

**REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD**

**The Orthodox Church has had a long-established practice of praying for the departed. This reflects the view that the “communion of the saints” encompasses the church Militant (those on earth) and the Church Triumphant (those who have already passed on to their eternal reward). Our prayers for the departed, therefore, are a continuation of the bond of love that we form in our human relationships with family and friends: a bond that even death cannot sever.**

**In her infinite wisdom, the Church designates several days in the liturgical year when we are called upon to offer prayers for the departed. Every Saturday is dedicated to those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. It was on the Sabbath day that Christ lay dead in the tomb “resting from all His works and trampling down death by death.” Special Memorial Saturdays, referred to as “All soul’s Saturday.” are also commemorated. While differences in these commemorations may arise in various Orthodox jurisdictions, let us all focus on the importance of remembering the dead. Jesus referred to heaven as “My Father’s House.” Knowing that our loved ones are in our Father’s House should motivate us to pray for them. The Church encourages prayers for the departed on the third, ninth, and fortieth day after their Death.**

**Orthodox prayers for our deceased loved ones are not only for them but also for Christ in Whom they died. *“I am the resurrection and the life,”* Jesus said, *“he who believes in Me though he were dead yet shall he live, and he who lives and believes in Me shall have life everlasting.”***