

**THE HOLY ALL-RUSSIAN NEW MARTYRS**

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## **1. TSAR-MARTYR NICHOLAS II AND HIS FAMILY AND SERVANTS**

### *Early Years*

Tsar-Martyr Nicholas was born in St. Petersburg on May 6, 1868, the day upon which the Holy Church celebrates the memory of St. Job the Long-Suffering. And how prophetic this turned out to be - for Nicholas was destined to follow the example of this great Old Testament Saint both in circumstance and in faith. Just as the Lord allowed the Patriarch Job to suffer many things, trying him in the fire of calamity to test his faith, so was Nicholas tried and tempted, but he too never yielded and remained above all a man of God.

His grandfather was Tsar Alexander II, the liberator of the peasants, who loved him and called him "sun ray". "When I was small," said Nicholas to his daughters, "they sent for me every day to visit my grandfather. My brother George and I had the habit of playing in his study while he was working. His smile was so pleasant, although his face was usually handsome and calm. I remember that it made a great impression on me in my early childhood... Once my parents were away, and I was at the all-night vigil with my grandfather in the small church in Alexandria. During the service there was a powerful thunderstorm, streaks of lightning flashed one after the other, and it seemed as if the peals of thunder would shake even the church and the whole world to its foundations. Suddenly it became quite dark, a blast of wind from the open door blew out the flame of the candles which were lit in front of the iconostasis, there was a long clap of thunder, louder than before, and I suddenly saw a fiery ball flying from the window straight towards the head of the Emperor. The ball (it was of lightning) whirled around the floor, then passed the chandelier and flew out through the door into the park. My heart froze, I glanced at my grandfather - his face was completely calm. He crossed himself just as calmly as he had when the fiery ball had flown near us, and I felt that it was unseemly and not courageous to be frightened as I was. I felt that one had only to look at what was happening and believe in the mercy of God, as he, my grandfather, did. After the ball had passed through the whole church, and suddenly gone out through the door, I again looked at my grandfather. A faint smile was on his face, and he nodded his head at me. My panic disappeared, and from that time I had no more fear of storms."

Dominic Lieven writes: "Aged 10, Nicholas was handed over to a military governor, General G.G. Danilovich... Danilovich himself invited specialists to come to the palace to teach the heir a range of subjects including four modern languages (Russian, French, English and German), mathematics, history, geography and chemistry. Of the subjects Nicholas was taught, history was much the closest to his heart. His membership of the Imperial Historical Society from the age of 16 was more than merely honorary. Many years later, in the enforced leisure of his Siberian exile, he returned to reading works of

history. He commented to his son's English teacher, Sydney Gibbes, that 'his favourite subject was history' and that he 'had to read a good deal when he was young, but had no time for it later'. In his youth and adolescence Nicholas had, however, also read fiction in English, French and Russian. Someone capable of mastering four languages and coping with Dostoevsky and the historians Karamzin and Soloviev at this age cannot have been without brains.

"Of his tutors, Charles Heath seems to have been closest to the heir... General V.N. Voeykov, the last Commander of the Imperial Palaces in Nicholas's reign, knew the monarch well. He commented that 'one of the Emperor's outstanding qualities was his self-control. Being by nature very quick tempered, he had worked hard on himself from his childhood under the direction of his tutor, the English Mister Heath, and had achieved a tremendous degree of self-possession. Mister Heath frequently reminded his imperial pupil of the English saying that aristocrats are born but gentlemen are made.'"

Above all the creatures of the earth, Nicholas Alexandrovich loved birds. When he heard them singing, he would become so absorbed that his playmates often commented on it. Once, when a young sparrow fell from its nest, little Nika, as his friends called him, said:

"It is necessary to pray for the little sparrows; may Dearest God not take it - He has enough sparrows."

On March 13, 1881, the Tsar-Liberator was murdered by a revolutionary fanatic. On a Petersburg street, in broad daylight, a bomb was thrown which injured some of the guards but left the Tsar unhurt. With disregard for personal safety, he left his carriage and was attending to the injured when a second bomb was thrown, fatally wounding him and many others. He was rushed to the Winter Palace where he died in the presence of his grief-stricken family. Later, on the spot of the murder, there was built a magnificent church, Christ the Saviour "Upon the Blood", which became the stronghold of the Catacomb Church in Petrograd after the revolution.

Nicholas described the event as follows: "We were having breakfast in the Anichkov palace, my brother and I, when a frightened servant ran in and said:

"An accident has happened to the Emperor! The heir [the future Tsar Alexander III, Nicholas' father] has given the order that Great Prince Nicholas Alexandrovich (that is, I) should immediately go to the Winter palace. One must not lose time.'

"General Danilov and I ran down, got into a carriage and rushed along Nevsky to the Winter palace. When we were going up the staircase, I saw that all those who met us had pale faces and that there were big red spots on the carpet - when they had carried my grandfather up the staircase, blood from the terrible wounds he had suffered from the explosion had poured out. My parents were already in the study. My uncle and aunt were standing near the window. Nobody said a word. My grandfather was lying on the narrow camp bed on which he always slept. He was covered with the military greatcoat that served as his dressing-gown. His face was mortally pale, it was covered with small wounds. My father led me up to the bed:

"Papa,' he said, raising his voice, 'your sun ray is here.'

"I saw a fluttering of his eyelids. The light blue eyes of my grandfather opened. He tried to smile. He moved his finger, but could not raise his hand and say what he wanted, but he undoubtedly recognized me. Protopresbyter Bazhenov came up to him and gave him Communion for the last time, we all fell on our knees, and the Emperor quietly died. Thus was it pleasing to the Lord."

Submission to the will of God was the distinguishing characteristic of Tsar Nicholas II's character. His faith in the Divine wisdom that directs events gave him that supernatural calm which never abandoned him. We fear catastrophes, but, as St. John Chrysostom said, there is only one thing that is truly fearful - sin. The Lord is in control of everything; everything is either blessed by Him or allowed by Him.

Nicholas' parents were Tsar Alexander Alexandrovich and Tsaritsa Marie Fyodorovna. Alexander was a man who feared God and became one of Russia's great Tsars, though his reign was short (1881-1894). Nicholas' mother, formerly Princess Dagmar of Denmark, was a loving and supportive wife and mother who accepted her adopted faith, Holy Orthodoxy, into her soul and along with Alexander transmitted it to her children.

The activity of the hateful revolutionaries was to plague Nicholas and his family throughout their lives. In 1888, while Tsar Alexander III and his family were travelling towards Kharkov, the imperial train was rocked by two explosions and derailed. Only the level-headedness and great physical strength of the Tsar kept the Royal Family from being killed.

Despite such difficult circumstances, Nicholas, now the Tsarevich, was being formed in all the Christian virtues. During his youth his kindness to others and selflessness impressed all who met him. While living frugally himself, he gave freely to those less fortunate. It is known that he often anonymously gave scholarships and other gifts through the agency of one of his childhood teachers. More than once he said:

"When I become Tsar, there will be no poor or unfortunate people. I want everybody to be happy!"

The Tsarevich entered into military service, and always afterwards remained devoted to the army, taking a detailed interest in the life of the soldiers. In 1891 he visited Japan. A.D. Khmelevsky writes about this visit: "In Japan the heir to the throne visited the cemetery of our sailors, where an old Japanese, who had for many years been the keeper of the Russian graves, said:

"The distinguished guest is intending to visit our ancient capital Kyoto. Near Kyoto there lives our well-known hermit, the monk Terakuto. The destinies of men are open to the eyes of this ascetic. Time does not exist for him, and he gives only signs of how long periods last.'

"On arriving in Kyoto the heir set off on foot to see Terakuto. He was dressed in civilian clothes and accompanied by the Greek Prince George and the translator, Marquis Ito. Terakuto was living in a grove. He said (these are extracts from the reminiscences of Marquis Ito, published in English):

"... Danger is hovering over your head, but death will pass you by and the shoot will be stronger than the sword and the shoot will shine brilliantly. Two crowns are destined for you - an earthly and a heavenly. Gems play on your crown, O master of a mighty realm. But the glory of the world passes and will dim the gems on your earthly crown, while the glittering of your heavenly crown will last forever. Great sorrows and upheavals await you and your country. You will fight for everyone, and everyone will be against you. Beautiful flowers bloom on the edge of the abyss, and children rush up to the flowers and fall into the abyss if they do not listen to the warnings of their father. You will offer a sacrifice for your whole people, as the redeemer of its recklessnesses. I see fiery tongues above your head. This is the consecration. I see innumerable fires on altars in front of you. This is the fulfilment. Here is wisdom and part of the mystery of the Creator. Death and immortality, a split-second and eternity. Blessed be the day and hour on which you came to old Terakuto.'

"A few days after this, there was an attempt on the life of the heir. A Japanese fanatic struck him on the head with a sabre, which gave him a minor wound since Prince George, who was all the time with the heir, parried the blow with a bamboo shoot. By command of Alexander III, the shoot which had played this role was encrusted with diamonds and returned to Prince George. Thus did the shoot prove stronger than the sword, and the shoot shone. The records witness that after his visit to the hermit Terakuto the heir was for a long time thoughtful and sad."

By 1894 the health of Nicholas' father, Tsar Alexander, began to fail, and on October 20 he reposed under the loving hand of his confessor, St. John of Kronstadt. By this time Nicholas was already engaged to Princess Alix of Hesse (Germany); and they were married one month after Alexander's repose. The couple had met several years before and fallen in love, but there had been obstacles to their marriage. Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich, Nicholas' uncle, and his wife, Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, Alix's sister, had done everything they could to bring the couple together. But Tsar Alexander III and his wife had been opposed to it, as had been Kaiser Wilhelm. However, the major obstacle had been the Princess' faith. She had been born and raised as a Lutheran and was very devoted to her faith, but she needed to convert to Orthodoxy in order to become Empress of the Russian nation. Being a highly principled woman, she did not take this as a light matter and at first resisted. Thus in November, 1893 she had refused Nicholas, writing:

"Dear Nicky, you, having such a strong faith, will understand that I consider it a sin to change my faith, and I would be unhappy to the end of my days, being conscious that I had committed a great sin. I am sure that you would not want me to go over to your faith against my convictions. What happiness can marriage give if it begins without the true blessing of God? And I consider it a sin to change the faith in which I have been brought up and to which I belong now. I could not never acquire peace of soul, and so I, though called to help you in everything, would never be for you a real companion in life..."

But God in His loving-kindness did not abandon her. She was greatly helped by her sister, Great Princess Elizabeth, who had converted to Orthodoxy two years before; and soon, after a number of meetings with an Orthodox archpriest who expounded to her the Faith, she gladly accepted baptism. Her conversion was anything but nominal. The depth of her embrace of Orthodoxy and the strength which it gave to her family was to be a spiritual reproach to the modern Russian nobility and to the "intelligentsia" who, listening to the spirit of antichrist, had gradually become ashamed of their faith, considering it something "outdated".

Dominic Lieven writes: "Like her mother, Alix was a fervent Christian. She abandoned Protestantism only after a great struggle. In her bedroom at Tsarskoe Selo 'was a little door in the wall, leading to a tiny dark chapel lighted by hanging lamps, where the Empress was wont to pray. When in Petersburg, the Empress used to go to the Kazan Cathedral, kneeling in the shadow of a pillar, unrecognized by anyone and attended by a single lady-in-waiting. For Alix life on earth was in the most literal sense a trial, in which human beings were tested to see whether they were worthy of heavenly bliss. The sufferings God inflicted on one were a test of one's faith and a punishment for one's wrongdoing. The Empress was a deeply serious person who came to have great interest in Orthodox theology and religious literature.

She loved discussing abstract, and especially religious issues, and her later friendship with the Grand Duchesses Militza and Anastasia owed much to their knowledge of Persian, Indian and Chinese religion and philosophy. Alix 'zealously studied the intricate works of the old Fathers of the Church. Besides these she read many French and English philosophical books.'

"As Empress, Alix held to an intensely emotional and mystical Orthodox faith. The superb ritual and singing of the Orthodox liturgy moved her deeply, as did her sense that through Orthodoxy she stood in spiritual brotherhood and communion with her husband's simplest subjects. But alongside this strain of Christian belief, Alix was a born organizer, an efficient administrator and a passionate Christian philanthropist. Though her interests included famine and unemployment relief, and professional training for girls, her charitable work was above all concerned with help for the sick and the world of medicine. Typically, even on holiday in the Crimea, Alix toured the hospitals and sanatoria in the neighbourhood, taking her young daughters with her because 'they should understand the sadness underneath all this beauty'."

The official coronation took place in May of 1896. The young Tsar and Tsaritsa spent the majority of their time in seclusion and intense prayer, preparing themselves for the awesome responsibility of governing, with God's help, the largest nation in the world, which was the protector of the Orthodox Faith. The coronation of a tsar is no mere secular affair of state. As Bishop Nectarius (Kontzevich) has written, "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 taken separately. Thus the Holy Church emphasizes the great spiritual significance of the podvig (struggle) of ruling as a monarch, equalling this to the holy sacrament of the priesthood... He (the Tsar) is the sacramental image, the carrier of the special power of the Grace of the Holy Spirit."

As Tsar Nicholas was crowned, he knelt and prayed aloud:

"O Lord God of our fathers, and King of kings, Who created all things by Thy word, and by Thy wisdom has made man, that he should walk uprightly and rule righteously over Thy world; Thou has chosen me as Tsar and judge over Thy people. I acknowledge Thine unsearchable purpose towards me, and bow in thankfulness before Thy Majesty. Do Thou, my Lord and Governor, fit me for the work to which Thou hast sent me; teach me and guide me in this great service. May there be with me the wisdom which belongs to Thy throne; send it from Thy Holy Heaven, that I may know what is well-pleasing in Thy sight, and what is right according to Thy commandment. May my heart be in Thine hand, to accomplish all that is to the profit of the people committed to my charge, and to Thy glory, that so in

the day of Thy Judgement I may give Thee account of my stewardship without blame; through the grace and mercy of Thy Son, Who was once crucified for us, to Whom be all honour and glory with Thee and the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, unto the ages of ages. Amen."

During the days of the coronation a great tragedy occurred. At Khodynka field, people had been lining up to receive free gifts. Pressure built up, some people fell, and hundreds were crushed to death. The Tsar, on hearing the news, immediately wanted to cancel his official engagements and go to the hospital where the injured were being looked after. But his entourage, belittling the seriousness of the event, discouraged him.

This was later held against the Tsar, and the tragedy was seen as a bad omen for the coming reign...

### *His Most Pious Majesty*

The Royal couple settled into their life of responsibility and took the lead in setting an example of godliness and true pastoral care for their enormous flock. Nowhere was this more evident than in their love and care for the Holy Orthodox Church. They gave much money and support to monasteries and to the building of churches. The Tsar considered it his sacred duty to restore to Russia her ancient traditional culture, which had been abandoned by many of the "educated" classes in favour of modern, Western styles. He encouraged the building of churches in the ancient architectural styles, rather than in the styles favoured since the disastrous "reforms" of Tsar Peter I and Empress Catherine II. He commissioned the painting of large numbers of icons in the Byzantine and Old Russian styles, adorning many churches with them. In the words of Archpriest Michael Polsky, "In the person of the Emperor Nicholas II the believers had the best and most worthy representative of the Church, truly 'The Most Pious' as he was referred to in church services. He was a true patron of the Church, and a solicitor of all her blessings."

During the reign of Nicholas II, the Russian Church reached her fullest development and power. The number of churches increased by more than 10,000. There were 57,000 churches by the end of the period. The number of monasteries increased by 250, bringing their total up to 1025. Ancient churches were renovated. The Emperor himself took part in the laying of the first cornerstones and the consecration of many churches.

The Emperor stressed the importance of educating the peasant children within the framework of church and parish and, as a result, the number of parish schools grew to 37,000.

Christian literature flourished at this time. Excellent journals were published, such as *Soul-Profiting Reading*, *Soul-Profiting Converser*, *The*

Wanderer, The Rudder, The Russian Monk, and the ever-popular The Russian Pilgrim. The Russian people were surrounded by spiritual nourishment as never before.

Tsar Nicholas visited churches and monasteries in all parts of the country, venerating their saints. There was no tsar in whose reign more saints were glorified (canonized) than that of Nicholas. His love of Orthodoxy and the Church's holy ones knew no bounds; and he himself often pressured the Holy Synod to speedily accord fitting reverence to many of God's saints. Among those glorified during his reign were: St. Theodosius of Chernigov (glorified in 1896), St. Isidore of Yuriev (1897), St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk (1909), St. Anna of Kashin (1910), St. Joasaph of Belgorod (1911), St. Hermogenes of Moscow (1913), St. Pitirim of Tambov (1914), St. John (Maximovich) of Tobolsk (1916) and St. Paul of Tobolsk (1917).

In addition, one of the most revered of Russia's saints, Seraphim of Sarov, was glorified by the Church during the reign of this pious Tsar in 1903, at his insistence. At this time, Nicholas was made aware of the future apostasy and downfall of the Russian nation and Church through a prophetic letter written by St. Seraphim himself. The saint had, shortly before his death in 1833, written this letter, sealed it with five wax seals and addressed it "to the Tsar in whose reign I shall be glorified". He then gave it to Elena Motovilov, the young wife of N.I. Motovilov, who is now well-known for recording his conversation with the saint about the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. She kept that letter for seventy years and gave it to the Tsar at the glorification ceremony. While the exact contents are today unknown, it is nevertheless certain that St. Seraphim prepared Nicholas for the coming tribulations.

Furthermore, on the return trip from Sarov, the Royal Family visited St. Seraphim's Diveyevo Convent where Blessed Pasha (Parasceva) the Fool-for-Christ spoke to them several hours; it is said that she foretold to them their own martyrdom as well as that of Holy Russia.

It is said that the Empress was near to fainting and said:

"I don't believe you, it cannot be!"

Now this was one year before the birth of the heir to the throne and they very much wanted an heir. So Blessed Pasha got up from her bed with a piece of red material and said:

"This is for some little trousers for your son, and when he is born, you will believe what I have been telling you."

They left her cell pale and shaken but resolute - they would accept with faith whatever God had prepared for them, esteeming the incorruptible

crown of martyrdom higher than corruptible earthly crowns; electing to accept the cup of suffering offered to them by God Almighty, that by drinking of it they might offer themselves up as a sacrifice for their people.

During his reign the Tsar sought the advice of Blessed Pasha on all serious questions. He used to send the Great Princes to her, and according to her cell-attendant, Eudocia Ivanovna, one would no sooner depart than another arrived. After the death of Blessed Pasha's cell-attendant, Matushka Seraphima (Bulgakova), they would put all their questions to her through Eudocia Ivanovna, who relates that she once said:

"Your Majesty, come down from the throne yourself!"

Not long before her death in August, 1915, Blessed Pasha was continually making prostrations to the ground in front of the portrait of the Tsar. When she was worn out, her cell-attendants lifted her up.

"Mamashenka, why are you praying to the Tsar?"

"Stupid, he will be higher than all the tsars."

There were two portraits of the Tsar: one of him with the Tsaritsa and the other of him alone. But she kept prostrating to the one of him alone. Again she said about him:

"I don't know, a monk saint, perhaps a martyr!"

Being a peace-maker by nature, the young tsar made an unprecedented suggestion to the world early in his reign - that all nations come together and meet in order to cut their military forces and submit to general arbitration on international disputes.

The result of his proposal, the Hague Peace Conference, was convened on May 18, 1899, and served as the precedent for the later League of Nations and United Nations. In 1921, the American President, Warren Harding, officially acknowledged the Tsar's noble efforts towards the limitation of armaments by way of binding agreements among the Powers.

The Tsar was unparalleled in Russian history for his mercifulness. He pardoned criminals, even revolutionaries, and gave away vast quantities of his own land and money to alleviate the plight of the peasants. It is believed that he gave away the last of his personal wealth during the Great War, to support the war effort. Even as a child he often wore patched clothing while spending his personal allowance to help poor students to pay for their tuition.

The Emperor took great interest in the strivings of the people for a better life. He changed the passport system introduced by Peter I and thus facilitated the free movement of the people, including travel abroad. The poll tax was abolished and a voluntary programme of hospitalisation insurance was introduced, under which, for a payment of one rouble per year, a person was entitled to free hospitalisation. The parity of the rouble was increased greatly on the international markets during his reign.

In 1897, a law was enacted to limit work hours; night work was forbidden for women and minors under seventeen years of age, and this at a time when the majority of the countries in the West had almost no labour legislation at all. As William Taft commented in 1913, "the Russian Emperor has enacted labour legislation which not a single democratic state could boast of".

On January 6, 1903, at the feast of the Blessing of the Water at the Winter Palace, during the salute of the guns of the Peter and Paul fortress, one of the guns was loaded with grape-shot, and the grape-shot struck the windows of the palace. Part fell near the procession where the clergy and the emperor's and empress's suite was. The calmness of the emperor's reaction was so striking that it drew the attention of the members of his suite. He didn't move a hair and only asked:

"Who commanded the battery?"

And when they gave the name, he said with evident sympathy:

"Ach, poor (so-and-so), how sorry I am for him!"

They asked the emperor what effect this incident had had on him. He replied

"I fear nothing until 1918..."

The emperor forgave the commander of the battery and the officer who ordered the shooting because by the mercy of God there had been no serious injuries. Only one policeman had been very slightly wounded. His name was - Romanov...

