



■ On the Occasion of the Commemoration of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia (25 January)

Holy New Martyr Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitsa* (1863-1937)

A wild animal is kinder than the wild-souled atheists

METROPOLITAN Peter of Krutitsa (in the world, Peter Feodorovich Polyansky) was born in 1863. In 1920 he was Consecrated Bishop. In the will of the most saintly Patriarch Tikhon (†1925), he was designated as one of the three Hierarchs who were in turn to become *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne after his repose. On 12 April 1925, Metropolitan Peter assumed the governance of the Russian Church, which was being put through terrible hardships by the atheists.

From the very first, Metropolitan Peter made no concessions to the Soviet State. After several months, on 10 December of the same year, he was imprisoned and was successively sent to prisons in Vyatka, Perm, Ekaterinburg, Tiumen, and Tobolsk (in Siberia).

From there, they exiled him to the village of Khe, near the Ob River, two hundred kilometers from Obdorsk.

According to Metropolitan Peter's own account, which we know from many sources, one night he was inhumanly thrown off the train



*Metropolitan Peter and
Patriarch Tikhon*

conveying him to Tobolsk. It is known that many Bishops and Priests died in this manner. The Metropolitan fell on the snow as if onto a pillow. He got up and looked around: snow, forest, not a sign of life.... He walked a long while through the snow and finally grew tired. The bitter cold pierced his bones. He was wearing only an old *exorason* [outer cassock—*Trans.*]. Understanding that his end was approaching, he began to pray more intensely before he should die....

Suddenly, he saw an enormous bear approaching him! What was it doing there, seeing as how those animals sleep all winter long, and when for some reason they do wake up, they become terribly wild, aggressive and dangerous to people? Aghast at the thought that he would be devoured, the Metropolitan did not have the strength in his weariness and exhaustion to flee.

The bear approached, sniffed him, and peacefully lay down at his feet, coiled up with his belly towards the Metropolitan, and, having stretched out, began to snore! From his massive body emanated heat and life!



The Metropolitan hesitated a bit, but then lay down on the bear's fur, changing sides a number of times towards her. At daybreak, he heard a distant cock-crow, something which signified an inhabited area! Then, with great care not to wake the bear, he got up. But the bear, as if it had not slept at all, got up, shook himself, and calmly headed towards the forest!

In a short while, the Metropolitan reached a small village in which he sought hospitality, saying that his sister, who lived not far from there, would pay the expenses. He was received in a house where he lived for half a year. He wrote to his sister and she came to the village. But, shortly after, some other “politicians” arrived—that is, agents of the secret police, the fearsome “Cheka” (precursor of the KGB).

Twelve years of inconceivable tortures followed: imprisonments, punishments, and exiles to the frozen, Northern Arctic regions.



Dozens of times, the Soviets offered him the “opportunity” to abandon his Confession and to work together with them, with the office of *Locum Tenens*, or even the Patriarchal Throne as bait; but Metropolitan Peter remained faithful to our Holy Church.

He was executed on 10 October 1937 in Magnitogorsk for the Faith and love of Christ,

without, of course, having seen earthly freedom, but having been vouchsafed that holy Freedom that is granted by the Divine Comforter to the children of God, in Christ and in His Church. Amen! ◻

*Source: *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No. 258 (January-February 1994), pp. 201, 203.