving hope to people greatly burdened by the challenges of life, and doing wonders. Imperceptible to most Russians, the empire was having a diabolical revolution right under their noses. What now Lenin? Blavatsky had beaten you in spreading her morbid teachings first. Of course, Gregory Rasputin would be more interesting, pants down and hands down, than self-described clergymen such as Nizier Anthelme Philippe and Gerard Encausse, boring gentry living saints.

The devil had poisoned the wells, too. When Pentecost happened, the Outpouring wasn't just that. God had so many things in store for His beloved mankind. Christ's Church is a living church, it has to be dynamic and animated not petrified even if She was built upon Cephas. Our Lady from time to time appears to remind her children not just to whisper to some adventurer whose ego needs continuous aggrandizement and merrymaking amidst crowds stricken with awe. And now, when the spirit comes, even if comes from Heaven, Blavatsky

had it neutralized as just one of them, natives of seances, and harbingers of death. Nineveh had plenty of soothsayers, go tell the marines! The world doesn't want anything fishy like the Galilean and His fishers. Hey, I must be rambling! Then, Rasputin was enterprising too. He had a way to massage broken hearts and so, one day in July of 1905, he telegraphed the Tsar and said he was coming over with an icon, and so, he gifted him with the likeness of St. Simeon of Verkothurye. In October, of the same year, he saw the whole imperial family and the parents saw how the children easily got comfortable with the monk. It was in 1906, that the first occasion of his ability to "cure" Aleksys' hemophilia became obvious. He had asked that all medicines the doctors prescribed be thrown into the fireplace which included the new wonder drug just discovered; aspirin asking the parents to rely on God alone and not any human prescription. During that time, it was as if aspirin could cure any malady at all. Physicians didn't know yet the thinning property of aspirin to blood which when taken by a hemophiliac like Alexis, the blood will simply more not coagulate and continue to flow. The effect was dramatic, and ever since that time, the Romanovs have only to depend on God's man alone; Rasputin.

Because of the relief he had given the Romanovs, Rasputin now enjoyed their gratitude of having him welcome anytime he would want checking on his patient. He had now their full trust and confidence that he started to become a mainstay in the imperial apartments only familiar to nurses and governesses and most intimate family relations. Even during parties, ceremonies and even public functions, the monk was there as a guiding spirit. In fact, even the ladies-in-waiting found his presence entertaining as he could seem to read minds, read palms, tell stories of his adventures and spiritual life and even cure their simple ailments by his mere touch all in a demure mild manner expected of a religious. But there were those who were starting to be uncomfortable with his obtrusive presence. The nurse, Sofia Ivanovna felt that there was something wrong when he could still come to the children already in their nightgowns and still caress them. She had the discomfort of trying to guess what they were whispering to each other concerning her presence as they look down on her. She had to open up to Xenia Alexandrovna, the aunt because the Grand Duchesses Olga and Tatiana were already teen-agers. But even if the aunt was convinced of her good motive and despite the former's protestations, the nurse was fired. How could she spread evil word against the holy man?

But then another Nyanya, Maria Ivanovna Vishnyakova complained that she was raped in 1913 by Rasputin. About the same time, Pyotr Stolypin, prime minister of the Duma, remember the Stolypin necktie which is the noose? -the same guy had Rasputin investigated and the Okhrana provided him with damaging reports such that the Tsar had him leave at once for Palestine in spite of the Tsaritsa's opposition. A former follower, Kehiyonia Berlatskaya also denounced him for raping her back in 1909.

In 1912, the Prince developed a dangerous hematoma larger than the one witnessed by the Tsaritsa's Lady-in-Waiting Anna Virubova in 1907. In that year, all that Rasputin did was gather some unknown leaves or weeds and applied them and everything went well in time. But this time, the starets was not around and so far away. They saw that the internal bleeding wouldn't stop as caused by a jolting accident of his thigh and groin area while on a ride in the imperial hunting grounds. They saw him getting weaker by the day and the best physician, Dr. S.P. Federov, couldn't do anything about it. Gregori alarmed already about the matter, sent word and said they should not lose hope because he will get well soon. This time, they couldn't even apply anything. The Tsarina kept on rereading the message but no, there was nothing

mentioning about leaves or weeds for she would order the doctor to do it right away. But when the next day came, it wasn't anymore necessary. The child Grand Duke was up and about as if nothing happened. Even Dr. Federov was impressed being the leader of a team of doctors and said that he now understands why the Tsarina trusted him above anybody.

Rasputin reaffirmed his reputation as he was called back to keep his watch again. As if to affirm on whose side was God with, Prime Minister "Noose" so much Stolypin was shot dead by an assassin. Even Rasputin was impressed, they still remembered the weeds and leaves which were his application in Petroskoye when a horse is cut and bleeding but this time he only prayed and was surprised that God listened!

Not that he himself faced no such challenges. In 1911, Iliodor who is actually Sergi Trufanov, a real monk and his former supporter denounced him for sexual misconduct and immoral aggrandizement which he simply took as hostile expressions of envy and/or jealousy. Iliodor was with the infamous police spy George Gapon who instigated the Bloody Sunday massacre before Czarina Elizabeth's opulent Winter Palace. The poor priest couldn't substantiate any of his claims and therefore, when Rasputin pointed out to his involvement in the massacre, he in turn, was defrocked by his superiors for raising such a howl and finding it was him who was the hooting owl. In July, 1914, Chionya Guseva tried to assassinate Rasputin by stabbing him repeatedly but he survived the attack. He knew that the plot was planned by the defrocked priest but she feigned insanity and evaded the punishment. All these had made him a celebrity in Petrograd that he had gained a lot of confidence of being a party animal. His being mild-mannered in the Tsaritsa's mauve boudoir is exactly the opposite of his behavior when he was out partying with the barinia of St. Petersburg. He would even show the embroidery made by her majesty on his favorite red shirts and the shiny boots he boasted somebody else gave. Alexandra would simply chuckle when the other ladies tell her unmindful that the crowd might misinterpret.

