Burial and Commemoration of the Dead

Prayer for those who have reposed is a tradition that dates back to the early church. Prayer for the departed is one way of heeding the apostle's exhortation to pray "for all men" (1 Tim 2.1). Since with God "all live" (Lk 20.38), the Orthodox Church makes no distinction between the living and the departed in terms of prayer: both, in its view, are in need of prayers of intercession.

The practice of praying for the departed is based on the concept that the posthumous fate of the dead may be altered through the prayers of the living for them. Among other fathers of the Church, the holy hierarch Cyril of Jerusalem gave a description of this:

> For I know many who say, "How can a soul receive profit after having left this world, either with or without sins, if it is remembered in prayer?" But surely if a king had made exiles out of certain people who had given him offense, and then their relatives wove a crown and offered it to him for those in need of help, would he not give them relief from their punishments? In the same way we also, offering our petitions to God for those who have fallen asleep, although they are sinners, we do not weave crowns, but we offer Christ slaughtered for our sins, propitiating God the lover of humanity both for them and for ourselves.[1]

Prayer for the departed is a point on which Orthodoxy differs both from Catholicism and, to an even greater degree, from Protestantism. Traditional Catholic dogma divides the kingdom of the afterlife into hell,[2] purgatory, and paradise.[3] In keeping with this division, Catholic theologians at the Council of Ferrara-Florence declared that those in paradise have no need of prayers for the departed, since they are already saved and abide with God; nor can prayer be of any help to those in hell, for deliverance from hell is impossible. Prayer for the departed can only help those in purgatory. In the words of the Latin attendees of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, "Unless there is a purification after death, this prayer would be in vain; for this prayer is neither for those who are already in glory nor for those who are banished to hell."[4]

Holy Hierarch Mark of Ephesus. Contemporary icon

During its revision of Roman Catholic dogma, Protestant theology rejected various individual doctrines, while fully retaining the basis on which these doctrines were established. As a result, instead of returning to its roots, Protestantism departed considerably farther from the faith of the ancient Church than had Catholicism. In particular, while renouncing the doctrine of purgatory, Protestantism retained the Latin belief that prayer for those in paradise and in hell was futile: purgatory does not exist, ergo prayer for the departed is completely unnecessary.

Unlike Catholicism, the Orthodox Church does not recognize the doctrine of purgatory and makes no distinction between eternal torment in a hell from which deliverance is impossible, and purgatorial fire from which one may yet be saved. According to Orthodox teaching, it is possible to be delivered from the torments of hell. This deliverance occurs not out of some automatic necessity, and not because a particular sinner has "served his time" according to the sins he has committed, but by the prayers of the Church and through God's ineffable love for mankind. The idea that deliverance from the torments of hell is possible formed the basis for numerous prayers for the departed, particularly a special prayer "for those who are imprisoned in hell," read at vespers on the feast of Pentecost.

The eastern fathers of the Church expressed the opinion that prayers for the departed benefit not just one specific category of the dead, but all those who have departed this life, including those in hell. In response to the Latin theologians, Mark of Ephesus wrote:

> So also, on account of these things, we have the prayers in behalf of those fallen asleep. The Church has received these prayers from the Apostles themselves and the fathers, and performs them in both the Mystical Sacrifice and in certain other rites at various times. We perform them in behalf of all alike, who have fallen asleep in faith. We say that for all of these the prayers contribute and furnish something, and that power and assistance from them pass over to all. This is so even for those sinners confined in Hades, that they may obtain some small relief, even though there may not be complete release for them. . . . But the Church of God in no wise prays for such ones, but rather asks from God relief for all who have fallen asleep in faith, though they be the most sinful, praying for them both publically and privately. . . . And so if both the prayers and petitions of the Church are effective for ones such as these [great sinners], and bring much profit to them, inasmuch as they have not yet been condemned nor received the verdict of the Judge and come into Judgment, much more will prayers for those in the intermediate state bestow great benefits upon them. The prayers will either restore them to the estate of the righteous, should their sins be very small and insubstantial, or at least in the meantime will lighten the difficulties of those who remain in them and lift them up to more propitious hopes.[5]

Furthermore, in the words of the saint, prayer for the departed, especially offerings for them at the divine liturgy, "proceeds also to those who passed their lives in a righteous and holy manner, inasmuch as they are also incomplete, ever making gains in their progression toward the good and not yet enjoying the final blessedness." Thus, the saint concludes, the effects of prayer for the departed "proceeds to all, and the aid which comes from the prayers and mystical rites likewise fulfills all who have fallen asleep in faith," and for this reason "we see that there is no inherent necessity in the argument which says that this sort of aid is administered by us to those in the purgatorial fire alone."[6]

Prayer for the Departed in the Ancient Church

In the early Christian Church the primary means of praying for the departed was to commemorate them at the divine liturgy. Testimonies to this form of commemoration abound in the writings of the fathers of the Church. In the third century Cyprian of Carthage speaks of "offerings" for one who has departed and of a "sacrifice . . . for his repose" before the altar of God.[7] Cyril of Jerusalem, commenting on the relevant place in the order of the liturgy, writes:

> Next, we make memorial and commemoration of those who have fallen asleep before us, first patriarchs, prophets, apostles, (and) martyrs, so that by their prayers and intercessions God might receive our petition. Next, for the holy fathers and bishops, who have fallen asleep before us, and, in general, for all who have fallen asleep before us, believing great profit will come to the souls for whom the petition is made as this holy and awe-filled sacrifice is being presented.[8]

We find similar accounts of commemoration of the departed at the liturgy in the writings of other fathers, particularly John Chrysostom:

> Not in vain did the Apostles order that remembrance should be made of the dead in the dreadful Mysteries. They know that great gain resulteth to them, great benefit; for when the whole people stands with uplifted hands, a priestly assembly, and that awful Sacrifice lies displayed, how shall we not prevail with God by our entreaties for them?[9]
>
> For it is, yes, it is possible, if we will, to mitigate his punishment, if we make continual prayers for him, if for him we give alms. However unworthy he may be, God will yield to our importunity. For if Paul showed mercy on one (who had no claims on his

mercy), and for the sake of others spared one (whom he would not have spared), much more is it right for us to do this.[10]

Not in vain are the oblations made for the departed, not in vain the prayers, not in vain the almsdeeds: all those things hath the Spirit ordered, wishing us to be benefited one by the other.[11]

Blessed Augustine likewise speaks of liturgical prayer and almsgiving on behalf of the departed:

But by the prayers of the holy Church, and by the salvific sacrifice, and by the alms which are given for their spirits, there is no doubt that the dead are aided, that the Lord might deal more mercifully with them than their sins would deserve. For the whole Church observes this practice which was handed down by the Fathers: that it prays for those who have died in the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, when they are commemorated in their own place in the sacrifice itself; and the sacrifice is offered also in memory of them, on their behalf. If, then, works of mercy are celebrated for the sake of those who are being remembered, who would hesitate to recommend them, on whose behalf prayers to God are not offered in vain?[12]

In the tradition of the ancient Church, prayers for one who had departed were made each year on the day of his death. The third, ninth (or tenth), and fortieth days after a Christian's repose were particularly observed. On these days prayers for the departed were offered, alms are distributed in memory of the departed person, and memorial meals were held, as attested in particular by the *Apostolic Constitutions*:

Let the third day of the departed be celebrated with psalms, and readings, and prayers, on account of Him who arose within the space of three days; and let the ninth day be celebrated in remembrance of the living, and of the departed; and the fortieth day according to the ancient pattern: for so did the people lament Moses, and the anniversary day in memory of him. And let alms be given to the poor out of his goods for a memorial of him. . . . Now, when you are invited to their memorials, do you feast with good order, and the fear of God, as disposed to intercede for those that are departed.[13]

Ultimately the third, ninth, and fortieth days became the days for commemoration of the departed in the East. In the West these days came to be the seventh and thirtieth days after a person's repose. Commemoration on the seventh and thirtieth days is based on the Old Testament practice of seven days (Sir 22.11, Gen 50.10) and thirty days (cf. Num 20.29, Deut 34.8) of mourning.

We know how the departed were commemorated at the Eucharist from the surviving ancient orders of the liturgy. In particular, the liturgy of the *Apostolic Constitutions* contains the following diaconal petitions for the departed:

Let us pray for our brethren that are at rest in Christ, that God, the lover of mankind, who has received his soul, may forgive him every sin, voluntary and involuntary, and may be merciful and gracious to him, and give him his lot in the land of the pious that are sent into the bosom of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, with all those that have pleased Him and done His will from the beginning of the world, whence all sorrow, grief, and lamentation are banished.[14]

The diaconal petitions are followed by a prayer that the bishop intones aloud:

O Thou who art by nature immortal, and hast no end of Thy being . . . who art the God not of the dead, but of the living: for the souls of all men live with Thee, and the spirits of the righteous are in Thy hand, which no torment can touch; for they are all sanctified under Thy hand: do Thou now also look upon this Thy servant, whom Thou hast selected and received into another state, and forgive him if voluntarily or involuntarily he has sinned, and afford him merciful angels, and place him in the bosom of the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and of all those that have pleased Thee from the beginning of the world, where there is no grief, sorrow, nor lamentation.[15]

As we have seen above,[16] prayers for the departed are found in the liturgies of both John Chrysostom and Basil the Great. These prayers are offered immediately after the consecration of the holy gifts.

A highly developed rite of prayer for the departed is found in the liturgy of the apostle James.[17] He begins by commemorating the Theotokos, the prophets, apostles, evangelists, preachers, martyrs, and confessors, John the Baptist, the protomartyr Stephen, and all the saints. This commemoration is accompanied by this priestly prayer: "Lead us into this blessed assembly, unite us unto this Church, set us by thy grace amid the elect that are written in the heavens."

Further on the deacon commemorates "the divine instructors and interpreters of blameless faith, who . . . have gone to their rest, having established and passed on to us the Orthodox faith." The priest commemorates the bishops, luminaries, and teachers of the Church who have gone to their rest before us, and asks that by their prayers the teaching and confession of Orthodoxy might be established in the souls of the faithful, and that malignant heresies might swiftly be eradicated. Then the deacon commemorates "all the departed faithful that have reposed in the true faith, who have passed on both from this holy altar and from this habitation, and from every country," that the Lord might show them forth "worthy of remission of transgressions and absolution of sins."

The priest goes on to commemorate all the departed members of the Church: "Orthodox presbyters that have gone to their rest before us, deacons, subdeacons, psalm singers, readers, interpreters, chanters, exorcists, monks, ascetics, those who listen, perpetual virgins and laymen who have departed in the faith, and those whom each has in his soul."[18] Then the priest says a prayer for all the departed, which the people take up and conclude with these words: "Grant them rest, and pardon and remit, O God, the sins of ignorance and the transgressions of us all, known and unknown." Thus, prayer for the departed transitions smoothly into prayer for the living—those present in the church. The living do not separate the departed from themselves, but feel themselves to be members of the same ecclesial organism, the same body of Christ, to which those who have reposed in the faith belong.

The Church, which accompanies a person on his life's journey from the moment of his birth, also does not abandon him in his final hours and after death. Since ancient times the death of a Christian has been attended by special church rituals. The priest would pray with the dying person and commune him of the holy mysteries of Christ. After his repose the body of the departed would be brought to the church, where a memorial service order was performed over it. In his panegyric on his brother Caesarius, Gregory the Theologian says:

> And now our illustrious Caesarius has been restored to us, when his honored dust and celebrated corpse, after being escorted home amidst a succession of hymns and public orations, has been honored by the holy hands of his parents; while his mother, substituting the festal garments of religion for the trappings of woe, has overcome her tears by her philosophy, and lulled to sleep lamentations by psalmody, as her son enjoys honors worthy of his newly regenerate soul, which has been, through water, transformed by the Spirit.[19]

The words cited are pronounced (or at least are intended to be pronounced) during a service for the departed. The service order, as is apparent from the words of the saint, is performed in the church in the presence of the relatives, and includes numerous hymns. The body of the deceased is located in the church in front of the altar (before "the altars of the martyrs"). Thus, by the fourth century it was a widespread custom for the body of the departed to be brought into the church, to have the prayers for the reposed read over it.

A detailed description of the ritual performed for the departed is found in Dionysius the Areopagite's *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.* Here this ritual is viewed as one of the sacraments of the Church. This sacrament, according to the Areopagite, is bright and joyous in nature, since the repose of a Christian is a joyous occasion both for the Christian himself and for his relations:

> The holy man himself, who comes to the end of his struggles, is filled with a holy consolation, and with much satisfaction draws nigh to the path of the holy regeneration. The familiar friends of him who has fallen asleep, as befits their Divine familiarity and fellowship, pronounce him blessed, whoever he is, as approaching, in answer to his prayers, the end crowned with victory. They send up odes of thanksgiving to the Author of victory, praying also that they themselves may come to the same inheritance.[20]

The relatives of the departed bring his body to the bishop, that is, to the church. The bishop "gladly receives him, and celebrates the rites fixed by reverend men, to be celebrated over those who have piously fallen asleep."[21] If the departed person was a priest, his body is placed before the altar (the holy table); if a monk or a layman, it is placed opposite the altar ("near the hallowed sanctuary, before the sacerdotal entrance").[22] The significance of this action is explained as follows:

> Not without reason does the Hierarch conduct to, and place the defunct in the place with those of the same rank. For it shows spiritually that, in the regeneration, all will be in that inheritance for which they have chosen their own life here. For example, if anyone here had a Godlike and most holy life (so far as the imitation of God is attainable by man), he will be throughout the age to come in a divine and blessed lot. But if he lead a life inferior to the divine likeness in its perfection, but, nevertheless, a holy life, even this man will receive the holy retributions of the same kind.[23]

In order to say the prayers over the body of the departed, the bishop "collects the revered Choir"—that is, assembles the clergy and laity—and "offers the prayer and thanksgiving to God."[24] In this prayer he "celebrates the worshipful Deity, as subjugating the unjust and tyrannical power against us all, but conducting us to our own most just judgments."[25] Next "the Leitourgoi read the faithful promises concerning our resurrection, which are contained in the Divine Lections, and chant the odes of the same teaching and power, from the Lections contained in the Psalter."[26] In other words, excerpts from holy scripture are read (apparently from the Old and New Testaments) concerning the resurrection of the dead, and hymns are sung, which, while modeled after the psalms, are actually the work of Christian hymnographers. This singing and reading is "explanatory of the most blessed inheritances into which those who have attained a Divine perfection shall be appointed. But the inheritances which await the defunct stimulate those who are still living to a similar perfection."[27]

Then "the first Deacon dismisses the catechumens."[28] After this the chief officiant "calls aloud the names of the holy people who have already fallen asleep, amongst whom he deems the man who has just terminated his life worthy of registration, as being of the same rank, and urges all to seek the blessed consummation in Christ."[29] The prayer read over the body of the departed "beseeches the supremely Divine Goodness to remit to the defunct all the failings committed through human infirmity, and to place him in the light and land of the living; in the bosom of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; in a place where grief and sorrow and sighing are no more."[30] The "bosom" of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, according to the Areopagite, should be understood to mean "the most divine and blessed inheritance which awaits all godly men."[31]

Upon completion of the prayers "the Divine Hierarch . . . salutes the defunct, and after him all who are present."[32] "For dear and honoured, to all Godlike men, is he who has been perfected in a Divine life."[33] After this the officiant pours oil upon the departed. The Areopagite sees in this ritual a reminder of the anointing with oil at baptism:

> In the course of the divine Birth from God, before the most Divine Baptism, the oil of Chrism, as a first participation of the holy symbol, is given to the neophyte, after the entire removal of the former clothing. But now, at the conclusion of all that is done, the oil is poured upon the defunct. The first anointing with the oil summons the initiated to the holy contests; but the pouring of the oil now shows the defunct to have struggled through those same contests, and to have been made perfect.[34]

When all the sacred rites are completed, and when the officiant "has offered the prayer for all, he places the body in a worthy grave, with other holy bodies of the same rank."[35] As the Areopagite notes, "If, in soul and body, the man has passed a life dear to God, there will be honoured with the devout soul also the body which contended with it throughout the devout struggles." Divine justice bestows upon the soul its due reward together with the body that belongs to it, "as companions and participators in the devout or the contrary life." For this reason also the church Typicon "bequeaths the supremely Divine participations to them both—to the soul, indeed, in a pure contemplation and in an exact knowledge of the rites celebrated; to the body, by sanctifying the whole man, as in a figure, with the most Divine Myrrh, and the most holy symbols of the Divine Communion, effecting his complete salvation, and announcing that his resurrection will be most complete by entire sanctification."[36]

The logic of this statement runs as follows: since during his earthly life the person's body participated in the church sacraments together with his soul, the Church bids farewell to the body as well as the soul as the person departs on his final journey. The sacraments of the Church, such as chrismation and communion, sanctify the whole man, including his body. Hence, posthumous honor is rendered to a Christian's body also, as being the fellow contender of the soul.

Over the centuries that followed the service orders for the departed were enriched with new hymns and sacred songs, but their essence remained unchanged. As in the ancient Church, in the Orthodox tradition prayers at the divine liturgy remain the primary means of commemorating the departed, though they are also commemorated at other times during the daily cycle of services, as well as at special service orders for the departed. As in ancient times, the body of the departed is brought to the church for the funeral. As in ancient times, special commemorations are made on the third, ninth, and fortieth days, and also each year on the day of the Christian's repose.

Prayers and Rituals Attending the Repose of a Christian

The Orthodox Church ascribes considerable significance to confession and communion as sacraments that prepare a person for the passage into eternity. Healthy people confess and commune in the church, but the sick are visited by the priest in their homes for this purpose. In our time confession and communion of the sick is frequently perceived as a ritual for the dying, and so the family is afraid to invite the priest to visit the sick person, lest this give the impression that he is dying. This approach is fundamentally incorrect. Firstly, healthy people also regularly confess and commune, and there is no basis for viewing a priest making a house call as a harbinger of death. On the contrary, in many cases communing one who is gravely ill has a salutary effect not only on his soul, but on his body as well, facilitating his recovery. Secondly, it is extremely dangerous to put off confession and communion for one who is gravely ill until the last minute, since he may die before the sacraments are brought, or he may lapse into unconsciousness and prove unable to receive them. Hence, the Church recommends that the priest be summoned without delay when a person is gravely ill. Confession and communion may also be administered repeatedly over the course of the illness.

If a person is on his deathbed and it is apparent that his repose is eminent, after confessing and communing him the priest may read special prayers over him. Early printed editions of the Book of Needs, used to this day by the Old Believers, contained the "Office at the Parting of the Soul from the Body." It included two canons—one addressing Jesus Christ, the other addressing the Theotokos. In Greek editions of the euchologion and Slavonic editions of the Book of Needs, the superscription of the first canon bears name of Andrew of Crete, while the second bears that of John, metropolitan of Mauropous (ninth century). Modern editions of the Book of Needs contain a separate "Canon of Supplication at the Parting of the Soul from the Body," comprising the second of the aforementioned canons, and the "Order at the Parting of the Soul from the Body When One has Suffered for a Long Time," which includes the first canon.

The burial of St Nicholas. Fragment of a hagiographical icon. Circa 1607

The "Canon of Supplication at the Parting of the Soul from the Body" is penitential in nature. Its reading is preceded by the usual beginning[37] and the reading of Psalm 50. The canon is read on behalf of the one who is dying, who is no longer able to speak but can still comprehend spoken words and pray: "My mouth is silent, and my tongue speaketh not, but my heart maketh utterance: For that fire of contrition which inwardly devoureth is kindled, and in tones inexpressible invoketh thee, O Virgin." After the reading of the canon the priest says a prayer in which he asks God to absolve the one who is dying of all bonds, to pardon him his transgressions known and unknown, both those confessed and those forgotten or concealed at confession out of shame. The final lines of the prayer contain a petition that the Lord will receive the soul of the dying person in peace, and give him rest in the eternal tabernacles with the saints.

The "Order at the Parting of the Soul from the Body When One has Suffered for a Long Time," as the name suggests, is read when a person is enduring severe death agonies. The rite includes the usual beginning; Psalms 60, 142, and 50; a canon; and two prayers. As is clear from the content of the canon, it is to be read in the presence of the friends and kin of the dying person (or, if he is a monk, in the presence of the monastery brethren). The canon is filled with penitential imagery; some of its troparia are in the words of the dying person, asking the saints and the friends at his bedside for prayers. In the prayers read following the canon the priest asks God that the dying person be forgiven his sins, and asks God to release him from his unbearable sickness and give him rest with the souls of the righteous.

Some editions of the Book of Needs likewise include an "Order Following the Departure of the Soul from the Body," which includes the usual beginning, the troparia for the departed ("With the souls of the righteous"), the reading of Psalm 90, the litany for the departed, and a special canon. The same order, with the exception of Psalm 90 and the canon, is part of the rite of burial for laymen.

