

The Parastas and the Panakhyda

Memorial Services

The **Parastas** "(standing service)" is a memorial service for the dead in the Byzantine-Slav tradition. It is also called the "Great Panakhyda"; the (small) Panakhyda forms the conclusion of the Parastas.

The Parastas is as a service of prayer for those who have died and gone forth to God's judgment. As such, the Parastas is appointed for the five All Souls Saturdays, after the Divine Liturgy, and may also be celebrated on the anniversaries of the deaths of those we love, or on common commemorations such as Remembrance Day.

The ancient Christian tradition of keeping watch or vigil, as well as the basic human desire to accompany the dead to their rest, lie behind the custom of reading the psalter during the night before a burial (for a priest, the Gospel is read). The Parastas is often celebrated in the funeral home as a similar sort of vigil service over the body of the one who has died.

Due to the length of the Parastas, the Panakhyda is sometimes celebrated instead.

Adapted with appreciation from: [The Memorial Service \(Parastas\) \(archpitt.org\)](http://archpitt.org)



The **Panakhyda** is one of our most important services outside of the Divine Liturgy, celebrated fairly frequently in the Ukrainian Catholic Church. This service is held several times as part of the funeral and graveside services for one who has died, and may be celebrated after the Divine Liturgy, particularly on All Souls Saturdays or on the anniversary of the death of a loved one.

Like all our services for the departed, it provides an opportunity to pray for the soul of the one who has died, asking God to grant them rest and forgiveness of all their sins, and serves to comfort and console those left behind. The name comes from the Greek *pannychis*, meaning an all-night vigil.

The Panakhyda is ordinarily celebrated:

- Immediately after the death of a Christian, if a priest is present (the prayers for the dying, together with the panakhyda, make up the "Office at the Passing of the Soul")
- Before the body of the departed Christian is taken to the church for burial
- After the burial, as a graveside service

- On the 40th day after death, and each year thereafter. In these cases, it may immediately follow a Divine Liturgy celebrated for the departed.
- At graveside blessing during the season of Pentecost

The Panakhyda also forms the concluding part of a longer memorial service for the dead, the Parastas.

The structure of the Panakhyda consists of:

- An opening blessing: "Blessed is our God...."
- The usual "beginning prayers", from "Holy God" through the Lord's Prayer.
- Troparia for the dead ("With the just souls who have reached their end...")
- Litany for the Deceased, concluding with the prayer, "O God of spirits and of all flesh."
- Dismissal
- "Вічна Пам'ять" "Everlasting Memory"

The complete text of the Panakhyda can be found in our Divine Liturgy books on page 133.

Adapted with appreciation from: [The Panakhyda \(archpitt.org\)](http://archpitt.org)