



## ***Holy Martyr Yevgeny Rodionov***

When he was 11 years old, Yevgeny Rodionov received from his grandmother a little cross on a chain. He wanted to wear it to school, but his mother, a devout atheist, warned him against it, since the communist authorities frowned on such things. Yevgeny wore it anyway and refused to ever take it off. When Yevgeny grew up he enlisted as a soldier in the Russian army. When he was 19, he was violently taken hostage by Muslim Chechen rebels. They kept him hanging by his wrists in a basement. He was left days without food and was severely beaten. He did not take off his cross even at the hardest moment of beastly tortures. The Muslims ordered Yevgeny and several other Russian prisoners to deny Christ and convert to Islam. Unlike most of his fellow prisoners, Yevgeny refused to betray his Savior and was beheaded by his torturer, Ruslan Khaikhoroyev, on May 23, 1996. The Muslim executioner told his mother, “Your son had a choice to stay alive. He could have converted to Islam, but he did not agree to take his cross off.” Yevgeny's mother, Lubov, has been able to recover her son's body to give him a proper burial. After seeing her son's boots in a shallow grave full of four dead soldiers, she would not believe it was him until she saw his cross still around his neck. She found his head later. Veneration of this Holy Martyr has been spreading and pilgrims are flocking from miles away to venerate his miracle working relics. An Icon that was made of Yevgeny has begun weeping myrrh. Yevgeny's father died shortly after the return of his son's body, not being able to live with the torment of losing his son. Yevgeny's mother, who never before set foot in a church, put off the world and is now an Orthodox Christian believer, saved by the example of her son, the Holy Martyr Yevgeny Rodionov.