Dominic Lieven writes: "Between 1895 and 1901 the Empress had given birth to four daughters: Olga, Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia. The four little girls were beautiful, healthy and lively children who were greatly loved by their parents. Nicholas was a fine father and the family circle was full of love, warmth and trust. If the Emperor had a favourite it was probably Tatiana, whose personality came closest to that of her mother. Olga, his eldest daughter, was the most thoughtful, sensitive and intelligent of the four. Marie, the third, with huge grey eyes and a warm-hearted, simple, friendly

manner, was always the easiest to get on with at first acquaintance. Anastasia, born in 1901, was notorious as the family's comedian. Under Russian law, however, no woman could inherit the crown. Had Nicholas died before 1904, the throne would have gone to his kind-hearted but weak-willed younger brother, the Grand Duke Michael. Since Michael was a bachelor in 1904 and subsequently contracted an illegal and morganatic marriage, the Romanov inheritance would then have passed to a younger brother of Alexander III, the Grand Duke Vladimir, and his descendants. Tension and mutual dislike between the 'Vladimir branch' and the imperial couple were never far below the surface in the twentieth century. Much therefore hung on the life of the little boy born in August, 1904. All the more horrifying was the discovery that the child had haemophilia.

"In the Edwardian era there was no treatment for haemophilia and little way of alleviating the terrible pain it periodically caused. The chances were against a haemophiliac living into middle age, let alone being able to pursue a normal life. For any parents who loved their children as intensely as the imperial couple did, the physical and emotional strain of a haemophiliac son was bound to be great. In the case of Nicholas and Alexandra, however, matters were made worse by the fact that it was considered unthinkable to admit that the future autocrat of all the Russias was incurably ill and quite possibly doomed to an early death. The natural sympathy and understanding which might have flowed to the parents had therefore to be foregone. Moreover, however harrowing one of Aleksei's periodic illnesses might be, a monarch - let alone a Russian autocrat - had always to keep up appearances. It says something for Nicholas's extraordinary self-control that, adoring Aleksei as he did, he nevertheless never let the mask slip. As Alexandra herself once wrote to him, 'you will always keep a cheery face and carry all hidden inside.'

"Inevitably, however, it was the mother who bore the greater burden during her son's illnesses, not to mention the incessant worry even when he was relatively healthy. Nor could she escape the guilt born of the knowledge that she was the cause of her son's suffering and of the extra burden of worry about his dynasty's future which had been placed on her husband's shoulders. Physically frail and always very highly strung, the Empress poured her last drop of energy into watching over her son and nursing him during his attacks... The effort cost the Empress dear. She was often too ill and exhausted to play the role of a monarch's consort, incurring great odium as a result. Moreover, the strain of Alexis' illness pushed his mother close to nervous collapse. As the Grand Duchess Olga commented, 'the birth of a son, which should have been the happiest event in the lives of Nicky and Alicky, became their heaviest cross.'"

Shortly after the birth of Alexis, according to the Procurator Lukyanov, the Tsar went to the metropolitan of St. Petersburg and asked for his blessing that

he abdicate from the throne and become a monk. But the metropolitan refused to bless this.

The tragedy of Alexis' haemophilia was followed by a succession of other tragedies, even a small number of which would have broken a lesser man. But for the Tsar they only served to further refine the nobility of his soul. First there was the disastrous war with Japan of 1904-05 during which most of the Russian fleet was lost. At this time also, sensing public disappointment with the defeat, the nihilistic enemies of Christ seized the moment and instigated mutinies, strikes, riots and assassinations. Here was a whole class of society who were, in the words of St. Paul, "... lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, heady, highminded..." (II Timothy 3.2-4).

The last great prophet of Holy Russia, St. John of Kronstadt, who clearly foresaw the approaching catastrophe, repeatedly exhorted his countrymen to repent and return to their former piety and support the God-anointed ruler or face untold disaster, both here and in the world to come.

In 1905 St. John said: "We have a Tsar of righteous and pious life. God has sent a heavy cross of sufferings to him as to His chosen one and beloved child, as the seer of the destinies of God said: 'Whom I love, those I reproach and punish' (Rev. 3.19). If there is no repentance in the Russian people, the end of the world is near. God will remove from it the pious Tsar and send a whip in the person of impure, cruel, self-called rulers, who will drench the whole land in blood and tears."

Although the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 was a bloody failure, the Tsar refused to allow the official record to whitewash anything. He said:

"The work must be based exclusively on the bare facts... We have nothing to silence, since more blood has been shed than necessary.... Heroism is worthy to be noted on an equal footing with failures. It is, without exception, necessary to aim at recording the historic truth inviolably."

The year 1905 was to be a "rehearsal" for the bloody events which took place twelve years later. Encouraged by Lenin and Trotsky, a campaign of disorders was begun all over the Empire. Many high government officials were murdered in the streets, among whom, in 1905 was Nicholas' uncle, the Great Prince Sergius, husband of the Empress' sister, Grand Princess Elizabeth.

The Tsar supported the restoration of canonical order and the patriarchate in the Russian Church. Once, at the pre-conciliar assembly convened in 1906, when the bishops were discussing these issues, he asked them whether they

had a candidate for the patriarchate. When they said no, he offered himself as a candidate. The bishops were shocked and refused his offer. The Tsar, being a humble man, never brought this subject up again.

On one occasion, the emperor was talking about the sufferings that lay ahead of him with his prime minister at the time, Peter Arkadyevich Stolypin.

"It was not for nothing," he said, "that I was born on the day of Job the Much-Suffering."

And on other occasions he said:

"I have more than a presentiment that I am destined for terrible trials, and that I shall not be rewarded for them on this earth... Nothing that I have undertaken succeeds for me; I have no successes. Man's will is so weak... How many times have I applied to myself the words of the holy Job, 'For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me.'"

Once, having prayed a little before an important decision, the emperor said to Stolypin:

"Perhaps an atoning sacrifice is necessary for the salvation of Russia. I shall be that sacrifice. May the will of God be done!"

Stolypin later recalled: "He made this triumphant declaration to me in the simplest, calmest and most even voice. There was a strange mixture in his voice, and especially in his look, of decisiveness and meekness, at the same time unshakeable and passive, unclear and well-defined; as if he was expressing, not his own will, but was rather bowing to some external power - the majesty of Providence."

After the disturbances of 1905-06, Russia entered into a period of great prosperity. With the wise and dynamic assistance of Stolypin, Tsar Nicholas led the nation through a time of such growth - agricultural, economic, educational and industrial - that had the First World War not occurred, Russia would have undoubtedly become the leading nation of the world.

But the Tsar never pursued industrial growth at the expense of his people. In 1908 he was presented with a huge plan for industrialisation which demanded far more money than was available. The Tsar replied:

"Peter I had little money and so he used forced labour and this cost him the lives of a million of his subjects... the realisation of this project would cost between 10 and 15 millions of the premature deaths of my subjects... I cannot in conscience sacrifice millions of my subjects, and therefore we must endure (without industrialisation)."

When he was advised that the success of future wars depended upon industrialisation, he replied:

"We will hope in God. If the war is short, we will win, but if it is long, then such is our fate."

Again, the head of the police promised the Tsar that there would be no revolution in Russia for a hundred years if the Tsar would permit 50,000 executions. The Tsar quickly refused this terrible proposal. After the revolution, however, the Bolsheviks thought nothing of butchering many millions of people for acts of "civil disobedience".

The Tsar tried to heal the revolutionary illness with mercy and forgiveness. One student was sentenced to death, but on the eve of the execution, his fiancée petitioned the Tsar for a commutation. The Tsar was reached by having his personal attendant call him from his bedroom. He received the petition and sent off a telegram commuting the sentence. He praised the attendant for his daring and even had the student sent to the Crimea for treatment of his tuberculosis.

The Tsar was always careful not to be vindictive, saying:

"Irritation solves nothing, and besides, a sharp word from me would sound more offensive than from anyone else."

In 1911, during the performance of an opera in Kiev, at which the Tsar was also present, Stolypin was assassinated. Before he fell to the ground, he turned to his sovereign in the balcony and, blessing him with the sign of the Cross, said:

"May God save him!"

The Tsar made many pilgrimages, and was a staunch supporter of the schools operated by the Church. In 1912, there were 1,988,367 children in these schools, in spite of a campaign by the Duma to close them. He also opened special industries for the city poor to help them earn their own living.

In 1914, Russia was forced to enter World War I. As Great Princess Elizabeth testified, the peace-loving Tsar did not want this war, but aggression against Orthodox Serbia by Germany left him no other honourable choice.

At the outbreak of the war, the Liturgy was celebrated in the Winter Palace. The French Ambassador observed that "Nicholas II prayed with a holy fervour which gave his pale face a movingly mystical expression". The tsar's

devotion to prayer was commented on by many; his private car included a "veritable chapel", and he never missed a service while in army headquarters.

When the war broke out, the Tsar ordered that all the money deposited in Britain be returned to Russia. The British did not want to comply. The Tsar then called a conference of bankers and merchants of the highest rank. He put 92 million roubles on the table and asked them voluntarily "to give money for the military victory of which the Russian people will be proud." The merchants and bankers refused to give any money. But the Tsar expended the whole of his fortune on the war effort.

As soon as the war broke out, the Empress and the four Great Princesses (Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia) became nurses; and hospitals were opened at Tsarskoye Selo, near the family's residence, where wounded soldiers were brought. They worked long hours, diligently and tirelessly following the commandment of Christ to visit the sick, since "inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matthew 25.30).

Anna Vyubova, the Empress' closest friend, wrote that she was a "born nurse", who "from her earliest accession took an interest in hospitals, in nursing, quite foreign to native Russian ideas. She not only visited the sick herself, in hospitals, in homes, but she enormously increased the efficiency of the hospital system in Russia. Out of her own private funds the Empress founded and supported two excellent schools for training nurses, especially in the care of children.": "I have personally seen the Empress of Russia in the operating room, assisting in the most difficult operations, taking from the hands of the busy surgeon amputated legs and arms, removing bloody and even vermin-ridden field dressings."

The Empress herself wrote to the Emperor on November 20, 1914: "This morning we were present (I helped as always giving the instruments and Olga threaded needles) at our first big amputation (whole arm was cut off). Then we all had dressings (in our small hospital), very serious ones in the big hospital. I had wretched fellows with awful wounds... scarcely a 'man' any more, so shot to pieces, perhaps it must be cut off as it's so black, but [we] hope to save it - terrible to look at, I washed and cleaned and painted with iodine and smeared with Vaseline, and bandaged all up - it went quite well - and I feel happier to do the things gently myself under the guidance of a d.[octor]. I did three such... One's heart bleeds for them, I won't describe any more details as it's so sad, but being a wife and mother I feel for them quite particularly..."

There was a young soldier, still a boy, of whom she wrote that he "kept begging me" and was "gradually getting worse". When he died, the Tsarina was overcome with grief: "I came home with my tears... Never did he

complain, never asked for anything, sweetness itself – all loved him and that shining smile... Another brave soul left this world..."

At first the war went well, and the country was united heart, soul and body in patriotic fervour behind their Tsar. But soon, due to poor communications, low-level mismanagement and subversive treachery, problems arose in supplying the armed forces with ammunition and food. The army began to suffer defeats, and many men were killed. It was at this crucial time that the Bolsheviks, fuelled by German money, went to work spreading discord among the troops and at home.

In 1915, tens of thousands of Serbs began to die after their forced march to the Albanian coast. Their allies looked upon them with indifference from their ships. The Tsar informed his allies by telegram that they must immediately evacuate the Serbs, otherwise he would consider the fall of the Serbs as an act of the greatest immorality and he would withdraw from the Alliance. This telegram brought prompt action, and dozens of Italian, French and English ships set about evacuating the dying army to Corfu. But western propagandists could not forgive the Tsar for his intercession and rumours that he wanted a separate peace began to seep out.

Once, during manoeuvres, the Tsar and his suite were brought breakfast. However, when he discovered that nothing had been prepared for the soldiers who were holding his horses, he would not eat until all the soldiers had received their rations. He also showed great compassion for the wounded.

In 1915, the following event described by Count Sheremetev took place when the Tsar and his family arrived in Sebastopol: "His Majesty, who loved to make long drives in the car in the environs of Sebastopol after breakfast, ... unexpectedly set off with the Empress to the monastery of St. George, where he had been for short periods in earlier years, but where nobody expected him this time. The abbot and brotherhood were very surprised and delighted by the visit of their Majesties..."

"We went into the church, and a moleben began. The harmonious voices of the monks immediately changed in mood: it was as if we had come into a quiet bay after a storm. Everything was so prayerful, penetrating and quiet... Suddenly beyond the doors of the church, which were very small, there was an unusual sound, loud voices and a strange turmoil - in a word, something that did not correspond to the seriousness of the moment or the usual monastic order. His Majesty turned his head in surprise, knitted his brows in displeasure and sent to find out what had happened and from where this incomprehensible disturbance and whispering to each other was coming from. I went out of the church and learned the following from the monks who were standing there: in the rocks of the cliffs to the right and left there lived

two schema-monks whom none of the monks had ever seen, and who were known to be alive only from the fact that the food which was placed for them on the narrow path in the rocks would be taken by some invisible hand by morning...

"And then an improbable event took place which shook all the monks of the monastery: two elders in the clothing of schema-monks were quietly climbing the steep steps that led upwards from the direction of the sea. They could have known nothing about the arrival of his Majesty, for neither the abbot nor the brothers themselves, nobody knew about the visit of his Majesty, which had been decided on quite suddenly, at the last minute. That was what caused the disturbance among the brotherhood. I told his Majesty about this and saw that this event made an impression on him, but he said nothing and the moleben continued.

"When the moleben had come to an end, his Majesty and the Empress kissed the Cross, then chatted for a while with the abbot and came out of the church onto the square...

"There, at the point where the wooden staircase ended, stood the two old elders. One had a long white beard, while the other had a short beard. When his Majesty came up to them, they both silently bowed to the earth before him. His Majesty was clearly embarrassed, but he said nothing and slowly bowed to them.

"... Now, after all that has happened, I wonder: did the schema-monks not foresee with their noetic eyes the destinies of Russia and the Royal Family, and did they not bow down to the feet of his Majesty the Emperor Nicholas II as to the great sufferer of the Russian land?

"Living here, as a refuge, many years later, I heard from one reliable person that his Majesty himself told him that once, as he was standing on the deck of the Standart, and passing by the monastery of St. George, he saw what seemed to be the figure of a monk in the rocks, continually blessing his Majesty as he was standing on the deck of the Standart with a large sign of the Cross, until the Standart disappeared from view."

In August, 1915, Igumen Seraphim (Putyatin) visited Blessed Pasha of Sarov. "In my presence the clairvoyant kissed the portraits of the Tsar and his family several times. She placed them together with the icons and prayed to them as to holy martyrs. Then she wept bitterly. I understood these allegorical acts only when there took place the great sorrows experienced by the Tsar and his Family and linked with the war; for although they were not torn by grenades or wounded by lead bullets, their loving hearts were torn by the unprecedented sorrows and flowed with blood. They were truly bloodless martyrs. In the same way the Mother of God was not wounded by weapons of

torture, but at the sight of the suffering of her Divine Son, as Righteous Simeon said, a sword pierced her heart. Then the eldress took little icons of the Mother of God of Loving Tenderness, in front of which St. Seraphim died, and blessed them from a distance for his Majesty and his Family. Then she gave them to me and asked me to send them to them. She blessed icons for his Majesty, her Majesty, the Tsarevich, the Great Princesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia, Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna and A.A. Vyrubova. I asked her to bless a little icon for Great Prince Nicholas Nikolayevich. She blessed one, but not of the Mother of God of Loving Tenderness, but of St. Seraphim. She blessed icons for nobody else, although I even asked her to bless some for some people. But my requests had no influence on her, for she acted independently..."

Once, in December, 1916, the Emperor and Empress went for the day with two of the Grand-Duchesses to Novgorod, where they visited some hospitals and monasteries and attended the Liturgy in the cathedral of Saint Sophia. Before leaving, the Empress visited the Yuriev and Desyatina monasteries. In the latter there lived the eldress Maria Mikhailovna, who was according to different accounts 107 or 116 years old and who for many years had been lying on an iron bed in iron chains.

According to the Empress's own account in a letter to the Tsar: "She blessed and kissed us. She sends you an apple (perhaps you'll eat it). She said that the war will soon end - 'tell him that we've had enough.' To me she said: 'As for you, beauty - a heavy cross - don't fear.' (She repeated this several times.) 'Because you came to us, two churches will be built in Russia (she repeated this twice) - don't forget us, come again.'"

According to another account, when the Empress came in, the eldress stretched out her withered hands to her and said:

"Here comes the martyr - the Tsaritsa Alexandra!"

She embraced her and blessed her. A few days later she died.

It has often been asserted that the Tsar was a weak-willed man who allowed himself to be ruled by his wife in matters of State, and, through her, by Rasputin. However, General A.I. Spiridonovich, having mentioned the empress' insistence on not trusting anybody but Rasputin, Vyrubova and Sablin, comments: "The Emperor understood all this well and very frequently acted against her advice, guided by his own experience. Sometimes his decisions coincided with the Empress' wishes. But to claim indiscriminately that the Emperor acted in state matters only according to the Empress' wishes is a great mistake. This means ignoring the facts as well as the character and principles of the Emperor. Emperor Nicholas was far from being as simple-minded and weak-willed as many thought."

As for Rasputin, Great Princess Olga writes: "Knowing Nicky as I did, I must insist that Rasputin had not a particle of influence over him. It was Nicky who eventually put a stop to Rasputin's visits to the palace. It was again Nicky who sent the man back to Siberia and that more than once. And some of Nicky's letters to Alicky are proof enough of what he really thought of Rasputin's advice..."

The enemies accused the Empress of pro-German sympathies because of her German blood. But her letters demonstrate beyond a shadow of doubt that she was completely devoted to Russia. In any case, as the French ambassador pointed out, "her education, her intellectual formation and her morals were entirely English."

In May, 1917, a Sarov archimandrite, who was sorrowing over the fate of the Royal Family, fell asleep during prayer and saw a vision of the Family together with St. Seraphim. And the saint told him not to sorrow, that God would not forsake his chosen ones, and that He had sent him, Seraphim, to comfort the Royal sufferers in the hour of their trial.

"Do you see the radiant light come from the faces of the Royal sufferers? This is a sign that they are under the special protection of God, as being righteous ones... Look at the face of the Empress and you will see that the light coming from it is brighter than the others. This is a sign that she will suffer more slander than any from the followers of the world's slanderer."

There had been even earlier prophecies of the martyrdom of the Tsar and Holy Russia. Thus A.D. Khmelevsky writes: "[Towards the end of the eighteenth century] the clairvoyant monk Abel wrote a prophecy entitled 'On the destinies of the Russian realm' for the Emperor Paul I Petrovich which referred to his great-grandson, the Emperor Nicholas II. This prophecy was placed in an envelope and sealed with the personal seal of the Emperor Paul I and with an inscription in his own hand: 'To be opened by our successor on the one hundredth anniversary of my death.' The document was kept in a special room in the Gatchina palace. All the emperors knew about it, but none dared to oppose the will of their predecessor. On March 11, 1901, when 100 years had passed in accordance with the behest, the Emperor Nicholas II came to Gatchina palace with the minister of the court and members of his suite and, after a funeral service for the Emperor Paul, opened the packet and learned of his thorny destiny. The writer of these lines knew about this already in 1905.

"The Emperor Alexander I Pavlovich once visited the elder St. Seraphim of Sarov in his poor cell, and this is what the man of God foretold him:

"There will a Tsar who will glorify me, after which there will be a great disturbance in Rus', and much blood will flow because they will rise up against this Tsar and the autocracy, but God will exalt the Tsar..."

### *The Atoning Sacrifice*

The enemies of Holy Russia knew well that the greatest unifying factors in Russia were the love of God and love for the Tsar, the visible symbol of the Orthodox Empire. By cutting off the head, they hoped to render the body powerless through fragmentation, thereby making it malleable to their evil intents. Through infiltration of the press, slanderous stories against the Royal Family were printed. The foreign press, hungry for scandal, printed unverified stories, many of which are still believed to this day. Even the Empress was accused of disloyalty and treason - she who was above reproach in her heartfelt love for her adopted land. Conspiracies began to take shape among court officials, the Duma (Parliament), the generals and the nobility, even including relatives of the Tsar. This, at a time when unity was more than ever needed.

The Duma deputies and army generals were putting pressure on the Tsar to abdicate. They kept reassuring him that only such an act would save Russia from bloodshed. He repeatedly asked:

"Are you confident that my abdication will save Russia from bloodshed?"

Again they reassured him that it would.

But the Tsar knew the quality of the men who were advising him. As he sadly wrote in his diary on the day of his abdication:

"All around me I see treason, cowardice and deceit."

And again, on the same day, while holding a bundle of telegrams from the Corps of Generals and even from his own uncle, he said:

"What is left for me to do when everyone has betrayed me?"

On the day of the abdication the enemies had arranged that the Emperor should not meet his strongest supporter, the Empress. She understood this and wrote: "My heart is rent with suffering, since you are completely isolated. It is clear that they do not wish to allow us to see each other before you sign some sort of paper. If they compel you to make concessions, you are under no circumstances obliged to fulfil them, because they are obtained by unworthy means. We are all of good cheer, but pressured by circumstances. We only suffer for you and endure humiliation for you, holy sufferer..."

And after the abdication, the Empress wrote to the Emperor: "You will be crowned by God Himself on this earth, in your own country..."

And so, after an entire night spent in prayer, he laid aside the crown for what he felt was the good of his country. For, as he wrote: "I am ready to give up both throne and life if I should become a hindrance to the happiness of the homeland." And again: "There is no sacrifice that I would not make for the real benefit of Russia and for her salvation."

