

Holy Martyrs

Acts 22:20- And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him (KJV)

Remembering the Holy Martyrs through the centuries is essential for believers. The witness of the Holy Martyrs is part of the essence of God's Holy Church. The Holy Martyrs teach, inspire and serve as examples for every generation. Protomartyr Stephen is a lasting example for believers down through the centuries. St. George and St. Demetrios are very well remembered for their great courage. St. Lazarus and the Holy Kosovo Martyrs continue to inspire Serbs world-wide. Believers learn from and turn to the Holy Martyrs as intercessors before God. Nourishing the hunger in the soul includes embracing God's Holy Martyrs.

Revelation 2:13- I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. (KJV)

The believer's love for God's Holy Martyrs is very well-placed and well-invested. Conditions in each generation summon forth Holy Martyrs to witness for Christ. The Holy Martyrs' commitment to Jesus Christ is until death and life-everlasting. Freely and consciously the Holy Martyrs go forth and give themselves for Christ. God's Holy Church honors and remembers the Holy Martyrs in Divine services. The Holy Martyrs are called to mind in the celebration of the Serbian Slava. Celebration of the Holy Mystery of Marriage includes reference to Holy Martyrs. The Church's importance ascribed to the Holy Martyrs cannot be over-estimated.

Revelation 17:6- And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (KJV)

The Holy Scriptures provide important references and lessons of the Holy Martyrs. Serious believers turn to the Holy Martyrs in prayer throughout the course of life. Families have the Holy Martyrs as their Patronal Saints and fervent intercessors. Communities bear the names of Holy Martyrs as lasting witness to their memories. The Holy Martyr St. Panteleimon comes to mind when believers seek healing. Holy Martyrs maintain the deepest hope, faith and love in following Jesus Christ. The Holy Martyrs nourish believers seeking strength in life's most difficult times. God's Holy Martyrs benefit the salvation of souls heeding their complete witness.

The Eve of Vidovdan. June 14/27, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic