



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

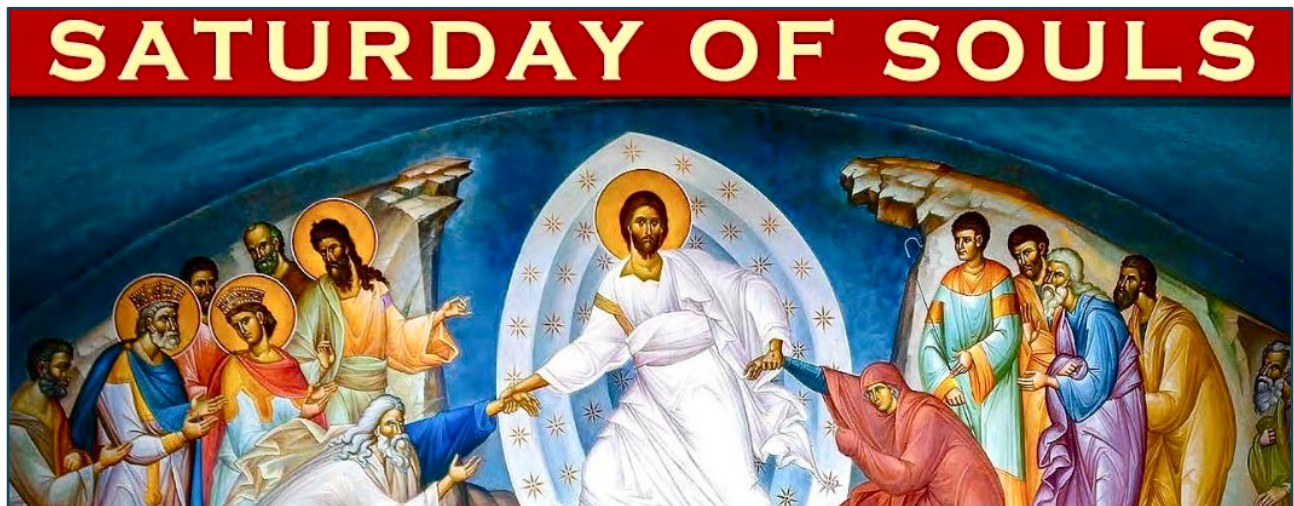
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Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor
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Pastoral Message from Fr. George for Friday, June 6, 2025



[Click here to offer your names for Memorial Saturday](#)

What Does It Mean When We Chant “Eternal Memory” at Memorial Services?

When we chant “eternal memory” (“αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη”) at the end of Memorial Services and Funerals, it is often falsely assumed that this memory of the departed be preserved on earth not only in the

minds of loved ones, but even for many generations after. In fact, however, this hymn is not addressed to the loved ones of the deceased, nor is it addressed to the deceased, nor does it have any mortal purpose, but it is addressed as a prayer to God, Who is eternal, on behalf of the departed.

One day the Apostles came to Christ with joy saying: “Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name.” Jesus replied: “Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens” (Lk. 10:17-20). In other words, Christ told His Apostles to not rejoice over something here on earth that bears nothing on their salvation, but to rejoice over the fact that their names are eternally remembered in the kingdom of heaven. Their names are written in what is commonly known in Holy Scripture as the “Book of Life”. This is best illustrated in the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Poor Lazarus after death is found in God's kingdom, and his name has become eternally remembered, while the miserable rich man lingers in Hades, utterly nameless. The name of a person is their identity.

“Eternal Memory” is equivalent to saying “may you ever be in God's memory.” The Church says this prayer so that the deceased “continue” in God's memory. Because if God “forgets” us, if He says “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:23), we are led into spiritual extinction. But if He remembers us, then like the thief on the Cross who asked Christ to remember him, we also will live eternally with Him in Paradise.

According to the Holy Fathers, creation lives and exists spiritually only when it participates in the deifying energies of God. Through this uncreated Grace we continuously receive our spiritual being and the potential for development. And this is natural, since “the divinity is being and creation is non-being” (St. Maximus the Confessor). Therefore, creation exists and has being because it participates in the essence-giving, life-giving, and deifying uncreated Grace of God. As Saint Basil the Great says: “Only two things exist, divinity and creation, the sanctifying power and the sanctified.”

The immortality of the soul after death is a given. We could say that it is natural and therefore forced on humans. And the damned exist eternally on the basis of the immortality of the soul, but their existence, precisely because immortality is natural and forced, is a “death”. Hell is a “place of the dead,” because participation in the deifying and life-giving uncreated Grace of God is absent from those in it. Absent is the necessary relationship with God and therefore the personal identity that creates this relationship. For we must know that the relationship with God, the partaking of the deifying energy of His Grace, is what gives substance to a person and not nature itself. The relationship of a person with God substantiates their nature and they become truly a person.

Many see the salvation of the soul only in light of the fact that they won't be tormented eternally, while salvation is in fact this relationship, this love, our participation in uncreated Grace. The soul, because it is immortal by nature according to the Grace of

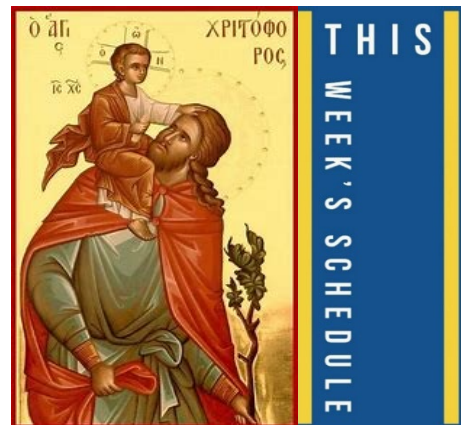
God, and not immortal by nature in and of itself, has an existential need for existence, to be substantiated in a relationship to a Person, to acquire a personal and eternal identity. And this identity, as we said, is given by God within a relationship that is freely initiated and created by people already in this life within the Church through her Mysteries. If, therefore, we do not create this divine relationship, we will be “deprived” of being in God’s memory and “fall” into the “I never knew you.” Essentially, this is “spiritual death.” - *By John Sanidopoulos*

Join Us This Sunday with Your Family

Saturday, June 7th – Saturday of the Souls

9:00 Divine Liturgy & Memorial Service

3:00 Pan-Orthodox Vespers for Pentecost



Join our Atlanta Orthodox parishes at St. Philothea Church in Athens for this Vespers Service featuring the Gospel to be read in various languages followed by an outdoor picnic celebration. It is a truly Orthodox family gathering. It is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. to ensure that we have a relaxed fellowship/dinner following the Vespers and return to our homes before dark!

Sunday, June 8th – Holy Pentecost

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy & Vespers of the Feast of the Holy Spirit

11:00 Blessing of Prayer Shawls & Bloom Our Youth Presentation

Pentecost Picnic

St Philothea Greek Orthodox Church

3761 Mars Hill Road, Watkinsville, GA

Saturday, June 7

3:00 pm Vespers & Picnic

Indoor & Outdoor Seating



RSVP: Please scan the QR code

Or go to: StPhilothea.org

For more information call 706-340-6366



This is a Pan-Orthodox AIOPA Event
A Family Event - Indoors & Outdoors Seating



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**Every day, you have two choices:
To focus on what's wrong or to
embrace what's right. Choose
gratitude. Choose joy. Choose to
see the beauty in the little things,
and life will become even more
incredible than you imagined.**

I cannot control

