

DAGESTANI MARTYRS COMMEMORATED ON 3RD ANNIVERSARY OF TERRORIST ATTACK



On Thursday, February 18, the five women who were shot dead in Kizlyar, Dagestan immediately following the Forgiveness Sunday service at St. George Cathedral in 2018 were prayerfully commemorated on the third anniversary of the terrorist attack on the church.

With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Varlaam of Makhachkala and Grozny, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the cathedral rector Fr. Pavel Kalikin, with a petition during the Litany for the Departed for the repose “of those murdered for faith in Christ in the city of Kizlyar and Grozny,” reports the Makhachkala Diocese.



Following the Liturgy, a panikhida was held for the martyrs Vera, Nadezhda, Ludmila, Irina, and Vera, after which Abp. Varlaam, the gathered clergy and faithful, and several visiting Dagestani politicians proceeded to their graves on the territory of the church, where they sang Memory Eternal and reverently laid flowers. On February 18, 2018, 22-year-old Khalil Khalilov opened fire on parishioners exiting the church on Sunday, leaving five women dead, two more parishioners wounded, and two security guards wounded. Four of the women died instantly, while the fifth later died in the hospital. The parish had just served the Rite of Forgiveness in which everyone asks for and offers forgiveness for all their sins against one another, thus entering the Great Fast, and for these victims, eternity, with pure hearts.

All of the martyrs were known as pious Orthodox Christians and active members of the cathedral community. One of the them, Irina Sosikovna Melkomova, known as Blessed Ira, would collect alms at the church and often gave what she received to the poor. She attacked the shooter with her bags, trying to stop him, and was shot point blank, giving her life for her fellow man and her faith in Christ.

Saint Joseph the Hesychast