What has been called "the Abdication Manifesto" was in fact a telegram to the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Alexeyev: "During the days of the great struggle against the external foe which, in the space of almost three years, has been striving to enslave our Native Land, it has pleased the Lord God to send down upon Russia a new and difficult trial. The national disturbances that have begun within the country threaten to reflect disastrously upon the further conduct of the stubborn war. The fate of Russia, the honour of our heroic army, the well-being of the people, the entire future of our precious Fatherland demand that the war be carried out to a victorious conclusion, come what may. The cruel foe is exerting what remains of his strength, and nor far distant is the hour when our valiant army with our glorious allies will be able to break the foe completely. In these decisive days in the life of Russia, We have considered it a duty of conscience to make it easy for Our people to bring about a tight-knit union and cohesion of all our national strength, in order that victory might be the more quickly attained, and, in agreement with the State Duma We have concluded that it would be a good thing to abdicate the Throne of the Russian State and to remove Supreme Power from Ourselves. Not desiring to be separated from Our beloved Son, We transfer Our legacy to Our Brother Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich, and bless Him to ascend the Throne of the Russian State. We command Our Brother to conduct State affairs fully and in inviolable unity with the representatives of those men who hold legislative office, upon those principles which they shall establish, swearing an inviolable oath to that effect. In the name of our ardently beloved Native Land We call upon all faithful sons of the Fatherland to fulfil their sacred duty before it, by submitting to the Tsar during the difficult moment of universal trials, and, aiding Him, together with the representatives of the people, to lead the Russian State out upon the path of victory, well-being and glory. May the Lord God help Russia. Pskov. 2 March, 15.00 hours. 1917. Nicholas."

Metropolitan Anastasius writes that the emperor "was far removed from the idea of defending his authority only for the sake of the desire to rule. 'Are you sure that this will be to Russia's benefit?' he asked those who, supposedly in the name of the nation, presented him with the demand that he renounce his hereditary rights, and when he received a positive answer, he immediately laid aside the burden of royal government, fearing lest a single drop of Russian blood might fall on him in case a civil war arose."

Though he no longer had the responsibility of government, his first thoughts were for his nation, as he said to one of his officers,

"Just to think that, now I am Tsar no longer, they won't even let me fight for my country."

At the very moment of the Tsar's abdication - 3 o'clock on March 2, 1917 - a miracle took place that attested to God's love for Russia. In the village of Kolomenskoye, near Moscow, according to a revelation of the Mother of God, a search had been taking place for several days for her icon "The Reigning Mother of God". This icon had gone at the head of the Russian army in 1812 as it drove Napoleon out of Russia. But then this wonder-working icon had been forgotten and seemingly lost. No one knew about its fate. And only on March 1, 1917, did a pious widow by the name of Eudocia receive a revelation to look for the icon in the village of Kolomenskoye. She looked through both of the churches of the village, but did not find the icon. Then she asked whether they had any old icons. They told her that there were some in the basement. She asked to go there, and she and a deacon went down into the basement.

"And truly, there were many old, dust-covered icons there. They began to wipe them one by one. But they still did not find the icon they were looking for. But when she came up to the icon "The Reigning Mother of God", Eudocia cried out:

"That's her!",

although it was still covered with a thick layer of dust which made it impossible to recognise. But when they cleaned it, it was true: the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God had been found. It depicted the Mother of God seated on a throne, her countenance both stern and sorrowful, an orb and sceptre in her hands and the Christ-child giving a blessing in her lap, with God the Father looking down from above. This icon soon thereafter miraculously renewed itself and the robe of the Mother of God was seen to be blood red, something which had been foretold also in the dream. Services were written to this icon and many people made the pilgrimage to venerate it. Healings, both of physical and mental infirmities began to take place before it.

However, the attention the event deserved was given to it neither by the provisional government, which was only to be expected, nor by the people, which was less expected, nor even by the Church herself... Then the servant of God Eudocia insisted that according to the revelation the icon had to be taken round the Kremlin seven times. But they managed to take it round only once during the time of Patriarch Tikhon, that is, after the October revolution, and to the sound of gunfire. Eudocia said:

"The Mother of God said: if they take it round the Kremlin seven times, the Bolsheviks will not be able to capture it!"

But this was not done. The Bolsheviks put the icon in a museum under the title "A counter-revolutionary icon of the Mother of God". Recently, it has been returned to Kolomenskoye.

After the abdication, on March 9, the Tsar arrived back in Tsarkoye Selo, where his family were all under house arrest like common criminals. All the children were ill. Alexis, Olga and Maria had measles and were bedridden with high fevers; Tatiana and Anastasia both had painful ear abscesses.

Again the image of Job overshadowed him - all had been taken from him except his dear ones and his indomitable faith. He did not curse his fate, accepting all as the will of God, and did not even murmur against his captors who treated him with disrespect and even contempt. What greater example could the Russian people have asked for, or what nobler man could have led them as their king? Thus Christ's lament over the chosen people was fulfilled in Holy Russia as well: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23.37-38).

Not only the Tsar, but the whole of his blessed family, met their fate with truly Christian patience. Thus on March 13, 1917, the Tsarevich Alexis wrote to his sister Anastasia:

"I will pray fervently for you and Maria. With God everything will pass. Be patient and pray."

And shortly after the abdication the Empress said: "Our sufferings are nothing. Look at the sufferings of the Saviour, how He suffered for us. If this is necessary for Russia, we are ready to sacrifice our lives and everything."

And again: "I love my country, with all its faults. It grows dearer and dearer to me... I feel old, oh, so old, but I am still the mother of this country, and I suffer its pains as my own child's pains, and I love it in spite of all its sins and horrors... Since [God] sent us such trials, evidently He thinks we are sufficiently prepared for it. It is a sort of examination... One can find in everything something good and useful - whatever sufferings we go through - let it be. He will give us strength and patience and will not leave us. He is merciful. It is only necessary to bow to His will without murmur and wait - there on the other side He is preparing for all who love Him indescribably joy."

From early childhood the Great Princesses had had the feeling of duty instilled in them. A defining trait of theirs was their flaming patriotism. They

did not think of marrying a foreigner or non-Orthodox. They wanted only to serve Russia, to marry Russians and to have children that would serve Russia.

A. Volkov, who had been the Tsar's valet for a long time, remembered: "I cannot say much about the character of the Royal Family, because I am an unlearned man. But I shall say what I can. I shall say simply this about them: it was the most holy, most pure family..."

For five months the Royal Family lived under virtual house arrest in the Alexandrovsky palace in Tsarksoye Selo, where there were regular services. The celebrant, Fr. Athanasius Belyaev, wrote in his diary for Great Friday, March 30, 1917: "The service was pious and compunctionate... Their Majesties stood throughout the service... Before them were placed analoys on which lay Gospels, so that they were able to follow the reading. They all stood until the end of the service and left through the general hall for their rooms. One has to have been close and seen for oneself to understand and be convinced how fervently, how in accordance with Orthodoxy, the former Royal Family prayed to God, often on their knees..."

On July 28 they learned that they were being sent, not to the Crimea, as they had hoped, but three or four days' journey away to the east. They were ordered to pack warm things and prepare for departure. During the preparations they celebrated the Tsarevich's birthday, on July 30, and gave him a book, Journey through the Urals. On the night of August 1 they were taken to the railway station, accompanied by 45 of those close to them, 330 soldiers and 6 officers. They were put in a carriage marked "Japanese Mission of the Red Cross".

On August 6 they arrived in Tobolsk on the ship "Rus", and were accommodated in a spacious house with a garden. Protopriest Vladimir Khlynov, superior of the Tobolsk cathedral, celebrated services for the Royal Family in the governor's house and was the spiritual father of their Majesties at this time. Once, when he was imprisoned on Solovki, he witnessed that the Tsar had said to him:

"I can in no way forgive myself for having given up power. I never expected that power would fall to the Bolsheviks. I thought that I was giving up power to the representatives of the people..."

At first the Royal Family went to services in the cathedral. And they and all the people liked this. But once the cathedral protodeacon on the Tsar's namesday, at the end of the moleben, pronounced the "Many Years" to the Tsar with his full title. This annoyed the Tsar. After the service, on coming home, he said:

"Who needs this? I very well know that the people still love me and are faithful to me, but now there will be unpleasantnesses, and they won't let us into the cathedral again."

And so it turned out. But thanks to this, the protopriest was invited to the house to perform services, and in this way got to know the Family better. The princesses sang simply and harmoniously. They had good books in which they followed the services. The Tsar also assisted the priest during the services.

Once the Tsar sent Bishop Hermogen of Tobolsk a bow to the earth, asking him to forgive him that he had been forced to allow his removal from his see. He could not have done otherwise at the time, but he was glad to have the opportunity of asking the bishop's forgiveness now. The bishop was very touched, and sent a bow to the earth to the Tsar together with a prosphora and asked for his forgiveness.

The late Rev. G.V. Vaughan-James, Anglican chaplain of the Convent of St. Denys, Warminster, England related the following story. He was on a British ship that was sent to a port on the Black Sea for the purpose of rescuing the Tsar and his family and bringing them to England. The crew were very excited by the mission. When they arrived at this port, Rev. Vaughan-James was told to leave the ship and get into a train without asking questions. The train travelled for some time and then stopped at a small station. A woman of striking beauty and wearing a sable coat entered his compartment. She told him that she was a lady-in-waiting of the Tsaritsa, and handed him an icon of St. Nicholas with the words:

"The Tsaritsa has asked me to give this to you. Take it back to England, and ask the English people to pray for the safety of her children."

The Rev. Vaughan-James was very surprised. The woman left the compartment, and the train returned to the port. After returning to the ship, the Rev. Vaughan-James was told that a telephone message had come from London, ordering the ship to return to England without the Tsar and his family. The rescue operation had been cancelled. No reason was given. On the way home all the crew were depressed, and while they were still at sea it was announced on the radio that the Tsar and his family had been killed.

The Rev. Vaughan-James did not know what to do with the icon, and gave it to the Admiralty, where, he said, it still hung in one of the rooms. However, a search recently undertaken at the Admiralty did not reveal the icon.

In the spring of 1918 a commissar arrived from Moscow and informed the Tsar that he was being taken away that night. The Tsar feared that he would be forced to sign the Brest-Litovsk treaty, but the commissar assured him that

that was not the case. The Tsar insisted on allowing someone to accompany him, and the Tsaritsa suffered much, not knowing whether to follow her husband or to remain with her sick son. Finally, after much heartbreak, she decided to entrust her son to his tutor and to follow her spouse.

The parents and children had never been separated, but now they had to be, and this on the eve of Pascha, which they had always celebrated together. On April 13/26, the Royal Couple left Tobolsk and covered 285 versts by wagon before reaching the railhead. On April 17/30, the Tsar, the Tsaritsa and Grand Duchess Maria Nikolayevna with some members of the servants, arrived in Yekaterinburg and were imprisoned in the home of the engineer N.N. Ipatiev. On May 10, the remaining members of the family arrived.

### *Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich*

On the night of June 12-13, 1918 **Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich Romanov**, the brother of the Tsar, was killed in Motovilihi region on the outskirts of Perm together with his secretary, the Englishman **Nicholas Nikolayevich Johnson**. His chauffeur, **Basil Borunov**, was arrested after the shooting and cast into prison. He was shot in September, 1918 in Perm.

Great Prince Michael was born on November 22, 1878, and had an excellent education. On June 28, 1899 his brother, Great Prince George, died, and Great Prince Michael became heir to the throne. However, in 1912, contrary to the will of the Tsar, he married the twice-divorced Countess Natalya Sergeevna Brassova, as a result of which the Tsar deprived him of his rank and regency, and exiled him from the country.

At the beginning of the Great War Great Prince Michael was allowed to return to Russia, and in 1916 was made commander of the Second Cavalry Corps. In July, 1916, after displaying great courage and ability in battle, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General. In September he became adjutant-general, and on the eve of the February revolution - General-Inspector of the Cavalry.

After the abdication of Tsar Nicholas, Great Prince Michael became tsar for a day, but then abdicated and went to live in Gatchina. There, on August 21, 1917 he and his wife were arrested. The arrest was lifted on September 13, but two months later, when the Bolsheviks had come to power, he was arrested and taken from Petrograd to Gatchina. On March 9, 1918 the Sovnarkom exiled him to Perm province. On May 18, to his great sorrow, his wife left Perm for Gatchina. Until the end of May, he lived in a hotel in Perm and went for walks. However, when the Bolsheviks noticed that old women were making "pilgrimages" to the places where he walked, the decision was taken to execute him.

### Martyrdom

In Yekaterinburg the Royal Family spent three hellish months of psychological torture - and yet they all retained their inward calm and state of prayer, so that not a small number of their tormentors were softened by these valiant Christian strugglers. As Pierre Gilliard, the French tutor to the Tsarevich Alexis recalled:

"The courage of the prisoners was sustained in a remarkable way by religion. They had kept that wonderful faith which in Tobolsk had been the admiration of their entourage and which had given them such strength, such serenity in suffering. They were already almost entirely detached from this world. The Tsaritsa and Grand Duchesses could often be heard singing religious airs, which affected their guards in spite of themselves.

"Gradually these guards were humanised by contact with their prisoners. They were astonished at their simplicity, attracted by their gentleness, subdued by their serene dignity, and soon found themselves dominated by those whom they thought they held in their power. The drunken Avdiev found himself disarmed by such greatness of soul; he grew conscious of his own infamy. The early ferocity of these men was succeeded by profound piety."

When this would happen, the inhuman Bolsheviks would replace the guards who had been so touched with crueller and more animalistic ones.

Seldom being allowed to go to church, they nevertheless nourished their souls with home prayers and greatly rejoiced at every opportunity to receive the Divine sacraments. Three days before their martyrdom, in the very house in which they were imprisoned, there took place the last church service of their suffering lives. As the officiating priest, Fr. John Storozhev, related: "It appeared to me that the Emperor, and all his daughters, too, were very tired. During such a service it is customary to read a prayer for the deceased. For some reason, the Deacon began to sing it, and I joined him... As soon as we started to sing, we heard the Imperial Family behind us drop to their knees' (as is done during funeral services)... Thus they prepared themselves, without suspecting it, for their own death - in accepting the funeral viaticum. Contrary to their custom none of the family sang during the service, and upon leaving the house the clergymen expressed the opinion that they 'appeared different' - as if something had happened to them."

The Tsaritsa used to say:

"We are one, and this, alas, is so rare today. We are tightly united together... a small, tightly knit family..."

Inseparable in life, they were now to remain inseparable in death.

After midnight on July 4/17, 1918, the entire family, with their doctor and two faithful servants, was brought to the basement of the house of their confinement under the pretext of moving them once again because "there's unrest in the city". There they were brutally and mercilessly murdered, the children as well as the adults, under the cover of darkness - for "men loved the darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3.19). The Tsar was shot as he stood forward to defend his family. Tsaritsa Alexandra was able to make the sign of the Cross before she, too, fell. The first bullets did not bring death to the youngest ones, and they were savagely clubbed, bayoneted and shot at point-blank range before being robbed of all their precious things.

Those killed were: the Tsar (born 1868), the Tsaritsa (1872), Olga (both 1895), Tatiana (1897), Maria (born 1899), Anastasia (born 1901), Alexis (born 1904), the Tsar's physician **Eugene Botkin**, the Tsaritsa's chamber-maid **Anna S. Demidova**, the cook **Ivan Mikhailovich Kharitonov** and the servant **A.E. Trupp**, the sailor **Clement G. Nagorny**, who had looked after the Tsarevich since early childhood, and **Ivan D. Sednev**, the servant to the Grand Duchesses. **General Elias L. Tatishchev** and **Prince Basil Dolgorukov**, who had been refused permission to stay with the Royal Family at YYYekaterinburg, were also shot in prison. The maid-of-honour, **Countess Anastasia V. Hendrikova**, and the court teacher, **Catherine A. Schneider**, were taken to Perm and shot there.

**Eugene Sergeyevich Botkin** was born on May 27, 1865, the son of an outstanding doctor. In 1889 he graduated from the Military-Medical Academy with distinction. In 1897 he became a lecturer in the Academy. He took part in the Russo-Japanese war and distinguished himself by his courage. In 1908 he was appointed a doctor to the Royal court. In May, 1917 he was placed under arrest together with the Royal Family and chose to go with them into exile, leaving his own family. The Tsar was deeply moved by his decision. He did not die immediately, but had to be shot again.

In a letter to a friend Botkin wrote: "My voluntary incarceration is limited in time to the same extent that my earthly existence is limited. In essence, I am dead - dead for my children, for my friends, for my work... I did not hesitate to leave my children as orphans so as to fulfil my duty as a doctor to the end, just as Abraham did not hesitate, when God required it of him, to offer his only son in sacrifice. And I firmly believe that just as God saved Isaac then, He will now save my children and will Himself be to them a Father..."

**Clement Grigoryevich Nagorny** was born in Yaroslavl province, and was a sailor of the Guards crew that sailed on the Tsar's yacht "Standart". He looked after the Tsarevich Alexis. He voluntarily went with the Royal Family

to Tobolsk and then accompanied the Royal Children to Yekaterinburg. On May 28, 1918 he was arrested together with the servant of the Great Princesses, **Ivan Sednev**, because they were disturbed by the behaviour of the guards and tried to save things belonging to the Royal Family from being stolen. They were both cast into prison in Yekaterinburg, where they were in the same cell as the former Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, Prince Lvov. On June 1 they were shot in the environs of Yekaterinburg.

On August 21, just before **Countess Hendrikova** was shot, she was asked if she had voluntarily followed the Romanovs to Tobolsk. She stated that she had. When asked if she would return and continue to serve them if she were set free, she said:

"Yes! Up to the last day of my life!"

On the night of July 4/17, Blessed Maria Ivanovna, the fool-for-Christ of Diveyevo, began to shout and scream:

"[They're killing] the princesses with bayonets! Cursed Jews!"

There is evidence that the murders were ritualistic. Thus strange cabbalistic symbols were found on the walls of the room where the crime took place which have been deciphered to mean: "Here, by order of the secret powers, the Tsar was offered as a sacrifice for the destruction of the state. Let all peoples be informed of this."

Again, on the wall of the death-chamber was found an inscription which fittingly sums up the deed from the point of view of the Jewish revolution. It was a quotation from the German Jewish poet Heine, slightly altered to bring out the word "tsar" and identifying the tsar with Belshazzar:

<i>Belsatzer ward in selbiger Nacht</i>	<i>On the same night Belshazzar</i>
<i>Von seinen knechten umgebracht.</i>	<i>Was killed by his own slaves.</i>

But the truth was quite the opposite. Belshazzar hated the people of God, and his removal opened the way for the rebuilding of the Temple of God in Zion by the Jewish Prince Zerubbabel. The killing of Tsar Nicholas, on the other hand, opened the way to the destruction of Orthodox Russia and its transformation into Babylon.

Thus ended the life of the Christ-like Tsar, as a sacrifice for the Orthodox Faith and for the Russian people, both of whom he so fervently loved and believed in.

Martyr-Great-Princess Olga Nikolayevna wrote from Tobolsk: "Father asks the following message to be given to all those who have remained faithful to

him, and to those on whom they may have an influence, that they should not take revenge for him, since he has forgiven everyone and prays for everyone, that they should not take revenge for themselves, and should remember that the evil which is now in the world will be still stronger, but that it is not love that will conquer evil, but only love..."

And in the belongings of the same holy martyr were found the following verses by S. Bekhteyev:

*Now as we stand before the gates of death,  
Breathe in the lips of us Thy servants  
That more than human, supernatural strength  
To meekly pray for those that hurt us.*

### Posthumous Glory

In 1917 Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow, who alone in the Church's hierarchy had refused to accept the Provisional Government because of his oath of allegiance to the Tsar, had the following revelation in a series of dreams: "I saw a field. The Saviour was walking along a path. I went after Him, crying,

"Lord, I am following you!"

"Finally we approached an immense arch adorned with stars. At the threshold of the arch the Saviour turned to me and said again:

"Follow me!"

And He went into a wondrous garden, and I remained at the threshold and awoke. Soon I fell asleep again and saw myself standing in the same arch, and with the Saviour stood Tsar Nicholas. The Saviour said to the Tsar:

"You see in My hands two cups: one which is bitter for your people and the other sweet for you."

"The Tsar fell to his knees and for a long time begged the Lord to allow him to drink the bitter cup together with his people. The Lord did not agree for a long time, but the Tsar begged importunately. Then the Saviour drew out of the bitter cup a large glowing coal and laid it in the palm of the Tsar's hand. The Tsar began to move the coal from hand to hand and at the same time his body began to grow light, until it had become completely bright, like some radiant spirit. At this I again woke up. Falling asleep yet again, I saw an immense field covered with flowers. In the middle of the field stood the Tsar, surrounded by a multitude of people, and with his hands he was distributing manna to them. An invisible voice said at this moment:

"The Tsar has taken the guilt of the Russian people upon himself, and the Russian people is forgiven."

In the same year Elder Nectarius of Optina said: "Now his Majesty is not his own man, he is suffering such humiliation for his mistakes. 1918 will be still worse. His Majesty and all his family will be killed, tortured. One pious girl had a vision: Jesus Christ was sitting on a throne, while around Him were the twelve apostles, and terrible torments and groans resounded from the earth. And the Apostle Peter asked Christ:

"O Lord, when will these torments cease?"

"And Jesus Christ replied: 'I give them until 1922. If the people do not repent, do not come to their senses, then they will all perish in this way.'

"Then before the throne of God there stood our Tsar wearing the crown of a great-martyr. Yes, this tsar will be a great-martyr. Recently, he has redeemed his life, and if people do not turn to God, then not only Russia, but the whole of Europe will collapse..."

The sanctity of the Tsar has been revealed in a number of miracles.

