



Sunday of All Saints of Rus'-Ukraine

The Sunday after All Saints Sunday in the Ukrainian liturgical calendar honors all the saints of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. This is fitting, since only two weeks ago—having celebrated Pentecost—we remember our forefathers who were set on fire by the Holy Ghost to spread the Faith. “This feast honors all the saints and martyrs native to the lands of Kyivan Rus’, the spiritual ancestors of the Ukrainian Church, as well as the modern martyrs who gave their lives for the faith, particularly during the persecutions of the 20th century.

“The saints of Kyivan Rus’ include prominent historical figures such as Saint Volodymyr the Great, who baptized the people of Rus’ in 988, as well as early bishops, monastics like Saint Anthony and Theodosius of the Kyiv Caves, [the holy martyrs like St. Josaphat (martyr of unity)], and countless holy men and women who faithfully lived the Christian life in Ukraine. This feast celebrates their lasting spiritual legacy and encourages the faithful to draw strength from their example.”

Pope John II beatified 27 of these holy people in 2001. Twenty-six of them were martyrs, all very close to our time. “They walked our streets and rode our roads. ...They probably did not think that the terrible trial of martyrdom and its everlasting crown was waiting for them.” Some of the beatified were married and had children; their descendants have personal stories of their family life. “Their figures are strangely close, visible. Through them, holiness itself is closer. They bring heaven closer to us...where they have gloriously found their place at the hand of the almighty Father and our creator. And the land on which they walked only yesterday has itself become holier receiving their hot blood and tortured bodies. Walking on this same earth, we feel the grandeur of this holiness and the depth of this drama, which they lived through and to which the Lord can call you and me.”

(Sources and Quotations: [Church of the Martyrs, stnicholasucp.ca](http://ChurchoftheMartyrs.stnicholasucp.ca))