

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)

The Church has been enriched and shaped by the lives of martyrs for centuries. Martyrs give their lives for the Lord God as expressions and proof of their love. The faith of the martyrs remains unquestioned and serves as a lasting example. The martyrs are sources of inspiration for believers faced with difficult decisions. Martyrdom can come at different stages of life under a variety of circumstances, Believers studying and examining the lives of the martyrs find all ages represented. Young children to elderly adults and all ages in between are among the martyrs. Martyrdom continues down to the present as verification of the deep value of faith.

Revelations 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)

Death comes to the martyrs in many different forms and for various reasons. Some martyrs lose their lives as individuals and others as part of large groups. Families have been martyred and the loss of life has had far reaching effects. Each generation has the benefit of learning from martyrs of earlier times. Lasting inspirations comes from the witness of martyrs in defense of the faith. Serbian Orthodox Christians have many martyrs to turn to for intercessory prayer. The Church's liturgical calendar remembers martyrs throughout the year. Martyrs often face a choice between temporary earthly rewards or eternal life.

Revelations 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)

Martyrs are firmly incorporated into the liturgical services of the Church. Specific services are written and celebrated for certain martyrs during the year. Services to the martyrs describe the depth of their faith and form of witness. The Church services for marriage and for a Slava reference the Holy Martyrs. Believers draw strength from the Akathists devoted to Martyrs of the Church. Vivid details of the Martyrs lives serve to enrich and inspire attentive believers. The Church remembers the Holy Martyrs known and those known only to God. Believers of each generation have continuously benefitted from the Holy Martyrs.

Holy Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates. June 8/21, 2023.

Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic