

FUNERALS:

Funeral Services in the church building are conducted for those who are Orthodox Christians in good ecclesiastical standing with the Church. In other words, only those who have been baptized and/or chrismated in the Orthodox Church, and have had their marriage blessed in the Church are eligible for an Orthodox funeral service in the church building. If there is a question, please contact the parish priest. Should there be a death in the family the following steps should be taken:

- 1.) Immediately notify the family doctor or the County Medical Examiner (County Coroner) if the death occurred at home so he may examine the deceased and sign the death certificate. The body may not be removed otherwise.
- 2.) Call the funeral director of your choice.
- 3.) Inform the parish priest.

The Church has no objection to autopsies for the sake of determining the cause of death or to further medical science, or to the donation of any body organs (eyes, heart, etc.) for transplants. However, because the human body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Orthodox Church insists that those who perform autopsies accord the utmost respect for the body. Arrangements for the funeral service must be made with the priest in conjunction with the funeral director. No funerals are allowed on Sunday, the day of the Resurrection of our Lord.

Some families prefer Memorial Donations to flowers. Such being the case, special envelopes are available to the funeral director and family at the Church Office or in the Narthex of the church. Acknowledgments to the donors are made by the church and a list sent to the family.

In the event of suicide, funeral rites are usually not accorded the deceased, unless the family acquires a letter from the family physician stating the deceased was under treatment for psychotic or emotional disorders. The Church believes that no one is permitted to take the life of another, especially the life of oneself. Suicide is murder and consequently a grave sin. Committing suicide signifies a loss of patience, hope, and faith in God. A person of faith does not lose hope, no matter how great the difficulties he or she faces. If there is a question, the parish priest should be contacted.

Various Christian groups, instead of burial, prefer the cremation of the dead, which was customary among many ancient peoples. The Orthodox Church, however, mindful of the fact that the human body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit and inspired by the affection toward her departed children refuses to deliberately destroy the body, and has adopted the burial of the dead, as it appears in the Catacombs, and in the graves of the Martyrs and Saints. Cremation, therefore, is contrary to the faith and tradition of our Church and is forbidden to Orthodox Christians. A Church funeral is denied to a person who has been or will be cremated.