According to the custom of the Orthodox Church, after his repose the body of a departed layman is washed and laid in a coffin. Customarily the Psalter is read over the body of a layman or a monk: it is read by laymen who were close to the departed person, and continues without interruption right up to the beginning of the office of the burial. The reading of the Psalter over the departed is a very ancient custom, being mentioned even in the *Apostolic Constitutions.*[38] At the coffin of a priest the Gospel is read—as a rule, by other priests. A departed monk is buried in full monastic robes, while a deacon, priest, or bishop is buried in full liturgical vestments.[39]

The burial of the one who has died, also called the funeral, is customarily served on the third day after his repose, though it may be served earlier or later.[40] For the funeral the body of the departed is brought to the church. The office of burial is preceded by a liturgy for the departed, during which the coffin containing the body of the departed remains in the church.

The Typicon currently in use contains four different service orders for the burial of the departed. One is served for a departed layman, another for a monk, a third for a priest, and a fourth for an infant. There is no special office for the burial of a bishop: a bishop is buried using either the monastic or the priestly rite.

The Order for the Burial of the Dead (the Funeral)

In the Book of Needs the order for the funeral of a layman is called "The Order for the Burial of the Dead (Laymen)." The Typicon prescribes that it be served with particular solemnity: "Whereas in other offices, even the offices of baptism and marriage, a single priest officiates, the service of burial is intended to be served with

the participation of a whole assembly of clergy—if possible, with a bishop presiding."[41] This is indicated by the notes still found in the Book of Needs: "The principle Priest, or the Bishop, if one be present, shall say . . ."; "The Priests each, secretly, recite, the while, according to his rank, this prayer"; "The principal Priest . . . shall recite, aloud, the Prayer which he hath said above."

The order of burial begins in the home of the departed. The priest in his epitrachelion censes the body of the departed and all those present, and begins with the exclamation, "Blessed is our God." The usual beginning is followed by the singing of the troparia for the departed:

> With the souls of the righteous departed give rest, O Saviour, to the soul of thy servant, preserving it unto the life of blessedness which is with thee, O thou who lovest mankind.
>
> In the place of thy rest, O Lord, where all thy Saints repose, give rest also to the soul of thy servant; for thou only lovest mankind.
>
> Thou art the God who descended into Hell, and loosed the bonds of the captives. Do thou give rest also to the soul of thy servant.
>
> O Virgin alone Pure and Undefiled, who without seed didst bring forth God, pray thou that his soul may be saved.

A litany for the departed is intoned, and a prayer is read for the repose of the departed (this same prayer is read when the litany for the departed is intoned at the divine liturgy):

> O God of spirits, and of all flesh, who hast trampled down Death, and overthrown the Devil, and given life unto thy world: Do thou, the same Lord, give rest to the soul of thy departed servant, *N.*, in a place of brightness, a place of verdure, a place of repose, whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away. Pardon every transgression which he hath committed, whether by word, or deed, or thought. For thou art a good God, and lovest mankind; because there is no man who liveth and sinneth not: for thou only art without sin, and thy righteousness is to all eternity, and thy word is true.

After this prayer has been read the priest gives a short dismissal, and the body of the departed is carried out of the house. The solemn burial procession progresses towards the church, "preceded by the Priest, and by the Deacon with the censer." Throughout the procession "Holy God" is sung. Concerning the place where the body of the departed is placed in the church, the Slavonic Book of Needs observes, "When we come to the Church, the remains are deposited in the porch (or in the Church, as is the custom in Russia)." As a rule, the coffin containing the body is placed in the middle of the church, opposite the royal doors, where it remains during the liturgy for the departed. The coffin may also be placed in a side chapel of the church.

The order of the burial has a twofold purpose: primarily, it is prayer for the departed; on the other hand, it is prayer intended to provide consolation and spiritual edification to the kinsmen and friends who remain on this earth. The burial of a loved one is one of those rare occasions when people who do not regularly attend services gather in the church. Unfortunately, the majority of these people do not understand the meaning of the service, which robs it of its edifying effect. The priest should see to it that the prayers are read intelligibly. The order of the burial must absolutely begin or end with a sermon by the priest.

The order of the burial is modeled after matins. It includes Psalms 90 and 118. As a rule, due to its length, the reading of Psalm 118 is generally abbreviated to a few lines. "Yet one would think it would be most desirable and comforting for believers and those who loved the departed one to sing at his coffin the same psalm that is sung at the tomb of the Savior[42]—to sing . . . this moving song of the law that makes blessed even those here on earth who walk in its way, quickening them for eternity, granting them aid at the universal Judgment."[43] When chanted in its entirety at the order of burial, Psalm 118 is divided in three parts.

The psalm is immediately followed by the troparia for the departed, preceded by the refrain, "Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes." The refrain is a phrase from Psalm 118, while the troparia themselves are modeled after the resurrectional troparia sung at matins of Great Saturday. They speak of the blessedness

of the saints who have found "the fountain of life and the door of paradise," of the delights the Lord has prepared for those who have followed him. Then, after the small litany, other troparia are sung, beginning with the words, "Give rest with the righteous, O Savior, unto thy servant."

The funeral of His Holiness Alexy II, patriarch of Moscow and all Russia

This is followed by Psalm 50 and a canon ascribed to the venerable Theophanes the Branded. Each ode of the canon has four troparia, of which the first is dedicated to the martyrs, the second and third contain prayers for the departed, and the fourth and final troparion addresses the Theotokos (the theme of the final troparion in all canons). After the third, sixth, and ninth odes of the canon there is a litany for the departed. After the sixth ode the kontakion and ikos are chanted:

> With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the soul of thy servant, where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing, but life everlasting.
>
> Thou only art immortal, who has created and fashioned man. For out of the earth were we mortals made, and unto the earth shall we return again, as thou didst command when thou madest me, saying unto me: For earth thou art, and unto the earth shalt thou return. Whither, also, all we mortals wend our way, making our funeral dirge the song: Alleluia.

Upon completion of the canon, eight stichera for the departed are sung, composed by John of Damascus, corresponding to the eight tones of the Octoechos. These stichera are "a stunning message of the vanity of all that allures us in the world, of the vanity of all that does not remain with us after death; a message that is beneficial and edifying for all those present to listen to in its entirety, from beginning to end."[44]

The stichera are followed by the Gospel Beatitudes, interspersed with troparia for the departed. Then a passage from the apostle Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians is read, concerning the general resurrection (1 Thess 4.13–17). A Gospel passage is also read, repeating Christ's declaration that one who hears his words and believes in him "shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life," and his words concerning the resurrection of the dead (Jn 5.24–30).

After the Gospel another litany for the departed is intoned, after which the senior priest or bishop reads aloud the prayer "O God of spirits" at the coffin of the departed. Then the last kiss is given to the departed, first by the clergy in order of seniority, then by the laity. During this ritual stichera are sung, the first of which begins with the words, "Come, brethren, let us give the last kiss unto the dead, rendering thanks unto God." These stichera portray in poetic form the sorrow of kindred and friends as they bid farewell to the one whom they loved. Several stichera reflect on the vanity and transience of human life. The penultimate sticheron is written on behalf of the departed, in which he addresses his kindred and friends who remain on earth, asking them to pray for him.

Next follow the trisagion prayers, the troparia "With the souls of the righteous," the litany for the departed, and the dismissal. Following the dismissal, "the bishop or the principal priest" must say thrice, "Eternal be thy memory, O our brother, who art worthy of blessedness and ever-memorable." Then he reads the "parting prayer," in which, addressing the departed, he says, "May the Lord Jesus Christ . . . pardon thee, O spiritual child, all thy deeds done

amiss in this life, both voluntary and involuntary." After this the body of the departed is brought out of the church and solemnly carried to its resting place (in the cemetery), to the singing of "Holy God." At this point, before closing the lid of the coffin, the priest sprinkles earth crosswise over the body of the departed, with the words, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the round world, and they that dwell therein." He then pours "oil from the shrine lamp" over the body.

In practice the order of burial is concluded somewhat differently. After the dismissal the deacon, and not the bishop, says, "Give rest eternal in blessed falling asleep, O Lord, to the soul of thy servant, *N.*, and make his memory to be eternal." The choir sings "Memory eternal" thrice, and the deacon performs the final censing. The earth, as a rule, is sprinkled into the coffin before leaving the church. Pouring oil on the body of the departed is frequently omitted in practice, despite this custom being so ancient as to have been recorded by Dionysius the Areopagite. Upon arriving at the cemetery, as a rule, a litiya (called a trisagion in the Greek tradition) for the departed is served.

Traditionally a copy of the prayer of absolution, read over the body at the end of the order of burial, is placed into the hands of the departed. This prayer, beginning with the words "Our Lord Jesus Christ, by his divine grace . . . ," may have been borrowed from the Jerusalem practice; certain of its expressions resemble the prayer of intercession from the liturgy of the apostle James.[45]

The above service order differs significantly from the offices for the burial of monks, priests, and infants. Each of these offices is compiled in such a way as to maximally reflect the way of life or ministry of the departed.

In particular, the *order of burial for monks* has no canon. Instead, resurrectional antiphons are sung in the eight tones. These antiphons, authorship of which is ascribed to Theodore the Studite, speak of the monk's ardent love for God, of solitude, and of dwelling in the wilderness. The antiphons alternate with stichera for the departed, also in the eight tones. The troparia at the Beatitudes, which differ in content from those chanted at the burial of a layman, focus primarily on the topic of asceticism as the path to celestial glory. Of the stichera at the last kiss, only the first four are sung; the stichera depicting in detail the sorrow of kinsmen at the loss of their loved one are omitted. As Bishop Athanasius (Sakharov) notes, "The love of monks for a departed brother is of a different nature than the love of laymen, and their sorrow at this time likewise differs in nature. It is poured out in calmer, more restrained expressions."[46]

A special *order of burial for priests* appears in Greek euchologia in the early fifteenth century, and in Russian editions of the Book of Needs towards the end of the same century, but the order did not acquire its modern form until the seventeenth century.[47] The burial of a priest is of greater complexity, solemnity, and duration than the burials of laymen and monks.[48] Five readings from the epistles and the Gospel form its basis, interspersed with psalms, antiphons, troparia, and sedalia. The majority of the readings and hymns are of a general funereal nature, but some contain reflections on the life, ministry, and death of the priest:

> Thy godly minister, made a partaker of the nature divine in his translation hence, through thy life-giving mystery, O Christ,[49] is now come unto thee. Receive thou his soul in thy hand, as it were a bird, O Saviour. Establish thou him in thy courts, and in the choir of the angels.
>
> He who lived in godliness, and was adorned as thy priest, the sacrifice and minister of thy mysteries divine, by thy divine command hath passed over from life's clamour unto thee. Save him whom, as priest, thou didst accept, O Saviour; and because of thy great mercy give unto him rest with the righteous.[50]

The canon in the order of burial for a priest is modeled after the canon of Great Saturday. The sixth ode of the canon is followed not by one, but by twenty-four ikoi. As the body of the departed priest is being carried from the church to the cemetery, the irmoi of the penitential Great Canon of Andrew of Crete are sung—"He is for me unto salvation." Traditionally, before being transferred to the cemetery, the coffin containing the priest's body is carried thrice around the church.

The *order of burial for children* is fairly brief: in it all prayers for forgiveness of the sins of the departed are omitted. Emphasis is placed primarily not on mourning the departed child, who is referred to as having passed over into the heavenly habitations, but on the repentance of his living relations:

> Let us not mourn the child, but rather weep heavily for ourselves who sin always; that we may be delivered from Gehenna.[51]

> Grieve ye not for me, for I have undertaken nothing worthy of grief. But weep ye rather always for yourselves who have sinned sore, O kin and friends, the dead child crieth.[52]

During the paschal season the burial of the departed follows a specific order, in which many prayers for the departed and of repentance are replaced with paschal prayers. As the Book of Needs notes in this regard, if a person reposes during Bright Week, at his burial "very little of the customary Office for the Dead is sung, because of the majesty and honor of the joyful Feast of the Resurrection: for it is the festival of joy and gladness, not of lamentation."[53]

The Long and Short Memorial Services (the Panikhida and Litiya, or Mnēmosyno and Trisagion)

The service called the *panikhida* in the modern usage of the Russian Orthodox Church (or the *mnēmosyno* in the Greek Church) is comprised of an abbreviated matins for the departed. In the ancient Church the term *panikhida* had an entirely different meaning, signifying an all-night vigil (the Greek word παννυχίς/*pannikhís* literally means "all-night"). The order for serving the panikhida, found in the fourteenth chapter of the Typicon, contains the rules for serving an all-night vigil for the departed. In practice, however, in most cases the panikhida is served as a private service, at the request of one parishioner or several. The service order of the panikhida includes litanies for the departed, Psalm 90, Psalm 118 (omitted in practice), the troparia for the departed ("The choir of the saints"), the troparia "Give rest with the righteous," Psalm 50, the singing of the irmoi of the canon for the departed with the refrains (the troparia of the canon, as a rule, are omitted), the trisagion prayers, the troparia "With the souls of the righteous," and the dismissal. After the dismissal the deacon traditionally intones, "Give rest eternal in blessed falling asleep, O Lord, to the soul of thy servant, *N.*, departed this life; and make his memory to be eternal." The choir sings "Memory eternal" thrice.

A *litiya* (or *trisagion*) is a short prayer service for the departed, comprised only of the ending portion of the panikhida: the trisagion prayers, the troparia "With the souls of the righteous," a single litany for the departed with a prayer, the dismissal, "Give rest eternal in blessed falling asleep," and "Memory eternal."

During the paschal season the panikhida consists of an abbreviated paschal matins, with only a handful of prayers and hymns for the departed.

