

Spiritual Care

When Someone Is Sick

At some point in our lives, we face the reality of illness, whether our own, a family member or a friend. In these situations, we are confronted with the frailty of the human body, our finitude and vulnerability. Illness can give us a glimpse of death. It can lead to anguish and despair, or it can lead to spiritual growth and maturity. Illness can also provoke a search for God and a return to Him.

Jesus had great compassion for the sick and suffering. He identified with them: “I was sick and you visited me” (Mt 25:36). He healed many as a sign that the kingdom of God was near and that the radical healing of human beings would be accomplished by His death and Resurrection.

Through the prayers and sacraments of the Church, Jesus continues to “touch” those who suffer illness, to bring them comfort, forgiveness of sins, inner peace and healing.

When someone is suffering grave illness, do not hesitate to call a priest to provide spiritual care.

This may include holy anointing, confession, absolution for the forgiveness of all sins, Holy Communion, a blessing and further prayers. This may be done anywhere and at any time: at the hospital, at home, in a care facility, at a chapel or in church; during the day, evening or night.

When Someone Has Passed Away

At death life is changed, not ended. If someone passes away suddenly, inform the priest. He will come to pray with the family by the body of the departed loved one. Arrangements for the funeral can be made through the priest and the funeral home selected by the family.

Preparation

Preparing the Body

The body of the departed loved one is always treated with utmost respect, because from the moment of Holy Baptism it became the living “Temple of Holy Spirit.” The body is clothed in new and festive clothing, as one who is about to attend the Divine Banquet in the Kingdom of God. The hands are folded on the chest crosswise, as a sign of surrender to God. A prayer book, icon or rosary may be placed beneath the hands of the departed person. A cross or the icon of the Descent of Christ into Hades may be placed in the casket.

Choosing a Reading

A family member or close friend may be invited to read the Epistle at the Burial Service. The priest will provide the family with several scriptural passages to choose from.

Eulogy

The eulogy (parting word) is an opportunity to honour the departed person and to give thanks to God for the gift of life. When families choose to include a eulogy as part of the Order of Burial, a short tribute to the life and spiritual virtues of the deceased loved one – no more than one typed page – may be offered by a family member or close friend at the end of the Evening Prayer Service (Burial Vigil). Longer eulogies are reserved for the reception or memorial dinner on the day of burial.

In place of the eulogy, families may opt for a multimedia presentation to take place at the reception.

Order of Burial

Burial Vigil

Vigil Prayer takes place in the evening, the night before the burial, at the funeral home or in the church. The first prayer service to take place is the **Panakhya** or **Parastas**, which means “to stand by.” Through prayerful intercession, we “stand by” the person who has fallen asleep.

If the Vigil takes place in the church, the family may request that the body remain in church overnight. Family members are welcome to stay in prayerful vigil by the body as long as they wish. The Psalms may be read at this time.

The casket is traditionally left open during prayers. This custom, established by the wisdom of the Church, encourages the faithful to express their sorrow and grief, which in itself is healing. It also allows the living to personally bid farewell to the deceased with a sense of closure.

Burial Service

On the day of the burial, the body is brought from the funeral home to the church for the Burial Service. The procession into the church is led by the cross, and a Gospel passage is proclaimed at the entrance. Normally, the **Burial Service** is served without Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion. This service is about 60 minutes in length. If, however, those attending the funeral will be mostly practicing Catholics, the family may request that the **Burial Service and Divine Liturgy** be offered. This service is about 90 minutes in length.

The Burial Service always concludes with the *Final Farewell* or *Final Kiss*. This custom dates back to the fourth century. Family, relatives and friends approach to bid farewell to the one who has fallen asleep. They express their love and devotion by kissing the cross, an icon, or by touching the

person's hand or the casket. The service in church ends with the Prayers for the Departed, the singing of *Everlasting Memory* and the Final Prayer of Absolution.