Thus in 1947 Protopresbyter Michael Polsky recounted the following story in which the intercession of the martyred Royal Family saved about a company of Cossacks who had lost contact with their transport and army, and were surrounded by the Reds in the midst of a swamp. The priest Fr. Elijah summoned everyone to prayer, saying:

"Today is the day of the commemoration of the Tsar-martyr. His son, the young Tsarevich Alexis was the honoured ataman of the Cossack armies. Let us beseech them that they intercede before the Lord for the salvation of the Christ-loving Cossack army."

And Fr. Elijah served a moleben "to the Tsar-martyr, the Emperor of Russia". And the refrain during the moleben was: "Holy Martyrs of the Royal House, pray to God for us!"

The whole company sang. At the end of the moleben, Fr. Elijah read the dismissal: "Through the prayers of the holy Tsar-martyr Nicholas, the Emperor of Russia, his Heir the young Tsarevich Alexis, ataman of the Christ-loving Cossack armies, the right-believing Tsaritsa-martyr Alexandra and her children the Tsarevna-martyrs, may He have mercy and save us, for He is good and loveth mankind."

To the objection that these holy martyrs had not yet been glorified, and miracles from them had not yet been revealed, Fr. Elijah replied: "Through their prayers we shall get out... They have been glorified... You yourselves have heard how the people has glorified them. The people of God... May the holy youth Tsarevich Alexis show us. Don't you see the miracle of the wrath of God on Russia for their innocent blood?... You will see revelations through the salvation of those who honour their holy memory... There is an indication for you in the lives of the saints. You will read that Christians built churches over the bodies of the holy martyrs without any glorification. They lit oil-lamps and prayed to them as to intercessors and petitioners..."

The company and transport got out of the encirclement in a miraculous manner.

They were walking up to their knees, even up to their waist in mud. Sometimes they sank in even up to their necks. The horses got stuck, but then jumped out and went on... They didn't remember how far they went or how tired they were... And they got out... 43 women, 14 children, 7 wounded, 11 old men and invalids, 1 priest and 22 Cossacks - 98 people and 31 horses in all. They came out on the other side of the swamp, on the corner of land which was occupied by the Cossacks who were holding back the encircling movement of the Reds, straight into the middle of their own people. None of the locals could believe that they had come through by that route. And the enemy had not heard the noise made by their passage. And in the morning the Red partisans could not find any trace of where they had got away. There had been people - and then there were none!

Again, the nun Barbara (Sukhanova) writes: "In the summer of 1923 a girl known to me by the name of Irina Meier received a letter from Petrograd from her friend - also a young girl of gentry family. I am amazed that this letter got through at that time. The girl from suffering Russia openly wrote that with the help of God she had decided to choose the monastic path and was striving for it with all her heart.

"This pure soul described a recent dream she had had. She was walking in Petrograd when in front of her there rose up a new, beautiful, white church. She entered it. The house of God was amazingly beautiful. Everything in it was shining, gleaming and irridiscent. The girl was struck by its majesty and asked:

"In whose honour is this church built?"

"And an invisible person replied: 'In the name of the slaughtered Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich.'"

Again, Monk Zachariah writes: "The Serbian people loved the Russian Tsar with all their heart. On March 30, 1930, there was published in the Serbian newspapers a telegram stating that the Orthodox inhabitants of the city of Leskovats in Serbia had appealed to the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church with a request to raise the canonization of the late Russian Emperor Nicholas II, who was not only a most humane and pure-hearted ruler of the Russian people, but who also died with the glory of a martyr's death.

"Already in 1925 there had appeared in the Serbian press an account of what happened to an elderly Serbian lady who had lost two sons in the war and whose third son, who had disappeared without a trace, she considered also to have been killed. Once, after fervently praying for all who had been killed in the war, the poor mother fell asleep and saw in a dream the Emperor Nicholas II, who told her that her son was alive and was in Russia, where he had fought together with his two dead brothers. 'You will not die' - said the Russian Tsar - 'until you see your son.' Soon after this dream, the old woman received news that her son was alive, and within a few months after this she joyously embraced him alive and well when he returned from Russia.

"On August 11, 1927, in the newspapers of Belgrade, there appeared a notice under the headline, 'Face of Emperor Nicholas II in the monastery of St. Naum on Lake Ochrid.' It read as follows: 'The Russian painter S.F. Kolesnikov was invited to paint the new church in the ancient Serbian monastery of St. Naum, being given complete creative freedom in adorning the interior dome and walls. While completing this, the artist thought of painting on the walls of the church the faces of fifteen saints, to be placed in fifteen ovals. Fourteen faces were painted immediately, but the place for the fifteenth long remained empty, since some kind of inexplicable feeling compelled Kolesnikov to wait for a while. Once at dusk he entered the church. Below, it was dark, and only the dome was cut through with the rays of the setting sun. As Kolesnikov himself related later, at this moment there was an enchanting play of light and shadows in the church, and all around seemed unearthly and singular. At this moment the artist saw that the empty oval which he left unfinished had become animated and from it, as from a frame, looked down the sorrowful face of Emperor Nicholas II. Struck by the miraculous apparition of the martyred Russian Tsar, the artist stood for a time as if rooted to the spot, seized by a kind of paralysis. Then, as he himself describes, under the influence of a prayerful impulse, he leaned the ladder against the oval, and without marking with charcoal the outline of the wondrous face, with brushes alone he made the layout. He could not sleep the whole night, and, hardly had the first daylight appeared than he went to the church and in the first morning rays of the sun was already sitting high on the ladder, working with such a fever as he had never known. As he himself writes: 'I painted without a photograph. In the past I several times saw the late Emperor close up, while giving him explanations at exhibitions. His image imprinted itself in my memory.'

The following vision was seen in 1971 by a certain Basil, a spiritual son of Archbishop Leontius of Chile of blessed memory, who had reposed that same year, at the same time when the Church was discussing the glorification of the New Martyrs of Russia: "At the beginning of this dream I saw myself in a huge temple not built by human hands. On the right kliros for quite a distance was a huge crowd of people dressed in white; I could not make out their faces. Around me there was a quiet, heartrending singing, although I couldn't see anyone there. Then both sides of the altar swung open and from them began to come out holy hierarchs and monks, fully vested in gentle blue vestments: among them I could recognise only St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia. From the door near me, among the passing bishops, Vladyka Leontius passed by and stopped near me, saying:

"You, brother Basil, were called and you did come. You know we have a great celebration here today!"

"What kind of celebration, Vladyka?" I asked.

"And he continued: 'The heavenly glorification of the Tsar-Martyr!'"

"And having bowed to me slightly, he continued on his way to the kathedra (in the centre of the church). Finally, the holy doors of the altar opened, and out of them came the Tsar-Martyr, looking just as he appears on his official portraits during the first years of his reign - that is, very young. He was dressed in the Tsar's royal mantle, as during his coronation, and he wore the emperor's crown on his head. In his hands he held a large cross, and on his pale face I noticed a slight wound, either from a bullet or some blow. He passed by me at an even pace, descended the step of the ambo, and went into the centre of the church. As he neared the kathedra, the singing increased in volume, and when his foot touched the step of the kathedra, it became so loud that it seemed that a whole world of people had gathered and were singing with one breath."

Again, in 1988, Claude Lopez, an Orthodox Christian from Switzerland, wrote that one day he, having great veneration for the New Martyrs, had placed a commemorative coin of the Tsar in his icon corner, along with an icon of the Royal Martyr with a halo. One day he noticed moisture on the coin and discovered that it was exuding a quantity of fragrant myrrh, which had flowed into the box in which it was kept. This obvious miracle continued until October of 1988, and resumed briefly during the autumn of 1989.

Finally, there is this testimony of a man from Spain: "I am 48 years old. I am Spanish-born from Barcelona. My name is Mateo Gratacos Vendrell. When the things I am going to mention happened, I was not a member of the Orthodox Church. Now, through God's mercy, I've become a member

(August, 1989). During four years I had had a pain in the loins and in the belly on the right side. I consulted various doctors and went through the usual routine (x-rays, ecography, etc., and analyses). All the results were negative. It was deduced that my pain was psychosomatic (psychological). To calm me down, I was treated through acupuncture and laser, but in vain; my pain was still there. I was desperate. One night I was experiencing again acute pain, I started reading. To mark my page I had put a portrait of Tsar Nicholas (his icon, in fact). I looked at the icon and he (the Tsar) looked at me. I started asking him to pray to Christ our Lord; for having suffered during the last days of his life, he would have compassion. I accepted the pain that I had but I could not accept the fact that I was 'mad', because I knew that my pains were real. On the next day, after that very night, as I was on my way to a job, a client who is also a friend of mind asked how I was and upon knowing that I was still suffering, he asked whether I had consulted Dr. P. I answered no. He told me to go and see him on his behalf. I went there on the next day. When he examined me he said that there was nothing psychosomatic; I had an invisible (on the radio) kidney stone. I underwent a 'natural treatment' and the stone went out naturally after one month. During this period of time I prayed to the Lord to remember me because of my love for the Tsar. I promised to Tsar Nicholas that I would distribute and make known his icon as a 'moleben' for the mercy he showed to the poor man who suffered for four years and saw his problem solved in less than a month through his intercession. Thank you, Saint Nicholas II, I am very thankful."

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## **2. MARTYR GREAT PRINCE SERGIUS AND NUN-MARTYR GREAT PRINCESS ELIZABETH** and those with them

Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich was born in 1857, the son of Tsar Alexander II and the brother of Tsar Alexander III. He was a very religious and highly cultured man who loved reading and music. Shy by nature, he made some of those around him think he was cold. But he was not. Without advertising the fact, he helped very many people. Ludmila Koehler writes: "All available evidence shows that Grand Duke Sergius was an outstanding personality and that he was highly educated, strict and demanding, but also kind-hearted. Naturally he was disliked by liberals and especially by the revolutionaries for his firm convictions; he was therefore eliminated by them, like so many other outstanding conservatives."

The Great Prince's first educators were Anna Tiutcheva, the daughter of the great Russian poet, who taught him to love Holy Rus' and its holy sites, Naval Captain Demetrius Arseniev, the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod Constantine Petrovich Pobedonostsev, the economist Vladimir Petrovich Bezobrazov, the historian Constantine Nikolayevich Bestuzhev-Ryumin and the talented archaeologist Alexis Sergeyevich Uvarov. The Great Prince's favourite subject, as of his beloved nephew, Tsar Nicholas II, was history.

In 1882 Great Prince Sergius founded the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, becoming its first president, and after his death his wife inherited from him the chairmanship of the society.

Great Princess Elizabeth was born on October 20 / November 1, 1864, the second child of Prince Ludwig (Louis) and Princess Alice of Hesse-Darmstadt, being the granddaughter (on her mother's side) of Queen Victoria of England. She was named after one of her ancestors, Elizabeth of Turingen, whose life exerted a great influence on her. She was brought up in conditions of simplicity and modesty. The elder daughters themselves cleaned their rooms and stoked up the fire. The parents of Elizabeth distributed a large part of their income in charity, and every Saturday the children would go with bouquets of flowers to the hospital. They were instilled with love for people, especially suffering people, as the foundation of life. Later Elizabeth would say: "They taught me everything at home". Elizabeth's mother died when she was only fourteen, but her nobility of heart transformed this suffering into a lifelong compassion for the bereaved.

From childhood Elizabeth loved nature and especially flowers. She had an artistic gift, and throughout her life spent a lot of time drawing. She also loved classical music.

People of various characters and positions in life were very similar in their estimates of Elizabeth: "Exceptional beauty, a remarkable mind, a subtle sense of humour, angelic patience, nobility of heart", was one such estimate. Metropolitan Anastasy, second president of the Synod of the Russian Church in Exile, wrote of her: "She was a rare combination of exalted Christian spirit, moral nobility, enlightened mind, gentle heart and refined taste. She possessed an extremely delicate and multi-faceted spiritual composition and her outward appearance reflected the beauty and greatness of her spirit."

In June, 1884, Elizabeth married Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich, having refused a whole series of other suitors, including the future German Emperor Wilhelm. The couple had no children of their own, but later adopted the two children of Great Prince Sergius' brother Paul. According to one source, Great Prince Sergius and his wife had both secretly wanted to remain virgins. Learning that they shared this secret desire, they decided to marry while living as brother and sister. Those around them never suspected this. However, other authoritative sources do not confirm this story.

The couple were married in St. Petersburg, first according to the Orthodox rite, and then according to the Protestant rite.

Although Elizabeth remained Protestant for the time being, she studied Russian and tried hard to understand the culture and faith of her new homeland.

The couple's summers were spent in Great Prince Sergius' estate of Ilinskoye, near Moscow, and their winters in St. Petersburg. Later they built a winter residence in Usovo, but Ilyinskoye remained the favourite residence of the couple, and they were very popular with the peasants on the estate.

In 1887 the couple went to England to represent the emperor at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. In 1888 they went to Jerusalem for the consecration of the church of St. Mary Magdalene. There Elizabeth said: "How I would like to be buried here" - and she was. The trip to the Holy Land made a deep impression on her. She wrote to her family in Darmstadt: "You cannot imagine how joyful it is to be able to see all these holy places... where our Lord walked and lived."

Soon after this, the grand duchess converted to the Orthodox Church. Already in 1890 she wrote to the Tsarevich Nicholas that she had tried with all her strength to convince her sister Alexandra (the future spouse of the Tsarevich) that she would love the Orthodox faith, "to which I also am striving to be united, the genuine and true faith, the only faith which has remained undistorted down the centuries and has retained its original purity."

On January 1, 1891 she wrote to her father: "You must have noticed how profoundly I venerate the religion here since you were here last time, more than one and a half years ago. I have been constantly thinking and reading, and praying to God to show me the right path, and I have come to the conclusion that it is only in this religion that I can find all the real and powerful faith in God that a person must have in order to be a good Christian. It would be a sin for me to stay as I am because I now belong formally and for the outside world to one church, while inwardly I pray and believe as does my husband. You cannot imagine how kind he has been: he never tried to force me in any way, presenting all this to my conscience alone. He knows what a serious step this is, and that one has to be completely convinced before deciding on it. I would have done it even earlier, only I was tormented by the thought that I would causing you pain, and that many of those dear to me would not understand me. But don't *you* understand, my dear Papa? You know me so well. You must see that I have decided on this step only out of profound faith, and that I feel that I must stand before God with a pure and believing heart. How simple it would be to remain as I am now, but then how hypocritical, how false it would be, and how I would be lying to everyone, pretending in all external rites that I am a Protestant when my soul belongs completely to the religion here. I have thought and thought deeply about all this, having been in this country already for more than six years and knowing religion has been 'found'. I so strongly want to receive the Holy Mysteries at Pascha with my husband... Earthly happiness I have always had as a child in my homeland, as a wife - in my new homeland, but when I saw how deeply religious Serge was, I felt so far behind, and the better I got to know his Church, the more I felt that it brought me closer to God - it is difficult to describe such a thing... This may seem sudden, but I have thought about it already for such a long time, and now, finally, I cannot put it off. My conscience does not allow me to. I earnestly beseech you, when you have received these lines, forgive your daughter if she has caused you pain. But is not faith in God and the confession of faith one of the main consolations of this world? Perhaps you can telegraph me just one line, when you receive this letter. May the Lord bless you. This will be such a consolation for me, because I know that there will be many unpleasant moments, since nobody will understand this step. I ask only for a small affectionate letter."

Her father did not send her the telegram she wanted with the blessing, but he wrote a letter in which he said that her decision caused him pain and suffering and that he could not give his blessing. Then Elizabeth Fyodorovna showed courage and spiritual firmness and, in spite of her moral sufferings, she unhesitatingly decided to become Orthodox. In general, firmness was one of the main qualities of her character: on taking a decision, she went straight for the goal no matter what the obstacles. "My conscience," she wrote to her father, "does not allow me to continue in this spirit - it would be a sin; when I remained in my old faith I was lying all the time... It would be impossible for me to continue living as I lived before."

"Dear one," she wrote to her brother, "you call me unserious, and you write that the external splendour of the church has charmed me. You are mistaken. Nothing external has attracted me, and not the services, but the foundation of the faith. The external signs only remind us of that which is inner... I am converting out of a pure conviction; I feel that this is the loftiest religion and that I will do this with faith, with profound conviction and with the assurance that God's blessing is on it."

About her husband she wrote to her brother: "He was a real angel of kindness. How often, by touching my heart, he could have brought me to a change of religion, so as to make himself happy; and never, never did he complain. Take his side with your close ones and tell them that I adore him, and also my new country and that in this way I learned to love their religion also." Elizabeth said that it was her husband who had educated her (presumably, in the Orthodox faith).

Her German relatives were not sympathetic to her conversion, unlike her English relatives, in particular her grandmother, Queen Victoria, who wrote her an affectionate, encouraging letter, which brought her great joy. As she wrote to the queen: "The only thing which made me wait so long was that I knew that so many would be pained and not understand me. But God gave me courage and I hope they will forgive me the pain I caused them, as I do so having my whole soul in this Church here, and I felt I was lying to all and to my old religion in continuing to be a Protestant. It is a matter of conscience whose profound importance only the person concerned can really feel."

When she told her husband of her decision, according to a former courtier, "tears involuntarily spurted from his eyes". He had not spoken a word to her about his desire that she become Orthodox. As she wrote on April 18, 1909: "He with his large heart never forced his religion upon me and found strength to bear up in this great grief of not seeing me in his faith, thanks to Fr. John, who told him: 'Leave her alone, don't speak about her faith, she will come to it of herself', and thank God it was so. Well, Serge, who knew his faith and lived in it as perfectly as a true Orthodox Christian can, brought me up and thank God warned me against this *spirit of delusion* you talk of."

Tsar Alexander and his wife, and all the Orthodox relatives of the Romanov house, were overjoyed at Ella's decision. Her husband was in raptures. As he wrote to Tsarevich Nicholas: "I am infinitely happy. I don't know by what right I deserve such grace. I am completely unworthy."

On March 8/20 she again wrote to her father: "Please, please forgive me for causing you so much suffering, but I feel so infinitely happy in my new faith. Earthly happiness I have always had as a child in my homeland, as a wife - in my new homeland, but when I saw how deeply religious Serge was, I felt so far behind, and the better I got to know his Church, the more I felt that it brought me closer to God - it is difficult to describe such a thing... However, in this case everything is in my hands and in God's, and I am convinced that He will bless this step; my hope depends on His strength, and I constantly pray that I will always be a good child and faithful wife and always remain a good Christian, and that in my earthly happiness I will always think of the future and my salvation and always be prepared for it (death)... Please show Alix... this letter."

She was received into the Orthodox Church by Holy Chrismation on Lazarus Saturday, April 13/25, 1891. She kept her former name, but now in honour of Righteous Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist. Now she could say to her husband, in the words of the Moabitess Ruth: "Your people has become my people, and your God - my God" (Ruth 1.16).

In the same year Grand Prince Sergius was appointed governor-general of Moscow. As she wrote to her father: "After seven years - long, happy years - of our married life, which we have spent with our dear relatives and friends here in Petersburg, now to have to begin a completely new way of life, and to more or less have to give up our cosy home life in the city, since we have to do so much for the people there, and actually we are playing the part of a ruling prince - it will be very difficult for us..."

And indeed it was difficult for both of them. Sergius loved his former post as colonel-in-chief of the Preobrazhensky regiment, and now had to govern the province of Moscow at a time of increasing revolutionary activity when society was becoming increasingly anti-monarchist. Elizabeth had to smile to guests, dance and talk, independently of her mood or health. Often she was exhausted and had headaches. She was very popular, but also there were many slanders. Once she told her brother Ernest that she thought that every human being had to have an ideal in life. When he asked her what her ideal was, she replied: "To be a fully perfect woman, and this is not easy, for one must learn to forgive everything..."

Her sufferings, both physical and spiritual, were increased by the death of her father, to whom she was very attached... A trip down the Volga, and another to Darmstadt and England, consoled her, and she involved herself

more in charities for the poor in addition to the many public engagements that she could not avoid. But her sadness lingered on...

According to the witness of Metropolitan Anastasy, the Great Prince did much to raise the level of Muscovite life. "His meek, idealistic personality was filled with instruction and a favourable influence on all Russians. The woes, sorrows and misfortunes of the people always found a ready response in his heart and speedy help." Indeed, the charitable work of the couple was amazing in its variety and extent.

Ella worked hard to bring about the union of her sister Alix (Alexandra) to Tsarevich Nicholas. As she wrote to Queen Victoria, "the world is so spiteful, and not knowing how long and deep this affection on both sides has been, the spiteful tongues will call it ambition". However, the marriage finally took place in 1894, and the two sisters were united in Russia in the Orthodox faith.

Grand Prince Sergius' brother Paul married a divorcée and a commoner, and was forced to leave Russia. And so his children Marie and Dmitri came under the tutorship of Great Prince and Princess. Elizabeth had already shown herself a wonderful mother to the poor and sick, and now became in effect the mother of two more children.

In 1903 Sergius and Elizabeth went to the uncovering of the relics of St. Seraphim in Sarov. From there she wrote: "What infirmities and what illnesses we saw, but also what faith! It seemed as if we were living in the time of the earthly life of the Saviour. And how they prayed, how they wept – these poor mothers with their sick children. And, glory to God, many of them were healed. The Lord counted us worthy to see how a mute girl began to speak. But how her mother prayed for her!"

During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, the Great Princess became the leader of a patriotic movement that swept the whole of society: she organized sewing workshops for the needs of the army, several in the Kremlin itself, where women of all classes worked; she equipped several hospital trains excellently at her own expense, including camp churches equipped with everything necessary for the Divine services; she daily visited hospitals; and she worried over the widows and orphans of those killed in the war.

