

Praying for the Deceased

The Great 40 Day Fast

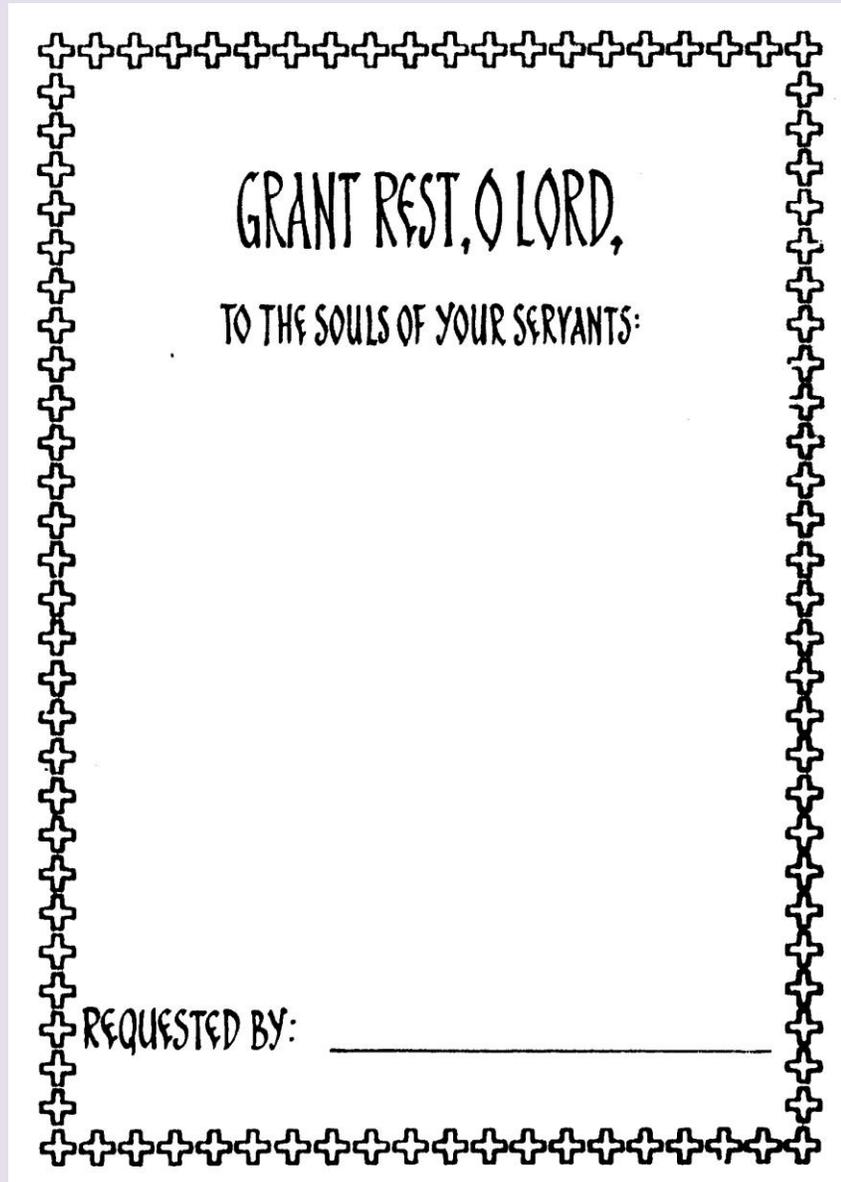
Sorokousty

Lent is not only a time for fasting and penance, but also a time for praying for the departed souls. The ancient practice of praying for those who have departed from us is based on the Dogma of the "Communion of Saints". The Communion of Saints is a mystical union of the Baptized Faithful here on earth, the blessed & saints in heaven and the suffering souls in purgatory all joined together in the bond of Love of God and Love of neighbor. The Holy Church teaches that the blessed in heaven can and do help those on earth and purgatory by interceding for them before God, while those in purgatory can pray for us, but cannot help themselves. However, we on earth can assist them by our prayers, good works, and above all by the sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy.

One special way we can do this during Great Lent is through the service of the ' Sorokousty. The word "Sorokoust" literally means: "forty mouths" (sorok- forty; ust-mouth), ie., a prayer offered by 40 mouths or by forty priests. To honour the deceased members of their families worthily, the custom developed of holding services for them in the great cathedral churches on the 3rd, 9th, and 40th day and Anniversary after their death, with forty priests participating in the celebration.

During the Sorokousty service the "diptychs", the little black booklets containing the necrology (list of names of the deceased family members) are read and included in our prayers. The use of the Diptychs are mentioned in the writings of St. Cyprian (third century) and by St. John Chrysostom (fourth century). Today, this Sorokousty service is typically celebrated once a week during the 6 weeks of the great fast either in the context of a divine liturgy or, a special Parastas memorial service.

The families who wish to have their deceased family & relatives commemorated would write their names on the provided piece of paper and place it with a small donation using a blue Special Donation envelope. All of the accumulated names are then be read either aloud or in a soft voice during the weekly service.



GRANT REST, O LORD,
TO THE SOULS OF YOUR SERVANTS:

REQUESTED BY: _____