Procession & Burial

The procession from the church is led by the cross, followed by clergy, the casket, family, relatives and friends. A Gospel reading is proclaimed at the main doors. From the church, the body is escorted to the cemetery, where a brief service takes place at the graveside. If the family wishes, the body may be lowered immediately into the grave.

Burial – the Norm

For theological and pastoral reasons, the burial of the physical body continues to be the preference and the norm for the Church. However, cremation has been permitted by the Church, provided that belief in the final and general resurrection of the body is maintained. As a sign of respect for the integrity of the whole person, the prayer services should take place in the presence of the physical body, with cremation taking place after all the prayers and rites have been completed. The cremated remains are to be interred in a proper burial site, not only to confirm that the person has been “buried with Christ,” but also to allow for future visitations to the graveside, for prayers and Memorial Services.

Memorial Dinner

The Memorial Dinner or “Tryzna” is an important part of the Order of Burial. It is given in honour of the beloved reposed. Eulogies, tributes, testimonials, slide or video presentations are welcome to take place at any time within the context of the dinner.

Memorial Services

Please call the priest to make arrangements for the Memorial Liturgy on the *Fortieth Day*, which brings to close the most intense period of mourning. *The Anniversary* is also an important day for prayer. Arrangements should be made to offer a Memorial Liturgy on this day for the repose of the soul of the departed one. Prayers may also be offered on the *Third* and *Ninth Day*, on the special *All Souls Saturdays*, and other *Memorial Days*.

Donations and Stipends

To pray for the souls of the departed and to bury the dead are works of spiritual and corporal mercy. The clergy are obligated to do both freely. The grace of God is freely given and freely received in the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, including funerals. The established tradition is to offer a donation to the Church on behalf of the departed soul, in support of the Church and its clergy. At funeral services, prayer responses and hymns are led by a trained cantor, who is compensated with a stipend. In situations of financial hardship, please inform the priest.

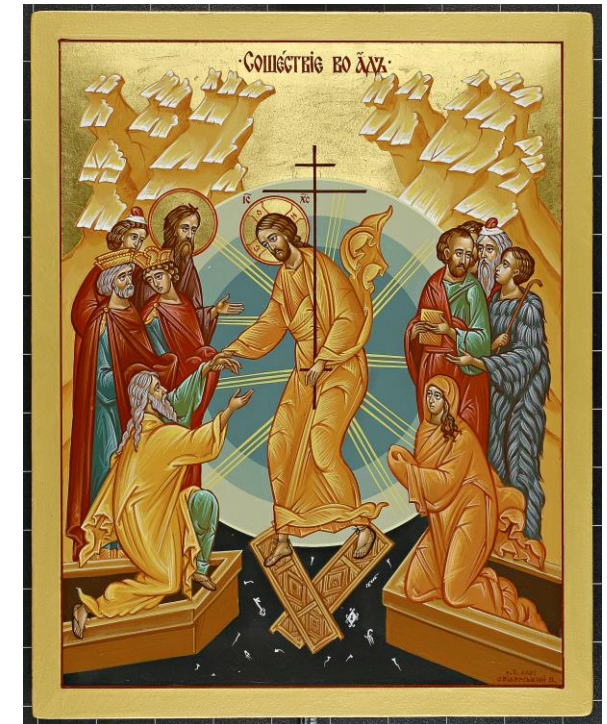
Cemeteries

The Eparchy of Edmonton operates two cemeteries. For more information, please contact Marc Turgeon at 780-424-5493 or mturgeon@edmontoneparchy.com or visit their website www.stmichaels-rosehill-cemetery.com

Parish:

Prayers and Funeral Services

According to the Ukrainian Catholic Tradition



By His death on a cross, Jesus descends into Hades – the “place of the dead.” Standing upon the broken doors of Hades, the light-bearing Christ “dispels” the gloom of death. He scatters the darkness of Hades to “find” Adam and Eve. Together with Adam, Christ brings forth out of the “shadow of death” the souls of the righteous who await Him.

Jesus said: “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in Me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die”
John 11:25-26