But then came the tragedy that changed her life. Great Prince Sergius had just resigned from the office of governor general of Moscow because he disagreed with the government on policy towards the terrorists, thinking that they should be treated more severely. His letters show his complete devotion to the monarchy and to Tsar Nicholas in particular. "You know," he wrote to him in 1896, "how I love You; my whole life belongs to You and the service and works of Your Father. Believe me: Your glory is dearer to me than anything on earth." But he felt that the Tsar was being too soft, and therefore

retired into private life. For some time before his death he had been receiving death threats, and when he went out used to try to ensure that he was as far as possible alone. On February 6/18, 1905 he was killed by a bomb that exploded almost at the doorstep of the palace that he and his wife inhabited in the Kremlin. At that moment the Great Princess was leaving for her workshops. She was alarmed by the sound of an exploding bomb nearby. Hurrying toward the place (near the Chudov monastery in the Kremlin), she saw a soldier stretching his military overcoat over the maimed body of her husband. The soldier tried to hide the horrible sight from the eyes of the unfortunate wife. But the Great Princess dropped to her knees, on the street, and put her arms out trying to embrace the torn remains of her husband. The bomb had shattered his body to such an extent that his fingers were found, still in their gloves, on the roof of the neighbouring building.

After the first pannikhida in the Chudov monastery, Elizabeth returned to the palace, put on black mourning clothes and began to write telegrams. From time to time she asked about the condition of the wounded coachman of the Great Prince. They told her that his condition was hopeless, and that he could die soon. So as not to upset the dying man, Elizabeth took off her mourning clothes, put on the blue dress she had been wearing before and went to the hospital. There, leaning over the bed of the dying man, she caught his question about Sergius Alexandrovich and, so as to reassure him, she smiled and said: "He has sent me to you." Calmed by her words, and thinking that the Great Prince was alive, the devoted coachman **Andrew** died that night...

The next day St. Elizabeth received Communion in the church in which her husband's coffin was standing. On the third day after his death she felt that the soul of the deceased was asking her to do something. She understood that Sergius Alexandrovich wanted to send his forgiveness to his assassin, Kaliayev, through her. She went to the prison where he was detained.

"Who are you?" he asked upon meeting her.

"I am his widow," she replied, "Why did you kill him?"

"I did not want to kill you," he said. "I saw him several times before when I had the bomb with me, but you were with him and I could not bring myself to touch him."

"And didn't you understand that by killing him you were killing me?" ...

Then she said that she was bringing him forgiveness from Sergius Alexandrovich and asked him to repent. The Gospel was in her hands and she begged the criminal to read it. He refused, but she left it in his cell together with a little icon. Leaving the prison, the Great Princess said:

"My attempt was unsuccessful, but, who knows, perhaps at the last minute he will understand his sin and repent."

She asked the tsar for clemency for him. And he was ready to bestow it provided the bomber did not refuse it himself. (According to another source, her request was refused.) On the memorial cross erected upon the site of her husband's death, the grand-duchess inscribed the Gospel words:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do..."

Great Prince Sergius was buried in the Chudov monastery in the Kremlin; a chapel dedicated to St. Sergius, his patron saint, was built there.

Igumen Seraphim says of the Great Princess' conduct after the murder: "Like a spiritual heroine she did not break down in consequence of her great sorrow, as happens to many women. She grieved most of all about the sudden death of her husband, afraid for his fate in the world to come." And yet she herself said of him that he was "a holy person, an angel of goodness, who never did any harm to anyone". And she was comforted by spiritual elders, who told her that the blood of her husband's martyrdom would surely efface all the errors and sins of his past.

From that time on, she remained in mourning clothes, refused the food she was accustomed to, and vegetables and bread became her daily nourishment, even before she took her monastic vows. She dissolved her court, withdrew from the world and devoted herself entirely to the service of God and her neighbour. She opened two hospitals in which she looked after the sick. She divided her property into three parts, distributing it to the state, to the heirs of her husband and (the largest part) to charity. With what remained she then acquired a small estate with four little houses and a garden, and then another neighbouring plot, on the Ordynka in Moscow.

Here, with the blessing of the elders of the Zosima hermitage, to whom she placed herself in complete obedience, she founded a small monastic community, calling it the convent of Saints Martha and Mary, in order to unite in it the virtues of the two sisters of Lazarus - prayer and good works. It contained a hospital with a house church, an out-patients' department, a chemist's, a refuge for young girls, a library, and a hostel for the sisters. In 1911 the main Protection church was built in the traditional Novgorod-Pskov style according to a plan by A.V. Shusev and with interior paintings by Nesterov. Protopriest Metrophanes Serebryansky, an exceptional pastor, was appointed the spiritual father of the community.

At first Elizabeth wanted to regenerate the institution of the deaconess in the convent that she founded. In early Christianity deaconesses had been widows or elderly virgins. Their main duties were to look after women

entering the Church, to teach them the faith, to help them during the sacrament of Holy Baptism and to look after the sick and needy. During the persecutions against Christianity the deaconesses had served the martyrs in prison. However, the Russian Synod did not approve of her idea of regenerating the institution, and she had to put aside this thought.

In April 1909 the Great Princess wrote: "My darling Serge rests in God with so many he loved who have gone to join him and God has given me on this earth a beautiful work to fulfil. Only He knows whether I will do it well or badly, but I will try my best and put my hand in His and go with no fear whatever the crosses and criticism this world may have in store - little by little my life has turned onto this way. It is not a fantasy of the moment and no disappointment ever can come - I can be disappointed in myself but then I also have no illusion and don't imagine I am different to others. I want to work for God in God for suffering mankind, and in my old age when my body can't work anymore I hope God will let me then rest and pray for the work I began and then I will leave the busy life and prepare for that great home - but I have health and energy and there is so, so much misery and Christ's steps guide us amongst the suffering, in whom we help Him..."

The convent began its existence on February 10, 1909. At first it had only six sisters, but within a year the number had risen to thirty and continued to rise. On April 9 seventeen sisters headed by Elizabeth were tonsured into monasticism (probably the little schema). She put off her black mourning clothes, put on the white habit of a sister of mercy, and took the name Alexia after St. Alexis of Moscow, whose relics rested in the Chudov monastery. According to one source, she was tonsured by the future Hieromartyr, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev. According to another source, however, Bishop Tryphon, in the world Prince Turkestanov, gave her her monastic vestments with the prophetic words: "These vestments will hide you from the world, and the world will be hidden from you, but at the same time they will witness to your charitable activity, which will shine before the Lord to His glory."

Just before her tonsure, the Great Princess wrote: "My taking of vows is even more serious than if a young girl marries. I am espousing Christ and His cause, I am giving all I can to Him and our neighbours, I am going deeper into our Orthodox Church and becoming a missionary of Christian faith and charity work and - oh dear! - I am so unworthy of it all, and I do so want blessings and prayers..." And on the morning of her tonsure she said to the sisters: "I am leaving the glittering world where I had a glittering position. But together with all of you I am ascending to a greater world - the world of the poor and the suffering. I have lain this upon myself, not as a cross, but as certain way full of light, which the Lord showed me after the death of Serge and which for many, many years before this began in my soul..."

The community's twenty-two-bed hospital in time acquired a high reputation. The best specialists in the city worked there for nothing. Often the most seriously ill people from other clinics were brought there. Every week 34 doctors worked, also for nothing, in the out-patients' department. In the chemist's they took no money from the poor for medicines, and distributed them to others at a considerable discount. They gave the orphans a basic foundation in medicine as well as a general education. They served over 300 meals to the poor daily. On Sundays the community organized a school for illiterate factory women.

Mother Elizabeth very carefully distributed tasks among the sisters - to each according to her strength. She watched over their health and tried to see that they had enough rest. She looked after the incurably ill and helped at operations, taking all the most burdensome tasks upon herself.

At the same time, her personal life was very ascetic. She slept for no more than three hours in every twenty-four on a wooden bed without a mattress, and after praying for a long time at night, she would go round the hospital wards. For food she had a few vegetables and some milk, and kept all the fasts strictly.

However, she considered the most important thing to be not the hospital, but visiting and helping the poor in their homes. The community received up to 12,000 requests for help every year. They had to arrange treatment for some, look for work for others, send still others abroad to study. How much money, food, clothing and medicine was distributed! But "Great Matushka", as she was called, considered their main work to be bringing the love of Christ to the suffering.

She used to visit the notorious Khitrovka market, believing, as did all the sisters of the community, that everyone is made in the image of God even if that image is partly distorted by the passions of life. She tried to touch the depths of their hearts, to arouse the beginnings of repentance in people sunk in corruption. Sometimes she succeeded, and then the gradual recovery of a spiritually sick person would begin. Mother Elizabeth rescued orphans from these dens of iniquity, and tried to persuade their parents to hand them over to her for education. She set up the boys in a hostel, and one such group even formed an artel of messenger-boys. The girls were educated in the refuge and in closed boarding-schools.

The sisters did not work for personal glory, and they did not count how many people they helped. They had to endure insults and mockery, sometimes they were deceived. But they did not despair in their service. The pledge of their constancy and conscientiousness was their faith in the words of Christ: "And he who gives even one of these My little ones to drink a cup of cold water... will not lose his reward."

One of the nuns of the convent, Mother Lyubov', Euphrosyne in the world, came to the monastery in the following remarkable way. At the age of sixteen she fell into a lethargic sleep, during which her soul was met by St. Onuphrius the Great. He took her to three saints. Euphrosyne recognized one of them to be St. Sergius of Radonezh, but she did not know the other two. Then St. Onuphrius told Euphrosyne that she was needed in the Martha-Mary convent. Waking from her sleep, Euphrosyne began to ask where such a convent might be in Russia. One of her acquaintances turned out to be a novice in the convent and told Euphrosyne about it and its abbess. Euphrosyne wrote to the abbess asking whether she could be received into the convent, and received an affirmative reply. When she arrived at the monastery she went into the cell of the abbess and recognized in her the female saint whom she had seen standing next to St. Sergius. Then, on receiving the blessing of the spiritual father of the convent, Fr. Metrophanes, she recognized in him the second of the saints. Exactly six years after this St. Elizabeth received the crown of martyrdom on the day of the uncovering of the relics of St. Sergius of Radonezh, while Fr. Metrophanes later received the monastic tonsure with the name of Sergius in honour of St. Sergius... Once, when she was not yet trained in the rules of the monastic life, Euphrosyne went into the cell of the abbess without asking a blessing. She saw St. Elizabeth in a hairshirt and chains. "My dear," said the saint, "when you enter, you must knock."

Among her very varied charitable works, St. Elizabeth paid the fares of pilgrims sailing from Odessa to Jaffa, and built a large hospital in Jerusalem. She also built an Orthodox church in Bari in Italy where the relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker rested.

In spite of her many and arduous duties, she found time to go on pilgrimage to the greatest shrines of Russia, like Sarov, Pskov, Kiev, Optina Hermitage, Zosima Hermitage, Solovki, Pochayev.

Among the holy elders she knew, writes Ludmila Koehler, "the grand duchess singled out Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel. The grand duchess was in the habit of seeing him on her annual pilgrimage to the Seven Lakes Hermitage (near Kazan). There she attended all the monastery services and shared the simple food with the brotherhood. Archbishop Tikhon (of San Francisco) relates that she and her faithful cell attendant Barbara usually were present at the four o'clock tea in the Abbot's quarters.

"When Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel died later stayed at the Eleazorov Hermitage (near Pskov) and his health began to fail, it was decided to add a little church to his small dwelling. The grand duchess not only contributed money but donated icons and even designed the iconostasis for the church. Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel decided to go to Moscow in order to thank her

personally; on this occasion, he invited her to attend the blessing and dedication of the church, and she did. He, in his turn, visited the Martha and Mary Sisterhood at the invitation of the grand duchess for the spiritual enlightenment of the sisters.

"When Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel died (in Kazan, in 1915), the grand duchess came for the funeral service and took part (with the sisters of the Mother of God Convent in Kazan) in the funeral repast. She also accompanied the coffin up to the Monastery of our Saviour on its way to the Seven Lakes Hermitage.

"News of the impending war reached the grand duchess while she was in the province of Perm. She proceeded to Verkhoturye to venerate the relics of St. Simeon; here she took Holy Communion. Verkhoturye is located only a short distance from Alapayevsk, which was destined to be the scene of her martyrdom.

"The Grand Duchess became something of a legend in her time. It is enough to quote a few of the numerous stories depicting her selfless services to the needy. A poor woman was admitted to the sisterhood hospital, the wife of a worker who was an unbeliever. As a consequence of malicious propaganda about the Royal House, he disliked all its members. During the many hours the man spent at the bedside of his stricken spouse, he noticed one particular sister who was like a compassionate, loving mother to the sick, and to his wife in particular. She not only rendered all the usual services, but also encouraged the patient by kind, heartening words. After the dying woman had received the Final Communion, this sister spent the night with her trying to alleviate her suffering and dying agony. After the woman's death this same sister helped others prepare the body for the funeral. When the husband found out that it was the grand duchess, he admitted his error and turned to God.

"Almedingen tells another fascinating story about a radical student, whose only sister had joined the Martha and Mary Sisterhood. When this 'republican' went to pay a call at Great Ordynka, she 'met the grand duchess, and to be in the same room with her was peace. I understood nothing about her vocation. I merely knew that she was good, creative and friendly, and I envied her the faith I did not possess.'

"She was particularly impressed when her sister told her that 'once when visiting a particularly dirty part of Khitrovka, the grand duchess sneezed, and the woman in the room at once offered her a very dirty rag, and she accepted it as though it were of finest, cleanest linen.'

"Another story concerns a woman 'who had overturned a lighted oil stove... Her clothes had caught fire and her body was a mass of burns.

Gangrene had set in and the doctors despaired of saving her. With gentle but obstinate courage, the grand duchess nursed her back to life. It took two hours each day to dress her wounds, and the stench was such that several of the nurses fainted. The patient recovered within a few weeks and this was considered a miracle at the time."

By the middle of 1914 there were already ninety-seven sisters in the community, and there was talk of building daughter-communities outside the city.

Then the war began, and part of the sisterhood was sent to work in the field hospitals. Others served in a hospital in Moscow. Serious difficulties arose with the provision of food and clothing, but the community did not suspend its charitable work.

The Dowager Empress, the Empress and Mother Elizabeth among themselves the work of nursing the wounded according to the front lines: the German front, the Austrian front, and the Turkish front. The latter, although smaller in size of operations, was just as intense in fighting. They were able to draw all kinds of people into their organization, men of high and low ranks, officials, clerks, government workers and a whole hierarchy of women. The Red Cross on a uniform was seen on everyone who could spare any time from housework. There was no sacrifice too great - money was given freely and personal life was not important in time of war.

Together with her younger sister, the Empress Alexandra, Mother Elizabeth was slandered on account of her German blood. But she harboured no bitterness against her enemies. Once she tried to warn her sister against Rasputin, but was rebuffed.

Metropolitan Anastasy wrote: "She suffered deeply for the royal family... when the thorns of grievous slander were woven around them, especially during the war. In order not to give impetus to new evil gossip, the grand duchess tried to avoid conversations on the subject. If it so happened that because of idle people's tasteless curiosity the subject was broached in her presence, she immediately killed it by her expressive silence. Only once after returning from Tsarskoye Selo, she forgot herself and remarked, 'That terrible man (i.e. Rasputin) wants to separate me from them, but, thank God, he will not succeed.' The occasion referred to is probably the one mentioned by several writers when the grand duchess went to warn her sister."

Rasputin was killed on December 29, 1916 by Prince Felix Yusupov. He owed much to the grand-duchess' warmth and good counsel, and considered her his second mother. She asked him to accompany her to the glorification of St. Joasaph of Belgorod, which made a great impression on him. And he was always fleeing to her when he was in distress.

“I was immeasurably grateful to the great princess,” he wrote, “that she understood my despair and was able to direct me to a new life. However, I was tormented by the fact that she did not know everything about me and considered me to be better than I was.

“Once, when speaking to her face to face, I told her about my adventures, which, as it seemed to me, were unknown to her.

“‘Calm down,’ she smiled, ‘I know much more about you than you think. It was for that reason that I called you. You are capable of much evil, and of much good if you find the right path. And great sin is not greater than sincere repentance. Remember that the reason sins more than the soul. But the soul can remain pure even in a sinful body. Your soul is important to me. And I want to open it to you yourself. Destiny has given you everything that a man could desire. But from him to whom much is given, much is required. Think that you are responsible. You are obliged to be an example. You should be respected. Trials have shown you that life is not a game. Think how much good you could do! And how much evil you could cause! I have prayed much for you. I hope that the Lord has hearkened to my prayer and will help you.’

“How much hope and strength of soul sounded in her words!”

Immediately after the February revolution Prince Felix flew to Moscow to inform her about recent events. “She embraced me,” he writes in his Memoirs, and blessed me with tears in her eyes.

“‘Poor Russia!’ she cried. ‘What terrible trials await her! And we are all powerless to resist the will of the Lord. It remains to us only to pray and hope on His mercy.’”

“She listened very attentively to my account of the tragic night [of Rasputin’s killing].

“‘You could not have acted otherwise,’ she said when I fell silent. ‘Your act was the last attempt to save the homeland and the dynasty. And it is not your fault that events did not measure up to your expectations. The guilt lies on those who did not understand their own duty. The killing of Rasputin is not a crime. You killed a demon. But it was even to your credit: in your place anyone should acted in the same way.’

“Then Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna informed me that several days after the death of Rasputin the abbesses of monasteries came to her to tell her about what had happened with them on the night of the 30<sup>th</sup>. During the all-night vigil priests had been seized by an attack of madness, had blasphemed and shouted out in a voice that was not their own. Nuns had run down the

corridors crying like hysterics and tearing their dresses with indecent movements of the body.

“‘The Russian people is not responsible for everything that is happening,’ continued the great princess. ‘Poor Nicky, poor Alex! What torments are prepared for them! May the will of the Lord be done. No power of evil can overcome Holy Rus’ and the Orthodox Church. Good will triumph without fail. And those who keep faith in it in themselves will finally see the light. The Lord punishes and He has mercy.’”

“Time flies so unnoticeably that you don’t even distinguish days or years, everything merges together into one second of prayer and mercy... Today is twenty-five years since I was united to our beloved Church... Everything is merged together in the profoundest gratitude to God, to our Church and to those noble examples that I have been able to see in truly Orthodox people. And I feel myself to be so insignificant and unworthy of the limitless love of God and of that love which has surrounded me in Russia – even the minutes of sorrow were sanctified by such consolation from above, and while the petty misunderstandings that are natural for people were smoothed away with such love that I can say only one thing: ‘Glory to God for all things, for all things.’”

The Lord bestowed upon Mother Elizabeth the gift of spiritual discernment and prophecy. Fr. Metrophanes related that not long before the revolution he had a very vivid and clearly prophetic dream, but he did not know how to interpret it. It was composed of a sequence of four pictures, in colour. The first revealed a beautiful church. Suddenly, it became surrounded by tongues of fire, and the whole church went up in flames - a terrifying spectacle. The second showed a portrait of the Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna in a black frame; the corners of the frame sprouted forth shoots bearing lily buds that blossomed, becoming so large as to conceal the portrait. The third showed the Archangel Michael holding a flaming sword. In the fourth, St. Seraphim of Sarov stood on his knees on a rock, his hands upraised in prayer.

Perplexed by this dream, Fr. Metrophanes described it to the Abbess one morning before the Liturgy. St. Elizabeth said she understood the dream. The first picture signified that there would soon be a revolution in Russia, that a persecution would be raised against the Church, and for our sins, our unbelief, the country would be brought to the brink of destruction. The second picture signified that her sister and the entire Royal Family would receive a martyr’s death. The third picture signified that subsequently Russia would be overtaken by frightful tribulations. The fourth signified that by the prayers of St. Seraphim and other saints and righteous ones of the Russian land, and by the intercession of the Mother of God, the country and its people would obtain mercy.

The revolution threw the country into chaos. Crowds of freed prisoners roamed round Moscow. Mother Elizabeth forbade the sisters to leave the community. In the spring of 1917 she wrote to her sister Victoria: "God's ways are a mystery and perhaps it is a great blessing we can't know all that the future has in store for us. All our country is being snipped into little bits. All that was gained in centuries is being demolished, and by our own people, those I love from all my heart. Truly, they are morally ill and blinded not to see where we are going. And one's heart aches, but I have no bitterness. Can you criticize or condemn a man in delirium, a lunatic? You can only pity and long for good guardians to be found, who can keep him from smashing all and murdering whomever he can get at."

The German ambassador Mirbach twice tried to see her and pass on an invitation to go to Germany, but she refused to receive the representative of an enemy country and said that she categorically refused to leave Russia: "I have done no harm to anyone. May the will of the Lord be done."

In this year, Mother Elizabeth wrote to her friend, Countess Alexandra Olsufiev: "God in His great mercy has again helped us to go through these days of internal strife, and today I had the infinite consolation of praying in... and attended the divine ceremony of blessing by our Patriarch [Tikhon]. The sacred Kremlin, with visible marks of these sad days, was dearer to me than ever before, and I realized to what extent the Orthodox religion is God's True Faith. I felt such pity for Russia and her children who, at this moment, know not what they do. Isn't it a sick child that one loves a hundredfold more in the time of his illness rather than when he's gay and healthy? One would like to bear his suffering, to teach him patience, to help him. This is what I feel every day. *Holy Russia cannot perish*. But, alas, Great Russia is no more; but in the Bible God shows how He had pardoned His repenting people and once more granted them blessed power. Let us hope that the prayers, which intensify every day, and the repentance, which increases, will bring the Holy Virgin to intercede for us before her Divine Son, and that God will pardon us."

