

The Holy Royal Martyrs of Russia, Emperor Nicholas II, Empress Alexandra, and Their Children, Alexis, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia.



**The Holy Royal Martyrs of Russia, Emperor Nicholas II, Empress Alexandra,
and Their Children, Alexis, Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia
Whom the Holy Church Celebrates on July 4.**

Tsar Nicholas II was the son of Alexander III, who reposed in the arms of Saint John of Kronstadt. Having been raised in piety, Tsar Nicholas ever sought to rule in a spirit consonant with the precepts of Orthodoxy and the best traditions of his nation. Tsaritsa Alexandra, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria of England, and a convert from Lutheranism, was noted for her piety and compassion for the poor and suffering. Their five children were beloved of all for their kindness, modesty, and guilelessness.

Amidst the political turmoil of 1917, Tsar Nicholas selflessly abdicated the throne for what he believed was the good of his country. Although he had abdicated willingly, the revolutionaries put him and his family under house arrest, then sent them under guard to Tobolsk and finally Ekaterinburg. A letter written from Tobolsk by Grand Duchess Olga, the eldest of the children, shows their nobility of soul. She writes, "My father asks that I convey to all those who have remained devoted to him...that they should not take vengeance on his account, because he has forgiven everyone and prays for them all. Nor should they avenge themselves. Rather, they should bear in mind that this evil which is

now present in the world will become yet stronger, but that evil will not conquer evil, but only love shall do so.”

After enduring sixteen months of imprisonment, deprivation and humiliation with a Christian patience which moved even their captors, they and those who were with them gained their crowns of martyrdom when they were shot and stabbed to death in the cellar of the Ipatiev house in Ekaterinburg in 1918.

Together with them are also commemorated those who faithfully served them, and were either slain with them, or on their account: General Elias Tatischev; Prince Basil Dolgorukov; the physician Eugene Botkin; the lady-in-waiting Countess Anastasia Hendrikova; the serving-maid Anna Demidova; the cook John Kharitonov; and the sailors Clement Nagorny and John Sednev.

See also the account of the uncovering of the relics of Saint Seraphim of Sarov on July 19.

*Dismissal Hymn of the Martyrs. First Tone
The Soldiers standing guard*

MOST noble and sublime was your life and death, O Sovereigns; * wise Nicholas and blest Alexandra, we praise you, * acclaiming your piety, meekness, faith and humility, * whereby ye attained to crowns of glory in Christ God, * with your five renowned and godly children of blest fame. * O Martyrs decked in purple, intercede for us.

*Kontakion of the Martyrs. Third Tone
On this day the Virgin*

ROYALTY and martyrdom were joined together, O blest ones, * in your death for righteousness and right belief, O wise Sovereigns, * Nicholas and Alexandra, * with your five children. * Hence, Christ God hath deemed you worthy of thrones in Heaven; * and with twofold crowns of glory, * ye reign forever, * adorned with grace divine.

SELECTED HYMNS
FROM
THE MENAION
VESPERS

After the Proemial Psalm we chant Blessed is the man. *For* Lord, I have cried,
we allow for six verses and chant the following Stichera:

Fourth Tone. O strange wonder

O STRANGE and most awesome mystery * of divine election, * which chose you for martyrdom! * And ye followed willingly in sacred love in sacred love for Christ. * The myst'ry of Golgotha * estranged you wholly from the all the vain things of life. * Initiates of the Cross, * ye were transfigured by God's boundless love for man. And the Resurrection's power * took up its abode in you * and exalted you wither * Christ doth ever sit at God's right hand.

WHO can tell your last days on the earth, * full of tribulations, * which, like fire, refined your faith? * Where others might fight or flee, ye bowed before the Cross. * Abandoning human means, * ye armed yourselves with the weapons of faith and prayer. * And she who gave birth to God * became supremely the Mother of all your hope. * Thus ye were no longer earthborn * but begotten from above * by the grace of the God-man, * Whom ye came to know through suffering.

THRESHED like seeds and cast down to the earth, * ye were sown, O Sovereigns, * in the soil of suffering. * The virtue hid in your hearts then grew and blossomed forth. * And ye were shown forth to be * a Paradise of forgiveness and Christ-like love, * Profound Depths of godliness, which none had seen were made manifest unto all. * And your very slayers marveled * at your meek and noble souls; * and the Angels extol you, * for they see in you their Master's wounds.

Of the Sovereign Passion-bearer Nicholas
Second tone. When he took thee

ENVY, finding entrance into Cain, * roused him up against righteous Abel, to shed his own brother's blood: * like a second Abel, thou, O righteous Nicholas, * wast betrayed not by foreign blood, but by thine own kindred, * who divided wrongly that which they brought unto God. * Wherefore, on the altar of

self-will, senselessly thine enemies slew thee * as a lamb most innocent and free from blame.

NOW the thread of kingship hath been cut * that began with Constantine seeing the Cross that spanned heaven's vault: * that which with the Cross began hath ended with the Cross. * For the last of Christ's sovereign kings * partook of Christ's Passion, * slain by those who hate both Christ and those who bear Christ's Name. * Wherefore, having lost life and kingdom, * he hath found a Kingdom far greater, * and reigning with the King of kings in endless life.

