

**Closing Prayer:** I would like to close with a prayer written by Saint Nicholai of Zhicha to Martyrs of the true faith:

Let us pray to the Lord, Lord have mercy.

Martyrs of the true faith, pray to God for us. Your faith has brought you near to the radiant throne of glory, adorned with the shining seraphim and the overpowering cherubim. You are nearer to immortality than we, and your prayer is more pure and audible. Remember us in your prayer also, so that you may be ever more acclaimed throughout heaven. Bring us with you also, and you will more swiftly and easily fly to the throne of glory. Whoever brings himself alone, walks more slowly and stumbles more often. The greater the load of your brothers you haul, the faster you fly. I have said to people: You are all martyrs, but not all of one martyrdom. Martyrs for the true faith are not the same as martyrs for a false faith. Truly, their bones are similar but not the soul. For the soul transfers power and weakness even to the bones. You who suffer for the true faith, are suffering for what your spiritual vision sees. You who suffer for a false faith, are suffering for what your physical eyes see. You former suffer in reality and truth; you latter suffer for a dream and a fantasy. Spiritual vision calls its knowledge by a humble name—faith. Physical eyes call their faith by a boastful name—knowledge. Both the one and the other are seeing: the first is a seeing of the peaceful and sparkling essence of creation; the second is a seeing of flickers of that essence through the darkness... I whisper morning and evening to you, O martyrs of the true faith, “pray to God for us.”