In April, 1918 she wrote to the same correspondent: "If we look deep into the life of every human, we discover that it is full of miracles. You will say, 'Of terror and death, as well.' Yes, that also. But we do not clearly see why the blood of these victims must flow. There, in the heavens, they understand everything and, no doubt, have found calm and the True Homeland - a Heavenly Homeland. We on this earth must look to that Heavenly Homeland with understanding and say with resignation, 'Thy will be done.' Great Russia is completely destroyed, but Holy Russia and the Orthodox Church, which 'the gates of hell cannot overcome', exists and exists more than ever. And those who believe and who do not doubt for one moment will see 'the inner sun' which enlightens the darkness during the thundering storm... I am only convinced that the Lord Who punishes is also the same Lord Who loves. I have read the Gospel a great deal, and, we wish to recognize that great

sacrifice of God the Father when He sent His son to die and be resurrected for us, we must feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, who illumines our path. And then joy will become eternal, even if our poor human hearts and our little earthly minds will experience moments that seem very terrible... We work, we pray, we hope, and each day we feel the mercy of God. Each day we experience a constant miracle. And others begin to feel this and come to our church in order to relax in soul."

"Even though all the powers of hell may be set loose, Holy Russia and the Orthodox Church will remain unconquered. Some day, in this ghastly struggle, Virtue will triumph over Evil. Those who keep their faith will see the Powers of Light vanquish the powers of darkness. God punishes and pardons."

"The spring of 1917," writes Ludmilla Koehler, "marks the beginning of her slow but steady ascent to martyrdom: searches, accusations, disruptions of the welfare system so painstakingly established by her, deportation, and finally a martyr's death. God led her to her great destiny by measured steps so as to strengthen her spirit. By the end of her ordeal she was as strong as tempered steel, radiating the bright light of her sainthood. Grand Duchess Elizabeth's attitude toward the turmoil besetting Russia is seen in a letter she sent to an old friend about this time. In it she predicts the complete disintegration of Russia and accepts it with the words, 'Thy will be done.' She is, however, simultaneously convinced that the gates of Hell will not prevail over the Church, which has been promised an eternal existence. Those who believe in this will be able, according to her, 'to discern the concealed beam of light shining through the darkness at the very height of the storm.' To be sure, she anticipated severe trials, but she looked on the approaching storm as having both 'horrifying as well as spiritualizing elements'.

"The harassment and persecution started gradually, first with a visit by a revolutionary gang under the leadership of a student who was visibly impressed by what he saw - the simple life-style of the sisters, including their Mother Superior, their activities, the relief they were able to provide to the needy. They parted in a friendly fashion, but this was just the beginning. It is obvious that the grand duchess was aware of the road ahead of her. She dampened the joyful reaction of the sisterhood to this 'peaceful' intrusion with the prophetic remark, 'Obviously we are still not worthy of a martyr's crown.' But she did not have long to wait for it.

"For a while the convent was allowed to go about its activities unhampered. The authorities largely ignored it, save for supplying it occasionally with critically needed supplies. One may speculate that at this point the authorities were afraid to attack the grand duchess and the sisterhood because of the popularity they enjoyed among the poorer inhabitants of Moscow."

At about this time, Igumen Seraphim of the Seraphim-Alexeyev monastery in Perm tried to convince the Great Princess to go with him to Alapayevsk.

“There,” he told her, “I know good people in Old Believers’ sketes and they can protect Your Highness.”

She refused to hide from fear of repression, but added:

“If I am killed, I ask you to bury me in a Christian manner.”

It was not long before Fr. Seraphim was able to retrieve her body and fulfil his promise to the Great Princess...

Another trial came at Pascha, 1918, when the chekist secret police arrested some of the sick and declared that they were transferring the orphans to a children's home. Then, on the third day of Pascha, continues Ludmilla Koehler, "on the feast day of the Appearance of the Iberian icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (March 31), Patriarch Tikhon was celebrating the Liturgy in the Iberian church across the street from the Martha and Mary Convent. After the service, the Patriarch visited the sisterhood and served a moleben, finding heartening words for the abbess and the sisters. He promised his assistance and protection should they be needed. The sisters felt greatly relieved and encouraged by this gesture but the grand duchess may have had premonitions of an impending separation from her community.

And indeed, immediately following the Patriarch's departure, she was to be cruelly torn from her sisters. Red guards intruded into the convent and ordered her to go to the station with them. The parting was agonizing. Both the abbess and her closest collaborators realized that this separation was forever. The scene must have been touching. The sisters surrounded their beloved Mother Superior and cried. There followed a painful leavetaking and prayers. Only the departing grand duchess remained calm. She blessed all the sisters with the sign of the Cross. She could not bid farewell to each of them individually, pressed for time by her captors as she was. She was able to say only a few words, making her orders known. The emotional scene only impelled the lawless authorities to act in a still ruder fashion. Using force, they literally tore the grand duchess from the flock of sisters and dragged the innocent victim away. Patriarch Tikhon made an attempt to intercede on behalf of the Great Princess, but to no avail.

They arrested Mother Elizabeth and two other sisters - **Barbara** Yakovlevna and **Catherine** Ianysheva. Before sitting in the car, the abbess signed all the sisters with the sign of the Cross. One of them recalled: “And they took her away. The sisters ran after her as far as they could. One fell on the road. When I came to the liturgy, I heard the deacon reading the litany,

but he couldn't, he was crying... And they took her away to Yekaterinburg, with someone escorting her, and Barbara was with her. They were inseparable... Then she sent a letter to us, to batyushka and each sister. 105 little notes, and every one in accordance with her character. To one a quotation from the Gospel, to another from the Bible, to another from herself. She knew all the sisters, all her children..."

During the rail journey she wrote to the sisters: "Lord, give the blessing. May the Resurrection of Christ console and strengthen you all... May St. Sergius and the holy hierarch Demetrius and St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk protect you all, my dear ones... I cannot forget yesterday, all your dear faces. O Lord, what suffering is in them, how their hearts are suffering! Every minute you become dearer to me. How can I leave you, my children, how can I console you and strengthen you? Remember, my dear ones, what I said to you. Always be not only my children, but obedient pupils. Come closer to each other and be as one soul, all for God, and say, with John Chrysostom: 'Glory to God for everything!' You older sister, unite your sister. Ask Patriarch Tikhon to take the 'chicks' under his wing. Make a place for him in my middle room. Make my cell a place for confession, and the big one for receptions... For God's sake, do not become despondent. The Mother of God knows why Her Heavenly Son sent us this trial on the day of Her feast... only don't become despondent and don't weaken in your radiant intentions, and the Lord, Who has temporarily separated us, will strengthen you spiritually. Pray for me, the sinner, that I may be counted worthy to return to my children and become perfected for you, and that we may all think how to prepare ourselves for eternal life.

"You remember how afraid I was that rely too much on my support as a stronghold in life, and I said to you: 'You must cleave more to God. The Lord says: "My son, give Me your heart, and your eyes will see My paths". Then be assured that you will give all to God if you give Him your heart, that is, your very selves.'

"Now we are going through one and the same experience and involuntarily we find the consolation to bear our common cross of separation only with Him. The Lord has found that it is now time for us to bear His cross. Let us strive to be worthy of this joy. I thought that we would be too weak, that we had not grown sufficiently to bear a great cross. 'The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away.' As it was pleasing to God, so has it happened. May the name of the Lord be blessed unto the ages. What an example St. Job gives us by his submissiveness and patience in sorrows. For this the Lord later gave him joy. How many examples of this sorrow do we find in the Holy Fathers in the holy monasteries, but then there was joy. Prepare for the joy of being again together. Let us be patient and humble. Let us not grumble but be thankful for all things.

"Your constant intercessor in prayer and loving mother in Christ,

"Matushka."

St. Elizabeth and her two nuns were joined in Yekaterinburg by other royal prisoners: Great Prince Sergius Mikhailovich, the three Brother Princes Igor, John and Constantine Constantinovich, the poet Prince Vladimir Paley (who wrote about "Aunt Ella's" great kindness to him) and Prince John's wife, the Serbian Queen Elena Petrovna.

Then, on May 20, the prisoners were taken to the Urals town of Alapayevsk, where they were imprisoned in one of the city schools. For some weeks Mother Elizabeth, though under guard, was able to go to church, to do some gardening, to paint and to pray. She was also in contact with her nuns in Moscow, and received gifts from the peasants of the region.

But on June 21 a stricter regime was imposed and Sisters Barbara and Catherine were taken away from their spiritual mother to Yekaterinburg. There they petitioned the authorities to be returned to Alapayevsk, and finally they were allowed back.

Soon Prince John Constantinovich's wife Elena Petrovna was torn from his side, and it was obvious to the captives what was in store for them. By the beginning of July their last contacts with the outside world were severed and the number of guards increased.

On the night of July 3-4 Tsar Nicholas and his family were executed in Yekaterinburg. On the following night, the eve of the feast of St. Sergius that meant so much to Grand Prince Sergius and his wife, the two nuns and other members of the royal family were taken outside the building where they were staying on the pretext of an armed attack. Nobody was allowed to see them. Outside the house their hands were tied behind their backs and they were blindfolded. They were taken in a car twelve miles outside the town. The leader of the assassins was named Ryabov.

Great Prince Sergius Mikhailovich started to struggle with the assassins and was shot; the rest were blindfolded and thrown into a mine shaft that was 200 feet deep. According to an eye-witness, Mother Elizabeth crossed herself and prayed loudly:

"Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Grenades were thrown into the mine shaft; they killed **Prince Theodore Mikhailovich Remez**. The others died in terrible sufferings from hunger, thirst and wounds. The bodies of Mother Elizabeth and Prince John Constantinovich were found on a ledge only 50 feet from the top. Mother

Elizabeth had remained alive for a long time. Mortally wounded herself, she had tried to bind the wounds of Great Prince John, serving her neighbour until her very death. Two grenades fell beside her, but did not explode: the Lord preserved the body of her who was pleasing to him. On her chest was an icon of the Saviour Not Made with Hands adorned with precious stones, which the Tsar had given her on day of her chrismation, and on the back of which were inscribed the words: "Palm Saturday, April 13, 1891".

According to one report from the recently published communist archives: "From beneath the ground we heard singing! I was seized with horror. They were singing the hymn, 'Lord, save Thy people'."

A peasant hid near the mine for two days, and all the while he could hear the martyrs singing. It was the cherubic hymn that they chanted from under the ground. The peasant drove to the camp of the not very far distant White Army and told them about what had happened. They reproached him for not giving any help, at least by throwing a piece of bread into the mine.

When the White Army was able to reach the spot they removed the bodies of the martyred ones, who included, besides Mother Elizabeth and Nuns Barbara and Catherine, were: **Princes Sergius Mikhailovich, John Constantinovich, Igor Constantinovich, Constantine Constantinovich, Vladimir Paley and Theodore Remez.**

Lubov Millar writes concerning the post-mortem on the bodies: "The Grand Duchess was severely bruised: there was a bruise the size of a child's palm on her forehead and one the size of an adult's palm on her left temple; hypodermic tissues, muscles and the cranial dome were also bruised; the skull bones were intact. Next to the martyr lay two unexploded hand grenades; the Almighty did not allow the body of His chosen one to be torn to shreds. An icon of the Saviour was found on her chest..."

**Nun Barbara**, in the world Vera Tsvetkova, was from Moscow. She belonged to a religious family of intelligentsy that greatly venerated Mother Elizabeth. After emigrating to the south of France, they found themselves in a difficult situation. They had to find a new flat, but their poverty deprived them of the possibility of finding it in such a short time. However, believing in a miracle, the daughter nevertheless began to search. On the eve of the day on which the family was to be evicted, Barbara had a dream in which she saw Mother Elizabeth, who asked: "Why don't the Tsvetkovs appeal to me for help? If I could help them earlier, now it is still easier for me to give them help." And she promised Vera to arrange everything in the way she wanted. On waking in the morning under the strong influence of her dream, Vera renewed her search. As she was passing the office where she had only recently applied for flats for sale without success, she felt an insistent desire to ask again. Vera knew that her fresh inquiries were likely to be as

unsatisfactory as her previous ones. But some clearly felt invisible force urged her to try again. Great was her astonishment when the official, seeing her arrive at the door, called her in, pulled out a map of the city and, pointing to a house and garden with his finger, said to Vera: "This village will suit you." It turned out later that a Belgian had entrusted the office with offering his dacha to needy Russian refugees. The owner of the house did his good deed in memory of the happy years he had spent in Tsarist Russia. Later, Vera became one of Mother Elizabeth's nuns with the name Barbara.

**Great Prince Sergius Mikhailovich Romanov** was born in 1869, the younger son of Great Prince Michael Nikolayevich, the brother of Tsar Alexander II. He served as an artillery officer, and in the reign of Tsar Nicholas became general-inspector of artillery. He was simple in manners and approachable to all, and a close friend of Tsar Nicholas, remaining with him at Army Headquarters to the end. In 1920 his body was taken to Peking and buried in the vault of the church of St. Seraphim of Sarov.

**Prince John Constantinovich Romanov**, the son of Great Prince Constantine Constantinovich, was born in 1886, was married to the daughter of the King of Serbia, Elena Petrovna, and had two children. He was distinguished by his exceptional religious feeling, and was often sent by the Tsar to represent him at spiritual festivals. He was a very sensitive person and did much to help the poor. He won the George medal for bravery in the First World War. In 1920 his body was taken to Peking and buried in the vault of the church of St. Seraphim of Sarov.

**Prince Constantin Constantinovich**, the son of Great Prince Constantine Constantinovich, was born in 1890. A meek man by nature, he distinguished himself by his courage in World War One. In 1920 his body was taken to Peking and buried in the vault of the church of St. Seraphim of Sarov.

**Prince Igor Constantinovich Romanov**, the son of Great Prince Constantine Constantinovich, was born in 1894. He served as an officer in the First World War. In 1920 his body was taken to Peking and buried in the vault of the church of St. Seraphim of Sarov.

In 1945 the Soviets occupied Manchuria, and the bodies of all the princes buried in Peking disappeared.

On January 27, 1919 the following princes were also shot by the Bolsheviks in the yard of the Peter and Paul fortress in Petrograd: **Nicholas Mikhailovich, Demetrius Constantinovich, George Mikhailovich and Paul Alexandrovich**. The latter in February, 1917 was working on the project of a constitution, and his son, Demetrius Pavlovich was the murderer of Rasputin. Great Princes Demetrius and George died with prayer on their lips.

The bodies of the Alapayevsk martyrs were buried in the cathedral in Alapayevsk, on October 18. Then, when the White Army was forced to retreat, Igumen Seraphim of the Seraphim-Alexeyev monastery in Perm escorted the bodies by train, first to Irkutsk (July, 1919) and later to China (February 28, 1920). During the journey St. Elizabeth appeared several times to Fr. Seraphim.

On the arrival of the bodies in Harbin, they were met by Duke Nicholas Alexandrovich Kudashev, who reported that "the bodies were totally decayed - all, except the Great Princess Elizabeth, whose body was totally incorrupt. The coffins were opened and put in the Russian Church. The Great Princess was lying as though she were alive and had not changed at all since the day when I, before my departure for Peking, said good-bye to her in Moscow - only on one side of her face was a large bruise from when she was thrown into the mine."

On April 3, 1920, the bodies of the martyrs were buried in the church of St. Seraphim of Sarov at the cemetery of the Russian mission in Peking. The body of the Martyr Elizabeth was found to be incorrupt. She looked asleep, and the three fingers of her right hand were folded as if she had been trying to make the sign of the cross.

At the request of the Great Princess' relative, the Marquess of Milford Haven, the bodies of the Martyrs Elizabeth and Barbara were taken by an English warship to Jerusalem, where they were laid to rest in January, 1921 in the crypt chapel of the Russian convent of St. Mary Magdalene on the Mount of Olives. In 1888 the Great Princess had expressed the desire to be buried there. Later, however, she said that she would like to be buried in her Martha and Mary convent in Moscow...

On May 2, 1982, the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women, the relics of the holy martyrs were translated from the crypt of the convent of St. Mary Magdalene to the convent church. It was found that each of them had been buried in five coffins, the outer one of oak containing two further zinc caskets, a wooden one, and an inner one of metal. When the inner casket of the Great Princess was opened, the chapel was filled with a sweet fragrance, which was said to be like that of honey and jasmine. Although the chapel was open and well-aired, this fragrance remained. The clothing of the martyrs was found to be damp, although the atmosphere at Gethsemane is very dry. The material was as if some liquid had been poured over it, so moist was it, although hitherto the coffins had been sealed. When a small portion of the relics was placed in a glass-topped receptacle, the glass became moist, and it was found that the sacred relics of both the martyrs exuded a fragrant myrrh. The bodies of both martyrs were found to be in a state of partial incorruption.

In 1981 the hand of St. Elizabeth and the hand of St. Barbara were brought to the glorification of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia in New York – the only relics of New Martyrs taken beyond the borders of Russia.

St. Elizabeth once said: "It is easier for feeble straw to resist a mighty fire than for the nature of sin to resist the power of love. We must cultivate this love in our souls, that we may take our place with all the saints, for they were all-pleasing unto God through their love for their neighbour."

And again she said: "If we look deep into the life of every human being, we discover that it is full of miracles. You will say, 'Of terror and death, as well.' Yes, that also. But we do not clearly see why the blood of these victims must flow. There, in the heavens, they understand everything and, no doubt, have found calm and the True Homeland - a Heavenly Homeland. We on this earth must look to that Heavenly Homeland with understanding and say with resignation, 'Thy will be done.' Great Russia is completely destroyed, but Holy Russia and the Orthodox Church, which 'the gates of hell cannot overcome', exists and exists more than ever. And those who believe and who do not doubt for one moment will see 'the inner sun' which enlightens the darkness during the thundering storm... I am only convinced that the Lord Who punishes is also the same Lord Who loves..."

"Even though all the powers of hell may be set loose, Holy Russia and the Orthodox Church will remain unconquered. Some day, in this ghastly struggle, Virtue will triumph over Evil. Those who keep their faith will see the Powers of Light vanquish the powers of darkness. God both punishes and pardons..."

(Sources: Velikaya Knyaginya Elisaveta Fyodorovna i Imperator Nikolai II, St. Petersburg, 2009; Uderzhivayushchiye Tajnu Bezzakonia, Yekaterinburg, 2009; Ludmilla Koehler, Saint Elisabeth the New Martyr, New York: The Orthodox Palestine Society, U.S.A., 1988; Lubov Millar, Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Publication Society, 1993; Archpriest Michael Polsky, Noviye Mucheniki Rossijskiye, Jordanville, 1949-57, part 1, chapter 30, part 2, p. 318; Protopriest Alexander Shargunov, "Velikaya Knyaginya", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 4 October, 1989, No 40 (5262); "A Sacrificing Love", Orthodoxy America, July, 1984, vol. V, no. 1 (41); Orthodox Life, September-October, 1981, January-February, 1981; Schemamonk Epiphany (Chernov), "Arkhiyeopiskop Feofan Poltavskij" (MS); Otyets Arseny, Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1994; Russkij Pastyr', 22-23, 1995 - II/III, p. 196; "A Prophetic Dream", Orthodox America, February, 1997, p. 7; Fr. Michael Harper, The True Light, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997, pp. 140-142; Nun Seraphima, "'Bury me like a Christian...'", Orthodox Life N 6, 1997, pp. 29, 30; Za Khrista Postradavshiy, Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1997, pp. 415-416; "K 100-letiyu so dnya tragicheskoy gibeli velikago

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### **3. HIEROMARTYR TIKHON, PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA**

#### *Early Years*

His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, in the world Basil Ivanovich Bellavin, was born on January 19, 1865 in Toropets, Pskov province, the son of a priest, Fr. John of the Spaso-Preobrazhensky church. His mother was called Anna. Once his father dreamed that he spoke with his dead mother. She warned him of his imminent death and went on to say that one of his sons would die a youth and be brought back to Toropets, and Basil would become very great. Just after he had been made Bishop of Alaska, Basil accompanied the body of his youngest brother back to Toropets, in fulfilment of this prophecy.

In 1872 Basil entered the Toropets spiritual school, and in 1878 - the Pskov theological seminary. He was a very cheerful, good-humoured and kind boy, quite tall with blond hair. He was also very intelligent, and used to help his schoolmates with their work. In 1884, at the very young age of 19, he entered the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. He was very popular with his fellow-students, who prophetically nicknamed him "Patriarch" and once jokingly censured him, crying: "Many years, your Holiness". On June 11, 1888 Basil graduated from the Academy as one of the best students; his dissertation was on the subject, "Quesnel and his relationship to Jansenism". Then he returned to Pskov seminary as a teacher in Dogmatic and Moral Theology, living very simply in a tiny annexe to a simple wooden house near the church of St. Nicholas. On December 14, 1891 he was tonsured into the mantia by Bishop Hermogenes (Dobronravin) of Pskov. On December 15 he was ordained to the diaconate, and on December 22 - to the priesthood.

On March 17, 1892, Tikhon was appointed inspector of the Kholm theological seminary. On June 24, 1892 he was briefly transferred to the Kazan Theological Academy, but soon, on July 15, returned to the Kholm seminary as rector in the rank of archimandrite. Here, besides his duties in the seminary, he was made president of the Diocesan Educational Council, president of the Kholm Orthodox Brotherhood of the Mother of God, dean of the monasteries of the Kholm-Warsaw diocese and publications censor.

Fr. Tikhon's simple, unaffected ways endeared him to the local population, and many uniates returned to the Orthodox Faith through his gentle tact. This reached the ears of the Holy Synod, and on October 19, 1897 (or 1898) he was consecrated Bishop of Lublin, a vicariate of the Kholm-Warsaw diocese, in the Trinity cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg by Metropolitan Palladius (Rayev) of St. Petersburg, Archbishop Arsenius (Bryantsev) of Kazan, Archbishop Anthony (Vadkovsky) of Finland, Bishop John (Kratirov) of Narva and Bishop Gurias (Burtasovsky) of Samara.

### *Archbishop in America*

After his consecration, Bishop Tikhon returned to Kholm, where he remained for about a year. Then, on September 14, 1898, he was made Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska. On February 7, 1900 he was appointed Bishop of North America and Alaska, becoming archbishop on May 5, 1905.

His activity in America was very successful, in recognition of which he was awarded the order of St. Vladimir, third class, in 1901, and the order of St. Anne, first class, in 1904. In Minneapolis he founded a seminary, which was soon producing enough American priests to obviate the necessity of sending priests from Russia. And in New Canaan, Pennsylvania he founded the St. Tikhon's monastery. The number of parishes increased from 15 to 70, and all became self-supporting. As in Kholm, Tikhon continued his missionary activity among the uniates, and a large number converted to the Orthodox Faith. Service-books were translated into the English language with his blessing. A special achievement of Vladyka Tikhon's, in view of the later disintegration of American Orthodoxy into various ethnic groups, was his unification of all the groups - Russian, Greek, Syrian, Bulgarian, Aleut - under his leadership. A symbol of this unity was the first Orthodox Church Council in America, which was convened by Tikhon in Mayfield, New York, in February, 1907.

### *The First World War*

However, Tikhon did not attend this Council because on January 25, 1907, he was appointed Archbishop of Yaroslavl and Rostov. Here, as always, Tikhon made a special point of visiting all the churches in his diocese, and by his humility, approachability to all classes and kinds of people, and active interest in the details of the lives of all his spiritual children he soon became as popular in Yaroslavl as he had been in Kholm and America. But his gentleness and love were combined with firmness on matters of principle. This once brought him into conflict with the governor of Yaroslavl, who on December 22, 1913 secured his transfer to Vilnius. The people were greatly saddened, and at a grand farewell ceremony he was made an honorary citizen of the city, the first time any bishop had been accorded this honour.

In Vilnius the Orthodox were a distrusted minority in a sea of Catholics. But once again Vladyka succeeded in winning the trust and respect of the heterodox. However, his work in this field was interrupted by the war. He worked first with refugees, and then with the soldiers at the front. He conducted services under bombardment and maintained the morale of the soldiers so well that he was awarded a military order for distinguished conduct.

When Vilnius was occupied by the Germans, Archbishop Tikhon was forced to go to Moscow, taking the relics of the holy three Vilnius martyrs with him. However, he was not detained long in Moscow and soon returned to the part of his diocese which was still in Russian hands. Here he often visited the soldiers in hospital and at the front and came under enemy fire.

Once he was entrusted by the Synod with travelling to Tobolsk, where Bishop Barnabas, supported by Rasputin, had on his own initiative carried out the glorification of a saint. As always, the archbishop carried out his obedience with tact, and succeeded in reconciling the warring parties.

During the war Archbishop Tikhon was frequently called upon to attend meetings of the Holy Synod. On January 29, 1917, on his way to one such meeting, he stopped in his native land of Pskov and served the Divine Liturgy and a moleben for the granting of victory to the Russian armies in the Trinity cathedral. That evening, however, at a meeting with the seminarians, he prophesied terrible times to come for Russia, and great sorrows and deprivations for everyone without exception...

After the abdication of the Tsar and the coming to power of the Provisional Government in March, 1917, Archbishop Tikhon was a member of the Synod under its new procurator, Prince Lvov. However, there was so much friction between Lvov and the members of the Synod that in April the procurator dismissed all of them except the future traitor of the Russian Church inside Russia, Archbishop Sergius of Finland. Sergius became head of the new Synod, which also included the future traitor of the Russian Church in America, Metropolitan Platon of Georgia.

### *Metropolitan of Moscow*

Since Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow had been among those removed from his see, it was necessary to elect a new metropolitan. On June 19, 1917, a congress of the clergy and laity of the diocese of Moscow met and on June 23 / July 6 elected Tikhon as Archbishop of Moscow and Kolomna. The decisive vote took place before the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God. However, this appointment caused some pain to him, because for a long time the lawful incumbent of the see of Moscow, Metropolitan Macarius, protested against his removal and did not want to recognize it as lawful. Some years later, the two holy hierarchs were reconciled.

Metropolitan Tikhon immediately set about visiting all the churches of his diocese, and became a member of the committee to prepare the election of delegates to the forthcoming Local Council of the Russian Church.

At about this time Bishop Joannicius of Archangelsk arrived at the Solovki monastery to supervise monastic life there. As he was coming towards the

monastery hospital in the company of the monastery's clergy and monks, he met a monk named Tikhon whom the brotherhood considered to be mad and who ran up to the window, opened it, stood on the sill and started to bless the approaching company with both hands, crying:

"We, humble Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, declare..."

Then he looked at the bishop who was just entering and said:

"and we bless you."

Surprised by this strange behaviour, the bishop asked the superior who this was. And he received the reply:

"This is Monk Tikhon, who already a year ago, having gone out of his mind, began to go up to the window and bless the people entering, saying similar things."

It is not known whether the bishop was satisfied by this reply. But soon the election of Archbishop Tikhon to the patriarchate gave a prophetic significance to the acts of Monk Tikhon...

### *The Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church*

On August 15, 1917, the Local Council of the Russian Church opened in the cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow attended by 564 delegates. On the day before the opening of the Council Archbishop Tikhon was promoted to the rank of Metropolitan. He was elected president of the Council by 407 votes to 33.

While the Council was in session, the Kremlin was being bombarded by the Bolsheviks, who were resisted only by a small force of junkers. When the Kremlin fell, everybody in the Council was very worried by the fate of the young men who had fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks, and on the fate of the holy things that had been fired at. The first to enter the Kremlin when access was made possible was Metropolitan Tikhon at the head of a small group of Council delegates. These delegates witnessed that the metropolitan went everywhere fearlessly, paying no attention to the savage soldiery.

The first major question before the Council was the restoration of the patriarchate, which had been abolished by Peter the Great in 1700. 200 delegates participated in the Section on the Higher Church Administration which was to decide this question, and for a long time the opponents of the patriarchate, led by the future renovationist Professor Titlinov, waged a bitter struggle against its restoration. However, the Bolshevik coup on October 25

changed the mood of the Council, and on October 31, at the suggestion of Count Paul Mikhailovich Grabbe, nominations of candidates took place.

On the first secret ballot, Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov received 101 votes, Archbishop Arsenius of Novgorod - 27 votes, and Metropolitan Tikhon - 23 votes. On the second ballot, only the first three candidates on the first ballot were considered. Archbishop Anthony got 159 votes, Archbishop Arsenius - 148 votes, and Metropolitan Tikhon - 125 votes. These three names were then put in a blessed urn and placed before the famous wonderworking Vladimir icon of the Mother of God. On the following morning, October 28, after the Divine Liturgy and a moleben served to the Holy Hierarchs of Moscow, Elder Alexis of Zossima hermitage drew out one of the names and handed it to Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, the future hieromartyr. Metropolitan Vladimir crossed himself and read out:

"Tikhon, Metropolitan of Moscow, Axios!"

A delegation from the Council headed by Metropolitan Vladimir went to the Trinity podvorye, where Metropolitan Tikhon was staying. After a moleben had been served, the Patriarch-elect said: "Your news about my election as Patriarch is for me that scroll on which was written: 'Tears, groans and mourning.' Such was the scroll that the Prophet Ezekiel had to eat. How many tears I shall have to swallow and how many groans let out in the patriarchal service that is set before me, and especially at such a terrible time! Like the ancient leader of the Hebrew people, Moses, I shall have to say to the Lord: 'Why dost Thou torment Thy servant? And why have I not found mercy before Thine eyes, that Thou shouldest lay upon me the burden of the whole of this people? Did I bear this people in my womb and give birth to it, that Thou shouldest say to me: bear it in your hands as a nanny bears a child? I alone cannot bear all this people, for it is heavy for me' (Numbers 11.11-14). From now on the care of all the Russian churches is laid upon me, and I must care for them every day. And who could be happy with that, even if he were among those who are stronger than me? But may the will of God be done! I find strength in the fact that I did not seek this election, and it came in spite of me and in spite of men, in accordance with the lot of God. I trust that the Lord Who has called me will Himself help me through His almighty grace to bear the burden laid upon me and will make it light. A consolation and encouragement for me is the fact that my election has not taken place without the will of the All-Pure Mother of God. Twice she, through the presence of her honourable Vladimir icon has been present in the cathedral of the Saviour at my election. This time the lot was drawn from her wonderworking image. I have as it were come under her honourable omophorion. May she the all-powerful one stretch out to me, the weak one, the hand of her help, and may she deliver this city and all the Russian land from every need and sorrow."

Then he withdrew to the Holy Trinity - St. Sergius Lavra to prepare to receive his lofty rank.

Soon the word went through Moscow that God had chosen, not "the cleverest" (umneyshij), Anthony, or "the strictest" (strozhayshij), Arsenius, but "the kindest" or "the quietest" (tishayshij), Tikhon. And on November 21 / December 4, 1917, Metropolitan Tikhon was enthroned as Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia in the Kremlin Dormition cathedral.

As he received the staff of St. Peter from Metropolitan Vladimir, the newly elected Patriarch expressed his sorrow at the tragic events that were taking place around him: "The patriarchate," he said, "is being restored in Rus' at a terrible time, in the midst of shooting and weapons of death-dealing fire. Probably it will itself be forced to resort more than once to bans in order to bring the disobedient to their senses and restore church order. But as in ancient times the Lord appeared to the Prophet Elijah not in the storm or in the earthquake but in the coolness and the breath of a quiet breeze, so now to our pusillanimous reproaches: 'Lord, the sons of Russia have abandoned Thy covenant, they have destroyed Thy altars, they have fired at the holy things of the churches and the Kremlin, they have slaughtered Thy priests' - the quiet breath of Thy words is heard: 'There are still seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the contemporary Baal and have not betrayed the true God.' And the Lord as it were says to me: 'Go and search for those for whose sake the Russian Land still stands and is maintained. But do not abandon the lost sheep who are doomed to destruction and slaughter - sheep who are truly pitiful. Shepherd them, and for this take this, the staff of goodwill. With it search out the lost sheep, return the oppressed, bind up the wounds of the wounded, strengthen the sick, destroy those who have grown fat and obstreperous, shepherd them with justice.' May the Chief Shepherd Himself help me in this, through the prayers of the All-Holy Birth-Giver of god and the Holy Hierarchs of Moscow. May God bless you all with His Grace. Amen."

After the Liturgy the Patriarch went round the Kremlin in a cross procession, sprinkling the wall with holy water.

Patriarch Tikhon immediately had to face a great test of his leadership as the new Bolshevik regime passed law after law restricting and robbing the Church, while excesses and murders of Church servers throughout the country increased. He did not wait for the delegates to the Council to return from their Christmas recess, but immediately took upon himself the whole responsibility for rebuking the communists. On January 19, 1918, he anathematized the Bolsheviks and their co-workers, saying: "I adjure all of you who are faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ not to commune with such outcasts of the human race in any matter whatsoever". Addressing the pastors and archpastors, he said: "Do not hesitate for a

moment in your spiritual activity, but with fiery zeal call your children to defend the rights of the Orthodox Church which are now being trampled on. Immediately organize spiritual unions, call on them to enter, not of necessity but voluntary, into the ranks of the spiritual warriors, who oppose external force with the force of their holy inspiration..." The decree ended with an appeal to defend the Church, if necessary, to the death.

This was read out by Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan to a closed session of the Council, which immediately supported the Patriarch with an epistle of its own.

In March, the Patriarch condemned the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which separated the Ukraine and Kiev, the mother of all Russian cities, in enemy hands and left millions of Russians in captivity, freeing the Bolsheviks to turn the war into a civil one. In May he made a triumphant journey to Petrograd, where the faithful greeted him en masse and with great joy. In July, on hearing of the killing of the Tsar and his family, he immediately served a pannikhida and funeral Liturgy during a session of the Council. He condemned the murders, and warned that anyone who did not likewise condemn it was also guilty of this most terrible of crimes.

Shortly afterwards some members of the Council suggested to the Patriarch that he take refuge abroad, so that he not share in the fate of the Tsar. "The flight of the Patriarch," replied his Holiness, "would play into the hands of the enemies of the Church. Let them do with me what they want."

### Civil War

In October, 1918 the Patriarch again condemned the Red terror, saying: "It is not our task to judge earthly governments. Every government allowed by God would attract blessing if it were truly a servant of the Lord for the benefit of its subjects and were a deterrent not for good deeds but for bad (Rom. 13.34). But now to you who use your powers for the persecution of the innocent, we direct our word of warning. Celebrate the anniversary of your rule by freeing the imprisoned, cease the bloodshed, violence, destruction, persecution of the faith, turn not to destroying, but to maintaining order and laws, give the people their well-deserved rest from civil war. Otherwise you will have to answer for all the righteous blood shed by you (Luke 11.51), and you who have taken the sword will perish by the sword (Matthew 26.52)."

When this epistle was read out at a united session of the Synod and the Higher Church Council, many tried to dissuade the Patriarch from publishing it, indicating that it would put him in great danger. The Patriarch listened carefully to all this, but did not change his decision. However, the Muscovites feared for the Patriarch's life, and organized 24-hour guards at his residence so that the alarm could be sounded immediately if he was arrested.

On November 24, 1918 his Holiness was subjected to house arrest, and a search was conducted in his flat. On January 6, 1919 he was released under guard. In the course of 1920 the Patriarch was often subjected to house arrest.

As the civil war progressed Patriarch Tikhon adopted a strictly apolitical stance that reflected the fact that there were millions of Russian Orthodox on either side of the conflict. Thus in the autumn of 1919, when the White armies had captured Orel and threatened Moscow, he issued an epistle to the clergy requiring that they not enter into the political struggle, while at the same time reminding them that the commandments of God are more binding than any human directives: "Remember the canonical rules, archpastors and fathers, and the testaments of the holy apostles: 'Guard yourselves from those who create discord and dissension'. Decline from participation in political parties and speeches, obey your human superiors in external matters (I Peter 2.14), give no reasons to the Soviet authorities to suspect you, submit to their commands insofar as they do not contradict faith and piety, for we must obey God, according to the apostolic exhortation, more than men (Acts 4.19; Galatians 1.10)."

On November 7/20, 1920, as the White armies boarded the ships taking them to Constantinople with several Russian hierarchs on board, he issued his famous ukaz no. 362, which authorized hierarchs who were out of touch with the centre to form their own autonomous administrations. This not only gave the émigré bishops the basis for their independent activity, but also helped the patriarchal Church to survive during the ascendancy of "the Living Church" and was used by the Catacomb Church after the apostasy of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927.

### *The Patriarch and the Commissars*

In 1921 a terrible famine struck the Volga region. Tikhon immediately authorized that the Church send aid to the starving, and in August appealed to foreign Christian leaders for help. But the Bolsheviks saw in this tragedy an opportunity to oppress the Church even further, and letters began appearing in the press accusing the Church of greed and demanding that all the Church's wealth should be used to feed the hungry. The Patriarch then issued a statement authorizing that all the church valuables could be donated, but only voluntarily and excluding those which were consecrated for use in the Divine Liturgy.

In February, 1922, the Bolsheviks decreed that the local soviets should seize all the valuables from the churches. This led to bloody clashes between the local soviets and believers. Many Orthodox suffered martyrdom defending the Church from sacrilege, many were brought to trial. On May 6 the Patriarch himself was placed under house arrest in the Troitskoye podvorye,

being accused of “resistance to the requisitioning of church valuables” under articles 62 and 119 of the criminal code.

At one such trial, that of the 54 in Moscow in May, the Patriarch appeared as a witness for the defence.

President: "Do you consider the state's laws obligatory or not?"

Patriarch: "Yes, I recognize them, *to the extent that they do not contradict the rules of piety.*"

President: "You ordered that your appeal calling on the people to disobey the authorities [this was the statement on church valuables] should be read out to the whole people.

Patriarch: "The authorities well know that in my appeal there was no call [to the people] to resist the authorities, but only to preserve their holy things, and in the name of their preservation to ask the authorities to allow their value to be paid in money, and, by helping their starving brothers in this way, to preserve their holy things."

President: "Well this call will cost the lives of your faithful servants."

At this point he pointed with his hand to those on trial.

Then, according to another source, the testimony of eye-witnesses, Patriarch Tikhon cast a loving look at the priests of the bench of the accused and said: 'I always said and continue to say... that I alone am guilty of everything, and this is only my Christian army, obediently following the commands of the head sent to her by God. But if a redemptive sacrifice is necessary, if the death of innocent sheep of the flock of Christ is necessary' – at this point the voice of the Patriarch was raised and it became audible in all the corners of the huge hall, and he himself as it were grew tall as, addressing the accused, he raised his hands and blessed them, loudly and distinctly pronouncing the words – 'I bless the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ to go to torment and death for Him'. The accused fell on their knees. Both the judges and the prosecutors fell silent... The session did not continue that evening. In the morning the verdict was pronounced: 18 priests were to be shot. When they were being led out of the hall, they began to chant: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life".

Among the critics of the Patriarch on the question of church valuables was a group of pro-revolutionary "renovationist" clergy, who created the so-called "Living Church". In this same month of May they took advantage of the

Patriarch's transfer to the Donskoy monastery to seize control of the Church's central administration.

Soon the renovationists were attacking several of the basic dogmas of the Church, and introduced several modernist innovations such as the new calendar and married bishops. They adopted a vigorously pro-Soviet and anti-patriarchal policy. The GPU supported them while imprisoning those clergy who remained loyal to the Patriarch. Soon most of the churches in Moscow and about a third of those in the whole country were in their hands. However, the masses of the people remained faithful to the Patriarch, who in April, 1922 was imprisoned in the Taganka prison pending his trial.

At this last liturgy in freedom, on April 24 / May 7, Fr. Michael Polsky concelebrated with the Patriarch in the village of Bogorodsk in Moscow. "Late at night, before this, he returned from the Cheka. He had only just been interrogated cruelly and for a long time. At home, among those close to him, who were tormented with expectation, the Patriarch said:

"'This time they interrogated me really strictly...'

"'What will happen to you?' asked one anxiously.

"'They promised to cut off my head,' replied the Patriarch with his usual geniality.

"He served the liturgy - as always, with not the slightest trace of nervousness or even tension in prayer. Looking at him, who was preparing himself for prison, and perhaps also for execution (that was a serious threat at the time), I involuntarily remembered the words of Christ: 'The prince of this world come, and will find nothing of his own in Me'. Let them accuse, they will find nothing, he will be innocent..."

At their second council, which met in Moscow in April, 1923, the renovationists first heaped praises on the revolution, which they called a "Christian creation", on the Soviet government, which they said was the first government in the world that strove to realize "the ideal of the Kingdom of God", and on Lenin: "First of all, we must turn with words of deep gratitude to the government of our state, which, in spite of the slanders of foreign informers, does not persecute the Church... The word of gratitude and welcome must be expressed by us to the only state in the world which performs, without believing, that work of love which we, believers, do not fulfil, and also to the leader of Soviet Russia, V.I. Lenin, who must be dear also to church people..."

The council tried Patriarch Tikhon in absentia, and deprived him not only of his clerical orders but also of his monasticism, calling him thenceforth

"layman Basil Bellavin". Then the patriarchate itself was abolished, its restoration being called a counter-revolutionary act. Finally, some further resolutions were adopted allowing white clergy to become bishops, and priests to remarry, and introducing the Gregorian calendar. When the decisions of the council were taken to the Patriarch for his signature, he calmly wrote: "Read. The council did not summon me, I do not know its competence and for that reason cannot consider its decision lawful."

46 "bishops" out of the 73 who attended the council signed the decree condemning the Patriarch. One of them, Joasaph (Shishkovsky), told Fr. Basil Vinogradov: "The leaders of the council Krasnitsky and Vvedensky gathered all those present at the 'council' of bishops for this meeting. When several direct and indirect objections to these leaders' proposal to defrock the Patriarch began to be expressed, Krasnitsky quite openly declared to all present: 'He who does not immediately sign this resolution will only leave this room straight for the prison.' The terrorized bishops (including Joasaph himself) did not find the courage to resist in the face of the threat of a new prison sentence and forced labour in a concentration camp and... signed, although almost all were against the resolution. None of the church people had any doubt that the 'council's' sentence was the direct work of Soviet power and that now a criminal trial and bloody reprisal against the Patriarch was to be expected at any time."

The pressures on the Patriarch were mounting inexorably, with daily visits from the GPU agent Tuchkov, who made blackmail threats to force him to make concessions to the State. (Tikhon called him "an angel of Satan".) In April, the government announced that the Patriarch was about to go on trial on charges arising from the trials of the 54 in Moscow and of Metropolitan Benjamin in Petrograd the previous year. However, partly because the authorities wanted to give the renovationist council the opportunity to condemn him first, and partly, later, as the result of an ultimatum issued by the British foreign minister Lord Curzon, which was supported by an outcry in the British and American press, the trial was postponed to June 17.

At the beginning of June, the Patriarch fell ill and was transferred from the Donskoy monastery to the Taganka prison. There he was able to receive only official Soviet newspaper accounts of the Church struggle, which greatly exaggerated the successes of the renovationists. Feeling that his presence at the helm of the Church was absolutely necessary, and that of his two enemies, the renovationists and the communists, the renovationists were the more dangerous, the Patriarch decided to make concessions to the government in order to be released. As he said: "Reading the newspapers in prison, with each passing day I was more and more horrified that the renovationists were taking the Church into their hands. If I had known that their successes were so meagre and that the people was not following them, I would never have come out of prison." But, being in ignorance of the true state of affairs, on

June 3/16 and again on June 18 / July 1 he issued his famous "confession", in which he repented of all his anti-Soviet acts (including the anathema against the Bolsheviks), and "finally and decisively" set himself apart "from both the foreign and the internal monarchist White-guard counter-revolutionaries".

This "confession" was undoubtedly a compromise, a concession in favour of the Bolsheviks, which sowed no little confusion and perplexity in the ranks of the Orthodox. However, as Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky) points out: "1) it did not annul the anathema in the name of the Russian Orthodox Church on Soviet power, 2) he did not declare himself a friend of Soviet power and its co-worker, 3) it did not invoke God's blessing on it, 4) it did not call on the Russian people to obey this power as God-established, 5) it did not condemn the movement for the re-establishment of the monarchy in Russia, and 6) it did not condemn the Whites' struggle to overthrow Soviet power. By his declaration Patriarch Tikhon only pointed to the way of acting which he had chosen for the further defence and preservation of the Russian Orthodox Church. How expedient this way of acting was is another question,... but in any case Patriarch Tikhon did not cross that boundary which had to separate him, as head of the Russian Orthodox Church, from the godless power."

Moreover, as reported in *Izvestia* on June 12, 1924, the Patriarch managed to write to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), as it were replying to the perplexities elicited by his words on "walling himself off" from the "counter-revolution" of the Church Abroad: "I wrote this for the authorities, but you sit and work" ...

Tikhon was released on June 27, 1923, and his appearance in public - he had aged terribly in prison - was enough to send the Living Church into a sharp and irreversible decline. They remained dangerous as long as they retained the favour of the authorities; but by 1926 the authorities were already turning to others (the Gregorians, then Metropolitan Sergius) as better suited for the task of destroying the Church. And by the end of the Second World War the last remaining renovationists had been absorbed into the neo-renovationist Soviet Moscow Patriarchate. However, the Patriarch bitterly repented of his "repentance"; he said that if he had known how weak the Living Church really was, he would not have signed the "confession" and would have stayed in prison. And when he was sadly asked why he had said that he was no longer an enemy of the Soviet government, he replied: "But I did not say that I was its (i.e. the Soviet government's) friend..."

We see a striking parallel between the destinies and decisions of Patriarch Tikhon and Tsar Nicholas here. Both were peacemakers, ready to lay down their own lives for the sake of their flock. Both, in the interests of saving lives, made fateful decisions which both came bitterly to regret - the Tsar his decision to abdicate the throne, and the Patriarch his decision to "repent" of his anti-Soviet behaviour. But in spite of these mistakes, both were granted

the crown of life from the Lord, Who looks on the heart and intentions of men, forgiving them their unintended consequences...

Protopriest Lev Lebedev writes: "On freeing Patriarch Tikhon from prison, [the Bolsheviks] at the same time officially *forbade* the commemoration of his name during the Divine services, as *a criminal* whose accusation *had not been removed*...For violating this ban, according to the circular of Narkomiust N 254 of December 8, 1923, those guilty (that is, those who would continue to consider the Patriarch the head of the Church and commemorate him during the Divine services) were subjected to *the punishment appointed for criminals* – three years in the camps! But in spite of everything the people, the priests and deacons *continued to commemorate him!*"

The Patriarch, though now released from prison, was severely curtailed in what he could do. Once he told Fr. Michael Polsky, who brought him greetings and bows from bishops and priests who were in prison: "It's better to sit in prison. After all, I only consider myself to be in freedom, but I can do nothing. I send a hierarch to the south, and he lands up in the north; I send another to the west, and they take him to the east."

On July 15, the Patriarch anathematized the Living Church, declaring: "They have separated themselves from the body of the Ecumenical Church and deprived themselves of God's favour, which resides only in the Church of Christ. Consequently, all arrangements made during our absence by those ruling the Church, since they had neither legal right nor canonical authority, are non-valid and void, and all actions and sacraments performed by bishops and clergymen who have forsaken the Church are devoid of God's grace and power; the faithful taking part in such prayers and sacraments shall receive no sanctification thereby, and are subject to condemnation for participating in their sin..."

Large numbers of parishes, especially in such important urban centres as Petrograd (through Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky)) and Voronezh (through Archbishop Peter (Zverev)), now renounced renovationism, and influential renovationist hierarchs such as Metropolitan Sergius hastened (and yet not very quickly, as Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene of Glukhov pointed out) to make public confessions to the Patriarch.

The authorities then tried to make the Patriarch introduce several of the innovations which the renovationists had adopted. One of these was the new calendar. For a short time, the Patriarch was in favour of this, thinking that the other Orthodox Churches had accepted the new calendar. However, the people were against it, and when he received a telegram from Archbishop Anastasius of Kishinev, the future first-hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, saying that the other Orthodox Churches had not accepted the new calendar, the Patriarch reversed his decision. He informed the authorities

about this, and noted with some irony that he did not quite understand why the secular authorities should be interested in changing to the new style...

"The brutal persecution," writes Fr. Demetrius Serfes, "did not let up during the entire remaining period of the Patriarch's life. They wished thereby to make him their obedient slave, as Metropolitan Sergius subsequently became, but he remained a guardian of Orthodoxy. Never during the Church's entire history had it ever been confronted by such a cruel and evil foe. The Patriarch literally fell ill after every encounter with Tuchkov, who directed Soviet ecclesiastical policy. The Patriarch was not afraid of martyrdom. The most savage death would probably have been easier for him than having to be constantly concerned over exiled bishops, priests and faithful laymen. On the other hand, as the breakdown which took place during his imprisonment indicated, it would seem that it was essential to do everything possible without changing the fundamental principles of the Church and its internal freedom, so that the recent state of affairs under which the sheep were abandoned to the mercy of wolves, would not occur again. The sheep however, realized that their shepherd had not forsaken them, but had been parted from them against his will. And they showed their love for him whenever possible."

The Patriarch was in effect powerless. As he said: "It's better to sit in prison - you know, I'm only considered to be free, but in fact I can do nothing. I send a hierarch to the south and he turns up in the north, I send him to the west, and they take him to the east."

In February, 1924, one of the renovationist leaders, Krasnitsky, with GPU backing, tried to join the patriarchal Church. After some wavering, the Patriarch rejected this, though the effort caused him to fall ill. Then Patriarch Gregory IV of Constantinople, who had just caused a schism in his own Church by introducing the new calendar, tried to reconcile the Patriarchal Church with the "Living Church". The Patriarch decisively rejected this attempt.

On March 21, 1924 the case against Patriarch Tikhon was shelved.

The Bolsheviks now resorted to another tactic. Instead of trying to remove the Patriarch, whose popularity was too solidly entrenched among the people, they tried to force him into accepting legalization by the state on terms that involved more-or-less total submission to them. To this end they applied blackmail - the threat of shooting several bishops. Under this terrible moral torture, the Patriarch's health began to deteriorate...

At about this time the Patriarch confided to his close friend and personal physician, Michael Zhizhilenko, the future Catacomb Bishop Maximus, that he feared that soon the "political" demands of the Soviets would go beyond

the bounds of faithfulness to Christ, and that the Church, in order to remain faithful, would have to go into the catacombs.

On December 7, 1924, the Patriarch sent an epistle to all the clergy of the Church, in which he wrote: "Whoever was in the administration of the Living Church in the HCA cannot take up any further administrative position in our Church. And not only can he not be an administrator: he cannot have a vote during a Council." This was an important decree, because it disqualified the man who eventually became "patriarch" after Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, who had been a member of the renovationist Higher Church Administration.

After the publication of this epistle, the Bolsheviks decided to kill the Patriarch – or perhaps only frighten him by killing the man closest to him, his cell-attendant **James Anisimovich Polozov** (according to another version, Sergeyevech Ostroumov). He began serving the patriarch in 1902, when he was in America. On returning from America, in 1920, James married Princess Drutskaya-Sokolinskaya. On March 19, 1921 he was arrested at the patriarchal Trinity podvorye and cast into the Lubyanka, and then into Taganka prison. The order was signed by Dzerzhinsky himself. Immediately the patriarch sent a letter to the investigator, asking him to free James Anisimovich. A few days after the arrest, his first daughter was born, but the mother's emotion was such that it affected the child, who died eight days after birth. On August 11 James Anisimovich was condemned to one year's imprisonment on Solovki. But the sentence was not carried into effect, and he was released because the GPU had only arrested him in order to exert pressure on the patriarch. On March 22, 1922 he was arrested again. The patriarch said: "They don't need him. Let them take me." Again, James Anisimovich was interrogated only once, and for a long time was not even accused. In the end he was accused that "in every way he aided and made easier the coming to the head of the Church of counter-revolutionary elements", but he refused to sign this. He was cast into the Lubyanka, but fell seriously ill there with a nervous disease, so he was transferred to a prison hospital. His wife did everything she could to have him released. By October she had obtained his release on condition that he promised not to leave the city. When she came to take him home he was in such a state that she did not recognize him, and the whole of his journey home he was stopping and weeping. Two weeks after his release a son was born to the couple. The patriarch became his godfather.

On the evening of December 22, 1924 another attempt was made on the life of the patriarch or his faithful cell-attendant – it is not clear who. In any case, it was the cell-attendant who was killed. Jane Swan writes: "... The Patriarch was standing before the icons in his bedroom praying. Hearing a shot, he crossed himself in the direction of the shot, then opened the door. For a moment, the door could not be opened for something was obstructing it. Then it suddenly gave and there James lay covered with blood, half on the floor

and half against the door. Two men stood there. On seeing the Patriarch, one of them grabbed his own head with his hands and turning, ran out. The other followed, also running. Tikhon shouted,

"Stop, what have you done? You have killed a man!"

"James opened his eyes, looked at the Patriarch, and then died. The police were called at once, and next day a notice was printed in *Izvestia* that two thieves had entered the apartment of Citizen Bellavin and stolen a fur coat. No mention was made of the murder and no investigation was ever made. Curiously enough, the Bolsheviks made an issue over James' burial [which took place on December 25 before a huge crowd of worshippers]. The Patriarch wished to have him buried at the monastery and for a while the Bolsheviks refused. Finally it was allowed, but almost as soon as the grave was made, the government announced that they were building a crematorium on that spot. Tikhon had the grave removed next to the walls of the church and eventually his own body was to be placed in the grave next to James'. This incident shattered the little health which remained to the Patriarch and his attacks [of angina] increased."

Holy Martyr James was canonized by the Russian Church Abroad in 1981.

According to the witness of Bishop Maximus (Zhizhilenko), during the murder of his cell-attendant, the Patriarch remained in a chair in the same room, but the murderer did not see him.

### Repose

On January 12, 1925, the Patriarch was admitted to a small private hospital run by Dr. Bakunina. Even here he came under pressure from the GPU agent Tuchkov. However, his health recovered somewhat, and for a while he was able to officiate in church again. On March 23, he consecrated two bishops. But the following evening he arrived back at the hospital exhausted after a meeting of the Holy Synod.

According to the official version of the Patriarch's death, he died at 11.45 p.m. on March 25 / April 7, 1925, "at the end of the feast of the Annunciation". There is no hint in the official version that the Patriarch may have been poisoned. But this is the inference to be drawn from the following account by the Catacomb Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin), which he received from the Patriarch's cell-attendant:

"The Patriarch continued his work. On the Annunciation [March 25], having celebrated the Liturgy, he was completely healthy. At four o'clock Metropolitan Seraphim of Tver [a suspected GPU agent who later joined

Metropolitan Sergius' false synod] came to him. The Patriarch told him that he would serve the next day, but Seraphim said:

"Do not serve, your Holiness, have a rest. You are very tired and weak."

"Seraphim left at eight o'clock in the evening.

"The Patriarch felt well and was getting ready to serve the next day. But suddenly there was a ring at the door. When they opened the door, a doctor entered. The doctor said:

"Your Holiness! You rang us and asked us to come since you were weak. Here I am to examine you and prescribe you some medicines."

"The Patriarch said: 'But no. I feel fine.'

"Okay," said the doctor, 'but just allow me to examine you. Your pulse is weak. You must drink some medicine.'

"The Patriarch asked: 'Why have you come and not my doctor, who always looks after me?'

"He's not at home now, he's on call, but I was at home - so here I am," replied the doctor. 'In an hour's time I shall send you a mixture.'

"An hour after the doctor had left, at ten o'clock in the evening, [the cell-attendant] Mark brought the Patriarch a mixture and said that the doctor had ordered him to drink a spoonful.

"Give it to me," said the Patriarch.

"Mark poured out a spoonful of the mixture and the Patriarch drank it. Immediately he began to vomit (be sick). The cell-attendants Stratonicus and Mark rang the doctor. After a few minutes the doctor appeared. The Patriarch was lying down.

"What's the matter with him?" asked the doctor.

"The doctor prescribed a mixture and ordered us to give him one spoonful," replied Mark.

"The doctor demanded to see the mixture immediately. They gave it him. On seeing it, the doctor threw up his hands and immediately sent the Patriarch to hospital. Mark and Stratonicus took him out and put him in the carriage. They got in themselves and accompanied him to the hospital. There they gave him some milk, and prepared some baths, but nothing helped.

Within an hour and a half Patriarch Tikhon had died. The cell-attendants took him back. At three o'clock the Patriarch was laid out as a corpse at home. I write this from the words of the cell-attendants Mark and Stratonicus, who were with the Patriarch in the place of the murdered James."

Just as the official version of the Patriarch's death may have been tampered with, so his official will, which was flagrantly pro-Soviet, was almost certainly a forgery. That was the opinion of Bishop Maximus and Protopriest Basil Vinogradov. As Bishop Gregory Grabbe writes: "We know that on the day of the death of the Patriarch the question of the epistle [his will], which was demanded by Tuchkov, was discussed. Apparently the last conversation between the Patriarch and Metropolitan Peter was precisely about this. The room in which the Patriarch died was immediately sealed by Tuchkov. Only after several days did Tuchkov give what purported to be the will of his Holiness to the two metropolitans to be taken to the newspaper.

"But Fr. B. Vinogradov tells us, from the words of people who were near the room of his Holiness the Patriarch, that during the conversation with Metropolitan Peter the Patriarch was heard to say: 'I cannot do that.' Then it is very important to draw attention to the fact that at the meeting of the assembled bishops the notorious 'will' was NOT proclaimed. Fr. Vinogradov is right in emphasizing that Tuchkov, in allowing the meeting, would undoubtedly have demanded its proclamation if it had really been signed by the Patriarch. Moreover, Metropolitan Peter in his first address as locum tenens did not mention the will...."

"Nevertheless," writes Protopriest Lev Lebedev, "a week after the death of the Patriarch the document was published in the newspaper Izvestia under the title 'Testamentary Epistle' of Patriarch Tikhon (later it was simply called 'Testament'). *They overlooked* a series of absurdities. Thus the 'Testament' (that is, that which is given before death) began with the words: 'Now we... *having recovered from illness*, entering again on the service of the Church...' and so on. The heading: 'By the mercy of God Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow *and the whole Russian Church*' is illiterate: he always wrote 'and all Russia'. The 'Testament' is dated 7 April, 1925, a date only according to the new style, whereas the Patriarch *always* used a double date (according to the old and the new styles). Finally, Metropolitan Peter *said nothing* to the almost 60 hierarchs assembled for the burial of his Holiness on April 12 about the existence of the 'Testament', which he could not have failed to do in view of its exceptional importance if it had been signed. And then he did not distribute it to the dioceses and parishes, which he would have been *obliged* to do as Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne. But the most weighty proof of the its fabrication lies in the fact that Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), who agreed to full cooperation with Bolshevism and on July 29, 1927 wrote his infamous 'Declaration', in which he emphasises the direct *succession* of his line of friendship with Soviet power from Patriarch Tikhon, says not a word about

the 'Testament' and does not refer to it, which he would unfailingly have done if he had considered it genuine."

Schema-Monk Epiphanius (Chernov) has further pointed out that the wording of the Patriarch's will is lifted almost word for word from the renovationist appeal published on April 30 / May 12, 1922 under the heading: "To all the believing sons of the Orthodox Church of Russia". Moreover, although "the official Soviet 'variant of the death' of Patriarch Tikhon was timed to take place in the clinic of Dr. Bakunina", it ends with the words "Moscow. Donskoj monastery". "This means that the writing and signing of this 'document' took place and was finished in the Donskoy monastery, and not in the clinic of Dr. Bakunina! Which corresponds to the hidden truth..."

According to the Patriarch's cell attendant, Constantine Mikhailovich Pashkevich, his last words, uttered in an unusually strict tone, were: "I shall now go to sleep... deeply and for a long time. The night will be long and very dark."

The burial of the Patriarch took place on March 30 / April 12, 1925 in the presence of fifty-eight bishops and enormous crowds. There has never been such a huge demonstration of religious feeling in Russia from that time to the present day. He was buried in the old winter church of the Donskoy monastery.

### *Glorification*

The monastery was closed in 1927, and it was rumoured that the monks had hidden the relics to protect them from the communists. However, in May, 1991, after a fire that damaged the church, a search commenced for the relics of the Patriarch. Hearts sank when, after hours of digging beneath the marble slab bearing the Patriarch's name, they finally uncovered a burial vault only to find it contained nothing but cobwebs. Closer inspection, however, revealed that this chamber was only part of the underground heating system. They also noticed that the heating ducts directly beneath the assumed burial place were firmly secured with cement and not limestone as elsewhere in the system. More significantly, this part of the system lay not on the ground but on top of a massive cement slab. The care with which it was all arranged made it doubtful that this was the work of chekists. Two more days of intense digging - and the real sepulchre was uncovered. It may have been that this was the plan from the first, which would explain why only a few hierarchs were admitted into the church for the actual burial. The relics, which were almost entirely incorrupt in spite of the extreme dampness of the vault, were discovered on February 19, 1992 (according to another source, February 22).

On March 23 / April 5, 1992, 50 patriarchal bishops solemnly transferred the relics of Patriarch Tikhon to the monastery's main church. Witnesses, who included Catacomb Christians, reported that "it was even possible to

recognize the face of the Patriarch from his incorrupt visage, and his manta and mitre were also preserved in complete incorruption. Witnesses also speak about a beautiful fragrance and an unusual feeling of reverential peace at that moment. But then, as some patriarchal clerics confirm, on contact with the air the relics crumbled, or - as the Catacomb Christians remark - the relics were not given into the hands of the Moscow Patriarchate. Then they buried them in plaster - a blasphemous act from an Orthodox point of view..."

At the reliquary there is an icon in which the Saint is depicted holding a scroll with the words: "My children, stray not from the path of the Cross, which has been sent to us by God."

(Sources: M.E. Gubonin, Akty Svyateishago Patriarkha Tikhona, Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1994; Metropolitan Manuel, Russkie Pravoslavniye Ierarkhi, Kuibyshev, 1966, reprinted Erlangen, 1989, vol. 6; Jane Swan, A Biography of Patriarch Tikhon, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1964; Protopresbyter Mikhail Polsky, Polozhenie Tserkvi v Sovietskoj Rossii, Jerusalem, 1931; The New Martyrs of Russia, Montreal: The Monastery Press, 1972; I.M. Andreyev, Russia's Catacomb Saints, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982, pp. 56-57; Zhitia i Tvorenia Russkikh Svyatykh, Moscow, 2001, pp. 992-1047; Fr. Epiphanius Chernov, Tserkov' Katakombnaya na Zemlye Rossijskoj (MS); Alexander Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago, Collins, 1974, vol. I; Fr. Demetrius Serfes, The Life and Works of St. Tikhon the Confessor, Patriarch of Moscow, vol. I, Old Forge, PA, pp. 37-38; Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), Zhizneopisaniye Blazhenneishago Antoniya, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galistskago, Montreal, 1960, vol. VI, pp. 114, 151-152; "Vospominaniya Skhiepiskopa Pyotra [Ladygina]", Tserkovnaya Zhizn', NN 3-4, March-April, 1985, p. 78 and NN 5-6, May-June, 1985, p. 148; Moskovskij Paterik, Moscow: "Stolitsa", 1991; "Patriarch Tikhon's Relics Discovered", Orthodox America, March-April/May-June, 1992, p. 11; "Preemvstvinnost' Grekha", a publication of the parish of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, Tsaritsyn, pp. 7-9; "Zhizneopisaniye Svyashchenomuchenika O. Sergiya Mechova, sostavlennoye ego dukhovnymi chadami", Nadezhda, 16, Basel-Moscow, 1993, p. 125; Eugene Polyakov, personal communication; Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), Zavet Svyatogo Patriarkha, Moscow, 1996; V. Petrenko, "Sv. Patriarkh Vserossijskij Tikhon", Vestnik I.P.Ts., N 1 (11), 1998, pp. 24-27; M.B. Danilushkin (ed.), Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi, 1917-1970, St. Petersburg: Voskreseniye, 1997, p. 201; Protopriest Lev Lebedev, Velikorossia, St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 572-573, 577, 582; M.V. "S grustiu o patriarkhe Tikhone", Pravoslavnaya Rus', N 2 (1861), January 15/28, 2009, pp. 7-9; [http://www.pstbi.ru/bin/code.exe/frames/m/ind\\_oem.html?/ans](http://www.pstbi.ru/bin/code.exe/frames/m/ind_oem.html?/ans))