

Saturdays of the Souls

February 22nd , March 1st & 8th 2025

During memorial services, we commemorate the souls of all Orthodox Christians who have gone before us into eternal rest. In praying for those who have “fallen asleep in the Lord,” we continue to ask that God may have mercy on them in His divine judgment so they may gain the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The names offered during the “SATURDAYS OF THE SOULS” (February 22nd , March 1st & 8th) at the beginning of the Lenten season will be commemorated.

Also remember your loved ones by not only submitting their names, but by attending the holy services to offer your own prayers for their eternal rest.

Anyone wishing to do so may also bring or order a dish of memorial wheat (“kollyva”) for use during the service.



Please, bring your **list of names to the service**, or if not able to attend, call the Church Office 973-584-0388 ahead of time or send it by email to info@standrewgonj.org

If you are unable to attend church, you can still participate by clicking on the menu bar LIVESTREAM on our Website or FACEBOOK page.

Online Giving System

Website: <https://www.standrewgonj.org/> and choose PayPal / ONLINE WeShare click on link and follow instructions
<https://standrewgonj.churchgiving.com> or call the office

*Orthros at 8am, Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom approximately at 9am
May their memory be eternal.*

As a grain of wheat...

Memorial Prayers in the Greek Orthodox Church

For Christians, the act of gathering to pray for those who have died goes back to the earliest days of the Church. In particular, martyrs were honored (for example, placing the Altar Table of a church upon the site where the relics of a martyr were buried); however, gathering at the burial place of a friend or family member was also a common practice among Christians. When we gather today in the Church for a memorial, we are continuing a centuries-old practice.

So, why do we use ‘kollyva’? In John 12:24, Jesus says: “Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” The boiled wheat is used in the Orthodox Church as a symbol of our hope in the Resurrection. From the grain that died comes the fruit of eternal life. Why, then, do we call the wheat ‘kollyva’? This name comes from a term commonly used during the fourth century, particularly where the following miracle occurred. The Emperor Julian the Apostate tried to have the fruits and vegetables, for use by Christians who were fasting during Great Lent, contaminated! In a dream, Saint Theodore the Tyron appeared to Patriarch Evdioxios and told him to instruct the faithful to consume only boiled wheat (‘kollyva’). The faithful responded accordingly and were able to continue the fast! This miracle is commemorated annually on the third Saturday of Souls.

When should we hold memorials? The practice of the Church is to hold them on Saturdays (since the souls are traditionally commemorated on Saturdays); however, the common practice has become Sundays, since we gather on Sundays for Liturgy. Regarding the usual times for memorials, besides the Saturdays of the Souls (the ‘psychosavata’), it should be noted that, according to ancient sources, memorials were held on the third, sixth, ninth, and fortieth day, as well as one year, after someone died. Currently, memorials are held around the fortieth day and the first anniversary of one’s death (although they may also take place at other times as well).

To arrange a memorial, one calls the church to schedule the service with the priest. If they would also like to hold a service at the gravesite, they discuss that with the priest as well. The name of the one for whom the memorial was arranged should be given to the priest (additional names may also be given for commemoration during the Preparation of the Gifts [the ‘Proskomidi’] and the Liturgy). It is traditional – though not required – to bring other items as well: Prosforon and wine, for use during the Liturgy, and olive oil, for the vigil light on the Altar.

As we pray, not only for the living (the Church Militant) but for the souls (the Church Triumphant) as well, we are drawn together with our Lord and Savior. Let us come together at all possible opportunities, seeking His blessings and His salvation.

Father Anthony Stratis / Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Praying for our Departed Loved Ones

Understanding the Memorial Service in the Orthodox Church

Fr. Luke Veronis

At no matter what age of life we die, we always see death as a distortion of our existence. Death portrays a horrible tragedy because it is the fruit of evil in the world. We were not created to die. When Almighty God created the first man and woman in his own image and likeness, he meant for all humanity to live for eternity with Him. Since God has no end, He desired for His beloved creation to dwell in His infinite love forever. This is why, deep within each of us, we all sense an innate desire for life!