Why would she? In fact, he is the favorite topic of conversation among the ladies-in-waiting because no Russian man had impressed them as he could. They have found their own husbands and escorts boring with their endless political talks about the war and the virtuous gallantry of dying for the empire. They all hated the death talks of their men and here is one almost like a child in his peasant efforts to please them all, singing, dancing and joking; so full of life which is less and less becoming present in the palace ballrooms of the empire. Here is one who's licking at the spoons and awkward handling of the other silver becomes delightful talk of the town. Here is one who would ask the orchestra playing to do a peasant polka or mazurka when he is already bored with the tango and the other classic dances of Russian belles and balls, a lively music from a muzhik. And here is one who can casually talk about sex as if it's just like drinking vodka with relish even without caviar, or even what you have is just kvass in your kovsh ; as if he wasn't a monk for he couldn't see the sin that it has entailed between two feeling luvobnik. Surely, one can abandon her palace or dacha for an izbas or even a cave just to be alive again. And that's not just one but three inseparable Gregory Rasputin. And compared to him, the relic gentry of the empire were just toy soldiers ready to be kept in the attic. And her barinia are courageous enough to dance with her in the Strelina, that night spot overlooking the lights of St. Petersburg and the Gulf of Finland. It doesn't matter if it will be printed in the Novoya Vremya or in the Moskvyy. For what is the use of a very expensive Parfum Francais if only your hand would be kissed, and politely at that, throughout the cold night?

Ah, thank you, _ exclaimed the Tsarina, _ I'm living a life through all of you. In her mind, she knew men excited them. They prefer aggressive, tall or big peasant men who longed for the soft slender body of the closeted barinia whose hair they are free to dishevel and whose imported clothes they can rip and toss aside because they were in a hurry. They could be soldiers, workers or farmers for as long as they are men who can express themselves in love, treating them as malenkaya or miloska, not marionettes whose every move is a string attached.

In September, 1915, against the protest of 12 government ministers, Nicholas II decided suddenly to take care of the war in the frontline himself. In his place, he assigned the empress and her loyal assistant, Gregory Rasputin. This was his reaction because they would want him to kowtow. For once, he wanted them to understand that he is a Russian Tsar, a real autocrat and never a pushover as some would have the gall to suggest. And to make it all more bitter for his political critics who kept on harping on the Tsarina and their muzhik friend as an issue, they would have to contend with them for some time, while they run the government. He is right, he is a Russian Tsar, an obstinate autocrat who could have his way, God forbids, without becoming an Ivan the Terrible. Somehow, Alexandra finds it an amusing idea because she can lash back at her most terrible critics who lampoon her and the healer in their outright ignorance.

On the way to the battlefield, Nicholas II felt heavy but cozy in his trench coat. Perhaps, if he were to die in some decisive battle, he could regain the respect of his citizens who could only think of him as a henpecked husband or nutcracker soldier whose enemies are nothing but nuts. Even if hired assassins of the enemy empire, could get past his aide-de-camps and fire a fatal shot, the empire would rally behind the traitorous deed and prove that Russia can still get back on its feet and give a good fight like a wounded bear. He had a noble quest and that is to vanquish the German-speaking enemy on the opposite side. But what happened was unwillingly as in an unexpected destiny his quest for a strong-willed woman who could be his inspiration for his whole life had found for him a strong-willed German-speaking Hussar woman whose ways and means are similar in ways to his enemies. But God, why should she be the reason why my countrymen are so critical of me? _ he asked himself, _And why do they hate Gregory so much when he is so Russian as a peasant, in his orthodoxy and his muzhik ways?

Thus, a one-track mind, volatile and reactive woman and a strange, unknowing peasant, who could only decide out of personal interest, and whose sudden exalted position is only founded on the tsarina's belief that only he could protect her son from his rare disease and that the peasant was sent by God to guide her, her husband and the motherland had the destiny of the empire in their hands. Under Rasputin's power, ministers leapfrog each other in successive rapid change and each was more under the monk's power than his predecessor, Ivan Goremykin who had returned to power only to manifest his growing senility.

The discontent over Rasputin's hand in government mounted. Almost everyone wanted him out. In the duma, the representations expressed their ire in simple terms. Duma Deputy Vladimir Mifanovich Purishkevich, the tsar's staunchest supporter spoke. He said that under the circumstances, the Tsar must be saved from all the troubles that Gregory Rasputin's influence is doing and said how much he hated the inner circle which hampered everything the Tsar wants to do for the empire. After his speech, Prince Felix Yusupov approached the speaker and told him that he is willing to rid the nation of this vermin assuring him that it will be done the soonest possible time before any other debacle could happen because of this peasant's stupid decision-making for the reign. And so, the Rightist conspiracy was born and the plotters worked

on Rasputin's known weaknesses such as parties, booze and beautiful women. Pretending that he had great emotional problems and yet, was a sure prospective homosexual source of funds because Yusupov was the richest man in Russia at that time. He therefore intimated a mutual understanding from where Rasputin could benefit much. Not only that, the prince's wife who was Nicholas II's niece was the real lure, wherein the prince arranged a meeting between her and Rasputin. Showing her picture of great youth and beauty, he saw his interest at the future meeting. Actually, at that time, the Princess Irene Yekaterinberg, his wife, and Nicholas II's niece, was vacationing in Crimea, but through correspondence her husband had been telling her about the plan, but in a discreet manner, so that the operation's cover wouldn't be blown. For her part, the princess found it interesting that her husband was doing something worthwhile for the motherland, and assented to whatever it was he was planning.

