

Holy Poles who were martyred by followers of the Latin church

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Newly-canonized Saints

- [Protopresbyter Basil](#)
- [Protopriest Paul Svaiko and his matushka Joanna](#)
- [Priest Nicholas Holts](#)
- [Priest Leon Corobtsuk](#)
- [Priest Peter Ochrisko](#)
- [Monk Ignatius](#)



Icon of the Holy Martyrs of Poland

Canonization of the Neo-martyrs of Poland on the 8th of June 2003

Act of the Holy Synod of the Polish Orthodox Church for the induction to the choir of Saints and Martyrs of the twentieth century, at the eparchy of Helm and Podlaskia.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

At the beginning of the third millennium of the goodness of the Lord, the Orthodox Church of Poland harvested the fruit of the divine sowing, which increased through the confession of the Orthodox Faith and the martyred end of the faithful people of the eparchy of Helm and Podlaskia.

The region of Helm and Podlaskia (present south-eastern Poland) which one thousand years ago received the Orthodox faith, many times suffered difficult conditions and persecutions by the heterodox. Despite all these, she always kept her dedication to Christ and to the Holy Church, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, who donated to the eparchy of Helm Her miraculous icon. Even during the most testing trials of faith when it was becoming apparent that the light of Orthodoxy was dimming, they guarded this holy inheritance and wealth of faith as she received it from Saint Vladimir.

As the terrible persecutions and the great darkness passed, again the faith would brighten up through distinguished confessors and martyrs who especially during the 20th century, irrigated their country with their martyric blood.

The zenith of the persecutions in the region of Helm and Podlaskia took place in 1944 and as the locals of that period testify: "We suffered terrible and difficult times by the enemies of the faith who flooded our region with rivers of blood and set on fire our homes. During those days certain ones received the crown of martyrdom, by dedicating their heart and faith to God and their neighbour".

Through their martyric blood and their intercessions our present ecclesiastic community is strengthened and we maintain the memory of their martyrdom according to the 1944 testimony of the local Hierarch Hilarion who said: "I steadfastly hope, that many of those clerics of my eparchy who martyred, the church will induct in the chorus of the saints".

During the intervening 50 years it was not possible to canonize them due to unfavourable conditions. However, their memory remained alive in the people of the region, until the local Orthodox Church based on research and evidence by a specific commission decided the following:

1. It is decided that the assembly of the Holy Martyrs and Confessors of the eparchy of Helm and Podlaska shall be on the first Sunday of the month of June.

2. To be ranked in the chorus of the Saints are:

- a) [Protopresbyter Basil](#) (martyred in the village of Teratin on the 4th May 1945).
- b) [Protopriest Paul Svaiko and his matushka Joanna](#) (who was martyred at the village of Graboviets on the 28th August 1943).
- c) [Priest Nicholas Holts](#) (martyred at Novosiolski on 2nd April 1944).
- d) [Priest Leon Corobtsuk](#) (martyred at Laskof on 10th May 1944).
- e) [Priest Peter Ochrisko](#) (martyred at Tsartoviets on 10th April 1944).
- f) Priest Sergius Zahartsuk (martyred at Nabruz on 6th May 1943).
- g) [Monk Ignatius](#) (martyred at the Monastery of Saint Onouphrios at

Giobletsna on 10 Aug 1942).

3. Apolytikion, Kontakion and Megalynarion to the above saints are to be composed, while the Chant Service is to be found in the Menaion of the Martyrs.

4. Whatever holy relics are found are to be honoured, and their icon hagiographed.

5. The Orthodox Patriarchates are to be informed, together with the autocephalous Churches.

Through the intercessions of all those Saints who were martyred at Helm and Podlask and who are present in front of the throne of the Highest, entreating Him for the Orthodox Church and the faithful people of their country, may the Lord strengthen our faith and grant us His rich blessing. Amen.

+ His beatitude Metropolitan Savva, Archbishop of Varsovia and of all Poland

+ Most Reverend Simon, Archbishop of Lots and Poznan.

+ Most Reverend Adam, Archbishop of Psemisl and Sanok.

+ Most Reverend Jeremiah, Archbishop of Vrotslav and of Stsetsin.

+ Most Reverend Abel, Archbishop of Lublin and of Helm.

+ His Grace Myron, Bishop of Hainouvka.

