

Memorial Services & Saturday of Souls Scheduling Guidelines

What is a Memorial Service?

The Church has always believed and taught that death only ends our lives on earth but that they continue in heaven. "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him (Luke 20:37-38)." Christians pray for the repose of the souls of the departed as an expression of faith in the resurrection and the belief that in death our relationship with Christ continues. Prayers for the dead cannot change the outcome of God's judgment because once death comes our destiny cannot change (Hebrews 9:7)." A memorial service is how Christians pray for and remember the dead.

The Church also remembers the departed in the prayers of every Divine Liturgy. Traditionally, when families prepare the offering bread (prosforo) they also submit names of the departed and the living to the priest. Anytime a parishioner would like for someone to be remembered at a Liturgy, simply submit the name(s) prior to the service to the priest. Parishioners may also offer Communion Wine (available in our bookstore); Olive Oil and Incense to be used in the altar when submitting names as well.

When should a Memorial Service be conducted?

A Memorial Service should be schedule with the priest to be conducted forty days after someone dies and on the one year anniversary.

"Saturday of Souls"

After the first year, names should be submitted for the special general memorial services conducted on four designated Saturdays called "Saturdays of the Souls."

They are: the two Saturdays preceding Great Lent; the first Saturday of Great Lent; and the Saturday before Pentecost.

The Custom of Koliva

When the Memorial Service is offered, it is customary for the family of the deceased to bring a dish of boiled wheat to the Church. The boiled wheat is placed on a table in the center of the nave during the Service. The wheat, known as koliva, is a symbol of the Resurrection. When speaking of the Resurrection, our Lord said: *"Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies it bears much fruit."* (John 12:24)

Memorial Service Policy of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

Memorial services are held after Liturgy based on the following guidelines:

- At 40 days after death, a memorial service should be scheduled on the nearest Sunday.
- At the first year anniversary of death, a second memorial service should be conducted on the nearest Sunday.
- All other memorials after the first year of death: the deceased should be remembered at the yearly Saturday of Souls Liturgies.
- Sometimes families request additional memorials services on Sundays after the first year, these are scheduled on the first Sunday of each month.

Memorials are not to be held on the following days:

- All Sundays of Great Lent, unless it is a forty day or one year memorial.
- From Palm Sunday to the Sunday of Thomas
- On Feast Days of Our Lord

Please contact Fr. Andrew to schedule a memorial service.