And so, very early on Dec. 30, 1916, Gregori Rasputin was lured into coming to the Moika Castle of the Yusupovs for a private party wherein the wife, the actual lure will come late with the other ladies. Before he left his apartment, he had to bless an insistent lady who was waiting outside, knelt and just asked for a blessing instead as she wanted to be with him. But kissing her *Do svidanya*, again he left her as he was already being fetched. According to Felix' diary when he was already in the castle, he was given sweets laced with arsenic which he declined at first and then he took with tea but it didn't have any effect on him. He also asked for Madeira wine which was also poisoned but he did not show any sign of distress either. Later, the tipsy Rasputin followed him to an upper room, he took the gun from Grand Duke Dmitrii Pavlovich, asked him to face the crucifix to pray for the last time. He then shot him at close range in the chest. They later drove Sukhotin to the monk's apartment with him wearing Rasputin's hat and coat to establish that he had returned home. Then, coming back to check on him, Rasputin rose and attacked him, he however, was able to shoot him again. He was still able to run and Purishkevich shot him at the back and he fell on a snow embankment. Then, they wrapped him in cloth drove to Petrovsky Bridge where they threw him into the water hole on the ice surface of the Malaya Nevka River. He indeed died with his favorite boots on. Yet all these accounts from the Yusupov diary were contested by the coroner who autopsied Rasputin's remains. Even the account of his consuming the sweets was contested by Rasputin's own daughter, Maria who found it strange for his father to be relishing on sweets because she as her daughter knows he doesn't like sweets. Maria was traced by the press in an American circus where she worked as a lion tamer after fleeing Russia.

Now, as a runner who stumbles in a race, Tsar Nicholas II still deserved a medal. On March 11, 1917, the duma sidestepped an imperial dissolution decree and entered into a provisional government with Prince George Lvov as prime minister. On the ides of March, Nicholas II bowed to the inevitable and abdicated for himself, and for his son, the imperial crown, in favor of his brother, Michael. On the next day, however, Michael abdicated in favor of the decision of the constituent assembly or in effect, the provisional government pending its decision. Nicholas II has appointed George Lvov as prime minister of the provisional government before renouncing the throne thus, effectively ending the reign of the Romanovs.

Also, as a runner who stumbles in a race, Tsaritsa Alexandra still deserved a medal. Up to the last moment of her life her very thought was still the protection of her children. Even if she is characterized to be obstinate, hysterical and superstitious. None of these negative qualities could tarnish the noun, mother, for it is the very profession worthy of honor to be given to a

woman, and in this regard, she did not fail even if she is characterized as a foolish empress a hundredfold times. She even waited for her missing Lady-in-Waiting like her real mother.

Likewise, as a runner who stumbles in a race, Starets Gregori Rasputin deserved a medal. Why, even in his death he had created more chaos as expected of someone like him. When he said, "Fear not, your child will not die," he has given back hope to a mother. But when he told the father about his impending death, that he will no longer see the new year, and the contingent prediction that if he {Rasputin} will be killed by government officials, the czar's entire family will be killed by the Russian people, he said it like a curse on the family that blessed him. The medal should come from Hades where he deserves to collect it.

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Now, I believe that would suffice for the moment and so, I would like to pick your brains now. _said Fr. Frank, _Just a few volunteers please...

Mons. Walleski should be given a medal, he couldn't be outdone,_ I just want to comment that Gregory Rasputin was never sanctioned by the orthodox church. In fact, he was even exposed as a heretic. (Fr. Caluag simply nodded.)

But Rodney Baynosa said, _ But for some time, the orthodox church made use of his influence too, for they too, believed at first. And when he was already in the sphere of influence, they didn't condemn him so much because they were afraid of imperial repercussions.

That's right, _said Zaida Tolentino, _It was only Bishop Hermogen of Saratov who was outspoken about him. Other metropolitans were simply scared.

The Tsaritsa-Starets tandem is really a worst political formula. This is the tsar's biggest blunder. _said Prof. Robert Besana, _It was a regime based on gossips and intrigues.

Whatever happened to the remains of Rasputin after his autopsy and who was this coroner mentioned? Rasputin's memories are indelible to Russian consciousness and they might spell trouble once again._ opined Simon Fe Dolor at the same time asking for basic facts.

Thank you. Dr. Dimitry Kosozotov did the post-mortem. He found no traces of poison. Rasputin's lungs didn't also have water and this would indicate that there was no more drowning that took place as the other shots were done already after he has transpired. As to the remains, they were exhumed and burned to ashes per order of Alexander Kerensky the same day that Nicholas II abdicated. This would presuppose Kerensky's intentions of taking the helm of governance.

Then apparently, Prince Felix greatly sensationalized the assassination of Rasputin so that it would achieve heroic heights. As far as I know this prince is a playboy good-for-nothing husband who is only using his money in everything he does._ opined Cenrick de la Rosa, _ For him, Rasputin's murder is the only good thing he can think of to redeem his reputation.

Or perhaps, it was the devil which muddled the post-mortem findings._ said Rodrigo Diaz, _ Perhaps, it was not even Rasputin's soul which animated the zombie that attacked Yusupov even when it was already fatally shot.

Very possible indeed. _ said Fr. Caluag, _ Anyway, Rasputin means a place where two rivers meet to become one. It must be that Gregory's enjoyed two presences or inferences because he could be so mild at one time, and very wild the next like the classic Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. And yet, he himself is surprised that the Good Lord will listen to his prayers knowing how profligate he was. And yet speaking of names, his original name was Novykh and when he became lampadnik or lamplighter to the imperial apartments he asked the czar to add

Novy to his name so that the Rasputin reputation could be changed. Did you know, too, that Rasputin even wanted to bless Russian troops? Nicholas II at least didn't allow him for that would scandalize the soldiers. Strange dualism indeed!

Therefore, a bipolar personality may be dismissed in favor of a supernatural one, _ said Dr. Mallorca, _But I'm glad about the revelations concerning folk medicine for horses and the properties of aspirin.

And yet the princes and the paupers with them should have been sent to jail for murdering a man, let alone a monk-ey!, _declared Atty. Magtibay, _However, I 'm glad at the mention of the Hague for even the Philippines benefited from the ICJ arbitration with China.

Yet, I would say, it's good for him because of what he did to women and children, _rejoined Janis Mendelsohn.

Ah, there are really many inconsistencies about the Rasputin murder. A crime scene featured a basement but the prince's diary mentioned going upstairs, _ said Misty Towers.

Oh, but that is moot and academic now. What I think was proven is the fact that evil had lodged in the Kremlin and even earlier in Petrograd, _said Nelson Dalisay.

