

- 1 Two thousand years ago, some leaders of the Roman Empire were called “Caesar”. It is from that word that the Germans (at the time of the First World War) named their leader “the Kaiser”. Also from the word “Caesar”, the Russians called their emperor “the Czar”.
- 2 Nicholas II was the last Russian Czar. He refused to take advice except from his wife, who was under the influence of the mad Rasputin. Nicholas led the country to a disastrous war with Japan in 1904, and he resisted all moves towards any kind of democracy. He gave poor leadership over 23 years, and particularly during the First World War against Germany, when 2 million Russian soldiers died in 1915 alone, and starvation gripped the country. All these factors contributed to the need for a major change. The Russian Revolution took place in 1917 and Communism became the way of life as the country became known as “the Soviet Union”.
- 3 During the night of 16th/17th July 1918, Tsar Nicholas II and his family were killed on the orders of local Soviet officials. After being shot, their bodies were burned and thrown down a mine shaft.
- 4 After the Fall of Communism in 1991 and the break-up of the Soviet Union, the bones of the Czar and his family were eventually DNA-matched with such distant relatives as Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. The Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, decreed that the remains of the Russian Royal Family would be buried on 1st March 1998. In the Russian Orthodox Calendar, that day is marked as “Forgiveness Sunday”, when people look at their past mistakes, pray for God’s forgiveness, and consider how they can make up for what they have done wrong.

5 *Let us pray:*

**Loving Lord,**

**you tell us in the Bible  
that whatever wrong we have done  
you tread down our faults  
to the bottom of the sea.** Mic 7<sup>19</sup>

**We know there is no need  
to keep thinking  
about what we have done  
in the past,** Is 43<sup>18</sup>  
**because you pardon  
the wrongs we have done,  
and you delight  
in showing mercy.** Mic 7<sup>18</sup>

**You bind up all our wounds  
and you renew us  
by your love.** Ps 147<sup>3</sup> Zeph 3<sup>17</sup>

**Lord, you love  
all that you have made,  
and it is your very nature  
to love and forgive.** Wis 11<sup>24</sup>

**Lead us to be generous  
in accepting and forgiving others  
in the same way  
as you accept and forgive us.**

**Amen.**

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in  
*'Praying Each Day of the Year'*,  
a 3-volume book  
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine  
to research this topic further.

This material is part of  
the prayer and education website  
of the De La Salle Brothers  
in Great Britain:

[www.prayingeachday.org](http://www.prayingeachday.org)