

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-C020
Title: Add Ilia Chavchavadze of Georgia to Lesser Feasts and Fasts
Proposer: Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe
Topic: Church Calendar, Lesser Feasts/Fasts

Directly Related: (Attached)

None

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).

C020 - Add Ilia Chavchavadze of Georgia to Lesser Feasts and Fasts

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 10 - Prayer Book, Liturgy & Music

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention authorize the inclusion of Ilia Chavchavadze in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*.

Explanation

Ilia Chavchavadze is the model of faith for contemporary Georgians. He championed many minority groups and causes long before they were supported elsewhere.

Born on October 27, 1837, in the village of Qvareli in Kakheti, Ilia, canonized by the Georgian Orthodox Church in 1987, received his primary education at home. His mother instructed him in reading and writing, prayer and the law of God. When he was eight years old, he was sent to study with Archdeacon Nikoloz Sepashvili of Qvareli. The years he spent there left an indelible impression on this holy man's life.

In 1857 Ilia enrolled in the law school at St. Petersburg University. Fascinated by Georgian history, he spent much of his time in the St. Petersburg archives in search of old Georgian texts. Although his academic achievements were outstanding, he dropped out before receiving his degree and returned to Georgia.

The restoration of national independence and the independence of the Georgian Church were the chief objectives of Ilia's life. To achieve these goals, Ilia carried out intensive research and exposed those who had falsified history and dishonored the Georgian nation.

This great philosopher, writer and historian repeatedly stated that "A nation whose language is corrupted can no longer exist as a nation." He cared deeply about the Georgian language and fought to ensure that it remained the primary language taught in schools.

Ilia inspired many with his patriotic zeal, and he founded the Society for the Propagation of Literacy. He established a depository of Georgian manuscripts and antiquities, while also initiating a movement to document oral folk traditions and helping found the Georgian Agrarian Bank.

But Ilia's righteous deeds were an affront and threat to those who adhered to the new atheist ideology, so they plotted to kill him. On August 30, 1907, Ilia Chavchavadze and his wife, Olga Guramishvili, had just set off from Tbilisi for Saguramo when their carriage stopped abruptly outside of Mtskheta, near Tsitsamuri Forest. There they were awaited by a band of militant social democrats, who attacked them and shot Ilia to death.

The Military Court of the Caucasus sentenced Ilia Chavchavadze's murderers to death by hanging. But Ilia's wife Olga requested that the governor-general pardon her husband's murderers. She asserted that if Ilia had survived, he would have done the same, since the killers were simply his "unlucky brothers gone astray."

Indeed, Ilia had forgiven his murderers' offense long before, in his prophetic poem "Prayer":

*Our Father Who art in Heaven!
With tenderness I stand before Thee on my knees;
I ask for neither wealth nor glory;
I won't debase my holy prayer with earthly matters.
I would wish for my soul to rest in heaven,
My heart to be radiant with love heralded by Thee,;
I would wish to be able to ask forgiveness of mine enemies,;
Even if they pierce me in the heart:
Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do!*