Are St. Petersburg and Petrograd two different places? _ asked Camille Mendoza.

They are one and the same, _said her husband.

Petrograd started being used to refer also to St. Petersburg during the war when the government rationing started, _ said Platito Toorinkaya, who is half-Greek and half-Russian but en toto, Filipino, _ By the way, Mt. Athos is in Greece and Thanatos is death in Greek.

Yes, we were surprised at your annotations earlier. They were very emotionally-laden, _observed Christie Marie.

Yes, they were very spontaneous and also the crime annotation on Rasputin's death was very hazy showing only hands sometimes or feet on the move, _added Rose Ann Migalang.

I can't help it if the Lord is better in building up suspense than Agatha Christie could, _ said Father Francis Caluag.

MARATHON

Before Fr. Frank Caluag could start the set of new visions, there were still curious questions that had to be asked and of course, the mystic priest had to obliged.

But what happened to the imperial family when Nicholas II abdicated? _ asked Wadi Watkalulu, a victim of communist infiltration in his home province in Southern Philippines. _And the government because what we have right now is a communist regime in Russia under Vladimir Putin.

I wish they were given a few concessions as in a constitutional monarchy, at least for

what their family has done for the people. Say that was something like three hundred years, _ said King Ed Asaytona, eastern Rite priest.

Fr. Caluag waved his hand.



Romanov family

The scene showed a platform and some soldiers in khaki arranging chairs thereon. Curtains were hung before it and when the seat preparations were ready, a tripod with a contraption about it was placed from a close distance before it. Then their majesties were called along with the children for picture taking as it was explained that the foreign press were always asking how the Romanovs were faring after the imperial government was deposed. Nicholas II and Alexandra hastily prompted the children into an adjoining room where sometimes, guests were waiting. The five children wore the familiar navy costume which were their favorite and so becoming. How fast time has changed them: Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia and Alexis have grown in spite of the vicissitudes. They all sat down with the children knowing already their places as they are used for photo sessions. But when curtains parted, the parents instinctively covered their children as the order to fire was given. The kneeling squad men made sure to finish what the machine gun mounted on the tripod started. When the smoke cleared, the whole family lay sprawled on the sordid platform bathed in blood. Rasputin's warning came several months after the Tsar's abdication: the people of Russia will kill them all. This is not even the provisional government wanted as it rushed through the reforms. This is the dastardly act of the Bolsheviks. Soon, their bodies were buried on the main road so that nobody would suspect. Even in death, the dignity of the Romanovs will be insulted as people and vehicles trample upon them.

This is terribly wrong! _cried the usually quiet woman, Liberty Danz as she wept, _What could the children possibly have done to deserve this?

But there was one who allegedly survived, _ said Jen Masamoc, _ I remember her name, Anastasia? I remember they were killed during the civil war.

Oh, but that was a hoax, _said Cenrick de la Rosa, _ She was just an actress who made a disguise. They were all wiped out by the Ekaterinberg Bolsheviks on July 16, 1918 as the Whites and Czechs approached fearing a counter revolutionary move using any one of the family.

Then out of the blue, Rodel Regino asked the anti-climactic questions, as he wanted to learn more Russian, _ But what do malenkaya, malaya and miloshka mean? – they were uttered by the mystic spontaneously earlier when he was rambling.

Miss Casey Ann Kingsley wanted to help and so Fr. Frank allowed her. She said malenkaya and malaya denoted being little and miloshka meant darling. _Malaya therefore does not mean free but meant that the river was small in that part. But you can imagine it to be free-flowing, _she added giving a rare smile.

How can that be when it has ice on the surface? _said the killjoy Ukrainian.

Icarus Leido, another silent fellow came to her rescue, _ There is free flow underneath the ice, sir. Even if the surface is rigid and col, there is always free flow below the ice. Revolutions are like that. Even if government is cold and unresponsive, the free flow of ideas in society's bottom could start a revolution!

And there were also the k-words which he uttered, _Joyce Alag recalled.

Kvass is fermented rye bread sour beer while kovsh is a drinking vessel as the German mug is, _explained Miss Kingsley. But the massacre of nobles would be regicide, that's English.

Thank you, Miss Kingsley, I thought you would only be helpful interpreting in English but I'm glad you can also help us with Russian. Y gracias, Senor Icarus Leido for the very profound interpretation of revolutionary undercurrents.

The gentleman bowed politely and said, _ De nada.

That sufficed for Fr. Caluag to wave his hand gently and new visions revealed themselves.



Alexander Kerensky

This is Alexander Kerensky. Remember that he was the one who had ordered the exhumation and cremation of Rasputin's remains. What he was not told was that a fanatical lady jumped into flames when they were already burning the corpse such that what they had were the ashes of two individuals who have said farewell to each other before the Czarina's favorite was murdered. Before the Czar's abdication, this lady-in-waiting was no longer seen in Tsarskoye Selo prompting the Tsaritsa to believe that she had already changed her allegiance since she told her she loved the starets and feared that he in turn actually loved the Czarina. The soldiers swore to one another to keep the secret of the bride that sacrificed herself for Rasputin and divided her jewels amongst themselves with even Kerensky kept in the dark. He tried to hold on to power in the provisional government and seesawed between political parties competing among themselves as to who will control the government and the duma. In the end, as he was trying to please all the leaders with different deals he himself lost credibility. He had in fact,

nominally became the Persuader-in-Chief and had to rely dynamically on the strength of others to keep his post secure. Finally, Gen. Lavr Kornilov stabilized the situation when he was made commander-in-chief by the Soviet. Gen. Kornilov wanted to put discipline and order in the armed forces and ordered his loyal troops to secure the capital. However, his move was impeded by a sudden railway strike which did not allow the troops to come on time prompting his trusted operation commander to commit suicide. In fact, Kerensky gave away the plan to the Bolsheviks and they in turn, started the railway strike to cause the chaos. During this time, there was a polarity in the ideological practice of Mensheviks and Bolsheviks which was growing. While the Mensheviks had a larger looser organization, they practiced more gradual applications of the Marx-Engels of thesis-antithesis-synthesis development for socialism. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks were a closely-knit body of dedicated professionals who would grab at any opportunity to emancipate the proletariat who they consider to be the messianic force that will save society through their brand of socialism. Because of Kerensky's Janus dealings, the Bolsheviks with their leaders being set free as Kornilov's men defend the capital for as long as they can last. Yet they found their logistics waning and the needed reinforcements nowhere in sight. This is when the Bolsheviks took over with the iscaritorial Kerensky fleeing several hours before they arrived.

