



## **Book on life of St. Odilia of Alsace presented in Russian language for the first time in Strasbourg**



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**On September 24, a new book entitled “St. Odilia – Patroness of Alsace” was presented at the library of the Parish Centre at the All Saints Church in Strasbourg. Archimandrite Philip (Ryabykh), rector of the church, and Sergei Volosenko, a parishioner, wrote the book, and Ms Yekaterina Shultz designed it and made the layout.**

The book, published in mid-September, is the result of the years-long study of the life of Odilia, a saint of the undivided Church who lived in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and of her spiritual heritage in Europe and throughout the world. This is the first research dedicated to St. Odilia in the Russian language. The book contains not only the narration of her life, but also prayers and the Akaphist hymn to the saint, and a travel guide to the sites of her spiritual exploits.

Attending the presentation were many parishioners as well as guests interested in learning more about

Orthodoxy, website of the parish reports. The authors told them about the story behind their work, as well as about interesting events and difficulties occurred during the writing process.

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St. Odilia was born ca. 660 into a family of Duke Etichon of Alsace. As she was born blind, she was an unwanted child. The father wanted to kill her, but her mother had her brought to Baume-les-Dames in Burgundy. Ten years later, St. Erhard, Bishop of Regensburg, saw an angel in his dream who ordered him to baptize a child with a name of Odilia – Daughter of the Light. When the girl was baptized, she regained her sight.

Later the father reconciled with his daughter who decided to become a nun and gave one of his estates for a convent. Upon a hill rising 760 meters above the sea level she founded an abode, which has become the first convent in Alsace. Many miracles happened here, and numerous sick and destitute people used to come here from the most distant corners of Europe. Once Odilia cured a blind man by water from a spring that gushed out from the earth by her prayers. St. Odilia passed away in the Lord in 720. She is widely venerated as a patron saint of Alsace.

Orthodox faithful living in Alsace have venerated St. Odilia for many years. Often enough, pilgrim paths to Christian shrines in France run through St. Odilia convent located in the hills. Here the pilgrims can pray at her shrine and drink water from the holy well. Another site for pilgrims is St. Odilia chapel in a village where the baby saint lived for a year in the house of her nurse.

An icon of St. Odilia has been kept at the stavropegic parish of All Saints in Strasbourg since 2012. It was painted for the Russian Orthodox community in Strasbourg at St. Elizabeth Convent in Minsk in the traditions of Russian iconography. The icon holds a reliquary with a particle of relics of St. Odilia.

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