AS Christ, Who, when in Gethsemane, * prayed while sweating blood in His great love to save the works of His hands, * suffered not from fear of death but for the souls of men, * so thine agony, Nicholas, was not for thy lost throne, but for the countless multitudes that strayed from godliness. * Thus, ruled by the love of thy neighbor, * rather than by vain love for power, * thou art crowned by Him Whom thou didst serve in truth.

Glory. *Plagal of Second Tone*

BORN on the feast of Job the Much-suffering and named for the merciful Nicholas of Myra, thou wast faithful to the virtues for which both are renowned. For like the almsgiving bishop, thou wast a rule of faith, an icon of meekness, a teacher of temperance, a father of orphans, a provider of the needy, and a well-spring of compassion for all. And like the Prophet of old, thou wast stripped bare of all thine earthly wealth in a single day, and wast smitten not with Job's bodily corruption, but with the corrupt ingratitude of an entire people, for whom thou hadst willingly borne the cross of sovereign rule. Yet to the end of thy much-suffering life, thou didst bless His Name with gratitude for all things, placing all thy trust in His mercy and the wisdom of His will. Thus when thou wast betrayed and didst surrender thy throne, thy soul was shown to be founded not on the rock of earthly power, but on the rock of faith in thy Heavenly Father. Intercede with Him to save us who honour thee.

Both now. *Theotokion*

WHO would not call thee blest, O all-holy Virgin? Who would not praise thine untravailing giving of birth? For the Only-begotten Son, Who shone forth from the Father timelessly, hath become ineffably incarnate, being God by nature and becoming man by nature for our sake; not that he was divided into two persons, but that He is known in two unmingled natures. Him do thou beseech, O august and all-blessed one, to have mercy on our souls.

MATINS

OIKOS

THE latter glory of this house, it saith, shall be greater than the former; and the last to sit on the Russian throne was greater than all that went before. Though lightly esteemed in the sight of men, meek like David, fearing God, he pleased Him, loving the beauty of His house, and holding His friends the Saints in exceeding honour. Wherefore God hath translated him, with those of his own house and his own mind, from a world unworthy of them, to where they reign for ever, adorned with grace divine.

SYNAXARION

✠ On the fourth of this month the holy Royal Martyrs of Russia, Emperor Nicholas the Second, the Empress Alexandra, Crown Prince Alexis, and the Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia, were slain by the atheists in the year 1918.

Verses

Who gave thee birth? Or whence camest thou, O Nich'las?
Thy meekness was not that of men, but of Angels!

Alexandra knew not to think of her sorrows:
What pained her great heart was her love for her neighbor.

Woes cast their gloom on thy brief life, O Alexis;
But now thou rejoicest in light everlasting.

The children had Olga among them as first-born;
The First-born Assembly on high hath received her.

Thy namesake, Tatiana, was martyred before thee;
But now, both together, ye dance in the Heavens.

To no man on earth was Maria's betrothal;
Divine dispensation betrothed her to Christ God.

Thy soul, Anastasia, in great joy exulteth,
For thou hast attained to a good resurrection.

On the fourth the godly Sovereigns received crowns
from the Sovereign God.

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✠ On this day we commemorate the holy Martyrs, the faithful royal servants Eugene Botkin, Elias Taitshev, Basil Dolgorukov, Anastasia Henrikova, Anna Demidnova, John Kharitonov, Clement Nagorny, and John Sednev, who were slain by the atheists in the year 1918.

Verses

What is this, a bare Bodkin I see before me?
No: one clothed in glory with his fellow martyrs.

By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us.

EXAPOSTILIARION

Second Tone. Upon that mount in Galilee

YE that stood at the pinnacle * of earthly might and glory * were in a single day cast down * to uttermost abasement. * With every day, ye descended to greater tribulation, * until ye reached the lowest pit * of suffering, where ye met Christ * the Crucified, * Who hath raised you up with His Resurrection, * and set you at the pinnacle * of everlasting glory.

Glory. *Plagal of Fourth Tone*

OCHRIST our God, Nicholas standeth before Thee in great boldness and ineffable rejoicing; and with Alexandra, his heroic yoke-mate in marriage, in the monarchy, and in martyrdom, he crieth to Thee exultantly: Behold, I and Alexis and Olga and Tatiana and Maria and Anastasia, the children Thou hast given me. By their intercessions, O Good One, strengthen Thy faithful hierarchs; enlighten Thy people in the purity of the Orthodox faith; preserve us from them that reject Thy judgments; and grant us the forgiveness of our sins and Thy great mercy.

On the Holy Forty Martyrs
by Saint Basil the Great

SHALL he that loves the Martyrs ever be satiated with celebrating their memory? The honor that we fellow-servants render to these stalwarts is the proof of our affection towards our common Master. For assuredly, he that lauds courageous men, in similar circumstances will not fail to emulate them himself. Wholeheartedly bless the sufferings of the martyrs so that you might become a martyr by your volition, and, without persecution, without fire, without scourging, you might be shown worthy of recompenses in no way differing from theirs.

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**HOLY ROYAL MARTYRS OF RUSSIA
SAVE US.**