Special Cases for Commemorating the Departed

All the prayers and offices for the departed found in Orthodox liturgical books pertain only to persons who have been baptized in the Orthodox Church. The church Typicon has no prayers for unbaptized persons, including unbaptized infants.[54] The prayers for unbaptized, stillborn, or aborted infants that are encountered in certain books are not part of the Orthodox order of services. This category also includes the canon to the martyr Varus, found in certain Old Russian manuscripts and containing prayers for those who have died in other faiths.[55]

The absence of prayers for non-Christians and the heterodox (both living and departed) in the church Typicon certainly does not mean that such prayers may not be offered at all by Orthodox Christians. The church Typicon pertains to the daily cycle of divine services: it says nothing regarding Christian prayer in the home, or the prayers a priest may say in special cases.

Emperor Michael and Empress Theodora. Icon. Novgorod. 16th c.

Church tradition has recorded several instances of prayers offered by Christians for departed non-Christians or heretics. In the Synaxarion of Meatfare Saturday, found in the Lenten Triodion, three such instances are mentioned. The first instance is the "account of Saint Macarius, who found the dry skull of an impious Hellenite man by the wayside and questioned it." This refers to the account from the *Alphabetical Patericon,* concerning how the venerable Macarius of Egypt, as he was walking in the desert, once saw a skull lying in the sand, and touching it with his staff he asked, "'Who are you then?' The skull answered . . . 'I was the high priest of the idols and of the pagans who inhabited this place; but you are the spirit-bearing Abba Macarius. Whenever you feel compassion for those in chastisement and pray for them they are a little relieved.'"[56]

The Synaxarion also relates an account mentioned in certain lives of St Gregory the Dialogist, of how the soul of the emperor Trajan was "baptized" in hell by the tears of St Gregory. Trajan was a persecutor of Christians, but he had performed one charitable act, of which St Gregory learned. Filled with pity, Gregory went to the church and prayed with tears for the soul of the persecutor until it was revealed to him that his prayer had been heard.

Finally, the same Synaxarion mentions the story of the salvation of the "unholy" emperor Theophilus (reigned 829–842) through the prayers of his widow Theodora (815–867). After the death of Theophilus, who was an iconoclast, his son Michael III (*842–867) inherited the throne, and Theodora became his regent. Theodora restored the veneration of icons, but asked Patriarch Methodius of Constantinople to absolve her deceased husband of his sins. The patriarch replied that the Church could forgive the living, but that it was unable to forgive those who had died unrepentant in a state of mortal sin. Theodora, however, said that before his death Theophilus had kissed an icon. The church council decreed that for one week prayers should be offered in all the churches of the capital for the repose of the emperor. Patriarch Methodius took a parchment and wrote upon it the names of all the iconoclast emperors, and laid it on the altar in the Church of Hagia Sophia. In a dream he beheld an angel, who proclaimed to him that God had pardoned the emperor. In the morning the patriarch came to the church and saw that the name of Theophilus had vanished from the list of iconoclast emperors. After this incident the church council confirmed that the emperor had been absolved of his sins.

Citing the stories related in the abovementioned Synaxarion, the holy hierarch Philaret of Moscow said that an Orthodox Christian may pray for a departed Lutheran, though he felt that such prayers ought not to prayed "openly," that is, publicly. Furthermore, the hierarch permitted a deceased Lutheran to be commemorated at proskomede:

> This matter is not an easy one to resolve. As grounds for permission you wish to employ the fact that Macarius the Great prayed even for a dead pagan. It is not expedient to make a general rule of the wonderworker's boldness. Gregory the Dialogist likewise prayed for Trajan, and was informed that his prayer had not been fruitless, but that he was not to offer up such bold prayers in the future. . . . To do a thing contrary to the rules for the consolation of one, but not without scandalizing many, would not be seemly to my mind. For a living Lutheran a moleben may be served, asking upon him the grace of God, that it might draw him into the unity of the true Church, but with the deceased it is a different matter. We do not condemn him: it was not his will to remain outside the Orthodox Church to the end. Knowing several Lutherans who had respect for and faith in the Orthodox

Church, but who had died outside of union with it, I permitted prayer for them—not public prayer in the Church, with which they did not unite openly during their lives, but commemoration at proskomede and panikhidas at home.[57]

As we have noted elsewhere,[58] the question of prayer for the heterodox was the subject of lively discussion on the pages of Russian ecclesiastical publications in the early nineteenth century. Archpriest E. Akvilonov wrote in a 1905 issue of *Tserkovnyy Vestnik* that prayer for a deceased Lutheran would not be accepted even by the Lutheran himself, since during his lifetime he did not believe in the power of prayer for the departed: it would be an unsolicited favor, since "at the hour of his death the reposed had no thoughts of converting to Orthodoxy." By way of example the author cites various corporations, associations, and academic and industrial communities that strictly guard their corporate boundaries, barring entrance to unauthorized persons: "Every member of the Church is obligated to cultivate in himself the true Christian, *Orthodox ecclesiastical corporate spirit,* and, not forgetting his duty to love his neighbor, to strictly uphold the banner of the Church."[59]

Archpriest Akvilonov was opposed by Vasily Sokolov, author of the book *Mozhno li i dolzhno li molit'sya v tserkvi za usopshikh inoslavnikh?* [May and Must We Pray in Church for the Heterodox Who Have Departed?] published by the Moscow Theological Academy:

> In all these discourses there is an undertone of extraordinary callousness, a squeamish, selfish concern lest one do a good turn unnecessarily and it prove to be intrusive and unwelcome. Completely forgotten in them is the fact that, despite the differences in confessions, we are all Christians, and hence, in loving our neighbors, we are obligated to render them tremendous aid. During their lives deceased Lutherans and Reformers did not believe in prayers for the departed. But what of it? We ourselves are Orthodox, after all! We believe that our prayer can be of tremendous aid to the deceased.[60]

The spirit of true Orthodoxy, the author continues, is not a "corporate" spirit, but a spirit of love, compassion, and condescension to all men, including those outside the Orthodox Church.

Recent Orthodox history has seen the advent of specially compiled orders of burial for non-Orthodox departed, approved by the ecclesiastical authorities. In 1869 one such order was instituted by Patriarch Gregory VI of Constantinople. This order consists of the trisagion prayers, the seventeenth kathisma with the customary funereal refrains, an epistle reading, a Gospel reading, and the small dismissal.[61] A similar "Service Order for Non-Orthodox Deceased" was printed shortly before the 1917 revolution at the Synodal Print Shop in Saint Petersburg. In this service order the usual beginning and Psalm 27 are followed first by Psalm 118, divided into three parts and chanted with the refrain "Alleluia," then by four troparia at "The Blameless" ("The choir of the saints," "Ye who preached the Lamb of God," "Glory," and "Both now") and Psalm 38. Next come an ikos ("Thou only art immortal"), a prokeimenon, an epistle reading (Rom 14.6–9), a Gospel reading (Jn 5.17–24), the stichera at the last kiss (1, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 11), and the usual small dismissal (not for the departed).[62] Use of these service orders, however, never became widespread.