+ His Grace Jacob, Bishop of Bialystok and of Gdansk.

+ His Grace Gregory, Bishop of Bielski

In Lublin on the 20th of March, 2003.



[Holy Martyr Saint Ignatius](#)

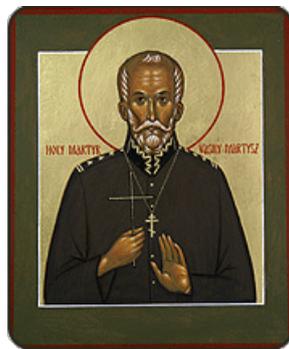
Monk Ignatius was born in the 1860's decade. Feeling the monastic calling, he entered the Monastery of Saint Onuphrios at Giabletsna, the only monastery in the region of Helm that had never in its history succumbed to the Unia. After the normal trial period of a novice, he was

tonsured monk with the name Ignatius.

During the difficult years of Orthodoxy after the end of the 1st World War and until the end of the 2nd World War, Fr. Ignatius was one of the most virtuous and older monks of the Monastery, who, with prayers and admonitions supported the Orthodox pilgrims who were coming to venerate the miraculous icon of Saint Onuphrios.

When the 2nd World War began, the life of the monks became unbearable, due to many raids by the Papist rebels, who looted the monastery and threatened the monks with death if they would not depart from their penitence. The Papists seeing the firmness and persistence of the monks to Orthodoxy and to their monastery, in collaboration with German soldiers whom they had predisposed against the monks, they raided the monastery during the night of the 9th August 1942. They scattered the monks who then took refuge into the nearest forest, they looted the monastery, set it on fire and guarded it so that no one try to put the fire out. All the monks were overtaken by fear and only Ignatius felt sorry for his monastery and not accepting its desecration returned to it and with great caution went up to the belfry and started to toll the bells so that the people at the nearest village would understand the destruction and run for help. Then the raiders with rage brought him down and having tortured him in many different ways, they murdered him.

The Holy Martyr Ignatius was buried at the cemetery of the monastery. In the spring of 2003 his tomb was opened and his relics were placed in the reliquary of the main Church of the Monastery.



[Holy Hieromartyr Basil](#)

Holy Hieromartyr Basil was born in the blessed by God eparchy of Helm, in the village Teratin during the 19th century. He descended from the proud Orthodox family Martis, his father Alexander was a judge and later became a priest. The young Basil was growing in an Orthodox pious atmosphere and was studying at the Hieratic School of Helm.

After his graduation, he married and at the age of 26 entered the priesthood. Later he was sent by his ecclesiastic authority as a hierapostle to Alaska, where he offered his priestly services, mostly serving at the islands Afognak and Kodiak. He discharged his priestly duties with toil and dedication and under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Russian Church, also serving for various periods in Pennsylvania in the States and in Canada.

After his return to his country in 1912, he was appointed officiating priest of the Orthodox parish in the city Sosnoviets (South Poland). When the 1st World War started, he found himself in a state of persecution and he was forced to become a refugee together with his family in Russia, where finally he ended up in Moscow at the Monastery of Saint Andronicus. He served wherever he happened to be, and he would also work as manual labourer to support his family. After the end of the war he returned to the city of Sosnoviets and to his parish.

In parallel with his parish duties, he tried to get a permit to serve as a military priest for the Orthodox soldiers of the Polish army. In 1921 he managed to become the general hieratic man-in-charge and confessor of the army, receiving in fact the position of protopresbyter (protopriest). Finding himself in this position for fifteen years he offered with hard work and toil his services, solving and overcoming problems and difficulties stirred up by the heterodox and those with political agendas. He worked also with the first Archbishops George and Dionysius of Barsobia and of all Poland, also taking part in the process of the declaration of the Polish Church as Autocephalous in 1934, under the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

After his retirement he returned to his birthplace Teratin, with his family and there he passed the difficult years of the 2nd World War during which German and rebel - Polish armies - passed through the region of Helm, hurting specifically the Orthodox people.

When the war ended and peace returned, the activity and hatred of the Polish rebels increased towards the Orthodox local inhabitants (in full knowledge of the Polish government and of the Latin clerics) and exactly then started the martyric Golgotha of elder Father Basil. His house was raided many times, threatening and terrorizing him, until in 1945 on Good Friday they surrounded his house and tortured him, pressing him to deny Orthodoxy. He however remaining steady in his faith, received the crown of martyrdom and surrendered his life for the holy faith of the Orthodox Church of Christ.

