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AN INTERPRETATION OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE PRESENT-DAY BYZANTINE-RITE FUNERAL SERVICE ANALYZED THROUGH ITS PRACTICAL RELATIONSHIP TO BEREAVED PERSONS

by

Robert Alan Hutcheon

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To my Mother, and to Marian, Pat, Eva, Marko and Tasso, for their love and support;

to His Grace, Bishop Seraphim (Storheim) of the Archdiocese of Canada (OCA), and to the pastor and parishioners of the Orthodox Church of the Sign of the Theotokos, Montreal, for their prayers and *koinônia*; and

to the worshipping community of the Chapel of Saints Joachim and Anna, Saint Paul University, whose epiphany of the "beauty of holiness" (Ps. 96:9 KJV) has been an unfailing source of inspiration.

Alleluia is one of the most, if not *the* most, joyful words of the Church. It is an exclamation of joy, and more specifically of joy provoked by the presence of God, by his coming to those who love him. It is, in other words, 'Presence' itself, witnessed to, manifested in song. And if it is so overwhelmingly used at the funeral, it is because it is the very sign, the very reality of the funeral as being transformed into a *Christian* funeral, and this means into the celebration of death as entering into the countenance, into the presence of the Living God – who is God of the living, *not* of the dead. The meaning of the Christian burial, in the words of the Kontakion, is that it "makes the funeral dirge into *Alleluia*."

Alexander Schmemann
The Orthodox Liturgy of Death

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Almost inevitably, students who are privileged to study at Saint Paul University are awestruck by its library facilities, and indeed, the breadth and richness of its holdings are a source of wonder. However, the defining characteristics of a superior research library can never be limited merely to its books and reading room facilities. Of equal or greater importance are the members of its staff, and in this regard we are richly blessed at Saint Paul. During my time here, I have deeply appreciated the services and efforts on my behalf of two chief librarians–Larry Eshelman and more recently André Paris–and their associates. Always helpful and unfailingly courteous, the library staff have often made the sometimes dreary days of doctorate research much sunnier for me than they might otherwise have been.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND WORKS CITED IN ABBREVIATED FORM

This useful bibliographical convention is *inserted as part of the front-matter* in certain major Eastern Christian publications, in particular those of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome (cf. Robert Taft, *The Diptychs*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 238 [1991]). The works listed here appear in the footnotes and/or text in abbreviated form three or more times. They are also included in the Bibliography to this dissertation that begins on page 361.

ABI-HASHEM = Naji **ABI-HASHEM**, "Grief, Loss, and Bereavement: An Overview," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 18 (1999): 309-29.

AC = The **Apostolic Constitutions**. See Marcel **METZGER**, ed., *Les Constitutions Apostoliques*, Vol. 1: Books I & II (SC 320); Vol. 2: Books IV-VI (SC 329); and Vol. 3: Books VII-VIII (SC 336) (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985-1987).

AINSWORTH-SMITH = Ian **AINSWORTH-SMITH** and Peter **SPECK**, *Letting Go: Caring for the Dying and the Bereaved* (London: S.P.C.K., 1984).

AMOMOS = psalm 118 (119) in the Byzantine tradition, the 'psalm of the Blameless,' so-called from its opening word (*ámômos*) in Greek; a selection of its verses are sung at BF's beginning.

Amomos = Diane H. **TOULIATOS-BANKER**, *The Byzantine **Amomos** Chant of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Analecta Vlatadon, ed. Panayotis C. Christou, no. 46 (Thessalonica: Patriarchikon Hidruma Paterikôn Meletôn, 1984).

APOL = the '**Apolysis**' or 'dismissal' which is taken at several places in BF and its related events (see ***Appendix I***, pp. 293-94 and 309).

Appendix I = see **LASH**.

Appendix II = Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, *The Orthodox Liturgy of Death*, transcriptions from audiotapes of four lectures by Alexander Schmemann, presented at a Liturgical Institute, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y., June 1979 (Montreal: FAS Books, P. O. Box 1390, Place Bonaventure, H5A 1H3).

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ARIÈS, *Hour* = idem, *The **Hour** of our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

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ARRANZ, "*Pannychis*-II" = idem, "Les prières presbyterales de la '***Pannychis***' de l'Ancien Euchologe byzantin et la '*Panikhida*' des défunts–II," *OCP* 41 (1975): 119-39.

ARRANZ, "Preghiere" = idem, "Le **preghiere** per i defunti nella tradizione bizantina: i sacramenti della restaurazione dell'antico Eucologio constantinopolitano (Prayer for the departed in the

Byzantine tradition: sacraments of restoration in the ancient Constantinopolitan Euchologion)," *OCP* 63 (1997): 99-117.

ASP = the '**Aspasmos**' ('Last Kiss'), referring either to the ritual itself and/or its accompanying accompanying hymns ('prosomoia' or 'stichera') (see ***Appendix I***, 307-09).

BAKOGIANNIS = Archimandrite Vasilios **BAKOGIANNIS**, *After Death*, trans. W. J. Lillie (Katerini, Greece: Tertios Publications, 1995).

BDEC = ***Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity***, ed. Ken Parry, David J. Melling, and others (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

BF = **'Byzantine Funeral'**: the ordinary Byzantine-rite funeral service for lay-persons, usually referred to in Greek service-books (*euchológia*) as the *Akolouthía Nekrôsimos eis Kosmikoús*; the topic of the present dissertation.

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BRENTON = see *LXX*.

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CF = **'Child's Funeral'**: the Byzantine-rite funeral service for deceased children below age seven years, usually referred to as the *Akolouthía Nekrôsimos eis Nêpia*.

CHRISTODOULOU = Themistoklis **CHRISTODOULOU**, *L'ufficio funebre nei manoscritti greci dei secoli X-XII* (The funeral office in Greek manuscripts of the 10th to 12th centuries) [in Greek], Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1996).

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CONSTAS = Nicholas **CONSTAS**, "To Sleep, Perchance to Dream': The Middle State of Souls in Patristic and Byzantine Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 91-124.

CS = Church Slavonic: the traditional liturgical language of Byzantine-rite Slavs.

DANFORTH = Loring M. **DANFORTH**, *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982).

DIONYSIUS = **DIONYSIUS** the (Pseudo)-Areopagite, "Rites Performed over Those who Have Fallen Asleep" in *Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite: The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, trans. and annot. Thomas L. Campbell, 69-91 (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981).

ETM = ***Euchológion tò Méga*** (The Great Euchology [prayer-book]) [in Greek], 2d ed. by Archimandrite Spyridon Zervos (Venice: Phoenix Greek Printers, 1862; reprint, Athens: Astir, 1992); page citations are from the reprint edition.

EVL = the "**Evlogitaria** for the Departed" (see ***Appendix I***, 296-97).

FAROS = Philotheos **FAROS**, ***Τὸ Πένθος: Ὀρθόδοξη, Λαογραφηκή καί Ψυχολογική Θεώρηση*** (Grief: an Orthodox, ethnographic and psychological perspective) (Athens: Akritas, 1981).

FEDWICK = Paul J. **FEDWICK**, "Death and Dying in Byzantine Liturgical Traditions," *Eastern Churches Review* 8 (1976): 152-61.

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GALADZA, "Lost Elements" = idem, "**Lost** and Displaced **Elements** of the Byzantine Funeral Rites: Towards a Pastoral Re-appropriation," *Studia Liturgica* 33 (2003):

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GBN-3 = St. Tikhon's Monastery, ed., *The Great Book of Needs, Volume III* (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1999).

GOAR = Jacques **GOAR**, ed., *Euchologion sive Rituale Graecorum*, 2d ed. [in Greek with Latin translation and commentary] (Venice: Typographia Bartholomaei Javarina, 1730; reprint,

Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck–U. Verlagsanstalt, 1960). Page citations are from the reprint edition.

GOS = '**God of spirits** (and all flesh)': BF's oft-repeated prayer, recited silently or aloud by the officiant, either during or after the 'Synaptê for the Departed' (see ***Appendix I***, 293).

GOTR = ***Greek Orthodox Theological Review***.

GRAINGER = Roger **GRAINGER**, *The Message of the Rite*, Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 1988.

GRISBROOKE, 'Committal' = W. Jardine **GRISBROOKE**, 'Towards a Liturgy of **Committal**,' in *Dying, Death and Disposal*, ed. Gilbert Cope, 57-84 (London: S.P.C.K., 1970).

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HOON = Paul Waitman **HOON**, "Theology, Death, and the Funeral Liturgy," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 31 (1976): 169-81.

HOPKO, 'Two' = Thomas **HOPKO**, '**Two** 'Nos' and One 'Yes'," *SVTQ* 28 (1984): 45-48.

IDML = the '**Idiomela** in Eight Tones' attributed to St. John of Damascus (see ***Appendix I***, 302-04).

ILT = Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. [from Russian] Asheleigh E. Moorhouse, Library of Orthodox Theology, 4 (Leighton Buzzard, UK: The Faith Press, 1966/ Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975).

IRION = Paul E. **IRION**, *The Funeral: Vestige or Value* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1966).

JMP = *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.

KJV = the **'King James'** version of the Bible, more correctly referred to as the 'Authorized Version (AV).'

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KON = the **Kontakion** of BF which begins: "With the Saints give rest" (see ***Appendix I***, 300)

KÜBLER-ROSS = Elisabeth **KÜBLER-ROSS**, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Macmillan, c1969; twentieth Macmillan paperback printing, 1978).

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LXX = the **Septuagint** (pre-Christian Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures *plus* the so-called 'deutero-canonical' writings). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations in English from the *LXX* (aside from Fr. **LASH**'s translations of BF's psalmody) are taken from *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha with an English Translation and with Various Readings and Critical Notes*, trans. Sir Launcelot L. **BRENTON** (London: Samuel Bagster, 1851; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999). Where it has been necessary to refer specifically to the Greek text of *LXX*, this has been done either from **BRENTON** or from **RAHLFS** = Alfred **RAHLFS**, ed., *Septuaginta: Duo volumina in uno* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, c1979).

Macrine = **GREGORY OF NYSSA**, *Vie de sainte Macrine* [Greek critical text with French translation], trans. and intro. Pierre **MARAVAL** (SC 178) (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971).

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MEYENDORFF, 'Liturgical' = **PAUL MEYENDORFF**, "The **Liturgical** Path of Orthodoxy in America," *SVTQ* 40 (1996): 49-55.

MEYER, "Challenges" = Ben F. **MEYER**, "The **Challenges** of Text and Reader to the Historical-Critical Method," in *The Bible and Its Readers*, Concilium n.s. 1991/1, ed. Wm. Beuken, Sean Freyne, and Anton Weiler, 3-12 (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991).

MF = **'Monastic Funeral'**: the Byzantine-rite funeral service for deceased monks and nuns, usually referred to in Greek *euchológia* as the *Akolouthía tou Exodiastikoú tôn Monachôn.*

NIV = the **New International Version** of the Bible.

NOLI = (Bishop) Fan Stylian **NOLI**, compiler, *The Eastern Orthodox Prayer Book* (Boston: The Albanian Orthodox Church in America, 1949).

NPNF = ***Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers***, Series I (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956) and Series II (Oxford: James Parker, 1890-1900).

NRSV = the **New Revised Standard Version** of the Bible.

NT = **New Testament**.

OCA = the **Orthodox Church in America**, the former Russian Orthodox 'Metropolia' which received its autocephaly from the Church of Russia in 1970.

OCP = ***Orientalia Christiana Periodica***

ODB = ***Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium***, ed. Alexander Kazhdan et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

OT = **Old Testament**.

PEKAR = Athanasius **PEKAR**, *Funeral Services According to the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite* (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1972).

PF = **'Priest's Funeral'**: the Byzantine-rite funeral service for deceased clergy above the rank of deacon, usually referred to in Greek *euchológia* as the *Akolouthía Nekrôsimos eis Hieréa Teleuthêsanta.*

PG = J.-P. Migne, ***Patrologia graeca***.

PROK = the **Prokeimenon** of BF (see ***Appendix I***, 305).

RAHLFS = see ***LXX.***

RANDO = Therese A. **RANDO**, *Grief, Dying, and Death* (Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1984).

RAYA = Joseph **RAYA** and José **DEVINCK**, eds., *Byzantine Daily Worship* (Allendale, NJ: Alleluia Press, 1969).

ROSCANU = Horia **ROSCANU**, "L'argile est ternie et le vase est brisé: les funérailles dans le rite byzantin, un rituel qui exprime le deuil," *Frontières* 10 (1998): 33-6.

ROUILLARD = Philippe **ROUILLARD**, "The Liturgy of the Dead as a Rite of Passage," in *Liturgy and Human Passage*, Concilium, vol. 112, ed. David N. Power and Luis Maldonado, 73-82 (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979).

RSV = the **Revised Standard Version** of the Bible. Unless otherwise specified, all Bible quotations are from the RSV.

SANTMIRE = Paul **SANTMIRE**, "Nothing More Beautiful than Death?," *Christian Century* 100, no. 38 (December, 1983): 1154-58.

SC = ***Sources chrétiennes***.

SCHMEMANN, "Blessed Sabbath," = Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, "This is the Blessed Sabbath," in *Matins of Holy Saturday with the Praises and Psalm 119* (Syosset, NY: OCA Department of Religious Education, 1982), 3-15; reprint of: "This is the Blessed Sabbath . . . (Matins of Great Saturday)," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* n.s. 2:2 (1958): 2-8. References are to the reprint edition.

SCHMEMANN, *Church* = idem, ***Church***, *World, Mission*. Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1979.

SCHMEMANN, *Eucharist* = idem, *The **Eucharist**: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, trans. Paul Kachur. (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1988).

SCHMEMANN, *Journals* = idem, ***Journals*** *of Father Alexander Schmemann, 1973-1983*, trans. **JULIANA SCHMEMANN** (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2000).

SCHMEMANN, *Life* = idem, *For the **Life** of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 2d rev. & exp. ed. (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1973).

SCHMEMANN, *Water* = idem, *Of **Water** and the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1974).

SERAPHIM = Bishop **SERAPHIM** (Storheim), ed., *Services for the Departed in the Orthodox Church*, unpublished manuscript (Spencerville, ON: Archdiocese of Canada [OCA], 2000).

SHEPPY, "Shaping" = Paul **SHEPPY**, "A 'Good' Funeral: **Shaping** the Final Exit," on-line text available at http://www.pastornet.net.au/jmm/aasi/aasi0037.htm, pages 1-4 (when down-loaded and

printed in an 11-point font. This is an 'edited version' of an article that appeared earlier in *The Baptist Ministers' Journal*, July 1997, n.p.

SHEPPY, "Transition" = idem, "Towards a Theology of **Transition**," in *Interpreting Death: Christian Theology and Pastoral Practice*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Tony Rogers, 42-55 (London and Washington: Cassell, 1997).

SPECK = Peter **SPECK**, "Bereavement and Belief: an Anglican Perspective," in *Interpreting Death: Christian Theology and Pastoral Practice*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Tony Rogers, 101-09. (London and Washington: Cassell, 1997).

SVSP = St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

SVTQ = St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly.

SWANSON = Paul R. **SWANSON**, "Some Considerations on Death and Dying," *Dialog* 11 (1972): 170-76.

TRIS = the '**Trisagion**,' with reference either to the hymn beginning 'Holy God' or to a brief 'Service for the Dead,' known to Russians as 'Litiya' and to west Ukrainians as 'Panakhyda' (see ***Appendix I***, 292-94).

TRUBACHEV = S. **TRUBACHEV**, "Panikhida Hymns in Russian Music," *JMP* (1986) no. 2: 68-75.

VAN GENNEP = Arnold **VAN GENNEP**, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

VASSILIADIS = Nikolaos **VASSILIADIS**, *The Mystery of Death*, trans. Peter Chamberas (Athens: Sotêr, 1993).

VELKOVSKA, *Dumbarton* = Elena Velkova **VELKOVSKA**, "Funeral Rites according to the Byzantine Liturgical Sources," in ***Dumbarton*** *Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 21-51 (chapter 3).

VELKOVSKA, *Handbook* = idem, "Funeral Rites in the East," in The Pontifical Liturgical Institute, ***Handbook*** *for Liturgical Studies, Volume IV: Sacraments and Sacramentals*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco, 345-54 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press/ A Pueblo Book, 2000).

WARE, "Mystery" = (Bishop) Kallistos [formerly 'Timothy'] **WARE**, "'Go Joyfully': The **Mystery** of Death and Resurrection," in *Beyond Death: Theological and Philosophical Reflections on Life After Death*, ed. Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Christopher Lewis, 27-41 (London: Macmillan, 1995).

WARE, *Orthodox* = idem, *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1963).

WB = 'World of the Bereaved': a theoretical construct derived from social science data, employed in the present dissertation to denote the psycho-socio-spiritual context liable to be inhabited by bereaved persons who live in contemporary western societies.

WILLIMON = William H. **WILLIMON**, *Worship as Pastoral Care* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1979).

WORDEN = J. William **WORDEN**, *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, 2d edition (New York: Springer Publishing Co., 1991).

WYSOCHANSKY = Demetrius **WYSOCHANSKY**, comp., *Euchologion (Trebnyk): a Byzantine Ritual*, 2d rev. ed. (Hamtramck, MI: n.p., 1986).

ZIMMERMAN = Joyce Ann **ZIMMERMAN**, *Liturgy and Hermeneutics*, American Essays in Liturgy (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999).

EDITORIAL METHOD

The methods followed in the preparation of this dissertation are based on the sixth revised edition of Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.*[1] However, I wish to draw attention to the following specific points:

1) the method for citing reference materials is basically that described by Turabian as the 'humanities style of documentation' (8.2, p. 118) which employs the use of footnotes and a bibliography whose format is given by Turabian;

2) for works with three or more mentions in either notes or text, I have followed (on the recommendation of my thesis director) a helpful method of citation in abbreviated form that is used in publications of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome[2]; for ease of reference by readers, this method prescribes the inclusion of a list of 'Abbreviations and Works Cited in Abbreviated Form' in the front-matter of the document and I have therefore incorporated such a list at an appropriate point in my dissertation (pp. viii-xvi);

3) the use of various 'levels' of 'subheads' for dividing the chapters of the text into sections and sub-sections is the one recommended by Turabian (1.37, pp. 11-12); and

4) in light of Turabian's observation that "in some fields – linguistics, *theology* – it is accepted practice to use *single* quotation marks to set off words and concepts" (5.12, p. 77, emphases mine), my use of double quotation marks is limited to non-block direct quotations from reference works and to the titles of book chapters and of essays from periodicals.

An important group of methodological matters relate to the use of 'foreign' words and terms in the text and notes. In works of 'Eastern Christian Studies,' an emergent discipline whose 'classical' roots lie in Greek, Syriac and Armenian more than in Latin, it seems increasingly illogical or even pedantic to regard as foreign (and hence to italicize) 'common' Greek terms like Orthros and Anaphora while freely using their un-italicized Latinate approximate counterparts, Matins and Canon (the latter of Greek derivation). For this reason, I have tried as much as possible, when using non-obscure Byzantine liturgical or theological terms from Greek or Slavonic, to render them without italics *unless* I am actually using them as foreign words. Thus, to give an example, I refer frequently at many points in my text to the 'rite of the Aspasmos' in the Byzantine-rite funeral service, but I may also treat the same term as a 'foreign import' by referring to 'rites of final farewell

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[1] Kate L. **TURABIAN**, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition, revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennett (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[2] See, e.g., Robert **TAFT**, *The Diptychs*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 238 (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1991), XIII-XXI.

(*aspasmós*)'. I believe that, in so doing, I am attempting to be internally consistent; at least I am here drawing the reader's attention to an underlying rule that I have tried to put into practice. I hope she or he can accept the logic of my decision, and be patient with my occasional lapses from my own first principles.

One seeming example of such a lapse on my part might be my frequent use of the italicized *ordo* (of Latin, not Greek, origin) to refer to the 'order of service' of a liturgical entity. My only 'rationalization' for this usage was a suggestion by my thesis director that when discussing BF's manuscript tradition, I consider using *ordines* rather than 'ordos' as a plural form. Both ordines and ordos (without italics, quotation marks, or capitalization) appeared strange to my eye. However, *ordines* as an intact foreign word probably necessitates italicization whereas ordos does not. Since I decided to use *ordines* as a plural, consistency suggested that I should use *ordo* as its singular.

In the text of my dissertation I have italicized (as is customary) most words of foreign origin (for example, *zikkaron*, p. 169, or *schmerz*, p. 191) other than – as mentioned above – commonly-used words that are being 'adapted' and 'adopted' with increasing frequency by writers on Eastern Christianity. However, in the notes and bibliography, foreign-language titles of papers in periodicals or collections have *not* been italicized. Besides marking words of foreign origin, italics have also been used (as is also customary) for the titles of all books or periodicals and for emphases of various sorts.

For abbreviated references to 'the Septuagint,' I have chosen to use *LXX* (italicized) rather than 'LXX'; both were found in the literature I referred to. Because *LXX* is effectively an abbreviation of the Latin word *Septuaginta* (even though it may be rendered into English as 'Septuagint' or into French as 'Septante'), its italicization seemed justifiable. *En passant*, it may be noted here that unless otherwise indicated, my numbering of psalms follows the *LXX* enumeration rather than that of the Hebrew Bible which is used in most English versions of the scriptures. Most commonly, I give both numbers in my text, with the Hebrew number in parentheses after that of the *LXX*; thus, the *Miserere* is referred to as 'psalm 50 (51).' In quoting the Bible in English translation, I have tended to be rather eclectic in my choices, although as a general rule, unless otherwise indicated, most quotations are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

When quoting Greek words or phrases in my text (whether from the Bible, the liturgy or occasionally the patristic corpus), I generally do so in transliteration. The one exception to this rule is in my discussion in *Chapter One* of the texts of BF on pages 47-57. Because the density of quotations there is high, and because the texts themselves are readily available to the reader in their original language in *Appendix I*, my practice for these few pages was to quote the original in Greek with a parenthetic English translation, making it less complicated (I hope) to locate the original of the text in question in the Appendix.

In giving the Greek titles of books in the notes or bibliography, I have sometimes used a Greek font and sometimes transliterated. My commonest reason for doing the latter was to make sense out of a chosen abbreviation (in Latin characters) for a particular work. Thus, for example, I refer frequently to the *Ἁγιασματάριον Τεύχος Δεύτερον* whose abbreviation as 'HAG-2' becomes more logical if that work's title has been transliterated as *Hagiasmatárion Teuchós Deúteron.*

To draw to a close this discussion of editorial method, I wish to point out that the line-spacing of the body of my dissertation is slightly less than double. This was necessitated, not by any desire to shorten the text, but rather to circumvent my computer's distressing predilection for continuing foot-notes beyond the bottom of the page where the note-number had been inserted, or even occasionally for placing an entire note on the following page. In order to correct this annoying problem, I consulted Microsoft's "Product Support Services" web-site for 'Word-97-for-Windows' where, amongst a number of suggested remedies for the problem in question,[3] I discovered that the one efficacious solution seemed to be a change to *exact* line-spacing. Thus, the spacing of the body of my text (but not the front-matter [except here], appendices, or bibliography) is 'exactly 22-point' which for a text like mine in an 11-point font is supposed to give an approximation of double-spacing that also corrects the footnote problem.

Practically, this means that a text-page without footnotes that contains 25 lines doubly-spaced may contain up to 27-28 lines of 'exactly 22-point' text. This approximately ten per-cent increase of text per page in the 'exactly 22-point' format means that had the present 288 pages of the body of my text been printed in strict 'double-spacing,' my thesis would have been about thirty or so

[3] See http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;EN-US;Q196720.

pages longer than it is. In its present format, the appearance of a page in my text-body is virtually indistinguishable from 'true' double-spacing, but there has been an important gain in ease of reading by having the complete content of all but the longest footnotes on the same page as their relevant footnote numbers.

A closing note is in order regarding the spelling conventions I have attempted to follow, albeit inconsistently. As a rather traditional Canadian, I prefer (and tend to use) certain British spelling conventions over their American counterparts (*always* 'labour,' 'cheque' and 'catalogue,' *usually* 'centre' and 'defence' as nouns, with a preference for the double-l in 'travelled' and 'cancelled' but for a single-l in 'fulfil'). On the other hand, I would never use the British-ise endings for verbs like 'criticize' or 'organize.' In between these broad parameters, I confess to a (typically Canadian) lack of uniformity that is certainly reflected in this dissertation.[4]

[4] Confirmation of my spelling predilections as 'typically Canadian' can be found in a web-site such as http://www.cornerstoneword.com/misc/cdneng/cdneng.htm.

RÉSUMÉ

The dissertation's *Chapter One* focuses on the 'shape' of the Byzantine-rite Funeral Service for Lay-persons (= BF), an *ordo* whose contents (presented in Greek text with parallel English translation in *Appendix I*) were effectively canonized by the advent of printed euchologies in the sixteenth century. Amongst western communities of Byzantine-rite Christians (as indeed, increasingly, in Byzantine-rite homelands), this 'traditional' *ordo* is often abbreviated by the omission or condensation of much of its psalmody and hymnography.

However, certain invariable elements are to be found almost everywhere that BF is celebrated. These include the following: 1) selected verses from psalm 118 (119); 2) five or six brief Evlogitaria hymns (= EVL) that evoke humanity's eventual restoration to Paradise; 3) the Kontakion (= KON: "With the Saints give rest, O Christ") and its Ikos; 4) a variable number of doleful Idiomela hymns (= IDML) that are attributed to John Damascene and that begin: "What pleasure in life remains without its share of sorrow?"; 5) a 'resurrectional' epistle (1 Thess 4:13-18) and gospel (Jn 5:24-30) (often preceded by the Beatitudes); 6) multiple repetitions of a short 'Synaptê [litany] for the Departed' that concludes with an ancient prayer addressed to the "God of Spirits . . . who has trampled down death" (= GOS); 7) mournful hymns, variable in number, that accompany a closing poignant ritual of the 'Last Kiss' (*aspasmós*, 'farewell' = ASP); and 8) a solemn concluding chant (repeated at the burial) that entreats God to keep the departed in God's "Eternal Memory." The service, entirely sung to an array of attractively sombre melodies and highlighted by the prominent use of incense and lights, is meant to be conducted in church in the visible presence of the deceased's body reposing in its open coffin.

Chapter Two prepares for my intended interpretation and analysis of BF's complex 'Text' that incorporates intertwining penitential and resurrectional themes and is composed of the foregoing assemblage of texts, music and ritual. This methodological exercise must take place (as the dissertation's *Introduction* tries to make clear) in the lofty shadow of the late Alexander Schmemann whose analysis of BF intuited within it two thematic 'layers' in profound tension with one another.

The one layer, paleo-Christian in tone and in parts of its actual content (the psalmody, GOS, KON, EVL, Beatitudes, and the scripture lections), focuses on Christ's triumphant *defeat* of death-as-separation (from God, the living and the already-departed) through his own death and

resurrection. The other later layer, a Middle Byzantine 'lamentation stratum' (comprising IDML, ASP, and the rarely-heard Canon and full-length Kontakion), seems bent (in Schmemann's view) on a return to antiquity's perennial 'cult of the dead' that precisely *emphasizes* death-as-separation.

Although Fr. Schmemann never published his theological analysis of BF's content, he did lecture on his ideas to a whole generation of North American Orthodox seminarians and lay-people. One – previously unpublished – set of four lectures on "The Orthodox Liturgy of Death," delivered in 1979 to the annual 'Liturgical Institute' of St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, NY, and incorporating Schmemann's *exposée* of an essential contradiction at the heart of BF, has been transcribed (by me) from audio-tapes and is included as the present dissertation's *Appendix II.*

In laying out elements of my own methodology for interpreting and analyzing BF's liturgically-mediated theology, *Chapter Two* opens by insisting (following a lead from American liturgiologist, Joyce Ann Zimmerman) that BF in its entirety – texts, setting, music, and ritual – can and must be 'read' holistically as a performative 'Text' (with upper-case 'T'), having its own language and 'sign systems'; such an approach accords well with contemporary hermeneutical theories. The chapter then proceeds to a review of the unsystematic past attempts (by Fedwick, Lazor and others) at reading 'BF-as-Text'; these very partial analyses appear, overall, to discern in BF a paradoxical (but not necessarily incompatible) mixture of sombre and celebratory themes.

Since Schmemann's lectures represent virtually our only accessible, quasi-systematic attempt by an eminent Orthodox theologian to analyze BF, *Chapter Two* next devotes considerable time to elucidating details of his above-mentioned dichotomous approach to BF, preceded by an examination of Schmemann's background and the evolution of his method of 'liturgical theology.' This examination concludes that in his approach to BF, Fr. Schmemann found himself on the horns of a dilemma: While his developed 'liturgical theology' preferred to interpret *intact* liturgical units synchronically (while keeping an eye on the past to highlight neglected elements of present-day structures), his use of a diachronically-based methodology to justify his analysis of BF brought him close to espousing a reform of BF to which he was theoretically and temperamentally opposed.

Chapter Two concludes by a laying-out of my own proposed approach to BF, one that rests on the fundamental distinction, drawn by Canadian biblical scholar, Ben Meyer, between the *interpretation* versus the *analysis* of texts. Insisting from his 'critical realist' (Lonerganian)

perspective that all texts have an "intended sense" (defined as "the [intrinsic] meaning that specifies the text's individuality"), and that the attempted elucidation of that 'sense' by a reader is the *only* operation that can legitimately be called *interpretation*, Meyer labels as *analyses* the other operations whereby various critical methodologies (historical, psycho-analytical, feminist, etc.) are brought to bear upon texts in acts of "textually-nurtured analytic reflection."

From this perspective, 'Schmemann-on-BF' seems to have abandoned his own usual preference for synchronic *interpretation* of texts in favour of an attempted historico-critical *analysis* that allows (or even obliges) him to cast doubt upon the theological validity of BF's relatively late 'lamentation layer.' *Contra* Schmemann, I therefore proposed: *firstly*, to read BF's 'Text' (including the 'lamentation stratum') synchronically in an attempt to uncover its intrinsic 'intended sense'; and *secondly* to analyze the same 'Text' (seeking extrinsic practical grounds to justify BF's inclusion of a prominent element of lamentation) by re-reading BF from the hermeneutical vantage point of 'western' Byzantine-rite mourners who inhabit the contemporary 'World of the Bereaved' (= WB).

The first of these readings, namely the interpretive endeavour to uncover BF's 'intended sense,' occupies *Chapter Three*. Although this operation is relatively time-consuming, its conclusions are straight-forward. BF encompasses a number of sombre 'themes of lamentation' (lament for a mythic 'Paradise Lost'; separation from and farewell to the deceased; impending judgment; and *memento mori*) that are set alongside other, more hopeful 'themes of celebration' (rest from the cares of life; hope of a future resurrection; and unending life in God's 'Eternal Memory'). However, their juxtaposition in BF is best described not so much as an antinomy but rather as a paradox: BF is seeking (in the words of its Ikos) to "make our funeral lament [in]to a song [of] Alleluia." The occasions of lamentation presented by BF are all capable of undergoing transformation through the 'themes of celebration' that BF presents. One particularly inspired way in which this fundamental paradox is 'iconized' in BF is through the presence of the visible remains of the deceased that are simultaneously viewed and referred to as a 'corpse' (the odious symbol of death's tragedy) and as 'relics' that are reverenced through incensation, touching and kissing.

In *Chapter Four*, I prepare for undertaking an analytical 'second reading' of 'BF-as-Text' (in *Chapter Five*) that will try and justify, from a practical pastoral standpoint the presence in BF of a 'lamentation layer'; the case against BF's detractors is to be strengthened by demonstrating how

lamentation, interpreted as theologically justifiable in *Chapter Three*, is also pastorally essential to BF's 'human adequacy.' To help analyze BF's practical dimensions, *Chapter Four* is devoted to considering what I have designated as 'WB,' a theoretical construct derived from the social sciences that tries to describe (non-exhaustively) some important features of the internal and external *milieux* out of which Byzantine-rite mourners living in the 'western world' will encounter BF.

Psychologically, the bereaved face the need to try and accomplish their so-called "grief work" (Freud's *trauerarbeit*) which dictates that an eventual recovery from bereavement is predicated on overcoming: 1) *denial* of the reality of a particular death; 2) *suppression* of thoughts and feelings regarding the deceased; 3) unhealthy *clinging* to the deceased's presence and memory; and 4) *stagnation* (a reluctance to invest in new relationships and projects). *Sociologically*, it can be shown that North American mourners inhabit a society that is dominated by three major distortions (from a Christian perspective) of death's significance: a widespread 'denial of death' (well described by Philippe Ariès); an attempted 'taming of death' (through the 'death-awareness' movement); and a 'triumph of death' (manifested by indulgence in risk-taking behaviours and by the advocacy of such practices as euthanasia and assisted suicide). *Anthropologically*, following the *schema* proposed by van Gennep's description of life's significant passages, mourners' *transition* from 'separation' to 're-incorporation' appears especially difficult in societies like ours that no longer accord special status to mourners nor prescribe methods for their passage through the difficult time of death-induced loss.

It is out of this *milieu* of WB that Byzantine-rite mourners encounter the paradoxical 'lamentation-to-Alleluia' paradigm proposed to them by BF, a meeting that I attempt to characterize in *Chapter Five*. There, my concluding synchronic appraisal of the 'adequacy' of BF's liturgical *and* pastoral theology is set within the context of the paschal mystery. Such an approach, as I try to demonstrate, conforms to the theological vision of BF and to the practical psycho-spiritual needs of the bereaved. Because of its insistence that an appropriation of the promise of Easter necessitates an antecedent acknowledgement of the pain of Good Friday and the bewilderment of Holy Saturday, BF's existing format can be shown to accord well in many respects with anthropological, psycho-social and theological *desiderata* derived from WB. This being the case, one is obliged to conclude, as I do in my *Epilogue*, that Fr. Schmemann's implied criticisms of the 'theological adequacy' of BF's 'lamentation stratum' are not well grounded.

INTRODUCTION

An expanding body of literature in the fields of pastoral care and practical theology attests to the fact that funerals can play an important role in the initiation of healthy mourning.[1] In this regard, various observers have suggested that the Byzantine Funeral Service [hereafter BF], both by its vivid presentation of the tragic reality of death and by its balanced intertwining of lamentation with rejoicing, may be cited as an example of a funeral office that seems (at least theoretically) to be well suited to accomplishing such a worthy pastoral goal.[2]

However, Byzantine Christians living in the western world are challenged by a wider society in which various forms of death denial are rampant.[3] As a result, the important and apparently helpful functions of BF's ritual in Byzantine Christians' societies of origin[4] are being

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[1] See (amongst others): Ian **AINSWORTH-SMITH** and Peter **SPECK**, *Letting Go: Caring for the Dying and the Bereaved* (London: S.P.C.K., 1984) [= **AINSWORTH-SMITH**], 61-105; Robert W. **BAILEY**, *The Minister and Grief* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1976), 43-51; Roger **GRAINGER**, *The Message of the Rite: The Significance of Christian Rites of Passage* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 1988) [= **GRAINGER**], 64-75; Donald **HEINZ**, *The Last Passage: Recovering a Death of One's Own* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) [= **HEINZ**], 128-51; Paul Waitman **HOON**, "Theology, Death, and the Funeral Liturgy," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 31 (1976): 169-81 [= **HOON**]; Paul E. **IRION**, *The Funeral: Vestige or Value* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1966) [= **IRION**], 44-166; Elaine **RAMSHAW**, *Ritual and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 69-72; Therese A. **RANDO**, *Grief, Dying, and Death* (Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1984) [= **RANDO**], 178-86; Paul **SHEPPY**, "A 'Good' Funeral: Shaping the Final Exit," edited on-line version of an article from *The Baptist Ministers' Journal* (UK, July, 1997), at www.pastornet.net.au/jmm/aasi/aasi0037.htm, n.d.: 4 pages (when printed using an 11-point font) [= **SHEPPY**, "Shaping"]; Idem, "Towards a Theology of Transition," in *Interpreting Death: Christian Theology and Pastoral Practice*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Tony Rogers (London and Washington: Cassell, 1997), 42-55 [= **SHEPPY**, "Transition"]; Peter **SPECK**, "Bereavement and Belief: an Anglican Perspective," in ed. Jupp and Rogers, 101-09 [= **SPECK**]; and William H. **WILLIMON**, *Worship as Pastoral Care* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1979) [= **WILLIMON**], 100-117.

[2] See: Philotheos **FAROS**, *Τὸ Πένθος: Ὀρθόδοξη, Λαογραφικὴ καὶ Ψυχολογικὴ Θεώρηση* (Grief: an Orthodox, ethnographic and psychological perspective)(Athens: Akritas, 1981) [= **FAROS**], 158-62; Stanley **HARAKAS**, "Trampling on Death," in *Health and Medicine in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition: Faith, Liturgy, and Wholeness* (New York: Crossroad, 1990) [= **HARAKAS**], 152-56; Paul **LAZOR**, "Burial 2. Orthodox," in *A Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, ed. J. G. Davies (London, SCM Press, 1972), 97-98 [= **LAZOR**, 'Original']; Idem, "Burial 2. Orthodox," in *The New Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, ed. J. G. Davies, 118-19 (London, SCM Press, 1986) [= **LAZOR**, 'Revised']; Horia **ROSCANU**, "L'argile est ternie et le vase est brisé: les funérailles dans le rite byzantin, un rituel qui exprime le deuil," *Frontières* 10 (1998): 33-36 [= **ROSCANU**]; and S. **TRUBACHEV**, "Panikhida Hymns in Russian Music," *JMP*, no. 2 (1986): 69-71 [= **TRUBACHEV**].

[3] See (amongst others): Philippe **ARIÈS**, *The Hour of our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) [= **ARIÈS**, *Hour*], especially chapter 12 entitled "Death Denied," 559-601; **HARAKAS**, 146-50; **HEINZ**, 3-31 (chapter 1); and Jessica **MITFORD**'s 'classic,' *The American Way of Death* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963).

[4] For some assessments (perhaps dated) of the important role of BF in various traditionally 'Byzantine' societies see, for example: Monk **ARSÈNE** (of Chèvetogne), "Du culte funèbre dans l'Église russe," *Irénikon* 1 (1926): 293-9; Loring M. **DANFORTH**, *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982) [= **DANFORTH**]; Hermann J. **GISLER**, "Coutumes funéraires chez les Bulgares," *Échos d'Orient* 6 (1903): 257-63, 390-6, 7 (1904): 27-31; and A. **MURGOCI**, "Customs Connected with Death and Burial among the Roumanians," *Folk-Lore* 30 (1919): 89-102.

increasingly questioned by them in the countries of their *diaspora*. For a growing number of Byzantine Christians – as for many of their compatriots in western industrialized societies – rites (and texts) like those of BF are liable to be dismissed as 'morbid' or 'primitive.' This assessment leads to increasingly frequent requests by Byzantine-rite faithful in countries like Canada for radical modification or even omission of various rituals and texts that are intrinsic to BF's present form.

In this context, it strikes one as ironic that certain 'western' Orthodox theologians have espoused revisionist views of BF that are equally critical, though from a theological perspective, of what might be termed BF's 'lamentation stratum.' Both Alexis Kniazeff[5] and Alexander Schmemann,[6] former deans of eminent Orthodox theological institutes in the western world, have discerned BF in its present form as juxtaposing an unfortunate medieval Byzantine depiction of death-as-tragedy, alongside a more authentic celebratory vision of death-in-Christ, characteristic of both the New Testament and the primitive church.

The whole question of the need for Christian funerals to embody a 'delicate balance' between elements of lamentation and those of celebration has been raised in evaluations of post-Vatican II Roman Catholic funeral rites. In his 1970 study (published not long after the new Roman Catholic *Ordo Exsequiarum*) the British liturgical theologian, W. Jardine Grisbrooke, made a plea for Christian funerals that are 'adequate' from both the human and Christian points of view. In his opinion, a funeral must be "*humanly* adequate, responding to the needs of the bereaved, and it must be *Christianly* adequate as well, conveying the Christian message about death as clearly and fully as possible."[7]

A 'Christianly adequate' funeral (in the words of paragraph 81 of Vatican II's

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[5] Alexis **KNIAZEFF**, "The Death of a Priest According to the Slavic Trebnik," in *Temple of the Holy Spirit: Sickness and Death of the Christian in the Liturgy*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, Twenty-first Saint-Serge [Paris] Liturgical Conference, 1-4 July, 1974 (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1983) [= **KNIAZEFF**], 66, 93-94. In this article, Kniazeff draws heavily on the authoritative work (in Italian) of Vitaliano **BRUNI** O.F.M., *I funerali di un sacerdote nel rito bizantino secondo gli eucologi manoscritti di lingua greca* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1972) [= **BRUNI**].

[6] Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, *The Orthodox Liturgy of Death*, audiotapes of four lectures presented at a Liturgical Institute, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y., June 1979 (Montreal, QC: FAS Books, P. O. Box 1390, Place Bonaventure, H5A 1H3) [= ***Appendix II***]. I have transcribed these heretofore unpublished talks (with minimal editing), and have attached them as *Appendix II* to this present dissertation (see pages 310-60). For ease of reference, the talks have been divided into sections bearing titles of my own devising.

[7] W. Jardine **GRISBROOKE**, "Towards a Liturgy of Committal," in *Dying, Death and Disposal*, ed. Gilbert Cope (London: S.P.C.K., 1970) [= **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal"], 66; italics are in the original. One can endorse the spirit of Grisbrooke's comments here, without embracing his implied polarity of 'human' *versus* 'Christian.'

Sancrosanctum Concilium) must "reflect . . . the paschal character of Christian death" – a character that of necessity will include elements proper to Good Friday as well as those commonly associated with Easter Sunday. Hence, suggests Grisbrooke:

> *The liturgy of committal must be at once triumphant and penitential, confident and suppliant, exultant and restrained.* This is not only theologically necessary: it accords with both the spiritual and the psychological needs of the bereaved. For if an exaggeratedly sorrowful liturgy of committal – and such all too many existing ones are – is neither fitting theologically nor helpful psychologically, an exaggeratedly joyful one – such as some now seem inclined to produce by reaction – is no better. What is needed is a liturgy in which the delicate balance between these two emphases is achieved and maintained.[8]

More recent (and more critical) commentators, such as Owen Cummings, while welcoming the 1969 *Ordo Exsequiarum*'s renewed emphasis on "expressing more clearly the paschal character of Christian death," have questioned whether "the revised funeral rites . . . err on the side of triumph and exultation [so that] *a controlling eschatological triumphalism is superimposed on the process of human grieving*" (emphasis mine).[9] In the light of reflections such as those of Grisbrooke, Cummings and others (which are certainly applicable to Christian funerals in general, including BF), it seems to me both legitimate and necessary, *pace* Schmemann and Kniazeff, to question their assessment of BF's juxtaposition of lamentation and celebration as somehow Christianly *in*adequate.

In analyzing the meagre literature on BF's theology, it becomes apparent that a key issue to be faced is that of a perceived dichotomy in the service's fundamental theological 'vision,' an interpretation first suggested by Kniazeff speaking at Paris's Institut Saint-Serge in 1974, and thereafter amplified by Schmemann in a 1979 series of heretofore unpublished lectures.[10] In the 1983 English translation of his Saint-Serge lecture, Kniazeff writes the following:

> It is possible to say that taken as a whole the [funeral] office has two approaches to death. On the one hand, it represents death as having been conquered by Christ. This is the image that emerges especially from the biblical passages in the office. The hymnic texts pick it up and speak of death as leading not only to a glorious resurrection but also to a next world that is no longer Sheol but a place of rest, refreshment, and light, a place in which grace continues its work. . . The next world is also presented – thanks again to Christ's

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[8] Ibid., 61; italics are in the original.

[9] Owen F. **CUMMINGS**, "How Adequate are the Postconciliar Catholic Funeral Rites?", *Antiphon* 3, no. 3 (1998), 19. See also: Eamon **DUFFY**, "An Apology for Grief, Fear and Anger," *Priests and People* 5 (1991): 397-401; and Robert J. **HOEFFNER**, "A Pastoral Evaluation of the Rite of Funerals," *Worship* 55 (1981): 482-99 (= **HOEFFNER**).

[10] See ***Appendix II***.

> victory over death – as the place where the angels and the glorified saints . . . [and] the Mother of God add their prayers to those of the living for the person being buried. The office goes so far as to imply that in the next world, the deceased may be called even now to live in the presence of the glorified Christ . . . All these comforting themes play an important role in the office. . . .
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> . . . But there is another vision of death in this office, a vision that I have been describing as the tragic aspect of death. This aspect appears in the greater part of the hymnic texts of this office. It can even be said that it is especially emphasized here . . . The office comes back a number of times to the fallen condition of the human being and to the moment of separation of soul from body; it expresses surprise at the destruction of beauty that had been created in the image and likeness of God (the idiomela [of John Damascene]). It also stresses the pain caused to the survivors by the separation from their deceased and by the decomposition of the body in the grave; it frequently depicts the parousia, the last judgment, and eternal punishment. This vision, distant alike from that given in the New Testament and that familiar to Christian antiquity, is not specific to the Byzantine and Byzantine-Slavic liturgies. . . [but] is also found in other liturgies and especially in the Roman liturgy after the Middle Ages.[11]

Schmemann (who, I suspect, may have drawn on Kniazeff's work in preparing his 1979 lectures) picks up on this analysis, and in fact amplifies (or even exaggerates) it when he observes (and I will quote him *in extenso*):

> When [the] funeral hymnography made its appearance [in the course of BF's evolution], it . . . reflected and expressed an attitude towards death . . . different from the one we found in the 'first layer' of the funeral, the one that . . . depends in its spirit as well as forms on the Matins of Holy Saturday. . . . These differences . . . we must briefly analyze and expose. . . .
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> . . . The *first difference* . . . concerns . . . the 'participation' of the deceased himself in the funeral service. What characterizes the first 'Holy Saturday layer' is the almost total absence of any liturgical differentiation between the dead and us, the living. . . It is not *our* service for *him*, the dead, and it is not *his service* in the sense of the dead being . . . separated from us by his death. It is the service of the Church in her totality which includes the dead and the living. It is the celebration by the Church of *Christ's death* into which we all enter by means of the service. . . . Therefore the words we utter [are Christ's] – we sing psalm 119, but it is also he [Christ] who speaks. . . .
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> . . . The *second change* . . . concerns the very idea or 'feeling' of death. . . . In the full hymnographic material of our funeral service, there is not one single reference to the death of Christ or to his resurrection. . . . Death is [depicted as] horror and separation, gloom and darkness. . . . Where the early Church sees her departed [ones] in "the place of brightness where the light of God's face shines," the funeral hymn says: "he takes up his abode in the gloom." Where the early Church says: "with the saints," the funeral hymn says "he is interred among the dead." . . . Now, it is the physical, biological death that occupies the center of the stage – the horror of decomposition, the ugliness of death – and it is upon that ugliness that the hymn invites us (better to say *orders* us) to gaze. . . .
>
> . . . The *third change*, the most subtle one, concerns . . . the "eternal rest" for the granting of which to the deceased we are invited by the hymnography to "beseech the Lord." . . . .

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[11] **KNIAZEFF**, 90-91. It should be noted that he is talking here specifically about the 'Funeral of a Priest' [PF], but his remarks apply equally well to BF, almost all of whose textual elements are to be found in the much lengthier PF.

> In its biblical or Jewish connotations . . . . ['rest' is primarily the] 'divine rest' that man partakes [of] in the holy rest of the Sabbath. . . . [It] is not opposed to *life*. . . . In the Bible, 'rest' is primarily and essentially *God's* rest. . . . Death as such – natural death – is *not* rest . . . for "there is no rest in Sheol" which is separation from God, and therefore from [God's] rest. It is Christ who, by entering death, [has transformed] it into 'his rest,' into a new and holy Sabbath. . . . In the funeral hymnography [by contrast], . . . the 'rest' for which we now pray [to] be given after death is *radically opposed to life*. . . . Death makes life into a meaningless illusion, into a "shadow unreal" and an "elusive dream." This new image [alters] 'eternal rest,' transforming it . . . into a thing in itself, a reality no longer related either to this life or to death. . . .
>
> . . . The *fourth and last change* introduced by the hymnography . . . consists in placing at the very center of [the Church's relationship with the dead], as its main content, [the notion of] intercession *for* the dead, the prayer for their acceptance into this place of rest. . . . This relationship becomes more and more that of an intercession *by* the living *for* the dead, a relationship that obviously posits, as its very condition, a [radical] separation between them. . . .
>
> . . . [These changes together reflect] the virtual disappearance – not from doctrine, not from the essential tradition, but from Christian mentality and piety – of the eschatological vision proper to the early Church, ... [whose] interest [was] not in what happens to *me* when *I* come to the end of *my* life and die, but [in] what will happen to the entire creation when Christ returns in glory and, in the words of Saint Paul, "all things shall be subdued unto him . . . that God may be all in all" [1 Cor 15:28].[12]

While one might want to accuse Schmemann of hyperbole in some of his observations, it appears that both he and Kniazeff have identified a problematic which is inescapable in any attempted analysis of the theology of BF. Though both authors conclude their assessments with attempts to reconcile the funeral's two strata, they do so in a rather unconvincing manner (especially in Schmemann's case),[13] leaving us with the implication that there exists a serious hermeneutical challenge to be faced.

On the other hand, various other authors – none of whom treat BF's theology systematically or extensively – suggest that BF's realistic confrontation of death might be considered as one of its theological strengths. One perceives such an assessment in, for example, Paul Fedwick, Stanley Harakas, Paul Lazor, Sergey Trubachev, Nikolaos Vassiliadis, and Kallistos Ware, all of whom comment upon BF's juxtaposition of lamentation with rejoicing, and evaluate both sentiments as appropriate expressions of a Christian theological appraisal of death.

Fedwick concludes that BF "does not offer a coherent view of human death." Thus, it is probably futile to try and construct any systematic theology of BF which, he feels, juxtaposes views

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[12] ***Appendix II***, pp. 337-41; most of the italics have been added for emphasis.
[13] Ibid., 354-55.

of death, ranging from lamentation to jubilation, without attempting to reconcile them.[14] Harakas lauds BF's insistence that death be confronted as something real, evil and painful, but reminds us of BF's fundamental perception that death, by faith, can become a manifestation of God's Kingdom.[15] Lazor observes that "the Orthodox burial rite does not avoid the fact of death, brush it casually aside in the 'joy' of the resurrection, or poetically explain it away."[16] Trubachev, in a most original work, expounds BF's paradoxical theological vision of death and contends that this dual apprehension of 'death-as-tragedy' and 'death-as-joy' must be reflected in BF's music if such music is to be considered 'canonical.'[17] Vassiliadis supports his similar appreciation of BF's antinomic character by frequent quotations from various patristic authors.[18] Ware points out that while BF makes "no attempt . . . to hide the painful and shocking reality of the fact of death," its hymnography also depicts death as a blessing that prepares the way for our restoration in Christ.[19]

These authors' views, seemingly in tension with those of Schmemann and Kniazeff, oblige us to address the following question: does BF's realistic (and possibly brutal) hymnographic appraisal of physical death in this world constitute a detraction from, or a necessary counter-balance to, its vision of death as having been conquered by Christ? Alexander Schmemann, in particular, seems to imply the former; it is upon his contention that much of my thesis will focus.

In order to address this question, I am proposing to treat BF as a 'performed Text'[20] (comprised of specific written texts in their ritual setting) which I will then 'read' from two different perspectives. In a synchronic first reading, I shall explore what Canadian biblical scholar

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[14] Paul J. **FEDWICK**, "Death and Dying in Byzantine Liturgical Traditions," *Eastern Churches Review* 8 (1976): 160, 158 [= **FEDWICK**].

[15] **HARAKAS**, 154.

[16] **LAZOR**, 'Original,' 97.

[17] **TRUBACHEV**, 71.

[18] Nikolaos **VASSILIADIS**, "The Funeral Service," in idem, *The Mystery of Death*, trans. Peter Chamberas (Athens: Sotêr, 1993) [= **VASSILIADIS**], 357, 363-64, 376-77.

[19] (Bishop) Kallistos **WARE**, "'Go Joyfully': The Mystery of Death and Resurrection," in *Beyond Death: Theological and Philosophical Reflections on Life After Death*, ed. Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Christopher Lewis (London: Macmillan, 1995) [= **WARE**, "Mystery"], 33-34.

[20] See: Joyce Ann **ZIMMERMAN**, *Liturgy and Hermeneutics*, American Essays in Liturgy (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999) [= **ZIMMERMAN**], 14-21, as well as her earlier works: *Liturgy as Language of Faith: a Liturgical Methodology in the Mode of Paul Ricoeur's Textual Hermeneutics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), especially pp. 61-69, 71-103; and *Liturgy as Living Faith: a Liturgical Spirituality* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 1993), 37-51. According to Zimmerman's reading of the French thinker, Paul Ricoeur, *a text* can be taken "to mean any *document* of life composed by pre-accepted rules in a particular style. . . Within this broad notion of text, a painting, sculpture, music, choreographed dance [or liturgy] would all be texts." See Zimmerman, *Liturgy and Hermeneutics*, 16.

Ben Meyer refers to as the "intended sense of the text,"[21] utilizing Schmemann's diachronically-based reading strategy as a heuristic device for identifying and developing two sets of themes – those of lamentation and those of celebration – within BF's liturgically mediated theology.

Thereafter, for the purposes of a second reading that will aim at analyzing this dichotomy through the eyes of bereaved Byzantine Christians living in the western world, I shall take a theoretical construct – the contemporary westerner's 'world of the bereaved' [WB] as described by various social sciences – as a hermeneutical stance from which to analyze and evaluate my first, dichotomous reading of 'BF-as-Text.' If the 'world of the bereaved' which contemporary western mourners inhabit – surrounded by a non-supportive and death-evading culture, and obliged to struggle desperately alone to begin their work of grieving – is a world which is no longer permeated by what Philippe Rouillard calls an "atmosphere of faith,"[22] then the task of celebrating funeral rites which maintain Grisbrooke's "delicate balance" between lamentation and rejoicing becomes an ever greater challenge.

For BF's major contemporary interpreters – Schmemann and Kniazeff in particular – the dichotomy within BF's theology is judged diachronically as embodying two divergent and ultimately incompatible theologies of death. The one theology – that which focuses on death as tragedy – is attributed largely to the unfortunate influence of the compositions of medieval Byzantine hymnographers whose works dominate BF, while the other theology – concentrating on Christ's victory over death – is understood to reflect the views of the New Testament and of Christian antiquity.

Though it may be readily acknowledged that BF's 'lamentation stratum' has roots outside the New Testament (and may even represent a 'throw-back' to pre-Christian Greco-Roman antiquity, as Schmemann alleges from his diachronic perspective), the real interpretive crux centres upon how one adjudges the theological intent of 'the Tradition' in admitting and retaining important elements of lamentation within BF during the course of its historical evolution. Thus, it might indeed be assessed from a synchronic reading that BF's theology highlights an unfortunate and

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[21] See Ben **MEYER**, "The Challenges of Text and Reader to the Historical-Critical Method," in *The Bible and Its Readers*, Concilium n.s., 1991/1 (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991) [= **MEYER**, "Challenges"], 9-11.

[22] Philippe **ROUILLARD**, "The Liturgy of the Dead as a Rite of Passage," in *Liturgy and Human Passage*, ed. David Power and Luis Maldonado (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979) [= **ROUILLARD**], 81.

arguably anti-Christian dichotomy (as Schmemann and Kniazeff appear to suggest). However, alternatively, I believe it can be shown that this same dichotomy ought to be embraced as enshrining a necessary theological antinomy of critical pastoral importance.

Hence, it will be my working hypothesis in the present dissertation that, from the perspective of Byzantine Christian mourners living in (or influenced by)[23] today's death-evading western world (and for those seeking to minister to them), the latter of these two assessments – *contra* Schmemann and Kniazeff – is definitely the more valid. I seek to demonstrate how, for the inhabitants of the 'world of the bereaved' (which is ultimately all of us), BF's theology can be viewed as both "humanly and Christianly adequate"[24] to the extent that it: a) promotes the initiation of healthy 'grief work' at the psycho-spiritual level; b) counteracts reductionistic and Christianly *in*adequate societal assessments of the significance of human death; and c) provides for an anthropologically sound and theologically significant 'context of passage' for both the bereaved and their deceased loved ones.

After this present *Introduction* to my dissertation, *Chapter One* examines the structure and content of BF, beginning with a consideration of its rather fluid *ordo* or 'shape' in communities of Byzantine Christians living in western societies. Then, there ensues a description and discussion of BF's principal written texts – both scriptural and hymnographic – with emphasis on their contents and significance within the overall rite. The chapter concludes with a description of the setting of BF – its venue, its ministers, its rituals, and its music and chant – and a discussion of the need to be aware of the important influences of these parameters on the interpretation of the words of BF's texts by the members of the worshipping community.

Chapter Two focuses upon certain relevant methodological considerations, including several raised by the diachronic approach to BF (and to liturgical theology in general) of the late Alexander Schmemann. This is in preparation for undertaking a synchronic 'first reading' of BF's

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[23] The liturgical scholar, Elena Velkovska, has observed that "it would be . . . naive to imagine that the various rites in the euchologion [service book] are used today just as they are, not only in New York, but also in cities like Moscow, Athens, Bucharest, or Sofia. At least in large cities, funerals in the East now pose the same problems as they do in the Christian West." See Elena Velkova **VELKOVSKA**, "Funeral Rites in the East," in The Pontifical Liturgical Institute, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies, Volume IV: Sacraments and Sacramentals*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco, A Pueblo Book (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press/ A Pueblo Book, 2000) [= **VELKOVSKA**, *Handbook*], 353.

[24] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 66.

liturgically-mediated theology that endeavours to elucidate the 'intended sense' of BF understood as a performative 'Text.' This latter activity constitutes the subject-matter of *Chapter Three* in which an essentially diachronic approach to BF – one that identifies within it an early Christian stratum of *celebration* overlaid with later Byzantine *lamentation* – is co-opted to serve as a heuristic device for a systematic *synchronic* exploration of paradoxically intertwining themes of lamentation and celebration within BF's theology.

Having utilized this as a 'system' for interpreting what I believe to be the 'intended sense' of BF, my dissertation's second objective is an attempted examination and evaluation of this interpretation from the standpoint of the newly-bereaved. In this, I am motivated in particular by Alexander Schmemann's implication that BF embodies an infelicitous and ultimately unnecessary admixture of two conflicting theologies, the one redolent with early Christian paschal joy, the other an unfortunate return to the perennial 'cult of the dead.'

I endeavour to accomplish this goal of a pastorally relevant evaluation of BF's 'intended sense' in *Chapters Four* and *Five*. First, in *Chapter Four*, I erect a theoretical construct that I designate as the 'world of the bereaved' [WB], utilizing insights to do so that are derived from psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Thereafter, from the hermeneutical stance of this construct, *Chapter Five* undertakes a 'second reading' of BF that attempts to assess its theological and pastoral 'adequacy' *à la* Grisbrooke and *contra* Schmemann.

The dissertation's *Conclusion* emphasizes that BF's admixture of lamentation and celebration can be viewed as a transformative antinomy that is simultaneously grounded in the paschal mystery of Christ and solicitous of the psycho-spiritual needs of the newly-bereaved.

CHAPTER ONE

THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE BYZANTINE FUNERAL SERVICE [BF]

The purpose of this first chapter within the overall structure of my dissertation is primarily descriptive. In order to facilitate and orient subsequent discussions, it seemed advisable to begin with an outline and limited treatment of the various textual and performative elements which comprise BF, focusing particularly on that service as it is liable to be encountered amongst the various groups of Byzantine-rite Christians living – whether geographically or spiritually – within contemporary western or western*ized* societies.

In what follows, we shall begin by discussing the usual structure of BF – its '*ordo*' or 'shape' – when served for the funerals of lay-persons. We shall then examine the various textual components of this *ordo*, paying closer attention to details which may bear upon the interpretation of these texts. Lastly, we shall consider elements of the setting for a usual Byzantine-rite funeral – its locale, *personae*, music, and rituals. As we do so, we shall endeavour to explore the potential influences of these factors upon the service's 'reception' by its 'audience,' namely the members of the liturgical assembly (including persons newly bereaved) who have gathered to bid farewell to a deceased fellow-Christian.

I.A *The 'Ordo' or 'Shape' of the Byzantine Funeral for Lay-Persons (the 'Akolouthía Nekrôsimos eis Kosmikoús')*[1]

I.A.1 *A Matter of Terminology*

Certain questions of terminology need to be clarified before we can turn to specifics. I have chosen here to employ the designations *ordo* or 'shape' as virtual synonyms, using them to refer *primarily* to the manner in which the various elements of a given 'liturgical unit' (e.g., a sacrament or rite, an office, a daily service, etc.) are related sequentially to one another, and *secondarily*, to the

[1]This is the Office's title in the Greek *Euchológion tò Méga*, 2d ed. by Archimandrite Spyridon Zervos (Venice: Phoenix Greek Printers, 1862; reprint, Athens: Astir, 1992) [= **ETM**], 393-482. Page citations are to the reprint edition).

way(s) in which a particular 'liturgical unit' is related to other such units within the complex system of the Church's worship.

Arguably, the two terms *are* equivalent if one bases oneself upon the definitions given in works by the two particular authors who may be credited with their popularization. The British Anglican Benedictine, Gregory Dix (1901-1952), originated the concept of 'liturgical shape' in his 1945 seminal work which defined 'shape' as the "normal or standard *structure* of [a] rite as a whole."[2] A somewhat later publication by the Orthodox liturgical theologian, Alexander Schmemann (1921-1983), some of whose other work we have already met, is undoubtedly responsible for the increasingly widespread use of *ordo* by liturgical scholars. Interestingly enough, Schmemann himself tended to equate the two terms when he first defined *ordo* in the light of Dix's work as "the shape or structure of worship."[3] His acknowledged indebtedness to Dix was re-confirmed near the close of his life when he wrote, introducing his final book which dealt with the Eucharist, that "by 'ordo' we mean . . . the fundamental structure of the eucharist, its *shape*, to use the expression of Dom Gregory Dix."[4]

One might assume that the use by Schmemann's translator of the borrowed Latin term *ordo* [order] may have been influenced by the prevailing climate of Roman Catholic liturgical and patristic renewal during the period of Schmemann's initial academic formation in France during the 1940s. Although his landmark first book, published in English as *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, was written in Russian, one assumes his intended audience included non-Orthodox western scholars and theologians in Europe and America, many of whom would not have been familiar with an approximately equivalent Orthodox term such as 'typikon.' According to commonly accepted definitions,[5] both 'typikon' and '*ordo*' can denote the relationship of elements

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[2] Dom Gregory **DIX**, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: A. & C. Black Limited, 1945; reprint with additional notes by Paul V. Marshall, New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), xiii. Page citations are to the reprint edition.

[3] Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 2d. ed., trans. Asheleigh E. Moorhouse (Leighton Buzzard, UK: The Faith Press/ Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1975) [= **ILT**], 28.

[4] Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, trans. Paul Kachur (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988) [= **SCHMEMANN**, *Eucharist*], 13.

[5] The recently published *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, ed. Ken **PARRY**, David J. **MELLING**, et al. (Oxford, UK, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) [= **BDEC**] gives the meanings of 'Typikon' (p.500) as including: "book (Slav: Ustav) prescribing the order of services for the liturgical year; consequently, . . the order (AKOLOUTHIA) followed in the celebration of a service or services." The entry for 'Akolouthia' (p.10) defines it as "Greek term for (a) the order of a service (Slavonic: *chinoposledovanie*), or

within a particular service (i.e. their order), as well as the inter-relationship of different services to one another within the broader context of the liturgical cycle. Hence, their use as near-synonyms could appear justifiable.

However, I believe that Schmemann himself, for a number of reasons, was not content simply to equate these two, as we see when he wrote as follows:

> At first glance the notion of Ordo seems . . . simple. . . . The Ordo [Russian *Ustav*] is the collection of rules and prescriptions ('rubrics' in the language of western liturgics) which regulate the Church's worship and which are set forth in the *Typicon* [*sic*] and various other books of rites and ceremonies. . . . But in fact the simplicity of such a definition is deceiving. . . . First, the exact scope of the Ordo is problematical. More than half of our liturgical rules are not drawn from the official and written Ordo, the *Typicon*. . . . [Second], there is a profound lack of correspondence between this written Ordo and our liturgical practice. . . . [I]t would not be difficult to show . . . that our present *Typicon* represents an amalgam of local rules not infrequently marked by contradictions and obscurities. We come to the conclusion, therefore, that the Ordo is problematical both in scope and content, and that selectivity and judgment are required in its use. . . .
>
> . . . Not only must the vagueness of the scope of the Ordo be recognized as [part of] the 'problem of the Ordo,' but even more the clear-cut divergence between the Ordo and the Church's liturgical life. . . . [Thus, for example], the office most widely attended and frequently conducted in the Russian Church – the short memorial service for the departed (*panikhida*) – is for the most part not even mentioned in the Ordo, and the celebration of numerous 'private' memorials at any time, especially on the day of the Sunday Eucharist, contradicts the entire spirit of the Ordo. . . . Behind the problem of the scope and content of the Ordo there appears therefore the problem of its *meaning*, . . of its 'inner logic.'[6]

Here, one sees how for Schmemann, the *ordo* of any liturgical entity in the Byzantine tradition is something that, on the one hand, is only partially given by the prescriptions of the Typikon, but that, on the other hand, reveals a 'shape' beneath which lies its "its theological content as the *lex orandi* of the Church [and] as something inseparable from this *lex orandi*."[7]

In the context of the present dissertation, Schmemann's observations seem especially pertinent. We shall be studying a service – BF – whose precise content and rubrical details have

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(b) the service itself (Slavonic: *sluzhba*)." One might also note the equivalent terms, Greek *táxis* ('order') = Slavonic *chin*, which are not mentioned here. These usages correspond closely to a recent Roman Catholic definition of the term '*ordo*' which includes: (a) "the *order* or 'ordinary' of the Mass"; (b) "[a term] used interchangeably with 'rite' to designate other services [e.g. the *Order of Christian Funerals*]"; and (c) "the annual calendar that indicates which feasts occur on which days, and which texts are to be used in the celebration of Mass and the liturgy of the hours on a specific day." See Dennis C. **SMOLARSKI**, *Liturgical Literacy: From ANAMNESIS to WORSHIP* (New York: Paulist Press, c1990), 160.

[6] ILT, 28-30. Italics in the last line were added for emphasis.

[7] Ibid., 33.

certainly been amongst the most fluid of all the offices celebrated by the Byzantine churches. This *de facto* lack of precision in the liturgical tradition has helped contribute to an impressive variability in the ways that BF is enacted in different parts of the world, although since the advent of printed euchologies, this variability involves relatively unimportant differences in celebrating what is essentially the same basic liturgical office.

It is our intention to try and demonstrate how, despite geographic heterogeneity in BF's *ordo* coupled with its seemingly random "juxtaposing of different, sometimes varying, opinions"[8] about human death, it is still possible for grieving human persons to glimpse the 'shape' of a practical Christian theological assessment of the 'mystery of death' which unites a profound realism with an equally profound hope.

I.A.2 *The 'Pedigree' of the Present-day Byzantine Funeral*

In the *Introduction*, we indicated that our study will be primarily a synchronic one, aimed at interpreting and analyzing BF from the perspective of bereaved Byzantine Christians living in modern-day westernized societies. At the same time, it is our intention to try and get at the 'intended sense of the text' of BF by employing heuristically a methodological approach whose roots are to be found in the essentially diachronic treatment of BF employed by both Schmemann and Kniazeff.[9] Hence, it need not be taken as evidence of inconsistency if, from time to time, we pause to attend to certain relevant features of BF's historical development including, in the present discussion, some matters relating to the evolution of its 'shape.' We shall pay particular attention to the origins of elements to be found in the present-day BF, noting where possible their likely geographical provenance, and their first appearance within a surviving Byzantine funeral *ordo*.

I.A.2.a The first millennium

It has been pointed out that in extant Byzantine manuscript euchologies (*euchológia*), there exists no evidence earlier than the tenth century for *any* funeral *ordo* properly so-called, although

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[8] **FEDWICK**, 160.
[9] See **KNIAZEFF**, and ***Appendix II*** (Schmemann).

some of these same documents do contain collections of 'prayers for the departed,' including texts to be found in one or other of the present-day Byzantine-rite funeral services.[10] Hence, one is left to speculate about the 'shape' of Byzantine funeral liturgies prior to the era of the manuscript, *Cryptoferrata graeca Γ.β.X*,[11] a tenth-century southern Italian euchology that contains the oldest surviving example of a Byzantine funeral office.

There do exist, however, several tantalizing traces of eastern Christian funeral rites in sources from the earlier half of the first Christian millennium. The *Life of Macrina* written by Gregory of Nyssa ca. A.D. 380 describes how an all-night vigil (*pannychís*) was celebrated around the bier of the nun Macrina, Gregory's dead sister, during which there was the "singing [of] hymns as on the festivals of martyrs" almost until dawn.[12] Thereafter, continuous psalmody ensued and at midday, Macrina's body was taken in procession, led by the local bishop, to a nearby church for burial in the family tomb. At the church, there followed prayers and Macrina's entombment beside the body of her mother.[13] Here, in a relatively early, post-Nicene source, we have a funeral vigil, psalmody, a procession, and grave-side rites, all elements that are found in today's *ordines*.

Two other fourth-century sources from eastern Mediterranean Christian communities contain information of interest to us. The *Apostolic Constitutions* (hereafter AC),[14] which are of Syrian provenance, contain prescriptions for a variety of funeral and memorial observances, while in the *Euchológion* of Sarapion of Thmuis,[15] we find the text of an early burial prayer from Christian Egypt. According to AC, the righteous departed were to be accompanied to their place of rest with psalmody, and were also to be commemorated by psalmody and by celebrations of the

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[10] See Miguel **ARRANZ**, "Les prières presbytérales de la '*Pannychis*' de l'Ancien Euchologe byzantin et la '*Panikhida*' des défunts - II," OCP 41 (1975) [= **ARRANZ**, "*Pannychis*-II"] : 138.

[11] See Themistoklis **CHRISTODOULOU**, *L'ufficio funebre nei manoscritti greci dei secoli X-XII* (The funeral office in Greek manuscripts of the tenth to twelfth centuries) [in Greek], Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1996) [= **CHRISTODOULOU**], 28. Fr. Christodoulou is the first person to undertake a critical analysis of this important document.

[12] See **GREGORY OF NYSSA**, *Vie de sainte Macrine* [Greek critical text with French translation], introduction, translation and notes by Pierre **MARAVAL**, SC no. 178 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971) [= ***Macrine***], 248: *Tês oun pannuchídos perí autên en humnodíais katháper epí martúrôn panêgúreôs telestheisês, epeidê órthros egéneto*; the English translation here is my own.

[13] Ibid., 248-57.

[14] See Marcel **METZGER**, ed., *Constitutions Apostoliques*, Vol. 1 (Books I & II), Vol. 2 (Books IV-VI), and Vol. 3 (Books VII-VIII)[Greek and French], SC no. 320, 329, & 336 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985 - 1987) [= **AC**].

[15] See Maxwell E. **JOHNSON**, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical and Theological Analysis*, OCAnal, 249 (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1995), 68-9.

Eucharist both in church and at the cemetery (Book VI, 30.2). Unfortunately, it is unclear from the text of AC whether these *requiem* observances were to occur in conjunction with, or independently of, the interment of the deceased's remains. After burial, AC mandated commemorative services of prayer and psalmody for the recently-departed on the third, ninth, and thirtieth [*sic*][16] days after death, and at the one-year anniversary of repose (VIII, 42).

AC also provides a form of prayer for the departed (VIII, 41) which includes phraseology reminiscent of two of the most 'popular' Byzantine-rite texts, found both in BF as well as in other Byzantine commemorations of the dead. The two texts in question are the 'Synaptê (Litany) for the Departed' and the oft-repeated memorial prayer *Theos tôn pneumátôn kai pásês sarkós* (O God of spirits and all flesh). On the subject of 'God of spirits,' one also notes with interest that there exists a certain commonality of wording, not only between it and AC, but also between it and Sarapion's burial prayer "For One Who Has Died and is Being Carried Out."[17] This latter fact may not appear so surprising when it is realized that, according to Vitaliano Bruni,[18] some of the earliest evidence for the existence of this quintessentially 'Byzantine' prayer comes from Nubia and upper Egypt.

One final witness from Christian antiquity is to be found in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Dionysius the (pseudo)-Areopagite, a document usually ascribed to sixth century Syria. From its chapter seven entitled "Rites Performed Over Those Who Have Fallen Asleep,"[19] we learn certain

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[16] This is according to the critical text of AC found in SC 329; see note 42, 2 on pg. 260-61. The thirtieth post-mortem day was (and is) important in Jewish tradition, a fact suggested by the text's reminder to its readers (VIII, 42.3) that the observance of the thirtieth-day anniversary is in keeping with the "ancient example" of the Israelites' mourning for Moses (see Dt 34:8). The traditional Byzantine system of commemorations (in keeping with more general Byzantine theological notions of significant time-intervals) mandates observance of the fortieth-day anniversary after a death. On this matter, see Gilbert **DAGRON**, "Troisième, neuvième et quarantième jours dans la tradition byzantine: Temps chrétien et anthropologie," in *Le Temps chrétien de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge: III^e^-XIII^e^ siècles*, ed. Jean-Marie Leroux, 419-30 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1984).

[17] **JOHNSON**, 68-69. In enumerating the similarities of language in these three examples of early 'prayers for the departed,' one notes first that Sarapion and AC both contain petitions for the deceased to be granted repose in intimate proximity (*en tô kólpô, en tameíois*) to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; this is a common paleo-Christian trope, based on Lk 16:22 (see *Macrine*, 222-23 [note 2]). Second, common to Sarapion and the Byzantine prayer 'God of spirits' is their address of God as "God of spirits and . . . of all flesh," and their use of another common early Christian trope for 'peaceful repose,' namely that it be granted "in [a place of] green pastures" [cf. Ps 22:2, *LXX*]. Finally, 'God of spirits' and AC both pray that the departed will be pardoned their "every sin" (*pan hamártêma*], and that in their place of rest, they will be freed from *odúnê kai lupê kai stenagmós* (Is 35:10b, *LXX*). These are three near-synonyms for which Ephrem **LASH**'s 'pain,' 'grief,' 'sighing' are possible renditions; see ***Appendix I***, p. 293.

[18] See **BRUNI**, 148-51.

[19] See **DIONYSIUS THE (PSEUDO)-AREOPAGITE**, "Rites Performed over Those who Have Fallen Asleep," in *Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite: The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, trans. and annot. Thomas L.

details of relevance to the later evolution of BF. Although this unique text arose within a monastic *milieu*, and is permeated by neo-Platonic notions of hierarchy, it is quite clearly describing a funeral rite for all faithful Christians, be they clergy, monastics, or laity (7.2). The rite's only distinction generated by concern for ecclesiastical *taxis* relates to the positioning of the bier such that a place in proximity to the altar is deemed fitting for the altar's servants, the priests.

The funeral office's principal celebrant is the bishop who offers a 'prayer of thanksgiving,' after which the deacons read lections, chant psalmody, dismiss the catechumens, and lead intercession for all faithful departed. Thereafter, the bishop himself prays for the newly-reposed (7.3.4.) asking, in language familiar to us from the fourth century, for the deceased to be forgiven "all faults . . . due to human frailty," to be carried "into the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," a place "from which grief, sorrow, and sighing have flown away."[20] Then, in a touching farewell gesture (preserved in BF's Aspasmos ritual), the bishop leads the assembly in giving a final 'kiss of peace' to the deceased, after which he anoints the body with oil. Traces of this latter ritual persist today in the rites of preparation for burial of the bodies of Byzantine priests and bishops.[21]

Here, in a rite from sixth-century Syria – a region and an era with profound influence on the final synthesis of the Byzantine liturgy – we have in embryo the 'shape' of today's BF. The 'funeral' as such takes place round the body of the deceased which lies in the midst of the church. (This contrasts with Macrina's *pannychís* which took place round her death-bed, and with AC and Sarapion whose focus is on forms of prayer to be used for 'one who is being carried out' to burial [Sarapion: *ekkomizoménos*].) One may safely presume that in Dionysius, there must have been a procession of some sort to transfer the deceased's remains from the place of death to the church, as well as a later cortège to the place of interment. The funeral office celebrated round the bier consists (as today) of psalms and hymns (the Greek *psalmôdía* includes both) and scriptural readings. A 'prayer of absolution' concludes the service (paralleling the original place and function

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CAMPBELL (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981) [= **DIONYSIUS**], 69-91. [For the Greek text underlying this translation, see J.-P. **MIGNE**, *Patrologia Graeca* [= **PG**] 3: 551C-570A (Paris, 1857)].

[20] **DIONYSIUS**, 84.

[21] See *The Great Book of Needs, Volume III* (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1999) [= **GBN-3**], 110.

of BF's 'O God of Spirits' according to Schmemann),[22] followed by final rites of aspasmos and unction that persist in today's *ordines* as we observed earlier.

Virtually no documentary evidence exists regarding the 'shape' of Byzantine funeral rituals (whether 'parochial' or monastic) during the interval between the pre-seventh-century sources we have just discussed, and the extant tenth-century monastic manuscripts which we shall touch upon in a moment. One of our only sources for this period, the manuscript monastic euchology *Barberini gr. 336* (late eighth century), includes a number of prayers for different 'categories' of deceased persons (monks, bishops and laypersons).[23] Another extant source, the 'Typikon of the Great Church,' provides us with a list of NT 'readings for those fallen asleep' (*anagnôsmata eis koimêthéntas*);[24] this document is presumed to describe the Constantinopolitan 'cathedral rite' of approximately the same era as *Barberini 336*, although its two principal extant manuscript sources date from a somewhat later period. What we lack in either of these sources is any real clue as to the identity of the 'liturgical unit' (or units) in which such prayers and lections were to be included. A recent mainstream opinion suggests that "before the 10th [*sic*] century . . . the Byzantines appended a three-antiphon [funeral] rite to different cathedral hours, be that orthros, trithektê or pannychis, though pannychis was the favourite, as can be guessed by those familiar with Slavonic."[25]

I.A.2.b 'Monasticization' of the funeral: the manuscript euchologies (tenth to fifteenth centuries)

In present-day Byzantine usage, there exist different 'categories' of funeral rites. Indeed, the liturgical books of the various Byzantine-rite jurisdictions may contain five or more different funeral offices including: a) the usual service for adult lay-persons (the *Akolouthía nekrôsimos eis*

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[22] ***Appendix II***, p. 325-26.

[23] Stefano **PARENTI**, and Elena **VELKOVSKA**, eds., *L'Eucologio Barberini gr. 336 (ff. 1-263)* [Greek text with Italian introduction], Bibliotheca 'Ephemerides Liturgicae': Subsidia, 80 (Rome: C.L.V. – Edizioni Liturgiche, 1995), 291-96.

[24] Juan **MATEOS**, ed., *Le Typicon de la Grande Église. Ms Sainte-Croix no. 40, Xe siècle*, vol. II [in Greek and French], Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 166 (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1963), 194-97.

[25] Peter **GALADZA**, "The Evolution of Funeral Liturgies for Monks of the Byzantine Tradition," unpublished paper (see p.2 of its manuscript), presented at the "Byzantine Monasticisms Conference," Faculty of Theology, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, ON, 31 March, 2001 [= **GALADZA**, "Evolution"]. See also: **CHRISTODOULOU**, 34-36; **VELKOVSKA**, *Handbook*, 349-50; and Elena **VELKOVSKA**, "Funeral Rites according to the Byzantine Liturgical Sources," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001) [= **VELKOVSKA**, *Dumbarton*]: 30, 43.

Kosmikoús); b) another for young children (the *Akolouthía nekrôsimos eis Nêpia*); c) a third for those in monastic orders (the *Akolouthía tou exodiastikoú tôn Monachôn*); d) an especially lengthy rite for the burial of priests and bishops (the *Akolouthía nekrôsimos eis Hieréa teleutêsanta*); and finally e) a uniquely celebratory *set* of services for persons in categories a) – d) who happen to die during the so-called Bright Week, the octave of Easter (*Akolouthíai nekrôsimoi en têi hebdomádi tês Diakainêsímou*).[26] *It is to be noted that in the present dissertation, we shall be concerned almost exclusively with the ordinary funeral for adult lay-persons (which we refer to as 'BF')*, although there may be occasional references to texts or practices from one of the other *ordines*.

This truly amazing proliferation of funeral rites is a relatively recent development for, as we shall observe in a moment, the extant manuscript euchologies, dating from the tenth century onward and all of monastic origin, know only one generic funeral whose *ordo* – by definition a 'monastic' one – must have sufficed for the burial of anyone else, be they bishop or child. While we may presume that there would have been on-the-spot modifications of this *ordo* in practice when funerals were being served for those outside monastic ranks, the manuscript tradition evinces relatively little concern for such adaptations. Effectively, it was the advent of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century which encouraged, first the proliferation, and later the crystallization, of the various distinct *ordines* that appeared initially within the Constantinopolitan sphere of influence, and subsequently in the Rus' lands.[27]

As was pointed out a moment ago, the earliest extant Byzantine euchology, the eighth-century *Barberini gr. 336*, contains a collection of 'prayers for the departed' but no funeral *ordo* as such. Only in a tenth-century source, *Cryptoferrata graeca Γ.β.X*, do we find the earliest existing schema for a full funeral office.[28] Originating as it does in an era of 'cross-fertilization' which

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[26] English translations for 4 of these orders (omitting only the monastic funeral) are to be found in Isabel **HAPGOOD**, trans., *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic and Apostolic Church*, 5th reprint edition of the 1906 original [translated from Church Slavonic] (Englewood, NJ: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1975) [= **HAPGOOD**], 368-436. The Greek texts of all five orders are to be found in the *Hagiasmatárion, Teuchos* 2: *Akolouthíai Nekrôsimoi* (Rome, 1955) [= **HAG-2**]. Although this volume is published by the Catholic Church (as a typical edition for use by Greco-Catholics), it agrees in most details with the Greek Orthodox texts to be found in such volumes as ETM. Translations of the five offices into French are given by Denis **GUILLAUME**, trans., *Rituel des Funérailles*, 2d. ed. (Rome: Diaconie Apostolique, 1990) [= **GUILLAUME**].

[27] For much of this discussion (as well as for most of what follows), I am indebted to **GALADZA**, "Evolution." See also **KNIAZEFF**, 66.

[28] See **CHRISTODOULOU**, 28, and **VELKOVSKA**, *Dumbarton*, 30-32.

eventually produced the present Byzantine rite (when there was underway an aggregation of elements from the Constantinopolitan 'cathedral office' [*asmatikê akolouthia*: 'sung rite'] with material of Palestinian monastic provenance), *Cryptoferrata graeca Γ.β.X* in its essential 'shape' comprises, according to Peter Galadza's succinct review, "Palestinian Orthros [Matins] . . . joined to a Constantinopolitan cathedral three-antiphon rite with the ancient final kiss and anointing."[29]

The bare outlines of a similar 'shape' are still discernible in BF which, following upon the suggestions of Miguel Arranz,[30] can be conceived simplistically as the union of:

(a) a monastically-modified Constantinopolitan *pannychís*[31] [psalm 90 (91)[32]; psalm 118 (119) sung in three staseis with refrains; prayer, and synaptê; psalm 50 (51); a canon (with the kontakion and ikos after ode 6); prokeimenon and gospel] supplemented by;
(b) additional materials, both hymnographic (the Idiomela) and scriptural (the Beatitudes and an epistle) and joined with;
(c) an ending whose 'shape' is similar to the present Byzantine week-day Orthros [with the Aspasmos stichera instead of aposticha; followed by Trisagion prayers, 'Our Father'; troparia ("With the spirits of the righteous") and theotokion; synaptê; dismissal].

Arranz's hypothesis is made more attractive by the persistence in East-Slavic Orthodox nomenclature of the term 'Panikhida' to denote the popular commemorative service for the departed whose *ordo* is similar in many respects to that of BF.

To conclude this section, it is interesting to note amidst the proliferation of monastic funeral *ordines* the approximate dating of the first documentable appearance of elements that are still to be found in BF. Thus, the singing of the Beatitudes appears for the first time in a tenth- or eleventh-century manuscript of Palestinian origin (*Sevastianov gr. 474*). The funeral's major hymnographic composition – the Idiomela sung right after the Canon and attributed by tradition to St. John of Damascus – is found for the first time in an eleventh-century document of southern

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[29] **GALADZA**, "Evolution," 2, and **VELKOVSKA**, *Dumbarton*, 31.

[30] **ARRANZ**, "*Pannychis*-II," 138.

[31] See Miguel **ARRANZ**, "Les prières presbytérales de la '*Pannychis*' de l'Ancien Euchologe byzantin et la '*Panikhida*' des défunts - I," OCP 40 (1974): 342 [= **ARRANZ**, "*Pannychis*-I"], which gives a 'bare-bones' outline of the *pannychis* distilled from an analysis of 37 manuscripts, and notes its similarity in outline to the *ordo* of BF.

[32] The numbering of psalms here (and hereafter in this dissertation, unless otherwise indicated) is that used in the Greek Old Testament or Septuagint [= ***LXX***] which is the numeration found in the Byzantine liturgical books. Each Septuagintal psalm number in the present text will generally be followed by its corresponding number (in parentheses) according to the Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*) on which most contemporary English Bible translations are based. For most of the Psalter, the number assigned to a given psalm in the *LXX* is one lower than its corresponding number in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. psalm 90 as here is psalm 91 in the Hebrew numbering).

Italian provenance (*Cryptoferrata gr. Γ.β.XLIII*). The Evlogitária (or *Tropária Amômou*) – a series of short hymns that conclude the chanting of psalm 118 (119) and are sung interspersed with the refrain: "Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes" (psalm 118:12) – have their initial appearance in a twelfth-century manuscript from Sinai (*Sinaitica gr. 963*). Finally, the singing during the procession to church of the Trisagion ("Holy God, Holy and strong, Holy and immortal, have mercy on us") has its earliest explicit mention in another twelfth-century text of south Italian origin (*San Salvatore gr. 172*), although as Galadza suggests, such a simple practice as this may have been in use long before it ever found its way into any written text.[33]

I.A.2.c The advent of printing: present-day BF (sixteenth century to the present)

We may reiterate at this juncture our earlier observation that the process of the ultimate 'crystallization' of the present-day multiplicity of Byzantine funeral *ordines* is probably attributable as much to an external event – namely, the advent of the printing press[34] – as it is to any internal forces operating from within the Byzantine liturgical sphere. Effectively, in an ecclesiatical *milieu* which often lacked any strong centralized authority, it was the production and dissemination of printed *ordines* (beginning with the Venetian euchology of 1526) rather than ecclesiastical *fiat* that put an end to the climate of exceptional creativity and fluidity of *taxeis* which prevailed during the era of the monastic manuscript *euchológia*.

Thus, it should come as no surprise to learn that the printed *ordines* of BF published by most Byzantine-rite jurisdictions in recent times are either virtual copies, or else relatively minor adaptations, of the printed version to be found in the monumental *Euchologion sive Rituale Graecorum*.[35] This work, which was first published in Paris in 1667 (and later reprinted in Venice

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[33] **GALADZA**, "Evolution," 3. For most of the information in this paragraph, I am indebted to observations made by Galadza, 3-4, whose conclusions are based on the schemata of manuscript monastic funerals to be found in **CHRISTODOULOU**, 40-48.

[34] See Alphonse **RAES**, "Les livres liturgiques grecs publiés à Venise," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant, Vol. III: Orient chrétien* (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1964), 211-22.

[35] Jacques **GOAR**, ed. *Euchologion sive Rituale Graecorum*, 2d ed. [in Greek with Latin translation and commentary] (Venice: Typographia Bartholomaei Javarina, 1730; reprint, Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck – U. Verlagsanstalt, 1960) [= **GOAR**], 423-33. Page citations are to the reprint edition.

in 1730), was produced by the French Dominican scholar, Jacques Goar (1601-1654), who consulted multiple manuscripts along with earlier Venetian printed editions.

Since we have been referring (and will continue to refer) repeatedly to elements of BF's *ordo*, it will promote clarity in much subsequent discussion if we reproduce here an outline of this service (modified slightly from Arranz)[36] according to Goar's *magnum opus*. This seems both an appropriate and useful exercise since so many authors refer to Goar as their standard reference work when dealing with BF's traditional *ordo*.

BF'S *ORDO* ACCORDING TO GOAR'S EUCHOLOGION (VENICE EDITION, 1730)

1. **Beginning**:
   Opening presbyteral **doxology** ('Blessed is our God')[37]
   Psalm 90 (91) ('He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High')

2. **Psalm 118 (119)**, vv. 1-72 (**stasis I**)
   Refrain after each verse: Alleluia
   Synaptê (litany) **of the departed**; [prayer *Theòs tôn pneumátôn kaì pásês sarkòs* ('O God of spirits and all flesh')]; with its **ekphônêsis** (concluding doxology): 'For you are the resurrection . . .'[38]

3. **Psalm 118 (119)**, vv. 73-131 (**stasis II**)
   Refrain after each verse: 'Have mercy upon your servant'
   Synaptê; ['O God of spirits']; **ekphônêsis**

4. **Psalm 118 (119)**, vv. 132-176 (**stasis III**)
   Refrain after each verse: Alleluia
   Evlogitária for the departed: Ps 119: 12 ('Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes') and troparia (hymn-verses) beginning with 'The choir of saints . . .'
   Synaptê; ['O God of spirits']; **ekphônêsis**
   Kathísmata in tone 5: 'Give rest with the just to your servant, O our Saviour'

5. **Psalm 50 (51)** (the *Miserere*: 'Have mercy on me, O God')

6. The **Canon (*Kanôn*) of Theophanes** (in 8 odes)
   Odes 1, 3; followed by
   Synaptê; ['O God of spirits']; **ekphônêsis**

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[36] ARRANZ, "*Pannychis*-II," 128-29.

[37] In Goar's version (and in most 'traditional' versions following therefrom), this opening blessing is actually given at the beginning of the short prayer service (Trisagion or Litiya) at the deceased's house, prior to the transport of the body to the church. The procession to church, and the service in church, are considered to be a continuation of the 'opening rites' at home, so a 'new beginning' in church is not made, but rather the church part of the funeral begins immediately with psalm 90 (91).

[38] In Goar's *ordo*, the prayer is usually (as here) *not* recited aloud, so that only the synaptê and ekphônêsis are audible.

Kathísmata in tone 6: 'Truly all things are vanity'

7. **Canon – odes 4, 5, 6**
   Synaptê; ['O God of spirits']; **ekphônêsis**
   Kontakion ('With the saints give rest, O Christ') and **Ikos** ('You alone are immortal')

8. **Canon – odes 7, 8, 9**
   Synaptê; ['O God of spirits']; **ekphônêsis**

9. The **Idiómela of Monk John the Damascene (in 8 tones)**

10. The **Beatitudes** with troparia

11. **Prokeimenon. Epistle. Alleluia. Gospel**

12. **Synaptê**
    'O God of spirits' recited aloud
    Ekphônêsis

13. The **'Last Kiss'** (***aspasmós***) during which special troparia (***prosómoia***) are sung

14. **Closing:**
    Trisagion ("Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy upon us"); 'O most holy Trinity . . .'; 'Our Father' and doxology
    Troparia: 'With the spirits'; **Synaptê**, 'O God of spirits,' **ekphônêsis**
    Apólysis (Dismissal) and **'Eternal Memory'**
    Procession to the cemetery singing the Trisagion

I.A.3 *Adaptations of BF's 'Traditional Ordo'*

I.A.3.a Four contemporary North American *ordines*

In the foregoing, we have presented what might be designated as the 'traditional *ordo*' of BF. Since this office in its entirety is seldom served in parochial settings, most contemporary Byzantine Christians (whether in the *diaspora* or the traditional homelands) will know it in some abbreviated version. Before embarking upon our analyses of BF's theological content, it therefore behooves us to examine more closely the North American 'shape' of BF.

Because the ultimate aim of this dissertation is to analyze the theology of BF from the perspective of bereaved persons inhabiting contemporary 'western' societies, we must try to identify (and limit our theologizing to) the sort of 'adapted *ordines*' familiar to present-day

Byzantine Christians in the west. Hence, in the table below, we compare the composition of modified *ordines* of BF drawn from four *unofficial* English-language publications produced by representatives of North American jurisdictions of Byzantine-rite Christians, two Orthodox and two Eastern Catholic. These *ordines* are taken from the following sources:

> Fr. Evagoras **CONSTANTINIDES**, ed., *The Priest's Service Book*, 2d ed. (Merrillville, IN: the translator, 1994) [= **CONSTANTINIDES**], 213-39. This volume carries the approbation of Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America, and is a translation of the Church of Greece's *Mikrón Euchológion ê Hagiasmatárion* (Small Euchology or 'Book of Blessings') (Athens: *Apostolikê Diakonía*, 1981). Thus, it represents current **Greek Orthodox** practice on both sides of the Atlantic.
>
> **BISHOP SERAPHIM** (Storheim), ed., "Services for the Departed in the Orthodox Church," unpublished manuscript (Archdiocese of Canada, Orthodox Church in America **[OCA]**, 2000), [= **SERAPHIM**], 20-54. This as yet unpublished text is quite typical of the mainstream usage of **east Slavic Orthodox** (e.g., Russians or Ukrainians) in North America.
>
> Archbishop Joseph **RAYA**, and José **DEVINCK**, eds., *Byzantine Daily Worship* (Allendale, NJ: Alleluia Press, 1969) [= **RAYA**], 983-1012. This text was mandated by **Melkite Greek-Catholic** Patriarch Maximos V for use in anglophone parishes of his church.
>
> Fr. Demetrius **WYSOCHANSKY**, ed., *Euchologion (Trebnyk): a Byzantine Ritual*, 2d rev. ed. (Hamtramck, MI: n.p., 1986) [= **WYSOCHANSKY**], 63-81. Though this volume bears no evidence of its being an 'official publication,' Fr. Wysochansky is an English-speaking **Ukrainian Greco-Catholic** priest of the Basilian order who has had first-hand exposure to the needs and practices of parishes in his church.

A COMPARISON OF FOUR CONTEMPORARY NORTH AMERICAN ORDOS OF 'BF'

Ordo item in GOAR (above)	**Constantinides (Greek Orthodox)**	**Bishop Seraphim O.C.A. (Slavic Orthodox tradition)**	**Raya & deVinck (Melkite Greek Catholic)**	**Wysochansky (Ukrainian Greco-Catholic)**
1. **Beginning**	Doxology NO psalm 90 (91)	Doxology [Trisagion prayers] Psalm 90 (91)	Doxology Psalm 90 (91)	Doxology Psalm 90 (91) [Great Litany] [Alleluia & verses][39] [Troparia]
2. **Ps 118 (119), stasis I**	Abbreviated	Abbreviation allowed	[–]	Abbreviated (includes vv. from staseis I & II)

[39] These verses are identical to the verses of the 'Alleluia' before the Gospel.

Refrains: Alleluia	+	+	[–]	"Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me . . ."
Synaptê, ekphônêsis	+	+	[–]	[–]
3. Ps 118 (119), stasis II	Abbreviated	Abbreviation allowed	[–]	Abbreviated (includes vv. from staseis II & III)
Refrains: *Ελέησον τον δούλον σου*	+	+	[–]	"O Savior, save the soul of your servant"
Synaptê, ekphônêsis	+	+	[–]	[–]
4. Ps 118 (119), stasis III	Abbreviated	Abbreviation allowed	[–]	[–]
Refrains: Alleluia	+	+	[Alleluia & verses][40]	[–]
Evlogitária	+	+	+	+
Synaptê, ekphônêsis	+	+	+	[–]
Kathisma hymn	+	+	+	+
5. Psalm 50 (51)	[–]	+	+	+
6. Canon, odes 1&3	[–]	Irmoi only with refrain: "Give rest"	Omissions allowed	[–]
Synaptê, ekphônêsis	[–]	[–]	+	[–]
Kathisma	[–]	[–]	+	[–]
7. Canon odes 4,5,6	[–]	Irmos 6 & refrain	Omissions allowed	[–]
Synaptê, ekphônêsis	[–]	+	+	[–]
Kontakion & Ikos	Kontakion ONLY	+	+	Omitted [?]
8. Canon odes 7,8,9	[–]	Irmos 9 & refrain	Omissions allowed	[–]
Synaptê, ekphônêsis	[–]	[–]	+	[–]
9. Idiómela	12 stichera plus doxastichon and theotokion	Abbreviation suggested (1, 8 only)	8 stichera plus Kontakion repeated	8 stichera
10. Beatitudes	+	+	+	+
11. Prokeimenon,	+	+	+	+

[40] Ibid.

Epistle, Alleluia, Gospel	1 Thess 4: 13-17 John 5: 24-30 [Sermon not mentioned]	1 Thess 4: 13-18 John 5: 24-30 [Sermon mandated]	1 Thess 4: 13-17 John 5: 24-30 ["Sermon if any"]	1 Thess 4: 13-18 John 5: 24-30 [Homily]
12. Synaptê **'O God of spirits'** **Ekphônêsis**	[–] [–] [–]	(Usually omitted) do. do.	[–] [–] [–]	[–] [–] [–]
13. 'Last Kiss' (*aspasmós*)	(After Dismissal) 2 stichera Theotokion: "Save those who hope . . ."	(After Dismissal) 3 stichera selected (others given) 'Glory': "As you see me . . ." 'Now & ever': [stich not in Greek *ordo*] Other troparia [not in Greek books]: "Today is fulfilled"	(After Dismissal) 8 stichera Theotokion: "Save those who hope . . ." 'Glory': "As you see me . . ." 'Now & ever': Theotokion: "At the prayers of her . . ."	+ 7 stichera 'Glory': "As you see me . . ." 'Now & ever': Theotokion: "Save those who hope . . ."
14. Closing: **Trisagion** prayers	[–]	+	[–]	+ (optional)
Troparia: "With the spirits"	[–]	+	[–]	+ (optional)
Synaptê, 'God of Spirits,' **Ekphônêsis**	+	+	+	+ (optional)
Dismissal & 'Eternal Memory'	+ & ['Eulogy'] [*Aspasmós*: cf. 13]	+ & ['Absolution'] [*Aspasmós*: cf. 13]	+ [*Aspasmós*: cf. 13]	+ ['Absolution']

I.A.3.b An emergent North American *ordo* for BF

We indicated a moment ago that our task in this present dissertation is to examine, theoretically and practically, the theology of BF as this is perceived by mourners who live in the contemporary 'western world' (either geographically or culturally). Hence, in the light of the comparisons we have just been making, and for the purposes of our subsequent discussions, it

seems essential to me that we try to define the 'shape' and content of a specific 'recension' of BF which would be recognizable to the vast majority of bereaved 'western' Byzantine Christians.

In embarking upon this discussion, I wish to limit its scope somewhat by introducing two *caveats*. *First*, I shall take North America to be representative of the 'western world' in general, since it is the 'epicentre' of the industrialized west as well as being home to the world's largest population of Byzantine Christians living outside their traditional lands. It is also the culture which I know best from personal experience, and in which I attempt to live and reflect as a Byzantine Orthodox Christian. This state of affairs brings me to my *second* proviso.

In North America (as also in certain other regions of the world like eastern Europe and the Middle East), the 'Byzantine rite' of the Orthodox Church is also practiced by substantial numbers of Eastern Catholics. Although I shall be attempting for the most part to make observations and undertake reflections which pertain to both Orthodox and Byzantine-rite Catholics, there *may* be times when I choose to limit the scope of my discussion somewhat by focusing upon the particular situation of the Byzantine Orthodox.

From a perusal of the above table, it might be concluded that BF in North America is in a state of flux. There is a fluidity in its liturgical 'shape' which is not dissimilar (although perhaps on a smaller scale) to that which prevailed during the era of the monastic manuscript *ordines*. This analogy is not as far-fetched as it might seem at first sight. Second- and third-generation communities of Byzantine Christians are in the midst of a transition from their liturgical languages of origin to the use of North American vernacular languages, mainly English. This linguistic transition may not always be embraced wholeheartedly, or else ecclesiastical interest in 'official' translation has concentrated on materials for use during the weekly Divine Liturgy. Thus, it is not surprising that there has been a proliferation of unofficial or semi-official materials for non-eucharistic services that tend to reflect the vagaries and peculiarities of local needs and preferences. In this respect, Byzantine-rite parishes or dioceses in the Americas often resemble the semi-autonomous monastic communities which produced the medieval manuscript euchologies.

Nevertheless, in the case of BF, I believe that it is possible within this prevailing *ethos* of rubrical fluidity to speak *de facto* of an 'emergent *ordo*' that embodies trends that are becoming the

common practice of the majority of Byzantine-rite parishes in North America (especially amongst the Orthodox). In what follows, I shall attempt to highlight some of the more obvious of these trends – not primarily as a matter of sociological interest, but specifically in order to propose a paradigmatic *ordo* for BF in relation to which it will be possible for me to carry out my proposed exercise in practical theology. Therefore, I am suggesting that, in the case of BF, its 'emergent American *ordo*' includes the following as important defining features.

(i) ***A fundamentally 'stational' liturgy.*** The original (and very ancient) model underlying BF's 'traditional shape' is that of an extended *procession* from the deceased's home to the place of burial.[41] Along the way, there is a short stop in church which has long since become the focus of the 'liturgy of death.' Here there is celebrated BF proper, referred to in the Greek liturgical books as the *Akolouthía nekrôsimos.* In the past (and to this day in many districts of traditionally Orthodox lands), it is often the case that less than twenty-four hours elapse between death (commonly at home) and burial.

How different this is from the usual North American scenario in which death typically occurs in a hospital or other institution, and the elaborate preparation of the body is left in the hands of a professional funeral director. The interval between death and interment is generally of several days' duration, during which there ensues a *series* of liturgical observances. At the 'funeral home' (the funeral director's premises), there will likely be afternoon and evening sessions of 'visitation.' During one or more of these, there may be celebrated the brief 'Service for the Departed' (essentially the closing rites of BF – #14 in Goar's *ordo*), known popularly by Greeks as the 'Trisagion,' by Russians and east Ukrainians as the 'Litiya,' and by western Ukrainians as the 'Panakhyda.'

The next liturgical 'station' is the church, to which the body is transported by the funeral director's professionals. The only surviving remnant of the traditional procession may be the singing of the Trisagion ('Holy God') as the body is brought into and/ or carried out of the church. In church there may take place one or other of the following services: (a) BF followed immediately by departure for burial at the cemetery (the most traditional Orthodox practice, observed also by

[41] See ***Appendix II***, pp. 329-30.

some Eastern Catholics); (b) a 'first part' of BF of variable content leading directly into the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, at the end of which take place BF's rites of farewell (common amongst Eastern Catholics of Slavic origin, and some Slavic Orthodox);[42] or (c) the celebration of a 'memorial' Divine Liturgy (with readings, etc. taken from BF), concluding with BF's rites of farewell (the practice of more 'Latinized' Eastern Catholics). An interesting variant becoming more popular in certain 'renewed' Byzantine-rite circles is: (d) to serve BF as a one- or two-part evening vigil (usually in church), followed by an optional 'waking' of the body in church overnight (with continuous reading of the Psalter), culminating in a morning celebration of the Divine Liturgy, and concluding with BF's 'rites of farewell' prior to departure for interment.[43]

The final 'station' of this evolving *ritus Americanus* is at the cemetery where, usually on the same day as the last service in church, there is served a short 'rite of burial' whose content varies somewhat depending on ethnic origin. Then, if geography and cemetery schedules permit, the interment normally follows immediately. However, in the not uncommon North American instance where a person dies whose body is to be interred elsewhere than in their home community, or under certain circumstances dictated by cemetery hours of work, there may ensue a distinct interval between the church funeral and a burial which takes place some days later. In this case, on the day of actual interment, and if a priest is able to be present, there will likely be served a final 'Trisagion'/ 'Litiya' before the committal.

(ii) ***An abbreviated order of service.*** This results from multiple abbreviations of the traditional *ordo* involving several of its components, both scriptural and hymnographic. The Amomos psalm 118 (119), if it *is* taken at all, is often reduced to two or three brief staseis of a few verses each, though its accompanying Evlogitária almost always survive. The Canon is virtually eliminated, its absence being marked only by the Kontakion and Ikos which follow Ode 6 in the traditional order. At the same time, other lengthy Byzantine hymnographic compositions are tending to be shortened (see below).

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[42] See **WYSOCHANSKY**, 75, and **SERAPHIM**, ii.

[43] See Fr. Roman **GALADZA**, ed., *Order of Burial* (Brampton, ON: St. Elias Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, 1995) [= **GALADZA**, *Order*], 29, and **SERAPHIM**, ii.

(iii) ***A greater predominance of biblical materials.*** If one leaves aside the unlikely possibility that psalm 118 is recited in full (which rarely occurs even in liturgically conservative circles), it becomes obvious to any observer that in its 'traditional *ordo*,' BF's Byzantine hymnographic texts have tended to predominate over materials of purely scriptural origin. However, in the 'adapted *ordo*' we are attempting to define, this is much less true.

With the virtual disappearance of the Canon, the tendency to chant the Beatitudes without stichera, and the common practice of reducing the number of stichera in the Idiomela and Aspasmos to fewer than the number prescribed in the service-books, the relative amount of scriptural material in the service – psalmody, Beatitudes and lections – becomes proportionately much greater. This state of affairs undoubtedly alters the theological 'balance' of the service as a whole, thereby influencing what is potentially to be 'received' by the bereaved.

(iv) ***The audible recitation of 'O God of spirits' as a paschal leitmotif.*** BF's traditional *ordo* is punctuated by the repeated intonation of the so-called 'Synaptê (litany) for the Departed' (occurring at not less than eight different moments). However, customarily, except for one or two of these eight recitations, only the synaptê itself is said aloud followed by an ekphônêsis (concluding doxological exclamation). The intervening prayer 'O God of spirits' (to which the ekphônêsis belongs as its proper conclusion) is normally recited *in secreto.*

By contrast, in the 'emergent *ordo*,' although the sequence «synaptê–'God of spirits'–ekphônêsis» tends to occur less frequently, there is an increasing tendency for celebrants to recite the 'God of spirits' prayer aloud each time it is mandated. Hence – given that mourners may already be growing familiar with the contents of this prayer from 'Trisagion/ Litiya' services celebrated prior to the actual funeral office (i.e. during the funeral home 'visitations') – it would be my contention that its repetitive audible recitation (with its powerful address of Christ as the one who "has trampled down death and crushed the devil, giving life to [the] world") serves to heighten the funeral's somewhat muted presentation of the 'paschal mystery.'

(v) ***An altered 'shape' to BF's ending.*** Examination of the above table discloses that, alone out of all the parts of BF's traditional *ordo* which have been adapted (mostly by abbreviation) in contemporary practice, it is only the service's conclusion that has had a significant alteration in

its 'shape.' In most jurisdictions, after the gospel reading (and homily), the service is brought to a formal conclusion with the Dismissal and the chanting of 'Eternal Memory' (preceded usually by what is actually a 'Trisagion/ Litiya'). Thereafter, in a sombre (but somehow less formal) moment, while the stichera of the Aspasmos are being sung, the members of the liturgical assembly come forward to pay their last respects to the deceased and to greet his or her immediate family.

This contrasts with Goar's *ordo* (nos. 12-14) where, following the Gospel, there is first another sequence of «synaptê–'God of spirits'–ekphônêsis», followed by the Aspasmos (which thus occurs within the 'official' service), and then 'Trisagion/ Litiya,' Dismissal, and 'Eternal Memory.' Although this may seem like a minor point, I believe that the near-universal present-day arrangement is more pastorally effective, because it provides for and encourages some time of greater intimacy and less formality, before the ordeal of the trip to the cemetery and the interment.

(vi) ***The role of the Eucharist.*** In North America, perhaps under the subtle influence of Catholic practice, there seems to be a growing trend among certain Orthodox to incorporate the celebration of the Divine Liturgy into the funeral observances in church. The ways in which this may be done were outlined briefly under item (i) above. To suggest that the Eucharist is an appropriate way of uniting the deceased's *transitus* to Christ's passover and of emphasizing our continued relationship of communion with the newly-departed is perhaps to belabour the obvious. This trend – although it will not play any major role in our subsequent theological reflections – is to be encouraged, I believe, and together with item (iv) above may help to sharpen the perception of BF's apprehension of death as an occasion of both lamentation *and* celebration.

(vii) ***The pressure to conform BF's rituals to societal values.*** It is becoming increasingly clear that the *mores* of the wider society are exerting ever greater pressure on such Byzantine ritual behaviours as the presence of the open casket in church, the practice of giving the 'last kiss,' or the insistence on the need for interment of the still-intact remains of the deceased. These all bring about changes in the 'shape' of BF, and hence on the vision of death in Christ which it seeks to communicate. We will have opportunities to speak later about these matters at greater length.

I.A.3.c BF's 'Common North American *Ordo*': our object of study

In the light of the observations I have just made, I would like to conclude this first section of *Chapter One* (devoted to a consideration of the *ordo* of BF) by outlining my perception of a contemporary North American *ordo* whose broad 'shape' reflects, I believe, the actual practice (with minor variations) of the majority of Byzantine-rite Christians on this continent. I am proposing this, not merely for debate or general interest, but for methodological reasons. This is the 'order of service' that will be the source and object of my theological reflections on BF throughout the remainder of my dissertation. In other words, although I may refer *en passant* to texts or practices not found in this 'common *ordo*' for purposes of comparison or amplification, I will limit my discussion and my drawing of conclusions to the 'liturgical unit' which I am here defining for the purposes of my research. In what follows, the numbers preceding each item correspond to those that were assigned to the corresponding item(s) in Goar (see pp. 21-22).

A COMMON *ORDO* FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE BYZANTINE FUNERAL IN CHURCH

1. **Beginning**:
[Entry to the church with the chanting of the Trisagion]
Opening Doxology ("Blessed is our God . . .")
[Trisagion, 'O most holy Trinity,' 'Our Father' and doxology]
'Come let us worship God our King . . .'
Psalm 90 (91) ('He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High')

2-4a. **Psalm 118 (119)**, selected verses with refrains:
Either: a) chanted as a single unit with refrains: 'Alleluia' after one verse alternating with 'Have mercy on your servant' after the next;
Or: b) chanted as two staseis, with the refrain 'Alleluia' for the first stasis, and 'Have mercy on your servant' for the second stasis
[Synaptê, 'O God of spirits,' ekphônêsis between staseis I and II]

4b. **Evlogitária for the Dead**: Ps 118 (119):12 ('Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes') and troparia beginning with 'The choir of saints . . .
Synaptê; 'O God of spirits'; **ekphônêsis**
[Kathismata in tone 5: 'Give rest with the just to your servant, O our Saviour']

5. **Psalm 50 (51)** (the *Miserere*: 'Have mercy on me, O God')

6-8. **Canon of Theophanes:** **[OMITTED]**
Kontakion ('With the saints give rest, O Christ') and **Ikos** ('You alone are immortal')

9. The **Idiómela of Monk John the Damascene (in 8 tones)**

10. The **Beatitudes** (*without* stichera)

11. **Prokeimenon. Epistle. Alleluia. Gospel** (as per the 'traditional *ordo*'). **Homily**

12. **Conclusion** (= Trisagion/ Litiya/ Panakhyda):
Triságion, 'O most holy Trinity,' 'Our Father' and doxology
Troparia: 'With the spirits of the righteous made perfect in death'
Synaptê, 'O God of spirits,' ekphônêsis

13. **Dismissal** (*apólysis*) and **'Eternal Memory'** followed by:

14. **'Rites of farewell'** during which are sung:
The **Stichera of the** ***Aspasmós***: 2-4 selected stichera to be sung (as dictated by circumstances: e.g. number of mourners, &c); and concluding with:
Doxastichon: 'As you see me lying without voice . . .'; and
Theotokion: 'Save those who hope in you'
[Absolution] (according to local custom); exit **procession** (singing Trisagion).

I.B *The Texts of BF: Background and Content*

I.B.1 *The Question of Translation*

Although all local churches of the Byzantine tradition base their funeral liturgies upon what is essentially the same Greek 'typical' or 'canonical' text of BF,[44] they frequently employ liturgical texts in worship (including those for BF) that have been translated from Greek (or Church Slavonic – hereafter **CS**) into a multitude of other languages. Many such translations have been made into English, both in North America and Great Britain[45] although, somewhat surprisingly, there exist remarkably few 'official' texts of BF published by any of the jurisdictions of Byzantine-rite Christians scattered throughout the English-speaking world. The problems of translation in general, and the particular problems of producing English translations of Byzantine liturgical texts, will only be noted *en passant*. They have been well summarized in two recent presentations, one by Fr.

[44] See ETM, 393-420, used in the Greek-speaking Orthodox churches, and HAG-2, 1-33, a virtually identical Greek Catholic version of the same text.

[45] For some examples (which vary considerably both in their accuracy and style of translation), see: **CONSTANTINIDES**, 213-39; **GALADZA**, *Order*; **HAPGOOD**, 368-93; Fr. Ephrem **LASH**, trans., "Funeral Service," http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem/funeral.htm. (on-line publication, updated 23 October, 1999) [= **LASH**]; Bishop Fan Stylian **NOLI**, compiler, *The Eastern Orthodox Prayer Book* (Boston: The Albanian Orthodox Church in America, 1949) [a much abbreviated version, based on Hapgood] [= **NOLI**], 177-87; **RAYA**, 983-1012; and **WYSOCHANSKY**, 63-81.

Robert Taft of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, and the other by Fr. Ephrem Lash, to whose translation of BF I shall refer in a moment.[46]

Concerning questions of language and translation within the present dissertation, three matters of methodological importance need to be highlighted. *First*, the ultimate textual referent for discussions of BF will be the Greek version that is presented in *Appendix I*.[47] This text possesses the advantage of being virtually identical to the CS texts of the Church of Russia on which Isabel Hapgood based her 1906 pioneering and still widely-used English translation (see note 26 above).

Second, when quoting the text of BF in English, rather than using Hapgood's deliberately archaizing rendition, I have chosen to avail myself of the on-line (but otherwise unpublished) contemporary English translation prepared by a British Orthodox, Father Ephrem Lash.[48] This text is included in parallel with the Greek text in *Appendix I*. Occasionally, for stylistic reasons, I have chosen to modify Fr. Ephrem's wording slightly. My reasons for choosing Fr. Lash's translation over others include: a) his personal reputation as a translator of Byzantine liturgical texts into English; b) the overall high level of accuracy of his translations; c) his rendition of BF into a dignified and generally pleasing contemporary English idiom; and d) the fact that it is one of the only available translations into contemporary English of the entire Greek text of BF as it is found in the *Euchológion tò Méga*.[49] Where minor modifications of Fr. Lash's text have been made, these were usually deemed necessary either because of his occasional use of contrived syntax in order to make certain texts fit the cadences of Byzantine chant, or else by certain of his 'British-isms' that were felt to depart too far from North American English usage.

Finally, in setting out to study the practical theological impact of BF upon bereaved Byzantine Christians living in North America and other such 'western' societies, *it will be an underlying assumption of the present dissertation that those bereaved persons being ministered to*

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[46] Robert **TAFT**, "Translating Liturgically," *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 39 (1998): 155-90; and Archimandrite Ephrem **LASH**, "Translating Liturgy," *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 39 (1998): 191-224.

[47] Based on those found in ETM and HAG-2.

[48] Fr. **LASH**, a former faculty member of the Institut Catholique in Paris, was also the chief translator of a recent volume: *The Divine Liturgy of Our Father Among the Saints John Chrysostom: The Greek Text Together with a Translation into English* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[49] There is also available the translation in GBN-3, 180-214. This text has made a deliberate editorial decision to use what it refers to as (page ix) "traditional liturgical English."

are capable of understanding the language of the liturgical texts to which they are being exposed. Hence, a word of clarification is in order concerning present-day liturgical language use amongst the various groups of North American Byzantine-rite Christians.

Historically speaking, for understandable reasons, one of the hallmarks of the Eastern Christian *diaspora* experience has been the initial retention of the liturgical languages of the motherland. Hence, upon their arrival in North America, starting from the latter part of the nineteenth century onward, most Byzantine-rite Christians were worshipping (with only partial comprehension at best) either in CS (in the case of Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, and Serbs) or else in Byzantine Greek. The limited use of 'modern' liturgical languages was confined initially to the Romanians, and the Arabs (from the ancient patriarchates of the Middle East), some of whom continued to worship at least partially in Greek.

With the passage of time and the beginning decline (or even loss) of mother-tongue fluency, several conflicting agendas began to influence Byzantine-rite liturgical language usage in America. On the one hand, conservative circles amongst both Greeks and Slavs promoted the retention of the quasi-sacral liturgical tongues of the homelands. On the other hand, this was opposed by a mounting pressure to utilize the modern spoken languages of either America or of the homeland. This desire for change was fueled both by the practical need and desire for comprehensible vernacular-language (i.e., English) worship on the part of the second- and later-generation offspring of the original immigrants, as well as by homeland-inspired nationalist movements that grew particularly strong after World War I and that advocated the liturgical use in the *diaspora* of newly-prestigious homeland vernaculars such as Ukrainian and Albanian.

In present-day North American Byzantine Orthodox churches, exclusive or extensive use of English is being made by all of the larger jurisdictions, including the OCA, and the Antiochian and Greek Archdioceses.[50] Amongst Byzantine-rite Catholics on this continent, English usage is probably strongest among the Melkites and the so-called Ruthenians in the United States, but there

[50] For general discussions of the language issue and the current status of English among North American Orthodox, see: Thomas E. **FITZGERALD**, *The Orthodox Church*, Denominations in America, no. 7 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 81-82, 106-9, 122-23; and John H. **ERICKSON**, *Orthodox Christians in America*, Religion in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 110-11. One may also note the insightful and prophetic comments on 'Liturgical Translation' by Alexander **SCHMEMANN** in his 1965 article "Problems of Orthodoxy in America: II. The Liturgical Problem," *SVTQ* 8 (1964): 181-83.

is a growing preference for English in many Ukrainian-Catholic parishes as well.[51] Thus, in keeping with this widespread trend towards the increasing use of the English vernacular by most North American jurisdictions of Byzantine-rite Christians,[52] *it will be an underlying assumption of my dissertation that we may legitimately study the impact of translations of BF on Byzantine-rite mourners in the 'west,'* since I would contend that at the present time, a majority of Byzantine-rite funerals in the North American *diaspora* are either being conducted wholly or partially in English (or, less commonly, in other vernacular languages such as Spanish or French), or else are accessible to worshippers through the availability of diglot texts when 'homeland' languages are being used.

I.B.2 *Scriptural Texts in BF*

In the course of the historical evolution of the Byzantine-rite liturgy, there has been a general tendency for scriptural material to be gradually supplemented and often replaced by hymnographic compositions.[53] Although these latter are often replete with scriptural allusions, and may even be based upon actual scriptural texts (e.g., the Irmoi of the various Canons for Orthros), it remains nonetheless true that a service such as BF (at least when served according to its traditional *ordo*) appears dominated by its hymnographic content.

However, it may be argued that the theological synthesis that BF strives to achieve is dependent to an impressive extent upon certain key pieces of purely biblical material. In what follows, we shall examine more closely some matters relevant to the background and content of these scriptural items – first the psalmody, and then the New Testament texts: an epistle, the gospel lection, and the Beatitudes – with a particular view to informing and facilitating the theological reflection that we shall undertake in *Chapters Three* and *Five* of this dissertation.

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[51] The interest in English-language translations for worship in the various Greek Catholic Churches in America is amply attested to by their several presentations at a recent symposium on Byzantine liturgical translation, which took place in Stamford, CT in June, 1998. See *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 39 (1998) and 41-42 (2000-2001).

[52] One may observe that in Canada, amongst both Byzantine Orthodox and Catholics, the trend towards the use of English (or another North American vernacular such as French) is less pronounced, due probably both to the more recent arrival of certain immigrant communities (e.g., the Greeks), as well as to the Canadian government's official policy of promoting multiculturalism.

[53] See Robert F. **TAFT**, "Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (d. 1948): A Reply to Recent Critics," *Worship* 73 (1999): 525-28.

I.B.2.a Psalmody

I.B.2.a.i *Psalm 90 (91).* This text is one of a small number of psalms which the ecclesiastical traditions of both eastern and western Christianity have singled out for daily recitation in the 'Liturgy of the Hours,' albeit at different times of the day.[54] While psalm 90's reassurance that believers will "not be afraid of terror by night" (v.5 *LXX*, Brenton)[55] doubtless accounted for its inclusion in both the western *ordo* for Compline[56] and as a hymn of entry in the no-longer extant *pannychis* ('all-night vigil') of the Byzantine 'cathedral rite,'[57] its reference to "calamity and the evil spirit at noon-day" (v.6 *LXX*) also favored its recitation by eastern monastics at noon, the 'Sixth Hour' of the ecclesiastical day.

In either setting, one can understand how this psalm has been treasured from antiquity for its fervent proclamation of God's overarching protection during times of particular danger, whether these be nocturnal fears of physical or spiritual harm, or the equally menacing (but more subtle) spiritual assaults of the 'noon-day demon.'[58] Its references to God as 'a help' (*boêthia*), 'a shelter' (*sképê*), and 'a refuge' (*kataphugê*), coupled with its promise that God "will give his angels charge concerning you, to keep you in all your ways" (v.11 *LXX*), likewise make comprehensible the inclusion of psalm 90 in BF where it serves as a reassuring introduction to what has been traditionally perceived as the public epiphany of an awesome *transitus* for both the living mourners and their departed loved ones.

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[54] See Patrick H. **REARDON**, *Christ in the Psalms* (Ben Lomond, CA: Conciliar Press, 2000), 179.

[55] This quotation of the *LXX* in English (and most subsequent *LXX* English renditions) are taken from Launcelot L. **BRENTON**, trans., *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha with an English Translation and with Various Readings and Critical Notes* (London: Samuel Bagster, [1956?]) [= **BRENTON**].

[56] In the east, psalm 90 (91) is mentioned by St. Basil as comprising a part of monastic compline in the fourth-century Cappadocian tradition; see Robert **TAFT**, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 86-87. To the present, it also forms part of the Byzantine *ordo* for 'Great Compline' which is served as part of the all-night vigil for certain great feasts (Christmas, Theophany, Annunciation); see **HAPGOOD**, 150-51.

[57] **ARRANZ**, "*Pannychis*-II," 136.

[58] Traditions of Christian monastic spirituality, both eastern and western, have stressed the need for continual vigilance against the vice of accidie (*akêdia*) or 'spiritual torpor,' perceived as especially liable to threaten monks and others in the midst of their spiritual pilgrimage through life. See: Alice-Mary **TALBOT**, "Akedia," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Volume I (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) [= **ODB**], 44-45.

I.B.2.a.ii ***Psalm 118 (119).*** This, the longest text in the psalter, is often conveniently referred to in Byzantine liturgical books as the psalm of the *Amômos* (the 'blameless' or 'undefiled' – from its opening verse: "Blessed are the blameless in the way" [v.1a *LXX*]). In its original Hebrew form, the psalm ingeniously comprises an alphabetic acrostic of twenty-two strophes of eight verses; each consecutive strophe (together with its constituent verses) begins in sequence with a different letter of the 22-letter Hebrew alphabet. No attempt to imitate this arrangement was made by the Greek Septuagint translators, so that in liturgical usage (including in BF), the rubrics usually call for psalm 118 (= kathisma XVII of the psalter) to be chanted in three (occasionally two) divisions or 'staseis' ('stations') of unequal length which bear no relationship to the strophic arrangement of the Hebrew original.[59]

The psalm's text comprises an extended paean of praise for God's word (*dābār*) enshrined and revealed in God's Law (*tōrāh*), and for those 'blameless ones' whose only delight is to "walk in the law of the Lord" (v.1b *LXX*). Virtually every verse extols 'the Law' by name, either as *tōrāh* or by using one of eight synonyms (here given in approximate English translation): 'the way,' word, testimonies, ordinances, precepts, oracles, statutes, and commandments.[60]

For the early Christian church, following in a tradition of interpretation going back to Origen, the opening verse's praise of "the blameless in the Way" (*hoi amômoi en hodôi*) – the way of perfect conformity to God's Law – was seen as a foreshadowing of Christ's blameless obedience to his Father "even unto death on a cross" (Phil 2:8b). As God's enfleshed *Logos* (the *LXX*'s equivalent of *dābār*), Christ in fact has become the true *Tōrāh* who is the "end of the Law" (Rom 10:4). Christians, as those "walking [*syn.*: 'travelling,' 'advancing,' 'progressing'] in the Law of the Lord" (*hoi poreuómenoi en nomôi Kyríou*) in imitation of and under the care of their crucified and risen Lord Jesus, must be vigilant and persistent in their pilgrim journey toward God, lest they stray from the path "like lost sheep" (*hôs próbaton apolôlòs*; v.176 *LXX*; cf. Lk 15:6 and Jn 10).[61]

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[59] *La chaîne palestinienne sur le psaume 118 (Origène, Eusèbe, Didyme, Apollinaire, Athanase, Théodoret)*, Vol. I, introduction, text, and translation by Marguerite **HARL**, SC no. 189 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1972), 106-07.

[60] Ibid., 125-26. Hebrew (transliterated): *derek*, *dābār*, *'ēdūt*, *pīqqūdīm*, *huqqīm*, *imrāh*, *mishpātīm*, and *mītzvōt* which are rendered by the *LXX* into Greek as: odós, *lógos*, *martúria*, *prostágmata*, *nómoi*, *lógia*, *dikaiômata*, and *entolái*.

[61] Ibid., 93-150, and especially 151-59.

As Byzantine Christian traditions of communal prayer evolved, psalm 118 came to occupy pride of place in the psalmody of both urban cathedral and monastic retreat.[62] In the no longer extant sung 'cathedral rite' of the Byzantine imperial cities (the so-called *asmatikê akolouthia*), the chanting of psalm 118 in three staseis comprised one of the fixed antiphons for the festal '*Asmatikos Orthros*' of Sundays – an important part of the weekly commemoration of Christ's resurrection.[63] In monastic settings, the psalmist's declarations that "at midnight I arose to give thanks to thee" (v.62a *LXX*) and that "seven times in a day have I praised thee because of the judgments of thy righteousness" (v.164 *LXX*) are said in the east to have favoured the recitation of a 'Midnight Office' (*Mesonyktikon*) in addition to the sevenfold daily 'Liturgy of the Hours' (matins, first, third, sixth and ninth hours, vespers, compline), common to both east and west.[64]

Within Byzantine monastic psalmody, psalm 118 formed part of the *mesonyktikon* on weekdays (with its theme of preparedness for the imminent *parousia* of the Lord); of the kathisma for Orthros ('matins') on Saturdays (devoted to the commemoration of the martyrs and of all faithful departed); and of Sunday Orthros during the period from after the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September) until Easter. The fully developed Byzantine rite, in addition to retaining the Amomos psalm for the Midnight Office (a service familiar only to monastics), for the Saturday Orthros of the departed, and for Sunday Orthros of the resurrection between autumn and Easter, also mandated its use in the rites for the taking of the monastic habit, at the matins of Holy Saturday, at the vigil of the Dormition of Mary (a relatively recent innovation), and (most importantly for our purposes) in the Funeral Services for lay-persons, monastics and clergy.[65]

One may discern within these multiple uses two broad liturgical themes which both relate to the use of psalm 118 in BF. First it is a psalm for those keeping vigil – for the returning Christ at

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[62] Its popular use in the evolved Romano-Gallican liturgy was much less abundant, being limited to the monastic 'lesser hours,' the Office for the burial of young children, and isolated verses to be found in various other services. See Diane H. **TOULIATOS-BANKER**, *The Byzantine Amomos Chant of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Analecta Vlatadon no. 46 (Thessaloniki: Patriarchikon Hidruma Paterikôn Meletôn, 1984) [= ***Amomos***], 95. Interestingly, in the present-day Byzantine tradition, the funeral for children is the only burial office which does *not* employ psalm 118.

[63] *Amomos*, 56-61.

[64] See Clifford William **DUGMORE**, *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office*, Alcuin Club collections, no. 45 (Westminster, UK: The Faith Press, 1964), 68-69; and **TAFT**, *Hours*, 85-86, where he quotes St. Basil in this matter.

[65] *Amomos*, 95-117.

midnight, for the departed on Saturdays or at funerals, for the dead Christ on the 'Blessed Sabbath' of the paschal *triduum*,[66] or in expectation of the risen Christ's theophany at Sunday resurrectional matins. Second, it is the great psalm for the dead, whether that be the dead Christ on Holy Saturday, his mother at her Dormition, the faithful departed who are united to Christ through their deaths (in BF and on Saturdays), or those who are actualizing their baptismal dying-by-anticipation through the putting on of the monastic *schema*.

Although the traditional *ordo* of BF calls for the recitation of the psalm in its entirety (divided into three staseis), this is never done in contemporary parish practice. Rather, a brief selection of verses is used (see *Appendix I*) that varies somewhat from one local tradition to the other. These verses are farsed with short refrains: 'Alleluia' in the first and third staseis, and 'Have mercy on your servant' in the second stasis.

I.B.2.a.iii *Psalm 50 (51).* Known popularly in the west as the '*Miserere*' (from its first word in Latin), this great psalm of *metanoia* was found in the *pannychis* that is thought by some to be a precursor of today's BF.[67] It is also an invariable (and ancient) part of Byzantine Orthros, and hence may be thought of as belonging to BF as a part of its self-evident 'matutinal shape.'[68]

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[66] See Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, "This is the Blessed Sabbath," in *Matins of Holy Saturday with the Praises and Psalm 119*. Syosset, NY: OCA Dep't of Religious Education, 1982, 4, [= **SCHMEMANN**, "Blessed Sabbath"], where he writes as follows:

> [The Matins of Holy Saturday] begins as a funeral service, as a lamentation over a dead body. . . . We stand at the grave of our Lord, we contemplate His death, His defeat. . . . And yet from the very beginning, alongside with [*sic*] this initial theme of sorrow and lamentation, a new one makes its appearance and will become more and more apparent. We find it, first of all, in Psalm 119 – "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." In our [parochial] liturgical practice today, this psalm is used only at the funeral services, hence its "funeral" connotation for the average believer. But in early liturgical tradition, this Psalm was one of the essential parts of the Sunday vigil, the weekly commemoration of Christ's Resurrection. Its content is not "funeral" at all. This psalm is the purest and fullest expression of love for the law of God, i.e. the Divine design of man [*sic*] and his life. . . . And since Christ is the image of a perfect fulfillment of this law, . . the Church interprets this psalm as the words of Christ Himself, spoken to His Father from the grave. . . . The death of Christ is the ultimate proof of His obedience to His Father. . . . Psalm 119 [= 118 *LXX*] is the psalm of that obedience, and therefore the announcement that in obedience the triumph has begun.

Elsewhere Schmemann maintains that this same paradoxical celebration of triumph amidst lamentation is the key to understanding the role of psalm 118 in BF. See ***Appendix II***, pp. 331-32.

[67] **VELKOVSKA**, *Handbook*, 349-50; **VELKOVSKA**, *Dumbarton*, 30; **CHRISTODOULOU**, 34-36; and **ARRANZ**, "*Pannychis*-II," 138.

[68] Like weekday Orthros, BF's 'core' comprises a kathisma in 3 staseis (psalm 118 = kathisma 17), psalm 50, and a canon in 3 parts with a 'sessional hymn' after ode 3 and the kontakion and ikos after ode 6.

Many mourners in their distress no doubt find solace in the psalm's opening plea: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy great mercy" (v.1 *LXX*). However, within the overall structure of BF, another interpretation seems to me eminently reasonable. Since many of BF's hymns put words into the mouth of the deceased, psalm 50 may also be understood as though spoken *in persona defuncti*. Walking "in the midst of the shadow of death" (Ps 22:4 *LXX*), the departed are embarking upon an ultimate act of profound *metanoia*; in the words of Alexander Schmemann they are to undergo one final "passage from the old life, 'shaped in wickedness and conceived in sin' [cf. v.5] into the new life made up of joy and gladness [cf. v.8]."[69]

Hence, intimates Schmemann, those who are present at the funeral of a loved one (and who will one day follow in their footsteps) may be moved to confess their longing for and faith in the resurrection. After their final *transitus*, they too may trust that God will "cause [them] to hear gladness and joy" so that their "afflicted bones shall rejoice" (v.8). Thus, the assembly prays in union with their departed sister or brother: "Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit in my inward parts. Cast me not away from thy presence and remove not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation; establish me with thy directing Spirit" (vv.10-12 *LXX*).

I.B.2.a.iv ***The prokeimenon and alleluiarion.*** Originally, in the history of Byzantine liturgy, these consisted of two entire psalms, or at least large portions thereof, which served to introduce the scripture lections. The prokeimenon was (and is) chanted before the reading from the *Apostolos* ('the Epistle') while the alleluiarion precedes the gospel lection.

As it still is, the prokeimenal psalm was sung responsorially, with a chanter singing the opening verse of the psalm which the people (or choir) then repeated. Thereafter this same verse served as the assembly's refrain to all subsequent verses of the prokeimenal psalm that were chanted sequentially by the *psaltis*. The 'alleluia psalm' on the other hand originally comprised psalm verses (normally taken from a single psalm) that were sung by a chanter and to which the assembly responded by singing a simple refrain – 'Alleluia' – after each verse.

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[69] ***Appendix II***, p. 333.

Almost uniquely, the opening verse of BF's prokeimenon – "Blessed is the way on which you journey today, [O soul], for a place of rest has been prepared for you" – is *not* taken from one of the psalms or indeed from any part of the Scriptures; it appears already in the earliest extant funeral *ordo* of the tenth-century southern Italian manuscript, *Cryptoferrata gr. Γ.β.X*.[70] The only stich – "To thee, O Lord, have I cried; my God, be not silent toward me" – is, however, taken from psalm 27 (28):1 *LXX* that continues (in appropriate words frequently *not* chanted at BF): "Lest thou be silent toward me, and so I should be likened to them that go down to the pit" (v.1b *LXX*).

The alleluiarion – "Blessed is the one you have chosen and taken, O Lord" – is also to be found in *Cryptoferrata gr. Γ.β.X*,[71] and is taken from psalm 64:4 (65:5) that continues (*LXX*): "he shall dwell in thy courts." Its stich – "His/her memory is from generation to generation" – is a slightly modified borrowing from psalm 101 (102):12b or psalm 134 (135):13b; the original wording of both extols the remembrance not of the deceased but of the Lord ("*your* memory").

I.B.2.b Scripture lections

I.B.2.b.i *The reading from the 'Apostolos' (the Epistle).* During the evolution of the various offices for the departed in the Byzantine rite, there have been a number of different Pauline epistles appointed to be read either at funerals or at other commemorative services. These texts include: Romans 14:6-9 ("Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's); 1 Corinthians 15:1-12 ("He was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures"); 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 ("Now is Christ risen from the dead"); 1 Corinthians 15:39-57 or 46-57 ("O death, where is thy sting?"); 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 ("We have a building of God . . . eternal in the heavens"); and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 ("I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep"). The underlying theme of virtually all these lections is their proclamation of a present and future hope for both living and departed, one that is grounded in the gracious reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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[70] **CHRISTODOULOU**, 64.
[71] Ibid., 65.

In present-day usage, the customary reading appointed for BF (1 Thess 4:13-17) focuses in particular upon the understandable concern that many bereaved persons may have over the 'fate' of their departed loved ones, whom St. Paul characterizes (4:13) (employing a term which resonates throughout BF) as "those fallen asleep" (*hoi koimômenoi*). The Apostle points out to his readers the inappropriateness of grieving ignorantly for the departed "like those who have no hope" (v.13b). Because they believe that Jesus died and rose again, they may trust that through Jesus, God will likewise raise to new life all who have died (v.14). At the *parousia* (which Paul describes using apocalyptic language that many will choose to understand symbolically), the dead will be in no way disadvantaged. They will even precede the living who, together with them, will be "caught up . . . in the clouds to meet the Lord . . . and so we shall always be with the Lord" (v.17). Paul concludes (v.18) by inviting his living hearers to "comfort one another" by recalling their great hope. For those "having Christ within themselves"[72] (however that may be understood), the communion of living and departed in Christ can find its proleptic fulfillment through faith even in this present age.

I.B.2.b.ii *The reading from the Gospel.* Aside from one reading from Luke (18:15-17, 26-27) appointed for the 'Funeral of a Child' [hereafter **CF**] in certain traditions,[73] the gospel pericopes for all other types of Byzantine memorial observance are taken from the Gospel according to John, chapters 5 and 6.[74]

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[72] St. John **CHRYSOSTOM**, "Homily VII: I Thessalonians iv. 13," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (NPNF), *Volume XIII*, ed. Philip Schaff (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956), 353.

[73] This lection ("Let the children come to me") is prescribed for the 'Funeral of a Child' [= **CF**] by the Church of Greece's *Mikrón Euchológion ê Hagiasmatarion* (Athens: Apostolikê Diakonia, 1981) [= **MEH**], 232, and by **GUILLAUME**, 177-78, both of which follow the Byzantine 'Greek' tradition. Perhaps surprisingly, the Greek Catholic HAG-2, 199-200, concurs with the 'Slavic' sources (both Orthodox and Catholic) in mandating John 6:35-39 ("I should lose nothing of all that he has given me") for CF.

[74] Byzantine Gospel lections 'for the Departed' include the following:

1) Jn 5:17-25 ("The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice"): Mondays and 'Priest's Funeral' [= **PF**];
2) Jn 5:24-30 ("The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God"): Tuesdays, Saturdays, BF, PF, and 'Funeral for a Monastic';
3) Jn 6:35-39 ("I should lose nothing of all that he has given me"): Wednesdays, CF, and PF (including vv.35-44 according to HAG-3, 88-89);
4) Jn 6:40-44 ("I will raise him up at the last day"): Thursdays and PF (and at the graveside in the Ukrainian Catholic tradition: **WYSOCHANSKY**, 83);
5) Jn 6:48-54 ("I am the living bread which came down from heaven"): Fridays and PF.

In the Ukrainian Catholic rite, according to **WYSOCHANSKY**, 81, Jn 11:17-26 ("I am the resurrection and the life") may be read at the church-door prior to departing for burial.

The usual lection for celebrations of BF is John 5:24-30, in which Jesus asserts that those who hear him (and thus his Father who sent him) have already "passed from death to life" (v.24) even though they still await a future 'coming forth' from the tombs to a "resurrection of life" (v.29). This typically Johannine note of '*sich realisierende Eschatologie*'[75] within the context of BF serves to create an antinomy when juxtaposed with the Epistle's more starkly futuristic eschatological *schema*. Whereas for Paul, our departed loved ones are resting 'in the Lord' while awaiting their future restoration,[76] for the Johannine evangelist this 'futurity' is mitigated by Christ's insistence that the dead who hear his voice are even now entering into new life.

I.B.2.c The Beatitudes.

The chanting of the Beatitudes (*Makarismoi*) as part of a Byzantine funeral *ordo* can be first documented in the tenth- or eleventh-century monastic manuscript, *Sevastianov gr. 474*, believed to be Palestinian in origin.[77] That the earliest evidence for this custom comes from Palestine appears logical since, according to N. D. Uspenski, "as an element in worship the Beatitudes seem to be of Palestinian origin."[78] The liturgical use of the Beatitudes, relatively rare

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[75] This phrase (best rendered into English as 'eschatology becoming actualized') was coined by the eminent German biblicist, Joachim **JEREMIAS**, to describe the antinomy of 'already'–'not-yet' inherent in such New Testament notions as 'Kingdom of God' in the Synoptic tradition, or 'eternal life' in John's Gospel. In Jeremias's *The Lord's Prayer* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 32 (note 27), the translator-editor (John Reumann) observes that Jeremias coined the phrase '*sich realisierende Eschatologie*' to counter the inadequacies (in his view) of C. H. Dodd's earlier term 'realized eschatology' [see C. H. **DODD**, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: the Religious Book Club, 1942), 198]. Dodd's term, according to Reumann, "describe[s] the view that in the New Testament . . the new age had already come . . . [but] does not do full justice to any future consummation." Reumann goes on to report that Dodd himself liked Jeremias's term [see C. H. **DODD**, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1955), 447 (note 1)], although Dodd was unable to come up with a satisfactory English equivalent. Reumann further notes (as does Dodd in the just-mentioned footnote) that attempts to coin near-equivalent terms to that of Jeremias have included the use of 'inaugurated eschatology' by the Russian Orthodox theologian, Georges **FLOROVSKY** [see his "Revelation and Interpretation" in *Biblical Authority for Today*, ed. Alan **RICHARDSON** and W. **SCHWEITZER** (London: SCM Press, 1951), 180].

[76] Nonetheless, I would maintain that the purview of Paul's eschatological hope is not as purely futuristic as it might seem at first sight. His insistence that believers "not grieve as those having no hope" can surely be read as permitting a certain 'eschatological tension' to exist between the sheer 'futurity' of his apocalyptic vision on the one hand, and his assertion (on the other hand) that they already possess a realistic present hope with which they are to 'comfort one another' even now.

[77] cf. Peter **GALADZA**, "Evolution," 2.

[78] N. D. **USPENSKY**, *Evening Worship in the Orthodox Church*, trans. Paul Lazor (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 124. Uspensky describes how the Beatitudes were used by Palestinian monks in their cells as part of a short presanctified communion office (*eis tên metálêpsên*). This later became amplified in the Constantinopolitan Studios Monastery into the service of *Typika*, chanted after the Ninth

outside the Syriac and Byzantine traditions, apparently spread from Palestine into the wider Byzantine world through the influence on Constantinopolitan liturgy of the monastic Typikon of the Judean desert Lavra of St. Sabbas. In fact there is evidence to suggest that the liturgical use of the Beatitudes was one of Byzantine liturgy's earliest 'Palestinian importations.'[79]

Even though the Beatitudes have continued to be sung without abridgment in Byzantine liturgy (unlike the OT odes, for example), by the eighth century there had arisen the practice of chanting them with two customary intercalations. First, the 'prayer of the Good Thief' ("[Lord], remember me [us] when you come in[to] your kingdom": Lk 23:42) was added at one or more points, a usage perhaps suggested by the reference of the first and eighth Beatitudes to the 'Kingdom of heaven.' Second, as with most other biblical odes in Byzantine liturgical practice, it became customary to interpolate thematic poetic stanzas (*troparia*) between certain verses of the biblical text in question. In the case of BF, eight troparia are prescribed to be chanted starting after the fifth Beatitude "Blessed are the merciful, . ." but in North American parochial practice, these troparia are often omitted.

In the present-day Byzantine rite, the Beatitudes are prescribed for the following occasions: at the Sunday Divine Liturgy (amongst east Slavic Orthodox and on Mount Athos); as part of the Typika service (that may replace Liturgy when no priest is available); at Orthros on Thursday of the fifth week of Lent; and during the Holy Friday 'Orthros of the Twelve Gospels.'[80] It is difficult to explain the presence of the Beatitudes in BF with specific reference to any of these other usages. One might speculate that the Beatitudes (an intrinsically beautiful and 'comforting' text in any event) were added to BF because of the aptness to a funeral of their opening refrain ("In your Kingdom remember us O Lord. . ."), as well as a certain congruence between these NT *makarismoí* (*Makárioi hoi ptôchoì tô pneúmati, hóti autôn estin hê basileía tôn ouranôn*: Mt 5:3) and BF's 'OT *makarismoí*' (*Makárioi hoi amômoi en hodôi, hoi poreuómenoi en nomôi Kyríou*: Ps 118:1 *LXX*).

Hour of the monastic day. The three antiphons of the *Typika* (including the Beatitudes) are customarily used as the Sunday Liturgy antiphons in east Slavic and Athonite use.

[79] Michel **HUGLO**, "Le Chant des Béatitudes dans la Liturgie hispanique," *Hispania Sacra* 17 (1964): 135. I am indebted to the same source, pp. 135-36, for some of what follows.

[80] For Lenten and Holy Week uses of the Beatitudes, see Mother **MARY** and (Bishop) Kallistos **WARE**, ed. and trans., *The Lenten Triodion* (London & Boston: Faber & Faber, 1978), 399 & 589-90.

I.B.3 *Hymnographic Texts in BF*

When served in its full traditional form, BF is dominated by certain Middle Byzantine hymnographic compositions that are of variable length and felicity. These include:

1) the troparia beginning "With the spirits of the righteous. . ." that properly belong to the short Trisagion (Litiya) service which, in North America, is usually served one or more times at the funeral home prior to the funeral as well as forming the concluding rites of BF proper (see *Appendix I*, p. 292);
2) the 'Evlogitaria for the Dead' that conclude psalm 118 (119) (pp. 296-97);
3) certain so-called 'sessional hymns' (Greek *kathisma*, Slavonic *sedalen*) that are found one after the Evlogitaria, and the other after Ode 3 of the Canon (pp. 297, 299);
4) a lengthy 'Canon for the Dead' (pp. 298-302) that tends to be omitted almost entirely in contemporary parish practice;
5) the Kontakion and Ikos (Greek: *oikos*), once much lengthier (as is still the case in PF), that are inserted after Ode 6 of the Canon (p. 300);
6) the 'Idiomela in 8 tones' ascribed by tradition to St. John of Damascus (pp. 302-04);
7) the verses (*prosomoia*) for the Aspasmos ('rite of farewell' or 'last kiss') (pp. 307-08).

In this present section of *Chapter One*, we shall deal briefly with these texts in four groups, based upon their length and/or importance within the overall 'contemporary shape' of BF: **a**) the Kontakion and Ikos (item 5 above); **b**) the Idiomela (item 6); **c**) the verses for the Aspasmós (item 7); and finally **d**) miscellaneous (mostly shorter) hymns that will include the Trisagion hymn ("Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal," – not listed above), the Evlogitaria (item 2), and the kathisma hymns (item 3). Under heading **d**), we will also make some very brief remarks about the Canon (item 4) that has virtually disappeared in North American usage.

I.B.3.a The Kontakion and Ikos

In the history of Byzantine liturgical hymnody, a kontakion (from the Greek *kontós* or *kontáx*, 'a pole' [i.e., of a scroll]) was originally a stylized, versified sermon, typically composed to celebrate major feasts or saints. Kontakia (whose composition reached its zenith in Byzantium in the mid-sixth century) were apparently derived from several analogous genres in the Syriac tradition, especially as these had been elaborated by St. Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306-373 A.D.). According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, a kontakion "consists of an introduction (the *prooímion* or *koukoúlion*), followed by a varying number of *oikoi* (stanzas) connected to the

prooímion by a refrain . . . [and] linked [to one another] by an acrostic as well as by their shared and complex metrical structure."[81] By the eighth century, the kontakion was already being eclipsed by a type of newer composition, the *kanôn* ('canon'), which is based on a series of OT canticles.

Ultimately, the kontakion was reduced to the vestigial remnant of its *prooimion* (now referred to as '*the* Kontakion') and its first *oikos* only ('the Ikos'), inserted after Ode Six of the Canon. It is in this form (and at this juncture) that we find it, for example, in BF, although a much lengthier version of the 'Kontakion for the Departed' survives within PF as one of the only extant examples in the Byzantine liturgical tradition of a full kontakion in the original sense.[82]

The Kontakion is undoubtedly one of the most emotionally charged, yet nonetheless 'popular,' moments in the entire BF.[83] Its melody in Tone 8, equally beautiful and plaintive in most of the various Byzantine national traditions, serves to highlight the poignancy of its text: "With the Saints give rest, O Christ, to the soul of your servant, where there is no toil, nor grief, nor sighing, but everlasting life." In effect, with minor rephrasing, these words recapitulate the central petition of BF's only (but oft-repeated) prayer, "O God of Spirits and all flesh," namely the entreaty that the Lord will "give rest to the soul of [his] servant . . . in a place . . . whence pain, grief and sighing have fled away."[84]

In contrast to the rather bright and hope-inducing imagery of the Kontakion, the Ikos (as is the general case with all the *oikoi* of the full 'Kontakion for the Dead,' to be found in PF) reverts to a more somber note of *memento mori*. The mourners are reminded that God alone is immortal and

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[81] ODB, Volume 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1148.

[82] See GBN-3, 294-98.

[83] Many members of the general public are unwittingly familiar with one particularly moving presentation of this hymn which features in the burial procession of the opening scene of David Lean's 1965 film version of Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. It was also included in *The Book of Alternative Services* of the Anglican Church of Canada (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 586, having been sung (to its most typical Russian Orthodox melody) at the 1979 Anglican state funeral of former Canadian Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker.

[84] In the Greek text, both the Kontakion [= **KON**] and "God of Spirits" [= **GOS**] request of Christ/ the Lord: *anápauson tên psuchên tou (kekoimêménou) doúlou sou* ("give rest to the soul of your servant [who has fallen asleep]"). The *locus* of this rest in GOS is evoked through imagery of a quasi-Islamic Paradise of light, verdure and coolness: *en tópô phôteinô, en tópô chloerô* (cf. Ps 22:2a *LXX*), *en tópô anapsúkseôs*, whereas that of KON is more specifically communitarian and ecclesial: *zôê ateleútêtos . . . metá tôn hágiôn* ("life everlasting . . . with the Saints"). In both instances, the entreated 'place of rest' is one in which there will no longer be found *odúnê* (GOS: 'pain')/ *pónos* (KON: 'toil' in the sense of 'painful drudgery' or 'pain' either physical or mental), *lúpê* ('grief'), or *stenagmós* ('sighing' or 'groaning'). This latter set of images is taken directly from a description of the restored Jerusalem found in *LXX* Is 35:10b: *apédra odúnê kai lúpê kai stenagmós*, quoted *verbatim* in GOS.

that some day soon "all we mortals . . . will go back to [the] earth" from which we were formed. As we do so, our 'funeral lament' (*epitáphios thrénos*) will become the biblical hymn of praise: 'Alleluia' – a chant that in the full original kontakion forms the refrain for all twenty-four *oikoi*.

There is a powerful paradox, points out Alexander Schmemann, in having the great psalmodic exultation '*hallel*' sung as a dirge. He observes:

> Since 'Alleluia' is indeed one of the keywords of the funeral service, the great majority of the Orthodox hear it as something precisely funereal, sad, if not [tragic]. But its true function and meaning is exactly the opposite. 'Alleluia' is one of the most, if not *the* most, joyful words of the Church. It is an exclamation of joy, and more specifically of joy provoked by the presence of God, by his coming to those who love him. It is, in other words, 'Presence' itself, witnessed to, manifested in song. And if it is so overwhelmingly used at the funeral, it is because it is the very sign, the very reality of the funeral as being transformed into a *Christian* funeral, and this means into the celebration of death as entering into the countenance, into the presence of the Living God – who is God of the living, *not* of the dead. *The meaning of the Christian burial, in the words of the Kontakion, is that it makes the funeral dirge into 'Alleluia.'*[85]

I.B.3.b The Idiómela in eight tones

These hymns of variable number (depending somewhat on the source consulted, but most usually eight) are sung immediately after the Canon in BF's traditional *ordo*. Their tones and *incipits*[86] (according to the *Mikrón Euchológion* of the Church of Greece)[87] are as follows (see also *Appendix I*, pp. 302-04):

1) Tone 1: ***Ποία τοῦ βίου τρυφὴ*** ("What pleasure in life remains")
2) Tone 2: ***Ὡς ἄνθος μαραίνεται*** ("As a flower withers"); and
   2a) another "outside the Typikon": ***Οἴμοι, οἷον ἀγῶνα ἔχει ἡ ψυχὴ*** ("Alas, what an ordeal the soul endures");
3) Tone 3: ***Πάντα ματαιότης τὰ ἀνθρώπινα*** ("Everything human which does not survive death");
4) Tone 4: ***Ὄντως φοβερώτατον*** ("Truly most fearful"); and
   4a) another "outside the Typikon": *Ποῦ ἐστιν ἡ τοῦ κόσμου προσπάθεια* ("Where is the attraction of the world");
5) Tone 5: ***Ἐμνήσθην τοῦ προφήτου βοῶντος*** ("I remembered how the prophet cried out");

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[85] ***Appendix II***, p. 332. The last sentence of the quotation has been italicized (by me) for emphasis.

[86] Here, and in the following pages, I have chosen to quote the *incipit*s of hymnic strophes in non-transliterated Greek, because these texts are readily available to readers (with their English translation) in *Appendix I*.

[87] MEH, 204-07.

6) Tone 6:'*Αρχή μοι καὶ ὑπόστασις τὸ πλαστουργόν* ("Your command which fashioned me was my beginning and my substance");
7) Tone 7:'*Ανάπαυσον, Σωτὴρ ἡμῶν* ("Give rest, O our Saviour"); and
7a) another "outside the Typikon": *Κατ'εἰκόνα σὴν καὶ ὁμοίωσιν* ("[Having fashioned man in the beginning] in your image and likeness");
8) Tone 8: *Θρηνῶ καὶ ὀδύπομαι* ("I grieve and lament"); plus
8a) a doxastichon: '*Ο θανατός σου, Κύριε* ("Your death, O Lord . . ."); and
8b) a theotokion:'*Αγνὴ παρθένε, τοῦ Λόγου Πύλη* ("O Pure Virgin, . .").[88]

In discussions throughout the present dissertation, *we shall limit our theological reflections to the content of the eight stichera* (#1, 2a, 3, 4a, 5, 6, 7a, and 8 above) *that are prescribed in the majority of the sources consulted.*

The composition of these hymns is attributed by tradition (and by the rubrics of BF) to St. John of Damascus (ca. 665-749 A.D.) who was a civil servant in the administration of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik prior to becoming a monk of the Judean monastery of St. Sabbas. According to a tenth- or eleventh-century version of the Damascene's *Vita* (recording what may be mostly a pious legend),[89] John composed the first and best known of his Idiomela: *Ποία τοῦ βίου τρυφὴ διαμένει λίπης ἀμέτοχος* ("What pleasure in life remains without its share of sorrow?") soon after his arrival at St. Sabbas. He did this in a spontaneous effort to comfort a grieving fellow-monk whose brother had just died, but apparently John earned thereby the severe displeasure of his spiritual father who sought to teach humility to the brilliant neophyte by forbidding him to engage in any kind of literary or philosophical activity.

The text containing this touching account is more or less contemporary with the first appearance (eleventh century) of a monastic funeral *ordo* (in *Cryptoferrata gr. Γ.β.XLIII*) which includes the Idiomela (described as *Stichêra nekrôsima tês Oktôêchou*: "Stichera for the dead from the Oktôêchos").[90] According to the Italian Franciscan, Fr. Vitaliano Bruni, this text attributes our

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[88] In most of the sources, both Orthodox and Catholic, which were consulted [including Orthodox: ETM; GBN-3; **HAPGOOD**; **NOLI**; **SERAPHIM**; and the *Service Book* of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese (Englewood, NJ: 1960); and Catholic: HAG-3; **GALADZA**, *Order*; **GOAR**; **GUILLAUME**; **RAYA**; and **WYSOCHANSKY**], there are given eight stichera (almost always #1, 2a, 3, 4a, 5, 6, 7a, and 8), i.e., one in each of the eight tones. However, MEH (and following it, **CONSTANTINIDES**) both give a total of eleven – one for each of the eight tones and three 'extra' (one each for Tones 2, 4, and 7) – plus the doxastichon and theotokion given above. Somewhat surprisingly, **LASH** (who claims to be following ETM) likewise gives eleven stichera (cf. ***Appendix I***, pp. 302-04), but without the doxastichon or theotokion.

[89] See Joseph **NASRALLAH**, *Saint Jean de Damas: son époque – sa vie – son oeuvre* (Harissa, Lebanon: n.p., 1950), 2-7, 97-99.

[90] **CHRISTODOULOU**, 42. Interestingly, one of the 'extra' Idiomela that appears in some present-day Greek books –'*Ὡς ἄνθος μαραίνεται* in Tone 2 – can be found in the tenth-century manuscript, *Cryptoferrata gr. Γ.β.X*; see Christodoulou, 60.

stichera #1, 2a, 3, 6, and 7a specifically to 'John of Damascus,' #4 and 8 are ascribed to one 'John the Monk,' while #5 is the work of another hymnographer, a certain 'Germanos.'[91] In the Oktôêchos (or *Paraklitikê*) itself, a work whose compilation was nearing completion at about this same time (and whose authorship has often been associated by legend with John of Damascus), the Idiomela of BF are to be found (without attribution to John) as aposticha for either the Friday Vespers or the Saturday Orthros of their respective tones.[92] Bruni, as well as noting this fact, points out that in the Lenten Triodion, on the other hand, those Idiomela that appear there (#1, 2a, 3, 4a, 6, and 8) all bear a specific attribution to 'John of Damascus' with the exception of the anonymous #1.[93] It is also noteworthy that only the first four of BF's usual Idiomela (#1, 2a, 3, and 4a) are to be found in Migne's *Patrologia graeca* (as 'Addenda' to the works of St. John of Damascus).[94]

Although a not-uncritical author such as Lash seems able to state in a recent reputable reference work that John *is* indeed the author of BF's Idiomela,[95] I would contend in the light of the above 'evidence' that we can only speculate about the extent to which these hymns represent the authentic work of the eighth-century Damascene. However, regardless of their authorship, we may close our consideration of these sobering texts by noting Kniazeff's summary of their content:

> The dominant theme of these idiomela is the description of man's [*sic*] anxiety in the face of death as the most important event in his existence. The anxiety arises because death comes suddenly [Tone 1] and, without warning, snatches someone from our midst; it initiates a hitherto unknown mode of existence; decomposition attacks the body, and no one can escape it, be he [*sic*] king or beggar [Tone 5]. The idiomela express surprise at this destruction of beauty that was created in the image and likeness of God, but at this point they remind us that divine mysteries are precisely divine in nature and they implicitly bid the Christian to submit humbly to God's decree [Tone 8].[96]

I.B.3.c The verses (*prosómoia*) for the Aspasmós (the 'rite of farewell')

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[91] See **BRUNI**, 179-86.

[92] See Denis **GUILLAUME**, trans., *Paraclitique ou Grand Octoèque*, Vol. I (Rome: Diaconie Apostolique, 1977), 148, 289, 425, 581-82; and Vol. II (Rome: Diaconie Apostolique, 1979), 126, 260-61, 398, 544.

[93] **BRUNI**, 179-86.

[94] PG 96: 1367B-1370A.

[95] BDEC, s.v. 'John of Damascus, as hymnographer,' 272.

[96] **KNIAZEFF**, 89.

Possessing a tonality that is similar in many ways to the Idiomela (though considerably more morose), this group of hymns is to be found toward the close of the funeral. In what is surely BF's most poignant (though sometimes harrowing) moment, the 'rite of farewell' (*aspasmós*), the family and friends of the deceased approach the open coffin to give a final kiss to their loved one. As they do so, there are sung a variable number of these *prosómoia* in Tone 2 (up to eleven, plus a doxastichon and two theotokia, according to the *Euchológion tò Méga*). The number actually prescribed varies somewhat from one national tradition to another;[97] the number actually sung may depend in most instances on such practical considerations as the length of time needed for the assembled mourners to complete their ritualized good-byes.

Some indication of the thematic mood of these hymns as a group can be deduced from a consideration of the *incipit*s of the eleven *prosómoia* of the Aspasmós (and their closing doxastichon), given in the *Euchológion tò Méga* as follows:[98]

1) *Δεῦτε τελευταῖον ἀσπασμὸν δῶμεν, ἀδελφοί, τῷ θανόντι, εὐχαριστοῦντες Θεῷ·* ("Come brethren, let us give the final kiss to the dead as we give thanks to God")
2) *Ποῖος χωρισμός, ὦ ἀδελφοί; ποῖος κοπετός; ποῖος θρῆνος ἐν τῇ παρούσῃ ῥοπῇ;* ("What is this parting, O brethren? What the grieving, what the lamentation in this present instant?")
3) *Ἄρτι ἡ τοῦ βίου πονηρὰ λύεται πανήγυρις πᾶσα τῆς ματαιότητος·* ("Now the whole wretched festival of life's vanity is being dissolved")
4) *Οἷα ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ἄνθος, καὶ ἀτμίς τε καὶ δρόσος ἐωθινὴ ἀληθῶς·* ("What is our life? Merely a flower, a vapor, a morning dew")
5) *Μέγας ὁ κλαυθμός καὶ ὀδυρμός, μέγας στεναγμὸς καὶ ἀνάγκη, ὁ χωρισμὸς τῆς ψυχῆς,* ("Great the weeping and lamentation, great the sighing and constraint at the parting of the soul")
6) *Βλέποντες προκείμενον νεκρὸν, λόγον ἀναλάβωμεν πάντες, τῆς τελευταίας ῥοπῆς·* ("As we look upon one who lies dead let us accept this expression of the final moment")
7) *Δεῦτε οἱ ἀπόγονοι Ἀδὰμ, ἴδωμεν εἰς γῆν βεβλημένον, τὸν κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμῶν,* ("Come, offspring of Adam, let us look at one in our image who [is being] laid in the earth")
8) *Ὅτε ἐκ σώματος ψυχὴ, μέλλει μετὰ βίας ἁρπᾶσθαι, ὑπο Ἀγγέλων φρικτῶν,* ("When the soul is about to be snatched by force from the body by fearsome Angels")

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[97] In reviewing the same sources as were consulted in foot-note 88 (above), the following was noteworthy. In the eight books which are evidently designed for parochial use (**CONSTANTINIDES**, **GALADZA-*Order***, **GUILLAUME**, **MEH**, **NOLI**, **RAYA**, **SERAPHIM**, and **WYSOCHANSKY**), one finds in virtually all of them that only a selection of the *prosomoia* are presented for singing during the Aspasmos. The specific hymns chosen most frequently are (according to their sequence in ETM): #1, 2, 4, 8, and the concluding doxastichon (#12). In subsequent references within this dissertation to the content of these texts, *observations will tend to be limited to those that can be substantiated by reference to the hymns that are most commonly sung.*

[98] See ***Appendix I***, pp. 307-08.

9) *Δεῦτε ἐν τῷ τάφῳ ἀδελφοὶ, βλέψωμεν τὴν τέφραν καὶ κόνιν, ἐξ ἧς ἐπλάσθημεν·* ("Come, brethren, let us look in the tomb at the ashes and dust from which we were fashioned")
10) *Ὄντως ματαιότης καὶ φθορὰ, πάντα τὰ τοῦ βίου ἡδέα, καὶ τὰ περίδοξα!* ("Truly all the pleasant and glorious things of life are vanity and corruption")
11) *Πάντα τὰ τοῦ σώματος νυνὶ, ὄργανα ἀργὰ θεωροῦνται, τὰ πρὸ μικροῦ κινητὰ·* ("Now all the body's organs are idle, that a little while ago were active")
12) (The doxastichon in Tone 6):*Ὁρῶντές με ἄφωνον καὶ ἄπνουν προκείμενον, κλαύσατε πάντες ἐπ' ἐμοί, ἀδελφοὶ καὶ φίλοι,* ("As you see me lying without voice and without breath, all weep for me, brethren and friends").

The message of these verses is clear. The dread moment of farewell is here; separation is already underway and the bereaved must say their final earthly good-bye. Life's fragility and transience are accentuated by the awesome (and fearful) character of death: its suddenness, the painful separation of soul and body, and the actual and impending loss of physical integrity. The mourners are reminded that humans are all 'made of the same stuff' and that they too will soon travel the same path as their newly-departed loved one. Entreaties are made to Christ the Lord for peaceful repose and forgiveness of sins for the deceased. There is an evident deep trust in the mercy of God, but nowhere are we made specifically conscious of a hope or trust grounded in the paschal mystery. The concluding doxastichon, spoken *in persona defuncti* (a literary conceit of which BF contains other examples) summarizes all of the above.

The identity of the composer of these texts is frankly unknown, and the tradition itself provides us with no consistent or convincing ascription of authorship. However, we are on considerably firmer ground when seeking information concerning the date of their first appearance in Byzantine funeral *ordines*. Bruni points out that two *prosomóia* of the Aspasmós (#1 and #12) are to be found in our earliest manuscript funeral *ordo*, *Cryptoferrata gr. Γ.β.X* (tenth-century), while two more (#2 and #5) appear a century later in *Cryptoferrata gr. Γ.β.XLIII*.[99]

I.B.3.d Miscellaneous hymnography

To complete our consideration of BF's hymnography, we shall briefly note the significance within BF of certain other hymns or groups of hymns, most of which are either brief or of minimal importance according to BF's typically North American *ordines*. In turn, we shall consider: i) the

[99] **BRUNI**, 192; see also **CHRISTODOULOU**, 65.

Trisagion hymn; ii) the troparia that begin: "With the spirits of the righteous"; iii) the Evlogitaria following psalm 118 (119); iv) the kathisma hymns (Slavonic: *sedalen*); and v) the Canon (either omitted entirely or reduced to a few remnants).

I.B.3.d.i *The Trisagion hymn.* This ancient and simple text ("Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us") is first mentioned specifically as being sung *kath odón* ('on the way,' i.e., to church) in a southern Italian Byzantine funeral *ordo* of A.D. 1179 (*San Salvatore gr. 172*).[100] However, given the antiquity of its use as a multi-purpose Byzantine processional,[101] it may well have had a much lengthier 'pedigree' as a funeral processional (which it remains to this day), but simply not have been deemed worthy of mention by the earlier manuscript tradition. In the context of BF interpreted as "our entrance together with the deceased brother or sister into the deathless death of Christ," Alexander Schmemann reminds us that the Trisagion (sung "with fear and great compunction," according to the rubrics) "is the same processional that we sing at the end of the Matins of Holy Saturday, as we celebrate by a procession round the church Christ's descent into death so as to liberate the universal Adam and Eve from bondage and corruption."[102]

I.B.3.d.ii *The troparia of the Trisagion (Litiya) service.* These four short troparia (see *Appendix I*, p. 292) – preceded by the Trisagion and 'Our Father,' and followed by the 'Synaptê for the Departed' and 'O God of Spirits' – comprise the core of the service known to Greeks as the 'Trisagion for the Dead' (*Litiya* for Russians and eastern Ukrainians, *Panakhyda* for western Ukrainians). Usually served in North America at the funeral home on one or more evenings prior to BF, the 'Trisagion/ Litiya' service also forms the conclusion of BF in church, and may be recited one final time at the graveside.

Since these brief hymns are heard repeatedly, it seems legitimate to assume that their 'message' is more likely to be heard by the assembled mourners. Therefore, I consider it a

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[100] **CHRISTODOULOU**, 44.

[101] See Robert **TAFT**, "How Liturgies Grow. The Evolution of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy," in Robert **TAFT**, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, second revised and enlarged edition (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 2001), 215.

[102] ***Appendix II***, p. 330.

worthwhile exercise to summarize here the essential themes of these verses that embody some of the most important themes of BF as a whole.

First, God (the only immortal One) is being entreated to grant repose to God's deceased servant in the company of all those righteous persons who, having preceded the newly-departed in death, have now been made perfect (troparia one and two) (cf. Heb 12:23). *Second* (according to the third troparion), this 'rest with the saints' is deemed possible because "the God who descended into Hades" has preceded us in death, granting release to all those whom death holds captive. Christ's descent to death, according to St. Irenaeus's famous notion of the 'recapitulation' of all things in Christ (*anakephalaíôsis*, cf. Eph 1:10),[103] renders his death salvific for all those who through death are united to him. *Finally*, as the concluding theotokion attests, the utility of the mourners' present intercessions for the departed is held up as efficacious since in so doing, we emulate the Mother of God who is deemed able to pray for the dead just as she prays for the living.

I.B.3.d.iii ***The 'Evlogitaria for the dead.'*** So called in order to distinguish them from the 'Evlogitaria of the resurrection' (which form part of the regular Sunday Orthros), this series of four to six short troparia (plus a doxastichon and theotokion) is sung at the conclusion of psalm 118 (119), farsed with a refrain "Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes" that is taken from the same psalm (v.12).

There are some minor differences apparent amongst the various national traditions of the Byzantine rite concerning the exact number (up to six) and order of the funeral's Evlogitaria. As a generalization, the service books of the 'Greco-Arab' Byzantine traditions (Lash excepted) tend to provide five troparia (plus doxastichon and theotokion) with the following *incipit*s (see *Appendix I*, pp. 296-97):

1) ***Τῶν Ἁγιῶν ὁ χορὸς εὗρε πηγὴν τῆς ζωῆς*** ("The choir of Saints has found the source of life");
2) ***Ὁ πάλαι μὲν*** ('of old,' or Goar: *παλάμη*, 'by art') ***ἐκ μὴ ὄντων πλάσας με*** ("Of old you formed me from nothing");
3) ***Εἰκὼν εἰμὶ τῆς ἀῤῥήτου δόξης σου*** ("I am an image of your ineffable glory");
4) ***Οἱ τὸν ἀμνὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ κηρύξαντες*** ("You who proclaimed the Lamb of God");

[103] See Jaroslav **PELIKAN**, *The Shape of Death: Life, Death, and Immortality in the Early Fathers* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 109-15.

5) *Ἀνάπαυσον, ὁ Θεός, τὸν δοῦλόν σου* ("Give rest, o God, to your servant").

The 'Byzantine-Slavic' books (both Orthodox and Catholic), on the other hand, usually give *six* troparia (plus the same doxastichon and theotokion). The additional troparion (placed in third position) begins in English: "All you who trod in life the hard and narrow way"; all the other troparia have the same wording. However, the order in which the hymns are sung also differs in the Slavic books as follows: #1, 4, 'extra', 3, 2, and 5. Lash's translation, although he claims to be basing himself on the *Euchológion tò Méga*, follows the Slavic books in this regard.

The theological content of these hymns (that tend to be well known by both Greek and Slavic faithful) has been succinctly summarized by Kniazeff, who writes as follows:

> These troparia are remarkable for their theology of man [*sic*] and death. They recall the creation of man in God's image, the fall of man which is the cause of death, man's restoration in Christ, and man's heavenly calling. They speak also of the happiness of the saints who shine as stars in heaven. They emphasize the power of the martyrs to pray for deceased Christians, a theme developed by the Oktoechos in the offices of Saturday. Finally, they ask the Holy Trinity to save from the eternal fire both the deceased person for whom prayers are being offered and those who are gathered to pray for him.[104]

I.B.3.d.iv ***The 'kathisma' hymns (Slavonic: 'sedalen').*** In the traditional *ordo*, there are two sets of these brief hymns: one set immediately after the Evlogitaria, and the other set after Ode 3 of the Canon. In practice, they are often omitted entirely (as is the case, for example, in the Church of Greece's *Mikrón Euchológion*). In content, they merely repeat themes that are to be found in other sets of hymnographic texts.

I.B.3.d.v ***The 'Canon for the Dead.'*** Ascribed by tradition to Theophanes Graptos (ca. A.D. 778-845),[105] this canon's troparia comprise an acrostic: *Hékton prosaudô tois apelthoúsin mélos* ("I address my sixth song to the departed"). In the usual Russian (and wider east Slavic) practice, only the Irmoi of the odes are sung, interspersed with the refrain: "Give rest, O Lord, to the soul of your servant who has fallen asleep." In common Greek parochial usage (as in many other traditions), the Canon is omitted altogether, its traditional place in the *ordo* being signaled by the singing of the Kontakion and Ikos.

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[104] KNIAZEFF, 83.
[105] See ODB, Vol. 3, s.v. 'Theophanes Graptos,' 2062.

1.B.4 *The Prayer(s) of BF*

Aside from a 'Prayer of Absolution' that is read in certain traditions at the very conclusion of the service in church, there is in fact only a *single repeated prayer in BF* – one to which we have already referred several times – namely, an ancient oration that begins: *Theos tôn pneumatôn kai pásês sarkós* ('O God of Spirits and all flesh' – hereafter **GOS**).

Alexander Schmemann suggests that GOS was probably the funeral's original 'prayer of absolution' that was read once toward the ending of the church service. He justifies this assumption by pointing to the confused (and confusing) rubric that accompanies the final recitation of GOS in church (*Appendix I*, pp. 306-07). This stipulates, first of all, that the prayer is to be recited aloud (compared to all previous recitations in the traditional *ordo* which are *in secreto*). Second, the rubric mentions that this recitation belongs, if possible, to the bishop whose presence has not previously been alluded to by any of BF's rubrics. Schmemann therefore concludes that this implies an ancient usage whereby the bishop, the ultimate 'minister of absolution,' was the one to recite GOS as *the* absolution prayer *par excellence*.[106]

Bruni, whom we cited earlier on aspects of BF's hymnography, has researched the history of GOS extensively, and reports that the text can be identified in essentially its present form in a south Palestinian papyrus datable to about A.D. 600; portions of the prayer's text appear on various Nubian artifacts possibly dating back even earlier than the sixth century. Bruni believes that the prayer as we have it may well be of Constantinopolitan origin,[107] but he also notes (as we have mentioned) that a prayer vaguely similar to GOS is alluded to in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite, a document of Antiochian provenance.[108]

Like many early Byzantine liturgical texts, GOS is a virtual *catena* of scriptural references and allusions. This biblical-theological richness becomes readily apparent if we present the Greek

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[106] ***Appendix II***, pp. 325-26.

[107] See Athanasius **PEKAR**, *Funeral Services According to the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite* (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1972) [= **PEKAR**], 43, where Fr. Pekar gives an apparently 'traditional' (?legendary) ascription of GOS to St. John Chrysostom.

[108] See **BRUNI**, 146-58, as well as his later paper "Un'antica preghiera bizantina per i defunti," in *Studia Hierosolymitana in onore di P. Bellarmino Bagatti, II. Studi esegetici* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1976), 309-18. See also my note 17, above.

text of GOS[109] (together with its English translation, modified slightly from Lash), giving the specifics of its biblical referents. Thus:

'*O Θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων και πάσης σαρκός*: "O God of spirits and of all flesh," [Num 16:22, 27:16 *LXX* : *θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων και πάσης σαρκός* ("the God of spirits and of all flesh": *LXX*; translated from Hebrew in the RSV as "the God of the spirits *of* all flesh")],

'*ο τόν θάνατον καταπατήσας*: "who trampled down death" [cf. 2 Tim 1:10: *διὰ . . . Χριστοῦ Ἰησου καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον* ("through . . . Christ Jesus who destroyed death": **NIV**)]

τὸν δὲ διάβολον καταργήσας: "and crushed the devil," [cf. Heb 2:14: *ἵνα διὰ τοῦ θανάτου καταργήσῃ τὸν . . . διάβολον* ("so that through death he might destroy . . . the devil": RSV)],

καὶ ζωὴν τῷ κόσμῳ σου δωρησάμενος: "giving life to your world"; [cf. Jn 6:51: *ἡ σάρξ μού . . . ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς* ("my flesh [which I will give] for the life of the world": NIV)];

αὐτος, Κύριε, ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχὴν: "do you, Lord, give rest to the soul" [cf. Mt 11:29: *εὑρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν* ("you will find rest for your souls": RSV)]

τοῦ κεκοιμημένου δούλου σου: "of your servant who has fallen asleep," [cf. Jn 11:11: *ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν . . . κεκοίμηται* ("our friend [Lazarus] has fallen asleep": RSV)],

ἐν τόπῳ φωτεινῷ: "in a place of light," [cf. Rev 22:5: *Κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ'αὐτούς* ("The Lord God will give them light": NIV)],

ἐν τοπῳ χλοερῷ: "a place of green pasture," [cf. Ps 22 (23):2a: *εἰς τόπον χλόης . . . με κατεσκήνωσεν* ("in a place of green grass, there he has made me dwell": *LXX*)],

ἐν τοπῳ ἀναψύξεως: "a place of refreshment," [cf. Acts 3:19(20): *καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως ἀπὶ προσώπου τοῦ Κυρίου* ("times of refreshing . . . from the presence of the Lord": RSV)],

ἔνθα ἀπέδρα ὀδύνη, λύπη, καὶ στεναγμός· "whence pain, grief and sighing have fled away." [Is 35:10b *LXX*: *ἀπέδρα ὀδύνη καὶ λύπη καὶ στεναγμός* ("sorrow and pain and groaning have fled away": *LXX* – Brenton)].

