



October 6, 2008

Protocol 08–22

All Parish Clergy and Laity of  
The Holy Metropolis of Denver

*Do you not know that you are  
the temple of God and that  
the Spirit of God dwells in you?  
If anyone defiles the temple  
of God, God will destroy him.  
For the temple of God is holy,  
which temple you are.*

1 Corinthians 3:16, 17

Beloved in the Lord,

Lately I have been hearing of an increasing number of Orthodox Christians who wish to be cremated after they die. Actually a few have already been cremated. This is totally unchristian.

The Church has always taught that everything which God created is good. This includes the material world, especially the human body.

It was the pre-Christian, pagan world which taught that the body is inferior to the soul. The pagans looked upon the body as the prison of the soul, and once the body died the sooner the soul was freed from its confinement. There are also people whose religion teaches of the reincarnation of the body, considering the body inferior to the soul.

If, in fact, the body were inferior to the soul then our Lord Jesus Christ would never have come into the world as a human person. He would never have taken on flesh in order to guide our lives to Him and to His coming Kingdom.

Unfortunately the perverse error that our bodies belong to us, and that we can do whatever we want with them, has become a prevalent falsehood in our society. This is reflected in the accepted policy of abortion, which says that a woman has the right to do whatever she wishes with her body.

This concept is totally against the Christian faith. If this were true, then the Apostle Paul would never have written:

*... do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

2 Corinthians 6:19, 20

If we are Baptized and Chrismated members of the Church, then we understand that we do not belong to ourselves and we have no right to violate that which belongs to God.

When a human body is cremated, it is radically violated. For after the process of cremation, only the skull and the bones are left. These bones are then crushed and pulverized in a machine to be given to the family. This is certainly the violation of the body in a horrible manner. Consequently what the urn contains, euphemistically called "cremains," are the pulverized bones.

I have recently been told that by a special process these bone remains are being made into necklaces which women are beginning to wear. Is this not diabolic in that Satan delights in seeing the human body truly obliterated as the temple of God?

Because this growing practice is anti-Christian, Orthodox funerals are forbidden in this Metropolis for those who are to be, or have been, cremated. As members of the Greek Orthodox Church, we have the holy responsibility of honoring the human body, and after death of burying it, so as to preserve the truth of the bodily resurrection of the dead when our Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish the fullness of His Kingdom.

With Paternal Blessings,



✠ Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver

**TO BE PRINTED IN ALL PARISH BULLETINS AND NEWS LETTERS**