The change of government was easily justified by Leon Bronstein better known as Leon Trotsky with his code name Prometheus to communists. The revolution succeeded with little opposition from November 7-October 25 (old style) which is why it is called the great October revolution with the Communists occupying strategic points of the capital. On October 8, the Bolsheviks led the taking of the Petrograd garrison, then with the Red guard workers and the sailors from Kronstadt the Winter Palace defended only by cadets from the military school and even a women's battalion was taken ensuring the establishment of the Soviet Government for the capital and the whole of Russia.

This is Vladimir Ulianov better known as Lenin who came from the intellectual family from Simbirsk (now Ulianovsk) on the Volga. His father was an school inspector but it was the execution of his brother in 1887 which made the turning point of his life.

His eldest brother became involved in the plot to assassinate Czar alexander III and this made him bitter against the Czarist government. He became acquainted with Karl Marx' pseudo-science of Hegel's Dialectical Materialism and worked on his own working theory with the application that the domination of proletariat class of all the other classes would bring about the communist Utopia to the world. Hence the ideas of the rally placards during the Bolshevik demos in his ascent to leadership are said to have come from his mind. Phrases like "War to the Palaces; Peace to the Huts!", "Expropriate the Expropriators!" and "Let the Proletariat Save the People!" were his adages. In a way, Rasputin and Lenin's thinking were the same. Rasputin did not really believe in God but found it profitable to be religious. He was able to stop Alexis' hemophilia by simply praying over him. He was able to stop his hemophilia by putting herbs on his wounds the way he applied them to horses. And he was able to stop his hemophilia without even being there. All he needed therefore was to be religious: to believe in his self, to have faith



Vladimir Lenin

in himself and believe that he could do it all by himself. It was even a startling revelation that this “God” would support him for as long as he believed. Thus, in the end, Satan would abandon him because he found a better god, himself; for he was a materialist, too. Satan is insecure with those who are self-indulgent like him.

As an opportunist, Lenin found that he could easily sway people to his ideas, all he had to do is to accompany them in their emotional state, to walk through their life with them like a WOKE psychologist would and tell them they have done good. Then he would convince them to do better in their art by following their passions even when if they were wrong. And then finally making them fearless by letting go of all inhibitions by liberating themselves as the true masters of the world. Hence, in his programming of his ignorant followers into Marxist-Leninism, he would introduce them to scientism; that they have done good for not believing in the superstitions of religion but rather understanding the scientism that goes in the production and conservation of goods and resource materials. And that they can do better by the optimistic teaching that they could in fact do better when they have the technology to produce and preserve more of the goods they needed. Finally, they can do best by forgetting their being colonized, enslaved and exploited by others by being the liberators themselves of others thus bringing equality and comradeship to others as well. It does not matter if they will use an aggressive or adversarial stance to protect this hard-won freedom for as long as this best expression of life is manifested.

Unfortunately, for Lenin it would be very impossible for him to tell the Bolsheviks that they have done good as everything that lay around them are chaos, misery and death. But they needed him as much as he needed them. He had goaded the goats into rampage and should somehow be a goatherd to them even if deep in his heart, he is so lonely. And so, the congratulations were in order for liberating this area and this, this city and that; in the name of the revolution. It was an easy victory although not given in a silver platter as it wasn't a gift at all of the Romanovs but the resultant squalor and rabble of continued fighting and infighting. Lenin was to be Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars, such fancy change of names for the almost the same political functions. Leon Trotsky became Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Alexis Rykov became Commissar of the Interior and Joseph Dzugashvili (Stalin) as the Commissar in charge of national minorities.

Everything seemed to be coming into order in October but in January 18 of 1918, the Constituent Assembly to challenge the new dispensation's mettle as it was awaited by all political entities as the gauge of legitimacy. However, the assembly was dispensed by the troops sent by Lenin in the morning of the 19th. Leading them by example, they could do better by willful passion applying the scientism of the Marxist-Leninist body of knowledge that no political entity should hamper its progress. But beset by the inability to stem the tide of war, Lenin's government had to concede to the Draconian terms of peace. All in all, Russia's losses in order to preserve its new nest of communism were as follows: The territories of Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine and Poland received their independence from Russia. Part of Transcaucasia was ceded to Turkey. Russia lost 26% of her population (over 60 million people), 27% of her arable land, 32% of her crops, 26% of her railway system, 33% of her manufacturing industries, 73 % of her iron industries and 75% of her coal fields. All in all, about 5,000 refineries, factories, mills and distilleries were lost. It also had to pay a large indemnity. These are the provisions of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty between Germany and Russia. As in Lenin's programming, the Russian people should not dwell on this exploitation and subjection but rather work on

remastering the deficiencies so that in the end, they will evolve as the new masters of the world and would be avoided with its implicit threat of aggression.

This was how Vladimir Lenin worked up the communist Russians to have their place in the world. His firm decision to disband the constituent assembly, and his capitulation to the Germans had enabled his Soviet regime to survive. Fearing greater losses yet if they don't persevere; they revamped and even transformed Russia politically, financially, economically and socially even if it will be guided by a "socialist legal consciousness" of the state above everything else. To do this, it has to be enforced with an established extraordinary Commission to Combat Counterrevolution, Sabotage and Speculation. The Cheka or the Political Police under Felix Dzerhinsky became a necessary evil of the Soviet life. Hence, in Russia it became very obvious that you can still say anything you want during that time; yes, you are free to do so, but perhaps only once. If you want to say anything repeatedly even by way of speculation, let it not be heard or you will get hurt, jailed or just die.