Πᾶν ἁμάρτημα τὸ παρ'αὐτου πραχθὲν ἐν λόγῳ, ἤ ἔργῳ, ἤ διανοίς: "[Pardon] every sin committed by him/her in word or deed or thought,"

ὡς ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλάνθρωπος Θεὸς, συγχώρησον: "as you are good and love mankind, O God," [cf. Jn 3:16: *οὕτως γὰρ ἠγαπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον* ("for God so loved the world": RSV)],

ὅτι οὐχ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ὅς ζήσεται καὶ οὐχ ἁμαρτήσει: "because there is no person who will live and not sin"; [2 Chr 6:36a: *ὅτι οὐχ ἔσται ἄνθρωπος, ὅς οὐχ ἁμαρτήσεται* ("for there is no man [*sic*] who will not sin": *LXX*)];

Σὺ γὰρ μόνος ἐκτὸς ἁμαρτίας ὑπάρχεις: "You alone are without sin;"

ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου, δικαιοσύνη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα: "your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness," [Ps 118 (119):142a: *ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου δικαιοσύνη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* ("thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness": *LXX*)],

καὶ [*ὁ νόμος*: *Euchologion*][*'ο λόγος*: Goar][110] *σου ἀλήθεια*: "and your law [word] is truth." [Ps 118 (119):142b: *καὶ ὁ νόμος σου ἀλήθεια* ("thy law is truth": *LXX*)].

"Οτι σὺ εἶ ἡ ἀνάστασις, ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἡ ἀνάπαυσις: "For you are the resurrection and the life and the repose" [cf. Jn 11:25: *'Εγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή* ("I am the resurrection and the life": RSV)]

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[109] In order to simplify this transcription, the Greek text has been limited to the generic masculine.

[110] MEH (following ETM) uses the biblical *νόμος*, whereas the Greek text of the Catholic HAG-2 follows Goar (and most Slavonic euchologies) in using *λόγος*. Lash also follows Goar here, translating "your *word* is truth."

τοῦ κεκοιμημένου δούλου σου, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν: "of your servant who has fallen asleep, O Christ our God," [Jn 11:11: *vide supra*],

καὶ σοὶ τὴν δόξαν ἀναπέμπομεν: "and to you we give glory," [cf. Lk 2:14: *Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ* ("Glory to God in the highest": RSV)],

σὺν τῷ ἀνάρχῳ σου Πατρί: "together with your Father who is without beginning," [cf. Jn 10:30: *Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμεν* ("I and the Father are one": RSV)],

καὶ τῷ παναγίῳ καὶ ἀγαθῷ καὶ ζωοποιῷ σου Πνεύματι: "and your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit," [cf. Ps 142 (143):10: *τὸ πνεῦμά σου τὸ ἀγαθὸν* ("thy *good* Spirit": *LXX*) and Jn 6:63: *τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ ζῳοποιοῦν* ("the Spirit gives life": NIV)],

νῦν, καὶ ἀεί, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν: "now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen." [Rev 22:5: *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων* ("for ever and ever": RSV)].

I believe that this magnificent composite of soundly biblical (and paschal) themes is coming to assume, through its repeated audible recitation, a place of prominence in a majority of North American Byzantine-rite funeral observances, thereby helping to ensure that contemporary celebrations of BF are ever more firmly grounded in the paschal mystery.

Before concluding this discussion of the prayers of BF, mention should also be made of the rather curious exclamation 'Eternal Memory' (*Aiônía hê mnêmê*) that is repeated thrice in a prayerful manner at the very end of the church service, and then once again at the conclusion of the burial. We shall have opportunity to speak of this text at greater length in *Chapter Three*. However, we should note at this juncture that whereas many Byzantine-rite faithful are under the impression that the phrase is an exhortation to those assembled to treasure the memory of the deceased, it is in fact a prayer that beseeches the Lord to grant eternal life to the deceased by keeping him or her in God's 'eternal remembrance.'[111]

I.C *The Setting of BF: Locus for Interpretation*

It would be a serious mistake to assume that the 'meaning' of BF (or of any other liturgical unit) can be adduced from a mere perusal of its written texts. Liturgy as a 'performed Text' is a notion to which we shall shortly be devoting greater attention in *Chapter Two*. However, if such a concept has validity, it would seem logical that a consideration of the setting in which such a performance takes place will be crucial for any attempt at intuiting or assigning 'meaning' to 'the Text' (rather than 'the texts') of BF.

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[111] Cf. ***Appendix II***, p. 343-44.

This final section of *Chapter One* will review in turn the following aspects of the *milieu* in which BF is conducted. We shall begin by examining the disposition and movements of the various members of the liturgical assembly, and by attending briefly (but more specifically) to certain ritual actions or moments in which some or all of them participate. We shall then turn to some remarks about the role of music in BF, a topic of obvious importance in a tradition where virtually all services are sung or chanted in their entirety. Finally, we shall conclude this section (and this chapter) by reflecting further on the critical importance of what I have called its 'setting' for any interpretation of BF.

I.C.1 *The Physical Setting: 'Performers' and Actions*

In the early evolution of Christian funeral rites (both eastern and western), the 'station' in church for the celebration of an office such as BF was a relatively late development. Initially (in places such as, for example, the fourth-century Cappadocia of Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*), after certain observances had taken place around the deathbed of the deceased, there was a procession with the body, accompanied by psalmody and lights, to the place of burial (a nearby church in Macrina's case), but with no 'church service' as such. Only at a somewhat later period (as we saw, for example, in the sixth-century Syria of pseudo-Dionysius's *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*) did there develop formalized funeral rites that were celebrated in church. Even with the appearance of these latter offices, it is uncertain the extent to which such churchly rites were carried out for the average 'person in the street,' whose relatives more probably had often to be content with a procession from home to place of interment accompanied by some sort of graveside observances.[112]

According to BF's 'traditional *ordo*,' the underlying 'shape' of the service remains that of a procession, albeit an interrupted one. It begins at the home of the deceased where the priest gives the service's opening blessing ("Blessed is our God always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages") before celebrating the brief 'Trisagion for the Dead'. Then, when "everything is ready for the Departure, the Priest again gives the blessing and we begin to sing the Trisagion with fear and

[112] See Richard **RUTHERFORD**, *The Death of a Christian: The Rite of Funerals* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1980), 39-41.

great compunction, [and] having taken up the body we leave for the Church, the Priests going ahead with lights and the Deacon with the censer." Upon arrival at the church, the rubrics continue, "the body is placed in the Narthex (or in the middle of the Church)" where the formal funeral office [BF], having been 'interrupted' by the movement to church, is resumed immediately (i.e., without another opening blessing) by the chanting of psalm 90 (91) (and the rest of BF thereafter). At the conclusion of the service in church, after the giving of the 'last kiss' (*aspasmós*), the interrupted procession resumes once again when, "taking up the remains, we leave for the grave, singing the [Trisagion]. . . and the remains are [then] laid in the tomb."[113]

This 'processional shape' has tended to survive intact in traditional Byzantine-rite countries – at least in rural areas where I have personally observed it on a Greek island and in a western Ukrainian village. By contrast, in present-day celebrations of BF in the western world, virtually nothing remotely 'processional' remains except the still common practice of singing the Trisagion while the body is being carried back and forth between the funeral director's hearse and the church building. Upon its entry into the church (despite the apparent preference of the traditional rubric for setting it down in the narthex), the coffin bearing the deceased's body is carried feet-first into the church building, and then placed longitudinally within the main part of the church building (the 'nave' in the usual English terminology). The feet of the deceased hence lie closest to the front of the church so that in effect, for one final occasion, he or she joins the community of prayer as it faces toward the sanctuary. By custom, the casket should remain open for the duration of the church funeral office, at the conclusion of which, in the usual North American practice, it is then closed prior to exiting the church for the journey to the cemetery.

The exact positioning of the bier is different in the two main Byzantine 'sub-traditions' (as one might designate them). Among the east Slavs (including – most importantly from a numerical standpoint – the Russian Orthodox), the open coffin is placed in the approximate middle of the nave. From this position, the service is conducted by the officiating clergy who stand much of the time at the head of the bier facing toward the altar area, surrounded by the members of the liturgical assembly. In the 'Mediterranean' tradition on the other hand (with the Greeks being, obviously, its

[113] For the rubrics quoted, see ***Appendix I***, pp. 294 and 309.

most important historical representative), the bier is placed much closer to the front of the nave, often resting upon the solea itself, right in front of the so-called 'Royal Doors' of the iconostasis. In this case, the officiant(s) stand either at the foot or at the right-hand side of the coffin, more or less facing the congregation.

A powerful symbolism is attributable to either of these 'positionings,' although unfortunately, the prevalent use of pews by North Americans in traditionally pew-less Byzantine-rite churches may tend to render such symbolism less obvious. Potentially, it is one that contributes richly to the overall *ethos* of the ceremony, though in a somewhat different manner in the two traditions. In the Slavic practice, the deceased's body lying in its open casket becomes the ritual focus of the entire funeral service in a manner analogous to the function of the 'enthroned' festal icon on a major feast-day, or the font at a baptism, or the sacramental table ('*tetrapod*') at a marriage. The bier (on which typically there usually rest an icon and a hand-cross) is reverenced by those entering or leaving the assembly and is incensed repeatedly by the celebrating clergy. Around this liturgical focus in the middle of the nave there stand arrayed the members of the liturgical assembly, clergy and people, who thus pray together *with* the deceased for one last time.

In the Mediterranean practice by contrast (or so it seems to me), the open coffin is a less obvious (and less important) focal point of the service which is rather more directed (as are most other Byzantine-rite services) toward the iconostasis and the sanctuary lying behind it. In this setting, the coffin's placement immediately before the open Royal Doors – the boundary between the nave and the sanctuary – signals the deceased's imminent *transitus* from 'this world' (symbolized by the nave of a Byzantine church) to the 'heavenly realm' symbolized by the altar area. In a certain sense, the deceased in the 'Greek' practice is already 'less present' to the mourning community than in the Slavic tradition.

In the Russian tradition (though less commonly in the Greek), the members of the assembly (both clergy and lay-people) hold lighted candles for much of the service in church; in both traditions, burning tapers may be placed around the bier. The use of lights in Christian funeral observances is ancient and may have served an originally practical purpose since, in the pre-Constantinian era, Christian funerals often took place at night and torches were necessary to light

the way. As well, at its inception, the custom probably represented a hold-over from the pagan burial rituals of the wider Greco-Roman society.[114] Whether in the darkness of Roman catacombs or in the relatively 'dark' interiors of many traditional Orthodox churches, the gentle flickering of candles and lamps constitutes a potent natural symbol of "the light of Christ [which] enlightens all," both the living and the departed.[115]

In Byzantine antiquity (and even today in most rural areas of Byzantine-rite homelands), the bodies of deceased persons were washed and dressed at home, and then wrapped in a shroud, leaving the face exposed. There was often no coffin as such; rather the shrouded corpse was laid out and later carried for burial upon a sort of stretcher. It was (and is) customary to place an icon upon the crossed hands of the exposed body of the deceased.[116] In the present-day, use of a coffin is of course almost universal, but it is supposed to be left open during the service in church, so that the body of the deceased (especially the face) is visible to the members of the assembly. In North America (and other parts of the industrialized world), this practice is under pressure from the wider 'western' culture whose *ethos* (in both the secular and ecclesiastical realms) tends to favor closed-casket funerals. Hence, it is becoming not uncommon (in North America and even in urban Greece) to find the coffin closed during the service in church, with perhaps a final reopening for the ceremony of the 'last kiss.'[117]

According to Schmemann,[118] it was not always the universal custom in Christian antiquity to leave the face of the deceased exposed. As evidence for this, he cites the fact that at the funeral of a priest (a 'liturgically conservative' occasion), the face of the departed is supposed to be *covered*

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[114] See D. R. **DENDY**, *The Use of Lights in Christian Worship*, Alcuin Club collections, no. 41 (London: S.P.C.K., 1959), 94-101.

[115] During the Byzantine 'Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts,' just before the second OT reading, the celebrant holds up a lightened candle before the congregation and exclaims: *Fôs Christoú phainéi pási*. See Spencer T. **KEZIOS**, ed., *The Lenten Liturgies* (Northridge, CA: Narthex Press, 1995), 64.

[116] See James **KYRIAKAKIS**, "Byzantine Burial Customs: Care of the Deceased from Death to the Prothesis," *GOTR* 19, no. 1 (1974): 44-48, 56.

[117] I am indebted for this information on current practice in Greece to a recently published paper by Bert **GROEN**, "'Burying the Dead is Christian, Burning Them is Pagan': the Present Controversy about Cremation in Greece and Greek Orthodox Funeral Rites," *Het Christelijk Oosten*, 53 (2001) [= **GROEN**]: 208. This paper was originally presented in 2001 as a case-study at the 18th Congress of *Societas Liturgica* in Santa Clara, California. Interestingly, even in North America, as recently as two decades ago, open-casket funerals for Orthodox were so much the norm as to attract a comment to this effect from a pastoral theologian studying inter-cultural bereavement practices; see James N. **LAPSLEY**, "Death and Bereavement in Mercer County, New Jersey: A Study in Ethnic Diversity," *Pastoral Psychology* 25 (1977): 179.

[118] ***Appendix II***, p. 322.

(with a eucharistic chalice-cover), although this custom in fact is often *not* observed in the case of married parish clergy. In any event, whether with face hidden or visible, it is clear from a perusal of BF's hymnographic texts that the visible (and tangible) presence of the body of the deceased is 'iconically necessary' for an integral presentation of the Christian anthropology of BF which underlies its vision of human death.[119] The actual sight of the corpse serves as a generalized *memento mori* for all those present at the funeral, while the visibility of its particular and unique face is a vivid image ('icon') of the 'person-hood' – both fallen and restored – of one specific human being. Priests who have served in life as the iconic presence of Christ in their communities (or professed monastics who have been 'clothed with Christ') are no longer their 'own persons' in a certain sense, and it is therefore deemed appropriate at their funerals that their faces be hidden.

In common with almost all Byzantine-rite services, the use of incense figures prominently in BF and all other Byzantine offices for the dead, a usage that can be documented as far back as the early fourth century.[120] Prior to the 'peace of the Church' under Constantine, the use of incense was eschewed by Christians because of its association with pagan Roman rites including, in particular, the veneration of the emperor. Thereafter, following a period of equivocation, the Christian use of incense was firmly established by the early sixth century.

Its initial employment at funerals was probably both ceremonial and practical. On the one hand it served to symbolize the ascent of the mourners' prayers to God as well as the hoped-for purification of the souls of the departed. More practically on the other hand, in an era before either refrigeration or embalming were common, its fumigatory function was undoubtedly of considerable importance. However, according to one contemporary author, the most important significance of the use of incense in BF is to highlight the service's theological anthropology. Thus, Paul Lazor writes:

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[119] One might consider, by way of example, phrases such as: "I am an image of your ineffable glory" (Evlogitária, *Appendix I*, p. 296); "Bring me back to your likeness, my ancient beauty" (Evlogitária, p. 297); "I grieve and I lament when . . . I see the beauty fashioned for us in God's image lying . . . without glory" (Idiómela, tone 8, p. 304); and "As you see me lying without voice and without breath, all weep for me, brethren and friends" (doxastichon of the stichera at the Aspasmos, p. 308).

[120] On this matter, and for other details which follow, I am indebted to E. G. Cuthbert F. **ATCHLEY**, *A History of the Use of Incense in Divine Worship*, Alcuin Club collections, no. 13 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909), especially pp. 46-60, 97-116, and 200-211. See also **VELKOVSKA**, *Dumbarton*, 27.

> The body of the deceased . . . is repeatedly censed as a sign that in it, 'the redemption of our bodies' (Rom 8.23) has already begun. The deceased is a baptized, chrismated and communing member of the body of Christ. Sacramentally, his [*sic*] whole substance is permeated by him who, having risen, is 'the first fruits of all those who have fallen asleep' (1 Cor 15.20).[121]

Since the rubrics in BF's *ordo* contain few specific directions regarding incensations, it is not surprising that precise customs concerning the use of incense during BF vary somewhat from one Byzantine national tradition to another. However, incensation of the deceased's body with or without incensation of the whole church commonly takes place at some or all of the following moments: during the troparia of the 'Trisagion for the Dead' (beginning "With the spirits of the righteous"); during some or all of the repeated recitations of the 'Synaptê for the Dead' (but always during its recitation as part of the 'Trisagion for the Dead'); during the singing of the Evlogitaria, and of the Kontakion and Ikos; and (lastly) during the chanting of 'Eternal Memory' at the very end of the funeral in church and again at the burial.

To bring to a close this discussion of the 'physical setting' of BF, it should be noted that the service has a number of ritual (and emotional) 'high points.' Though the number and intensity of such occasions may differ a bit between the various national churches, the members of virtually all Byzantine communities have a strong and near-universal attachment to the following three 'ritual moments' during the Byzantine funeral service: 1) the Kontakion ("With the Saints give rest, O Christ") and its accompanying incensation (during the singing of which many east Slavic Orthodox are accustomed to kneel); 2) the giving of the 'Last Kiss' when those present come forward to pay their last respects to the deceased's body, generally doing so by placing a light kiss on the icon held in his or her hands and frequently on the forehead as well; and 3) the funeral's conclusion when 'Eternal Memory' is intoned just before the cortège leaves the church for the cemetery.

I.C.2 *The Music of BF*

This is a subject on which remarkably little has been written from a theological perspective, yet it is obviously of critical importance to the overall 'success' of BF as 'enacted theology.' In a written document (such as this dissertation), one cannot possibly evoke through words the actual

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[121] LAZOR, 'Original,' 98.

ethos of BF's music (in whatever tradition), nor describe adequately the contribution of that music to the presentation of the service's 'theological vision' or its 'pastoral intent.' Rather, we shall have to content ourselves with making some general remarks about the role of music in the services of the Byzantine liturgical tradition, and then try to present, however inadequately, some observations on the specific function of BF's music in achieving BF's 'theological goals.' In this latter regard, I am especially indebted to an article published in English in 1986 by the Soviet musicologist, S. Trubachev.[122]

Within the Greek Byzantine musical tradition, by approximately the eighth century, a 'framework' for musical composition had evolved according to which the melodies of the various hymns and psalms used in worship "were systematically assigned to [one of] the eight ecclesiastical modes." In his succinct and lucid explication of these modes, the contemporary Byzantine musicologist, Dimitri Conomos, continues:

> For all practical purposes, the Oktoechos [Greek: 'eight tones'], as the system is called, was the same for Latins, Greeks and Slavs in the Middle Ages. Each mode is characterized by [the] deployment of a restricted set of melodic formulas peculiar to that mode, which constituted the substance of the hymn. While these formulas may be arranged in many different combinations and variations, most of the phrases of any given chant are nevertheless reducible to one or another of this small number of melodic fragments. . . . All forms and styles of Byzantine chant, as exhibited in the medieval sources, are strongly formulaic in design.[123]

As the Byzantine form of Christianity (including its musical traditions) expanded to form its various 'daughter churches,' several of the latter eventually developed their own local variants of the eight-tone system in which the actual melodic elements differed (sometimes quite radically) from those of the 'parent' musical system used in Byzantium itself. Thus, suggests Conomos, alongside the original 'Byzantine chant' used by Greek churches, it became "possible to identify a Serbian school, a Russian school, a Bulgarian school, and a Moldavian school."[124] Up to the present day, in all local churches of the Byzantine rite, musical settings for most of the elements of divine service continue to be based upon (or at least derived from) a system of eight tones (or

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[122] **TRUBACHEV**, 68-75.

[123] Dimitri E. **CONOMOS**, *Byzantine Hymnography and Byzantine Chant* (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1984) [= **CONOMOS**], 33-4.

[124] Ibid., 35.

'modes'). However, there may be little or no audible resemblance between, on the one hand, a particular hymn sung in 'Tone Six' according to the 'Kievan chant' tradition (commonly employed in Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox churches) for example, and (on the other hand) that same hymn sung in the sixth (or 'Second Plagal') tone according to the more venerable tradition of 'Byzantine chant' favoured by most Greek or Lebanese Orthodox communities.

Fundamental to the whole *ethos* of Byzantine music is the principle that the "direction and thrust" of the music should be shaped by (and be at the service of) "the inherent dogmatic and poetical impulses of the text."[125] Attention to this principle hopefully leads to the outcome envisaged by Trubachev when he writes as follows:

> The action of word and melody . . . blend in inseparable unity: the idea is contained in the word, and the word in the melody; the melody brings out the meaning of the word, the idea contained in it. Content and form in a hymn are indivisible. While perceiving the melody, we perceive the words which give birth to the melody.[126]

Within the eight-tone system, certain tones seem to possess an apparent 'colouration' that renders them especially appropriate for expressing the theological (and poetical) 'tonality' of the hymnography proper to particular feasts or seasons in the Christian year. Thus, to cite but one example, the sixth tone is described by Trubachev as "inseparable from conveying states and images of sorrow";[127] not surprisingly, its use figures prominently in the melodies of both Holy Week and BF.

This observation provides an *entrée* to a more specific discussion of the actual music of BF. Since obvious differences exist amongst the eight-tone systems used by the different Byzantine local churches, I shall focus my remarks (with assistance from Trubachev) upon the Russian Orthodox tradition whose music is best known to me personally. However, my intention in so doing is primarily illustrative, since I believe (without in-depth knowledge of other traditions of Byzantine-rite music for BF) that what I am about to say may be extrapolated (perhaps with some qualification) and applied to the funeral music of other communities within the Byzantine tradition.

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[125] Ibid., 45.
[126] **TRUBACHEV**, 69. The punctuation is as in the original.
[127] Ibid., 71.

We must begin, suggests Trubachev, by identifying the most important characteristics of the 'theological vision' of BF which will have to be expressed through its music. These, he believes, are aptly summed up by a quotation from BF itself, taken from the closing line of the Ikos following the Kontakion: *epitáphion thrênon poioúntes ôdên: tò Allêlouïa* ("making our funeral lament into a song: Hallelujah"). Trubachev amplifies the sense of this phrase with words taken from the writings of a Soviet-era martyr, the scientist-theologian Pavel Florensky:

> The inhuman, dense, untransformed darkness of despair becomes human when it is illumined, when it is transformed, when it changes into bursts of glorification of the Almighty. The impermeable veil clouding the heart becomes bright. Our sorrow is not abolished. . . . But something else is required: it, the sorrow at the graveside, must be transformed into the greatest spiritual joy; the abuse of the Creator which is about to escape one's lips, must be transformed into glorification of Him; the curse languishing in the depths of longing and despair – into a blessing, 'let it not be' into 'let it be' – in short, graveside lamentation must be turned into a graveside hymn of 'Hallelujah.' The wounds of the soul must be healed. . . . 'Funeral Dirge' is turned into 'hallelujah' of glorification, the earthly into the heavenly.[128]

This juxtaposition of (and alternation between) contrasting transformations – darkness and illumination, sorrow and joy, woundedness and healing, the earthly and the heavenly – constitutes the fundamental *ethos* of BF and, according to Trubachev, is embedded within and embodied by its music which 'iconizes' the metamorphosis of 'funeral lament' into 'hallelujah.'

In the melodies of BF, notes Trubachev, "there is no weakness of the soul, no deliberate drama or false pathos. The strongest [theological] elements are expressed objectively and calmly, . . and the words of the hymns fit into a simple form, moulded, so to speak, specially for them."[129] The paradigmatic example of such a melody within BF is that used for the Trisagion ('Holy God') during the processions into and out of church. In its most usual Russian Orthodox setting, this hymn's melody (in tone six) "is structured as a wave-like and balanced alternation of rises and falls."[130] Virtually the same melody (modified only in its third line) accompanies the singing of 'Eternal Memory,' while several of these same melodic elements contribute to the slightly more elaborate melodies (in tone six) for the Irmoi of the Canon (which remain a typical part of the

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[128] Pavel **FLORENSKY**, "From the Theological Heritage: Sacraments and Rites," *Theological Studies* [Moscow], no. 17 (1977): 136-37; quoted in **TRUBACHEV**, 69.

[129] **TRUBACHEV**, 71.

[130] Ibid.

Russian Orthodox funeral *ordo*). Finally, points out Trubachev, the funeral's oldest melody, one that survives today in the Kontakion ('With the Saints' – sung in tone eight), is noteworthy for "the similarity between [its] wave-like rises and falls and the intonational structure of the simpler chants 'Holy God' and 'Eternal Memory.'" All of these melodies, concludes Trubachev, "indubitably have a common tone base."[131]

It does not require too much imagination – so I would contend – to discern the connection between the repetitively rising-and-falling common melodic line of many of BF's hymns (in the Russian tradition), and the theological 'alternations' (dark-light, sorrow-joy, earth-heaven) of which we spoke a moment ago. In drawing to a close the initial 'general' portion of his paper, Trubachev highlights this connection:

> The commonality of the patterns of melodic movement is justified by the profound conceptional [*sic*] connection between the main hymns and the symbolism of church singing. The waves of eternity strike the earthly bank and return to their source. The rhythm of cosmic life, of heavenly energies forcefully enters the sphere of liturgical acts.[132]

Trubachev devotes most of the rest of his important (and to date neglected) paper to a consideration of settings for BF by Russian composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, arrangements which, he feels, by and large fail to do justice to BF's traditional theological-musical integrity. While one may admire the musicality of many of these compositions, their authors reduce the "polysemantic and generalized nature of the main panikhida melodies" to a "means of symbolic expressiveness" whereby they acquire "a specific figurative meaning in the [composition] of a particular artist."[133]

I.C.3 *Setting and Interpretation*

At several points in our discussions thus far, we have had occasion to allude to ways in which the theology and anthropology of BF are brought into focus by particular aspects of BF's setting: the open casket, the visible face of the deceased, the use of lights and incense, the ritual of the 'last kiss,' the character of the music. From the standpoint of BF's 'theology of death,' (which

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[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 75.

we shall treat in much greater detail in *Chapter Three*), none of these can be considered as 'optional extras.' In a very real sense (according to Marshall McLuhan's now-famous maxim), BF's 'medium' *is* its 'message,' or at least absolutely integral to that message. This assessment will be of critical importance as we proceed to a discussion in *Chapter Two* of a hermeneutic that feels compelled to treat BF *in its entirety* as 'a Text' rather than an assemblage of individual texts.

To draw this present *Chapter One* to its conclusion, and to 'flesh out' my contention of BF's integral unity of medium and message, I should like to reproduce a narrative that was originally included as part of my *projet de thèse*. In that document, I wrote the following:

> Several years ago, in company with two 'post-Christian' friends (the one a lapsed Catholic, his wife a former Lutheran), I attended the Russian Orthodox funeral of a mutual friend who had died of a slowly progressive disease, and of whom we were all very fond. The deceased was a member of a distinguished Russian *émigré* family that had played a prominent role in the life of the post-revolutionary Russian *diaspora* community, both in Europe and in North America. As a result, his funeral was well-attended, somewhat more elaborate than many, and conducted in accord with the strict norms of tradition.
>
> Several clergy concelebrated (including a bishop), and a chorale of about ten voices was in attendance. The longitudinally-oriented open casket lay in the center of the pew-less nave, facing towards the altar of a beautifully appointed Orthodox cathedral church. The mourners entered the church in twos and threes, and after paying their respects to the body of the deceased and the members of his family, they took their places with . . . candles in their hands, standing clustered in a loose semi-circle around the coffin and family. The clergy began to intone the words of the traditional funeral chants in the mellifluous cadences of Old Church Slavonic, to which the choir softly responded by singing *a capella* in flawless four-voiced polyphony. At appropriate moments in the service, incensations occurred (as called for by the funeral rubrics) – of the catafalque, the church, the family and the entire congregation. A Gospel lection was chanted and a short homily was delivered in Russian. Finally, after about an hour, the service concluded by the mourners filing past the still-open casket to pay their final respects to the deceased, and then offering warm embraces and condolences to the deceased's widow and three daughters. The coffin was closed and escorted from the church to the waiting hearse by the entire assembly accompanied by the soothingly continuous singing of the choir.
>
> As we left the church with the crowd following the coffin, one of my friends turned to me and remarked that this was the most comfortingly beautiful funeral he had ever attended, and he wished rather whimsically that he might one day be the 'beneficiary' of similar rites. Yet, the service had been conducted entirely in a language that none of us understood, in the heart of an *émigré* community not renowned for its spirit of welcoming openness. Though none of us were 'close friends' of the deceased, we were all genuinely saddened by his death (especially coming, as it did, after much suffering), yet we left his funeral with an unmistakable sense of well-being.
>
> Reflecting subsequently on the 'event' of my friend's funeral, it occurred to me that in many important ways, the spiritual needs of my fellow-mourners and myself had been powerfully addressed. We had witnessed the enactment of a 'theology of death' that had interpreted and presented death as a profoundly tragic event while, simultaneously,

> celebrating it in a context of Christian community as an occasion filled with affirmation and beauty. We were led to intuit that there was *meaning* to our friend's life (and his death); we were surrounded for an hour by an atmosphere of peace that bespoke *hope* rather than despair; and, by our physical proximity in the church to the deceased's body, to his family and to our fellow worshippers, we experienced a sense of *connectedness* both inter-personally and 'cosmically.'[134]

In analyzing this example, it could be argued that the 'theological vision' being communicated to the attendant mourners would have been even better served had the bereaved been able to understand the actual words of the ritual texts. This is probably true, and yet, my personal experience over many years as a physician leads me to believe that in situations of great distress, people actually 'take in' only a small part of what is being *said*, whereas they are able to remember vividly certain non-verbal accompaniments of what they were meant to be hearing. I know, for example, that from my father's United Church funeral (which took place over thirty-five years ago), I remember not a single word that was 'spoken' aside from the words (and especially the melody) of the opening hymn, a metrical paraphrase of psalm 120 (121).

By way of contrast, one might try to imagine the reverse situation to my narrative example, one in which, with minimal non-verbal contextual cues, someone in a state of fresh bereavement were to be exposed to the words of BF's texts (by hearing them read aloud, for example, in an unadorned room such as a Society of Friends meeting-house). I suspect that under such circumstances, most people would 'absorb' only the tiniest portion of what was said, even if the texts *were* being read to them in their mother tongue.

Consider, for example, the situation of a newly-bereaved person whose attention happens to fix upon a striking phrase from BF's Evlogitaria: "I am an image of your ineffable glory, though I bear the marks of offenses."[135] I venture to guess that such a phrase, spoken or read outside of its ritual context, would convey little or no meaning to a majority of contemporary mourners. However, for those mourners in tune with (or at least not offended by) the Byzantine liturgical *ethos*, the probability of some 'message' being received is appreciably enhanced (it seems to me) if the same words are being spoken (or rather chanted – comprehensibly and to an engagingly sombre melody) before those who stand with lighted candles in hand beside the visible countenance of their

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[134] Robert **HUTCHEON**, "Doctoral Thesis Project Presentation," Faculty of Theology, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, ON, 29 September, 2000.

[135] See ***Appendix I***, p. 296.

loved one, surrounded by family and friends in the semi-darkness of a Byzantine church, and who watch while the bier is being reverently and fragrantly incensed. Even if the precise words ("I am an image of your ineffable glory") are *not* heard (whether because of language difficulties or through preoccupation), their 'sense' may still be 'received' in some fashion by means of their accompanying ritual gestures.

In discussing BF's music, we noted Trubachev's observation (at note 129 above) that the funeral's melodies are supposed to form a sort of 'mould' for the words of its texts. It seems to me that this is not only true for the music, but indeed for the entire setting of BF of which we have been speaking. Out of a 'mould' there emerges a 'shape' which can be palpably embraced. In opening this chapter, I began with a consideration of BF's 'shape'; in drawing it to its conclusion, I am contending that this 'shape' cannot be reduced to a particular sequence of analyzable texts prescribed by an *ordo*. Rather, it is the unity of 'text-in-setting' which will engage us as we seek to discern the 'intended sense' of 'BF-as-Text' and then to analyze that sense through the eyes of those who inhabit the contemporary 'world of the bereaved.'

CHAPTER TWO

BF'S LITURGICALLY-MEDIATED THEOLOGY: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

My goals for this second chapter of my dissertation are twofold. First (and most importantly), I wish to address methodological issues which need to be rationalized prior to undertaking an interpretive 'first reading' of 'BF-as-Text.' Second, as one aspect of treating these methodological matters, it is my intent to review the methods and findings of the relatively few authors who have heretofore done any sort of systematic study of BF's theology.

Hence, in *Chapter Two*, we shall proceed as follows. Section ***II.A*** will consider in greater detail (and provide justification for) the hermeneutical presupposition which was touched upon in section 'C' of *Chapter One*, namely the notion of treating BF in its entirety of 'texts-plus-setting' as a single 'performative Text' which is then able to be 'read' from one or more perspectives. In section ***II.B***, we shall review the rather scanty existing attempts by earlier authors at any sort of either synchronic or diachronic 'reading' of BF. Section ***II.C*** will examine and critique what is by far the most important of these attempts, that undertaken from an essentially diachronic perspective by the late Alexander Schmemann in his little-known 1979 series of lectures on the topic. Finally in section ***II.D***, with the help of certain insights gleaned from Schmemann's work, I shall propose and attempt to justify my own initial 'reading strategy,' one aimed at uncovering what Canadian biblicist, Ben Meyer, refers to (from a Lonerganian perspective) as 'the intended sense of the text.'[1]

II.A *The Grounding of Method: Reading 'BF-as-Text'*

In an address to the North American Academy of Liturgy upon his 1985 receipt of their prestigious 'Berakah Award,' Fr. Robert Taft, observed the following:

> A method is just a way of approaching and organizing the raw information we possess. Like language or history or theology, methods are a product of the human mind, tools for the conscious organization of data into intelligible and hence communicable units and frames. . . . The mass of data at our disposal is amorphous and of itself yields no understanding. We must render it intelligible by explaining it, and to do that we must have the courage to be *subjective*. Things haven't been the same since Hans-Georg Gadamer's claim that methodological objectivity is an illusion. We all have ideological patterns that

[1] **MEYER**, "Challenges," 9-11.

> condition our work. But the scholar is supposed to be aware of them, and subject them to critical challenge – in short a scholar needs not just a method, but a *methodology*. Methodological reflection examines our presuppositions and uncovers the patterns of our patterns.[2]

Fr. Taft's rigorous and productive application of the historico-critical method to his chosen field of study, Eastern Christian liturgy, has focused mainly (though not exclusively) upon a detailed and meticulous comparative study of liturgical *texts*. Although my reading of Fr. Taft and his work makes me certain he would eschew any attempted limitation of the broad field of 'liturgics' to a critical study of texts,[3] we may note how Aidan Kavanagh (and others) have been alerting us to the dangers of the prevailing reductionist, 'text-centered' *zeitgeist* that has informed all too many recent attempts at liturgical reform, for example.[4]

The American Jewish liturgist, Lawrence Hoffman, is regarded by many as one of the more insightful and original scholars in the contemporary field of liturgical studies. In his ground-breaking 1987 work, *Beyond the Text*, Hoffman urges his readership to adopt what he refers to as a "holistic approach" to the study of liturgy. In elaborating some of his proposed methodological considerations for such an approach, Hoffman writes as follows:

> As far as methodology is concerned, [my point has been] to demonstrate an example of the kind of additional questions one might ask if one refuses to be limited by a literary bias. Clearly, this sort of reconstruction is not amenable to the same sort of rigorous demonstration that can be applied to the philological studies dealing solely with textual reconstruction. But *worship is not a text; it is human behavior*. The study ought to aim at [anthropologist Clifford] Geertz's "construction of a construction" of the reality that worship communities assume. It is time to supplement the literary model of liturgical study with a new one.
>
> I say "supplement" not "replace." Our findings in no way invalidate those of other methodologies, which correctly make available to us scientifically accurate reconstructions of ancient texts. But a holistic perspective rounds out the picture, concentrating on the liturgical ceremony as it really was practiced, the ritual field itself, rather than on some words that eventually found their way into written form.[5]

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[2] Robert **TAFT**, "Response to the Berakah Award: Anamnesis," *Worship* 59 (1985): 315-16. The italicizations are mine.

[3] See Robert **TAFT**, "Liturgy as Theology," *Worship* 56 (1982): 117.

[4] See Aidan **KAVANAGH**, "Textuality and Deritualization: The Case of Western Liturgical Usage," *Studia Liturgica* 23 (1993): 70-77. Kavanagh's concern about what he sees as the reduction of 'liturgy' to 'written text' resonates well with a recent work by David **TOREVILL**, "Forgetting How to Remember: Performance, Narrative, and Embodiment as a Result of the Liturgical Reforms," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 65 (2000): 33-42.

[5] Lawrence A. **HOFFMAN**, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987) [= **HOFFMAN**], 45. The italics have been added for emphasis.

Hoffman's assertion here that "worship is not a text" might seem at first sight to contradict what is to be a fundamental presupposition of my dissertation, namely that a liturgy (in this case, BF) can be approached from the standpoint of contemporary hermeneutics as 'a Text.' However, it is obvious from the context that Hoffman here means 'text' as a '*written* document,' whereas when I speak of 'BF-as-Text,' I am construing 'Text' (with upper-case 'T') *en sens large* to mean the ensemble of the written texts of BF together with the communitarian (i.e. ecclesial) and ritual setting in which these texts are actually *performed* as part of a liturgical rite. Throughout my dissertation, therefore, in order to avoid unnecessary confusion, I may refer to written documents as 'texts' (with lower-case 't'), but I will utilize the designation 'Text' (with upper-case 'T') to refer to the entire enacted 'liturgical unit' of BF that includes, but is not limited to, an assortment of printed liturgical *texts*.

The present dissertation, conceived as an exercise in practical liturgical *theology*, is most definitely *not* a historico-critical study of texts. Nonetheless, there exists the risk of its remaining narrowly focused upon an array of 'texts' even though I have already signaled my intention, motivated by concerns such as those of Hoffman and others, to try and respect BF's unity of 'text-within-setting,' a setting which is provided first and foremost by a *community at worship*. Despite the best of such intentions however, in a written academic work of this present kind, one is perforce limited to an analysis of documents with the aim of producing some sort of written communication (i.e., a dissertation), and hence, of necessity, recourse must be had to various concepts and tools that were designed primarily for the historical and literary critical study of written texts. Therefore (making a *virtue* of necessity), I wish to digress for a moment in order to elaborate a theoretical justification (as well as hermeneutical ground-rules) for treating BF in its entirety (including its texts, locale, music and rituals) as a 'performative Text' that can then be 'read,' interpreted, analyzed, and scrutinized for meaning according to the canons of textual criticism.

To this end, I have appreciated insights gleaned from a recent work by Joyce Ann Zimmerman[6] in which she draws heavily upon the hermeneutic thought of Paul Ricoeur (just as she

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[6] **ZIMMERMAN**, 14-21. Zimmerman's dissertation has been published as *Liturgy as Language of Faith: a Liturgical Methodology in the Mode of Paul Ricoeur's Textual Hermeneutics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988); see especially pp. 61-69, 71-103.

did in her doctoral thesis at Saint Paul University). For Zimmerman (according to her reading of Ricoeur's hermeneutical theories), a "text is a paradigm of interpretation with a much broader domain of potential data (meaning) than just written texts . . . [so that a text can be taken] to mean any *document* of life composed by preaccepted rules in a particular style." Within such a generous definition of text, there may be included a painting, a sculpture, a piece of music, a choreographed dance and also – a liturgy.[7]

In Zimmerman's understanding (following Ricoeur), a 'text' of whatever sort acquires 'meaning' through its being 'interpreted.' The 'meaning' of any text for Ricoeur (and Zimmermann) is to be found in the dialectic of its 'sense' ('what is said') and its 'reference' ('about what'). *Sense* – 'what is said' – is the surface or *linguistic structure* of a text, its 'literal sense' which is imminent in the text itself. On the other hand, *reference* – 'what is spoken about' – is the text's deep or *life structure*, its 'implied sense' which is dependent upon extra-textual referents and which possesses what Zimmerman likes to refer to as "ontological vehemence." Thus, the act of 'interpretation' (whose outcome is, hopefully, 'meaning') involves a process of interaction between the 'world of the text' on the one hand, and the 'world of the interpreter' on the other hand. If the interpretive act is authentic, this encounter should produce a 'difference' in the interpreter (p. 18).

Authentic interpretation always proceeds according to 'method' which Ricoeur – ever fond of dialectic – describes as the dialectic of 'explanation' and 'understanding.' *Explanation* is a primarily analytical exercise aimed at disclosing the 'sense of the text.' *Understanding*, which can be "delivered up" (Zimmerman's term) by explanation, eventually yields the 'world [reference] of the text' which is available to the interpreter as "new possibilities for human action." Hence, Ricoeur's 'methodic hermeneutics' in its most complete and authentic practice entails both an 'analytic moment' and a moment of 'new self-understanding' (p. 20).

At the present time, most contemporary essays at liturgical hermeneutics (a field still in its infancy) remain principally focused on the 'analytic moment' which has two important interpretive objects: first, the meaning of the fleeting (and ultimately unrepeatable) event of celebrating a particular *ritual* on a specific occasion, and second, the meaning conveyed within a fixed, written

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[7] Ibid., 16. To reduce foot-noting hereafter, references to Zimmerman will be placed within the body of the text.

liturgical text. "Limiting the hermeneutical task of the liturgist to either the ritual or the text," notes Zimmerman, "is to limit the richness of meaning that can be recovered" (p. 19). However, beyond these two 'analytical moments' is a third object of liturgical interpretation which may more likely open up a 'new moment of self-understanding,' namely the relation of liturgy (or *a* liturgy) to Christian living (and dying) which (like Christian liturgy itself) is supposed to be about "making present the paschal mystery" (p. 19).

Assuming that a liturgy (such as BF) may legitimately be construed as 'a Text,' it follows that it must also be conveyed to us as a 'language' which we will need to 'read' in order to be able (in Zimmerman's terms) to 'analyze' and 'understand' our Text. Hence, it seems appropriate at this juncture to highlight some (to me helpful) considerations which can impact upon our understanding both of the *language* of BF-as-Text as well as the act of *reading* that language.

In his penetrating review of Lawrence Hoffman's above-cited book, the American liturgical semiotician, J. Michael Joncas, concludes that "Hoffman conceptualizes liturgy primarily as complex human communication on the model of a 'language system' and employs methods ultimately derived from semiotics/semiology for exploring and analyzing this system."[8] Indeed, Hoffman does make it quite clear that for him, 'liturgy' is to be viewed as a seemingly arbitrary series of culturally determined 'signs' to which religious communities attach numinous significance. And, he continues, "since the classical instance of an arbitrary semiology ['sign-system'] is language, we might consider liturgy as a language with its own rules of combination." As a language, liturgy contains a vocabulary in which single units (analogous to the phonemes of spoken language) are 'combined' into a series of ever-larger units of communication to which 'meaning' is attributed. Unlike spoken language, however, liturgy combines units from more than one sign-system. Hence, concludes Hoffman, "worship becomes worship, rather than speech or dress or gesture alone, because it combines all these other sign systems according to its own ends."[9]

It might be argued in the context of Hoffman's construal of liturgy as a language, and with some justification, that Eastern Christian liturgy is particularly rich in the number and complexity

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[8] J. Michael **JONCAS**, "Lawrence A. Hoffman's 'Holistic' Approach to Liturgical Studies: A Review and Some Methodological Considerations," *Questions Liturgiques* 72 (1991): 93.

[9] All quotations in this paragraph are to be found in **HOFFMAN**, 158-59.

of the 'sign systems' making up its 'language.' Highlighting this observation nearly thirty years ago, the French student of Eastern Christian liturgy, Fr. Irénée-Henri Dalmais, wrote the following:

> The various Eastern liturgies have drawn . . . on the wealth of ideas and images contained in the Bible, and they have also used the great cosmic symbols. . . . The result is liturgies in the form of lengthy poems in which singing, movements and gestures, even religious art, especially in the Byzantine tradition, play as important a role as verbal expression. The latter, as is still most often the case, may continue to be formulated in an archaic language or even in one no longer used; the need of translation is hardly felt. The liturgical action is lived; it is an experience as well as a profession of faith. A few gestures, a few formulas familiar to all are enough.[10]

In the light of these observations of both Hoffman and Dalmais, it is thus pertinent (so it seems to me) to remember the extent to which liturgy – like music, theatre and art, which are also languages – entails authentic *performance*. In remarks intended by her to apply to 'good' biblical interpretation (but equally applicable to liturgy), the British theologian, Frances Young, has drawn a parallel between musical performance in particular, and the 'art' of communicating effectively and authentically the 'Word of God' contained in Scripture. Her 1993 work, which bore (in North America) the intriguing title *Virtuoso Theology*, contains the following observations on music, applicable to scripture (or liturgy in my opinion) if one substitutes 'text' for the physical realities of music of which Young is speaking in the following quotation:

> It is of the essence of music that it is a 'language' embodied in physical reality, and yet an analytical account of sound-waves in the air, resonances and intervals, . . comes nowhere near providing an 'exegesis' of it. . . . [Music's] 'spiritual nature' is incarnate in a medium of which 'physics' can give an account both explanatory and necessarily reductive, yet it is not translatable into any other medium except by way of analogy: what music 'means' cannot be expressed in words without change or loss. In order to communicate, music has to be 'realised' through performance and interpretation. . . . Musician and listener learn a shared communication system, but both have to transcend it: the performer needs to be more than technically competent, and the hearer has to respond by attending to and being taken up into what is happening. In other words both need inspiration. . . .
>
> . . . Mysteriously . . . music is a universal language. . . . Music can communicate and unite across the divides of time. The question is: what is 'authentic' performance of the classics of the past? Debate over this issue parallels debate over biblical interpretation. . . . Musicology, critical research, enhances a masterly performance. But an 'authentic' performance without inspiration would be as dead as any other bad artistry.[11]

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[10] Irénée-Henri **DALMAIS**, "The Expression of the Faith in the Eastern Liturgies," in *Liturgy: The Expression and Experience of Faith in Worship*, ed. Herman **SCHMIDT** and David **POWER**, *Concilium* n.s. 9, no.2 (Feb. 1973): 83-84.

[11] Frances **YOUNG**, *Virtuoso Theology: The Bible and Interpretation* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1993), 22-25; originally published as *The Art of Performance* (London: DLT, 1990).

For out present purposes, I would summarize and synthesize the several pertinent observations of the above-cited authors as follows. Within the scope of contemporary textual hermeneutics (exemplified by Zimmerman's use of Ricoeur), it seems legitimate to attempt to treat a liturgy (such as BF) as a 'Text' which can be 'read' and 'interpreted' so as to yield 'meaning.' This 'Text,' according to Hoffman is expressed (or better 'performed') in a 'language' which (from a semiological perspective) contains elements from several different 'sign systems,' of which 'text *qua* written document' is arguably *by no means* the most important one (both according to Hoffman and in keeping with Dalmais's view of the 'genius' of Byzantine liturgy). This 'performance' of a liturgical 'Text' and its 'reception' by an actively participating 'audience,' require (according to Young) not merely that the elements from the several different 'sign systems' utilized in its language be deciphered, but rather that both 'performance' and 'reception' be leavened by transcendent 'inspiration' if real communication is to take place.

In concluding this initial discussion of my dissertation's major methodological presuppositions, it is crucial to say something further about the presumed audience or readership of 'BF-as-performed-Text' and about that entity's role in acts of reading and interpretation. As background to any such consideration of 'the reader,' one must acknowledge the extent to which many late modern and post-modern hermeneuts (including many of those who invoke the name of Ricoeur) take it for granted that 'a text' (or 'Text') is to be viewed as essentially 'mute' in front of the collectivity of its various interpreters. These latter are viewed as an aggregate of individual 'interpreting selves,' each of whom approaches the text with a set of presuppositions while striving (hopefully) to 'read' with some attempt at 'authentic' subjectivity.[12] Such an approach is inherently unsettling to those (myself included) who seek to read and interpret the 'Texts' of Byzantine liturgy from some sort of traditioned communal (i.e., Byzantine) hermeneutical perspective, rather than uncritically appropriating methodologies borrowed from literary criticism.

I would contend that any attempted subscription to a 'Byzantine hermeneutic' ought to entail approaching a liturgical Text with at least three major axioms in mind. First, as Anton Ugolnik points out, the locus for any Byzantine interpretive act is always *social* – within the

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[12] For a critique of this position, see Ben **MEYER**, *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1989), [= **MEYER**, *Critical*], 19-29, and **MEYER**, "Challenges," 5, 8-11.

worshipping ecclesial community – rather than individual.[13] One can perhaps highlight this difference in approach to 'texts' between an 'eastern' versus a 'western' hermeneutic by comparing two paradigmatic early Christian conversion narratives, both of which are centred upon critical engagements with particular texts.

The 'western' example concerns St. Augustine who, while seated alone in a garden, heard a voice, seemingly that of a nearby child at play, which urged him: *Tolle, lege* ("take and read"), in response to which, in his own words, Augustine "arose, interpreting the incident as quite certainly a divine command to open my book of Scripture and read the passage at which I would open [Rom 13:13]."[14] In the 'east,' by comparison, St. Athanasius's *Life of Antony* tells how the young Antony, newly orphaned and possessed of his inheritance, went to church where he heard (and responded radically to) the publicly-proclaimed gospel of the day which included Christ's command (Mt 19:21) to "sell all that you possess and come, follow me."[15]

The circumstances surrounding Antony's conversion, it seems to me, are liable to strike the modern reader as epistemologically 'truer to life' than the rather fanciful details of Augustine's highly subjective experience, and thus could be used as an argument in favour of the 'appropriateness' to general human experience of the communal nature of Byzantine hermeneutics. If this be true, we must presume that any 'superiority' inhering in this approach to the world of meaning mediated by texts (or 'Texts') is not necessarily by virtue of its being 'eastern,' but rather because of its conformity to the intrinsically social nature of all authentic human endeavour.

Second (and as a corollary to the first axiom that we have just treated), the setting for the Byzantine 'interpretive act,' as can be deduced from our foregoing examples, is primarily a *public* and *oral* one as compared to the contemporary western *penchant* (albeit one with older, apparently 'Augustinian' roots) for individual interpretation which focuses upon the *private* interpreter's engagement with a *written* text.

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[13] For this specific point and for much of what follows, I am indebted to Anton **UGOLNIK**, "An Orthodox Hermeneutic in the West," *SVTQ* 27 (1983): 93-118.

[14] **AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO**, "Confessions 7:12," in *Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. F. J. **SHEED** (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1943), 178, as quoted by **UGOLNIK**, 97.

[15] Saint **ATHANASIUS** (of Alexandria): *The Life of Saint Antony*, trans. and annot. by Robert **MEYER** (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1950), 19.

Lastly, in the Byzantine east, a 'tradition of interpretation' has been preserved by the interpreting community, and must be attended to if present-day 'authentic' interpretation is to occur. The contemporary Byzantine interpreter will strive to be faithful to tradition as "the living faith of the dead"[16] while seeking to discern the 'intended sense' of a liturgical text. To this latter notion of a text's having an 'intended sense,' grounded in a 'critical realist' reading of texts, we shall return in the final section of this chapter. But now, we shall turn to a survey of the relatively meagre past attempts at 'reading' BF's 'Text.'

II.B *Glimpsed Readings of 'BF-as-Text': a Literature Review*

A contemporary Greek Orthodox theologian has commented concerning BF that it "has evolved into the richest, most versatile, most dramatic and most impassioned of all the services of [the] Church."[17] In the light of such an assertion, debatable though it might be, it is all the more surprising that the available scholarly (and even popular) literature contains, relatively speaking, so little on this topic. The majority of such materials as do exist tend to be: 1) presentations in Greek or translations from Greek of BF's texts (a number of which were identified in *Chapter One*); 2) studies of BF's history and *ordo* (the more important of which have already been cited in *Chapter One*);[18] and 3) ethnographic or historical studies of the popular funeral practices of the various peoples who have employed the Byzantine rite in worship.[19]

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[16] In Jaroslav **PELIKAN**, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 65, Pelikan is contrasting the "living faith of the dead" – his definition of 'tradition' – with 'traditionalism' which he defines as "the dead faith of the living."

[17] Constantine **CALLINICOS**, *Ὁ Χριστιανικὸς Ναός καὶ τὰ Τελούμενα ἐν αὐτῷ* (The Christian church-building and the services conducted therein), 2nd edition (Athens: Ekthesis Christianikou Bibliou, 1958) (= **CALLINICOS**), 597; as quoted by **VASSILIADIS**, 352.

[18] Among the references cited in *Chapter One*, see especially: **ARRANZ**, *Pannychis*-I & -II; **BRUNI**; **CHRISTODOULOU**; **GALADZA**, "Evolution"; **KNIAZEFF**; **VELKOVSKA**, *Dumbarton*; **VELKOVSKA**, *Handbook*; and ***Appendix II***. Other studies of note include: Miguel **ARRANZ**, "Le preghiere per i defunti nella tradizione bizantina: i sacramenti della restaurazione dell'antico Eucologio constantinopolitano (Prayer for the departed in the Byzantine tradition: sacraments of restoration in the ancient Constantinopolitan Euchologion)," *OCP* 63 (1997): 99-117 [= **ARRANZ**, "Preghiere"); S. B. **BULGAKOV**, *Nastolnaia kniga dlia sviashchenno-tserkovno-sluzhitelei* (A [liturgical] handbook for clergy) [in Russian] (Kharkov: n.p., 1900), 1195 ff.; Placido **DE MEESTER**, O.S.B., "Rituale dei Defunti," in his *Rituale-Benedizionale Bizantino*, Liturgia bizantina, Book 2, Part 6 (Rome: Tipografia Leonina, 1930), 73-148 (chapter 2); Karl Christian **FELMY**, "Die Verwandlung des Schmerzes. Sterbebegleitung und Totengedächtnis in den östlich-orthodoxen Kirche (The transformation of pain: the accompaniment of the dying and the awareness of death in the Eastern Orthodox Church)," in *Im Angesicht des Todes* (In the Face of Death): *Ein interdisziplinäres Kompendium II*, ed. Hansjakob Becker, Bernhard Einig and Peter-Otto Ullrich (St Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1987) [= **FELMY**], 1087-1115; Mère F. **MARCHÈSE**, "La liturgie

With respect to a discussion of the existing *theological* literature on BF, it is important to emphasize at the outset that this literature, with one or two possible exceptions, includes *scarcely a single work that might be described as a systematic theological study of BF.* Indeed, the only important study which approaches such a characterization is one which is minimally available and little known – namely, a series of four lectures on the topic which were given in 1979 by the late Alexander Schmemann and which, since they have never been published elsewhere, are presented as *Appendix II* to the present dissertation.[20] Because of the uniqueness of this work and my interest in it, because it embodies Schmemann's negative (and, to me, contestable) theological assessment of BF's hymnography, and because of Schmemann's international stature as a Byzantine liturgical theologian, I have considered it essential to treat in greater detail his analysis of BF in a later section of the present chapter.

II.B.1 *Theology* from *BF: One 'Text' Among Many*

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des défunts dans le rite byzantine," *Paroisse et Liturgie* 34 (1952): 270-74; Georgii **ORLOV**, *Zaupokoinoe bogosluzhenie: obiasnenie obriadov* (Services for the departed: an interpretation of the rites) [in Russian], reprint (n.p.: Mezhdunarodnyi Izdatel'skii Tsentr Pravoslvnoi Literatury, 1994); **PEKAR**; Peter **PLANK**, "Der byzantinische Begräbnisritus (The Byzantine Burial Rite)," in *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes, Judentum und Ostkirchen I: Texte und Kommentare* (Liturgy in the Face of Death, Judaism and the Eastern Churches I: Texts and Commentaries), ed. Hansjakob Becker and Hermann Ühlein (St Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1987), 773-819; and Bishop Afanasii **SAKHAROV**, *O pominovenii usopshikh po ustavu Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi* (Regarding the commemoration of the departed according to the *ordo* of the Orthodox Church) [in Russian] (St.-Petersburg, Russia: Satis, 1995), 133-80.

[19] Dorothy **ABRAHAMSE**, "Rituals of Death in the Middle Byzantine Period," *GOTR* 29 (1984): 125-34; (Anonymous), "Il funerali greco," *Bessarione* 1 (1896-97): 563-71, 785-92, 886-91; Monk **ARSÈNE** [of Chèvetogne], "Du culte funèbre dans l'Église russe," *Irénikon* 1 (1926): 293-99; **DANFORTH**; Archimandrite Apollinary **DOUBININE**, "Le sacré dans l'Office des Funérailles," in *Liturgie et Cosmos* (Rome: C.L.V. – Edizioni Liturgiche, 1998), 13-17; Hermann J. **GISLER**, "Coutumes funéraires chez les Bulgares," *Échos d'Orient* 6 (1903): 257-63, 390-96, and 7 (1904): 27-31; Phaedon **KOUKOULIS**, "*Βυζαντινῶν νεκρικὰ ἔθιμα* (Byzantine burial customs)," *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 16 (1940): 3-80; James **KYRIAKAKIS**, "Byzantine Burial Customs: Care of the Deceased from Death to the Prothesis," *GOTR* 19 (1974): 37-72; Demetrios **LOUKATOS**, "*Λαογραφηκαὶ περὶ τελευτῆς εἴδησεις παρὰ Ἰωάννῃ Χρυσοστόμῳ* (Ethnographic information concerning death in John Chrysostom),")," *Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Λαογραφηκοῦ Ἀρχείου* 2 (1940): 30-117 (a thorough study of funerals and death in St. John Chrysostom); A. **MURGOCI**, "Customs Connected with Death and Burial among the Roumanians," *Folk-Lore* 30 (1919): 89-102; C. H. **ROMANOFF**, "Extreme Unction, Funeral Services, and Requiems," in idem, *Sketches of the Rites and Customs of the Greco-Russian Church* (London: Rivingtons, 1868), 221-62 (chapter 5).

[20] See ***Appendix II***, pp. 310-60. Besides these lectures by Schmemann, there exists a book in Greek that is a systematic presentation of the content of BF, written by a theologian from the faculty of the University of Athens. See Andreas **THEODOROU**, *"Ἄμωμοι ἐν Ὁδῷ, Ἀλληλούϊα": Σχόλιο ἑρμηνευτικό στή Νεκρώσιμη Ἀκολουθία* ('Blameless in the Way, Alleluia': an interpretive annotation of the Service for the Dead) (Athens: Apostolikê Diakonia, 1990). Basing my assessment on some limited samplings of the work, this text appears to me to be a largely didactic, catechetical (and sometimes pedantic) exposée of its subject, useful principally for the numerous scriptural and patristic cross-references which are provided in the notes.

Leaving aside Fr. Schmemann's work for the moment, I believe it is possible to characterize existing attempts at 'theologizing' around BF as adopting one of three broad approaches. The *first approach to BF* typifies works that aim to undertake some sort of *general theological study of death and dying* (and/or 'after-death') from within the broad limits of the Byzantine Orthodox theological tradition. Typically, their authors make tangential or scattered references to BF as one particular source among many (alongside patristic, hagiographic, iconographic, liturgical, and other sources) which they employ to add weight to their theological arguments. In recent years, for example, there has appeared a spate of 'traditionalist' works on Orthodox eschatology whose principal interest lies in BF's depiction of matters such as the soul's separation from the body at death, or the trials through which the soul then passes before achieving its final pre-resurrectional state.[21]

There are, however, other general studies which deal with the Byzantine theology of death from some more global theological perspective, and which likewise employ BF as one of their sources. This 'sub-group' includes several works of a strongly pastoral bent, written by authors whose interest in the pastoral and 'practical' importance of BF (a matter which will concern us extensively in *Chapters Four* and *Five* of our dissertation) has not, unfortunately, produced any systematic study for the most part. Hence, I propose to offer here a systematic *résumé* of 'themes' which run through the works of one or more of these writers.[22] In order to reduce foot-noting in what follows, I will cite references to particular authors within the body of my text.