Holy Hierarch Athanasius (Sakharov)

The abovementioned accounts of prayer for heterodox departed were analyzed in the mid-twentieth century by the renowned Russian liturgist and confessor, St Athanasius (Sakharov, 1887–1962), who came to the following conclusion:

> Christian love, which moves us to prayer for our brethren who have gone astray, finds ways to satisfy this need without violating the canons of the Church: both in prayer in the home . . . and in public worship in the church . . . commemorating them at proskomede, on the basis of the authoritative permission of Metropolitan Philaret. If therefore the names of non-Orthodox departed may be pronounced at one of the most important commemorations—the proskomede—this means they may also be entered in commemoration books and intoned along with other names."[63]

This conclusion, however, remains to this day simply the personal opinion of a hierarch, albeit one greatly respected and numbered with the choir of the saints. In the current practice of the Orthodox Church, departed heterodox are not commemorated at proskomede and the heterodox are not named at litanies for the departed. Some priests accept commemorations slips with the names of heterodox departed, to be read silently at the liturgy. Others, on the contrary, are vigilant in their efforts to keep the names of heterodox persons off of commemoration slips. In certain parishes the ladies who run the candle desk consider it their duty to scan the commemoration slips submitted for any "non-Orthodox" names (Albert, Leopold, Janine, etc.), which if found are promptly crossed out. This vigilance, even if motivated by the worthy intention of guarding the "corporate boundaries," nevertheless to our mind cannot be considered justified (the more so since, as noted above, not even all Orthodox Christians are named after Orthodox saints).

Another special case worthy of note is prayer for suicides. The ancient canons permitted liturgical commemoration of suicides only if the person who had taken his own life was "beside himself" or "out of his mind," that is, in a state of insanity. The fourteenth canon of Timothy of Alexandria states:

> *Question:* If anyone having no control of himself lays violent hands on himself or hurls himself to destruction, should an offering be made for him or not?
>
> *Answer:* The Clergyman ought to discern in his behalf whether he was actually and truly out of his mind when he did it. For oftentimes those who are interested in the victim and want to have him accorded an offering and a prayer in his behalf will deliberately lie and assert that he had no control of himself. Sometimes, however, he did it as a result of influence exercised by other men, or somehow otherwise as a result of paying too little attention to circumstances, and no offering ought to be made in his behalf. It is incumbent, therefore, upon the Clergyman in any case to investigate the matter accurately, in order to avoid incurring judgment.[64]

This canon refers to an "offering," that is, to a liturgy for the departed. No mention is made of other forms of commemoration. The longstanding practice of the Church, however, also excluded other forms of commemoration: a person who took his own life was not granted a church funeral, and panikhidas were not served for his soul. In many cases the body of a suicide was buried outside the cemetery. In refusing prayerful commemoration to the suicide, the Church leaves him solely to the mercy of God, as the holy hierarch Theophan the Recluse says concerning this:

> You ask whether one may pray for suicides. The Church does not allow it; how then can its sons and daughters pray for them? . . . This reveals an attempt to show that we are more merciful that the Church and God himself. . . . It is enough to limit ourselves to pity for them, committing their fate to the boundless mercy of God.[65]

The reason for the Church's strictness toward suicides is that suicide is considered a mortal sin that a person cannot repent of during his life, since the sin and death occur simultaneously. To an equal degree, however, this strictness is pedagogically motivated: by refusing a funeral and commemoration to the suicide the Church emphasizes that a suicide essentially places himself outside the Church. In an era when religious sentiment was widespread, when Christian morality defined the standards for behavior, the prospect of being deprived of a funeral and commem-

oration after death was able to prevent a person from committing suicide.

The pedagogical aspect of the rule depriving suicides of all church commemoration proved considerably weakened in an era when the Church ceased to exercise a definitive influence on public morality. For this reason in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries discussion of whether suicides might be commemorated was resumed with renewed vigor. Time and time again the increased frequency of suicide obliged pastors and spiritual fathers to revisit the issue. The venerable Leo (Leonid) of Optina wrote the following to one of his disciples, Pavel Tambovtsev, whose father had committed suicide:

> Entrust both yourself and your father's fate to the will of the Lord, which is all-wise, all powerful. Do not tempt the miracles of the All-high, but strive through humility to strengthen yourself within the bounds of tempered sorrow. Pray to the All-good Creator, thus fulfilling the duty of the love and obligation of a son . . . in the spirit of the virtuous and wise, thus: "Seek out, O Lord, the perishing soul of my father: if it is possible, have mercy! Unfathomable are Thy judgments. Do not account my prayer as sin. But may Thy holy will be done!" Pray simply, without inquiring, entrusting your heart to the right hand of the All-high. Of course, so grievous a death for your father was not the will of God, but now it rests completely in the will of Him Who is able to hurl both soul and body into the fiery furnace, of Him Who both humbles and lifts up, puts to death and brings to life, takes down to Hell and leads up therefrom. . . . It remains for you to entrust the eternal lot of your father to the goodness and compassion of God, and if it is His good will to show mercy, who can oppose Him?[66]

The current practice of the Orthodox Church, based on centuries of tradition, allows for commemorating suicides if the deceased was mentally ill and not in control of himself at the time the sin was committed.[67] With the permission of a bishop other exceptions to the rule may also be permitted—in particular, if the suicide was a minor. Some cases that are formally classified as suicides may prove upon closer inspection to merit *oeconomia* (leniency) from the Church. Conversely, death resulting from a drug overdose or drunkenness is not formally classified as suicide, but in actuality is exactly that, even if the deceased did not intend to take his own life.

There is therefore no universal answer to the question of church prayer for suicides. In making a decision on this matter the bishop's guiding principle is that the Church punishes and exacts revenge on no one, especially posthumously. The Church grieves for every person who departs this life without repentance, and it hopes in the mercy of God. In cases where leniency may be shown in the matter of prayer for the departed, it is shown. If, however, the bishop makes the decision to deny such prayer, this is in no way motivated by a lack of compassion for the deceased, either on his part or on the part of the Orthodox Church. Rather, it is motivated by an acknowledgment that the Church is powerless to oppose the free will of a person who has voluntarily left this life and thereby placed himself outside the Church. Here too, however, hope remains in the mercy of God that knows no bounds.

Notes

1 Cyril of Jerusalem, *On the Mysteries* 5.10 (PPS 57:127).

2 In Russian there is no distinction between the words *hades* and *hell*, both of which are rendered as *ad.—Trans.*

3 Cf. vol. 1, p. 133.

4 Cardinal Julian Cesarini, *Latinorum ad Graecos capita circa purgatorium ignem* [Latin Chapters to the Greeks Concerning Purgatorial Fire] (*Patrologia Orientalis* 15:28), quoted in "The Debate Over the Patristic Texts on Purgatory at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, 1438" by James Jorgenson, *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 30.4 (Winter 1986): 309–334, at 311.

5 Mark of Ephesus, *Oratio Altera de Igne Purgatorio* [in Greek]. In *Patrologia Orientalis* 15.1 (No. 72), *Documents Relatifs au Concile de Florence I: La Question du Purgatoire à Ferrare, Documents I-VI*, 1st ed., edited and translated by Mgr. Louis Petit A. A (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1920. Reprint, Turnhout, Belgium: Editions Brepols, 1990), 39–60, 108–51. Greek text with parallel Latin translation. English translation by Protodeacon Jeremiah Davis.

