



MEMORY ETERNAL

March 16



Did you know we say “Memory Eternal” not for the living but for the dead?

We say “Memory Eternal” for the reposed to be primarily remembered by God; not the living, though we wish this too. Like the Good Thief on the cross who asked to be remembered by Christ in Paradise (Luke 23:42–43), we pray that the soul has entered Heaven and is experiencing eternal life.

“Memory Eternal” is an exclamation of praise for Orthodox Christians who have died. We say “Many Years” for living members of the Church. “Memory Eternal” is not chanted for those who have been officially glorified as Saints.

“Memory Eternal” can be said anytime, and it is said formally at Orthodox Funeral Services, Memorial Services (including Saturday of Souls), and on the Sunday of Orthodoxy (the First Sunday of Great Lent).

“Memory Eternal” is a response to Christ, who says to Moses: “I AM THAT I AM...This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations” (Exodus 3:14,15). Also, every Divine Liturgy is offered in obedience to Christ, who says: “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19) when instituting the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist.

The Church as a eucharistic community exists beyond time and space, established by Christ for eternity, and existing in the ever-present now of God’s eternal memory. And we who “remember” Christ during our earthly life will be “remembered” by Christ forever in Heaven.

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