Many challenges will still come their way such as the civil war, but Lenin will maintain his dignified stance. The White army aided by Allied forces even have superb generals to command but in the end because the proper logistics were in Petrograd and Moscow, the Red Army prevailed. Just to give examples of how useless the allies proved themselves, please be reminded that those sent from America wanted to go home right away since they did not understand why they were fighting in Russian soil, the French sailors mutinied in the same vein, the Japanese were sent to exploit resources, while the Poles were already contented in getting back their lands. But in the final analysis, it was the attitude of the Russian people which mattered as many peasants found access in lands to till and the unnerving sight of foreigners exploiting still. Vladimir Ulianov better known in history as Lenin died in January of 1924 seeing the end of the civil war in 1920. He was, however troubled by the fact that the men running the commissars are already bickering while he was still alive. He didn't like one of them who remained a goon even when he was already of cabinet rank, Joseph Dzugashvili. It's untrue, therefore, that Lenin anointed Stalin as his successor for in fact his testament had willed against him as he was too rigid and rude as general secretary. With such forebodings, Lenin suffered from a stroke and therefore could not write the testament personally, hence the objections for they were just dictated in whispers and great difficulty, and died.



Joseph Stalin

This is Joseph Dzugashvili better known as Stalin. Known to be one of original proletariat origin, he was born the son of a shoemaker in 1879 in the capital city of Tiflis or Tbilisi in Georgia. This gory man first attended a church school in Gori until 1894 and then transferred to a theological seminary in Tiflis. In 1899, he was expelled from the seminary and was already acquainted with the writings of Marx and Lenin. He would therefore join the social democratic party and upon its split in 1903 as he saw that the Mansheviks were too lenient and inutile he became a devoted Bolshevik. Between 1902 and 1913, he had been involved in activities

which made him arrested and exiled several times. He, however usually bribed the policemen and some judges so that he can eventually evade arrest or even sentencing into exile. His last exile continued from 1913 to the February revolution. Lenin, himself an opportunist got his attention because he was very daring in executing raids or robberies to finance the cause. Stalin never left the motherland and his revolutionary activities spanned Tiflis, Batum, Baku and even St. Petersburg. Being Georgian in origin, and not even from the mainland Russia, this even gave him an advantage for him to be the Bolshevik expert on nationalities. During the civil war, he was seen in action in the defense of Tsarytsyn against the White Army. This is the reason why in 1925 it was renamed in his honor as Stalingrad although it was changed again to Volgograd in 1961 at the instance of Nikita Khrushchev. Stalin's bid for power started as early as 1922 when he became the General Secretary of the party. Using intrigues and changing alliances

from time to time, he slowly but surely rose to prominence such that when Lenin died it was easy for him to grab power. Leon Trotsky, his greatest rival had to be expelled from Russia and yet, despite his distance, he still had to be murdered in Mexico City in 1940, which he thought was already his refuge. Starting that time anyone who would deviate from the party's line would already be suspect. There was no stopping for Stalin's continued struggle to showcase Russia as the real Marxist-Leninist Utopia and thousands have to die opposing the idea. Although Stalin was advancing a modern ideology, there was a madness akin to Ivan the Terrible's suspected harm-doers. He was indeed Machiavelli's Black Prince come to life. In the end, even his beloved daughter, her dushka and doragai, Svetlana Alliluyeva in 1967 memoirs presented how the fact and fantasy blended in her father's real struggles against rivals which resulted in his fatal conspiracy for them. In January of 1953, everything came exciting as nine doctors were accused of having assassinated Soviet leaders which included Stalin's critic, Andrei Zhdanov. Even Laurentii Beria's police were charged with incompetence because of ineffective vigilance. The press campaigned against all possible traitors and a great purge was

expected. Then quite unexpectedly, on March 4, it was announced that he had suffered a stroke as early as March 1. And on March 6, it was announced that he had died the previous night with the dictator's entourage, especially close to him, all disappearing at the same time.

This is Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev. He was not even part of the group from where the successor of Stalin would come from when Stalin was interred with honors at the Lenin Mausoleum in Red Square on March 9, 1953. George Malenkov, Viacheslav Molotov and Laurentii Beria were there to bury him and from this triumvirate it was expected that the General Secretary would come from. On the Ides of March, Malenkov has resigned as Party Secretary although he continued as prime Minister and quite suddenly with the presidium being reduced only to ten, Khrushchev emerged as First Secretary since he wouldn't want to use Stalin's title. Then Beria was arrested and executed in secret for treason. But actually, he was killed right there at the presidium where he expected he would be given full power. In the 20th Party congress in 1956, he denounced his predecessor, Josef Stalin as a cruel, irrational and



Nikita Khrushchev

bloody tyrant quite unexpectedly. Then repeating this feat, alongside his major developmental plans, in the 22nd Party congress in October, 1961. Although he had his way again, and even was able to remove Stalin from the Mausoleum and rename Stalingrad, Volgograd, many started wondering at the fact that he was also there in administration doing the evils the tyrant wanted done and so, the ebullient leader of Russia was already on his downfall. On October 15, 1964 it was announced in Moscow that this man who dressed down inferior Communist leaders like Mao Ze Dong and who engaged John F. Kennedy quite inferiorly during the missile crisis had to be “released” from his administrative duties as the top man of Russia due to “advanced age and deterioration of his health.” Thank to those concerned with his well-being, Khrushchev had finally finished his marathon run.

When I was very young, _ said Fr. Caluag, I used to think that the word marathon came from the Jacobin leader Marat for I didn't even know how to pronounce French even then. I thought then that the runners had to die or at least fall, from exhaustion as the Jacobins did. So, let me see what your thoughts are. Volunteers, please.

Of course, Miss Kingsley would volunteer and was nodded ahead of the Ukrainian because the meaning of a word had been mentioned. _ Marathon, sir originated from the famous run of the Greek warrior announcing the results of the battle far from the city which is why you mentioned it to be exhausting and therefore applied already to walkathon, telethon and the like which actually now applies to the endurance of a long-distance runner.

I do believe that the elimination of some political rivals were necessary in the context of Russian leadership and therefore they are justified, _said the Ukrainian.