From this perspective, death is fearful, and something we despise. And yet, although we can see death as the greatest evil, St. Paul counsels us “not to mourn as those who do not have hope.” He advises us to never despair over the dead, because “if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” (1 Thess 4:14)

Here is the essence of our Christian faith and the Good News we proclaim week after week. “Christ is Risen from the dead, **trampling down death by His own death**, and granting life to those in the tombs!”

For all of us who have believed in Christ and walked with Him in the newness of life here and now, death becomes but a doorway into a fuller union with Him. This is why St. Paul could say, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Phil 1:21) The Apostle Paul goes on to say, “If we have been united [through baptism] in the likeness of Christ’s death, we also shall be [united] in the likeness of His resurrection. (Rom 6:4-5)

Today, I want to talk about the topic of death because I want to relate it to the Memorial Services we do so often at the end of our Sunday Divine Liturgies. We all have loved ones who have passed away, and as a Church we never forget them. At each Divine Liturgy, I remember all the faithful who have died and passed on. On their anniversaries, like the 40 day memorial that we offer today for Kosta Magaritudis, or the 17 year anniversary, which we also offer today for Kosma Hadjoclou, we remember the departed, and pray for them.

Why? What is the purpose of our memorial service and why do we pray for the dead?

To answer this question, I first want us to understand clearly how we, as Orthodox Christians, view death itself. Then, I will explain why we remember the dead continuously, and pray for them.

Although death is the culmination of evil in our world, for Christians our faith in Jesus Christ transforms death. For one who is united to our Lord here on earth, death is no longer a fearful and tragic conclusion of one’s life. It is but an entranceway into a new beginning!

I remember a story my parents told me about their first travel abroad. My father and mother had only been married for half a year, and my mother was several months pregnant, when both got on a boat heading towards Greece, so that my father could study at the University of Athens. Both my parents remember vividly the scene of their farewell, as they leaned on the rail of the ship waving goodbye to tearful family and friends. Many mixed emotions passed through their minds as the ship slowly sailed away, and the figures of their loved ones got smaller and smaller in the horizon. During the long journey which followed, my parents became anxious about their separation from family, their pregnancy, and their new life in Athens.

When they arrived at the port of Piraeus many days later, however, their anxieties and concerns were washed away as other relatives and family friends **lovingly waited to receive them in their new country.**

Death itself may seem like an uncertain, even fearful journey, and yet as Christians we know who awaits us on the other side. Our Lord Jesus Christ is there, lovingly waiting, with His arms outstretched, ready to embrace us in deeper union with Himself, and welcome us into our eternal home.

As Christians, we can face death with hope, knowing that our loving, all merciful and compassionate Lord awaits us! Divine love is greater than death. St. Paul even dares to say, "Death has been swallowed up in victory!" The victory of divine love.

Well, this same love is central to understanding the role of the Memorial Service in the Orthodox Church. **We remember and pray for the dead because of God's divine love for us, and our sacred love for one another.** As the famous French writer and Catholic reformer Leon Bloy once wrote, "To say to a person 'I love you' is tantamount to saying 'you shall never die.'"

We express our love to our departed ones through our prayers to reaffirm that those who have died are not dead to us, nor to God. Our love for one another continues even after death. Metropolitan Anthony Bloom so beautifully explains, "A person bereaved must learn never to speak of the love relationship that existed before in the past tense. One should never say 'We loved one another.' We should always say 'We love each other.' If we allow our love to become a thing of the past, we have to recognize that we do not believe in the continuing life of the person that died."

St. Paul teaches, "Love never ends." The Church understands well this precept, and therefore, continues to pray for the dead always. Since love never ends, our prayers never end; our communion with the departed never end; our union with them through Christ never ends.

Our prayers for the dead reveal in a most beautiful way our understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ both here on earth and in heaven. We are one Church, which includes those struggling here

on earth, together with those who now live in fuller union with God in paradise. Just as we pray for one another here on earth, we also pray for those who have departed. The Body of Christ is not just the members who we see each week in Church. The Church is also the saints who we see in the icons, and the beloved faithful who have died and live in Christ. That is why before each Divine Liturgy, when I am preparing the bread which will be used for Holy Communion, I offer prayers for each one of you by name, as well offer prayers for the names of many who have died. There is no separation in our prayers for the living and the dead. Divine love unites us all together, as one Church.

