

Guidelines for Funerals, Memorial and Trisagion Services, and the Preparation of Kolyva

Funeral Services

A Funeral Service may only be celebrated for an Orthodox Christian who has fallen asleep in good standing with the Church.

Circumstances when a Funeral Service is Not Permitted

Those who have been separated from the Church and were not reconciled before death may not receive an Orthodox Funeral. Those who were married outside the Church may not receive an Orthodox Funeral. Those who committed suicide may not receive an Orthodox Funeral unless special dispensation is obtained from the Metropolitan.

A Funeral Service may only be celebrated if the body of the deceased is present and only if it will be buried. Those whose bodies have been, or will be, cremated may not receive an Orthodox Funeral. Those whose bodies have been, or will be, donated to science may not receive an Orthodox Funeral.

Memorial and Trisagion Services

Orthodox Christians offer prayers for the blessed repose of those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. The priest may be asked to serve a Memorial (Mnymosynon) or Trisagion Service and, although these may be offered at any time, they are customarily done at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Both services are nearly identical. The difference is that at a Memorial Service a plate of boiled, sweetened wheat (Kolyva) is placed before the Icon of our Lord, and the Evlogitaria for those Fallen Asleep are chanted in addition to the Trisagion prayers.

For Whom may the Memorial and Trisagion Services be Offered

A Memorial Service may only be offered for an Orthodox Christian who received a Funeral Service in the Orthodox Church.

The priest may offer a Trisagion Service at the end of the Divine Liturgy for any Orthodox Christian.

The priest may offer a Trisagion Service privately outside of the Divine Liturgy for a non-Orthodox Christian.

Circumstances when a Memorial Service is Not Permitted

A Memorial Service (Mnymosynon) may not be offered for the non-Orthodox. A Memorial Service may not be offered for those who died separated from the Church, those who were married outside the Church, and those who committed suicide.

Making Kolyva for the Memorial (Mnymosynon) Service

Kolyva should be prepared in an atmosphere of prayer, knowing that these kernels of wheat symbolize the seed which our Lord spoke of when He said: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” (*John 12:24*)