He was buried in Teratin and in 1963 they transferred his relics to Barsobia to the Orthodox cemetery and later in 2003 when it was decided to glorify him, they were taken and placed in a reliquary at the cemetery parish Church of Saint John of the Ladder in Barsobia.



[Holy Martyr Nicholas](#)

Holy Martyr Nicholas was born in 1907 in the village of Cotlatsov, in the county Zitomir, in the very large family Holts. After the 2nd World War he

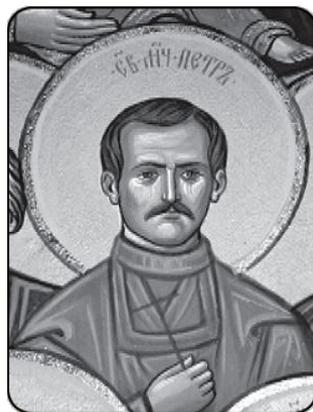
moved back with his parents to the historic city of Vladimir, in the eparchy of Bolynia. He felt the calling to the hieratic step and studied Theology during the 1930's in Bulgaria.

After his studies, he got married and in 1935 he was ordained priest. As a newly ordained, he was sent to assist the officiating priest in the parish of the village Babitse, while he was staying in the village Obsa, in the county Bilgorai. The years of his priestly service were especially difficult and he was unassigned, living totally on the charity of the faithful. At the same time the Papist government of Poland was trying to curtail his pastoral activity and underhandedly suggested numerous proposals to lead him astray and even change his faith.

From 1937 until the start of the War, due to various difficulties and restrictions, he served as a priest in the parishes of the villages Dougose and Cochilno of the county Bolynia. During the War years he went to the parish of the village Nobosioulki, in the county Tomasouf, of the eparchy of Helm. During that period of fear and terror he helped and saved the lives of many Orthodox and non-Orthodox, performing his pastoral work with dedication and without any concern even for his life.

In 1944 after the withdrawal of the German troops, the activity of the Polish Catholic rebels against the Orthodox became widespread. Then Father Nicholas with a group of faithful of the above parish, in the month of April, was martyred for not submitting to the suggestions of the Papists, who, attacking the Church while he was performing the Mystery of Baptism, they forcefully seized him and took him outside together with all those present and having tortured them in multiple ways they murdered them all.

The Holy Hieromartyr Nicholas was buried in the place where in 1938 the Papist government had leveled the previous parish church. A special ecclesiastic commission could not find his relics or his tomb, in consideration that the Papists had converted all that area into cultivated fields.



[Holy Martyr Peter](#)

Holy Martyr Peter was born in 1891 in the village of Tarnavatka, in the county Tomasouf. After his general studies he studied at an Agricultural School, from where he graduated in 1908. During the 1st World War years he was working as a teacher.

In his thirties Peter Ohrisko felt his hieratic calling and entered the

hieratic school in the city of Cremieniets. After his graduation in 1923 he got married. During the same year in December he was anointed deacon and priest in the city of Cremieniets by Metropolitan Anthony of Loublin. For a decade, he served at different villages of the eparchy of Bolynia.

In 1939 when the atheistic regime prevailed in Bolynia, Father Peter returned to his place of birth, the eparchy of Helm in the county of Tomasouf. He remained at the village of Sumin and was appointed officiating priest of the parish of the village Moresin. During the difficult years of the 2nd World War he continued with zeal his hieratic service, placing more importance on the spiritual progress of the youth. However, the spreading Papist propaganda and hate towards the Orthodox of the eparchy of Helm, included him and his parish members, making them various underhanded proposals, with the intention to make them deny Orthodoxy. Seeing that he was not giving in, but only continue supporting his parish members, they unleashed against him persecutions and threats.

Finally, in the year 1944 at the village Tsartoviets of the county Zamosts, on Holy Monday while he was performing the Presanctified Divine Liturgy, and at the same time confessing the youths who had gathered there, the Papist rebels surrounded the church and seized him, fully dressed in his hieratic vestments; they took him outside, tore his hieratic vestments and tortured him horribly while taking him away from the village. Over these tortures he surrendered his soul, remaining always in word and works faithful to Orthodoxy. Many of the parishioners met with the same fate. The murderers buried his body in that place, in the fields and since then the location of his grave with his relics remains unknown.