Yes, as necessary as eliminating indigenous people if they oppose the Reds, _ said Wadi Watkalulu sarcastically.

Well, it's just like saying that the deaths of Andres Bonifacio and Antonio Luna are justified so that the presidency of Emilio Aguinaldo could go on, _ said Cari del Sol.

Or that Brutus and Cassius were correct in brutally murdering Julius Caesar on the Ides of March, _said Dale St. Oz

What'd the Ides of March? -Joyce Alag asked.

It's the middle of any month but sometimes would include 13th and 14th, _said Miss Kingsley.

I pity Lenin, I believe he realized what a monster he had created before his death, _said Robert Besana.

I beg to disagree, Professor, _ said Cari del Sol, _Godless people wouldn't admit their mistakes even at the throes of death.

Did Lenin order the massacre of the Romanovs? _ asked Jen Masamoc.

No, _ the mystic priest said, _ The Bolsheviks are like AI's. They are already programmed to do things like that in accordance with their indoctrination. The clue is in Rasputin's prediction. Besides Kerensky was no longer around to order a heinous crime again.

Oh, but there were so many who took over._ protested Liberty Danz but it was a whimper.

Did Stalin really order the death of his possible rivals? _ Ferdie Migalang asked._ He really looked like a gentle grandfather in the visions.

He may appear gentle but even her daughter said so in her memoirs, _said Rodel Regino,

_Appearances sometimes don't show the true nature of things. It's like in The Godfather.

Was Khrushchev already showing signs of senility when he was "released"?_ Camille Mendoza asked.

Looks like it, _said Ron Mendoza,_ he was already repeating a lot of things. Besides he had no right to criticize Mao's Great Leap Forward because Russia had similar problems. It was even cruel how they exploited the Chinese.

Whatever happened to Molotov? Was he the inventor of the Molotov cocktail? _Misty Towers asked.

No harm happened to him. Khrushchev had him expelled from the party in 1962 but he had an honorable comeback in 1984._ said Fr. Caluag and seeing Miss Kingsley's expression nodded to her.

Molotov cocktail isn't a fancy drink. It's a substitute grenade using a bottle with a wick. The politician didn't invent it but it was named in his honor. _ she said.

Thank you, _Miss Towers said, although she already knew it wasn't a drink because she was a former activist.

RUN

Fr. Frank Caluag had to be frank about it and he said, _ Well since we have little time left I think we have to make a run for it. Let us therefore, be content with what the Paraclete would give us in the little time that we have and do not question anymore the completeness of things presented to you since we are the ones wasting time.

And thus, with a gentle wave of his hand new visions emerged before the audience like holograms.

These are Alexei Nikolayevich Kosygin and Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev. In 1964, they removed the presidium which caused the death of Laurentii Beria and ousted Nikita Khrushchev restoring the former politburo structures. They would form a formidable diarchy which usually assigned the younger Kosygin to peripheral tasks such as foreign relations. However, seeing how communist countries are being attracted to capitalism, they had the Brezhnev Doctrine and in 1968 declared its worldwide impact. This of course meant that Russia will intervene if a certain communist country is drifting to western influence or capitalism. It was therefore felt in its intervention to suppress the Solidarity movement in Poland and resulted in the engagement with the Taliban in the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Though never admitted, its technical intervention in the Vietnam war helped the Viet Cong inflict defeat on the American superpower.

This is Yuri Valdemorovich Andropov who succeeded Brezhnev. Though his achievements aren't remarkable for some, this diplomat to Hungary was the KGB head which has sent deep

Alexei Kosygin



Leonid Brezhnev



Yuri Andropov



Mikhail Gorbachev



Boris Yeltsin



penetration agents to different areas of Russian interests in the world including securing the infiltration of the Roman Catholic Church which begun as early as the time of Khrushchev. The Christian Liberation Theology which influenced Catholic priests such as our own Conrado Balweg followed this KGB scheme.

This is Mikhail Sergeyev Gorbachev who succeeded Konstantin Chernenko, who succeeded Andropov for only 13 months due to poor health in 1985. He will be best remembered for his openness or *glasnost* to the west which included summits with two American presidents; Reagan and Bush. His openness also allowed the *perestroika* or Russia's restructuring of most rigid positions in the international scene. These reforms however did not sit well domestically and led to some uprisings of traditional republics which in turn brought rapid economic decline.

This is Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin who became President of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republics in 1990. Though he resigned from the communist party for his democratic ideals about which he wrote, he was the one who saw the "lightning reaction and precision" in Vladimir Putin, the Head of the Federal Secret Service which took over the KGB when Russia became smaller.

And this is Dmitrii Medvedev who was Russian president from 2008 to 2012 and his Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Putin promised he would come back as president and he did.

Right now, he had made Russian troops invade Ukraine following up the initiative of pro-Russian Ukrainians which he denied instigating. In 2008, he punished George Saaskashvili for his pro-western leanings by invading Georgia. On the day, Russia officially annexed Crimea, he said before signing it, "NATO remains a military alliance making a home right in our own backyard, in our own historic territory." His personal ideology as a Russian is coupled by a manifest destiny. On St. Vladimir of which he was named he said; "His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilization and human values that the people of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus." And it looks like he is not going to have this belief tainted by any pervert western influence. This is because Putin believes that Russia keeps the Third Rome in her heart because Constantinople, the second is already gone and Rome continues to decay in perversion. As if putting him to the test, the band Pussy Riot performed an anti-Putin song beside the altar of a cathedral in the heart of Moscow. He had them jailed and only freed two of the lady band members before the Sochi Winter Olympics he hosted.



Dmitry Medvedev



Vladimir Putin

Now, tell me, what do you make of these visions. Volunteers, please.

Christie Marie was ahead for the first time, "I pray to God that Pope Francis wouldn't go to Moscow because in Garabandal, it is prophesied that immediately after such an event, meaning the pope will go to Moscow, hostilities will start right away.

Baloney, the apparitions there aren't completely approved yet, _said the Ukrainian Monsignor, _ Why would we stop the Pope from making peace? That's his job.