So we hold Memorial Services and pray for the dead because we love!

Now, I know some people will say, "OK, I understand we pray for the dead because our love for them never ends, but do our prayers actually help those who have died?"

Sincere prayer unites us to God, and when we pray for others, we believe our prayers can help others in their own union towards their Creator.

Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald, a professor at Holy Cross Theological School, writes, "Death alters but does not destroy the bond of love and faith which exists among all the members of the Church. Orthodoxy believes that through our prayers, *those "who have fallen asleep in the faith and the hope of the Resurrection" continue to have opportunity to grow closer to God.* Therefore, the Church prays constantly for her members who have died in Christ. We place our trust in the love of God and the power of mutual love and forgiveness. We pray that God will forgive the sins of the faithful departed, and that He will receive them into the company of Saints in the heavenly Kingdom."

Of course, some who have died have not lived a righteous life of faith and love in Christ Jesus. Even for such as these, we still pray with hope. We know that God's unfathomable mercy and love is immeasurably greater than any sin or shortcoming of a person, no matter how evil. *Therefore, by turning to this ocean of love in prayer, we believe as Orthodox Christians that our prayers in some way, and this way may be a part of the mystery of God, our prayers bring in some way comfort and benefit to the person we pray for!*

Love compels us to pray for one another, with hope and with faith. And death can never stop this!

As a symbol of this hope we have for the dead, it is traditional for the family to bring a bowl of boiled wheat to the Church for the Memorial Service. This wheat, known as kollyva in Greek, reminds us of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ spoke, "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." (Jn 12:24)

Death is not the end, and our Memorial Service concretely proclaims this fact!

Saturdays of the Souls

February 22nd , March 1st & 8th 2025

ΨΥΧΟΣΑΒΒΑΤΑ (PSYCHOSAVATA)

ORTHROS @8AM & DIVINE LITURGY @9:15AM

LIST OF NAMES Please write clearly the *+Names* of your beloved for eternal memory and blessed repose. They will be prayed for on **all three Saturdays**. You may submit your **+List** along with your offering for the priest by 9am on day of service or bring **+List** to the office before Saturday.

Baptismal +Names please: for example *+Nicholas* NOT Nick or Niko or..., *+Vasiliki* NOT Vickie or Vaso or..., *Konstantinos* NOT Dean or Costa or.... *+Chrysanthi* NOT Chrissy or Chris or.....

KOLLYVA: Arrange for your kollyva and bring your donation to the office with your check payable to St. Andrew or bring your prepared kollyva from home.

1. **Kollyva prepared at home:** Please bring to church by 8:45am. Place dish on table and submit **+List** of Names with your offering.
2. **Individual Kollyva dish** If you do not want to prepare your own you may wish to order from the church your individual Kollyva dish for your beloved the cost for kollyva is **\$30**.
3. **COMMUNAL KOLLYVA TRAY** Many parishioners participate in the Saint Andrew COMMUNAL KOLLYVA TRAY. The cost for this is \$15 each week or **\$45** for all three Saturdays

Please contact the office and make arrangements by Thursday before the Saturday of Souls.

973-584-0388 info@standrewgonj.org

Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church
1447 Sussex Turnpike, Randolph, NJ 07869
info@standrewgonj.org (973)584-0388

SATURDAY OF THE SOULS

Σάββατο των ψυχών

Please PRINT CLEARLY +**BAPTISMAL NAME** (1st Name) only
For the souls of the departed. – ΥΠΕΡ ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΕΩΣ

+ _____	+ _____	+ _____
+ _____	+ _____	+ _____
+ _____	+ _____	+ _____
+ _____	+ _____	+ _____
+ _____	+ _____	+ _____
+ _____	+ _____	+ _____
+ _____	+ _____	+ _____

Baptismal Names please: for example +**Nicholas** NOT Nick, +**Vasiliki** NOT Vickie

May Their Memory Be Eternal - ΑΙΩΝΙΑ Η ΜΝΗΜΗ ΑΥΤΩΝ

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____