

*The Fifth Anniversary of
Bishop Nektary's Repose:*

The
Mystical Meaning
of the
Tsar's Martyrdom
by Bishop Nektary

EDITOR'S PREFACE

A VIVID REPRESENTATIVE of Holy Russia, Bishop Nektary Kontzevitch managed to preserve and exude, like fragrant incense, the spirit of the great Optina monastic tradition. And he did this on the other side of the globe, in contemporary America, over fifty years after the destruction of his monastic citadel — Optina. This living witness, who passed away to the Fathers five years ago, was indeed a father in his own right, a father of the Russian Orthodox monastic tradition, who spiritually fathered many sons and daughters. And yet he remained so obscure in today's smoggy ecclesiastical atmosphere, which actually rejected him. He was at odds with the changing church trends in a world where "the love of many" (Matt. 24:12) has been replaced by a calculating organizational mentality under the guise of "properness."

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Due to the fact that his earthly life left no man-pleasing "achievements," no monumental reminders of what he represented, Bishop Nektary by the law of common oblivion would remain obscure and lost to the generations to come. Should our lips be sealed about him, we would betray God's Providence, which gave us the privilege and blessing to know and be benefited by the last disciple of the Great Optina Elder Nektary. In the future we will attempt to present personal reminiscences of this outstanding Hierarch, who linked our feeble and fragile American shoots to the great Optina tradition. And we place our hope in the Lord to guide us on the path whereon we were firmly placed by Bishop Nektary.

The report which we have translated here, written not long before the canonization of the Russian New Martyrs, is the definitive version, given to us personally by Bishop Nektary for inclusion in *The Orthodox Word*. He feared, and had grounds to fear, that his text would be altered by other church people who disagreed with him concerning the placement of the holy last Tsar Nicholas at the head of the New Martyrs. That is why he gave his own type-written copy to us, saying, "This is what I wrote. They will change the text, but you print it as I have written it here."

In this report, Bishop Nektary writes that only by deep repentance and by canonizing the martyred Tsar Nicholas as the *head* of the Russian New Martyrs will the Russian people ever have hope of removing the sin of regicide from their conscience. He believed that the overthrow of the God-hating regime and the resurrection of Holy Russia in fact *mystically depended* on the Tsar heading the New Martyrs at the canonization. But while he looked at it from this mystical point of view, the Archbishop whom he was under — Anthony of San Francisco — took the political and diplomatic aspect into consideration. Not wanting to appear improper in the eyes of the liberal, anti-monarchist Russian emigre, this Archbishop insisted that the Royal Passion-Bearers not be given preeminence, either with regard to the feast-day of the New Martyrs or to the troparion at the canonization. He wanted the Tsar to be given second place; and in the official troparion his opinion eventually prevailed.



Royal Passion-Bearer Tsar Nicholas II. A painting by Serov.



Bishop Nektary

It was to counteract this view by pointing out the mystical dimension that Bishop Nektary wrote the following report. By tracing the course of cosmic evil unto our own day, he intended to show that the killing of the Tsar was a key event in the final, universal unleashing of evil prophesied in the Scriptures. According to Byzantine theology, the restraining power against the "mystery of iniquity" mentioned by the Apostle

Paul has reference to the God-given power of the Anointed Christian monarch. The last Tsar of Russia was the one "who restraineth"; and when he was killed this restraining power was "taken away" (II Thes. 2:7). The history of the 20th century has proven how this apocalyptic event has changed the face of humankind, opening the way for the entry of the "abomination of desolation," the "son of perdition." The murder of the Tsar actually *beaded* the whole phenomenon of the New Martyrs, making possible the murder of millions of Christians under an evil power. It inaugurated the unchecked and unrestrained war against true Christianity in the latter times, which will finally bring about the destruction of the whole world.

When, in the following text, Bishop Nektary speaks longingly of "Holy Russia," he knows whereof he speaks, since he was the disciple of a genuine clairvoyant elder in Russia and was infused with the radiant spirit of Optina. And when he speaks of Christians suffering under the Communist yoke, he also knows whereof he speaks, for he was the only bishop present at the canonization of the Russian New Martyrs who had himself been a member of the Suffering Russian Church, having personally known Patriarch Tikhon.



**A Report of Bishop Nektary of Seattle
concerning**

**THE CANONIZATION OF THE
NEW MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS
OF RUSSIA**

*Read at the Conference of Russian Youth
in San Francisco, July 25/August 8, 1981.*

IN the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. . . .

God foreordained us to gather here at this conference on the threshold of the wondrous event of the canonization of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.

This event has great significance because it occurs in an epoch of intense confrontation, of war between good and evil, an epoch of almost universal apostasy of men from God, from faith in Him, from the Church and, as a consequence, from the work of salvation.

And what is very important is that this forthcoming canonization can have a tremendous spiritual and historical significance; that is, it can open up a path to the rebirth of Russia and can save it from final destruction in the clutches of the God-fighting authority.

Of course, all this will depend on how the rest of the still-believing Orthodox people in Russia will accept this event, and how we will accept it in exile away from Russia.

We know that our martyrs have been already glorified by the Lord a long time ago, from the moment of their martyric death; but the Holy Church with its canonization or glorification thereby informs its children of the holiness of the New Martyrs and summons them to raise their prayers to God. Before the canonization, the

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"earthly Church" is praying for the repose of the martyrs' holy souls; and after the canonization they receive from the Church, so to speak, an obedience to pray for us sinners at the throne of the altar of God. And we, knowing how abundantly our countrymen have increased the number of God-pleasers, will turn to them that they may raise their holy prayers to the altar of God, for the salvation of Russia and for us sinners.

At the threshold of the canonization of Russia's New Martyrs, we are witnesses of how evil is being strengthened and perpetrated throughout the whole world with unusual strength and rapidity. And if we are attentive to all that occurs around us, we will unquestionably see many examples which convince us that there exists a powerful, frightful and unusually organized secret power, a power that possesses limitless opportunity and huge means, and consciously places before itself the aim of the liquidation of religion as well as the spiritual and physical demoralization of the young generation. [Those who hold this power] assume that they can realize this criminal aim by means of carefully prepared plans, the execution of which is already happening.

In the proposed church Act of the canonization of New Martyrs, we sense hope for liberation of our Russia from the bonds of God-fighters, because we believe in the holy prayers of the righteous ones of God. But we see how the devil and his servants with frightful power rise up against Orthodox Faith within the Church in our country. Therefore, at the beginning of our talk let us speak about the Church teaching on the derivation of evil.

In the world there occurs a fierce battle of good and evil – unseen warfare. Against God – the absolute good – rose the devil – absolute evil.

But of contemporary people, there are few who understand the true spiritual meaning and significance of Church events; events of state; and social, family and personal events. Most people accept as true their personal, subjective calculations and judgements, their conclusions (which are always wrong).

How can we avoid mistakes and subjectivity, and achieve a correct understanding of the events which take place and the phen-

omens which surround us and touch our lives? In this the *Orthodox world-view* helps us.

About the spiritual world above and its rules, its spiritual truths, we can know only from Divine Revelation which is given to us in the Bible, and from that which is revealed to us by God-inspired Holy Fathers.

The heavenly other world is different from our earthly world. Of that world, the highest one, we can have an understanding only by analogy with our world, as long as our world is a reflection or symbol of the highest. And much of that world is impossible to transmit in our language.

The Apostle Paul witnesses "how that he was caught up in paradise, and heard unspeakable words" (II Cor. 12:4). That is, he heard words which a man cannot interpret.

Therefore, much of what the chronicle of Moses says, and also what the prophets say in the very primitive language of their time, can seem, from a superficial view, rather naive; but the truth opened by it became the foundation of the Orthodox world-view and Christian philosophy.

God created the world out of nothing. At first the spiritual world was summoned to life. It was gifted with reason and the God-like quality of *free will*. Spirits, the angels, were created at the border of time, as St. Basil the Great says. From their creation time began.

St. Dionysius the Areopagite, in his remarkable composition *On the Heavenly Hierarchies*, reveals the mysteries of life and the creation of the angelic world. This angelic world is a hierarchical world; that is, it is divided into different levels according to height. There exist nine levels of the angelic orders, divided into three groups, three ranks in each: the highest rank, the middle, and the lower. The ranks of the higher group are: the six-winged Seraphim, the many-eyed Cherubim, and the Thrones. Seraphim means flaming: they burn with flaming love towards God. Cherubim means contemplative: they contemplate God's wisdom and penetrate into its mystery. Upon the Thrones rests God. The middle group is comprised of Principalities, Authorities and Powers. The last group, the lower one, consists of Dominions, Archangels and Angels. The number

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of all the Angels is *thousands of thousands*. These words are used to describe the uncountability of their multitude, whereas there are only seven Seraphim.

But of the highest of the angels, the "crown of creation," there was only one: Lucifer – the "Morning Star," the "Son of the Dawn." He was closer to God than all who stood near Him, and had the power of direct contact with Him.

All heavenly powers, in heavenly harmony, glorified the Creator.

But in our world there is Evil. Its beginning is outside the world. It came to us from outside. From where did it originate?

Lucifer could not endure His glory and he fell. Pride destroyed him. Infatuated by his glory, he became proud that he himself could be as God.

The Prophet of God Ezekiel testifies with such concealed words about the fallen Lucifer: "Thus spake the Lord: Thou art the stamp of perfection, the fullness of wisdom and the crown of beauty, thou who dwelt in Eden in the garden of God. Thou wert anointed by Cherubim in order to bless, and I placed thee to do that. Thou wert on the holy mountain of God. Thou didst walk amidst the flaming stones; thou wert perfect in thy ways from the days of thy creation until there was found in thee unrighteousness. Thy countenance was filled with untruthfulness and thou didst sin; and I cast thee as unclean from the mountain of God." And the Lord Jesus Christ confirmed this with these words: "And I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

When Lucifer rose up against God, he was followed by a third of all the angels. Among those who remained faithful to God there occurred confusion. The heavenly harmony was disturbed. Then one of the higher Seraphim exclaimed: "Who is like God?!" (which is the meaning, according to ancient Hebrew, of the name Michael) and from that moment Archangel Michael headed the heavenly army and the rebellious spirits were cast down from heaven.

Thus appeared evil in the world.

The fallen Lucifer knew much. He knew that God would not create angels anymore. The harmony of the life of the spiritual

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world was disturbed. The fullness of heavenly powers was damaged. Lucifer was malevolent, and was put to shame.

God in His grandeur then created the **VISIBLE WORLD**.

In the limitless spaces of the universe, there began to shine star-like worlds of dazzling beauty and harmony. And in the midst of this enormous cosmos there was a lost speck: our **EARTH**, upon which our Lord, after forming nature and the animal world out of nothing and dust, created **MAN** and gave him the greatest gift, **FREE WILL**.

In this was completed God's creation of the visible world.

All God's creation – is beautiful. The Bible says: "And God saw everything that He had created, and it was good," or, according to the Slavonic, "everything was beautiful." And the most beautiful creation – was **MAN**.

The vocation of man was to fulfill the number of fallen angels and to restore the disrupted fullness. Righteous John of Kronstadt said, "The Lord deigned to create man out of dust and with such earthly beings to complete the lack in the angelic worlds, which was a consequence of the falling away of the proud spirits. And this was infinite shame and infinite punishment to the proud ones."

When Lucifer saw that man was capable of occupying the "empty thrones" abandoned by the fallen angels, he could not endure his disgrace, was inflamed with vicious hatred and envy towards man, and decided to destroy him, beginning to pour out the poison of evil and saying to him, "You will be as Gods." Thus whispered the tempter, the "primordial evil," to the newly-created people.

And humanity fell at the dawn of its existence in the persons of our forefathers, not being able to overcome this temptation.

After the fall of the first created people, the tempter Lucifer was cursed by God and became absolute Evil, The Devil, Satan.

Since then he conducts war not only with God, but for each human soul.

Man's nature was harmed by the first sin. Evil and death entered our earthly world, and in such a way the harmony was also broken. After the fall of first-created Adam, the grace of God stepped away

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and a flood of evil began to flow upon the whole earth. Man, with his strength, could not any longer stop and conquer evil.

For this reason, there had to come the One Who had been promised to our forefathers still in Paradise: the SAVIOR, the MESSIAH, the "SEED OF WOMAN," who will "CRUSH THE HEAD OF THE SERPENT." He is the Creator of the world: everything is made by Him.

With blessed guidance, God trained a special line, the lineage of King David, in which from generation to generation holiness was collected and grew until the time when this blessed line gave the PURE VIRGIN – the MOTHER OF GOD, the HOLIEST OF THE SAINTS, already without *personal* sin. Only because of this blessing was the incarnation of the Son of God upon this earth possible.

The time of promised fulfillment came. Born of the pure Virgin through the descent of the Holy Spirit was CHRIST – the SON OF GOD, the SAVIOR OF THE WORLD, GOD THE WORD.

Thus was the beginning of the New Testament.

But with special hatred the devil rose up against the Infant Christ – many innocents were killed according to the decree of Herod, who was hoping to destroy Christ together with them. Further, at the instigation of the devil, [another Herod] ordered the beheading of St. John the Baptist.

