

When Someone Passes Away

Funeral services are conducted only for those who are Orthodox Christians in regular Canonical and Spiritual standing with the Church. In other words, only those people who have been Baptized and Chrismated in the Orthodox Church and have had their marriage blessed in the Orthodox Church are eligible for an Orthodox Christian Funeral.

If one of your loved ones is about to pass away, it is important to immediately contact YOUR PRIEST via phone or email him at so that he may come to the family and perform the last rights. This includes the offering of Holy Confession, Holy Communion, and prayers.

If your loved one has already passed away, again it is imperative to contact YOUR PRIEST immediately (BEFORE YOU CONTACT A FUNERAL HOME) so that he may advise the family on proper Orthodox burial traditions.

Funeral Arrangements:

1. Arrangements for the funeral service should be made with the priest in conjunction with the funeral director.
2. No funerals are permitted on Sundays, the day of the Resurrection of our Lord.
3. The priest should conduct a Trisagion (viewing with prayers) on the evening before the funeral.
4. No lay person is permitted to deliver a funeral oration (eulogy) in the Church. The Archdiocese explicitly prohibits lay people from speaking in Church. During the funeral the priest will deliver a sermon and any personal eulogies may be given at the mercy meal (Makaria) in the hall, after the internment.

Items needed for the funeral (to be brought by family):

1. Wine (a small bottle).
2. Oil (a small bottle).
3. Kolyva (boiled wheat)
4. Savano (white sheet to be used as a burial shroud in the coffin).

Organ Donation

Although nothing in the Orthodox tradition requires the faithful to donate their organs to others, nevertheless, this practice may be considered an act of love, and as such is encouraged. The decision to donate a duplicate organ, such as a kidney, while the donor is living, requires much consideration and

should be made in consultation with medical professionals and one's spiritual father. The donation of an organ from a deceased person is also an act of love that helps to make possible for the recipient a longer, fuller life. Such donations are acceptable if the deceased donor had willed such action, or if surviving relatives permit it providing that it was in harmony with the desires of the deceased. Such actions can be approved as an expression of love and if they express the self-determination of the donor. In all cases, respect for the body of the donor should be maintained. Organ transplants should never be commercialized, coerced, take place without proper consent, nor place in jeopardy the life of the donor or recipient, such as the use of animal organs. Neither should the death of the donor be hastened to harvest organs for transplantation to another person.

Cremation

Because the Orthodox Faith affirms the fundamental goodness of creation, it understands the body to be an integral part of the human person and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and expects the resurrection of the dead. The Church considers cremation to be the deliberate desecration and destruction of what God has made and ordained for us. The Church instead insists that the body be buried so that the natural physical process of decomposition may take place. The Church does not grant funerals, either in the sanctuary, or at the funeral home, or at any other place, to persons who have chosen to be cremated. Additionally, memorial services with koliva (boiled wheat) are not allowed in such instances, in as much as the similarity between the "kernel of wheat" and the "body" has been intentionally destroyed. For further information and guidance do not hesitate to contact your parish priest.