[Holy Hieromartyr Paul and presbytera \(Matushka\) Joanna.](#)

He was born in the village of Zablotsie in the eparchy of Helm, of the family Svaikof. Following his general studies, he entered the Hieratic School of Ekaterinoslav (in today's Russia) and in 1918 after graduation he returned to his place of birth. At the age of 30, he married the 24 year old Joanna Lototska at the village Gogie Levitinskie, county Cremienietsk, from where his wife came, at the Church of Saint Nicholas. She was, for that time, quite well educated, having studied at a school of Economics and Commerce. Joined through the mystery of Marriage, they created an exemplary Christian family, an "in family church" and bore the burdens of family life by helping each other.

After their marriage, they dedicated themselves to the Orthodox Church and in 1924 he was ordained deacon and presbyter (priest) at the Church

of Saint John the Theologian in Helm by Archbishop Dionysius of Barsobia. His presbytera would follow him and would help him in his spiritual work. The first parish of Fr. Paul was in the city of Potok Gurni of county Bilgorai

At the end of 1927 the authority in charge, sent him to southern Poland, to the eparchy of Lemkovotsizna. There he continued his pastoral work with the same zeal and many former Uniates, among them Lemkonv, returned to their ancestral faith, Orthodoxy. In his eparchy he would serve in the villages Sviotkova and Desnitsa of county Giaslo.

When the persecution of the Orthodox expanded in the eparchy of Helm, in 1938, Father Paul with his wife - he was then 44 years old- was sent there and took over the parish of the city Sienliski, of county Zamots. During these difficult times, when the Roman Catholics were forcing Orthodox with every means to convert to Papism, Father Paul would strengthen them to remain Orthodox.

At the end of the Second World War he continued in the same eparchy serving various parishes, while living in the village Sniatitse. The environment was hostile towards Orthodoxy and himself with his wife many times suffered persecutions, as well as beatings, robberies of their possessions and threats, yet despite all these, he remained steadfast in his service.

Finally in 1943 he was sent by his ecclesiastic authority to the village Graboviets of the same eparchy, where the hostility of the heterodox had reached its peak, due to his Godly zeal. So the Papist rebels, on the day of the Assumption of the Theotokos, seized him and his wife and subjected them to horrible torture and finally killed them, because they (the Papists) could not tolerate their steady persistence in their ancestral faith.



[Holy Hieromartyr Leon](#)

Holy Martyr Leon came from the family Corombtsouk from the region of Helm. However, he was born far from his country of his ancestors in 1919 in county Jiaroslav of Russia because his parents migrated to this region during the 1st World War.

Soon though he returned to the region of Helm, where his father, the most reverend priest Gabriel became the officiating priest of the village Couлно. The young Leon studied at the highest School of the city Psemisl and Lvov and then during the years 1936-1939 completed the hieropsaltic School

that was at the monastery of Saint Onuphrios in Giabletsna.

In 1941, during the difficult years of the 2nd World War, the Orthodox Church appointed him psalmist and conductor of the parish of the village of Verbkovitse. There in 1942 he married and in the Cathedral Church of Helm he was ordained deacon and priest by the local metropolitan Hilarion. At the beginning the young priest was staying at Helm, where he served and helped in the offices of the metropolis.

He was then assigned to a very difficult and responsible pastoral position, due to the contact with the Catholics and the Uniates, in the parish of Laskof, in county Chroubiesouf. With great zeal and self sacrifice he worked in the vineyard of Christ, serving and always standing in solidarity with the parish members on every difficulty they may have had in relation to the heterodox. Sometimes in fact they would plot against himself and his household.

On the 10th March 1944, the 25 year old priest with his family and two hundred parish members at Laskof, received the crown of martyrdom from the Papists, who with particular fanaticism especially tortured the priest.

The bodies of the martyred the Papist rebels cast into a pit prepared earlier for this purpose; from there the Orthodox removed the body of priest Leon and buried it at the parish cemetery of the village Laskof. Later the cemetery was destroyed by the Papists and since then the location of the tomb of the priest remains unknown

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