6 Ibid.

7 Cyprian of Carthage, *Epistles* 65 (*ANF* 5:367).

8 Cyril of Jerusalem, *On the Mysteries* 5.9 (PPS 57:127).

9 Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians* 3 (*NPNF*[1] 13:197).

[10] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts* 21 (*NPNF*[1] 11:139–140). [Here the Russian translation differs significantly: "For if for the apostle Paul's sake [God] saved others, and for the sake of some spared others, how can it be that he will not do the same for us?"—*Trans.*]

[11] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts* 21 (*NPNF*[1] 11:140).

[12] Augustine, *Homilies* 272. In *The Faith of the Early Fathers* 3, William A. Jurgens, trans. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1970), 29.

[13] *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.4.42–44 (*ANF* 7:498).

[14] Ibid., 8.41 (*ANF* 7:497).

[15] Ibid. (*ANF* 7:497–498).

[16] Cf. 365 and below.

[17] *The Divine Liturgy of James, the Holy Apostle and Brother of the Lord* (*ANF* 7:537).

[18] That is, those for whom each of those present at the service is currently praying.

[19] Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 7.15 (*NPNF*[1] 7:234).

[20] Dionysius the Areopagite, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7.1. In *The Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, John Parker, trans., 90.

[21] Ibid.,

[22] Ibid., 7.2

[23] Ibid., 7.3, 91.

[24] Dionysius the Areopagite, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7.2. In *The Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, John Parker, trans., 90.

[25] Ibid., 7.3, 91.

[26] Ibid., 7.2, 90.

[27] Ibid., 7.3, 91.

[28] Ibid., 7.2.

[29] Ibid.,

[30] Ibid., 7.3, 92.

[31] Ibid.,

[32] Ibid., 7.2, 91.

[33] Ibid., 7.3, 95.

[34] Dionysius the Areopagite, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7.3. In *The Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, John Parker, trans., 95.

[35] Ibid., 7.2, 91.

[36] Ibid., 7.3, 95–96.

[37] The so-called "usual beginning" typically consists of the following: the priest gives the exclamation ("Blessed is our God"), and the reader continues, "Amen. Glory to thee, our God, glory to thee." He then reads the prayer "O Heavenly King" and the trisagion prayers, which the priest concludes with the exclamation, "For thine is the kingdom." The reader says, "Amen." He then reads "Lord, have mercy" twelve times, says "Glory . . . both now . . ." and concludes the usual beginning with the threefold "O come let us worship. . . ."—*Trans.*

[38] Cf. *Apostolic Constitutions* 6.5.

[39] At the vesting of a departed bishop the same prayers are read as at the vesting of a living bishop before the divine liturgy. When the vesting is completed a lighted dikerion and trikerion are placed in the hands of the departed bishop. During the vesting the body of the departed bishop remains in a seated position.

[40] The laws in certain countries require a detailed examination to determine the cause of death, making burial on the third day impossible.

[41] St Athanasius of Kovrov, *O pominovenii usopshikh* [On Commemoration of the Departed] (Saint Petersburg: Satis, 1995), 145.

[42] This refers to matins of Great Saturday [when the "praises" or "lamentations" are sung over Christ's burial shroud, interpolated between the verses of Psalm 118 —*Ed.*].

[43] Athanasius of Kovrov, *O pominovenii usopshikh,* 147.

[44] Athanasius of Kovrov, *O pominovenii usopshikh,* 148.

[45] Vasily Prilutsky, *Chastnoe bogosluzhenie v Russkoi Tserkvi v XVI i pervoi polovine XVII v.* [Private Worship in the Russian Church in the Sixteenth and First Half of the Seventeenth Centuries] (Kiev: Petr Barskiy, 1912), 254–255.

[46] Athanasius of Kovrov, *O pominovenii usopshikh,* 159.

[47] Prilutsky, *Chastnoe bogosluzhenie v Russkoi Tserkvi,* 271–282.

[48] Athanasius of Kovrov, *O pominovenii usopshikh,* 154.

[49] These words signify that before his death the newly reposed communed of the holy mysteries.

[50] *Order for the Burial of a Priest*, stichera at the praises.

[51] *Order for the Burial of a Child*. Canon, ode IV.

[52] *Order for the Burial of a Child*. Canon, ode V.

[53] *Order for the Burial of Those who Die at Holy Easter*.

[54] In 2018, a service for infants who died without baptism was approved by the synod of the Moscow Patriarchate (the Slavonic service text is available online: p2.patriarchia.ru/2018/07/14/1239018310/ posledovanie-mlad.docx).—*Ed.*

[55] An akathist to St Varus is available in English, blessed to be read in homes by bishops in the Serbian Church in America and the Moscow Patriarchate. Isaac Lambertson, *Akathist to the Martyr Varus: Holy Intercessor for Family Members Who Reposed Outside the Orthodox Faith* (Safford, AZ: St Paisius Monastery, 2009).—*Ed.*

[56] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, Macarius the Egyptian 38 (PPS 52:191).

[57] Holy Hierarch Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow, *Sobranie mneniy i otzyvov Filareta, mitropolita Moskovskago i Kolomenskago, po uchebnym i tserkovno-gosudarstvennym voprosam. Tom dopolnitel'nyy.* [Collected Opinions and Comments of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna, on Matters of Education, Church, and State. Supplemental volume] (Saint Petersburg: Synodal'naya tipografiya, 1887), 186.

[58] Cf. Hilarion (Alfeyev), *Tainstvo very,* 259.

[59] Cited by Vasily Sokolov, *Mozhno li i dolzhno li molit'sya v tserkvi za usopshikh inoslavnikh?* [May and Must We Pray in Church for the Heterodox who have Departed?] (Sergiev Posad: Trinity-Sergius Lavra Printshop, 1906), 23.

[60] Sokolov, *Mozhno li i dolzhno li molit'sya v tserkvi za usopshikh inoslavnikh,* 23–31.

[61] Athanasius of Kovrov, *O pominovenii usopshikh,* 192.

[62] Ibid., 193.

[63] Ibid.

[64] *The Rudder,* 898.

[65] Theophan the Recluse, *Sobranie Pisem* [Collected Letters], 4th ed. (Moscow: Pravilo Very, 2000), 58–59.

[66] Elder Leonid, first great elder of Optina. Quoted from *Orthodox Life* 26.1 (Jan.–Feb. 1976), 27–31.

[67] There is an opinion that every suicide is "beside himself," that is, mentally ill. This opinion was held, notably, by the renowned archpriest Boris Stark of Yaroslavl (1909–1996), who inquired, "Who in his right mind would take his own life?" This same archpriest pointed out that the time of the suicide and the time of death are not always concurrent: a person who hurls himself from ten floors up may have time to repent of it before his death. In 2011, the synod of the Moscow Patriarchate approved a "rite of prayerful consolation for the relatives of those who have taken their own lives," which may be found online in Slavonic: http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1586949.html.—*Ed.*