Please, Monsignor, _ King Asaytona interceded, _ Let's be more charitable.

Actually, it is the job of the Pope to consecrate Russia with all the bishops of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary so that Russia will stop spreading its errors. _said Simon Dolor.

Until today it isn't done and he has a lot of other things to do than follow Our Lady, _said Rodrigo Diaz.

Please, _reminded the Aggrege, _We aren't speaking of the Pope here.

It was a terrible thing that the Russians did in Afghanistan. When they were losing in the guerilla warfare, they introduced exploding toys which when the children find they would naturally bring them where the rest of the family is hidden and then the Russians would detonate, _Nelson Dalisay recounted, _ This is because of the Brezhnev doctrine.

And not to mention the deep infiltration of our Church by their agents who have now attained becoming princes of the church if not bishops. _ said Robert Besana.

But God is still with us. The Berlin Wall was breached and the USSR was fragmented, _ said Rose Ann Migalang.

She promised that in end, her Immaculate Heart will triumph. It seems that Russia will be converted, too, _said Misty Towers.

But I'm still afraid of Putin, especially his personal convictions. Why, he is rushing Russia to perdition, _said Janis Mendelsohn.

Poor Ukraine, she may not hold on much longer even if they give her the arms and logistics, _worried Cenrick de la Rosa.

Then, let us pray, _said Fr. Caluag perhaps as devoutly as the people in Ukraine streets did.

FINISH

After the sessions and the dinner, Fr. Caluag and the other priests set out for the seminary in different cars. It was only the Fr. Asaytona, the King who didn't go to the seminary because he had promised the night with Wadi Watkalulu. Raul Celada was already singing a spiritual kundiman to entertain those who are staying for the night because their trips are still in the morning. During dinner Ronald Celada who had been monitoring things at the seminary gave the signal that they were on the way back. De la rosa had already given explicit instructions. Peter Balucas had the seminarians secured while Carlito Anonuevo had secured all copies pertinent to the seminary's records.

Around three blocks from the seminary Ronald counted at least three black vans which de la Rosa confirmed also in the Waray dialect. Rolling inside, there was almost nothing changed at all. Victor Le Fugue of Interpol, a Frenchman was there to oversee and also to keep Fr. Richelieu Les Saintes safe as a French national. He was on the part of the boys dorm that led to the basement at which opening was another Interpol man, Juriel Codizal. By the stairs that led to the computer center was their third man, Irwin Quines. The French priest was to share the room with the Ukrainian monsignor if not for whom Fr. Frank could have stayed with the rest of the people in Arci's home. But Mons. Walleski wanted to see the boys early in the morning before his flight to the Rome.

Late that afternoon, at the hospital Ronnel Reyes joined Fr. Ferdie Dela Cruz in her supper which was already allowed by the doctor by buying some food from the cafeteria. After they have dined and said grace, Ronnel in his unusually serious tone told the priest that an operation would be made soon and right after he had finished the priest asked him if they could pray again this time the rosary for the said operation. And so, they did with tears in their eyes after which the priest thanked him in earnest and went to sleep in peace.

At ten minutes to nine, Mons. Walleski who was raving at the other parts of the sessions suddenly got up and said he will confront the Rector about it. Alarmed and reminding him of being more restrained they found his room still empty and they discovered him inside his office, clutching a rosary in prayer. He pushed the French priest at one side of the office and declared, _That's right priest just like the starets have your last prayer because you have offended our bureau chief making a fool out of our President.

But suddenly he felt the presence on his side as the door creaked with Ronald Celada pointing his gun at him. Then from the closet, came De la Rosa who said, _ Drop your weapon, Volodia Rokossovsky or you will surely die. You are not in the Ukrainian roster of Catholic priests nor in the Orthodox and the Ukrainian you are impersonating had long been dead, thanks to you, Stanovoiy, isn't that your code name, Russian?

But he ran and grabbed the Frenchman putting the muzzle at his temple. _ One wrong move and he's dead. Now, drop your weapons! Caluag must die!

WASAR! _the detective/investigator said and automatically, the French priest lifted the elbows of his predator and his shot missed his hair. This allowed De la Rosa to shoot him into his gaping mouth and he choked falling into the floor no longer in control of his gun which Les Saintes had taken. The silencers of the guns were effective to muffle the sounds. His instructions concerning WASAR texted to Fr. Richelieu paid off as he had training in water rescue under the Foreign Legion. He was also told to expect that he had to come along when he sees the Rector. He may be used as a shield. He was correct all along. Then at exactly nine o'clock the smokers were thrown and the operatives started to climb the walls.

A number of them fell already as Cenrick's men were ready but some persisted into the buildings. Le Fugue was confused, this was the first time he had these number of people to protect. He usually had been a bodyguard, even a glamorous escort to VIPs. And while he was covering because of the incessant semi-automatic fire, an intruder threw a grenade into the opening to the basement.

At the same time as Carlito Anonuevo clutched at the record USBs in a dapple bag, the marauders swept into the room and Irwin Quines engaged them. When the smoke got cleared he lay still with the enemies sprawled across the room all dead. He has done his last mission.

Peter Balucas joined now by Ronald attacked the men who had cornered Victor Le Fugue who had been immobilized. They rushed into the basement where the seminarians led by Daniel Santos were praying for their hero who jumped onto the grenade taking it all for them, Juriel Codizal.

Ronnel Reyes was so excited when Peter Balucas told him the news. The operation was a success. He couldn't help waking up Fr. Wilfred to tell him that the operation was a success, thanks to his prayers. But the bewildered priest told him that the doctor hasn't even told him when he will be operated on and Ronnel found the priest very funny. Savitri who was given by Arci his phone, so that he could dance with one of the ladies, fainted when she understood the whole message being given by Carlito Anonuevo. It was only when she revived and was given by a drink by Sarvan that she was able to tell the whole lot. It was Janis Mendelsohn's turn to faint.

And this is how the story should run until the finish.

As for Fr. Frank Caluag, I think he was able to finish praying his rosary. What do you have in mind about this?

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