

REFLECTION

Old Weapons

by Guillermo de Carndonagh

We have all seen film and videos of the awful power that modern weapons of war give to the user. The radio reports today contain brief reports of the continued resistance of a small force to the armies of one of the last multiethnic empires. The weapons used by both sides have destroyed a city and killed thousands.

In 1917 a very different sort of war was launched with very different sorts of weapons. A call to penance, conversion and prayer was issued and a spiritual war was initiated for the conversion of Russia. The prayer to be used was the Rosary. In 1989 a successful battle in this war occurred when the Soviet empire began to crumble, as its control over the captive states of eastern Europe failed. In a much weakened state this multiethnic empire thrashes about in the last stages of disintegration, and a new battle call is sounding. A new spiritual battle just as real, and just as seemingly hopeless, as the overthrow of the Soviet empire is being initiated. A spiritual battle using the same weapons and with expanded goals is being proposed.

This call will be more difficult for some to respond to because it will require them to set aside old preconceptions and prejudices. Pope John Paul II has asked us all to pray and work for union with our separated Orthodox brothers and sisters. The Pope knows the Eastern church well, with many friends, relatives, and a grandmother from amongst the Eastern Christians.

Werenfried van Straaten, the founder of Aid to the Church in Need, along with the World Apostolate of Fatima have joined the Holy Father in this call to Pray for unity: "The only salvation left to us is the joint conversion of both Russia and ourselves. The Churches in the West and in Russia must come to their senses and together take the final step along the road to reconciliation."

This battle should appeal to Gregorian Rite Catholics; like our quest to reestablish our Rite it is "hopeless" and it aims to strengthen and reinvigorate tradition and orthodoxy. The booklet "We fly to Thy Patronage O Holy Mother of God" quoted above and below is distributed by Aid to the Church in Need and contains beautiful reflections on the mysteries of the Rosary along with other prayers to assist us in praying for Holy Union.

Intention for the Fifth Glorious Mystery

Mighty Queen of Heaven and earth, now that the need of your children has reached its peak, we entrust the whole of divided Christianity into your motherly hands. Bless all those who work for reconciliation and love. Keep us in the love of your Divine Son and direct our hearts to that place where we hope at last to share in your Glory.