

Place of Administration of the Office of Burial

Concerning the **burial service place** in the "Office of Burial of Laity" it says that for the burial service, "taking up the remains of the departed, we go into the temple"; "when they come to the temple, for the remains are placed on the church porch (or in the temple, like the custom in Great Russia). In the "Office of the Burial on Holy Pascha" it is also said that before giving the body to the earth, "taking up the remains of the departed, they go to the church", but then it is specified to place his remains "in church"¹.

It is allowed **to bring the body of the departed into the church only** for the burial service² and not under any circumstances is it necessary to keep it more than a day in church, and then only in an emergency³ (Ukaz Sv. Sinoda [Decrees of the Holy Synod] Jul. 16, 1812; In. Bl.[Instructions to Deans], 16).

Women, who died during their forty-day cleansing, are also brought into church and besides, of course, without reading the fortieth day prayers over them⁴.

Dirge for the dead **during infectious diseases** has to be done either in the house or at the burial place (Ukaz Sv. Sinoda [Decrees of the Holy Synod] 18 Oct. 1755; 14 Nov. 1830; see Prof. J. S. Berdnikov, Kr. Kur. tser. prava [Short Course on the Rights of the Church], p. 432).

By explanation of the "Tserkovniia Vedomosti [Church News]", the burial service of the dead in houses, especially when close to the cemetery (no more than 5 versts) is illegal, it follows to remove this from use⁵ (Tserkovniia Vedomosti [Church News] 1898, 42); as the burial service of the dead has to be done in church, except in cases of death from especially infectious diseases⁶ (Tserkovniia Vedomosti [Church News] 1898, 44; refer to 1895, 37).

The body of the departed is put in church with the head always to the West and the feet to the East (Novaia Skrizhalj [New Stone Tablets]; Treb. of Metr. P. Mogila).

Existing in some places in the South-western country is **the custom to place the dead priests facing the people**, but not to the altar as laymen are, - this custom is not Orthodox, passed through Catholicism and the Unia ruling them, but therefore it needs to be abandoned⁷, especially more that in the Western Church, under the witness of Catholic theologians, it is the newest (Podol'skiia Eparkhial'niia Vedomosti [Podolsk Diocesan News] 1886, 26; Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1886, 32). - For more information see the supplementary notes for burial below.

¹ In the temple in ancient time deceased Bishops were laid out before the holy doors, closer than for priests, as St. Dionysius also makes room for them before the offertory altar where they also do the service; bodies of monks are before the holy doors where the monastics usually stand in prayer; but the bodies of laymen are laid out in the middle of the temple where laymen usually stand in the temple; but at the present time all **are laid out in the middle of the temple**; because this place is roomier and can accommodate more people than all who saw the departed and came in prayers to God for him (Novaia Skrizhalj [New Stone Tablets], chapter 22, § 1). - Refer to note 7 on p. 1223 below.

² Burial service of dead clergy of this cathedral can be done **in the Petersburg Kazan Cathedral** only with the direct permission each time of the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg according to the will of the Sovereign, (relating to the G. of the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod addressed to the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg 4 Dec. 1882).

³ In Kiev there is a custom to bring the dead into church and keep it there for the night on the eve of the burial. The **custom to put the dead in church for a known time** also exists in other places. In the opinion "of the Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger]" if to take into account that the dead during infectious diseases are forbidden to be brought into the church and that in summertime the putrid smell of the departed from a noncontagious illness is capable to infect the air, then for hygiene it is necessary to recognize that it is well-founded that coffins of the dead brought in church were hermetically sealed but if it is impossible to meet this condition then the dead in the summer were not brought into the parish church for the night where it is always possible to expect a large or little confluence of pilgrims, but in the cemetery church and chapel (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1886, 24). But these or those other procedures, not concordant with the specified custom which took root in this place, of which existence, of course, the local diocesan administration knows that the priest under its authority cannot establish without appropriate authority from the designated administration.

⁴ The canons and ceremony of the Church on the subject of the forty-day cleansing of women relate to the living and not to the dead; the condition of cleansing stops with death, and the **reading of the fortieth day prayer** over the departed in a condition of cleansing before entry into the church for the burial service would be a moot point (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1892, 51; 1894, 31; Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1890, 21; 1898, 29; Tserkovniia Vedomosti [Church News] 1897, 5).

Superstitions, connected with some cases of death, are found out and in the false belief that all souls of the dead without confession and communion of the Holy Mysteries remain on earth, frighten people and leads to various adversities among them; in the number of such souls are also included women who died before the "conclusion" or before receiving a cleansing prayer after the delivery. Owing to this superstition grandmothers demand a reading of the cleansing prayer for the women who died when giving birth. The same weak or wrong understanding of the meaning of the cleansing prayer is found out and women demand, but some priests allow to do the "conclusion" or to say a cleansing prayer and to do the churching of children after 10-20 days. The persistent correction of these superstitious and false concepts from Orthodox parishioners is required of the priests (Podol'skiia Eparkhial'niia Vedomosti [Podolsk Diocesan News] 1889, 18; see also Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1864, 18).

Relatively it follows to have in view all the rights and the Christian obligations of the **unchurched child** are received by him in holy baptism, the churching ceremony only in an external way, visually, expresses his accession in the true meeting and approach to the Lord's offertory in which the completeness of Christian grace is concentrated. Therefore the non-execution of this ceremony over the baby cannot deprive it at all of the right of entering into the temple at burial, which he received in holy baptism (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1898, 29).

⁵ **Burial service can be done outside the temple** (at the burial of the dead from noncontagious diseases), but this only should be allowed for good reasons, and such an exception should not become the general rule. In the same place, where there are conditions for such an exception, the constant demand for its repeatability (as e.g., the remoteness of the temple from the cemetery, the inconvenience of means of communication), needs the permission of the local diocesan administration (refer to note 1 on p. 1206); it is also desirable that the clergy encourage parishioners of villages remote from the parish church to construct an appropriate chapel in their own cemetery (see Tserkovniia Vedomosti [Church News] 1895, 37).

⁶ The burial service of the dead **during the time of infectious diseases** is not done in the temple only because the presence of a coffin with a body departed from an infectious illness in the temple can have the consequence of the spread of the infection. The danger to life of this or that infectious disease, the degree of infectivity of the body that died from such illness and the ways of the distribution of the infection are not identical. In compliance with this burial service of the dead from infectious diseases in one case is not done in the temple, but in other cases the dead even from infectious diseases are done in the temple. It agrees with our civil legislation concerning the cautioning against development of generally contagious disease measures, the establishment of these measures is the obligation of the local civil government and these measures can vary in various districts. In other cases the cautions

against infectious diseases measures are published in the form of special written instructions of the diocesan authority to the local clergy, and such instruction also directly specifies the place of the burial service of those dead from infectious diseases.

So, the Simbirsk Theological Consistory in 1889 ordered the clergy of the diocese to read the burial service over the dead men who died of infectious diseases (scarlet fever, diphtheria and so forth) by all means in closed coffins and not in church, but in a tomb, if there is one, or in the houses of parishioners and in such cases not to allow the kissing of the dead and methods of commemoration (see Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1889, 20).

The Moscow Theological Consistory ordered the deans of the diocese to make the rule with the entrusted deaneries not to transfer bodies of the dead from smallpox and other infectious diseases from houses to churches in open caskets, but also not to read the burial service with an open one and generally take measures during the burial is ordered in art. 746 vol. XIII of the Ustav Vrachebnii [Physician's Charter (Ustav)], and that the obligatory sanitary regulations are also fulfilled (Uk. Mosk. Dukh. Kons. [Ukase of the Moscow Theological Consistory] 24 Feb. 1892).

