



Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia

In the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Dear in Christ Fathers, brothers, sisters, and children,

Today we celebrate the memory of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, the heavenly intercessors for our parish. Their memory is precious to us for many reasons—some personal, some that relate to the entire Russian Church.

Since ancient times, the Christian Church has been strengthened by examples of its martyrs' unshakable faith. These examples, passed down through generations of Christians, have nurtured and strengthened the Holy Church. From the times of the Apostles, Christians have gathered around the holy relics of martyrs, celebrating their memory and looking up to their standing in faith despite torture and persecution as a source of strength and inspiration in their own spiritual lives.

Undoubtedly, the new martyrs and confessors of the Russian Church recalled the holy examples of the ancient martyrs as they themselves were tortured, persecuted, and exiled by the Communist



regime. Countless faithful of the twentieth century—members of the Royal Family and peasants, professors and the illiterate, the rich and the poor, clergy and lay people, men, women, and children—united around the memory of Christian martyrs, and through their intercession were able to defeat the torturers through unwavering standing in their faith in Christ.



History always repeats itself not only in its worst examples but also in its best. In our time, we, the spiritual and very often direct descendants of the countless new martyrs and confessors of the Russian Church, united around their memory, and through their intercession became witnesses of the great miracle of God—the unification of the Russian Church after eighty years of separation. Built at the time when the



executioners were still in the Kremlin, our little church in Mulino became the first temple in the world to be consecrated to the memory of the holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia. But today, only a quarter of a century later, we see churches honoring the new martyrs and confessors not only outside of Russia, but also in places where not too long ago were heard pre-execution prayers of the new martyrs. Now, as if continuing their prayers, the words of the Divine Liturgy ascend from the holy ground of the Butovo polygon and other places soaked in the blood of the new martyrs.

Let us always have the holy example of the new martyrs before our eyes as we live our lives. Let us find the source of their strength and drink of this fountain of immortality. As we go about our lives, sometimes giving to God five or ten minutes of our day, sometimes a couple of hours from our week, sometimes even less, let us remember those who gave all, their whole lives and their earthly end to God. Let us ask that God, through the prayers of the holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia, grant us strength to live our lives the way they lived theirs—in an unshakable faith in Christ and in service to His Holy Church.

Amen!