The devil became still more hardened in his war against God. He whispered to the Scribes, Pharisees and archpriests – the leaders of the Jews – hatred towards Christ. "Crucify, crucify Him," they screamed. "His blood be upon us and our children." . . . And these leaders of the chosen people of Abraham, who knew the One God, turned into the servants of demons, who conduct cruel war against the whole Christian world.

But God limitlessly loved His creation, man, so much so that He sent His Only-begotten Son to give Him to death on the Cross in order to save the fallen creation. And Christ brings Himself forth in sacrifice. With His life, His teachings, His suffering, His Blood, His death and resurrection, He performs the redemption of the whole human race. Before this incomprehensible mystery of immense divine love, all the angels are stunned and tremble.

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Thus man himself, with naught but his own powers, cannot perform the act of salvation of his soul. "Without Me ye can do nothing," says the Lord. Man can be saved only by Christ the Savior in the enclosure which He created, the Church, with the help of the grace-filled sacraments of the Church.

Thus the Lord created His Church.

With unusual divine beauty shines the Church of God, created by the Lord Himself and wafting the Holy Spirit.

The Church – the mystical Body of Christ – is the only spiritual organism. The Truth is one – Christ. Thus, there can only be one true Church. This Church is our Orthodox, Catholic and Apostolic Holy Church, which Christ acquired through His Blood and which in virgin purity preserved the teaching of the Savior up to our days.

And we know how Satan rose up at once against the [newly] created Church of the Lord. With the servants of Satan persecutions began, the period of martyrs arrived. The Church began to be torn by heresies and schisms, which continue into our apostate times.

With great regret, and within the Church, we sometimes sorrowfully hear people who consider themselves faithful, believing and even Orthodox proudly say: "*I believe according to my own opinion.*" Such people, usually, consider unnecessary the observance of fasts and various Church traditions, or they doubt the existence of evil spirits and criticize the rules, canons and even church dogmas, forgetting that the Orthodox Church was founded on canons and church dogmas which were confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the Councils of the Holy Fathers. She, the Orthodox Church, is enriched with spiritual experience and the writings of a whole host of the Holy Fathers who dedicated their whole lives to inward activity, having studied to perfection the laws of ascent according to the divine ladder of virtues and the laws of healing spiritual wounds and vices.

A man who "believes according to his own opinion" leads himself out of the enclosure of the Church, depriving himself of the Holy Mysteries and the supernatural grace of the Holy Spirit. This man perishes from frightful spiritual sickness – the PRIDE OF THE

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MIND – since he considers himself wiser than the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils, who with the Holy Spirit expounded the dogmas and rules of the Church. He who “believes according to his own opinion” considers himself wiser than the Saints and Fathers who attained sanctity in the bosom of the Orthodox Church. And, finally, he who “believes according to his own opinion” considers the Holy Church imperfect and with this places himself higher than Christ, Who, it seems, has not created a perfect Church. He who “believes according to his own opinion” does not notice how he places himself in the ranks of the enemies of Christ, confessing a frightful contemporary heresy – Ecumenism. This is frightful pride and blasphemy.

And so in order not to deviate from the right path of salvation, first of all it is necessary to belong to the true Orthodox Church and like a child accept dogmas in the spirit of her teaching. “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,” says the Lord (Matt. 18:3).

There is no salvation outside the enclosure of the Church.

From the day of the fall of Russian monarchy, the devil with special hatred rose against the Orthodox Church of Russia. Truly, in the history of all the local churches, there has been no more fatal persecution of the Church, which has endured and still endures in the Russian Orthodox Church.

In our Russia was confirmed the God-fighting satanic power; and therefore we cannot hope that it – this authority – can change towards the better, since Satan can perfect himself only in evil.

But with God everything is possible – He is powerful to free Russia from the bonds of the devil.

Much depends on how we, together with the believing Russian people, will accept the news of the canonization of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.

Thus, we are preparing ourselves for the historic church Act – the glorification of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. About these martyrs and their sufferings, about the cruelty of their tortures, many books, articles and memoirs have been written.

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Let us remember the confessor, our Patriarch Tikhon, the executed Metropolitan Vladimir and other executed and tormented hierarchs: Benjamin, Joseph, Andronicus, Hermogenes, Peter, Cyril, Agathangelus, and many other archpastors. Let us remember the thousands of priests and millions of lay people who were killed in prisons and concentration death camps because of their confession of faith.

As we have already said, all the New Martyrs have already been glorified by God from the moment of their martyric death; but rare is he who pays attention to the mystical aspect of the question. This, however, is very important because, having endured martyrdom, they become conquerors of evil and have boldness with the Lord to pray for us and fulfill the number of those who please God. Therefore, the apparent victory of the torturers who killed their victims actually turns out to be their defeat by the martyrs.

It is especially important to note the martyric death of our Tsar, Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, and his family. He was the last Monarch anointed by the holy chrism to reign. *The Tsar was and is anointed by God.*

This Mystery is performed by the Church during the Coronation, and the Anointed of God enters the Royal Doors into the altar, goes to the altar table and receives the Holy Mysteries as does the priest, with the Body and Blood of Christ taken separately. Thus the Holy Church emphasizes the great spiritual significance of the *podvig* of ruling as a monarch, equalling this to the holy sacrament of the priesthood.

Thus, the Emperor – Anointed of God. He is the sacramental image, the carrier of the special power of the Grace of the Holy Spirit. This divine power, which acts through the Anointing by God, restrained evil, the “*mystery of iniquity*.”

The Holy Apostle Paul, in the Second Epistle to Thessalonians, writes: “The mystery of iniquity is already in action but is not fulfilled up to today, until there will be taken away from the midst he who restraineth” (II Thes. 2:7).

Our spiritual writer, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, and others explain that by this “he who restraineth” one can understand the power of the Tsar.

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The devil already, it seems, had for a long time been trying to manifest antichrist but could not because of the divine grace fully active through the Anointing by God: "he who restraineth" did not give him such possibility.

In order for the "mystery of iniquity" to receive freedom of action, it was necessary to take from the midst the "restraining one," which precisely occurred by the allowance of God because of the sins of the Russian people.

Thus occurred the frightful deed – REGICIDE.

The Emperor, the Anointed of God, the Protector of the Orthodox Church, the Head of the Orthodox Government, was killed. He who restraineth was killed. And from that moment the "mystery of iniquity" received freedom; and we are all witnesses to the unrestrained reign and propagation of evil in the whole world.

From what we have said above, it is absolutely clear that the evil deed was RITUALISTIC, and not a political killing, which was demonstrated also by the cabalistic signs on the wall of the cellar of the Ipatiev house, where this truly satanic evil deed was performed.

As Christ was crucified on Golgotha for the sins of the *whole* world and abandoned by all, so also was the Emperor presented as a sacrifice for the sins of the *whole* of Russia and abandoned by all. No one rendered help to their Emperor in the days of his temptations, when he was a prisoner of the God-fighting satanic power. Therefore, the mortal sin of regicide lies hanging over all Russian people, and consequently, in this or that measure, over each of us.

And if this is so, then in order to have at least a small hope of removing the sin from the conscience of Russia it is necessary, besides our deep repentance, to canonize the Emperor as the head of all the Russian New Martyrs. After all, he accepted a martyric end for the Orthodox Faith, for the Holy Church, for his homeland.

Here is what Priest Gleb Yakunin writes concerning this: "The tragedy of the Imperial Family lies as a curse upon the Russian land, having become a symbolic prologue to the long path of the cross of Russia, to the perdition of tens of millions of its sons and daughters. The canonization of the Royal Martyrs will be for Russia the removal of the sin of regicide, finally freeing it from the evil spell."

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How should we prepare ourselves for the day of the great event of the canonization of Russia's New Martyrs?

We have a flicker of hope that the news of canonizing the Emperor as the head of all the New Martyrs of Russia will reach still-believing Orthodox Russian people in our homeland, who together with us, understanding the heaviness of the sin of regicide over Russia, will with repentant tears beg the Lord for forgiveness and in the prayerful singing of all hearts will call on the help of Tsar Nicholas: "Holy Tsar-Martyr and Passion-Bearer Nicholas, together with all the New Martyrs of the Russian land, pray to God for us sinners."

Then we believe that the holy soul of the Emperor, who feels deep sorrow for Suffering Russia, will bow down before the throne of God and will perform intensified prayer for the salvation of Russia and us sinners. "The blood of the martyrs is crying to Heaven."

And the Lord will hear our repentant plea; and – hearing the holy prayer of His humble servant, our Tsar-Martyr – will in His power

PERFORM A MIRACLE.

Having taken from the conscience of the Russian people the heavy sin of regicide, with the breath of His lips He will be able to blow from the face of the Russian Land the comunist yoke and all the uncleanness of the God-fighting power.

With God, everything is possible!

He has the power to transform sorrow into joy and

WILL RESURRECT HOLY ORTHODOX RUSSIA.

Amen.