In exactly the same way the orders of other diocesan administrations were responsible in the obligation to the local clergy: to bury bodies of the dead from diphtheria and other epidemic infectious diseases soon after death in closed caskets (Resolutions from the Kharkov, Chersonese, Taormina dioceses): not to bring such dead men into the church (Resolutions from the Kharkov, Chersonese, Taormina and Don Dioceses); not to accompany them up to the cemetery with reasonable suggestions to convince parishioners not to be in contact with the bodies of the dead from infectious diseases (Rasp. po Khers. Ep. [Dispositions of the Chersonese Diocese]); to inspire funeral directors not to do lunches in houses of the dead men who died of diphtheria (Dispositions of the Kharkov, Chersonese and Taormina Dioceses); most strictly to prohibit in houses where there are those who died of diphtheria, to also allow visitors from other houses, especially children, to be present at the burial service (Dispositions of the Kharkov and Chersonese Dioceses); whenever possible to bury those who died of diphtheria in closed coffins, without bringing them into church and without allowing children to see off the dead (Dispositions of the Poltava Diocese); to inter those who died of diphtheria not later than 3 days after death, rather it is possible to place the dead man in a coffin and to close the cover which is not to open even during the burial service, not to allow the putting bagels, gingerbread or other things over the dead man for their later distribution to the people (Dispositions of the Kharkov Diocese); not to take covers from those men dead from diphtheria because they can be an infection source for many, but equally to also not take bread which lay on dead men, but it is better to bury those and other things into the earth together with the dead (Dispositions of the Chersonese Diocese); not to open the grave of the dead from a diphtheria for the joint burial of other dead men in them (Dispositions of the Kharkov Diocese; see Khersonskii Eparkhial'nii Vedomosti [Chersonese Diocesan News] 1879, 5; Khar'kovskii Eparkhial'nii Vedomosti [Kharkov Diocesan News] 1880, 7; Poltavskii Eparkhial'nii Vedomosti [Poltava Diocesan News] 1891, 22; Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1888, 4; Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1889, 17; see also the Dispositions of the Chernigov Diocese beginning in the Tserkovnii Vedomosti [Church News] 1896, 34).

In 1893 the Samara Episcopate published the following resolution concerning burial service of the dead from infectious diseases to the diocese: "it is necessary to read the burial service in absentia for those who died of diphtheria and other infectious diseases, in any case not in the temple and with the people. The Lord God, according to his unuttered love for mankind and grace, equally accepts fervent prayer for the repose of souls of Orthodox Christians, whether or not it rises during the presence or lack of presence of the departed. In these cases it is better to pray in the absence of them, because without the fear of transmissibility of the corpse it is possible to pray more diligently longer than in the presence of a corpse that renders it unsafe. Can there be a prayer fervent and pleasing to God when while only praying in mind and heart and the soul, from long standing at the corpse of an infectious disease, not catch that illness? It is necessary to impressively explain this to peasants, that this time they were not without need of challenges, regardless of dangers, that can really exist and happen from that" (Samarskii Eparkhial'nii Vedomosti [Samara Diocesan News], 1894, 4; Kholm'skii-Varshavskii Eparkhial'nii Vedomosti [Kholm-Warsaw Diocesan News], 1894, 9; Litovskii Eparkhial'nii Vedomosti [Lithuanian Diocesan News] 1894, 14).

Wherever these or other orders relating to the place of the burial service of the dead from infectious diseases are published, local priests also had to comply with these orders. In the absence of such local orders concerning these or other cases of the burial service of the dead from infectious diseases, it will be most expedient of all if the priest informs the local police government about the specified cases from which will depend the acceptance of these or other measures for the prevention of an infection which under the law is imputed the obligation of police. In case of the impossibility for some reason or other to communicate with police, the priest himself with the power of his moral influence can insist that the sealed coffin was brought into the church, but also, if possible, that other measures for preventing the spread of an infection were also taken.

⁷ **To place in the temple the coffin with the dead priest facing the altar** so that, 1st, not only servers but also the deceased himself prays for the repose of his soul (see "The choir of the Saints have found the Source of life" and "The image is Your unspeakable glory") is why his face also must be turned to the East; 2nd, according to the teaching of the Church, the reposed is brought into the church for saying his fate over him in the afterlife, is also why his face needs to be turned to impartial Judge, Who is invisibly present in the sanctuary on the throne [altar table]; 3rd, the sanctuary itself represents heaven, the deceased cries out: "I raise up my eyes to You, O Word in heaven, defend me", and so forth, but therefore the mental eyes of the departed also need to be turned to heaven, especially as, 4th, in the Christian Church since the most ancient times (see the Novaia Skrizhalj [New Stone Tablets]) placed priests facing the sanctuary, as St. Dionysius the Areopagite, St. John Chrysostom and St. Simeon of Salonika testify about the custom, is protected in those places of Russia where the most ancient Christian customs were observed in protected integrity (Podol'skiia Eparkhial'niia Vedomosti [Podolsk Diocesan News] 1886, 26).

*S. V. Bulgakov, "Handbook for Church Servers", 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 1219-1221.
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