

a. Christian Funeral

*Give graciously to all the living;
do not withhold even kindness from the dead.
(Sir 7:33)*

- 511 Christians view death in the light of Christ's victory over Death in his Resurrection. This is expressed in a special way when the funeral of a Christian occurs during the Paschal season and the troparion of Pascha is sung over the deceased: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to those in the tombs giving life." The joy of Christ's Resurrection is the divine answer to the sorrow of a person's death.
- 512 A Christian funeral is always filled with hope for the person's resurrection in the flesh. This is why the body of the deceased is tensed, sprinkled with holy water, and otherwise shown reverence; and it is why it is carried solemnly to the church and cemetery. Those participating in the funeral procession accompany the deceased with their joint prayers to the place of burial. The hope of Christians for eternal life is expressed in the singing "Everlasting memory" which refers to God's "remembrance" of the person. To be embraced by that memory is to remain in eternal life.
- 513 In keeping with the words of Scripture: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (*Gn 3:19*), the body of the deceased is returned to the earth. According to a widespread Ukrainian custom, the body rests in the ground with the head facing the east, where the sun rises. It thus awaits the coming of Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness." Over the grave is placed a cross. This is a sign of the beginning of the victory over death, won by Christ's death on the cross.
- 514 There are four distinct Rites of Burial: for priests, monastics, laypersons, and children. The rite for priests is used for bishops as well as priests; the rite for laypersons is served for all those baptized and chrismated, including deacons; and the rite for children is celebrated for children up to the age of seven.
- 515 The funeral rite for a priest includes numerous readings from Scripture. These and the profound verses about the sense of human life are a sort of spiritual testament, a final homily of the deceased pastor addressed to the living.
- 516 The funeral rite for monks, which is used at all stages and forms of the monastic life—for novices, monks, and priest-monks—differs from other funeral services in the prescriptions concerning the preparation

and the vesting of the body. As for the texts, they speak of the renunciation of the world, monastic dedication, the vows, and separation from the monastic community.

- 517 The texts (stichera) of the funeral rite for laypersons describe the tragedy of death that resulted from the Fall. But the Christian answer to death is heard in the singing of the evangelical Beatitudes. Then, during the final kiss—the Christian parting with the deceased—sorrow is joined to hope. The funeral service concludes with the Panakhyda (brief memorial service) at the cemetery and the sealing of the grave "until the second and glorious coming of Christ."
- 518 The funeral fora child offers words of consolation to the parents, and expressions of faith that God has received the child to himself. This rite does not include prayers for the forgiveness of sins. Children of this age are without sin and possess the innocence of Adam prior to his Fall.

b. Commemoration of the Deceased

*For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again,
it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead.
(2 Mc 12:44)*

- 519 At death, a person leaves this world and stands before God. Fora worthy encounter with the Lord, the deceased needs the prayerful support of the living, as well as the intercession of the most holy Mother of God, their guardian angel, and of all the saints. That is why at the notification of death, the family and friends of the deceased gather around (in Greek, parastasis) to pray for him or her. Thus, the prayerful commemoration of the deceased begins with the parastas service. Subsequently, throughout the night, according to Christian custom, the Psalter is read for the repose of a layperson, and the Gospel fora priest and bishop.
- 520 According to ancient custom, on the day of the funeral, the family and neighbours gather after the services at the home of the deceased [o elsewhere] to prayerfully commemorate him or her at a common meal (in Slavonic, *tryzna*) and to console the bereaved family. Subsequent commemorations are made in the church on the ninth and fortieth days and at every anniversary of the death. Such Christian commemoration overcomes the separation between the living and the deceased.
- 521 The Church also designates other days for commemoration of the deceased. Every Saturday is a day when we remember them together with all the saints. Then there is Meatfare Saturday, as well as the second,