

# Personal Pre-Planning for an Orthodox Christian Ending

*...Consequently, it is better, before your death, to prepare yourself the arrangements of your funeral. A good funerary linen is piety.” Saint Basil the Great (Homily 9 on the wealthy)*

Understanding how we as Orthodox Christians view our bodies, made in the image of God, that have been sanctified by receiving the very body and blood of Christ throughout our lives, and following the example of our Lord's burial, the Orthodox Christian takes the treatment, preparation, and the burial of their bodies, with utmost reverence. To ensure this takes place, warrants pre-planning and communication to everyone involved in an Orthodox Christian's life and their cooperation to understand their wishes with explicit communication.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

### 1. Estate Planning

-Complete the necessary paperwork:

1. Durable Power Attorney
2. Living Will
3. Durable Healthcare Power of Attorney
4. Do Not Resuscitate order (DNR)
5. Advance Directive for Healthcare (Living Will)
6. Advance Directive for Funeral Care
  - Death Care Power of Attorney
  - Burial and Funeral Care Instructions
  - Obituary /information sheet (optional)
  - Location of Important Documents (optional) \*DO NOT STORE IN BANK LOCKBOX
7. Last Will and Testament
8. Educate yourself about what is prescribed by the Holy Orthodox Church for a proper Orthodox funeral.
9. Decide if you want to avail yourself of the resources in your parish that the Bereavement Ministry Team has to offer.

## ESTATE PLANNING

- **Durable Power of Attorney** the DPOA gives the person you name the ability to handle your legal and financial affairs at any time regardless of health and mental condition.
- **Living Will** or **Advanced Directive for Healthcare** stipulates what wishes measures, if any you wish to be taken to prolong your vital functions. (*Five Wishes*)
- **Durable Healthcare Power of Attorney** appoints a person of your choice to carry out your wishes as directed in your **Living Will** (see above)
- **Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)** usually reserved for the terminally ill.
- **Advance Directive for Funeral Care** (Death Care Power of Attorney) names an executor of your choice, and an alternate, to make all decisions relating to the care of your bodily remains. It also specifically prohibits any facility, hospital, or doctor from making any provisions or arrangements for your care, such as calling a funeral home or performing an autopsy
- **Burial and Funeral Care Instructions** provides the person named to Post Mortem Preference Document the vital information they will need to carry out your directives.
- **Obituary /information sheet** (optional) personal and confidential information
- Location of Important Documents (optional) \*DO NOT STORE IN BANK LOCKBOX
- **Last Will and Testament** A last will and testament is a legal document that dictates what happens to your possessions and assets once you pass away.

## ***Educating yourself about what is prescribed by the Holy Orthodox Church for a proper Orthodox funeral***

### EASTERN ORTHODOX VIEW OF OUR BODIES

“For Christians the belief that the body was the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore sacred, made the burning of the body unacceptable. Bodies of our dead were always to be treated with great reverence. From the earliest of times the bodies of the martyrs and saints were buried in the catacombs, their tombs used as altars for the celebration of the Eucharistic offering, catacombs often being the only safe place for believers to worship without threat of arrest.”(<http://pemptousia.com/2013/10/cremation-versus-the-orthodox-practice-of-burial/>)

### Care and Preparation of the Deceased

“For those who desire it, friends and family of the deceased may prepare the body immediately after death. This procedure may also take place immediately prior to the beginning of the funeral. The funeral home may assist the family by providing a room in which to wash and dress the body as well as placing the body in the casket. The priest can oversee the preparation of the body. This preparation of the body has been traditionally the task of the members of Orthodox Christian families.

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## St. IGNATIUS BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY TEAM

(Fr. Philip Begley, Kh Terry Rogers, Alexandra Larrison, Margie Naftel, Laurie Holmes)

Please indicate on the form to what extent you would like to be ministered to by the Bereavement Ministry Team

### ***The Bereavement Ministry Team may:***

- **Visit the sick** and keep the priest informed
- **Prayer and Notification:** The Team are available to help the priest before and at the time of death. Disabled or home-bound volunteers can help pray from home notify needs by phone. They can be prepared to help the family, bring coffee, clean up, prepare food, etc., as needed or **stay out of the way** as the case may be. This group may help keep other members of the team informed and prepared for an expected death.
- **Funeral home liaison:** These individuals are available to accompany the family &/or notify the funeral home, if needed.
- **Assist in in the preparation of the body** (washing, dressing, anointing) The family may or may not participate or if comfortable may do this... This team can come in just before or after the death, when called by the visitation team.
- **Pray prayers** from the time of death until transferring the body to the church.
- **Family and Friends Notification** (phone calls & email) *Fr. Philip and Pam Gaddis* will initiate this. The team may then use the *Contact Form* provided with the *Pre-Arrangement* form. They may answer questions and help with transportation and accommodations, if needed for travelers.
- **Write and place the obituary** A funeral home is prepared to do this for a fee.
- **Prepare the church** (flower placement, guestbook placement, etc.)
- **Arrange for a marker or monument** If the family has not pre-planned and made a choice here, the team may assist with this choice. Otherwise, the funeral home will take care of what has been previously chosen. ***Deacon Ed will assist in this need.***
- **Obtain a guest book** if the funeral home is not providing one.
- **Mercy Meal** The team will initiate Sign Up Genius for the parish to serve the family a meal following the burial in the St. Ignatius Parish Hall if the family wishes.
- **Readers** Last, but not least, the team will initiate (IF THE FAMILY DESIRES) readers to read the psalter during the time the deceased is brought to the church until the funeral begins. We will not publicly have readers *if the family has stated they prefer we not have them and will honor their wishes.* Parishioners may read in private if this occurs.

\*Forms and the definition of them with permission, from [A Christian Ending A Handbook for Burial in the Ancient Christian Tradition](#) by J. Mark & Elizabeth J. Barna *Divine Ancient Press*

\*Unless otherwise noted