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[21] See for example: Archimandrite Vasilios **BAKOGIANNIS**, *After Death*, trans. W. J. Lillie (Katerini, Greece: Tertios Publications, 1995) [= **BAKOGIANNIS**], 37 (a work that includes a more protracted reflection on BF, pp. 43-57); Constantine **CAVARNOS**, *The Future Life According to Orthodox Teaching*, trans. Monks Auxentios and Chrysostomos (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1985), 21, 34; Archbishop Lazar **PUHALO**, *The Soul, the Body and Death*, 4th ed. (Dewdney, BC: Synaxis Press, c1996), 130; Hieromonk Seraphim **ROSE**, *The Soul After Death* (Platina, CA: Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1980), 190, 200; and Metropolitan Hierotheos **VLACHOS**, *Life After Death*, trans. Esther Williams (Levadia, Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1996), 52.

[22] See: Joseph J. **ALLEN**, "The Orthodox Pastor and the Dying," *SVTQ* 23 (1979): 36-37; **BAKOGIANNIS**; Olivier **CLÉMENT**, "Notes sur la mort," *Contacts* 28 (1976): 162-63; **HARAKAS**, 152-56; Thomas **HOPKO**, "Death and Dying: Theological Perspectives," in *Coping with Death and Dying: an Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. John T. Chirban (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985); Élie **MÉLIA**, "Le sens de la mort selon la conception et dans la pratique de l'Église Orthodoxe," in *Célébration chrétienne de la mort*, ed. R. Daille et al. (Lyon: Chalet, 1972), 115-25; David **MELLING**, "Death," www.arimathea.co.uk/death.htm, updated 12 September, 2001; **VASSILIADIS**, 353-54; and **WARE**, "Mystery," 27-41.

First, BF emphasizes for mourners *adversus modernos* the psychological and theological truth that death is both very real and terribly tragic; this is particularly highlighted by the centrality of the open casket in church and by the funeral's hymnography.[23] *Second*, in this context, the psycho-spiritual need for the grieving to express their pain and sorrow is recognized theologically and provided for in a "climate of therapeutic grief" (Harakas, 156): by the texts of the hymns (Allen, 36; Mélia, 120; Melling: "I weep and I lament when I behold death"); by the engagingly mournful character of their musical settings (Vassiliadis, 359, 365); and by the ritual (especially the 'last kiss' at BF's conclusion; Faros, 166-69; Melling). *Third*, BF's theology presents a paradox which the mourners are invited to embrace. Death, though undoubtedly tragic, can also become an occasion for rejoicing (Clément, 162; Hopko, 72). The deceased loved one, according to BF, has been liberated from life's burdens, and has embarked upon a path of 'return to the homeland' and 'restoration of lost beauty' (Ware, 33-4) made possible by Christ's own victory over death. If by faith we can perceive the reality and decisiveness of Christ's victory, we are empowered to live with a hope (Clément, 162; Faros, 165) which can transfigure sorrow (Hopko, 72).

Fourth, BF has important pedagogical and ethical dimensions (Harakas, 154-56); its hymns remind us repeatedly of the fragility and transience of all human life, admonishing us to critical reflection, renewed discipleship, and amendment of life (Vassiliadis, 353-54). *Fifth*, the very existence of BF testifies to the death of a Christian as being "an event in and for the ecclesial community as a whole; through the liturgical and spiritual celebration of death, the Church aligns itself with both the deceased and its living members . . . within the mystery of Christ's own journey through death and into resurrection."[24] This sense of ecclesiality is powerfully reinforced by the unique dialogic character of BF whereby the mourners and the deceased address one another hymnically (Harakas, 154; Vassiliadis, 353). *Finally*, both through BF and the traditional memorial services, the bereaved may feel themselves valorized by being able to pray for their departed loved ones within the Church's communion of love (Ware, 36-8).

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[23] **FAROS**, 158-62. See also **ALLEN**, 36; **HARAKAS**, 154; and **WARE**, "Mystery," 34.

[24] Boris **BOBRINSKOY**, "Old Age and Death: Tragedy or Blessing?" *SVTQ* 28 (1984) [= **BOBRINSKOY**]: 244; as quoted by **HARAKAS**, 155.

A *second approach to BF* (with strong affinities to the first) can be found in the small number of studies which explore the *liturgical theology of death* as this is to be gleaned from the texts (or 'Texts') of various Byzantine liturgical offices. Such works are obviously obliged to draw heavily on BF as one important source.[25] Of the several studies in this category, the conclusions of that by Paul J. Fedwick[26] seem to me particularly worthy of recapitulation here, since he touches systematically upon themes in BF which I intend to develop at greater length in subsequent chapters of my dissertation.

First of all, within BF's 'Text,' Fedwick discerns three groups of elements arranged around and between BF's twin 'tonalities' of mourning and rejoicing. There are, on the one hand, elements of lamentation – for life's transience, for separation, for loss of bodily integrity and beauty. On the other hand, one finds elements of celebration – for liberation from life's instability and futility, for eventual restoration at the resurrection of the dead, and for God's trustworthiness and mercy. And, finally, there are elements that Fedwick describes (p. 158) as "intermediate thoughts" between the other two poles, including pity for others, resignation, longing, remorse, and repentance.

Second, Fedwick concludes that BF "does not offer a coherent view of human death" but rather "a juxtaposing of different, sometimes varying opinions" (p. 160). This inconsistency of outlook may well have an underlying historical explanation, but (suggests Fedwick), it is perhaps also a reflection of "the fact that death is essentially a mystery – an occurrence partly obvious, and partly hidden, and as such defies any claims to definite knowledge" (ibid.). *Third*, in touching upon the 'hidden' undisclosed aspects of death, BF according to Fedwick "limits itself in the main to the bare reproduction of the scriptural statements," focused in particular on the "grace of resurrection"

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[25] The following are brief notes on four of the more 'interesting' works of this type. (1) Constantin **ANDRONIKOF**'s text, "The Dormition as Type of Christian Death," in *Temple of the Holy Spirit: Sickness and Death of the Christian in the Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1983), 10-11, studies the dormition of Mary as presented through the festal liturgy for 15th August, assesses it as an idealized type of Christian death, and explores liturgical affinities with other Byzantine celebrations of Christian *transitus*, including Pascha and BF. (2) An overview of 'death' obtained through the diachronic and synchronic study of various Byzantine liturgical contexts is offered by **FELMY**, 1087-1115. (3) Vigen **GUROIAN**'s article, "Death and Dying in the Orthodox Liturgical Tradition," chapter 8 (pp. 175-99) of his *Ethics After Christendom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), offers an original ethical reflection on contemporary societal responsibilities to the terminally ill, buttressing his arguments with, among others, references to the Armenian and Byzantine rites of burial for laypersons (pp. 188-93). (4) Lastly, in a work from a bygone era – *Oratio Liturgica pro Defunctis in Ecclesia Russo Orthodoxa (Exquisitio dogmatica)* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Wiedzy Chrzescijanskiej, 1930) – Michael **NIECHAJ**'s mild polemic seeks to validate and justify the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory by citing various Byzantine liturgical texts, especially BF.

[26] **FEDWICK**, 160-61.

which is seen as the "culmination of [humans'] pilgrimage status" (p. 160). *Lastly*, suggests Fedwick, although BF undoubtedly conceives of death in dualistic terms as the separation of soul and body, this inadequate concept is "transcended" on the other hand by BF's anthropological 'integralism' which affirms "a continuing . . . relationship between body and soul, even after death, . . . [as] the soul of the departed begins to prepare itself for a reunification with its body in the final resurrection" (p.161).

II.B.2 *Theologies* of *BF: Readings of a 'Text'*

There exists a *third approach to BF* that seeks to deal directly with 'BF-as-Text,' and to elaborate its theology and spirituality from various perspectives, either synchronic (anthropological, liturgical, pastoral, pedagogical) or diachronic (historical and liturgical).[27] It is to this group of studies that we may now direct our attention. Rather than beginning by discussing individually a whole series of particular studies, I shall attempt firstly to systematize the variety of theological 'themes' which diverse authors have discerned within BF. Thereafter, in keeping with the overall 'methodological' thrust of the present chapter, I will proceed to examine more closely the rather 'original' theological analyses of BF made by a few specific authors, utilizing each of them to illustrate a different methodological approach to the reading of 'BF-as-Text.'

In reviewing the 'theological themes' of BF, it seems to me that they can be divided into three non-exclusive categories. First I shall describe what I refer to as 'sombre themes,' then I shall present a group of themes which might be characterized as 'comforting' or 'celebratory,' and lastly, I shall identify themes which I have labelled as 'paradoxical.' *En passant*, I would like to signal my intention to use something similar to this tripartite *schema* as the template for my own later analysis of BF's theology in *Chapter Three*. As I present here these various groups of themes, in order to

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[27] Studies (of variable quality) which I assess as exemplifying this approach to a greater or lesser extent would include the following (most of them cited earlier): **ARRANZ**, "Preghiere," 114-117; **BAKOGIANNIS**, 43-57; **BRUNI**, 213-27; **CALLINICOS**, 555-63; **DANFORTH**, 35-69; **FAROS**, 158-62; **FELMY**, 1087-1115; **KNIAZEFF**, 90-94; **LAZOR**, 'Original'; **LAZOR**, 'Revised'; Frank **MARANGOS**, "Shared Christian Praxis: Approaching the Orthodox Funeral Service," *GOTR* 29 (1984): 195-206 [= **MARANGOS**]; Alexandre **NÉLIDOW**, "Rite for the Funeral of Children," in *Temple of the Holy Spirit: Sickness and Death of the Christian in the Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1983), 163-72; **PEKAR**, 35-42; **PLANK**, "Der byzantinische Begräbnisritus," 797-806; **ROSCANU**, 33-36; ***Appendix II***; **TRUBACHEV**, 69-71; and **VASSILIADIS**, 352-77.

reduce dependence on tedious foot-noting, I shall include in my text parenthetic references to one or more principal proponents of each particular theme.

I would contend that the authors surveyed identify 'sombre themes' in BF which are basically four in number. *First*, there is a prominent emphasis on life's transience[28] and vanity[29] (Faros, 161; Trubachev, 70), which is often coupled with the exhortation or invitation to *memento mori*[30] (Bakogiannis, 45). The death of a loved one can serve those still in this life as an occasion for reflection and amendment of life (Marangos, 198; Roscanu, 35; Vassiliadis, 354).[31]

Second, death is presented as a painful, tragic and awesome reality which destroys the integrity and beauty of the human person (Lazor, 97; Marangos, 197-98). In the light of this realization, BF acknowledges the legitimacy of grieving and encourages the overt expression of appropriate emotions (Bakogiannis, 50; Faros, 162; Roscanu, 34).[32]

Third, a death is an occasion for the sorrowful contemplation of a number of inter-related and profoundly painful separations: of the creation from its Creator through 'the Fall,' of a soul from its body (Lazor, 97, quoting Fr. Georges Florovsky), and of the bereft living from their deceased loved one.[33] Psychologically and spiritually, this latter separation requires a definite moment of farewell, something which BF provides through its rite of the Aspasmos or 'Last Kiss' (Danforth, 41-42; Marangos, 201).

Fourth (and finally), BF advances the awesome prospect of the judgment which awaits both the bereaved and those still alive (Bruni, 227; Trubachev, 70). This becomes an occasion for the trusting entreaty of God's mercy in Christ, and for intercessory prayers for forgiveness, remission

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[28] "As a flower withers and a dream passes, so every human being is dissolved" (Idiomela).

[29] "Truly all the pleasant and glorious things of life are vanity and corruption" (Aspasmos).

[30] "Come brethren, let us look in the tomb . . . . Where are we now going? What have we become?" (Aspasmos). "We mortals then were formed from earth and to that same earth we shall go" (Ikos).

[31] "Let us fly far from every worldly sin that we may inherit the things of heaven" (Aspasmos).

[32] "I grieve and lament when I contemplate death, and see the beauty fashioned for us in God's image lying in the graves, without form, without glory, without shape. O the wonder! What is this mystery which has happened to us? How have we been handed over to corruption?" (Idiomela).

[33] Various 'levels' of 'separation' are highlighted in the following examples of texts drawn from BF: 1) separation of the creature from Creator ("I am an image of your ineffable glory, though I bear the marks of offenses": Evlogitaria); 2) separation of the soul from the body at the moment of death ("Great the weeping and lamentation, great the sighing and constraint at the parting of the soul": Aspasmos); and 3) separation of the deceased from their living family and friends ("Come, let us give the final kiss . . . to [her who] has left her family and is hastening to the grave": Aspasmos).

of sins, and a favorable and restful 'final outcome' (Danforth, 40-41; Kniazeff, 90-91).[34] It is noteworthy how these latter sentiments are particularly evident in the oft-repeated words of the 'Synaptê for the Dead' and its accompanying prayer: 'O God of spirits' (Marangos, 201).

We turn now to a presentation of what can be designated as BF's 'comforting' or 'celebratory' themes. By analogy to the preceding four 'sombre themes,' I would suggest that in the works of the authors reviewed we may identify four broadly-defined 'themes of comfort.' *First*, there is a sense of consolation through knowing that death provides liberation from the toils, cares and shortcomings of this life, from its 'wounds' both physical and spiritual (Fedwick, 155; Ware, 33). In the words of the 'Kontakion for the departed,' the dead are in a place of rest "where there is no more toil, nor grief, nor sighing, but everlasting life" (Trubachev, 70). In such a "place of light, green pasture, and refreshment" ('God of spirits'), it is hoped through 'the mercies of God' (synaptê) that the departed will enjoy that rest 'with the saints' (kontakion) for which BF so fervently and so repeatedly entreats the Lord (Marangos, 206; Pekar, 41).[35]

A *second* 'celebratory theme' in BF is its evident certainty that death has truly been defeated by Christ who (in the words of the prayer 'God of Spirits') has "trampled down death and crushed the devil, giving life to [his] world" (Kniazeff, 90; Lazor, 97-98).[36] By means of BF's "celebration of death," suggests Miguel Arranz, Christians who have been baptized and shared the eucharist enter sacramentally one more time into the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection.[37] The hope engendered by Christ's victory over death gives substance to humanity's longings for restoration as these are evinced by BF's 'Evlogitaria for the Dead' (Marangos, 200; Roscanu, 35; Ware, 33-34).[38]

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[34] "[The] concern [of the soul] is for its stand at the coming trial of vanity and much wearied flesh. Come let us all beseech the Judge and pray that the Lord pardon all that he has done" (Aspasmos). One might also single out here the reminder in BF's Gospel (Jn 5: 24-30) of the prospect of a possible 'resurrection of judgment.'

[35] **PEKAR**, 41, reminds us that a majority of the stichera for the Aspasmos end with a uniform refrain: "Let us pray that the Lord will give him/her everlasting rest." An entreaty for this same 'rest' is, of course, also the object of both the kontakion and the prayer 'God of spirits.'

[36] **LAZOR**, 'Original,' 98, points out how the 'light' of Christ's resurrectional victory over death is made present liturgically in BF through: its matutinal 'shape'; the use of light-colored vestments, lights and candles; the repeated incensations; and the contents of the epistle and gospel lections.

[37] **ARRANZ**, "Preghiere," 100, 115-17.

[38] "To the source of life and the door of Paradise, may I too find the way through repentance." "I am the lost sheep, call me back, O Saviour." "Give me the longed for fatherland, making me once again a citizen of paradise." "Bring me back to your likeness, my ancient beauty."

Third, we entreat God to keep our departed loved ones in his 'Eternal Memory' (Roscanu, 34; Trubachev, 70),[39] which envisages them as inhabiting a "place where grace continues its work" (Kniazeff, 90; see also Bruni, 227). This is the justification for our prayers for the dead, both within and beyond BF, in which we entreat the Lord to forgive their sins (Pekar, 42). And *lastly*, in keeping with the whole ethos of prayer which pervades and informs BF, we experience how even now, in Christ, it is possible to enjoy a relationship of continued communion with our beloved departed, especially through a 'communion of prayer' which is both personal and ecclesial (Andronikof, 10; Ware 35).

A final group of themes to be found within BF, according to my reading of the authors studied, are those which could be described as 'paradoxical' and of which I shall enunciate three. *First*, there is the respect, at times bordering on veneration, which is shown to the physical remains of the deceased. One text notes the critical importance for BF's pedagogical function of those physical "points of contact" with the deceased which the service affords, most importantly during the farewell rite of the 'last kiss' (Marangos, 200). It has also been pointed out that although the body of the deceased is now a 'corpse,' the Church in BF nonetheless honors that body as though it were a living person (for example, by incensing it) because this corpse was until recently a "co-agent in virtue" (Bakogiannis, 47). There is, however, an intensely paradoxical aspect to this quasi-veneration accorded to the body, for this corpse is simultaneously something execrable from a theological-anthropological perspective. It is in fact a tragic 'sign of sin.' The process of soul-body '*dis*-integration' which produced it is emblematic of our state of internal fragmentation and of separation from God (Lazor, 'Original,' 97), and of the contingent necessity for our bodies to undergo dissolution before there can take place our final restoration in Christ (Ware, 32-34).[40]

BF's *second* paradoxical theme entails its function of marking the 'passage' (*Pascha* or *transitus*) of a deceased person (Danforth, 40-42). In BF we confront something – a human death – which is intrinsically tragic and evil from a theological perspective, and which causes enormous

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[39] See also **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 119.

[40] "Having fashioned man in the beginning in your image and likeness, you placed him in Paradise to govern your creatures; but led astray by the envy of the devil he tasted the food and became a transgressor of your commandments; and so you condemned him, O Lord, to return again to the earth from which he had been taken, and to beg for rest" (Idiomela, tone 7).

human pain, suffering and sorrow for those left to mourn. At the same time, for the one 'fallen asleep in the Lord,' it is "an escape from [an] *impasse*, a means of grace, the doorway to . . . re-creation."[41] Hence, BF (in common with many other Christian funeral rites) serves to signal an outwardly tragic event which, at the same time, is also an event worthy of celebration. Although it marks an occasion which is undoubtedly sorrowful, for Christian believers it also marks the passage of a brother or sister towards a new and greater stage in their life-in-Christ, and their eventual attainment of *theôsis*. Within the service itself, this paradox is highlighted by the Prokeimenon (which proclaims, addressing the deceased): "Blessed is the way on which you journey today, for a place of rest has been prepared for you."

A *third* paradoxical theme in BF, closely related to the second, concerns the apprehension of the foregoing paradox by those left behind to grieve. It was highlighted previously in *Chapter One* by a discussion there of sentiments expressed in the Ikos (after the Kontakion): "You alone [O God] are immortal; . . . we mortals were formed from earth and to that same earth we shall go . . . *making our funeral lament a song: Alleluia.*" Trubachev has suggested that this italicized phrase enshrines the most fundamental (but also the most difficult) paradox in all of BF. Attempting to 'explain' this troubling idea, Trubachev writes: "This in effect means turning, transforming our lamentation over the passing of near and dear ones, our uncontrollable sorrow and the unspeakable longing of our soul into a jubilant, triumphant, joyous glorification of God – into the Hallelujah, the song which is sung by the Heavenly Host, . . [that is] into the word of final joy, into a hymn of the highest elation."[42] For those mourners who can see their way forward in faith, the *transitus* of their loved ones is capable of becoming an occasion for rejoicing, because it opens the way for them in Christ by the power of the Spirit into the kingdom of the Father.

II.B.3 *Some Original Methodological Approaches*

I wish now to present briefly five examples of interesting treatments of BF's theology which I have gleaned from my reading of various authors. I have elected to focus on these five because each of them strikes me as being rather 'original' in *his* theologizing (unfortunately all are

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[41] **WARE**, "Mystery," 32.
[42] **TRUBACHEV**, 69.

male), and hence worthy of comment for that reason alone. But in addition, each of them illustrates (it seems to me) a different methodological approach to reading 'BF-as-Text'; hence, it is for this reason in particular that I wish to highlight their work. The five chosen, all authors of works previously cited, are (in order of presentation): a) Paul Lazor; b) Sergei Trubachev; c) Frank Marangos; and d) Loring Danforth, all of whom treat BF in synchronic perspective; and e) Alexis Kniazeff whose brief interpretation of the theology of BF (actually PF) is from an essentially diachronic perspective. It was Kniazeff's approach, I believe, which probably influenced the work of Alexander Schmemann to which we shall turn in the next section of this chapter.

a) Paul Lazor, instructor in liturgics at New York's St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, wrote a brief but succinct overview of BF in 1972 for the SCM Press's *Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, which was later totally rewritten for the book's re-issue in 1986 as *The New Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*.[43] Both articles provide us with concise assessments of BF which manage to be expository and liturgically theological at the same time.

Lazor's first essay focuses upon BF's theological anthropology, a unifying theme which he finds running throughout the service, and which essentially revolves around two diametrical opposites – death-as-tragedy overcome by resurrection-as-victory. On the one hand, "the character of death is exposed in all its realism,"[44] something achieved particularly by the visible remains of the deceased and by the unflinchingly powerful words of the Idiomela attributed to John Damascene. However, this "great tragedy is overcome by an even greater victory [when] Christ shatters death by entering into its very depth."[45] Within the context of BF, this victory is proclaimed by a number of liturgical elements including: the matutinal 'shape' of the service (similar both to Sunday's resurrectional orthros and that of Holy Saturday); the wearing of light-coloured vestments by the clergy; the presence of numerous lights and candles; the frequent incensations; and the epistle and gospel lections. One may note here how Lazor's theological appreciation of BF's 'Text' is grounded equally in both the texts and the setting of the service. He concludes that experientially in BF, whose "'funeral dirge' . . . is the singing of 'alleluia,'" there is

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[43] See **LAZOR**, 'Revised.'
[44] **LAZOR**, 'Original,' 97.
[45] Ibid.

revealed that "gradual yet shattering overcoming of death from within death" which is the "destiny of each member of the church."[46]

In his second essay, Fr. Lazor is again solicitous of the need to read 'BF-as-Text' when he discerns a tripartite liturgico-theological 'shape' to the service. In its first part, reminiscent of Holy Saturday matins, the burial of the Christian is joined liturgically to the 'Blessed Sabbath' on which Christ rested in the tomb from all his labors, that he might fill all things – even death and *Sheol* – with himself. Thus in BF, as on Holy Saturday, the celebrant stands before a bier, candle and censer in hand (in the east Slavic tradition) while the Amomos, psalm 118 (119), is being chanted, following which, as at Holy Saturday Orthros, he incenses the whole church carrying a candle while the Evlogitaria hymns are being sung with their refrain: "Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes" (Ps 118:12). The 'message' is clear, says Lazor. "For the one who has died, this day is a personal Holy Saturday, a personal entrance into Christ's Sabbath rest and entombment, into [his] 'trampling down death by death.'"[47]

Gradually, BF's tonality shifts as the service moves into its second, more penitential part containing psalm 50 (51), the Canon of Theophanes (in fact generally omitted) and the verses, both "sombre and pedagogical," of John Damascene's Idiomela: "What earthly sweetness remains unmixed with grief (tone 1). . . . I weep and I lament when I contemplate death (tone 8)." Observes Lazor: "The theme underlying this particular layer . . . is clear. A lesson is being given to the living. Death comes to everyone and destroys everything. . . . Those present . . . are summoned to arouse themselves, to repent before it is too late."[48]

Then, with the chanting of the Prokeimenon: "Blessed is the way in which you shall walk today [O soul]," followed by the scripture lections, the service's final portion unfolds, one whose theme is "joy in Christ." In the epistle, "St. Paul urges us not to sorrow as others do who have no hope . . . 'since we believe that Jesus died and rose again.'" The gospel reading "also proclaims the good news about Christ's resurrection. . . . Those who die . . . may pass from death to eternal life."[49]

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[46] Ibid., 98.
[47] **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 118.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 119.

Fr. Lazor's tripartite interpretation of BF's 'shape' in his second essay seems to me theologically ingenious. We open the service with Holy Saturday's reminder that through our death, we are being joined to that of Christ who likewise rested in a tomb. Then, like Christ, we enter the darkness of death, recalled for us by the sombre tone of BF's middle section which Lazor describes as 'penitential.' Finally, from that "region and shadow of death" (Mt 4:16), we emerge into the resurrectional joy that pervades the concluding portion of the office.

b) Sergei Trubachev, upon whose insights we drew liberally in *Chapter One* for our discussion of BF's music, is a musicologist and church musician who has written on BF in *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.[50] Like Lazor, Trubachev proceeds under the assumption that BF's theology can only be interpreted by attending to its composite nature of texts-within-setting, which in his case, entails a particular focus on the service's music. Trubachev maintains that BF's music is intended to embody BF's central theological paradox which resides in the assertion of the Ikos that our 'funeral lament' is able to be transformed into a triumphant 'Alleluia.' Hence, authentic settings of BF's music, according to Trubachev, possess a tonality which is at once poignant and exultant "but with no deliberate drama or false pathos."[51] This dual character of BF's music serves to highlight a whole series of paradoxical metamorphoses which BF's theology invites mourners to experience – from darkness to illumination, from sorrow to joy, from woundedness to healing, from death to resurrection.

c) Frank Marangos, an American Greek-Orthodox priest, has elaborated a unique approach to BF in his 1984 article whose theme is the pedagogical potential of the Byzantine-rite burial service.[52] Fr. Marangos's practical theological assessment of BF has been well summarized for us by Stanley Harakas who writes as follows:

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[50] I am assuming here that the person who signs himself as 'S. **TRUBACHEV**' in the *JMP* is the same person as 'Deacon Sergei Trubachov' whose name is given as a musical arranger in the notes accompanying a recently released Austrian CD recording of Russian Orthodox liturgical music performed by the Moscow Cathedral Choir; see *Missa Mystica* (Koch Schwann #365732, 2000; ASIN#: B000054330). The name of 'S. Trubachev' likewise appears as a composer or arranger of numerous Russian liturgical pieces on other recent CDs released under various labels including: IMP Carlton Classics, Naxos, and Russian Compact Discs.

The particular author to whose work we have been referring, S. **TRUBACHEV**, actually produced a two-part article entitled "Panikhida Hymns in Russian Music" which appeared in two consecutive 1986 issues of the JMP, No. 2 (1986): 68-75 and No. 3 (1986): 69-72. Thus far, I have been referring only to part 1 of his study. Part 2 continues Trubachev's critique, begun in part 1, of modern musical settings for the *Panikhida* by 19th and 20th century Russian composers. Any citations of part 2 will be made as "Trubachev, part 2."

[51] **TRUBACHEV**, 71.

[52] **MARANGOS**.

> Marangos relates the dynamic of the funeral service to the process of growth in God-likeness for those who participate in the service. "At all major points," he notes, "the service attempts to thrust individual participants and the entire community beyond their present conduct, understanding, feelings, desires and relationships" [Marangos, 201]. Besides provoking "critical reflection," the service educates through its dialogic hymnody and prayers, the story of salvation it tells in various ways, and its vision of the kingdom as a "homeland" and a place of rest. He sums up the meaning of the Orthodox funeral service as a lesson in discipleship.[53]

Employing a method which is quite different from those of Lazor and Trubachev, Fr. Marangos's theologizing concentrates mainly on the actual words of BF's hymns, psalms, readings and prayers, suggesting that from his educational perspective, BF's 'Text' and its 'texts' are virtually synonymous. Besides the fact that he makes only scant reference to important ritual actions or 'moments' in BF, his overall approach is made clear when he counsels that the "liturgical aesthetics" of BF should be considered of secondary import to its primary function of "kerygmatic disclosure."[54] However, although Marangos seems generally to neglect the important educative potential of ritual, he does make a point of emphasizing the importance for "critical reflection" within BF's 'traditional shape' of certain so-called "'points of contact' with death,"[55] including (most importantly) the ritual of the 'Last Kiss.'

d) Loring Danforth, an American anthropologist, is the author of our final example of an 'original' synchronic approach to BF. Danforth interprets BF's theology[56] in the light of the now-classic theory elaborated by the eminent French sociologist, Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957).[57] Writing from a 'functional anthropological' perspective, van Gennep described what he called 'rites of passage' by which all societies mark the important transitions of their members from one socially significant status to another – the 'life crises' which (in western industrialized societies) include such events as birth, school entry, puberty, marriage, retirement, and death.

According to van Gennep's theory, rites of passage "share a common tripartite structure . . . [being] composed of rites of *separation*, which remove a person from a previously occupied state; rites of *transition* or *liminality*; and rites of *incorporation*, which integrate [a person] into a new

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[53] **HARAKAS**, 155.
[54] **MARANGOS**, 203.
[55] Ibid., 200.
[56] **DANFORTH**, especially chapter 3 (pp. 35-69) entitled "Death as Passage."
[57] Arnold **VAN GENNEP**, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) [= **VAN GENNEP**].

state."[58] These three phases can be identified in any life-crisis ceremony, though each one of the sub-categories of rites may not be present to the same extent in every set of ceremonies nor amongst all peoples. Writing of this, van Gennep observed that "although a complete scheme of rites of passage theoretically includes *preliminal* rites (rites of separation), *liminal* rites (rites of transition), and *postliminal* rites (rites of incorporation)," in any given ritual "these three types are not always equally important or equally elaborated."[59]

The 'rites of passage' paradigm when applied to funerals can be used to characterize burial rituals from the dual perspectives of both the deceased and those left to mourn. Numerous authors have used it to study Christian funeral rites in general, as well as to analyze specific denominational funeral services outside the Byzantine tradition.[60] As 'rites of passage,' funerals have typically been interpreted as rites of liminality or transition, although they obviously contain important elements of both separation and incorporation.[61] Van Gennep himself seems to have conceived of funerals, at least in traditional societies, primarily as 'rites of separation.'[62]

To the best of my knowledge, Danforth is the only author to date (at least in the English-speaking world) who has analyzed BF as a *rite de passage*. Although he is mainly interested in BF as a social scientist, his anthropological perspective nonetheless provides him with a useful framework of interpretation for a theology of BF. Within the overall context of 'death as passage' (the title of his book's Chapter Three), Danforth begins by describing BF specifically as a "poetic yet emphatic call for the quick and successful completion of the passages that constitute death" (p. 40), going on to point out how the service (both through its texts and its rituals) is organized in tripartite manner around its principal elements of passage.

Those of *separation* concern "both . . . the departure of the soul from the body and . . . of the deceased from his surviving relatives" (p. 41); as a particularly acute focus for the latter,

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[58] **DANFORTH**, 35-36. Italics have been added for emphasis.

[59] **VAN GENNEP**, 11; italics added for emphasis. The terms relating to 'liminality' are derived from the Latin *limina* = threshold.

[60] One can cite as examples the following studies: **AINSWORTH-SMITH**, 61-105; Roger **GRAINGER**, *The Message of the Rite: The Significance of Christian Rites of Passage* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 1988), 64, 72-3; **HEINZ**, 130-35; **IRION**, 92-94; **RAMSHAW**, 42-44; **RANDO**, 179; **ROUILLARD**, 73-82; **SHEPPY**, "Transition," 48-9; **SPECK**, 101-09; and **WILLIMON**, 101-02.

[61] On this matter see **HEINZ**, 130-31, and **SPECK**, 102-07. Speck (p.105) speaks of funerals, from the standpoint of the deceased, as belonging to "the period between Good Friday and Easter Day."

[62] **VAN GENNEP**, 11.

Danforth calls attention to the moving ritual of the 'last kiss' (pp. 42-43). 'Rites of *transition*' pertain to the service's repeated entreaties for "the forgiveness of the sins of the deceased [and for] the purification of his [*sic*] soul" (p. 40). Finally, there are the 'rites of *incorporation*': "of the soul into paradise" (p. 41, citing examples of BF's repeated prayers for rest); of "the body into the earth" (p. 42, describing the rites of interment at BF's conclusion); and of "the close relatives of the deceased back into the world of the living" (pp. 42-43, describing common Greek traditions upon return from the cemetery).

Danforth concludes his analysis by suggesting that within the overall anthropologic perspective of "the death rituals of rural Greece" (his book's title), BF may also be viewed simply as a 'rite of separation.' The ritual's conclusion initiates a lengthy 'period of liminality' which lasts from the end of BF until the customary exhumation which will take place several years later, and confirm with grim finality that the remains of the deceased (apart from the skeleton) have been *incorporated* into the earth to await the resurrection.

e) Alexis Kniazeff, formerly dean of the Orthodox Theological Institute of St.-Serge in Paris, is the author of the last of the five studies which I have chosen to present in greater detail.[63] His work is the only one presented which – at least in its brief but very important conclusion – assesses BF's theology from a *diachronic* perspective (in contrast to the essentially *synchronic* viewpoint of the four previous authors). Although the article to which I am referring is actually a study of the Byzantine 'Funeral for a Priest' [PF], it seems quite legitimate to apply Fr. Kniazeff's analysis to BF as well, since most of the latter's parts are included within the much lengthier PF.[64] We have in fact already dealt with Kniazeff's interpretation in the *Introduction* to the present dissertation. However, it is worthwhile for continuity's sake to recapitulate his conclusions here.

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[63] See **KNIAZEFF**.

[64] **PF**, besides containing all of the elements to be found in BF's *ordo*, includes the following additional materials: (1) a series of 5 epistle-gospel readings (after the Evlogitaria and before psalm 50), each of which is accompanied by a prokimenon, hymns and/or psalms, and a special prayer; (2) a special Canon; (3) a full Kontakion of 24 *oikoi* after Ode 6 of the Canon; (4) certain matutinal elements after the Canon including an exapostilarion, the Praises with stichera, and the Great Doxology; followed by (5) the recitation of psalm 91(92). During the procession to the grave, the *Irmoi* of the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete are sung instead of the Trisagion hymn. The 'Funeral of a Monastic' (**MF**) closely resembles BF in its 'shape,' with the major difference being that the 'Canon of Theophanes' is replaced by the singing of the Antiphons in eight tones of the *Anabathmoi* (with accompanying stichera), plus the Idiomela of John Damascene are sung as a processional on the way to the grave.

According to Kniazeff, PF/BF provides us with "an opportunity for meditating on death in general,"[65] a subject which is approached in two contrasting ways by both funeral offices. On the one hand, there is an approach filled with what Kniazeff describes as "comforting themes" and which "emerges especially from the biblical message in the office." This approach "represents death as having been conquered by Christ," a vision that is picked up by certain hymns and prayers which speak of "a next world that is no longer Sheol, but a place of rest, refreshment and light." There, the deceased is welcomed by the Virgin Mary, the saints and the angels who "add their prayers to those of the living for the person being buried." The mourners are even given hope that "the deceased may be called even now to live [there] in the presence of the glorified Christ."

Alongside (and in marked contrast to) this 'comforting' approach to death, PF/BF offers "another vision of death . . . that emphasizes . . . the tragic aspect of death, [an] aspect [which] appears in the greater part of the hymnic texts of the office." This 'stratum' of the funeral concentrates on 'negative' themes such as: humanity's fallen state; the painful separation of soul from body; the "destruction of [human] beauty that had been created in the image and likeness of God"; the pain of the survivors caused by their separation from the deceased whose body is now decomposing; and the prospect for all of the parousia with its final judgment and the possibility of eternal punishment.

Kniazeff, in contrasting these two 'visions of death,' certainly leaves us with the distinct impression that he assesses the latter 'tragic' vision as theologically unsatisfactory, although he refrains from saying this directly. Instead, he opines that the 'tragic vision' is "distant alike from that given in the New Testament and that familiar to Christian antiquity." Speaking, as he was, to an ecumenical audience in 1974, one that was doubtless familiar with the recently promulgated thorough revision of the Roman Catholic *Ordo Exsequiarum*, Kniazeff delivers an oblique criticism of PF/BF's 'tragic vision' by noting its resemblance to that "found in other liturgies, . . especially in the Roman liturgy after the Middle Ages." Finally, he considers it "surprising" that the 'tragic vision' is to be found within the same (Byzantine) liturgical tradition "that features such a

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[65] This reference (and all other references to **KNIAZEFF**, unless otherwise specified) are to be found on pp. 90-91 of his text.

magnificent cry of triumph as is found in Matins for Easter with its canon from St. John Damascene [or its] catechetical sermon on the resurrection which is attributed to St. John Chrysostom."

In essence, Kniazeff interprets PF/BF's theology diachronically as containing two discordant (and probably incompatible) visions of death – a 'comforting' *biblical* one that focuses on Christ's defeat of death, and a predominantly *hymnic* one (hence chronologically later) that dwells on death's 'tragic aspect.' This dichotomy will be picked up and considerably amplified a few years later by Alexander Schmemann in his 1979 lectures on the 'Orthodox Liturgy of Death' (see *Appendix II*). It is to an analysis and critique of this work by Schmemann that we shall now direct our attention.

II.C *Alexander Schmemann's Diachronic Dichotomous Reading of 'BF-as-Text'*

Regardless of how theological history may ultimately adjudge the lasting contributions of the late Alexander Schmemann (1921-1983), there must be few who would dispute the contention that he is one of the most significant figures of twentieth-century Orthodox theology, one whose influence is felt well beyond the often narrow confines of the world of eastern Christian studies. Given Fr. Schmemann's eminence, it makes it all the more pressing for me to attempt to summarize his assessment of BF's theology, since the present dissertation proposes to call into question certain fundamental aspects of it. In setting out to present and later critique Schmemann's reading of 'BF-as-Text,' we shall first examine some of the basic premises of his general theological approach (especially those that might be presumed to condition his treatment of BF), after which we shall proceed to a more detailed discussion of his analysis of BF.

II.C.1 *Schmemann's Background and Theological Method: Situating his Approach to BF*

There exists a growing number of generally positive appreciations of the life and works of Alexander Schmemann which may be drawn upon by anyone seeking an overall comprehension of his background and contributions to theology.[66] However, my more specific interest at this juncture

[66] Important primary sources for an appreciation of the nature and scope of Schmemann's theological *opus* include the following major works: ILT; Alexander SCHMEMANN, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 2d revised and expanded edition (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1973) [= SCHMEMANN, *Life*]; idem, *Of*

is to try and identify particular aspects of Schmemann's life and thought that are either reflected in his theological treatment of BF or might be presumed to have conditioned it in some manner.

In what follows, I propose to highlight and briefly discuss five areas of Schmemann's experience and work: a) his 'churchly' upbringing in Paris; b) his early intellectual formation in France; c) the evolution of his method of 'liturgical theology'; d) his trenchant critique of various 'reductionisms' affecting both the contemporary western world and the Orthodox Church's encounter with that world; and e) his apparent mistrust of programmatic liturgical reform. For each

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Water and the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1974) [= **SCHMEMANN**, *Water*]; idem, *Church, World, Mission.* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1979) [= **SCHMEMANN**, *Church*]; and **SCHMEMANN**, *Eucharist.* For a critically important collection of Schmemann's essays on the relationship between liturgy and theology, see Thomas **FISCH**, ed., *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemann* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1990) [= **FISCH**]. For some helpful insights into the man Alexander Schmemann, both as person and as priest-theologian, see the recently published *Journals of Father Alexander Schmemann, 1973-1983*, trans. Juliana Schmemann (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2000) [= **SCHMEMANN**, *Journals*].

Some generally positive assessments of Schmemann's life and works include: Bernard **DUPUY**, "Un témoin de l'Orthodoxie contemporaine: le Père Alexandre Schmemann (1921-1983)," *Istina* 30 (1985): 117-30; Vigen **GUROIAN**, "An Orthodox View of Orthodoxy and Heresy: An Appreciation of Fr. Alexander Schmemann," *Pro Ecclesia* 4 (1995): 79-91; Thomas **HOPKO**, "Two 'Nos' and One 'Yes'," *SVTQ* 28 (1984): 45-48 [= **HOPKO**, "Two"]; Mathai **KADAVIL**, "A Journey from East to West: Alexander Schmemann's Contribution to Orthodoxy in the West," *Exchange* 28 (1999): 224-46; John **MEYENDORFF**, "A Life Worth Living," *SVTQ* 28 (1984): 3-10 [= **MEYENDORFF**, "Life"]; Paul **MEYENDORFF**, "The Liturgical Path of Orthodoxy in America." *SVTQ* 40 (1996): 49-55 [= **MEYENDORFF**, "Liturgical"]; Aidan **NICHOLS**, "Alexander Schmemann and Liturgical Theology," in idem, *Light from the East: Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology* (London: Sheed & Ward, c1995), 146-69 (chapter 9); Michael P. **PLEKON**, "Alexander Schmemann: Father and Teacher of the Church," *Pro Ecclesia* 3 (1994): 275-88; idem, "The Church, the Eucharist and the Kingdom: Towards an Assessment of Alexander Schmemann's Theological Legacy," *SVTQ* 40 (1996): 119-43; and Robert **SLESINSKI**, "The Theological Legacy of Alexander Schmemann," *Diakonia* 19 (1985): 87-95.

For a recent work in which Schmemann's approach is proposed as 'liturgical theology' in its most proper sense, see David W. **FAGERBERG**, *What is Liturgical Theology?: A Study in Methodology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992). Two other important works by liturgical theologians, which bear the strong imprint of Schmemann's influence (without being primarily assessments of him or his theology), are: Aidan **KAVANAGH** , *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1984); and Gordon W. **LATHROP**, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1993).

Among less adulatory assessments of Schmemann's work (including some quite critical of him), one might cite the following: Peter **GALADZA**, "Restoring the Icon: Reflections on the Reform of Byzantine Worship," *Worship* 65 (1991): 238-55 [= **GALADZA**, "Restoring"]; W. Jardine **GRISBROOKE**, "An Orthodox Approach to Liturgical Theology: The Work of Alexander Schmemann," *Studia Liturgica* 23 (1993): 140-57 [= **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann"]; Kevin **IRWIN**, *Liturgical Theology: a Primer* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 40-44; Paul V. **MARSHALL**, "Reconsidering 'Liturgical Theology': Is There a *Lex Orandi* for All Christians?" *Studia Liturgica* 25 (1995): 129-51; Bruce T. **MORRILL**, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, c2000); Michael **POMAZANSKY**, "The Liturgical Theology of Fr. A. Schmemann," in *Selected Essays* (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1996), 82-102; and Nicholas **WOLTERSTORFF**, "Liturgy, Justice, and Tears," *Worship* 62 (1988): 386-403.

of these parameters, I shall try and show why I believe it may have influenced Schmemann's assessment of BF, about which we shall speak more shortly.

II.C.1.a Fr. Alexander's 'churchly' upbringing in Paris is commented upon by John Meyendorff in the moving memorial tribute to his friend and colleague which was published in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* just a few months after Schmemann's death in December, 1983.[67] Born in Estonia in 1921 to Russian *émigré* parents from St. Petersburg (with some Baltic German ancestry on his father's side), Schmemann in early childhood moved from Estonia to Paris with his family, and initially continued his upbringing in Paris within the confines of what was essentially a Russian 'cultural ghetto.' As a student first in a Russian military school and later in a *gimnaziya* (high school), Schmemann along with his peers would have been exposed to typically boring, compulsory religion classes.

However, it appears that the really important locus for the young Schmemann's religious formation was the St. Alexander Nevsky Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Paris's rue Daru, an institution where he served as an acolyte and eventually as a sub-deacon, under the watchful and kindly eye of Metropolitan Evlogii (Georgievskii) who was chief hierarch of the exiled Russians in Western Europe. Meyendorff (p. 4) comments that "Alexander understood the value and dimensions of the liturgy and even developed a certain love for pomp and ceremony, which remained with him all his life."

Living in an *émigré* community which was practically defined by its bitter experiences of exile and hardship during the inter-war decades, the young church-server Schmemann must have had a thorough and early acquaintance with human suffering and loss through his presence at an endless round of Russian Orthodox funerals and memorial observances, an experience that he indeed refers to *en passant* in his BF lectures.[68] Although Fr. Alexander as an extra-parochial Orthodox priest may not have presided at all that many funerals, his BF lectures betray a fundamental deep familiarity with the service and its texts, and he spontaneously and repeatedly quotes from the funeral office during his talks. Given his early and intense exposure to BF, it seems

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[67] **MEYENDORFF**, "Life," 4.
[68] See ***Appendix II***, pp. 316, 346.

to me reasonable to conclude that this experience must have exerted a significant influence on his later assessment and appreciation of BF and its theology.

II.C.1.b Schmemann's intellectual and theological formation in France was to comprise several different in-depth exposures which made a lasting impression on the mind and heart of the youthful Alexander. After his initial Russian primary and high-school education, Schmemann attended a French *lycée* and later still, the University of Paris.[69] From these experiences he acquired a life-long admiration for French literature in particular, and for 'western' arts and letters in general. Indeed, having grown up and had his higher education in France, and later on after having lived a good part of his adult life in America, Fr. Schmemann would confide to his diary that he thought of himself as an essentially 'western' person who, despite his great love of and respect for the Orthodox Church and its 'Holy Tradition,' actually recognized within himself a strong aversion to many aspects of Orthodoxy's Byzantine inheritance.[70] This latter attitude may account at least partially for Fr. Alexander's criticisms of (and even distaste for) much of BF's Byzantine hymnography.[71]

At the Orthodox Theological Institute of St.-Serge in Paris which he attended from 1940-1945, Schmemann came under the influence of a number of charismatic teachers who inculcated in him an early appreciation for the critical importance to modern Orthodox thought of liturgy in general (Fr. Cyprian Kern) and the eucharist in particular (Fr. Nicolas Afanassieff), of a critical reading of ecclesiastical history (A.V. Kartashev), and of the necessity for a return to the authentic sources of theology in the works of the early Greek Fathers (Fr. Georges Florovsky).

However, during most of Schmemann's student days at St.-Serge, the Institute (as well as the lives of its students) would have been dominated by the towering intellectual and spiritual presence of its dean, Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, who died in July, 1944.[72] Bulgakov, a disillusioned former Marxist, had become a figure of considerable prominence in Russian *émigré* churchly circles because of his generally original – and often highly speculative – metaphysical and theological thought. In this regard, he had even managed to achieve a significant degree of

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[69] **MEYENDORFF**, "Life," 4.
[70] See **SCHMEMANN**, *Journals*, 213.
[71] See, e.g., ***Appendix II***, pp. 337-40.
[72] See BDEC, s.v. 'Bulgakov, Sergius (1871-1944), 93.

notoriety through his propounding of a 'Sophiology' which sought the hermeneutical key to all Christian doctrine through the perspective of a nearly-enhypostasized 'Holy Wisdom.' Although Fr. Alexander was never to evince any great fondness for philosophical or theological speculations in general, nor for those of Fr. Bulgakov in particular, there can be little doubt that the youthful Schmemann would have been profoundly touched by the intellectual and moral stature of the man, from whom he must surely have imbibed generous quantities of that urbane broadmindedness which they possessed in common.[73]

Beyond the walls of St.-Serge, the young Schmemann's evolving theological consciousness was also moulded by exposure to the intellectually exciting climate and personalities of the *ressourcement* which was sweeping through French Roman Catholicism during the forties and fifties. Its 'return to the sources' through new methods of biblical and patristic study, and the attendant interest in a renewal of liturgical life served in Alexander's mind and heart to fertilize seeds which had earlier been sown at St.-Serge.

Schmemann seems to have been especially attracted to and influenced by the works of Jean Daniélou and Louis Bouyer; according to Meyendorff, it was from these thinkers and the climate which they helped create that Fr. Alexander "really learned 'liturgical theology,' a 'philosophy of time,' and the true meaning of the 'paschal mystery.'" Meyendorff goes on to opine that even if the legacy of men such as Bouyer and Daniélou "was somewhat lost within the turmoil of postconciliar Roman Catholicism, their ideas produced much fruit in the organically-liturgical and ecclesiologically-consistent world of Orthodoxy through the . . . witness of Fr. Schmemann."[74]

Stimulated by his several Paris exposures, Schmemann's recognition that doing liturgical theology necessitated an understanding of liturgical history and an appreciation of the liturgy's multiple 'developmental *strata*' bore fruit in his seminal work composed in Russian in 1961, and translated into English in 1966 as *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* **[ILT]**. We shall examine

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[73] Evidences of Schmemann's considerable regard for Bulgakov are to be found in Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, *Ultimate Questions: An Anthology of Russian Religious Thought* (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1977), 297-98. In this two-page introduction to some of Bulgakov's Easter sermons, Schmemann speaks of him as possessing "admirable integrity, depth, and conviction" in his approach to theological problems, and as being both "a great and creative thinker" as well as "a wonderful priest and a powerful preacher."

[74] **MEYENDORFF**, "Life," 6.

shortly the way in which the historico-critical approach underlying ILT (which helped to make Schmemann an internationally recognized liturgical scholar) defines his treatment of BF.

However, let us note *en passant* how in ILT's final chapter (entitled "The Byzantine Synthesis"), Fr. Alexander concludes, regarding the evolution of today's Byzantine rite, that the eventual addition of the 'monastic' *stratum* to the 'early Christian' and 'parochial' *strata* of the *ordo* resulted in "one of the most important and profound upheavals ever to occur in liturgical piety, precisely the separation of the Eucharist (in the minds of believers) from its eschatological and ecclesiological significance."[75] Remarks such as this allow one to deduce that for Schmemann, not every 'development' in Byzantine liturgical history was necessarily to be assessed as an 'improvement.' This attitude will become quite obvious when we turn to consider Schmemann's treatment of what he characterizes as the 'lamentation layer' of BF.

II.C.1.c The gradual evolution of Schmemann's 'method of liturgical theology' (a method which was indebted to, but went well beyond, mere historico-critical study)[76] has been highlighted for us by Thomas Fisch and W. Jardine Grisbrooke.[77] They inform us that the term 'liturgical theology' was apparently used for the first time (at least in the 'western' world) in 1937 by a certain Maieul Cappuyns,[78] but with a meaning much closer to what Schmemann would later characterize as 'theology of liturgy,' and define (in 1982) as "all study of the Church's cult in which this cult is analyzed, understood and defined . . . in terms of *theological categories and concepts which are exterior to the liturgy itself*."[79] Grisbrooke contends that the 'early Schmemann' actually availed himself of just such an approach in many parts of ILT. Thus, in its introductory chapter for example, Schmemann could write that "the task of liturgical theology consists in giving a theological basis to the explanation of worship . . . [which] means, first [of all], to find and define

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[75] ILT, 152.

[76] Ibid., 18: "Historical liturgics establishes the structures and their development, liturgical theology discovers their meaning: such is the general methodological principle of the task."

[77] See **FISCH**, 5-7, and **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 150-56.

[78] The term was probably used for the first time by a Russian Orthodox author when it appeared in the title of a 1928 work by Fr. Cyprian Kern; see Peter **GALADZA**, "Liturgy and Life: The Appropriation of the 'Personalization of Cult' in East-Slavic Liturgiology, 1869-1996," *Studia Liturgica* 28 (1998): 222.

[79] **SCHMEMANN**, "Liturgical Theology: Remarks on Method," in **FISCH**, 137-38. Italics have been added for emphasis.

the [theological] concepts and categories which are capable of expressing as fully as possible the essential nature of the liturgical experience of the Church."[80]

However, Grisbrooke goes on to suggest (citing Fisch) that Schmemann's notion of a 'theology of liturgy' was already being modified in the direction of his later 'liturgical theology' under the influence of some critically important observations by Louis Bouyer contained in an appendix to his 1955 work, *Liturgical Piety*. Here, Bouyer wrote that "the theology of liturgy is the science which *begins with the liturgy itself* in order to give a theological explanation of what the liturgy is, and of what is implied in its rites and words." Hence, cautioned Bouyer, "those *authors are not to be accounted as liturgical theologians* . . . who go to work the other way round and *seek to impose on liturgy a ready-made [theological] explanation* which pays little or no attention to what the liturgy says about itself."[81]

Building upon this *caveat* of Bouyer's (according to Fisch and Grisbrooke), Schmemann already in the just-cited introduction to ILT, could write that the goal of liturgical theology is "to explain how the Church expresses and fulfils herself in [the] act [of worship]" (p. 14), and that "after historical analysis there must come a theological synthesis [which is] the second and major part of liturgical theology . . . [namely] the elucidation of the rule of prayer as the rule of faith" (p. 17). Here we can see that an important distinction was forming in Schmemann's mind between liturgy understood primarily as a 'source of theology' (because he saw liturgy as both a manifestation and an experience of faith),[82] and liturgy understood merely as an 'object of theology.' "By 1963," observes Grisbrooke, "the distinction is formulated and explicit" such that Schmemann could write as follows in his essay entitled "Theology and Liturgical Tradition":

> There is much confusion and ambiguity in the use of certain terms. One speaks, for example, of *liturgical theology*, of a liturgical "resourcement" [*sic*] of theology. For some, this implies an almost radical rethinking of the very concept of theology, a complete change in its structure. The *leitourgia* – being the unique expression of the Church, of its faith and of its life – must become the *basic source of theological thinking*, a kind of *locus theologicus par excellence*. There are those, *on the other hand*, who, while admitting the importance of the liturgical experience for theology, would *rather consider it as a necessary object of theology* – an object requiring, first of all, a theological clarification of

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[80] ILT, 14.

[81] Louis **BOUYER**, *Liturgical Piety* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press), 277; italics added for emphasis.

[82] See **SCHMEMANN**, "Liturgy and Theology," in **FISCH**, 61-68.

> its nature and function. *Liturgical theology* [the former] or the *theology of liturgy* [the latter] – we have here *two entirely different views concerning the relationship between worship and theology.*[83]

Schmemann's *praxis* of liturgical theology entails what Grisbrooke describes as a "holistic and contextual approach to the study of the liturgical tradition."[84] This fundamental axiom for Schmemann's whole manner of proceeding is something which informed my own earlier remarks on the need to approach BF theologically as a unitary 'Text' comprised of 'texts-within-setting.' Fr. Alexander sheds further light on what is entailed by his 'holistic and contextual approach' in the 'Introduction' to ILT where he writes as follows:

> Worship simply cannot be equated with texts or with forms of worship. It is a whole within which everything, the words of prayer, lections, chanting, ceremonies, the relationship of all these things in a 'sequence' or 'order' and, finally, what can be defined as the 'liturgical coefficient' of each of these elements (i.e. that significance which, apart from its own immediate content, each acquires as a result of its place in the general sequence or order of worship), only all this together defines the meaning of the whole and is therefore the proper subject of study and theological evaluation.[85]

Through the application of his evolved method of liturgical theology, the 'mature' Schmemann, according to Thomas Fisch, made two important contributions to the prevailing ecumenical climate of liturgical renewal during the latter part of the twentieth century. One of these, of secondary importance according to Fisch, was Fr. Schmemann's "articulation of the early church's consciousness of the relationship between the *ecclesia*, the eucharist, and the eighth day, a consciousness which continues to be embodied in the liturgical tradition of both East and West."[86] The other, of particular importance in conditioning Schmemann's assessment of BF (as we shall see more fully in a moment), was Fr. Alexander's "rediscovery of the *eschatology* inherent to the liturgy." According to Fisch, "it is Schmemann's insight that eschatology, far from being a small or accidental aspect of the liturgy, is in fact what defines the liturgy. The 'specificity' of the Christian liturgy," continues Fisch quoting Schmemann, "consists in its eschatological character."[87]

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[83] **SCHMEMANN**, "Theology and Liturgical Tradition," in **FISCH**, 11-12, quoted also by **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 153. Most of the italics have been added by me for emphasis.

[84] **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 149.

[85] ILT, 15-16, and quoted by **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 149.

[86] **FISCH**, 7.

[87] Ibid., 8. The terminal quotation from Schmemann is taken from his previously-cited essay, "Liturgical Theology: Remarks on Method," **FISCH**, 142. A work which contextualizes and resonates well with Schmemann's eschatological emphases is Geoffrey **WAINWRIGHT**, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (London: Epworth Press, 1973), see especially pp. 151-54.

II.C.1.d Schmemann's critique of various 'reductionisms,' both societal and ecclesial, has been noted by many authors, but by few so trenchantly as his son-in-law, Fr. Thomas Hopko, in a homily delivered at Fr. Schmemann's funeral on 16 December, 1983.[88] According to Hopko, during a casual conversation one summer day many years prior to Schmemann's eventual final illness and death, Fr. Alexander half-jestingly suggested to Fr. Thomas that after his death, he needed only one brief *in memoriam*, namely the recollection by others that the 'meaning' of his life could be summed up by "two 'nos' and one 'yes.'"

The major 'yes' of Schmemann's world-view has already been touched upon – namely his conviction that the uniqueness of the Christian faith lies in its 'eschatological vision,' in its dual apprehension of the Kingdom of God as a reality which, on the one hand, awaits its final consummation in that mysterious 'end time' when God will become "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28 KJV), but which, on the other hand, is already present and available to human persons as the 'new life in Christ,' realized most perfectly within the communion of the Church through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Although this antinomic eschatological vision has always been preserved at the heart of the Church's liturgical life (most especially in the celebration of the eucharist), history attests to Christianity's repeated temptation to diminish the Christian vision by an over-emphasis on one or other arm of the antinomy, thereby risking the Church's reduction to either an other-worldly sect or a this-worldly institution. These twin reductionisms, both within the life of his own church and within the wider Christian community, preoccupied Fr. Schmemann for much of his life in North America,[89] and underpinned the two great 'nos' of his testament to succeeding generations.

These 'nos' were directed squarely against both *secularism* as well as its supposed antithesis, namely *religion*. Schmemann understood 'secularism' as an "all-embracing world-view proclaiming the self-sufficiency of the world, whose meaning can and must be found in itself,

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[88] See **HOPKO**, "Two," 46-47.

[89] These and his related concerns about 'nominalism' and 'minimalism' inform much of what is contained in Fr. Alexander's insightful and prophetic three-part article, "Problems of Orthodoxy in America," which was published in *SVTQ* in 1964-65. See: Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, "I. The Canonical Problem," *SVTQ* 8 (1964): 67-85; "II. The Liturgical Problem," *SVTQ* 8 (1964): 164-85; and "III. The Spiritual Problem," *SVTQ* 9 (1965): 171-93.

independently from any reference to the transcendent."[90] This 'heresy' has been seriously bedeviling the modern world ever since the Enlightenment, although Fr. Alexander contended that its roots went back much further into the medieval history of western Christianity.[91] However, in Schmemann's opinion, far from its being a purely Western problematic, secularism is also having a serious impact upon the Orthodox as they encounter the modern world, an impact made all the more threatening by Orthodoxy's mistaken belief in its supposed immunity to such threats.[92]

Thought of popularly as secularism's polar opposite, 'religion' in Schmemann's understanding was rather like the obverse face of a two-headed coin. Elaborating on his father-in-law's sometimes confusing (to lay-people) critique of 'religion,' Thomas Hopko, putting words into the mouth of his newly-deceased mentor, said:

> Christ did not bring religion; Christ brought the Kingdom of God. Christianity is not a religion to help secular man [*sic*] to cope with his "problems." Man does not have problems, he has *sins*. This world does not need "therapy"; it can't be "helped." It has to die to rise again. There is one sentence in *For the Life of the World* where Father says that this, as a matter of fact, is the heart of the matter. [Quoting Schmemann, Hopko continues]: "It is here we reach the heart of the matter. For Christianity, *help* is not the criterion. Truth is the criterion. . . . Salvation . . . is not only not identical with help, but is, in fact, opposed to it. Christianity quarrels with religion and secularism not because they offer 'insufficient help,' but precisely because they 'suffice,' because they 'satisfy' the needs of men" [end of quotation].[93]

For Schmemann, *all* reductionist sufficiencies, whether secular or religious, anything which promises to replace humans' focus on "the one thing needful" (Lk 10:42), must be vigorously combatted. As one might anticipate, such a position will be unsympathetic (to say the least) to any

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[90] Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, "Orthodoxy," in *The Study of Spirituality*, ed. Cheslyn **JONES**, Geoffrey **WAINWRIGHT**, and Edward **YARNOLD** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 521.

[91] See "The 'Orthodox World,' Past and Present," in **SCHMEMANN**, *Church*, 58-63.

[92] See Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, "Hartford and the Future of Orthodoxy: That East and West May Yet Meet," in *Against the World For the World: the Hartford Appeal and the Future of American Religion*, ed. Peter L. **BERGER** and Richard John **NEUHAUS** (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 134-37. Many of Schmemann's conservative Orthodox interlocutors were offended by his warnings about the unacknowledged (because insidious) secularism, often disguised as 'religiosity,' which has been one of the unfortunate results of Orthodoxy's encounter with the modern world. Ironically, despite Schmemann's many criticisms of Russia's historical evolution, he himself appears to have been insufficiently cognizant of the extent to which the early 18th-century 'Petrine reforms' of the Church of Russia produced a church containing powerfully secularizing forces which, paradoxically, generated a highly 'religious' ecclesiastical culture that ultimately abetted the 1917 Revolution. See Nicholas **ZERNOV**, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 35-62 [= Chapter Two: "The Russian Church on the Eve of the Revolution"].

[93] **HOPKO**, "Two," 46-47. Hopko's quotation from Fr. Alexander is taken from **SCHMEMANN**, *Life*, 99. Italics are in the original.

'therapeutic' interpretation of BF (and the other Byzantine-rite commemorations of the departed) in terms of their proffering 'help' to the bereaved.

II.C.1.e Fr. Alexander's apparent aversion to programmatic liturgical reform has been drawn to our attention by relatively few commentators on the work of the great liturgist.[94] It is, however, a matter of direct importance to our discussion of Schmemann's appreciation of BF in its present form (as we shall see), and for this reason, I wish to explore the question more carefully.

In company with many other Orthodox living in the West, Schmemann was attentive to the unfolding drama of the Roman Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council. Like many of the 'progressive' Council Fathers and *periti*, Fr. Alexander was apparently attracted by the prospect of a major *ressourcement* within the Catholic church (and possibly beyond), along lines envisaged by Daniélou, Bouyer, and the other great French Catholic theologians of his Paris days. Just as the Council was convening, Schmemann wrote in 1959: "We must neither overlook nor underestimate a genuine renaissance that takes place today in the Roman Church, of a deep and in many respects admirable theological renovation, liturgical movement, [and] spiritual revival. In all of this, there is a far greater degree of self-criticism, re-evaluation of the past and free rethinking of historical development than we can find within Orthodoxy."[95]

However, several years prior to penning these lines of admiration, Fr. Schmemann (under the acknowledged influence of some earlier cautionary observations by Louis Bouyer)[96] had sounded a more sobre note in an article which, when later revised as the 'Introduction' to *ILT*, included the following thoughts:

> It became clear that without such theological 'reflection' the liturgical revival was threatened either by an excessive submission to the 'demands of the day,' to the radical nature of certain 'missionary' and 'pastoral' movements quite prepared to drop old forms without a second thought or, on the other hand, by a peculiar archeologism which considers the restoration of worship in its 'primitive purity' as the panacea for all contemporary ills.[97]

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[94] See **FISCH**, 21-47 (for the famous 'trialogue' involving Schmemann, Dom Bernard Botte, and W. Jardine Grisbrooke); **GALADZA**, "Restoring," 251-53; **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 146-48; and **MEYENDORFF**, "Liturgical," 49-55.

[95] Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, "Rome, the Ecumenical Council and the Orthodox Church: 1. Possibilities and Impossibilities," *SVTQ* 3:2 (1959): 2-3.

[96] Louis **BOUYER**, "Où en est le mouvement liturgique?", *La Maison-Dieu* 25 (1951): 40-46. This reference – incorrectly cited! – was pointed out to me by **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 146.

[97] ILT, 12-13 [approximately = Alexander **SCHMEMANN**, "Liturgical Theology: Its Task and Method," *SVTQ* 1:4 (1957): 19], quoted also by **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 146.

To Schmemann and others, it was evident by the close of the sixties that his words of caution had become a prophecy. Contemplating the "present liturgical confusion in the West," especially within the Roman Catholic Church, Fr. Alexander attributed it to an "absence of a clear and consistent rationale for liturgical reform."[98] Of concern to Schmemann was his perception of a fundamental "divorce between liturgy, theology, and piety" which he believed had affected the post-patristic church of both East and West, and which had precipitated the 'crisis' that the contemporary liturgical movement was attempting to remedy. However, he concluded, "precisely because the roots of the crisis are theological and spiritual rather than liturgical, no liturgical reform can by itself and in itself solve it."[99]

Because it had neglected to precede its liturgical reform by a fundamental and radical theological and spiritual *ressourcement*, the Roman Church "in spite of some excellent ideas and a good deal of liturgical competence" had precipitated a "disintegration of [its] liturgy" through a "hasty acceptance of such [reforming] principles as the famous 'relevance,' . . . or 'social justice.'"[100] The resulting climate of experimentation was a fundamentally anarchic one which, having neglected the wise counsel of the 'liturgical movement,' became "inspired by an altogether different and indeed deeply *anti-traditional* set of aspirations."[101] For the Orthodox Church to follow suit would have nothing but disastrous consequences. No merely "external liturgical reform" was in order, thought Schmemann, but rather "a theology and piety drinking again from the eternal and unchanging sources of liturgical tradition."[102]

From his 'practical' perspective, W. Jardine Grisbrooke bemoans what he senses was Fr. Alexander's 'loss of nerve' engendered by his "fear that liturgical reform in the Byzantine rite

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[98] **FISCH**, 46. Roman Catholic liturgists might well take issue with Schmemann on this matter, pointing out that in fact, Vatican II specifically attempted to provide such a 'rationale' in its *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*]. This document, in its oft-cited paragraph 14, identifies the second of its "General Principles for the Restoration and Promotion of the Sacred Liturgy" in the following statement: "Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that *full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy* [emphasis mine], and to which the Christian people . . . have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism"; see *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents, Study Edition*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1987), 7-8. However, this proposed 'rationale for reform' has merely begged the question, so it seems to me, because there have ensued (and continue to take place) endless debates (both in the Roman church and elsewhere) about what actually constitutes "full, conscious, and active participation."

[99] **FISCH**, 41.

[100] Ibid., 46.

[101] Ibid., 28. Italics are in the original.

[102] Ibid., 29.

would in practice produce the same kind of chaos as it has produced in so many churches of the Roman rite." Grisbrooke goes on to give the following opinion:

> To my mind, the sad thing about Schmemann's attitude to practical reform is that he, of all people, was in his day the man most likely to have been able to give a lead in proposing a liturgical reform in the Byzantine rite truly in accord with "the eternal and unchanging sources of liturgical tradition," the man above all others able to set out "a clear and consistent rationale for liturgical reform." I cannot but fear that his conservatism in this matter can only have strengthened the position of those who adhere to – and I quote his own words – "a sterile, liturgically illiterate 'integrism'."[103]

Beyond such a 'practical' assessment, however, one needs also to recall Fr. Schmemann's previously mentioned attitude toward the negative consequences of the 'upheaval' engendered by certain monastically-inspired developments during the evolution of the Byzantine rite.[104] If 'Schmemann as liturgical historian' was correct in his perception that one of the unfortunate consequences of the in-grafting of monastic liturgy onto the Byzantine trunk was a "separation of the Eucharist (in the minds of believers) from its eschatological and ecclesiological significance,"[105] then it becomes problematic to accept that 'Schmemann as pastoral liturgist' – one credited by many for being the principal moving force behind *diaspora* Orthodoxy's current Eucharistic revival[106] – did not also harbour a desire, albeit a 'secret' one, for some sort of reformed Byzantine-rite parochial liturgy.[107]

Before proceeding to consider 'Schmemann on BF,' I wish to close the present section on his background by conceding that Fr. Alexander's loving critics, Grisbrooke among them, are probably justified in criticizing him for his principled (even if comprehensible) reluctance to embrace any overt 'program' of liturgical reform, especially as there are hints in the pages of ILT, some of them none too subtle, that Schmemann might well have viewed certain 'restorative'

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[103] **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 148. The final quotation is from **SCHMEMANN**, *Eucharist*, 198.
[104] See ILT, 152-62.
[105] Ibid., 152.
[106] See, for example, **MEYENDORFF**, "Liturgical," 53.
[107] My intuition in this regard finds some support, albeit anecdotal, in a remark noted *en passant* in Robert **TAFT**, "The Byzantine Office in the *Prayerbook* of New Skete: Evaluation of a Proposed Reform," *OCP* 48 (1982): 357. Speaking of the reformed 'Liturgy of the Hours' published by the Monastery of New Skete in New York state (formerly a Byzantine-rite Catholic house, now part of the Orthodox Church in America), Fr. Taft reports the following: "I have heard that in 1979-1980 the Liturgical Commission of the Orthodox Church in America, chaired by the well-known liturgist Alexander Schmemann, submitted to the Holy Synod a similar [i.e. to that of New Skete] though less radical proposal for a reformed parish vigil based on similar principles."

changes to the Byzantine liturgy as both desirable and defensible. Fr. Alexander's eschewal of reform on theoretical grounds is a factor which, in my opinion, creates certain inconsistencies in his analyses and evaluations of BF's liturgical theology, a subject to which we shall now turn.

II.C.2 *A Résumé and Critique of Schmemann's Views on BF: Are its Strata Incompatible?*

Schmemann's unpublished 1979 series of four lectures on "The Orthodox Liturgy of Death" were delivered in the context of an annual week-long 'Liturgical Institute' which was (and is) a regular part of the annual programme at St. Vladimir's Seminary where Schmemann was Dean for twenty-one years. In his recently-published *Journals*, Schmemann refers several times to his intention of revising and editing these lectures for publication.[108] However, for reasons that will probably remain unknown, this project never reached completion, so that only the audio-cassette recordings of his talks are available. For the first time ever (to my knowledge), these lectures have been transcribed (by me), and are included in this present dissertation as '*Appendix II.*'

Since the texts of Fr. Schmemann's lectures are available to readers of the present dissertation in the aforementioned *Appendix II*, I shall attempt only to provide a brief *résumé* of what I take to be some of Schmemann's principal 'points,' focusing in particular on those with which I either take issue, or strongly concur, for one or another reason. In order to reduce foot-noting, references to *Appendix II* will be incorporated into the body of my text.

In his ***first lecture***, Fr. Alexander undertakes to provide his audience with elements for a theoretical perspective from which to assess contemporary North American Orthodox attitudes to death in general and BF in particular. Not too surprisingly, the principles upon which he attempts to construct his theory are precisely those "'Two 'Nos' and One 'Yes'" about which Thomas Hopko spoke at Schmemann's funeral. 'Secularism' is roundly criticized because "neither . . . in its totality, nor in its religious expression, [is there] any room for *death as a meaningful event*, as . . . the *kairos* of human destiny" (*Appendix II*, p. 313); in his fourth lecture, Schmemann goes so far as to *define* secularism precisely as that world-view "which has no reference to death" (p. 348).

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[108] SCHMEMANN, *Journals*, 222, 264, 270, 308.

Under secularism's death-deprecating influence, there have emerged three serious distortions in the North American '*praxis* of death.' On the one hand, there is a public 'conspiracy of silence,' aided and abetted by organized medicine and the funeral industry, which has made it easy to deny death by effectively removing it from everyday life. On the other hand, in opposition to this climate of denial, and under the influence of authors like Elisabeth Kübler-Ross,[109] there has arisen what Schmemann calls "a new and fashionable interest in death" (p. 314), that attempts to 'humanize' death by focusing on its 'natural-ness,' thereby threatening to deprive death of "whatever mystery and tragedy, whatever sacredness and numinosity" it still possesses (p. 315). Finally, in desperation, our culture reacts against both of the above distortions by deciding – still distortedly – to treat death as a *neurosis*, "as an illness to be treated therapeutically" (ibid.).

However, at the root of all this, suggests Schmemann, there lies a complex religio-theological problem. In virtually every pre-Christian pagan civilization, the '*praxis* of death' was relegated to the realm of 'religion' – coincidentally Fr. Alexander's other great 'No' alongside secularism. Through various forms of the 'cult of the dead,' humanity sought to keep at bay its fear of 'the dead' by maintaining them ritually in a spiritual realm that was valued expressly for its total separation of the dead from all contact with the 'land of the living.' What Schmemann refers to as the 'Christian revolution' – the early Church's exultant proclamation of Christ's defeat of death – promised to put an end to the need for all of this religious effort, but within the space of a few centuries, the old 'cult of the dead' reappeared in a new guise such that an eventual "flood of funeral piety threatened to engulf the Church" (p. 317). In his vehement and repeated criticisms of Christianity's virtual return to the 'old death' of its pagan pre-history, we can surely imagine that here Fr. Alexander was responding (and perhaps over-reacting) to the excesses of Orthodoxy's 'religion of the dead' which he had encountered weekly in the Russian Paris of his boyhood.

The reason for this restoration of the 'cult of the dead,' opines Schmemann (thereby broaching his pre-eminent theological 'Yes' – eschatology) was the loss by later Christian generations (for reasons he does not detail) of that eschatological vision which had typified the first Christians. Says Fr. Alexander (utilizing the 'historical present'):

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[109] See Elisabeth **KÜBLER-ROSS**, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Macmillan, 1969) [= **KÜBLER-ROSS**].

> The early Church lives in the quiet and joyful certitude that those who have fallen asleep in Christ are alive. . . . She asks no questions as to the nature and modality of that 'being alive' before the common and final resurrection. . . . She is freed from that individualistic . . . interest in death as *my death*, as the fate of *my* soul after *I* die, interest which will later . . . virtually overcome the eschatology of the early Church. For the early Christians, the common resurrection is precisely *common*, and this means a cosmic event, the fulfillment [in Christ] of all things at the end of time . . . the dead and the living and the whole creation of God.[110]

It is ironic, suggests Schmemnn, that "the death which our [post-Christian] secularist culture forces on us, strange as it may seem, is the *old pre-Christian death* – death naturalized, death tamed, humanized, disinfected, deodorized, banalized " (p. 321), a death in which the departed inhabit a realm separated both from the living and from God.

I have presented Schmemann's views in his first lecture at some length because they provide the 'theoretical framework' out of which he attempts to interpret BF's 'liturgical theology' in ***lectures two and three.*** Here, we can behold in full force Fr. Alexander's attempted application of the historico-critical approach that he learned in France (which we were already beginning to glimpse toward the end of lecture one), now hard at work alongside and inter-twined with an attempted liturgical theology. However, it quickly becomes clear that his theological interpretation of BF is to depend upon certain *a priori* historical and cultural analyses as we learn from the opening words of lecture two: Schmemann states that BF is "made up of *layers* [emphasis mine] belonging, not only to different historical periods, but . . . also to different spiritual, different theological, psychological and cultural mentalities" (p. 322). Theological evaluation of today's BF needs to be linked to its historical evolution, says Schmemann, signaling the basic diachronicity of his methodology.

Apparently violating his own axiom that "the true meaning of each liturgical act is revealed through context, i.e. by its place within the *ordo*,"[111] and being committed theologically to 'anti-secularism,' 'anti-religion,' and 'pro-eschatology,' Schmemann appears to be practicing more a 'theology of liturgy' rather than his preferred 'liturgical theology' when he discerns historical grounds for dismantling and analyzing BF into three discontinuous historico-theological layers. He manages to do all this despite his seeming intentions to the contrary: Part way through lecture two

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[110] ***Appendix II***, p. 320.
[111] SCHMEMANN, *Water*, 74,

he insists, in spite of the way he is actually proceeding, that "from beginning to end, from the home to the last 'Amen' at the grave, *we have here one service, one celebration* [emphasis mine] . . . – our entrance, together with the deceased, . . into the deathless death of Christ" (p. 330).

BF's oldest *stratum* in Schmemann's *schema*, the one deriving presumably from paleo-Christian funeral rites (as practiced, for instance, during the era of imperial persecution), in all likelihood differed little in its outward form from the funerary rituals common to Jewish and Greco-Roman antiquity. After a semi-ceremonial preparation of the body at home, there would have occurred a public procession to the burial-site where there must have taken place certain 'last rites.'

Perhaps only with these latter is there imaginable room (and necessity) for any specifically Christian content in the form of hymnody, scripture lections, and/or prayers. But, suggests Schmemann invoking a Baumstark-like 'law of continuity and discontinuity,'[112] the continuity in outward *form* of early Christian funerals only served to disguise their revolutionary discontinuity in inward *meaning*, because the psalmody, scripture readings and prayers would have reflected the Christians' post-resurrectional eschatological view of the world and of human death and burial *en Christô*. Admitting that his analysis "must of necessity be a very tentative one, based not only on clearly established facts, but also on some hypothetical guess-work" (p. 322), Fr. Schmemann hypothesizes that "at least one prayer [GOS] and one hymn [the Kontakion] that have survived in our present burial service can be traced back to that early period, if not in [their] very wording at least in spirit and style" (p. 325).[113]

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[112] Cf. Anton **BAUMSTARK**, *Comparative Liturgy* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, c1958), 130: "Actions which were in origin purely utilitarian . . . afterwards received a symbolic interpretation [which they] acquired . . . by a new general law which we may formulate as follows: Certain [purely utilitarian] actions [in this case the need for burial] may receive a symbolic meaning either from their function in the Liturgy as such or from factors in the liturgical texts which accompany them."

[113] This statement by Fr. Alexander appears to me as a mixture of serious historical inaccuracy with an excess of wishful thinking. In his theologically-motivated anxiety to demonstrate that our present-day BF is comprised of an 'early' 'Holy Saturday' layer and a 'later' Byzantine layer, Schmemann can be said to have 'jumped the gun' for the following three reasons:

(1) all of the earliest extant manuscript funeral *ordines* date from the latter half of the 'Middle Byzantine' period (8th – 12th centuries), and hence are available to us only as mixtures of presumed 'early' and 'late' materials about whose dating we can merely hypothesize in most instances;

(2) there is certainly no documentation whatsoever for the textual contents of *any* pre-Constantinian funeral rites, the period Schmemann is discussing here. *Macrine*, AC, and **DIONYSIUS** all provide evidence for the ritual 'shape' of relatively primitive funeral *ordines*, but these three documents (all mid-4th century or later) give us scarcely any specifics about the hymns, prayers or readings used;

(3) GOS is indeed one of the oldest parts of today's BF, as Fr. Schmemann asserts, but even it can only be attested as far back as the early 7th century. Kontakia in general (commonly attributed to Romanos the Melodist) also date back to at least the 6th century, but there is no documentary evidence for a

Next, Fr. Alexander proceeds to elaborate the early Church's understanding of the continued communion of the living and the dead – reflected for him in the text of BF's Kontakion: "With the Saints give rest" – by developing an insight that he presumably gleaned from his reading of the French cultural historian, Philippe Ariès, referred to elsewhere in Fr. Schmemann's lectures. Seriously over-interpreting Ariès, Schmemann attaches great theological significance to what he describes as "the most radical and most visible christianization of death in the early Church," namely "the return [*sic*] of the cemetery to the city" which is said to reflect a paleo-Christian intuition that "the dead must be with the living because they are *alive*" (p. 328).[114] With the re-location of cemeteries from outside the city walls into urban church-yards, the funeral liturgy's "main emphasis now was laid on the presence of the deceased . . . in the church, and on the meaning of that ultimate *synaxis*, the assembly of the Church . . . for her deceased member" (ibid.). Hence, BF changed its 'shape' as a procession from home to the cemetery by gradually adding to this procession a stational funeral-vigil in the cemetery's adjacent church. Thus, according to Fr. Schmemann's analysis, there was created BF's *second layer.*

In introducing his analyses of BF's second *stratum*, Fr. Alexander takes no great pains either to strive for historical precision or to conceal his preferred liturgico-theological key to its interpretation. He simply informs us that "once the funeral service was transferred to the church, it sooner or later (and it doesn't matter too much when exactly) took the form of a vigil, similar not only in structure, but also in spirit and meaning, to the one the Church celebrates in the early morning of the middle day of the *triduum paschale*" (p. 329). Schmemann opines that the key elements of this layer of BF are the ones common both to it and to Holy Saturday Orthros, namely: 1) the recitation in

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presumed date of appearance for KON. It may possibly have been present in the earliest extant monastic funeral *ordo* that is found in the 10th-century manuscript *Cryptoferrata graeca Γ.β.X*; this document mentions a 'kontakion' during the Canon, but no text is given.

[114] See **ARIÈS**, *Hour*, 29-40. In actual fact, Ariès, basing himself almost exclusively on western European developments, describes a phenomenon somewhat more complex than Fr. Schmemann's attempted theologization of it. Rather than a simple 'relocation' [*not* 'return'] of the cemetery to the town from its Greco-Roman location *extra muros*, it seems that the sites of entombment of popular martyr-saints (most of which were located in cemeteries originally beyond the town walls) gave rise in the post-Constantinian church to the erection of memorial basilicas whose grounds (which were already pagan cemetery precincts) soon became popular as Christian burial-spots because of their proximity to the saints' tombs. Eventually these suburban basilicas with their adjacent grave-yards attracted the development of new neighborhoods which soon expanded to fuse with their nearby towns, thereby helping to break down the old taboo against burying the dead within the city limits. By extrapolation, the grounds of all churches, including those originally urban (most of which also contained the re-interred relics of martyrs) eventually became the preferred locale for Christian burial.

three staseis of Psalm 118 (119); 2) a set of so-called 'Evlogitaria' sung concurrently (in the east Slavic tradition) with a 'great incensing'; and 3) a procession accompanied by the repetitive chanting of the Trisagion. The particulars of Fr. Alexander's theologizing around each of these three principal 'moments'– much coloured of course by his 'Holy Saturday' paradigm for BF – need not detain us here. The interested reader (who may have noted references to certain of Schmemann's analyses in my *Chapter One*) will find these analyses detailed on pp. 330-33 of *Appendix II.*

Fr. Alexander, doubtless pressed for time, now goes on to sketch the remainder of BF's *ordo*: psalm 50 (51); the Canon "with its usual ingredients"; the "eight sticheras ascribed to Saint John of Damascus, at the place where in a normal Matins we would have the psalms called 'the Praises'"; the Beatitudes "with their own troparia"; the Epistle and Gospel (pp. 334-35); "and finally the concluding part of the service, centered on the ritual of the 'Last Kiss'" (p. 333). Adducing no particular historical justification for his conclusion, Schmemann then suggests that of these elements of BF, "only psalm 51, . . maybe the Beatitudes, and certainly the scriptural lessons seem to me to have belonged to the original *ordo* of the funeral after it began to be served in the church" (ibid.).[115] Concerning the remaining elements which are all "hymnographical" [*sic*], he informs us that they "belong to a later layer [which] embod[ies] an approach, a tonality, substantially different from the one I have just tried to analyze [and] whose main expression is psalm 119" (ibid.).

Almost half of ***lecture three***, entitled "Prayers for the Dead," is devoted to a discussion of BF's hymnography, described elsewhere by Fr. Alexander as comprising a "layer of lamentation and fear" (p. 354). This in actuality is the funeral's *third stratum* (or 'layer') according to the *schema* with which Schmemann began his analysis; the *first stratum* (or 'layer') was the primitive procession to the

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[115] Here once more, as in the two preceding notes, Fr. Schmemann has allowed theological agendas to interfere with historical accuracy. From **DIONYSIUS**, we do know that funeral rites in church were already being practiced in 6th-century Syria, an era and locale with a strong influence on the later evolution of the Byzantine Rite. Unfortunately, there is little information given about the specific contents of this service, although the text (section 7.3.4, p. 84) does provide an outline of a final prayer by the bishop that contains many elements in common with GOS. To say, as Schmemann does, that "psalm 51 [*sic*], . . maybe the Beatitudes, and certainly the scriptural lessons . . . belonged to the original [i.e., 4th-5th century] *ordo* of the funeral . . . in church" is nothing but idle and romantic speculation. Psalm 50 (51) was indeed a part of the Byzantine *pannychis*, BF's possible precursor, so on this score, Fr. Alexander could conceivably be right. However, the Beatitudes can only be documented for the first time in a 10th-11th century Palestinian manuscript (*Sevastianov gr. 474*). Our earliest list of NT 'readings for those fallen asleep' (in a 10th-century manuscript of the 'Typikon of the Great Church') witnesses to a tradition which is no earlier than the 8th century. Interestingly, our oldest (10th-century) extant manuscript monastic funeral *ordo* (*Cryptoferrata graeca Γ.β.X*) provides (after psalm 118, a Canon, the Praises, and a 'rite of three antiphons') for the same Epistle (1 Thess 4: 13-18) and Gospel (Jn 5: 24-30) lections to be read as are found in today's BF.

grave, while the *second stratum* (or 'layer') comprised the 'Holy-Saturday-like' *ordo* of the earliest vigil-service in church. From here on, the references to 'layers' sometimes get a bit confusing as Fr. Schmemann tends now to refer to 'two layers' in today's BF: an 'early Christian' or 'Holy Saturday' layer (effectively the combination of his original first and second *strata*); and a later, hymnographic 'lamentation layer.'

Analyzing the piety of the 'lamentation layer' (which we shall discuss more fully in a moment), Fr. Alexander assesses it as similar in spirit to that piety which led to the Church's reluctant acceptance of a system of essentially private 'commemorations of the departed'; the remainder of lecture three is devoted to a critique of these private memorial services. They are described by Schmemann as "mini-pseudo-funerals" (p. 346) which detract from the Church's most authentic locus for the 'commemoration'/ 'remembrance' of both living and departed, namely the celebration of Eucharist. The Church obviously struggled to contain this burgeoning Christian return to the pagan 'cult of the dead,' as is evidenced by the Typikon's prohibitions against the holding of memorial services, for example, on Sundays or on major Feast-days.

Turning to a comparison of the 'theological tone' of BF's 'lamentation [or hymnographic] layer' with that of the earlier 'Holy Saturday layer,' Fr. Schmemann proposes that the funeral hymnography introduced into BF four important changes in its approach to death and the dead. In the 'Introduction' to this present dissertation (see pp. 4-5), I have quoted him extensively in this regard. Here I will only list the major differences which Schmemann identifies and which are:

a) an emphasis on our *separation from the departed*, rather than our entering together with them into the 'deathless death' of Christ;
b) the depiction of death as *gloom and darkness* rather than an entry into that "place of brightness where the light of God's face shines";
c) the sense that the departed need rest-as-respite because *life is nothing but an "unreal shadow,"* filled with suffering which leads only to a death where all is silence, darkness, and separation. Hence, the *rest* which we entreat of God for the deceased is no longer 'God's [Sabbath] rest,' which is the fulfillment and celebration of life;
d) our funeral prayer is envisaged primarily as one which is *for* rather than *with* the departed.

As with Knizaeff's earlier discernment of two contrasting "visions of death" in PF/BF, the one "comforting" and the other "tragic,"[116] we see here also in Schmemann the perception that there is a

[116] **KNIAZEFF**, 90: "The tragic aspect . . . appears in the greater part of the hymnic texts of this office."

fundamental dichotomy in BF's theology according to which the theology of death presented by the later 'lamentation stratum' is adjudged, more than implicitly, as theologically inadequate when compared to the paschal and eschatological perspectives of BF's Holy Saturday layer.

We may turn now to ***lecture four*** in which Fr. Alexander re-visits his earlier astute critique of various themes pertaining to death and contemporary Western culture by considering their effects on the Church and by presenting certain remedies that could be taken within the Church to alleviate some of his concerns. Details of Fr. Alexander's final talk need not concern us here for the most part. However, I would like to note (and gently criticize) his somewhat ineffectual attempts to "reconcile . . . those 'two layers' [of BF] which, with purpose, I opposed to each other so strongly"; now, "because of the Church's faith" as he says, Fr. Schmemann feels obliged to try and show that both layers "are integral parts of the liturgy of death" (p. 354). His efforts to achieve this objective, however, strike me as rather perfunctory and thus not particularly convincing.

Fr. Alexander insists with no intended disingenuousness that he can accept that "lamentation has its place" in BF, and that from a purely anthropological 'human' perspective, it is probably the case that lamentation should be given a certain priority as the funeral's 'earliest layer' (ibid.). He observes that we may follow Christ's own example when he wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus (ibid.), and that human beings, besides being *homo sapiens* or *homo adorans*, are also "crying animals" who have been given the "gift of tears" (p. 355). When a person weeps on the occasion of the loss of a beloved 'other' through death, that person is not simply mourning this one loss, says Fr. Schmemann, but in a larger *existential* sense, he or she grieves for all "brokenness in time [and] space, the impossibility of keeping [at bay] the 'iron law' of aging" and our dissolution "into weakness, into senility, into loss of memory – all that is still the sad reality of this world" (ibid.). It seems to me that here Fr. Schmemann is actually confirming the validity of certain themes that one finds within BF in the hymns of John Damascene or the Aspasmos.

Unfortunately (in my opinion), Fr. Schmemann shies away from actually embracing BF's elements of lamentation as an *essential* component of BF's 'genius' (something that I hope to demonstrate later on in my dissertation). We are left to assume that Schmemann's well-known aversion to 'liturgy-as-therapy' (a topic to which we shall return in a later chapter) would have

prevented him from endorsing lamentation for its supposed pastoral usefulness. Likewise he apparently did not discern or appreciate any dramatic or pedagogic value to BF's juxtaposition of the 'old death' alongside its scripturally-based presentation of Christ's paschal victory over death.

Despite his modest efforts to rationalize what he earlier presented as 'opposing' theological assessments of death within BF, Fr. Alexander finds himself trapped on the horns of a dilemma. By presenting what is essentially a deprecation of BF's 'lamentation layer' while attempting to adhere to his oft-stated preference for 'appreciating' intact liturgical units, Schmemann comes close to mooting a *de facto* liturgical reform to which, as noted earlier, he remains opposed in principle.

II.D *Towards a Synchronic Interpretation of the 'Intended Sense' of 'BF-as-Text'*

We have now reached the concluding section of *Chapter Two*. Having stated our major methodological presuppositions in section ***II.A***, and having reviewed (in sections ***II.B*** and ***II.C***) existing attempts by others (especially by Alexander Schmemann) to 'situate' and 'give form to' BF's liturgically-mediated theology, our task will now be to impart some final methodological precision to our own proposed interpretation (as well as later practical analyses) of BF's theology.

It is important to stress at this juncture that my 'interpretive reading' of 'BF-as-Text' (and my subsequent analyses) will be carried out from a *synchronic perspective*. That is, I intend to undertake a non-historico-critical reading of BF's 'Text' (and its various texts) as these are encountered in present-day recensions of BF in use by North American jurisdictions of Byzantine-rite Christians. In particular, I plan to focus most of my attention on (and limit my interpretation and analyses to) what I characterized in *Chapter One* as BF's 'emergent North American *ordo*' which, as I tried to show there, is representative (I believe) of BF's 'shape' amongst a majority of North American Byzantine-rite Orthodox.

My synchronic approach contrasts with the essentially diachronic perspective which was adopted by Fr. Schmemann (and by Fr. Kniazeff before him), and which led them to conclude that factors in BF's historical development had produced a profound – and, at least in Schmemann's eyes, unfortunate – dichotomy in the service's theology. Without accepting Fr. Alexander's denigration of this dichotomy, I believe that he is nonetheless correct in discerning its existence. Moreover, I believe

that it can function heuristically to assist us in interpreting BF's theology and in eliciting what can be referred to as its 'intended sense.'

The notion that BF (or indeed any other text or 'Text') might possess an 'intended sense' is not a particularly fashionable one in today's hermeneutical climate that, in reaction (or over-reaction) against excessive past reliance on historico-critical methodologies often appears bent on dismissing authorial or editorial intention not only as a chimera but also as irrelevant. In this view of things, a text, once freed from the real or imagined constraints of the *mens auctoris* (or *mens redactoris*), becomes a *tabula rasa* upon which the text's would-be 'interpreters' can feel free to deposit whatever personal referents they may wish,[117] thereby avoiding in many instances the much more difficult task of actually grappling with the 'deep sense' of their chosen text.

Describing this situation, Ben Meyer has spoken of "the contemporary flight from interpretation" which he understands as a flight "from construal of and encounter with intended meaning." The symptoms of this increasingly prevalent *maladie* include "the limiting of interpretation to elucidation of detail; the drift into trackless historical conjecture; the preferring of analysis . . . to interpretation, together with an accompanying domestication of intended meaning, either by translating it into more congenial terms or at any rate by judging it on the basis of some conventional standard or some closed system."[118] If Meyer's diagnosis and 'description of symptoms' are valid, one surely finds here sufficient grounds for convicting Schmemann of a "flight from interpretation" in his diachronic treatment of BF, for through his "trackless historical conjecture" and his "translating [of BF] into more congenial [i.e., eschatological] terms," he has, perhaps inadvertently, contributed (in my opinion) to a "domestication of [BF's] intended meaning."

With specific regard to my own proposed interpretation of BF, an attempted refutation of contemporary criticism's prevailing set of interpretive presuppositions seems essential at the outset, not only because these presuppositions are espoused in general by an increasing number of modern (and post-modern) hermeneuts, but also because they appear to have infected in particular such an august interpreter of BF as Alexander Schmemann himself. Hence, in relation to BF, we need to look

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[117] See **MEYER**, "Challenges," 5: "'Meaning' was now taken to be the product, not of the textual realization of an author's intention, but of a reader's 'realization' of a text otherwise mute. No longer a stable artefact, the text yielded centre-stage to the reader's creative cognitive activity."

[118] **MEYER**, *Critical*, 28-29.

briefly in turn at the questions of 'authorial intention,' the 'intended sense' of a text, and the need for 'authentic subjectivity' in readership.

Although the tortuous and seemingly random evolution of most Byzantine liturgical offices can be unraveled to a greater or lesser extent by the application of critical methods, and often 'explained' through a study of ecclesiastical history, these exercises leave unanswered the question of there being some possible 'meaning' or 'intention' behind such an evolution. This issue is a particularly acute one for any student (such as myself) who seeks to integrate his scholarship with an Orthodox Christian faith perspective which comprehends liturgical tradition not simply as a sequence of historically-conditioned texts and rites, but also as an integral part of the Church's 'Holy Tradition' conceived of as "the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church."[119] From a Byzantine perspective, without insisting that the liturgical offices in their present form are *immutable* parts of 'the Tradition,' one is nonetheless obliged to take seriously the notion of the Church's having had a definite 'editorial intention' (discerned as an action of the Holy Spirit) when it undertook to disclose its *lex credendi* through the theologically dichotomous present-day *lex orandi* of BF.

If the ecclesial community's presumed exercise of 'redactorial intent' in its handling of BF can be accepted as a valid insight, it then follows that 'BF-as-Text' can be assumed to possess what Ben Meyer refers to as an 'intended sense.' In fact, in Meyer's view, any 'serious' text possesses an intrinsic 'intended sense' even when such a text has no traceable evidence of 'external' authorial intent. In his understanding of the notion of an 'intended sense' of texts, Meyer relies heavily upon the 'critical realist' hermeneutics of the Canadian Jesuit, Bernard Lonergan, an approach that we may now examine briefly with help from Meyer.[120]

According to Lonergan's theory, in the world of human being and knowing, there are two sorts of 'real objects' and hence two sorts of 'objectivity.' The first objectivity is that of the senses with which we encounter and come to know (from earliest childhood) the 'real' objects in our environment. The second type of objectivity is much more complex, and concerns "the world mediated by meaning" in which "an object is what is wondered about, what is specified by

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[119] Timothy **WARE** (now Bishop Kallistos of Dioklea), *The Orthodox Church*, (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1963) [= **WARE**, *Orthodox*], 206

[120] **MEYER**, "Challenges," 5-9, 11. References to this work are included in the body of my text in order to reduce foot-noting.

questioning, understood when the question is relevantly answered, and known when the answer is secured as true" (p. 6). In the modern world, there are those who maintain that the term 'objectivity' can legitimately be applied only to the first sort of objectivity, and who would restrict 'knowing' to that which can be gleaned from the world of the senses. However, Meyer (following Lonergan) insists that "knowing is more than sensing." The 'real' includes everything which can be grasped with the intelligence and affirmed by reason. "This account of knowing is called *critical realism.* It is *realism*, but not the realism of the infant child. Its *critical component* derives from its focus on acts of understanding and judgment" (p. 7; emphases mine).

'Critical realism' has been applied by Lonergan (and Meyer) to the reading of texts. Here it serves to critique what Lonergan has called "the principle of the empty head" according to which the "intelligent and rational act of reading" is reduced to the naïve supposition that reading consists solely in "seeing what is there to be seen" (p. 8). This is a fallacious understanding of the 'act of reading' which, if 'meaning' is to be achieved, requires numerous acts of the attentive reading subject. In a first moment, the subject begins to understand the text as its "word-sequences are pressed to provide clues to the understanding of just what those sequences mean"; at this stage, understanding is still hypothetical. Thereafter, in a second moment, "the meaning of the text emerges out of the reader's own [subjective] resources. . . . Questions for reflection spontaneously occur: Is this, in fact, the meaning that the text is aiming at? What actual warrants make this meaning probable? With what measure of assurance?"[121] "Successful reading" in fact depends on a series of "habitual subjective acts." Hence, "objectivity (the sort that is relevant . . . to fully human knowing) is precisely the fruit or product of *authentic subjectivity*" [emphasis mine]. This basic principle of critical realism "is perhaps the most significant single ascertainment in contemporary hermeneutics" (p. 8).

From a 'critical realist' standpoint (and in firm opposition to all forms of 'reader-response criticism'), "the text remains central to the reader" (p. 9). The reader in seeking to evoke the text's "intended sense" is *neither* a passive drinker from the text's "container of meaning" *nor* at liberty to bring to bear on the text whatever analytical apparatus he or she wishes. Rather the text is to be approached as "an index to meaning" – a meaning "that must be actively evoked, construed,

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[121] One notes a similarity between these two 'moments' (my term), and the two components of meaning – 'sense' and 'reference' – that **ZIMMERMAN** described from her Ricoeurian perspective.

articulated *from within the reader's resources*" (ibid., emphasis mine). The text's "intended sense" (in this Meyerian-Lonerganian sense) is not synonymous with 'authorial intent' which has often been conceived of (by reader-response critics) as something *external* to the text – "the psychology at work as the writer attempted to bring the text to birth, a factor of no further interest once the text was born" (ibid.). Rather, 'intention' is *intrinsic to the text*, and is to be understood as "*the meaning that specifies the text's individuality.* The greater the text, the more pronounced its individuality. . . . Uniqueness and intended sense are precisely one and the same" (ibid., emphasis mine).

It is the text's unique individuality or 'intended sense' that the 'authentic subject' must strive to evoke. But in a very real sense, 'intended sense' remains a "heuristic ideal" (p. 9) to which the reader is called to "measure up" (p. 11). The exercise [*askêsis*] of 'measuring up' to a text is "anything but easy" and may require that the reader "undergo a radical long-term personal development, or even the kind of reversal implied by the word 'conversion'" (ibid.). The reading of a text with 'authentic subjectivity,' one's being prepared to really labour at doing so, and the resultant pursuit of 'intended meaning' are what for Meyer constitute the act of *interpretation* properly so-called. In addition, he speaks of two other related operations: first, "the delicate enterprise of *ascription*" whereby "new, unintended meaning is ascribed to old, well-known texts"; and second, "the unending task of *analysis*" in which various critical methodologies (literary, historical, sociological, etc.) are brought to bear upon the text in acts of "textually-nurtured analytic reflection" (p. 11).

So how does all this *theory* apply to our proposed 'interpretive reading' of BF ? *First of all*, it allows us to accept that 'BF-as-Text' possesses an 'intended sense' which cannot and must not be side-stepped (as I believe Fr. Schmemann did) through the attempted application to it of particular historical or theological methods or agendas. (I would note *en passant*, however, that I believe that the historically-based dichotomy which Schmemann describes – and denigrates – within BF's theology will prove useful in the attempt to evoke BF's 'intended sense.') This 'intended sense' of BF (in Meyer's terminology) is also, I believe, more or less coterminous with what I described earlier as the Church's 'redactorial intent' as it gradually edited BF over the centuries, guided (so I would maintain) by God's Holy Spirit.

Secondly, it highlights for us the crucial importance of *authentic subjectivity* when one seeks the meaning of any text through interpretive reading. In this regard, I would like to draw particular attention to three vital components of the 'authentic subjectivity' with which, as a Byzantine Orthodox Christian reading BF, I hope to approach my 'Text.' These three are: 1) a consciousness of Tradition; 2) an openness to Inspiration; and 3) the need for ascetical effort. We may speak briefly about each of these in turn.

I am aware, first of all, of the fact that, as a would-be interpreter of BF, I will be doing so as a member of that community (the Orthodox Church) which produced and redacted BF in the first place and which, so I maintain, had Spirit-guided 'editorial intent' in doing so. I am also aware, therefore, that I am an inheritor of and a participant in living traditions of communal liturgical performance and interpretation ('the Tradition') which I intend to utilize to the fullest, and to which I will strive to be faithful. Thus, at the outset, I wish to signal my firm wish *not* to set myself up as a solitary interpreting subject in my engagement with my Text, but rather to seek to discern within BF the marks of the Church's living Tradition.

I have mentioned several times, almost *en passant*, the notion of 'Inspiration' – this is the second element of authentic subjectivity to which I wish to attend. I have suggested that I am cognizant of what I take to be the Spirit's activity in the ongoing processes of BF's redaction. I wish now to make clear my equal awareness of the understanding by my ecclesial community that authentic interpretation is also an inspired endeavour. And finally, in keeping with Meyer's remarks about the need for *effort* in "measuring up" to texts, I am reminded that, according to Byzantine tradition, authentic theology is never primarily an activity of the reasoning, discursive intellect, but rather is a reflection of the interior disposition of the theologian, emerging from the totality of his or her being. In this respect, borrowing and adapting words of Jesus spoken in a *very* different context, I find it useful to reflect how it may be true that the meaning of a text such as BF requires a vigorous and concerted ascetical effort because (similar to the epileptic's demon [!] of Mt 17:21) this meaning may "never come forth except by prayer and fasting."

Earlier, I suggested that while I disagree with the conclusions of Alexander Schmemann in his reading of BF (in what must be seen as an *analytical* reading rather than an *interpretive* one in

Meyer's terms), I nonetheless agree with his intuition that the 'Holy Saturday-lamentation' dichotomy holds the interpretive key to our understanding of this complex and even confusing Byzantine liturgical entity. Schmemann (probably following Kniazeff) ultimately questions the theological validity of this dichotomy, although other authors – Fedwick, Trubachev, and Lazor among them – who are equally convinced of its existence seem more inclined to embrace it. Given Fr. Schmemann's stature in the world of contemporary Orthodox theology, it seems to me particularly important to attempt to refute his overly-pessimistic analysis of BF's 'practical liturgical theology,' something which I hope to do in the remaining chapters of my dissertation.

We are finally ready to undertake in *Chapter Three* an *interpretive reading* of 'BF-as-Text' (Zimmerman, Hoffman) which will strive to discern its 'intended sense' (Meyer) by reading in 'authentic subjectivity' (Lonergan), using heuristically the perception (Schmemann and others) that BF enshrines a fundamental dichotomy (or rather antinomy) of simultaneous 'lamentation' and 'celebration' (while remaining open to the possibility of there being 'themes' in BF which lie outside this dichotomy). Thereafter, we shall go on in *Chapters Four* and *Five* to try and 'validate' such an interpretation by an *analytic re-reading* of BF from the psycho-social standpoint of the newly bereaved – the 'world of the bereaved' [WB] as I have chosen to designate it.

CHAPTER THREE

THE 'INTENDED SENSE' OF 'BF-AS-TEXT': AN INTERPRETIVE SYNCHRONIC FIRST READING

To the best of my knowledge, no comprehensive, systematic study of the theology of the Byzantine Funeral Service has been produced to date. Hence, at the outset of this chapter, I wish to highlight what I believe to be an important original contribution of my dissertation, namely its presentation of just such an interpretive study. Critics who find congenial Fr. Schmemann's diachronic *analysis* of BF (together with its negative assessment of BF's 'lamentation stratum') may dispute the 'theological adequacy' of *my* attempted *interpretation* (using both italicized terms in Meyer's sense), but I would insist that it (or something close to it) is the 'intended sense' of 'BF-as-Text.' Moreover, as I shall show in *Chapters Four* and *Five*, I believe that this 'intended sense' of BF can be analyzed from a pastorally-relevant standpoint and shown to be an important component of what Grisbrooke would designate as its Christian (hence human) "adequacy."[1]

In adducing my efforts at an interpretation of BF's liturgically-mediated theology, I have chosen to present my data in a thematic format (while also trying to attend to BF's unity as a 'Text' comprised of 'texts-within-setting'). That is, I shall try and describe my 'reading' of BF by encompassing its theology within an admittedly artificial set of 'theological themes' which I believe are to be discerned within the rich complexity of the Byzantine funeral office. Basing myself upon Schmemann's approach to BF, I shall proceed heuristically by categorizing these themes as ones either of 'lamentation' or of 'celebration,' while remaining open to the conclusion that some themes do not fit easily into either category.

By electing to present my findings in this manner, I am deliberately departing – in letter if not in spirit – from Schmemann's preferred 'method of liturgical theology' (as he likewise did in his own treatment of BF). Integral to this method – which Schmemann utilized to such great effect in his important works on baptism and the eucharist[2] – was his insistence that because "[worship] is a whole" comprised of "prayer, lections, chanting, ceremonies, [and] the relationship of all these things

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[1] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 66.
[2] **SCHMEMANN**, *Water* (1974) and *Eucharist* (1988).

in a '*sequence*' or '*order*'," it therefore follows that "*only all this together defines the meaning of the whole* and is therefore the proper subject of study and theological evaluation."[3]

Rather than being 'sequential' or 'orderly' in my approach, I have chosen instead to be synthetic in order to highlight the elements of antinomy and paradox which – as I hope to show – lie at the heart of BF. While still attending (as I hope) to what Schmemann calls the "liturgical coefficient"[4] of BF's various elements of text and rite, I have elected to try and identify specific themes of lamentation and celebration within BF (based on my researches). I have then 'slotted' into this framework various elements within the service (taken out of sequence)[5] that, in my opinion, address and manifest each particular theme. Perhaps at some later date, it may be possible to undertake a properly 'liturgical theological' study of BF in the wonderful tradition of Fr. Schmemann's own studies of initiation and eucharist.

In what follows, section ***III.A*** will focus on BF's sombre 'themes of lamentation,' while section ***III.B*** will be devoted to a consideration of the service's 'themes of celebration.' In the concluding section ***III.C***, we shall examine certain 'paradoxical themes' that may best be viewed as fitting into neither (or possibly both) of the foregoing categories.

III.A *"I grieve and lament when I contemplate death"*[6]*: BF's Sombre Themes*

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[3] ILT, 15-16. The italics are mine.

[4] See ibid., 15, where Schmemann defines 'liturgical coefficient' as "that significance which, apart from its own immediate content, each [element in a liturgy] acquires as a result of its place in the general sequence or order of worship."

[5] In citing the major parts of BF from hereon (as these are to be found in ***Appendix I*** according to the page numbers below), the following abbreviations will generally be employed:

- **AMOMOS** = psalm 118 (119) from which a selection of verses are chanted at the beginning of BF (***Appendix I***, 295-96);
- **APOL** = the '**Apolysis**' or 'dismissal' which is taken at several places in BF and its related events: a) at the end of the 'Trisagion for the Departed' (whenever its is served independently of BF); b) at the conclusion of the service in church; and c) after the interment is completed (***Appendix I***, 293-94, 309)
- **ASP** = the '**Aspasmos**' ('Last Kiss'), referring either to the ritual itself and/or its accompanying hymns ('prosomoia' or 'stichera') (***Appendix I***, 307-09);
- **EVL** = the '**Evlogitaria** for the Departed' (***Appendix I***, 296-97);
- **GOS** = the prayer '**God of Spirits** and all flesh' (***Appendix I***, 293);
- **IDML** = the '**Idiomela** in Eight Tones' attributed to St. John of Damascus (***Appendix I***, 302-04);
- **KON** = the '**Kontakion** for the Departed': "With the Saints give rest" (***Appendix I***, 300);
- **PROK** = the **Prokeimenon** (***Appendix I***, 305);
- **TRIS** = the **Trisagion**, referring either to the hymn "Holy God" or to the brief service for the dead, known to most east Slavs as 'Litiya' and to west Ukrainians as 'Panakhyda'; (***Appendix I***, 292-94).

[6] IDML, tone 8; ***Appendix I***, 304.

As we saw earlier in *Chapter Two*, it has become almost a commonplace to suggest that BF legitimizes both personal and existential grieving, and that it attempts to provide something for their assuagement that Harakas (citing Faros) refers to as "a climate of therapeutic grief."[7] However, the grieving for which BF makes allowance is not limited to the mourners' obvious sorrow at losing a loved one, painful though this loss surely is. Rather, the service proposes a number of reasons for death-induced grieving; it is to a consideration of these thematic 'occasions of grief' that we shall now turn our attention.

I believe that one discerns in BF four principal sombre 'themes of lamentation,' namely: 1) 'Paradise Lost' (what might be termed BF's 'negative' Christian anthropology); 2) the mourners' sense of personal loss and their pain at being separated from the deceased; 3) the awesome prospect of a future judgment for both the deceased and the mourners; and 4) the summoning of the bereaved to a remembrance of death (*memento mori* or *melétê thanátou*, 'meditation on death'). In what follows, for each of these in turn, I shall focus on an elucidation of those elements from BF which, I believe, highlight the 'theme' in question, while seeking at the same time to indicate how each theme can be related to the wider theological and liturgical traditions of the Byzantine churches.

III.A.1 *The Loss of Paradise: "Grant me the homeland of my heart's desire, making me again a citizen of Paradise"*[8]

In keeping with one of the most fundamental axioms of Byzantine theological anthropology, BF views human death ('Death') as an unmitigated tragedy, as a catastrophic event of truly cosmic proportions. The meta-historical roots of this assessment underlie the great drama of salvation which is succinctly resumed in kerygmatic fashion by the Byzantine anaphora of St. Basil. There, the celebrant prays:

> Having made man [*sic*] by taking dust from the earth, and having honored him [*sic*] with Your own image, O God, You placed him in a garden of delight, promising him eternal life and the enjoyment of everlasting blessings in the observance of Your commandments. But when he disobeyed you, the true God who had created him, and was led astray by the deception of the serpent becoming subject to death through his own transgressions, You, O

[7] **HARAKAS**, 156; see also 154-55.

[8] From EVL (cf. ***Appendix I***, 296). The wording I have used here (whose poetry I prefer in this instance over that of Lash's translation) is taken from a commonly used OCA text (which I know by heart).

> God, in Your righteous judgment, *expelled him from paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken.*[9]

This text (based quite obviously upon the second chapter of Genesis) is echoed almost verbatim by the words of IDML, tone 7: "Having fashioned man in the beginning in your image and likeness, you placed him in Paradise, . . but led astray by the envy of the devil he . . . became a transgressor of your commandments; and so you condemned him, O Lord, to return again to the earth from which he had been taken." In both these liturgical pieces (as in numerous other Byzantine texts), we see presented the key elements of the 'mythology'[10] that underlies Byzantine theology's understanding of the significance of human mortality. This assessment, which we find mirrored throughout many texts of BF, has been nicely summarized for us by John Meyendorff who writes:

> Mortality, or "corruption," or simply death . . . has been viewed, since Christian antiquity, as a cosmic disease which holds humanity under its sway, both spiritually and physically, and is controlled by the one who is "the murderer from the beginning' (Jn 8:44). It is this death which makes sin inevitable, and in this sense "corrupts" nature. . . . There is indeed a consensus in Greek patristic and Byzantine traditions in identifying the inheritance of the Fall as an inheritance essentially of mortality rather than sinfulness, sinfulness being merely a consequence of mortality.[11]

'Death' is clearly envisaged by the Byzantine tradition as *not* having been an inevitable part of God's original 'plan' for the human race. Invited to deepen and perfect their loving communion with God through living in free and grateful obedience to him, humans instead have allowed themselves to be seduced by 'the Tempter' into misusing their God-given freedom of choice. Humanity (personified by our first parents) chose (and continues to choose) to disobey God, and

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[9] Nomikos M. **VAPORIS**, ed., *The Divine Liturgy of Our Father Among the Saints Basil the Great* [in Greek and English] (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, c1988), 25-26; italics have been added for emphasis. For the sake of internal consistency within the present dissertation regarding the use of English translations of Greek liturgical texts, I would have preferred to employ here a translation of Basil's anaphora by Fr. Ephrem Lash, but none exists to date on his web-site. My use of a Byzantine anaphora as a source document for outlining a Byzantine theology of death seems to me quite justifiable because: (a) this particular text (Basil) is undoubtedly early (late fourth century) and thus would have nourished, theologically and spiritually, many subsequent generations of Byzantine theologians; and b) it is almost certainly the work of St. Basil himself whose standing as an eminent Orthodox Father is beyond dispute. For a summary of scholarly evidence on the date and authorship of Basil's anaphora, see my recent paper: Cyprian Robert **HUTCHEON**, "'A Sacrifice of Praise': A Theological Analysis of the Pre-*Sanctus* of the Byzantine Anaphora of St. Basil," *SVTQ* 45 (2001): 4-6.

[10] An elaboration of the 'intended sense' of my use here of the term 'mythology' can be found in Paul **RICOEUR**, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. E. Buchanan (New York: Harper & Row, c1967), 232-35.

[11] John **MEYENDORFF**, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974) [= **MEYENDORFF**, *Byzantine*], 144-45.

has thereby incurred God's "righteous judgment" (according to St. Basil). This judgment has been acted out through two events of great import for Adam and his descendants: exclusion from *potential* immortality in Paradise, and an eventual return "to the earth from which [we were] taken."

However, for the Greek patristic tradition, our 'fate' after death is not simply that God "entrust[s] to the earth our earth which was shaped by [God's] hands,"[12] in a manner suggesting our relegation to the status of unimportant and replaceable elements of some great cycle of nature.[13] Rather, this 'return to the earth' entails a corruption (*phthorá*) of our bodies which is the total effacement of one major aspect of that integral human personhood which, according to the Genesis narrative, has been "fashioned" (*éplasen)* for us "according to the image and likeness" (*kat' eikóna . . . kaì kath' homoíôsin*) of God (Gen 1:26 *LXX*).

For Greco-Roman antiquity (dedicated, as it often was, to the cultivation of the famous *mens sana in corpore sano*), an important component of the 'glory' (*hê dóxa*) of human beings resided in their possession of a pleasing externally visible "figure-as-a-person" (*tó schêma*), something that was characterized by such attributes as 'form' (*hê morphê*), 'shape' (*tó eídos*) and 'beauty' (*tó kállos*). According to this view in its Christian versions, post-mortem 'corruption' (*phthorá*) was an abhorrent prospect, not so much because it entails our becoming "food for worms," but more because death transforms the human body precisely into 'a corpse,' into that which (even prior to burial, according to BF) is "formless" (*ámorphos*), "without glory" (*ádoxon*), "lacking in shape" (*mê échôn eídos*) (cf. IDML, tone 8) and bereft of its "former beauty" (*tò archaíon kállos*; EVL).[14]

Although the origins of this entire theology are commonly thought of as 'patristic,' it is interesting for us to notice that its principal components can already be discerned in pre-Christian

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[12] *Macrine*, 218; the translation to English from Greek is mine.

[13] In fact, some such (virtually antiseptic) process of 'human re-cycling' has always been the dominant image evoked for my imagination by the famous words of the interment ritual of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*: "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" (see: *Book of Common Prayer* [London: Cambridge University Press, 1926], 333). Any horror of physical death that might be felt (which is scarcely glimpsed nowadays in any event, thanks to the mortician's art) is thereby effectively bypassed.

[14] We see this in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina* when, in describing Macrina's burial in the family tomb (*Macrine*, 254), Gregory details for us his scrupulosity about gazing on the "common shame of human nature in my parents' bodies" (*en toís tôn gonéôn sômasi blepôn tôn koinên tês anthropinês phúseôs aschêmosunên*). The corruption of mortality ("changed into foul and repulsive formlessness" [*eidechthê kaì dusántêton amorphían metablêthéntôn*]), as the 'evidence' for human sinfulness, was not only intrinsically repulsive for Gregory, but also a source of shame, compared by him to the shame of Noah whose son (Ham) gazed on his father's nakedness and was cursed (cf. Gen 9:20-25).

Hellenistic Jewish thought. Thus, for example, in the 'Wisdom of Solomon' (a first-century B.C. Jewish text found in *LXX*, composed in Greek probably in Alexandria), one reads that "God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living" (Wis 1:13, RSV) and also that "God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity,[15] but through the devil's envy death entered the world" (Wis 2:23-24, RSV).

Most elements of a Genesis-derived meta-narrative of 'Paradise Lost' are recapitulated through the texts and the rituals of BF which interpret the loss through death of our 'body-soul integrity' and the resultant disintegration of our mortal bodies ('corruption') both as symbols of God's just judgment upon our lives, and as the occasion for a sobering recollection – at once nostalgic and sombre – of what our human existence could and should have been like.

The service reminds its participants first of all of how, "in the beginning" (Gen 1:1), Adam (and from him all subsequent human persons) were created as "image[s] of God's ineffable glory" (EVL), "fashioned [by God] . . . as living creature[s]" with a "body from the earth" and "a soul by [God's] divine and life-giving breath" (IDML, tone 6). The primal beauty and glory of the human form even in death are acknowledged by the clergy's repeated incensations of the open casket. By the very presence in church of the visible remains of the deceased, the mourners are drawn to contemplate humanity's "ancient beauty" (EVL). Yet it is a beauty which, despite its having been "fashioned for us in God's image," now lies "without form, without glory, without shape" before the members of the assembly (IDML, tone 8). It is a beauty which is being "discarded" and will soon be "dissolved in a grave, wasted by darkness, hidden in earth" (ASP #7). And, lest those present might be tempted to deceive themselves into imagining that this calamity involves only the one who has died, IDML, tone 8, jolts all back to reality by querying: "What is this mystery which has happened *to us*? How have *we* been handed over to corruption, and yoked with death?" (emphases mine).

We are left with a very clear message that bodily death is universal and vividly real, a genuine tragedy because it is ultimately understood as 'un-natural.' Paradise, that life of integrity

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[15] In a footnote, the RSV gives 'nature' here (cf. **BRENTON**, *ἰδιότης*) as an anciently attested alternative to 'eternity' (cf. **RAHLFS**, *ἀϊδιότης*).

and of communion with God that should have been humanity's 'natural' lot has been lost through human disobedience, an 'un-natural' disaster of which death and corruption are the outward signs.

Yet, for Byzantine thought in general echoed by BF, it is not only biological death – the transformation of our bodies into lifeless corpses – that functions as a reminder of our primeval expulsion from Paradise. The agony of dying, conceived as *chôrismos tês psychês* or 'parting of the soul' (from the body), provides another especially doleful and poignant 'moment' for recollection of the painful and un-natural disintegration which is taking place. The soul, according to BF, is totally bereft by its separation from its body; it "endures an ordeal," its "entreaties are without effect," it "has none to help" (IDML, tone 2). "Great [is] the weeping and lamentation, great the sighing and constraint at the parting of the soul," observes one prosomoion sung during the 'Last Kiss' (ASP #5). Arguably, this 'soul-pain' for the deceased, and perhaps even for the bereaved, is viewed by BF as even more distressing than the physical sufferings of bodily demise.

As though the catastrophe of the 'dis-integration' through death of the human body-soul union were not enough, the remembrance that things *might* have been 'different' introduces into BF a touching element of nostalgia. This is manifested most clearly by the bitter-sweetness of several EVL, a quality that is expressed both through their words (uttered on our behalf *in persona defuncti*) and through the dynamic yet poignant character of their musical settings in all Byzantine traditions. Together, text and music give voice to humanity's dolorous yearnings for God to set aright that which has gone so disastrously awry. "Though I bear the marks of offenses, take pity on your creature, Master, . . and give me the longed-for fatherland, making me once again a citizen of Paradise. . . . Bring me back to your likeness, my ancient beauty." These notes of longed-for restoration resonate well with lines (vv. 7-12) from psalm 50 (*LXX*) which are chanted shortly after the singing of EVL. "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be purified. . . . [My] afflicted bones shall rejoice. Turn away thy face from my sins. . . . . Renew a right spirit in my inward parts. Cast me not away from thy presence. . . . Restore to me the joy of thy salvation."

In common with most other Christian funerary traditions, BF's interment rituals (that vary somewhat from one Byzantine regional tradition to another) serve as a powerful enactment of the pathos surrounding human beings' inevitable disintegration through a 'return to the earth.' Earth

(and often ashes) are scattered crosswise over the soon-to-be buried remains of the deceased. But – so the ritual concludes – all is not lost. As the celebrant scatters dust over the coffin, making the sign of the cross, he speaks the hope-filled opening words of psalm 23 (24): "The earth is the Lord's, and its fullness; the world and *all* who dwell on it" (emphasis mine). Then one last entreaty is made that God will keep the departed in his 'Eternal Memory.'

III.A.2 *Personal Loss, Grief, and Separation: "Come, let us give the final kiss to the dead"*[16]

In comparison with several examples from recently reformed funeral rites employed by western Christian confessions, BF is quite overt in its attempts to legitimize human grieving both through its vivid depiction of the pain engendered by humans' final earthly separation from their loved ones, and by its provision of a distinct moment of 'final farewell.'[17] Although one might be tempted to search only within the anthropological and psychological domains for the reasons underlying BF's apparent 'folk wisdom' in this regard, the service itself makes reference to two important *neo-testamental* parameters – the one 'Johannine' and the other 'Pauline' – which define BF's provision for overt expressions of grief.

A 'Johannine' referent on grieving is supplied in many Greek versions of BF[18] *en passant* by an undoubtedly deliberate (but indirect) allusion to Jesus' actions following the death of his friend, Lazarus of Bethany (Jn 11). The Apolysis (= APOL: 'dismissal') used throughout BF (but especially familiar to mourners through its use at the conclusion of TRIS) often invokes the intercessions *inter alia* of "the holy and righteous Lazarus, for four days dead, the friend of Christ."

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[16] This is a quotation from the opening line of ASP; see ***Appendix I***, 307.

[17] See, for example: Anglican Church of Canada, *Book of Alternative Services* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 565-605 ("The Funeral Liturgy"); and Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House and Philadelphia, PA: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, c1978), 206-214 ("Burial of the Dead"). Both these liturgies contain well-crafted prayers for the consolation of the bereaved (something which is *not* found in today's BF *per se*), but aside from an optional use of the Ikos of BF in the Anglican example, there is virtually no material which exudes the same climate of dismay and overt lamentation in the face of death that characterizes BF. For the Anglican tradition in particular, this represents a subtle but definite departure from elements of BF-like sombreness that *could* be found in the Burial Office of *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1926), particularly in the 'Sentences' sung during the body's entry into church (p. 326), and in the rite of interment (p. 332). A good example of an older 'Office of the Dead' that *does* display many of the characteristics of BF is to be found in *The Roman Breviary*, trans. John, Marquess of Bute (Edinburgh & London: Wm. Blackwood, 1908), 822-39.

[18] I am grateful to my thesis director, Prof. Peter Galadza, for pointing out to me that BF's reference to Lazarus, although it occurs commonly in Greek texts of BF (such as, e.g., MEH), is virtually never found in Slavonic versions of the service.

The event of the 'Raising of Lazarus' occupies a place of considerable prominence in Byzantine piety, and its commemoration on the Saturday preceding 'Palm Sunday' is usually reckoned as one of the 'Twelve Great Feasts' of the liturgical year, and as the event that introduces the 'Holy Week' leading to observance of the Lord's Pascha. John's Gospel account of the event, read during the Lazarus Saturday liturgy, records unequivocally that "Jesus wept" (Jn 11:35) when confronted by the reality of the death of a man whom APOL remembers liturgically as "the friend of Christ." This implicit drawing upon mourners' liturgical familiarity with 'Jesus the mourner' confers 'permission' for followers of Jesus to grieve in like manner, for as Christ himself said, "Blessed are they who mourn for they will be comforted" (Beatitudes). It is also noteworthy that the reaction of Jesus to the death of his friend has in fact been used traditionally as one of the 'proofs' for the reality (and 'consubstantiality' with our own) of Christ's human nature.[19]

However, if humanity *may* (or even must) grieve because Jesus himself did so before the tomb of his friend Lazarus, BF's countervailing 'Pauline referent' on grief, provided by the service's Epistle reading, warns bereaved Christians that they "may not grieve as others do who have no hope" (2 Thess 4:13b, NRSV). Although other readings from Pauline epistles have been (and are) mandated for various Byzantine-rite funeral and memorial observances, one might speculate that BF's lection from the Apostolos (1 Thess 4:13-17 or 13-18) was 'canonized' (so to speak) by the printed-euchological tradition because of its particular pertinence to those immersed in (and, perhaps, overwhelmed by) BF's abundant expressions of profound lamentation. Paul highlights for his auditors the inappropriateness of their grieving ignorantly for the departed; because they believe that Jesus died and rose again, they may trust that through Jesus, God will raise to new life those who have died (v.14). The living are exhorted to "comfort one another" (v.18) with this hope which, in Paul's opinion, ought to impart a unique tonality to the human grieving of Christians.

Given that BF has provided its participants with *theological* parameters for assessing the *content* and *extent* of an 'acceptable' Christian grieving, I believe that within BF's overtly

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[19] In the "Tome of St. Leo" for example (which was received at the Council of Chalcedon held in A. D. 451), Pope Leo 'the Great' of Rome tells us that it "belongs" to Christ's human nature "to weep with feelings of pity over a dead friend." See: *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, NPNF Series II, Vol. XIV (Oxford: James Parker, 1900), 256.

sanctioned *expression* of such grieving, one may discern two intertwined 'lament-worthy sub-texts' (as I choose to call them): those of 'farewell' (*aspasmós*), on the one hand, and those of 'separation' (*chôrismós*) on the other. Let us proceed to examine each of these discretely, realizing that to do so risks accentuating what is a somewhat arbitrary distinction.

On the occasion of any sort of 'parting' in human life, even lesser ones that will be quite temporary, there is a near-universal desire for some overt expression of farewell. How totally normal it appears then, at least through Byzantine eyes, that human persons who are facing involuntary separation from a loved one through death should be afforded a ritualized moment of *aspasmos* ('farewell greeting') in which to say their final good-bye. BF seems to understand that human beings need and may well cherish such moments even if they are emotionally taxed by them, and even if such a parting is envisaged, from the standpoint of Christian faith, as being a temporary state of affairs, to be 'set right' by an eventual resurrection of the dead.[20]

BF's grief-focusing moment of *aspasmós* (often referred to as the 'Last Kiss') includes an important ritual 'high point' that helps to drive home the meaning of key phrases from the hymnography which accompanies it. In what is surely BF's most poignant (and often harrowing) moment, the family and friends of the deceased approach the open coffin to pay their last respects to the person who has died. In doing so, they may employ a variety of ritual gestures such as might be used in venerating the 'holy relics' of saints which, like the 'remains' of the deceased, are also designated in Greek as *leípsana* [= Slavonic *moshchi*]. Thus, for example, mourners may make the sign of the cross over the deceased, or gently place a final kiss on their loved one's hands or forehead, or reverence an icon held in his or her hands (a relatively recent practice).

As the 'rite of the Last Kiss' proceeds, a select number of special 'Verses' (*prosómoia*) in Tone 2 are sung. By means of the *Euchológion*'s instruction that the melody of these hymns should 'resemble'[21] the melody of the aposticha for Good Friday vespers, BF invites a comparison between what is happening in the funeral liturgy and the doleful events of Holy Friday. The poignancy of

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[20] Cf. John Chrysostom (Homily 62 on John 11:1-29): "Weep this way, then, at the death of a dear one, as if you were bidding farewell to one setting out on a journey." See Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin, trans., *Saint John Chrysostom: Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist: Homilies 48-88* (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1960), 176-77.

[21] Hence they are designated as *prosómoia*, that is, things (in this case liturgical melodies) that 'resemble' something else.

this time of farewell is heightened (at least for those with "ears to hear") by the ASP hymns' insistent invitation: "Come, let us give the final kiss . . . to the dead, . . because he has left his family and is hastening to the grave (ASP #1). . . . Come then, kiss him who a short while ago was with us (ASP #2). . . . Let us accept this expression of the final moment" (ASP #6). As the ritual nears its conclusion, BF's insistence on our *need* to say good-bye becomes relentless when the concluding hymn (ASP, doxastichon) places one final invitation on the lips of the very one who has died: "Come, all who loved me, and kiss me for the last time."

The Aspasmos (comprising farewell texts and ritual) – which I have identified as one 'sub-text' within BF's overt expression of theologically-delimited grief – is really a ritualized iconic focus onto one moment of time of what I earlier identified as a second (and even more painful) 'sub-text,' namely the experience of 'separation.' The noun *chôrismós* ('parting' or 'separation') is derived from the verb *chôrizô* whose active and passive meanings in the NT include 'to separate/ be separated,' 'to part,' 'to leave,' 'to depart,' 'to be taken away,' and 'to be set apart'; the nominal form *per se* does not actually appear in the NT. In BF, *chôrismós* is used to describe both the 'parting of the soul from the body' at death, and (more importantly for our present discussion) the separation by death of the deceased from his or her friends and next-of-kin. Both of these 'lesser *chôrismoi*' are, of course, understood by BF (and by Byzantine theology in general) as a consequence (and reflection) of a more fundamental and equally 'un-natural' *chôrismós*, namely that state of virtual separation which came to characterize the post-lapsarian divine-human relationship and which is 'iconized' by human death.

There are two 'ritual moments' near the very end of BF – two moments that are just barely touched upon by the liturgical books – which depict graphically the harsh and cruel reality of the painful human separation that is taking place. First, after the poignant moments of the 'Last Kiss' are over, after all texts have been chanted and all final prayers have been read, it is at last time to close the coffin. In modern western Christian funeral rites, this normally takes place *prior* to the service in church, often in semi-private surroundings with only close family and intimate friends at hand. On the other hand, according to Byzantine-rite usage (at least when traditional norms are being observed), the sealing of the casket takes place in full public view, either at the conclusion of

the service in church (the usual North American practice), or else at the grave-side (as is commonly done in Byzantine-rite homelands, especially in the rural areas). In the latter setting (as I have observed personally in both Greece and rural Ukraine), the shocking finality of what is transpiring is emphasized starkly by the pounding of hammers as the coffin-lid is nailed into place.

Thereafter, even the coffin's visible reminder of the close-by presence of the earthly remains of a loved one is shortly to be removed from view in a second (and final) 'ritual of separation.' The grave "is sealed until the Second Coming of our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ"[22] (a phrase sometimes spoken in the Slavic Orthodox ritual) as earth and frequently oil or ashes are sprinkled over the coffin. Then, in an act both necessary and symbolic (which in North America is all too often completed only after the funeral party's departure from the cemetery), the grave is filled with earth as the body of yet another human person is "returned to the earth from which [it] was taken."

Certain key phrases from those particular *prosómoia* that are most commonly sung during the giving of the 'Last Kiss' serve to highlight the awesome 'mystery of separation,' as a cantor or choir chants words such as these:

> [She who has died] . . . has left her family and is hastening to the grave. She has no further care for things of no moment, affairs of the much-wearied flesh. Where now are her relatives and friends? (ASP #1). What is this parting, O brethren? What the grieving, what the lamentation in this present instant? [The one who] a moment ago was with us . . . is being entrusted to a grave, covered by a stone, left to dwell in darkness, buried with the dead; all we her relatives and friends . . . are now being parted [from her](ASP #2).[23]

The closing lines of these particular hymns, in common with many of the dozen or so stichera provided for the Aspasmos, remind mourners of the possibility that some of their pain may be assuaged, ever so slightly, by means of their prayers to God that 'rest' (*anápausis*) be granted to their deceased loved one. "As we are parted (*arti chôrizómetha*) from our loved one," the hymns counsel us, "let us pray that the Lord will give her rest (*anapaúsai Kúrios euksômetha*)." And, to remind us that our personal pain at parting may well be shared by "the one who has fallen asleep

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[22] See, for example, **SERAPHIM**, 53, and **WYSOCHANSKY**, 83. It has been suggested that this practice of 'sealing' a grave arose most likely in certain areas of the Byzantine east (in lands adjacent to Transylvania, for example) where grave robbery and an attendant fear of vampires had become of great popular concern (Peter Galadza, personal communication).

[23] I have worded these hymns here as though they were being sung for a female deceased, a usage which should, of course, be understood as generic.

(*ho kekoimêménos*)," the concluding doxastichon of ASP – employing a literary conceit of which BF is fond – puts these touching words into the mouth of the deceased: "Only yesterday I was talking with you, and suddenly the dread hour of death came upon me; . . . I shall not walk with you again, nor speak with you any more."

It has been argued by Fr. Schmemann that BF's hymnography, when it wishes to evoke humanity's profoundly painful experience of death-related *chôrismós*, does so by employing language that is liable, in the minds of its auditors, to lead to an unfortunate reversion to certain pre-Christian emphases (both Jewish and pagan). Once again, says Fr. Alexander, we are confronted in BF's hymnography, by the spectre of 'Death-as-separation,' whereby we the living are 'hermetically sealed off' from the departed who once again inhabit (as they did in antiquity) their own shadowy 'realm of the dead' (*Sheol* or *Hades*).[24]

It seems to me that Schmemann's point here would be quite well taken if one were restricted to hearing texts like the following, a composite of phrases drawn from ASP:

> The deceased has left his family and has no more care for things of no consequence. Where now are his relatives and friends? He has been left by them to dwell in the darkness, buried with the dead. He who once blossomed like a flower is now wrapped in a shroud and hidden in the earth where we have left him out of sight. He will not walk with us again, nor speak with us any more. Let us pray then that he may not be condemned because of his sins to a place of torment.[25]

In my opinion, when Fr. Alexander analyzes BF texts with a content similar to this, he commits a fundamental error. He does so, I believe, because he tends to forget that BF in its present form constitutes precisely a 'canon' of texts (analogous in many respects to the 'canon of Scripture'). The texts of this 'canon' have been 'selected' in the Church's Tradition[26] out of a much broader assortment of existing funeral texts (mainly monastic in origin and including psalms, hymns, lections and prayers), then 'arranged' by a process which may strike us as haphazard, and

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[24] See, for example, ***Appendix II***, especially pp. 317 and 337-38.

[25] To emphasize Fr. Schmemann's point, and to achieve a certain smoothness of reading, I have deliberately conflated lines drawn here from a number of the *prosómoia* for the Aspasmos (#1, 2, 6, and the doxastichon). I have also altered the wording slightly in places, but have deliberately (for continuity's sake) *not* shown any ellipsis points for omissions or brackets for insertions.

[26] I am not convinced that it needs to be particularly deleterious to a healthy respect for the Church's 'Holy Tradition' (defined by Georges Florovsky as "the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church") to acknowledge that the process of ecclesiastical 'selection' and 'canonization' of the texts comprising BF's modern-day *ordo* probably owed as much or more to the choices of Venetian typographers in the Greek diaspora as it did to decisions by any 'official' ecclesiastical authorities.

finally melded into a single ritual 'Text' (BF) whose unity derives entirely from its 'performance' in an assembly for common worship convoked for a very specific reason.

As with any array of texts that has been 'canonized' in this manner and formed into one larger 'Text,' it is always necessary that we 'read' any given text or action (or set of texts and/or actions) in the light of the whole. Such a principle, as we saw earlier, was in fact integral to Fr. Schmemann's own conception of how one ought to do 'liturgical theology.'[27] Hence (as I shall insist repeatedly throughout the remainder of this dissertation), it is not sufficient to read BF texts like my example, which meditate on the starkly human horror of 'separation' through death and bereavement, without remembering (as Fr. Alexander sometimes neglected to do) that these same texts are part of a 'canon' that also includes psalms 90 (91) and 118 (119), hymns such as KON and EVL, scripture lections such as the Beatitudes and 1 Thess 4:13-18, and the wonderful prayer, GOS. Obviously, the hymnographic 'separation' that Fr. Schmemann decried needs to be radically re-thought and qualified in the light of its overall liturgical context.

III.A.3 *Judgment and Intercession: "Because I am on my way to the Judge . . . pray for me"*[28]

Although the present focus in our reflection on BF is not primarily an anthropological one, it is perhaps interesting (and even helpful theologically) to be reminded of van Gennep's tripartite division of 'rites of passage' into phases of *separation*, *transition* and *incorporation*.[29] With reference to funeral rites, van Gennep's first two stages of *separation* and *transition* (particularly the former) are self-evidently 'painful' processes for human beings to undergo, and hence provide the pretext for BF's varied thematic expressions of lamentation. Later on we shall have a chance to consider as one of BF's 'celebratory themes' the hoped-for *incorporation* of the departed into "a place of light, a place of refreshment, a place of green pasture" (GOS).

However now, having just finished an examination of the manner in which BF sanctions lamentation as an eminently appropriate response to *separation* or *chôrismós*, and preparing to undertake a consideration of the third of BF's 'somber themes' – namely, the prospect of an

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[27] Cf. note 3, above.
[28] ASP, doxastichon; ***Appendix I***, 308.
[29] See above in *Chapter Two*, p. 92 and following.

impending post-mortem 'Judgment' for departed and living alike – I believe it helpful to our understanding of BF's theology to bear in mind van Gennep's concept of *transition* as a descriptor of the manner in which BF depicts and reacts to a seemingly precarious interlude in the progress of the departed human soul. The notion that every human death initiates an uncertain (hence anxiety-inducing) period of *transitus* for both living and departed[30] provides us, to my way of thinking, with a theoretical justification for our linking together 'intercession' with 'judgment' in our present study, since it seems to me a 'normal' human reaction (anthropologically speaking) that the bereaved, faced with concerns over the 'fate' of their loved one, should seek to assuage their anxieties and fears by turning to God and his 'holy ones' in intercessory prayer.

There can be no doubt that the Byzantine theological tradition as a whole (with BF being one particular expression of that tradition) takes the concept of 'Judgment' very seriously. Every time Byzantine-rite Christians join in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy or participate in services of Orthros and Vespers, they hear chanted a litany that prays for a "good defense at the fearful judgment-seat of Christ." In the Byzantine Churches' annual cycle of preparation for Easter, the penultimate pre-Lenten Sunday is dedicated to contemplation of the 'Fearful Judgment' as presented in Mt 25:31-46. A vivid iconographic interpretation of this same pericope has often been found on the west wall of traditionally-frescoed Byzantine temples in a prominent location that makes it particularly visible to those about to return to the world and its temptations.

In examining BF's treatment of the question of 'judgment,' I believe that we must not forget that its presentation of this awesome reality is directed not only at the departed, so to speak, but equally (or even *more* importantly) at the living mourners. We shall perhaps realize the extent to which this is true as we deal in turn with three separate yet closely inter-related aspects of 'judgment' according to BF, namely: **a)** 'sin' as a characteristic feature of the human condition; **b)** God's righteous judgment that awaits all sinners; and **c)** the possibility of a mitigation (by God's grace) of this judgment (both through personal repentance and the intercessions of others).

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[30] Certain monastic strains in Byzantine theology, and a good deal of popular monastically-influenced Byzantine piety, have placed considerable emphasis on events during the period immediately after death, viewing them in the words of one author as a time of "dangerous passage"; see Nicholas **CONSTAS**, "'To Sleep, Perchance to Dream': The Middle State of Souls in Patristic and Byzantine Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001) [= **CONSTAS**]: 105-9.

a) ***First***, BF gives insistent voice to the assertion of the Apostle Paul that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Rom 3:23). Nowhere is this more obvious than in GOS where, in slightly modified words resembling 2 Chr 6:36a, we are repeatedly reminded that "there is no one who will live and not sin," in contradistinction to God "who alone [is] without sin." Students of Byzantine thought sometimes like to contrast favourably its depiction of our merely 'sinful propensities' with the Calvinist notion of humanity's 'total depravity.'[31] Yet, in a certain sense, the typically Byzantine conception of human sinfulness appears even more daunting than the latter for it extends our responsibility before God to include (in the exemplary words of the Kathismata after EVL) "offences [both] voluntary *and involuntary*, . . committed *through ignorance* or through knowledge."[32] It is an acknowledgment of this all-encompassing reality, at once unavoidable and undeniable, that underlies the words of psalm 50 (51) spoken *in persona defuncti* in the context of BF, but equally applicable to both living and dead: "I was conceived in iniquities (*anomíais*) and in sins (*hamartíais*) did my mother conceive me" (*LXX* [Brenton] 50:5).

Likewise, it is this same consciousness – of the inevitability of human beings' erring from their chosen path through sin – which lies at the root of the particularly touching image with which AMOMOS concludes (118:176 *LXX*: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep [*hôs próbaton apolôlós*]"), and which is picked up only moments later in the opening verse of EVL where the deceased, speaking as the representative of 'EveryMan,' pleads with the 'Good Shepherd' (cf. Mt 18:12; Jn 10:1-18): "I am the lost sheep (*to apolôlós próbaton egô eimí*), call me back, O Saviour, and save me."

b) ***Second***, granted the accuracy and seriousness of BF's assessment of sin's universality amongst humankind, and given that God's "righteousness is an everlasting righteousness" (GOS quoting Ps 118:142a), Christian orthodoxy has always maintained that *humans are necessarily and consequently subject to God's righteous judgment.* This judgment, insists Byzantine theology as we saw earlier, is *already* being executed upon us through the necessity and inevitability of death: "Because I transgressed your commandment, you return me to the earth from which I was taken"

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[31] See **WARE**, *Orthodox*, 228-29.

[32] ***Appendix I***, 297. Italics were added here for emphasis. The 'Synaptê for the Departed' repeatedly entreats God for the remission of "every offence, both voluntary and involuntary."

(EVL).[33] Yet God's judgment continues after death as well when, as BF reminds us in definite if subdued tones, we await our appearance before that which a common Byzantine synaptê refers to as "the fearful judgment-seat of Christ."

Fedwick has commented on BF's general treatment of 'after-death' that, contrary to much popular piety or monastic theology,[34] "[BF] limits itself in the main to the *bare reproduction of . . . scriptural statements*" (emphasis mine).[35] With reference to any precise details about the character and timing of 'judgment' or 'punishment,' this is certainly the case.

Thus, BF mentions only once "the everlasting fire (*to púr tôn aiônion*)" of Mt 25:41, as part of an entreaty that God will "snatch (*eksárpason*) us from [it]" (EVL). In a similar vein, the verse of PROK, taken from Ps 27 (28):1b (and in practice often omitted), entreats God: "Do not be silent towards me or I shall become like those who go down to the pit (*eis lákkon*)." The most definitive mention of 'judgment' in BF is certainly that of the gospel reading where, in Jn 5:28-29 Jesus is recorded as saying: "The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear . . . [the] voice [of the Son of man] and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and *those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment*" (emphasis mine). Finally, in ASP (a set of hymns that are not noted for their generally biblical tone), the doxastichon nonetheless resorts to scriptural language when the departed, who is going to meet "the Judge with whom there is no respect of persons (*prosôpolêpsía*: cf. Rom 2:11, Eph 6:9)," entreats the mourners in the first person to pray on his or her behalf that "I may not be condemned because of my sins to the place of torment (*eis ton tópon tês basánou*: cf. Lk 16:28)."

All the elements surrounding 'judgment' that typify popular caricatures of 'Hell' (everlasting fire, 'the pit,' a resurrection to judgment, and a place of torment) are undoubtedly present in BF, but overall, the theme of God's 'punitive judgment' is broached by it in a muted and totally unsystematic fashion. In other words, its reality and certainty are taken seriously, but it is not brandished in any conspicuous fashion over the heads of the bereaved.

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[33] Ibid.; cf. also IDML, Tone 7 (ibid., 304).
[34] For examples of this, see: **VASSILIADIS**, 378-416, 483-537; and **BAKOGIANNIS**, 59-67, 121-28.
[35] **FEDWICK**, 160.

c) This being the case, it is all the more remarkable (when we turn, finally, to the ***third aspect*** of BF's 'theology of judgment') to discover the extent to which BF dwells on *factors that are presented by it as being capable of mitigating God's retribution towards sinners*. Such factors are divisible into two categories, namely: **i)** *personal factors* (i.e., indications that the departed and/or the mourners could 'improve their lot' by becoming sorrowful over, and seeking remission of, their sins); and **ii)** *communitarian factors* (i.e., intercessions which the whole Church community, both earthly and heavenly, might be moved to make on behalf of those who, according to St. Paul, are "members one of another" [Rom 12:5]).

However, before proceeding to my brief discussion of these two categories (personal and communitarian), let me first reiterate remarks made at the outset of this section ***III.A.3*** and justify once again my decision to include here (under the broad rubric of 'BF's sombre themes') a discussion about the importance that BF undoubtedly attaches to the whole matter of personal and ecclesiastical responses to the 'plight' of the departed. It might well be opined that there is nothing intrinsically sombre or lament-worthy about the laudable desire of the bereaved (nor of the wider ecclesial community) to pray for deceased loved ones; some might even prefer to identify BF's whole presentation of intercession for the departed as one of its celebratory aspects.

Let me simply point out how very natural it is for most persons to become deeply troubled and anxious when confronted by the passage of someone close to them into a 'realm' beyond their immediate surveillance and control, whether that 'someone' be a young child beginning school, a son or daughter leaving home for college or marriage, an elderly parent entering an old folks' home, or a spouse who has died. Every human passage contains within itself a period of liminality characterized by uncertainty, anxiety and fear for both the 'passage-er' and for those around her or him.[36] In the case of human death, BF views it as 'normal' and desirable that the newly-bereaved will be afraid for themselves and for their departed (even if today our society renders us less able to take seriously BF's imagery of an impending heavenly tribunal).

In BF's view, the survivors' fear and disquiet ought to move them *firstly* to amend their own lives, and *then* to undertake intercession for their loved ones, thus feeling empowered

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[36] See Victor W. **TURNER**, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, c1969), 94-113. See also **CONSTAS**, 105-9, which was cited above.

(perhaps) through actually 'doing something' for their beloved in an otherwise helpless situation, while at the same time assuaging some of their own painful uncertainty. In this context, I would contend that the need or desire to reflect upon one's own sinfulness and to intercede for the dead (focused round 'mythological' fears about the dead passing through judgment or of their failing to find rest) can legitimately be reckoned as an intrinsic part of BF's 'sombre aspect.'

Having pointed out my reasons for discussing at this juncture BF's combined appeals for i) amendment of life coupled with ii) fervent intercession for the dead, let us now turn to a brief consideration of each of these in turn.

c.i) The possibility of our finding pardon through personal *metánoia* is broached most prominently in BF by the EVL which couch their pleas in moving terms that might equally be uttered by either the departed or the survivors:

> May I too find the way through repentance; I am the lost sheep, call me back, O Saviour, and save me. . . . Grant us abolition of our debts. . . . Take pity on your creature, Master and with compassion cleanse me; and give me the longed-for fatherland, making me once again a citizen of Paradise. . . . Bring me back to your likeness, my ancient beauty. . . . Enlighten us who worship you in faith, and snatch us from the everlasting fire.

Later in the service, mourners and departed together reiterate their entreaty for forgiveness when they pray in psalm 50 (51): "Have mercy upon me, O God; . . [and] according to the multitude of thy compassions, blot out my transgression, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (50:1-2). In the same spirit, they employ jointly the Lukan words that customarily introduce Byzantine-rite uses of the Beatitudes: "In your Kingdom remember us O Lord, when you come in your Kingdom" (Lk 23:42).

c.ii) Passing from this individual focus to a more communal one, we find numerous evidences in BF for the possibility of an ecclesially-mediated mitigation of God's righteous judgment that will ensue instead in the granting of 'rest and refreshment' to the newly-departed. We should note here that there is no doubt for BF (nor for Byzantine theology in general) about the utility of 'prayer for the dead' being offered by the whole Church (both 'militant' and 'triumphant,' to use a Roman Catholic idiom). Such prayer is seen as somehow efficacious in influencing the

'ultimate fate' of all the Church's departed members, especially those who may have died in a presumably 'inadequate' state of preparedness for death and eventual judgment.[37]

Intercessory prayer for the dead is amply provided for in the Byzantine tradition, both during BF itself as well as by means of a lengthy series of special memorial commemorations of the departed that are commonly observed: on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after death;[38] on the one-year anniversary of a death (and frequently annually thereafter); and on certain particular Saturdays of the year that are specially dedicated to a commemoration of all the departed.[39]

Undoubtedly, BF's most prominent intercessors for the departed are the actual living members of the liturgical assembly, who throughout BF entreat God on behalf of their deceased loved one that instead of retribution God may grant remission of sins and rest to his departed servant. This takes place most obviously via the 'Synaptê for the Departed,' where the assembled mourners repeatedly pray: "[For] the repose of the soul of the departed servant of God [hereafter the generic female, N.] who has fallen asleep; . . that she may be pardoned every offence, both voluntary and involuntary; . . that the Lord our God may establish her soul where the righteous rest; [and that she be granted] the mercies of God, the kingdom of heaven, and the forgiveness of her sins."[40] Examples in a similar vein can be multiplied from throughout BF.

However, in BF's conception, the power and efficacy of our prayers to God for the departed are magnified through our joining to them requests for the intercessions of all God's holy ones: the blessed martyrs, the other saints, and especially the Most Holy Theotokos. "O only pure and spotless Virgin, . . intercede for the salvation of the soul of your servant," pleads the theotokion of TRIS, echoed by the theotokion of EVL: "Through you may we [all] find Paradise, O pure and blessed Mother of God." To requests for her loving intercessions are added those to other members of the heavenly *synaxis*: for example, one stanza of EVL sings out: "You Holy Martyrs, who proclaimed the Lamb of God, . . plead with him to grant us abolition of our debts."

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[37] See, amongst others: **BAKOGIANNIS**, 83-98; **CONSTAS**, 101-2; **FEDWICK**, 155-56; **MEYENDORFF**, *Byzantine*, 220-22; **VASSILIADIS**, 417-39; and **WARE**, *Orthodox*, 258-60.

[38] On the significance of these particular days, see: **VELKOVSKA**, *Dumbarton*, 39-42; and Gilbert **DAGRON**, "Troisième, neuvième et quarantième jours dans la tradition byzantine: Temps chrétien et anthropologie," in *Le Temps chrétien de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge: III^e-XIII^e siècles*, ed. J. Leroux, 419-30 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1984).

[39] **VASSILIADIS**, 420-26.

[40] ***Appendix I***, 293.

III.A.4 *The Remembrance of Death* (*'Memento mori'*): *"Whither we mortals all shall go"*[41]

BF's fourth and final 'theme of lamentation' is definitely linked to the preceding section which mentioned 'personal repentance' as one means by which BF envisages effecting a mitigation of God's 'righteous judgment.' In our present discussion, we will be more concerned with the "somber and pedagogical"[42] manner in which BF actually seeks to *engender repentance* on the part of the living mourners, by taking advantage of their presence at a funeral as an occasion to recollect for them the reality and inevitability of their own eventual deaths.

The practice of such a 'remembrance of death' is an important element in the monastic spirituality that Byzantine Christianity, in common with virtually all late antique and medieval Christian traditions, inherited through a long and venerable pedigree, one having roots in both Jewish wisdom thought and Greco-Roman philosophy. Sirach's exhortation to "remember the end of your life in all you do and then you will never sin" (Sir 7:36) mirrors Socrates' definition of philosophy as "meditation on death (*melétê thanátou*),"[43] and both maxims are of a type that seems to have inspired BF's monastic hymnographers as they composed IDML and ASP. Thus, it need not strike us as remarkable to find BF's 'authors' sometimes recapitulating actual phrases and sentiments that are to be found either in the Hebrew Bible or in writings from the ancient pagan Mediterranean world.

We may cite examples from the Jewish 'Wisdom tradition.' The words of 'The Preacher' – which conclude in Ecclesiastes 1:1b-2 that "all is vanity [for] what advantage is there to a man in all his labour that he takes under the sun?" – are reminiscent both of John of Damascus when he says: "Everything human which does not survive death is vanity" (IDML, tone 3), and of the unknown author of ASP who opines that "all the pleasant and glorious things of life are vanity and corruption" (ASP #10). And Jesus ben Sirach's question: "How can he who is dust and ashes (*LXX*:

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[41] The Ikos of KON; see ***Appendix I***, 300. The wording here (which I chose for its poetry) is from Igor **SOROKA**, comp., *Service for Those Fallen Asleep: "Panikhida"* (n.p.: OCA, 1973), 34.

[42] **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 118.

[43] See Plato, *Phaedo* 81A, as quoted by **VASSILIADIS**, 40; the accurate English translation of *melétê thanátou* is open to discussion. Peter Chamberas, the translator of Vassiliadis, having given "meditation upon death" in the body of his text, suggests in a note on the same page (40) that an alternative translation might be the "practice of death." My own personal preference is "attention to death."

gê kai spodós) be proud?" (Sir 10:9, RSV) permeates IDML, tone 5, which is probably alluding to this very text: "I remembered how the Prophet cried out: I am earth and ashes (*gê kai spodós*); and I looked again into the tombs and saw the naked bones, and I said: 'Who then is a king or a soldier, a rich man or a beggar, a just man or a sinner?'"

Alongside Hebrew 'wisdom,' there are discernible as well in BF's hymns numerous traces of emphases that typified ancient Greek thought. With respect to these, Vassiliadis reminds us that "for the Greeks the most grievous event for man [*sic*] [was] to abandon this world, filled with light, enjoyment, beauty and symmetry, and to descend into dark Hades where one will succumb to his [*sic*] inevitable fate."[44] Attitudes of this sort are to be found especially in ASP where one typical prosomoion invites us to "look at one in our image who has been laid in the [tomb], who has discarded all his beauty, . . [and is] wasted by darkness, hidden in the earth" (ASP #7).

Thus, from origins in both Hellenistic and Hebraic thought, a powerful focus upon the gravity of the fate awaiting all of us (and the futility and foolishness of attempting to 'resist' it through sinful self-indulgence) was incorporated into the teachings of the Christian monastic fathers,[45] and from there passed, not surprisingly, into BF's monastic hymnody. To exemplify this assertion, I shall close this brief digression on the origins of *memento mori* by citing a quotation taken from St. Basil the Great, noting how his remarks (which allude in their closing line to the Sirach quotation of a moment ago) are reflected in IDML, tone 5. In a homily entitled "On Guarding Thyself [cf. Deut 15:9]," Basil wrote the following:

> Where are they who had political authority? Where are the unsurpassed rhetoricians? . . . Where are the generals, the satraps, the tyrants? Have they not all, and all things [with them], become dust? . . .. Are not their few bones a memento of their passage through this life? Bend down and examine the graves to see if you can distinguish who is the slave and who is the lord; who is the poor and who is the rich. Separate, if you can, the captive and the prisoner from the king; the strong from the weak; the beautiful from the ugly. Remembering the common nature of all of us, you will never become prideful and will never be boastful.[46]

The IDML attributed by tradition to John of Damascus conclude with a stanza (in tone 8) that begins: "I grieve and lament when I contemplate death, and see the beauty fashioned for us in

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[44] **VASSILIADIS**, 40.
[45] On this, ibid., 273-90.
[46] St. **BASIL THE GREAT**, PG 31: 209D-212A, modified slightly from **VASSILIADIS**, 290.

God's image lying in the graves without form, without glory, without shape." Although the author refers here to a body lying in its tomb, there can be little doubt that in the context of BF, the "beauty lying without form, glory or shape" is taken by those present as describing the body of the deceased which lies in their midst. Here, it is important to remind ourselves briefly of a matter of which I have spoken previously in *Chapter One* and with which I shall deal at greater length towards the end of the present chapter.

For the 'contemplation of death' which BF proposes to the mourners, one must stress the importance of the visible presence of the deceased's remains during the funeral ceremonies, where they fulfill two purposes. In a positive manner, they are like 'holy relics,' bearers of a divine image through creation which has been refurbished through reception of the Christian sacramental Mysteries, and which is therefore venerated through being exposed, kissed and incensed. But negatively, the deceased's body is present during BF precisely as 'a corpse,' as a macabre 'icon' which reminds one and all of the ugly and tragic reality of death, and of the destruction it wreaks upon integral human personhood as we know it. (We should note *en passant* in this latter regard that the *maquillage* of the North American mortician's 'art' has seriously compromised this function since, for certain deceased persons, onlookers are said – only half-jestingly – to remark that "they haven't looked so good for years!")

In inviting us to engage in *melétê thanátou*, I believe that BF aims to impart reminders of three obvious realities: **a)** that life is both fragile and relatively transient; **b)** that death is a 'heartless' phenomenon which destroys everything intrinsically human; and **c)** that it (death) is the inevitable fate of all human beings to which we also will be subject before long. Let us briefly examine the evidences from within BF's hymnody for each of these assertions in turn.

a) BF's hymns evoke vivid reminders of *life's transience and fragility* coupled with warnings of death's frequently unexpected or insidious arrival. The evanescence of our earthly existence preoccupies the hymnographers of both IDML and ASP. The Damascene author reminds us: "All things are feebler than a shadow, more deceptive than dreams" (IDML, tone 1). "Where [is] the delusion of the temporary? All [now is] dust, all ashes, all shadow" (ibid., tone 4). These sentiments are echoed by ASP which laments: "[Our life is] merely a flower, a vapor and morning

dew" (ASP #4). "[The departed] passes like smoke from the earth; . . [she] blossomed like a flower, was cut down like grass, is wrapped in a winding sheet, hidden in earth" (ibid., #6).

The extremely ephemeral nature of our 'mortal coil' is reinforced for the hymn-writers by the suddenness with which death apparently strikes, a phenomenon that is a source of marvel in both IDML and ASP. "One instant, and death supplants . . . all [things]" (IDML, tone 1). "All the body's organs are idle, which only a little while ago were active" (ASP #11). But perhaps, suggests BF, no one has been more surprised by death than the deceased himself: "Only yesterday I was talking with you, and suddenly the dread hour of death came upon me" (ASP, doxastichon).

b) Death is not only sudden but, according to BF, *it is ruthless for in the end, nothing human remains untouched by it.* "Everything human is vanity [since it] does not survive death; wealth does not last, glory does not travel with us; at death's approach all of them disappear," observes IDML (tone 3). The destruction wrought by death is total: "The spirit has left its dwelling, the clay has turned black, the vessel has been broken" (ASP #3). "Where is the body's beauty? Where its youth? . . . All have withered like grass, all have vanished" (ibid., #4). "Truly *everything human* is vanity" (ibid., #11; emphasis mine).

c) Finally, and of greatest importance to BF's pedagogical efforts, the hymnody wishes to stress to the assembled worshippers (in case they might possibly have forgotten!) that *death is universal and inevitable*, a path that they too will tread some day. The Ikos of KON has no scruples about recalling this harsh fact of our existence: "You [O God] formed [us and] commanded saying: 'You are earth, and you will go back to earth,' to which all we mortals *will* go."

Nonetheless, the hymnographers remain awestruck and inquisitive concerning the fate that awaits us: "What is this mystery which has happened to us? How have we been handed over to corruption, and yoked with death?" (IDML, tone 8). "*For we all depart, we shall all die*, monarchs and rulers, judges and potentates, rich and poor and every mortal being" (ASP #10; emphasis mine). "[All the departed are] on [their] way to the Judge, with whom there is no respect of persons; for slave and master stand alike before him, king and soldier, rich and poor, with the same rank; each will be glorified or shamed in accordance with their own deeds" (ASP, doxastichon).

Implicitly, BF desires fervently that we the living, "thinking on the shortness of our life" (IDML, tone 2), should begin to repent *now*, before it is too late and we find ourselves standing before the Judge. *Now* is the time to manifest sorrow for sin and to begin amendment of life. All that the mourners have to do – the "one thing needful" of Lk 10:42 – is to appropriate the entreaties to God which BF voices in psalm 50 (51): "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Fill me with joy and gladness; *let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice*" (Ps 51:7-8 RSV; emphasis mine).

III.B *"O Christ, You are the resurrection, the life, and the rest of your departed servants"*[47]*: BF's Celebratory Themes of Comfort*

The hope-filled text from psalm 50 (51) that we have just quoted can serve as an appropriate transition from our treatment of 'Lamentation' to a discussion of certain more positive and 'Life-affirming' Christian truths that are also to be found within BF.[48] These comforting 'resurrectional realities' (as one might term them) shine forth all the more brilliantly in BF because they are placed with intentionality (so I believe) alongside and as a contrast to the funeral's presentation of the 'cold hard facts' of human mortality. In a vein rather similar to my assessment, Fedwick discerns BF's juxtaposition of celebration and mourning as predicating a victory of the former over the latter, when he writes as follows:

> Death [for BF] is the beginning of liberation. . . Thus, death should not only be mourned but celebrated because *more than a defeat it is a victory*, a victory over the instability, futility, and transitoriness of human existence. This dimension of death is stressed by . . . the frequent singing of *Alleluia*, [and] the inclusion of the Beatitudes in the service. . . The forerunners and prototypes of this victory are Christ and the Martyrs whom the liturgy constantly invokes.[49]

Having discussed BF's lamentation themes at some length in section ***III.A***, it is time now to move forward to a consideration of BF's comforting themes which it presents (in the words of the Ikos) as being capable of transforming our "funeral lament (ἐπιτάφιος θρῆνος)" into a victorious

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[47] From the ekphônesis of GOS (cf. Jn 11:25).

[48] See ***Appendix II***, p. 333, for Fr. Schmemann's interpretation of psalm 50 (51):8 as 'resurrectional' when recited in the context of BF.

[49] **FEDWICK**, 155; italics have been added for emphasis. While not disagreeing with the overall tenor of Fedwick's remarks here, one should note that 'Alleluia' is simply an ancient (as opposed to Paschal) liturgical refrain which, in the Byzantine east, continues to be sung even during Lent.

"Alleluia" of celebration. There are discernible in BF, I believe, three basic celebratory or comforting themes that are summed up rather neatly by the three substantives that conclude GOS and that I have chosen as the title of this present section of *Chapter Three*. Hence, in the following pages, I plan to deal in turn with BF's presentation of 'rest,' 'resurrection,' and 'life' as the three possible (and desirable) characteristics of the present and future state of the departed.

Section ***B.1*** will discuss BF's depiction of the prospect for the departed of their entry even now into 'God's *rest*.' Then, in ***B.2***, I will look at BF's grounding of hope for mourners (and for all of us) in the victory of Christ's (and ultimately our own) *resurrection* from the dead. Lastly, in ***B.3***, I shall try to show how BF envisages God as the trustworthy provider of new *life* for the departed through their abiding in his 'Eternal Memory.'

III.B.1 *"With the Saints give rest, O Christ, where there is no toil, nor grief, nor sighing"*[50]

Given the dazed state of mind that characterizes most mourners attending funeral services including BF, it is obvious that relatively few ideas from the service's 'Text' are likely to penetrate into their preoccupied state of consciousness. However, one concept from BF that seems to me more liable than most to actually 'sink in' is that which surrounds BF's incessant use of the term *anápausis* ('rest' or 'repose'), something which without doubt is mentioned more frequently than any other word or phrase in the entire service.[51] In what follows, I propose to highlight and discuss four parameters within BF that relate to the seemingly vague notion of that 'rest for the departed' for which BF makes so many repeated entreaties.

First **(a)**, the conceptual content of *anápausis* needs to be elucidated both within BF itself and in its relation to the wider Byzantine liturgical and theological tradition. Second **(b)**, given BF's repeated entreaties (in the 'Synaptê for the Departed' and elsewhere) "for the repose of *the soul* of the servant of God who has fallen asleep (*hupér anapaúseôs tês psuchês tou kekoimêménou doúlou tou Theoú*)," its understanding of 'the soul' (*hê psychê*) invites clarification. Third **(c)**, it is presumably the hope (or even the assumption) of most mourners attending BF that 'the soul' of

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[50] From the KON of BF (***Appendix I***, p. 300).

[51] This assertion is even truer if one groups it together with closely related nouns (e.g. *katápausis*) and with various forms of its cognate verb *anapaúô*, 'to give rest' or 'to take one's rest.'

their particular loved one will be amongst those to be accorded rest by God, although the whole ethos of BF implies that the departed's accession to rest is by no means automatic; this tension requires exploration. Lastly **(d)**, we need to consider 'where' and 'when' BF envisages that rest may be granted to the newly-reposed; in other words it is necessary to delineate the characteristics of BF's 'systematic eschatology' (including its probable lack thereof).

III.B.1.a The 'content' of BF's presentation of *anápausis*

It may be helpful to introduce this interesting topic by simply setting forth some of BF's rich array of poetic images so as to form a sort of verbal *collage*. This particular theological method is intrinsic to BF for, as Fedwick has pointed out, it is "quite common [to discover in BF and other Byzantine-rite memorials] the juxtaposition of different, sometimes varying, opinions."[52]

A first and important group of images depicts the deceased's rest as final 'liberation' from (or 'victory' over, using Fedwick's term) the many negatives of human existence: sin and wounded-ness, and the hardship, instability, and futility of life. According to the Isaian metaphor of KON (and GOS; cf. Is 35:10b *LXX*), in God's rest there will be "no toil, no grief, no sighing." Psalm 90 (91), which opens BF, likewise celebrates God's efficacious protection (for the living as well as the dead) from every sort of adversity: "from the hunters' snare and the word which troubles, . . [from] terror by night [and] the arrow that flies by day, . . [from] asp and basilisk, . . lion and dragon." At last, rejoices EVL, the departed like the Martyrs have been released, as it were, from following "the hard and narrow way."

A second collection of powerful images concern the 'restoration' which death makes possible for human beings, according to Bishop Kallistos Ware. "The divine Potter," he points out (employing an extended metaphor based on Jeremiah 18:4-5), "lays his hand on the vessel of our humanity, marred by sin, [and] breaks it in pieces, so as to make it again on his wheel and *refashion it according to its first glory*." Concludes the bishop, "[Death] is an escape from [an] *impasse*, a means of grace, the *doorway to our re-creation*" (emphases mine).[53]

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[52] **FEDWICK**, 160.

[53] **WARE**, "Mystery," 33-34. In the same article (p. 33) Ware stresses another aspect of 'death as release,' noting that "to live unendingly in this fallen world, caught for ever in the vicious circle of boredom and sin, would have been a fate too terrible for us . . . so God has supplied us with a way of escape."

In such a vein, death according to EVL is seen as providing access to "the source of life and the door of Paradise"; it marks our entrance to "unending life which knows no aging" where humanity's "ancient beauty" will be re-fashioned. In a place of "eternal rest" (*eis aiônas anápausis*: ASP #5, 6), which is the Lord's Kingdom (cf. Beatitudes), we will be refreshed through our being granted "the mercies of God, . . and the forgiveness of sins" (Synaptê). In "the kingdom of heaven" (ibid.), even before the *parousía*, we can begin already to experience "eternal Life" through hearing the "voice of the Son of God" (Jn 5:24a, 25) and contemplating "the light of [Christ's] countenance and the sweetness of [his] beauty" (IDML, tone 1).

A third image of 'rest for the departed' in BF is afforded implicitly by the parallels which exist between it and the 'Sabbath rest' of Christ in the tomb as depicted in the liturgy of Holy Saturday.[54] In the Byzantine tradition, this middle day of the *triduum paschale* is called the "Great and Holy Sabbath" because on it, by analogy with the sabbath of the original creation when God "rested on the seventh day from all his work" (Gen 2:2), Christ likewise 'rested' in the tomb on the seventh day from his work of the 'New Creation.' According to Lazor, BF constructs this parallelism (between Christ's 'Holy Saturday' rest and BF's *anápausis*) in a number of ways:

> For the one who has died, this day [of their funeral] is a personal Holy Saturday, a personal entrance into Christ's Sabbath rest and entombment, into Christ's 'trampling down death by death.' Psalm [118], the great messianic psalm chanted over the icon of the entombed Christ during the Matins of Holy Saturday, occupies nearly the entire initial portion of the [funeral] service. This psalm delights in the law of God and praises the victorious Messiah who fulfills it. In him is health, joy and life. As the troparia which follow the psalm [EVL] are sung, the priest, following the pattern of Great Saturday Matins [in the Slavic Orthodox tradition], censes the whole church while carrying a candle: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it' (Jn 1:5).[55]

We may summarize the most salient characteristics of BF's hoped-for 'rest for the departed' as these are given to us through this profusion of images. *First*, it is particularly noteworthy that this rest is precisely 'God's rest,' comparable both to the rest "from all his labors" which God himself enjoyed on the seventh day after Creation, and to the rest of the Incarnate Logos in the tomb on Holy Saturday;[56] it is this life's culmination rather than merely its antithesis (as some

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[54] See ***Appendix II***, pp. 329-32, as well: as **SCHMEMANN**, "Blessed Sabbath"; **LAZOR**, 'Original,' 97-98; and **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 118.

[55] **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 118. **LAZOR**, 'Original,' 98, notes as an additional parallelism the fact that "the clergy wear light-coloured vestments."

[56] See **CONSTAS**, 102-105.

of BF's hymnography seems to imply). *Second*, rest for the departed entails both their 'liberation' from human weakness and life's travails, as well as their 're-creation' to a 'new Life' which is somehow modeled upon yet surpasses their former existence; it is the restoration of their "ancient beauty" as EVL tells us. *Third*, as we shall discuss more fully in a moment, one of BF's arguable 'strong points' is its lack of any consistent eschatological 'viewpoint' or 'timetable,' a fact that enables it to speak about rest as something which begins 'now,' includes (apparently) aspects of the 'beatific vision,' and is 'eternal' (*eis aiônas*), while continuing to look forward through the funeral Epistle and Gospel readings to a 'future perfection.'[57]

III.B.1.b The 'soul' (*hê psychê*) in the context of BF's *anápausis*

To try and understand *anápausis* in BF, it seems important to establish what might be meant by BF's repeated references to 'the soul of the departed' for which it so earnestly entreats that rest be granted. Within BF taken as a whole I detect two principal contexts in which mention of the soul is made.

On the one hand, particularly in certain stichera of IDML and ASP, one finds depictions of the soul in essentially Platonic terms. It is, so to speak, one partner in the body-soul team, something that is ultimately separable from the body which it inhabits and animates. When such a separation (*chorismôs*) does occur – an event which is one of BF's definitions of 'death' – it involves a painful 'struggle,' suggesting that for BF at this level, the union of body and soul is an intimate one which is to the 'mutual advantage' of both 'parties.' The dis-animated body becomes a corpse slated for decay (*phthorá*); the disembodied soul is depicted by BF as in torment "with none to pity her," so she turns for assistance to both angels and men but "without effect" (IDML, tone 2). With such an image of a distraught soul in mind, it seems only natural that one would pray for its relief through the granting of rest.

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[57] **CONSTAS**, 124, closes his paper with the following astute *résumé*: "The Byzantines had no 'system' around the last things. Eschatology remained for them an open horizon within theology, an openness perhaps intended to draw experience and thought toward that which lies beyond the world of space and time. Perhaps the very inaccessibility of the last things rendered them all the more actual and compelling; a ferment in the present order. It was not the last things that were expected to be carried over into the cosmos, but the cosmos that was called, in and through the microcosm, to be carried beyond itself, out of itself into the mystery of God, who alone is the first thing and the last thing."

On the other hand, one finds ample evidence for an anthropology seemingly based more upon the second chapter of Genesis. According to Gen 2:7 (*LXX*), God "formed the [first] man (*ánthropos*) of dust of the earth"; then God "breathed upon his face (*prosôpon*) the breath of life (*pnoên zôês*)" so that "the man became a *living* soul (*egéneto eis psychên zôsan*)" (emphasis mine). BF seems often to use 'the soul' (*hê psychê*) in a manner analogous to this, so that 'soul' comes to function virtually as a sort of shorthand for 'human person.' I would cite as proof for my contention the fact BF sometimes asks (for example: in the ekphônesis of GOS; in EVL and its following Kathisma; in IDML; in the little-used stichera for the Beatitudes; in ASP; and in APOL) that rest be granted *to the departed* himself or herself ('directly' as it were), whereas, other BF texts (for example: the TRIS troparia, the Synaptê, the body of GOS, and KON) prefer to speak about the granting of rest *to the soul* of the departed person. Thus, there appears to exist in BF a *de facto* terminological equivalency between the departed 'person' *per se* on the one hand, and his or her soul on the other.

In conclusion, I am certain that in the minds of most of BF's auditors, its incessant requests for rest for the departed (whether or not they specify 'the soul' as their specific object) are understood as something entreated in a sense for the 'whole person,' since a 'body-soul composite' is the only mode of human existence which we know and can claim to understand. As my ultimate 'proof' for this contention, I would cite that 'Orthodox folk consciousness' which Danforth describes in his book on rural Greek death rituals. Here, one observes in the rituals first of burial and particularly of exhumation several years later (a usual Greek practice due to cemetery land scarcity) that there is a shared concern for the 'proper fate' of both body and soul. This relationship is summarized as follows by Danforth:

> When the bones of the deceased are exhumed, the reduction of the body to pure white bones, compact and immutable, offers visible evidence that the soul of the deceased has entered paradise. As a person's flesh (the impure, perishable portions of the body) decomposes, his [*sic*] sins are forgiven. At the end of these parallel processes both the body and the soul exist in pure and permanent form.
>
> This symbolic association between the body and the soul of the deceased is captured in the wonderful ambiguity that exists in the concluding passage of the funeral service which is recited at the burial, . . [a passage] in which the deceased addresses the priest who [in the common Greek practice] is pouring wine in the shape of a cross over the corpse [and] the grave . . . [while saying]: "You shall wash me with [with hyssop] and I shall be whiter than

> snow." . . Whiteness here refers metaphorically to the purity of the soul of the deceased and literally to the whiteness of his [*sic*] bones at exhumation. This illustrates forcefully the manner in which two aspects of rural Greek death rites, that concerned with the body and that concerned with the soul, are integrated into one coherent system.[58]

III.B.1.c *Anápausis* in BF: a hope or a certainty?

We mentioned earlier the probable hope (tending often towards an assumption) held by most mourners attending BF that 'the soul' of their particular loved one will be amongst those to be accorded rest by God. Yet, the Tradition as a whole has always felt obliged to take seriously words such as those of Christ expressed in the 'Sermon on the Mount': "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 7:21 NRSV). The answer as to who then *will* enter the Kingdom is provided, it seems to me, by BF's inclusion of the Beatitudes in its *ordo*:

> Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven" (Mt 5:3, 8-12a NRSV).

Yet 'ordinary mourners' (which includes most of us) – those whose newly-deceased and 'ordinary' loved ones were not particularly distinguished for their poverty of spirit or their purity of heart or their peace-making or their persecution for righteousness' sake – still tend to cherish the hope that their dear ones will nonetheless find 'God's rest.' I suggest that BF may well give them grounds for doing so; in EVL, the funeral service portrays 'EveryMan' (that is, the vast majority of us who are *not* recognizably either Martyrs or Saints) as addressing words to God that are both eloquent and compelling:

> May I too find the way through repentance; I am the lost sheep, call me back, O Saviour, and save me. You Holy Martyrs, who proclaimed the Lamb of God, plead with him to grant us abolition of our debts. . . . I am an image of your ineffable glory, though I bear the marks of offences; take pity on your creature, Master, and with compassion cleanse me; and give me the longed-for fatherland, making me once again a citizen of Paradise. Of old you formed me from nothing and honoured me with your divine image; . . bring me back to your likeness, my ancient beauty (EVL).

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[58] **DANFORTH**, 49.

To these entreaties, spoken on all our behalf *in persona defuncti*, the assembly adds its own petitions: "Give rest, O God, to your servant and settle her in Paradise, . . overlooking all her offences. [O Holy Trinity], . . enlighten us who worship you in faith, and snatch us from the everlasting fire. . . . O pure and blessed Mother of God, through you may we find Paradise."

It is in keeping with the spirit and texture of all of these fervent petitions (uttered both *for* and *by* the deceased) to conclude that although BF never *promises* rest and salvation for all, it certainly leaves the bereaved with reasonable grounds for hoping that mercy *may* be granted to all by the One whom APOL describes as having "authority over the living and the dead."

III.B.1.d The '*locus*' and timing of *anápausis*: observations on BF's eschatology

At the outset of this particular discussion, it is perhaps worth attending in greater detail to certain previously-noted helpful remarks by Fedwick who writes:

> The liturgical heritage of the Christian churches that follow the Eastern Byzantine rites [*sic*] does not offer a coherent view of human death. . . Quite common in them is the juxtaposing of different, sometimes varying opinions. Apart from historical reasons, this is probably *due also to the fact that death is essentially a mystery* – an occurrence which is *partly obvious, and partly hidden*, and as such defies any claims to definite knowledge. As to the former, the liturgy depicts death in all its ugliness and gloominess, adding some further considerations as to the value of human existence in general. . . . As to the *undisclosed aspect of death*, its reason for being, and *what follows after death, the liturgy limits itself* in the main to the bare reproduction of the scriptural statements. In this regard, it *rarely discloses more of death than is warranted by an average reading and understanding of the Word of God* (emphases mine).[59]

This being the case, it follows that BF's eschatology is as totally unsystematic as that of the Scriptures themselves.[60] We earlier spent time examining the question of 'judgment' in BF, noting how its existence is presented with conviction, while leaving open the genuine possibility that its outcome may be altered by repentance and the intercessory prayers of the Church. With specific regard to the 'rest' we are discussing, it appears that BF certainly views entry to it as being something available to the departed *here and now*. The most obvious text supporting this assertion is surely PROK which (employing non-biblical language which is rare in prokeimena) states: "Blessed is the way on which you journey *today*, [O soul,] for *a place of rest* (*tópos anapaúseôs*)

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[59] **FEDWICK**, 160.
[60] On this, see the earlier-cited remarks of **CONSTAS**, 124.

has been prepared for you" (emphases mine).[61] As a further example of the 'now-ness' of *anápausis* (albeit only an implied one), we might cite the introduction to the liturgical Beatitudes of BF; to this so-called 'prayer of the Good Thief' ("Remember me, O Lord, when you come in your kingdom": Lk 23:42), Christ is recorded as replying (23:43): "*Today* you will be with me in Paradise" (emphasis mine).[62]

Conversely, in some future 'then' of the *eschaton*, "those who have fallen asleep" (similar, presumably, to those in the 'place of rest') will be raised again "with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet" according to BF's Apostolos (1 Thess 4:16 NRSV). (One might note here, however, that a certain mitigation of the total futurity of this event is introduced by the Gospel reading in BF where Christ says: "The hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear [*hoi akoúsantes*][63] will live" [Jn 5:25; emphasis mine].) Between accession to rest 'now' and its termination (or perhaps perfection) by resurrection in a future 'then,' there is apparently 'something' in between. This 'intermediate state' is conceived by BF in terms that are in keeping with the general thrust of the mainstream patristic and Byzantine tradition,[64] and is more or less equivalent in a majority of BF's instances to the rest (*anápausis*) we have been discussing. This 'middle state,' as we saw earlier in the present chapter, is one in which the prayers of the Church for the departed are seen as efficacious.

In keeping then with BF's subscription neither to a fully realized eschatology on the one hand, nor to a totally futuristic one on the other hand (in other words to its *de facto* presentation, albeit with minimal details, of what Fr. Georges Florovsky calls an "inaugurated eschatology"[65]), we find within the texts of BF a wide diversity of 'rest-full' imagery, much of it biblical, which could be compatible with several different sorts of eschatological timetable. In the brief presentation that follows, I will group BF's imagery into four categories: **i)** rest 'with the Saints'; **ii)** rest 'with the Just'; **iii)** a return to Paradise; and **iv)** miscellaneous (mostly biblical) tropes.

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[61] The interpolation, "O soul," is found in most modern Byzantine-Slavic books (both Orthodox and Catholic), whereas it is absent in texts, both ancient and modern, from the Greek tradition.

[62] Another example of 'now-ness' is APOL's reference to "rest in the bosom of Abraham," a reference to Lk 16:22 that clearly depicts this as something which the deceased Lazarus is already enjoying.

[63] *Hoi akoúsantes* here might just as easily be translated as 'those who listen [actively]' since Greek does not differentiate clearly between active and passive meanings of the verb *akoúô*.

[64] For a thorough review of this interesting matter, see the entirety of the article by **CONSTAS**.

[65] Georges **FLOROVSKY**, "Revelation and Interpretation," in *Biblical Authority for Today*, ed. Alan Richardson and W. Schweitzer (London: SCM Press, 1951), 180.

d.i "*Rest with the Saints*" is an important image in EVL and KON, and receives brief mention by both TRIS and IDML (tone 2). In alluding to the circumstances of rest, reference is made in EVL to its being enjoyed amidst the "choir(s) of the saints." This image conveys several messages. 'God's rest' will be savored by the departed, not as individuals, but communally in the company of all those 'holy ones' redeemed by the blood of Christ (cf. Col 1:14 KJV). These are the 'saints' of the New Covenant, whose foremost members (according to Rev 17:6) are the martyrs; BF makes special mention of the 'Holy Martyrs' (in EVL and in the seldom-used Canon) perhaps because, like Christ, they exemplify for the deceased the possibility of embracing death willingly. 'Rest with the saints' is obviously not a purely passive phenomenon, since the departed will be joining a 'choir of saints' who presumably have the pleasure of offering praises to God.

d.ii "*Rest with the Just*" is perhaps even commoner as an image in BF than 'rest with the saints.' The "tents (*skênai*)[66] of the just" (APOL, IDML tone 6) are a source of illumination (EVL), located variously by BF "in [God's] courts" (Kathisma after EVL) or "in the land of the living" (IDML, tone 6). 'The Just' (or 'the Righteous,' *hoi dikaíoi*) is the common Byzantine trope for those OT personages who led holy lives prior to the coming of Christ. By his liberating descent to Hades, Christ (according to TRIS) loosed the bonds of those who were held captive there, so that 'the Just' of the Old Covenant are now joined to 'the Saints' of the New Covenant to form one single company in whose midst the departed can hope to abide. Hence, EVL prays: "O God, settle your servants in Paradise where the choirs of the Saints and all the Just shine forth like beacons."

d.iii *A return to Paradise* for the departed is an image which is found in BF exclusively in EVL. Paradise, of course, is the Persian-derived *LXX* name for the biblical 'Garden of Eden' (Gen 2:8) which immediately conjures up visions of a place of rest and refreshment. Hence, BF's concept of a return there for the departed constitutes primarily an image of 'restoration' rather than of 'reward'; this latter sense is more commonly the understanding of those who mistakenly equate 'Paradise' with popular notions of 'Heaven.'

Paradise in Byzantine theology represents a life of free obedience to God's commandments, one in which human beings are able to enter ever more fully into communion with God and to grow

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[66] Older alternative translations include 'tabernacles' or 'habitations': see KJV.

eternally into his 'likeness' (*homoíôsis*). The primeval 'myth' of Genesis 2 and 3[67] – picked up and amplified in numerous Byzantine liturgical texts including, as we saw earlier, the anaphora of St. Basil – describes (in Gen 3:24-25) how disobedient Adam ('humanity') was expelled from Paradise. Thereafter, the way to the garden and its 'tree of life' (the image of our *potential* immortality) was barred by cherubim holding a flaming sword. Now, according to BF's theological imagery, the only way 'back to Paradise' is through death (understood of course as happening 'in Christ'), which thus becomes the means of humanity's liberation, paradoxically providing humans with unhampered access to "the source of life and the door of Paradise" (EVL).

d.iv *Additional biblical tropes for anápausis*, mostly comprising a single reference, contribute to BF's impressive array of eschatological imagery. The scope of these is intriguing, and could certainly provide material for an interesting study of its own. Since time and space do not permit this, we shall have to be content here with cataloguing these images, as well as indicating their scriptural referents and making a few brief comments about some of them.

In GOS (which, as a part of TRIS, is often quite familiar to Byzantine-rite mourners), we hear a succession of three beautiful images detailing the departed's hoped-for resting place "in a place of light, a place of green pasture, a place of refreshment (*en topô phôteinô, en topô chloerô, en topô anapsúkseôs*)."

"A place of light" can be interpreted as an indirect reference to the 'new Jerusalem' since, according to the description of the heavenly city in Revelation, its inhabitants "need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light" (Rev 22:5). John the Seer shares metaphorical language here with another contemporaneous apocalyptic document, 2 Esdras (RSV)[68] where in 2:35, we are told that in God's kingdom-to-come, "the eternal light [of God, presumably] will shine upon you forever."[69] This apocalyptic imagery of a future luminous celestial dwelling-place

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[67] For an interesting contemporary discussion of the history of this 'mythology,' see James **BARR**, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 1-20.

[68] This originally Aramaic book, later translated into Greek, survived in the west only in its Latin edition. Hence, it is not found in *LXX*, although it does appear in the Russian Bible of 1956 which calls it '3 Esdras.' The Latin Vulgate (which includes it as an appendix) knows it as '4 Esdras.' See: *The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha: Revised Standard Version*, ed. Herbert May and Bruce Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, c1977), pp. 23 and 334 of the *Apocrypha* section (which is separately paginated).

[69] For this reference, I am indebted to Christine **MOHRMANN**, "'Locus refrigerii lucis et pacis'," *Questions Liturgiques et Paroissales* 39 (1958): 204-05 (= **MOHRMANN**).

resonates well within BF, it seems to me, with a typological understanding of references in psalm 50 (51) to a restored Zion (Ps 50:18-19), as well as with the lovely depiction in IDML, tone 1, of rest for the departed being sought "in the light of [Christ's] countenance."

"A place of green pasture" is a tranquil pastoral image, drawn probably from Ps 22 (23):2 (*LXX*): "In a place of green grass (*eis tópon chloês*), there he has made me dwell; he has nourished me by water of rest." Reference to rest in "a place of refreshment [or coolness]" is a paleo-Christian trope which, as Pierre Maraval notes, is found in the Christian East much less frequently than one finds its Latin equivalent *locus refrigerii* in early western Christian texts.[70] Christine Mohrmann has suggested that this image may well have its origins in the description by St. John's Apocalypse of the well-watered and fertile new Jerusalem (Rev 22:1-2).[71]

Moving beyond GOS to other rest-evoking imagery in BF, we might mention *en passant* the many references in BF's opening psalm 90 (91) which speak of God's presence (by inference to both the living and the dead) as being a refuge, a shield and a shelter. The "longed-for fatherland (*tên potheinên patrída*)" of EVL evokes Heb 11:14 in which Abraham's faith-filled descendants are described as "strangers and exiles on the earth"; the text goes on to inform us that "people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland (*hóti patrída epizêtoúsin*)." The reference of IDML, tone 6, to "rest . . . in the land of the living (*en chôra zôntôn*)" employs a phrase from psalm 114 (116A):9 where it is an antonym to 'death'; its roots may lie in ancient Egyptian mythology. It is used occasionally by Philo, Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Chrysostom, and John Damascene.

I mentioned the wonderfully evocative language of IDML, tone 1, when it prays for rest from Christ "in the light of your countenance (*tou prosôpou sou*) and the sweetness of your beauty (*tô glukasmô tês sês ôraiótêtos*)." I have been unable to elicit a source for the latter half of this phrase,[72] but the first half, as I mentioned earlier, may well depend on Rev 22:5. The references to the "light of the countenance" of the Lord are also reminiscent of the Aaronic blessing (Num 6:24-26) and of 2 Cor 4:6 where Paul speaks of "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

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[70] *Macrine*, 221: note 3. For more discussion of this venerable image, see **MOHRMANN**, 208-11. A reason favoring identification of the *locus refrigerii* as a place of repose and safety for the deceased may well have been knowledge of the fate that promptly overtook any unembalmed body in the Mediterranean climate.

[71] **MOHRMANN**, 207-08.

[72] It was not to be found in a search of the data-base *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* [= TLG].

A final image worth noting is used by APOL which beseeches rest for the departed "in the bosom of Abraham (*en kólpois Abraám*)"; one may note here the use of the plural that conveys a sense of being concealed safely within Abraham's most intimate inner parts (his 'innards,' to use a colloquial English term). The expression 'bosom of Abraham,' as used originally in the parable of 'Lazarus and the Rich Man' (Lk 16:24), conjures up thoughts of intimacy, comfort and protection; thus, Lazarus, whose earthly life was so tormented and difficult, now appears like a child reclining comfortably and safely on the lap of a beloved grandfather. The use of this image has extensive documentation in paleo-Christian funerary inscriptions and texts of assorted provenance;[73] closer to our own time, one finds it as the theme of a well-known Afro-American spiritual which sings: "Rock o' my soul in the bosom of Abraham."

In the veritable *collage* created by all the foregoing wealth of imagery, we can recognize the extent to which 'rest' (*anápausis*), as entreated by BF (whether for persons or for their 'souls') and evoked by its texts, is an imprecise reality, one that is depicted simultaneously as already actualized yet still awaiting completion. Thus, for example, a definite 'now-ness' strikes me as inherent in BF's utilization of imagery such as 'resting with the Saints' or 'reclining in Abraham's bosom,' whereas I deduce a stronger sense of pending future fulfillment in BF's allusions to rest as the 'return to Paradise' or as coming to dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem.

By utilizing this latter set of images as part of its overall evocation of 'rest,' BF relies upon notions whose semantic fields overlap to a certain extent, I believe, with those of its second 'celebratory theme.' We shall glimpse the extent to which this is so as we turn now to explore BF's depiction of a hope for the departed that is grounded in the paschal mystery of Christ.

III.B.2 *"You trampled down death and crushed the devil, giving life to the world"*[74]*: Vanquished Death and Resurrectional Hope in BF*

I should like to begin this section of my dissertation by highlighting certain recent developments in Roman Catholic liturgiology (found in Anglican and traditionalist Protestant

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[73] See: "The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter," in Herbert **MUSURILLO**, trans., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 154 [Asia Minor, late 2nd century]; Maxwell E. **JOHNSON**, *The Prayers of Serapion of Thmuis* (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1995), 68 [Egypt, mid-4th century]; and AC, Tome III, 256 [Antioch, ca. A.D. 380].

[74] From GOS; see ***Appendix I***, 293.

circles as well) which I believe may help to illuminate and inform our subsequent discussion of BF's apparently muted presentation of resurrectional faith.

Any student of contemporary Christian liturgy cannot help but be aware of the extent to which, in the years since the Roman Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council, a renewed emphasis on the 'paschal mystery' of Christ has become an important theme of western Christian liturgical scholarship and practice, in the Catholic, Anglican and Protestant traditions.[75] By definition, liturgical emphasis on the paschal mystery consists of celebrating through worship "the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ [as] one event seen from two sides: cross and resurrection, each incomplete without the other."[76]

Engaging the paschal mystery through worship would seem to be an especially relevant exercise in the shaping of Christian funeral rites that are 'adequate' (Grisbrooke's term again), something that was indeed recognized in the Vatican II document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* ("The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy"), 81, where it was stipulated that "funeral rites should express more clearly the paschal character of Christian death."[77] In a similar vein, the Orthodox theologian, Boris Bobrinskoy, feels able to refer to BF as "the sacrament of death,"[78] an assertion he prefaces by explaining: "Within the mystery of Christ dead *and resurrected*, death acquires a positive value; . . . it has become the indispensable doorway, as well as the sure sign, of our ultimate Pascha, our passage *from death to life* . . . [so that] the paschal mystery forms itself within our very being."[79]

During the period immediately after Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church (and following its lead, most of the historic mainline Protestant confessions) were quite prompt in reforming their funeral liturgies, attempting to put into practice what was felt to be mandated by the spirit of the

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[75] See: Irmgard **PAHL**, "The Paschal Mystery in its Central Meaning for the Shape of Christian Liturgy, " *Studia Litugica* 26 (1996): 16-38 [a Roman Catholic perspective]; Willy **RORDORF**, "A Response to the Paper of Irmgard Pahl," *Studia Liturgica* 26 (1996): 39-48 [a Reformed perspective]; and Maxwell E. **JOHNSON**, "The Paschal Mystery: Reflections From a Lutheran Standpoint," *Worship* 57 (1983): 134-56. It is noteworthy as well that the popular *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, Image Books, 1995) devotes close to forty pages (pp. 304-340) to a presentation of the relationship between the paschal mystery and the sacraments.

[76] Philip H. **PFATTEICHER** and Carlos **MESSERLI**, *Manual on the Liturgy, Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 305; as quoted above by Johnson, 141.

[77] Austin **FLANNERY**, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents, Study Edition*, (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1987), 24.

[78] **BOBRINSKOY**, 244; his reference here to BF as the 'sacrament of death' reminds us that for certain medieval Byzantine liturgical commentators, the funeral actually was reckoned as one of the sacramental mysteries; see **MEYENDORFF**, *Byzantine*, 191-92.

[79] **BOBRINSKOY**, 242; italics are in the original.

Vatican II pronouncement. Rome's new *Ordo Exsequiarum*, published in 1969,[80] took the lead in eradicating (or at least toning down) the importance given in many older funeral liturgies to 'the Dead' – especially their fate and our ongoing relationship to them – and in substituting for this focus a greater emphasis on a sometimes vague hope centered round the Resurrection of Christ.

A little more than ten years after the new *Ordo* was introduced by Rome, aspects of the pastoral wisdom and theological adequacy of this shift were seriously called into question in a penetrating article by an American pastoral liturgist, Richard Hoeffner, who wrote the following (along with much else of potential interest for the present dissertation):

> The human ritual of burying the dead, much of which had already been taken away by the culture in an attempt to deny death, [is] de-emphasized in the prayers of the [new] rite. . . . This leaves us rather starkly with a prayer for the bereaved, so that they might handle the separation well, and a hoped-for future reunion with the dead, based on the promise of Christ. There is a great deal of ritual, using symbols of resurrection and life; but very little ritual that actually deals with death. There is a deep and empty silence about the fate of the dead, . . and very little basis for relationship with them. This silence may be authentic and realistic, and it surely allows the faith in the resurrection to stand [boldly] forth in its naked reality. . . . [But] it also allows the gulf between the living and the dead to become uncrossable, and forbids a unity of living and dead, a oneness of the Church in Christ, the Lord of the living and the dead.[81]

I find it interesting to hear echoed, in this critique of the mainly 'resurrectional' prayers and rituals of the new Roman funeral rites, a similar concern to that voiced by Fr. Schmemann (discussed earlier in both the present chapter and in *Chapter Two*) about the creation by BF's hymnography of a climate of 'separation' between living and departed. The implication of Fr. Hoeffner's remarks – that the new 'celebratory' Roman rite could use a greater and tighter degree of connectedness between 'death,' the departed, the bereaved, and the resurrection of Christ – gives one pause for thought, both for evaluating Fr. Schmemann's analysis of BF (as we shall continue to do throughout this dissertation), and in approaching (as we now do) BF's juxtaposition of 'resurrectional reality' alongside its unquestionably sombre presentation of death.

As another prefatory remark to our discussion of resurrection and the paschal mystery in BF, I would like to highlight an observation that I made *en passant* a moment ago in concluding

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[80] See: Cuthbert **JOHNSON**, *Christian Burial: The Ordo Exsequiarum 1969 with Related Liturgical Texts, Indexes and Bibliography*, Bibliotheca "Ephemerides Liturgicae": Subsidia, 69 (Rome: C.L.V. - Edizioni Liturgiche, 1993).

[81] **HOEFFNER**, 494.

section *III.A*. I am quite aware that there *are* overlapping semantic fields between my earlier concern with 'rest' in BF on the one hand (especially in its use of certain 'not-yet' images of restoration such as 'Paradise' or 'Jerusalem'), and my present interest in BF's presentation of 'resurrection' on the other hand. Thus, in approaching the latter as we shall do in a moment, one ought not to be surprised or perplexed to discover the definite congruence of imagery that exists between present 'rest' for the newly-departed, and the Holy Saturday 'repose' (of Christ and the departed) which, I believe, is one of BF's principal 'intimations' of an eventual and inevitable resurrection. Of course, it is also well to bear in mind that this whole discussion of 'overlapping imagery' is a somewhat artificial problematic that has been engendered in the first place by my choosing to 'dissect' BF into a set of discrete themes in order to display what I discern as its antinomic and paradoxical 'intended-sense-as-Text.'

Our move now to a consideration of resurrection in BF should begin by our stressing another important fact (one which can be gleaned from our consideration of recent developments in western Christian liturgy): namely that any entry into the paschal mystery – resurrection's theological 'matrix' – entails an ingress into *all* the 'events,' so to speak, of the interval between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. This is a particularly relevant *caveat* for approaching BF's presentation of resurrection, since so much of this presentation (as I suggested a moment ago) is done in anticipatory fashion through being focused on the drama of Holy Saturday, a drama which highlights certain obvious parallels between the entombed Christ and the departed.

One can discern BF's apparent 'message' here: through the deceased's being joined now in death to the 'Holy Saturday Christ' (an observable fact beyond dispute), there is given the equal certainty that he or she will be joined (and in a real sense is already being joined) to the 'Easter Christ.' Thus, in the context of the unitary paschal mystery of Christ, it is primarily through a focus upon Christ's death-destroying (hence life-creating) descent into and sojourn in Hades – rather than through the more familiar and typically Byzantine exultation of *Christós anéstê* – that BF announces and celebrates the reality of the resurrection of both Christ and the departed.

Perhaps I can add weight to my fundamental contention here by quoting some (to me) helpful observations by the Harvard Byzantinist, Nicholas Constas, who writes as follows:

> The Byzantines . . . developed a view of the afterlife loosely based on the postmortem experiences of Christ, whom scripture proclaimed to be the "firstborn of the dead," a "second Adam" in solidarity with humanity even in his death (cf. Col 1:18; 1 Cor 15:20-22). The Byzantine christomimetic tradition was deeply enculturated, and the *exemplum Christi* was a master metaphor according to which the relationship between body and soul in human beings was seen as analogous to that obtaining between humanity and divinity in Christ. Christology, in other words, provided an illuminating paradigm for anthropology and stimulated reflection on the fate of souls after death, a situation that John Meyendorff has aptly characterized as a "christocentric eschatology." Generally speaking, the *exemplary death of Christ established a fundamental law of human existence, namely, temporary residence in an interim state until the general resurrection of the dead.* Based on Matthew 10:24 ("A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master"), the soul's tarriance [*sic*] between death and resurrection became a universal *lex mortuorum*, although the *souls of the righteous could now endure this experience in solidarity with Christ*, to whom they were mimetically linked: "For where I am, you will also be" (John 14:3).[82]

With these observations in mind, I would contend that there are at least three ways, each of which I shall now examine briefly, by which BF accentuates liturgically, in actuality or *in potentia*, its focus on resurrection in the context of the overall paschal mystery. *First* (and nowadays of least relevance), there is the processional character of BF as a service which, in its probable genesis, began as a stational vigil in church along the route from the deceased's home (the place of death) to the *koimêtêrion* (the place of rest while awaiting resurrection). Grisbrooke reminds us of how in Christian antiquity, this procession was always "a triumphal, not a mournful [one]" in which "the bier . . . was preceded and followed by men carrying lighted torches, and escorted by others bearing branches of palm and olive as tokens of victory, while the paschal 'Alleluia!' was repeated again and again."[83] The paschal referents of this scenario are obvious; possible remnants of it in today's BF include the singing of TRIS on entry to and exit from the church,[84] and perhaps the holding of lighted candles in church by the mourners (a usual practice in the east Slavic Orthodox tradition).

Second, the present-day 'shape' of BF, regardless of its origins in liturgical history, is essentially that of Orthros ('Matins') with some minor alterations in the sequence of its constituent parts. Thus, one finds in BF as in Orthros:

a) a kathisma of the psalter (the seventeenth: AMOMOS);

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[82] **CONSTAS**, 102-3. Italics were added for emphasis.

[83] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 77.

[84] This is certainly analogous to the singing of TRIS during the procession with the Epitaphios [icon depicting the entombed Christ] which forms the popular heart of Byzantine Orthros of Holy Saturday (normally celebrated 'by anticipation' during the evening of Good Friday). Ironically, in both instances (BF and Holy Saturday), the commonly-used melodies for TRIS are mournfully solemn, rather than joyous.

b) EVL (which are also part of Sunday Orthros, and more importantly, of Holy Saturday Orthros; in east Slavic Orthodox practice, they are accompanied by an incensation);
c) the recitation of psalm 50 (51);
d) a Canon (effectively 'replaced' in most parochial settings by IDML and Beatitudes) with a kontakion and ikos;
e) a prokeimenon and Gospel, as on Sundays and great Feasts; and
f) ASP as the equivalent of the concluding aposticha of week-day Orthros.

Byzantine Orthros, particularly for Sundays, is essentially a vigil that is kept in anticipation of the dawning of the new day, when the rising sun provides a powerful natural symbol of the rising from the dead of Christ, the 'Sun of Righteousness.' During Holy Saturday Orthros in particular (celebrated usually by anticipation on the evening of Holy Friday), there takes place a vigil that awaits (and anticipates hymnographically) the rising of 'new life from the tomb,' as worshippers stand holding candles before the image of the dead and entombed Son of God. The resurrectional parallels of this Holy Saturday service with a celebration of BF seem obvious enough to need no explication, although it must be admitted that they will generally be more apparent to a student of Byzantine liturgy than to an average mourner attending a Byzantine-rite funeral.

Third (and finally), as Lazor has pointed out for us, BF embodies a tripartite movement which 'descends' from calm repose to 'the pit' of penitential desolation and then 'ascends' from there to the proclamation of resurrectional joy.[85] This trajectory of 'descent-depths-ascent,' it seems to me, precisely imitates and thereby makes present to mourners the *transitus* of Christ (and hence eventually of themselves) in the paschal mystery. I would like to amplify this assertion and thereby conclude section ***III.B.2***, by highlighting the sequential elements of BF which serve, I believe, to mark the various movements and points along the trajectory I have just described.

One starts with the actual death of the newly-deceased by which, according to Bobrinskoy, he or she in union with Christ begins his or her passage through the "doorway . . . of our ultimate Pascha, our passage *from death to life*, rather than from life to death."[86] In the ensuing 'descent to death' for both the deceased and the mourners, we initiate a contemplative emulation of Christ who overcame death only by descending first into "the depths of the Pit, into the regions dark and deep" (Ps 87 [88]:6, RSV, a verse used as one of the prokeimena at Holy Friday Vespers). Thus, in words from TRIS, we praise Christ "who *descended* into Hell and did away with the pains of those held

[85] **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 118.
[86] **BOBRINSKOY**, 242; italics are in the original.

captive," while in GOS (first heard at the conclusion of TRIS), we entreat "resurrection, life, and repose" from him who by descending "trampled down death and crushed the devil, giving life to [his] world."

Despite the anguish and sorrow that are caused for mourners by their loved one's 'descent,' this same descent for the deceased, as for the entombed Christ on the 'Blessed Sabbath,' signals the beginning of a time of tranquil repose which those grieving can only contemplate but not yet share. Gathered round the still and often peaceful countenance of a departed sister or brother, the assembly hears chanted verses from AMOMOS, a hymn which in the context of BF celebrates the entry of the departed with Christ, who alone is "Blameless in the Way," into the 'way' which is Holy Saturday: "Hear my voice, O Lord, in accordance with your mercy; in accordance with your judgment give me life; Alleluia [v.149]. Rulers have persecuted me for no reason; and my heart has been in awe of your words; Alleluia [v.161]. My soul will live and praise you; and your judgments will help me; Alleluia [v.175]."[87] The spirit of these assurances continues in the ensuing EVL, which look to God to accord the dead "the longed-for fatherland" and the restoration of their "former beauty."

On the other hand, for the mourners who stand around keeping vigil, this 'time of descent' is certainly a sombre and usually troubling one, full of sentiments that may resonate with lines from psalm 50 (51): "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love (51:1 RSV). . . . Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy holy Spirit from me (v.11)." At this moment, it may be easy for the grieving to identify with the painful perplexity expressed in a hymn like IDML, tone 8, attributed to John Damascene: "I grieve and lament when I contemplate death. . . . What is this mystery? . . . How have we been handed over to corruption and yoked with death?"

Upon completion of the psalmody, (the Canon when taken), and IDML, a gradual change takes place in BF's trajectory. Introduced by the singing of the Beatitudes and the following PROK, there begins a movement of 'ascent' towards God's promises of resurrection and restoration for the departed,[88] and the possibility through them of eventual hope and consolation for the

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[87] This particular selection of verses is included in most Greek books (though not usually in Slavic ones) as part of an abbreviated Stasis Three of the AMOMOS; see ***Appendix I***, 296.

[88] In certain Slavic communities within the Byzantine tradition, this movement of 'ascent' is highlighted by a move of the clergy at this point from the body of the church into the sanctuary.

grieving. "In your Kingdom, remember us O Lord; blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven; blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted (Beatitudes). . . . Blessed [then] is the way on which you journey today, [O soul], for a place of rest has been prepared for you" (PROK). Perhaps now the lights, incense and white vestments of the service start to seem just a bit more 'appropriate' to the attendees.

The assembly is being readied to hear the wonderful promises of the Word of God. "Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so too through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess 4:14). "The hour is coming *and is* [*even*] *now*, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who have heard will live. . . . All who are in the tombs will hear his voice; and they will come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, but those who have done ill to the resurrection of judgment" (Jn 5:25, 28: emphasis mine).

For the first time, perhaps, there may be glimpsed a ray of truth in the proposition of the Ikos that "our funeral lament" is able to become "a song [of] Alleluia." Departing for the cemetery, the members of the funeral party prepare to watch as earth is strewn cross-wise over the coffin accompanied by the opening words of psalm 23 (24): "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and *all those* who dwell therein." The grave of another loved one is "sealed until the second coming of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ,"[89] the Immortal King who rose from the dead, and who thereby has been given, according to APOL, "authority over the living and the dead." The mourners prepare to leave the cemetery to return to their homes after entreating God one last time before their departure that he will ever keep the departed in his 'Eternal Memory.'

The significance and meaning of this remarkable final entreaty of BF merits a more detailed consideration, something to which we shall now direct our attention. "Eternal Memory," together with its concomitant vision of continued communion with the departed made possible by God's trustworthiness, constitutes (so I contend) the third of BF's 'celebratory themes.'

III.B.3 *"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance" (Psalm 111 (112):6b)*[90]*: Life in God's 'Eternal Memory' (Aiôniá hê mnêmê)*

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[89] See, e.g., **SERAPHIM**, 53; **WYSOCHANSKY**, 83.

[90] This verse is the communion-hymn (*koinônikón*) for celebrations of the Divine Liturgy on ordinary Tuesdays.

For those having even a passing acquaintance with the Byzantine funeral tradition, whether they are actual Byzantine-rite Christians or only casual visitors to BF, the heart-rending melody and words of the service's closing chant – 'Eternal Memory' – are particularly liable to create a lasting impression. Personal observation suggests that this phrase is often mistakenly interpreted by onlookers as a pledge on the part of mourners never to forget the one who has died, a sort of vow made just as the bereaved prepare to leave the cemetery taking with them their (hopefully) fond memories of a departed loved one. Such an interpretation, however, totally neglects the traditional phraseology with which the chanting of 'Eternal Memory' is usually introduced, in which the priest or deacon entreats God firstly that the deceased be granted 'eternal rest' and then that *God will make the departed one's memory to be eternal.*

The Soviet-era theologian-martyr, Pavel Florensky (recently canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church), has suggested that the intended meaning of 'Eternal Memory' is revealed through the words of the 'Wise Thief' (Lk 23:42) that introduce the Beatitudes in BF: "Remember us O Lord, when you come into your Kingdom" (Lk 23:42). Comments Florensky:

> [The wise thief] asks to be remembered and that is all. And in answer, in satisfaction of his wish, his wish to be remembered, the Lord Jesus witnesses: "Verily, I say unto thee. Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42-43). In other words, "to be remembered" by the Lord is the same thing as "to be in paradise." "To be in paradise" is to be in eternal memory and, consequently, to have eternal existence and therefore an eternal memory of God. Without remembrance of God we die, but our very remembrance of God is possible [only] through God's remembrance of us.[91]

In reflecting upon this insight of Florensky's, there are aspects of his remarks that invite further elaboration in the context of the present discussion.

It should be evident even to the casual observer that there is an obvious overlap in the semantic fields which surround: a) this understanding of 'Eternal Memory'; b) the Johannine concept of 'eternal life' which is central to BF's Gospel lection; and c) the notions of 'rest' (*anápausis*) and 'resurrection' that we have just been exploring within BF. Florensky points out this convergence with reference to the commemorations of the living and the departed which are made as the priest prepares

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[91] Pavel **FLORENSKY**, *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*, trans. Boris Jakim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 144; quoted by Donald **SHEEHAN**, "Dostoevsky and Memory Eternal: An Eastern Orthodox Approach to *The Brothers Karamazov*," on-line at www.dartmouth.edu/~karamazo/sheehan.html, updated on 14 May, 2002.

the eucharistic elements before serving the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. Although it is customary in many places to commemorate the living by asking God to 'remember' them, and the departed by requesting God to 'give rest' to them, in effect (as Florensky observes) "this 'giving of [rest]' by the Lord [to the departed] and His 'remembering' [the living] signify one and the same thing: the *salvation* of the one whose name is pronounced."[92]

Florensky's reference to acts of 'cultic remembrance' in the context both of the Eucharist and of BF possesses an appropriateness that becomes more readily apparent when we explore the biblical antecedents for BF's concluding presentation of God as the One who is infinitely capable of sustaining human persons (and the whole of creation) through his eternal 'remembrance' of them.

The Hebrew root *zkr*, together with its cognates in related Semitic languages, has the basic sense of 'remembering.'[93] However, as used in various parts of the OT, the verb *zākhār*, commonly rendered as 'remember,' does not mean simply the intellectual act of recalling some past event or person. Rather its meaning is often closer to 'being mindful of' someone or something, and as such, it can refer to things past, present, or yet-to-come. The "fundamental bond of mutual remembrance that unites God and man"[94] that is denoted by *zākhār* is depicted in the OT as a reciprocal, albeit asymmetrical, one. Essentially Israel's remembrance of God and his acts in history entails Israel's calling-to-mind and holding-in-remembrance the God who has initiated a covenant relationship in and through which he has remembered, is remembering, and will continue to remember his people. We are moved to remember God because he first remembers us, and we hope and trust that he will continue to do so.

When traditional Jews and Christians have sought to remember (*zākhār*) God and his gracious 'mighty acts' on their behalf, one important way they have done so is through performance of one or another 'cultic act' (*zikkārôn*) which has served as a 'memorial' (*'azkārāh*, Greek *mnêmósynon*), and recalls for the community and its members the *trustworthiness* (note my emphasis) of God's past, present, and future remembrance (*zikkārôn*) of them. For Christians, the paradigmatic

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[92] Ibid., 143-44; quoted by **TRUBACHEV**, 70.

[93] For the elements of this discussion, I am indebted to H. **EISING**, "*Zākhar*; *zēkher*; *zikkārôn*; *'azkārāh*," in *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Volume IV, ed. G. Johannes **BOTTERWECK** and Helmer **RINGGREN** (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974), 64-82.

[94] Ibid., 70.

example of *zikkārôn* (whose NT Greek equivalent is the *anámnêsis* of Lk 22:19 and 1 Cor 11:24-25) is of course the celebration of the Eucharist. However, it seems to me essential to understand that all genuine Christian liturgy will include important moments for *zikkārôn*. One such 'important moment,' I believe, can and often does occur when Byzantine Christian communities, having gathered both to mourn and celebrate the death-in-the-Lord of one of their members, then conclude their assembly by faithfully and trustingly committing that member to God through the singing of ***Aiôniá hê mnêmê*** – 'Eternal Memory.'

I am suggesting here that an important result of our practice of *zikkārôn-anámnêsis* is the inculcation of an abiding confidence in the trustworthiness of God and of God's promises. I would maintain that such a fundamental climate of trust is especially focused in BF around the chanting of 'Eternal Memory,' but it is one that pervades all of BF even during its more sombre interludes. The opening psalm 90 (91) is essentially a great hymn of confidence in God that extols God's habitual presence to humans – in life and death – as 'helper,' 'refuge,' 'shield,' and 'hope.' (One might observe parenthetically that the frequent omission of this psalm in Byzantine-rite parishes of the Greek and Arab traditions is unfortunate, to say the least.) Then come the insistent (but not desperate) petitions for the departed to be granted rest (including most especially those of GOS) which, taken together, exude an atmosphere of quietly trustful hope in God – a hope which is legitimized by the resurrection faith proclaimed through both the epistle and gospel readings.

Finally, at the service's conclusion and as the veritable climax of BF's multiple expressions of confidence in God and his promises, the singing of ***Aiôniá hê mnêmê*** appears as a magnificent and poignant final expression of that 'blessed assurance' which underlies BF and is expressed throughout it. St. Symeon of Thessalonica intuited this well when he wrote that "the prayer [for eternal memory] is . . . a gift and the culmination of all; it sends [the deceased] to the joy that he will have in God and gives to God, as it were, the soul and body of the deceased."[95]

Ultimately, the trust and hope that are expressed through 'Eternal Memory' constitute the foundation of that ongoing communion in Christ of the living with the departed for which mourners

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[95] **FLORENSKY**, *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*, 507, where this quotation appears in a note.

yearn. If the living and the dead are sustained in the end by being kept in the eternal remembrance of God, then in God, they can never be separated either from him or from one another.

III.C *"Making our funeral lament into a song: Alleluia"*[96]: *the Fundamental Paradoxicality of BF*

I have attempted to demonstrate thus far in *Chapter Three* how the 'intended sense' of BF entails a reasonably balanced presentation of a series of sombre themes of lamentation alongside a near-equal number of comforting themes of celebration. Earlier, in *Chapter Two*, I criticized Fr. Alexander Schmemann for his *de facto* attempts, based upon an often tentative and poorly substantiated diachronic analysis of BF, to denigrate and downplay present-day BF's 'lamentation stratum' as embodying (in his opinion) a theological assessment of 'Death' that represents simultaneously an unfortunate departure from the resurrectional and eschatological perspectives typical of early Christianity, coupled with a return to an attitude towards death that characterized much of pre-Christian antiquity.

In concluding the present chapter, I should like to begin to show why I believe that Fr. Schmemann is fundamentally mistaken in his assessment of the 'adequacy' of BF's theology. I propose to start doing so by indicating here some of the ways in which, as I believe, BF enshrines and expresses a climate of apparent and intentional paradox at its center. It will be my contention (both here and throughout later chapters) that this paradox should be viewed as a fundamental expression of BF's theological method and as most definitely an integral part of its 'intended sense.' To assess it instead as the result of an essentially 'accidental' and highly regrettable contamination of an initial pristine thematic by a set of unworthy later accretions (as Fr. Schmemann seems wont to do) is, I believe, both inaccurate and inadequate when viewing BF from a practical theological perspective. This latter assertion I shall hope to demonstrate through the final two chapters of my dissertation.

My suggestion that there are within BF two broad categories of themes comprising its 'intended sense' – those of lamentation and those of celebration – risks being misconstrued as an over-simplification; one might suppose that we are dealing here essentially with an *antinomy*, whereby the death of a Christian, according to BF, is perceived by faith as an occasion for

[96] From the Ikos after KON: see ***Appendix I***, 300.

simultaneous lamentation and celebration on the part of the mourners. However, it seems to me that the 'theological genius' of BF, if one may put it that way, lies in something much more subtle than the construction and presentation of a straightforward antinomy. Rather, it resides in a frank *paradox*, namely BF's assertion that an obvious occasion of lamentation – the death of a loved one – is capable of being (and indeed ought to be) transformed into an occasion of celebration for Christians.

Several observers – including most particularly Alexander Schmemann himself (as was mentioned in *Chapter One*)[97] together with the Russian liturgical musicologist, Sergei Trubachev (whose work we also encountered both in *Chapters One* and *Two*)[98] – have pointed out how this fundamental paradox is focused in the words of BF's Ikos that comprise the title of this concluding section of Chapter Three. "You alone [O God] are immortal, who made and fashioned mankind; we mortals then were formed from the earth and to that same earth we shall go . . . *making our funeral lament a song: Alleluia* (*epitáphion thrênon poioúntes ôdên: to Allêloúïa*)." Bearing this latter italicized phrase in mind as the focus of BF's fundamentally paradoxical approach to Christian death, I would like to suggest three especially important ways in which this paradox is presented for those attending a service of BF.

My *first example of heightened paradox* within BF concerns the service's attitude towards the body of the deceased whose visible presence, as I have indicated in earlier parts of this dissertation, is essential for achieving the theological goals of BF. I have also pointed out how within BF, the deceased's body can be understood as serving two different 'theological functions.'

On the one hand, it enters the church essentially as a 'corpse' – as an unsightly 'icon' of the tragedy which is death, whereby our integral body-soul union, fashioned after the image and likeness of God, undergoes dissolution into its 'component parts,' one of which now comes to lie before the assembly as a lifeless cadaver that is already beginning the process of 'corruption' (*phthorá*). BF's hymnography invites us (or rather compels us) to gaze unflinchingly upon this most graphic reminder of our human mortality. "I grieve and I lament when I contemplate death, and see the beauty fashioned for us in God's image lying in the graves, without form, without glory, without shape. . . . How have we been handed over to corruption and yoked with death?" (IDML, tone 8). "Come, . . let

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[97] See *Chapter One*, p. 47.
[98] See *Chapter One*, p. 66, and *Chapter Two*, pp. 88, 91.

us look at one in our image who has . . . discarded all his beauty, been dissolved . . . by the rottenness of worms, wasted by darkness, hidden in earth" (ASP #8).

Simultaneously and paradoxically however, this same corpse is treated with a reverence which is not dissimilar to that accorded the 'holy relics' (*hágia leípsana*) of the saints. Thus, observes Lazor:

> The body of the deceased . . . is repeatedly censed as a sign that in it, 'the redemption of our bodies' (Rom 8:23) has already begun. The deceased is a baptized, chrismated and communing member of the body of Christ. Sacramentally, his whole substance is permeated by him who, having risen, is 'the first fruits of all those who have fallen asleep' (1 Cor 15:20).[99]

This quasi-veneration is expressed at various points throughout BF, but it arguably moves to a climax during the rite of the Aspasmos, the giving of the 'Last Kiss' which concludes the service in church. At this poignant juncture, the celebrating clergy, the members of the deceased's family, and commonly other members of the assembly approach the *hágia leípsana* of the deceased, and for one final time seek to fulfill Apostle Paul's oft-repeated injunction to 'greet one another with a holy kiss' (Rom 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, etc.).

There is discernible here a paradoxical vacillation within BF, from an attitude of near-revulsion and perplexity before the tragedy of the deceased's "blackened clay [and] broken vessel" (ASP #3) to a disposition which is able to approach these same remains as a sacramentalized reminder of God's "pledge of future inheritance, the first-fruits of eternal good things."[100] This apparent progression within BF's overall liturgical ethos serves, it seems to me, as a tangible and visible witness to the whole service's fundamentally paradoxical character.

A *second important focus of paradox* within BF concerns the 'shape' of the momentous *transitus* which the rite recognizes and signals for both the mourners and the deceased. For the bereaved, this transition is apparently from 'light' to 'darkness' – from dwelling in a world made bright by the presence of a loved one, to a new and more sombre universe marked by separation and grieving. For the deceased, on the other hand, the passage through death is typically envisaged as a move 'upwards' in exactly the opposite direction – as an escape from a 'darkness' imposed by pain

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[99] **LAZOR**, 'Original,' 98.
[100] Pre-Sanctus of the Anaphora of St. Basil the Great, cf. Eph 1:14, Rom 8:23.

and suffering into a new reality that is presented by BF as "a place of light . . . whence pain, grief and sighing have fled away" (GOS).

One of the fundamental 'intentions' of BF, it seems to me, is to plant in the hearts and minds of those left to grieve certain seeds for their eventual healing. One of these, I believe, is the 'Holy Saturday shape' of BF which, as we saw earlier, attempts to initiate mourners into the heart of the paschal mystery of Christ. Through BF's twin movements of hymnographic 'descent' to Death and scriptural 'ascent' to Resurrection, mourners are invited to experience in their own lives the nascent realization that the trajectory being followed by their loved one (through 'darkness' into 'light') is being offered to the living as well. Entry through painful loss into the darkness of the "region and shadow of death" (Mt 4:16; cf. Is 9:2 *LXX*) need not (and indeed must not) become the final word for bereaved Christians. In and through the 'Eternal Memory' of God, BF promises to mourners, there is not merely grievous and 'lament-able' separation, but the possibility and promise of ongoing 'holy communion' in Christ with their beloved departed, now and into eternity.

Though it may require many months or even years for a realization and appropriation of this truth to take hold of mourners, its liturgical presentation is a key part of that core of paradox which lies at the heart of BF. The proclamation of the 'Good News' of Holy Saturday (through ways which were explored in greater detail earlier in this dissertation) is, I believe, the second of three important ways in which BF encourages us to change our lamentation into 'Alleluia.'

A *third and final important paradoxical element* in BF – namely its music – is something which was discussed at some length in *Chapter One*. At the present juncture, I shall briefly review the gist of these earlier remarks, noting as I did previously, my particular indebtedness to the ideas of Sergei Trubachev. Trubachev contends that the fundamental theological vision of BF is enshrined in the paradoxical words that have been quoted repeatedly from the Ikos. The music of BF, more than any other feature of the service (in Trubachev's opinion) is responsible for 'iconizing' that metamorphosis of 'funeral lament' into 'Alleluia' of which the Ikos speaks.

In the Russian Orthodox musical tradition (from which Trubachev draws his illustrations, and with which I am personally most familiar), this is accomplished by the utilization of a predominant melodic mode in many of BF's principal chants that, according to Trubachev, "is structured as a

wave-like and balanced alternation of rises and falls."[101] This alternating rising and falling of the melodic chant line serves to highlight for the listener the numerous contrasting alternations (dark-light, sorrow-joy, earth-heaven) in BF's theology. These contrasts can ultimately be resolved, according to the paradoxical summons of the Ikos, by mourners allowing the 'sombre side' of these alternations (dark, sorrow, earth, etc.) to actually be 'transformed into' (*not* 'replaced by') the 'bright side' to which they correspond (light, joy, heaven). Thus, it comes about in popular experience that the obviously grave (though not 'heavy') funeral melodies (such as those of the KON, TRIS, and 'Eternal Memory' in the Russian Orthodox tradition) acquire a simultaneous quality of near-exultation which listeners find most engaging.

Through the three examples from BF which I have just cited and discussed – the corpse as a 'holy relic,' the 'Holy Saturday shape' of its *ordo*, and the 'joyful sadness' (*charmolúpê*) of its music – I have been attempting to voice my understanding of BF's 'intended sense' as enshrining a fundamental paradox. Through this liturgical 'Text,' the death of a Christian is presented as simultaneously a legitimate occasion for both lament and celebration, but with the *caveat* that lamentation ("our funeral lament") paradoxically can and must be ultimately transformed into rejoicing ("Alleluia"). This assessment of BF's theology obliges me to disagree with those (especially the late Fr. Alexander Schmemann) who are apparently inclined to denigrate the presence of 'themes of lamentation' in BF by viewing them as evidence of an unfortunate Middle Byzantine 'decadence' that detracts from the more authentically scriptural and paleo-Christian character of BF's 'themes of celebration.'

In introducing my dissertation, I made approving reference to the opinion of W. Jardine Grisbrooke that good Christian funeral liturgy "must be *humanly* adequate, responding to the needs of the bereaved and . . . *Christianly* adequate as well, conveying the Christian message about death as clearly and as fully as possible."[102] As a result of my work thus far, I have come to the conclusion that, firstly, BF's proclamation of "the Christian message about death" (which is, or should be,

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[101] **TRUBACHEV**, 71. His meaning here fortunately remains clear, I think, despite the strange Soviet-style English in which it is being expressed.

[102] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 66; italics are in the original. It needs to be reiterated that, despite my overall approval of the sentiments expressed here by Grisbrooke, I am uncomfortable with his implied polarization between 'human' and 'Christian.' As a would-be 'Christian humanist,' I am personally convinced that if something is genuinely and authentically *Christian*, it will of necessity also be genuinely and authentically *human*.

nothing less than the paschal mystery of Christ) is in fact 'theologically adequate' in Grisbrooke's sense, and that, secondly, this adequacy (*contra* Schmemann) is in no way compromised by the inclusion within BF of its 'lamentation layer.' Rather, BF's 'intention' is to depict human grieving in as realistic a fashion as possible, in order to demonstrate how grief for Christians, paradoxically, can and must be changed into joy. The presentation of overt lamentation by BF does not detract from its proclamation of the Gospel, but rather serves as the necessary acknowledgment of a human reality which, precisely within and by means of BF, is capable of being transfigured *by* the very Gospel that BF proclaims.

Proceeding now to *Chapters Four* and *Five* of my dissertation, I will continue my refutation of Fr. Schmemann's analysis by examining the extent to which the 'Christian adequacy' of BF may be viewed, in Grisbrooke's terms, as simultaneously "humanly adequate." I propose to do so by undertaking an analytical 'second reading' of 'BF-as-Text' from the psycho-socio-spiritual perspective of Byzantine-rite mourners who are living in the Western world and who are newly bereaved. To that end, in *Chapter Four*, I shall first discuss some important parameters that define the contemporary Westerner's 'World of the Bereaved' [WB] according to various social sciences, before proceeding in *Chapter Five* to my proposed 'second reading' of BF's Text.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS AN ANALYTICAL SECOND READING OF BF: THE CONTEMPORARY WESTERNER'S 'WORLD OF THE BEREAVED' [WB]

IV.A *WB as a 'Hermeneutical Vantage Point' for Re-reading BF*

According to a popular contemporary maxim, "funerals are for the living."[1] One may (and I would contend *must*) quarrel with such a limited understanding of the 'meaning' of *Christian* funerals. Nonetheless, in light of the widespread public acceptance of sentiments such as these, it will come as no surprise to discover how, over the past few decades, there has grown up a quite considerable body of literature in the fields of practical and pastoral theology that is interested in the 'consequences' for mourners of Christian funeral services.[2]

Fortunately, from a Christian *theological* perspective, a good deal of this literature can be read as tending to support Grisbrooke's contention (mentioned above) that a well-crafted Christian funeral service ought to strive simultaneously to "be *humanly* adequate, responding to the needs of the bereaved . . . and *Christianly* adequate, . . conveying the Christian message about death as clearly and as fully as possible."[3] In this regard, it is instructive to note how an eminent American pastoral theologian, Paul Waitman Hoon, while conceding that funerals have a critical role to play in "the wise management of grief," has insisted nevertheless that "the funeral is kerygmatic before it is therapeutic."[4] Hence, in analyzing the goals and content of any authentic Christian funeral liturgy (including BF), one might wish to reverse the order of Grisbrooke's *desiderata* and accord instead a certain priority to the attempt to achieve a modicum of 'Christian adequacy.'

In the preceding *Chapter Three*, I undertook to study and describe how BF in its current form does precisely this when it presents "the Christian message about death." In my concluding

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[1] As quoted (in a critical vein) by **HOON**, 172. In the same article, 176-77, Hoon (a principal author of the funeral liturgy of the USA-based United Methodist Church) goes on to criticize this ecclesially reductionistic understanding of the Christian funeral, noting that a funeral is first and foremost an act of worship by the Christian community which, like all authentic worship, is intended "to be addressed to people and offered to God."

[2] Some especially relevant and/or important examples of this literature, most of which appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, are cited in note 1 of the 'Introduction' to this dissertation (see page 1). The relatively recent dates of most of these studies would seem to lend weight to an observation by Hoon, writing in 1976, that "a revealing lacuna in the literature on death . . . pouring forth these days is the scarcity of theological reflection upon the funeral liturgy" (**HOON**, 169).

[3] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 66.

[4] **HOON**, 172.

assessment of the 'Christian adequacy' of this presentation, having emphasized the service's paradoxical proposal that mourners must ultimately "change their weeping into joy,"[5] I suggested that therefore it was appropriate to achieving both the theological and pastoral goals of BF for it to include vivid and pathetic expressions of the human pain of bereaved persons.

However, it is precisely these same expressions of 'lamentation' that are such an obvious source of theological dismay to Fr. Alexander Schmemann who adjudges them as out of keeping with the *presumed* original 'intended sense' of BF as that rite is *presumed* to have existed prior to the era of the Middle Byzantine hymnographers.[6] BF's inclusion of so many works by the latter, replete as these works are with expressions of (in Schmemann's eyes) a 'pre-Christian' spirit of death-induced 'gloom and doom,' has resulted, in Schmemann's opinion, in a liturgico-theological presentation of death within BF that is just barely 'Christianly adequate.'[7]

In striving to assess BF's *overall* 'adequacy' from the perspective of Grisbrooke's two-fold sense of that term, I would insist that any authentic, fully incarnational Byzantine Christian 'spirituality' cannot accept the existence of a real or implied dichotomy between that which is "humanly adequate" on the one hand, and that which is "Christianly adequate" on the other. It seems that for Schmemann, what might be understood as the 'human adequacy' of BF's 'lamentation layer' is interpreted by him as detracting from its 'Christian adequacy.' My emergent viewpoint is exactly the obverse: In order to achieve its 'Christian adequacy' through a paradoxical 'transfigurational' approach to human grieving, BF finds it necessary to meditate *in extenso* upon human mortality and bereavement. *I believe that this protracted meditation on human grief (with its attendant opportunities for a realistic expression of that grief) is an intrinsic component of BF's 'human adequacy' and therefore ultimately of its 'Christian adequacy.'*

To further address this thesis of mine, I wish now to attempt to '*re*-read' BF through the hypothetical eyes of a newly bereaved Byzantine Christian who inhabits 'the West,' whether that

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[5] Cf. the Byzantine liturgy's Sunday resurrectional apolytikion in tone 7, which speaks here of the transformation experienced by the Myrrh-bearing women who went to the tomb of Christ on the first Easter.

[6] The description by **GREGORY OF NYSSA** (*Macrine*, 246-55) of the intense lamentation (albeit in a para-liturgical form) that took place during the funeral of his sister Macrina certainly allows one to call into question this presumption by Schmemann. See my recent paper on this matter: Robert **HUTCHEON**, "A Comparison of Death Imagery in Gregory of Nyssa's *Vita Macrinae* and the Byzantine Funeral Hymnography," *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christianity* 41-42 (2000-2001): 239-67.

[7] See especially ***Appendix II***, pp. 336-41.

West be the geographical one located here in North America or an experiential one situated elsewhere in the increasingly westernized precincts of 'Eastern' cities such as "Moscow, Athens, Bucharest or Sofia."[8] In order to undertake this proposed *relecture* (which I shall carry out in *Chapter Five*), I will attempt in the present chapter to depict a theoretically constructed 'World of the Bereaved' (hereafter **'WB'**). To do so, I shall draw upon various insights on death and bereavement drawn from the human sciences in order to try and create a sympathetic and hopefully realistic portrait of some significant aspects of the 'real world' inhabited by newly bereaved persons living in a country such as Canada.

I am proposing then to examine certain important perspectives on WB that I have gleaned from a variety of academic disciplines including psychology, sociology and anthropology. It should be noted that, in doing so, my intention has *not* been to undertake a *comprehensive review* of all the pertinent literature on bereavement in these fields, but rather to try as much as possible to focus in upon certain noteworthy, often pioneering, contributions to bereavement studies that will be recognized by most observers as having achieved something approaching a 'classical' or 'normative' status within their respective fields.

Thus, in the pages that follow (to take some prominent examples), we shall consider relevant aspects of the work of bereavement theorists who draw heavily on the now time-honored theoretical concept of 'grief as work' that was first elaborated by Sigmund Freud in 1917 and later popularized by Harvard psychiatrist, Erich Lindemann. We shall review the social evolution of contemporary western attitudes of death denial through the perceptive eyes of Philippe Ariès, a renowned French social historian. We shall assess the important contributions of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross whose ground-breaking work is credited by many with having inspired the contemporary 'death awareness movement.' Finally, in concluding *Chapter Four*, we shall have recourse to the innovative anthropological theories of Arnold van Gennep in order to be reminded of the difficult 'phase of transition' following a bereavement that so many isolated western mourners are obliged to negotiate with only minimal societal assistance.

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[8] **VELKOVSKA**, *Handbook*, 353. For some interesting specific observations on 'death in Athens' (and elsewhere in modern urban Greece), see **GROEN**, 202-03, 207-211.

My purpose in carrying out this process of review is to uncover relevant materials that will permit me to elaborate a theoretical construct, WB, that will serve in turn as my 'hermeneutical vantage point' for a pastorally-oriented re-reading and practical analysis in *Chapter Five* of BF's paradoxical and dichotomous 'intended sense.'

IV.B *Important Contemporary Social Science Perspectives on WB*

IV.B.1 *A Psychological Perspective: the 'Tasks of Mourning' (Freud, Lindemann, Worden, Rando, Abi-Hashem)*

The human phenomena of grief and mourning occurring in response to losses through death are complex processes on which there is abundant literature. In attempting to provide a brief overview of portions of this body of knowledge of relevance to my topic, I propose to look first at some general aspects of the study of human bereavement. Thus, in sub-section **1.a**, I shall touch on certain of the more important aspects of 'normal grief' by examining the following: **i)** some definitions; **ii)** the spectrum of normal human reactions to acute loss; and **iii)** the 'phases' or 'stages' of normal grief. Thereafter, in sub-section **1.b**, I shall move on to consider more specifically and in some detail the concept of grief as 'work' that requires attending to certain 'tasks of mourning.' I will conclude this chapter's section *IV.B.1* (outlining a psychological perspective on WB) with sub-section **1.c** that will examine some current thinking on the perceived importance of funerals in initiating and facilitating the accomplishment of the several 'tasks of mourning.'

IV.B.1.a Some important elements of contemporary bereavement theory

a.i) The ***definition of certain key terms in grief theory*** – 'grief,' 'mourning,' and 'bereavement' in particular – has been addressed by multiple authors. Therese Rando, in line with various other theorists, has questioned the necessity and utility of stressing the implicit distinction that is often drawn (at least in English) between notions of 'grief' on the one hand and those of 'mourning' on the other;[9] she observes that in the bereavement literature, there is a duality of

[9] Such a distinction does not exist, for example, in either French or German which both have a single word (French: *deuil*, German: *Trauer*) whose semantic field includes the shades of meaning encompassed by the English words 'grief' and 'mourning.'

approach to this matter, with certain authors (she being one of them) viewing the terms as virtually or actually interchangeable while certain others insist upon their specificity.[10] However, even those who prefer assigning relatively specific meanings to the terms in question would probably agree with the spirit of remarks made by Naji Abi-Hashem who writes that "no term or combination of terms can totally unfold, completely explain, or fully capture the profound meaning of the encompassing phenomenon of grief."[11]

For Rando, perhaps the easiest term of the three to understand and define is 'bereavement': "the state of having suffered a loss." The other two terms – 'grief' and 'mourning' – are then used to denote distinguishable (but overlapping) sets of responses to the losses sustained in bereavement. Of the two, 'grief' is a less intentional, more passive and spontaneous reaction to loss, one which certain theorists believe is "a product of biological evolution . . . [that] has adaptive value." Thus, Rando defines 'grief' simply as "the process of psychological, social, and somatic reactions to the perception of loss," and she goes on to emphasize that grief is manifested in all three areas of the human personality, that it is both natural and to be expected, and that it may be evoked by many other profound experiences of human loss besides loss through death.[12]

'Mourning' on the other hand, while doubtless quite spontaneous in most instances, involves the calling into play of a whole interacting set of intra-psychic and external, culturally-determined responses to loss, operating at both conscious and unconscious levels. 'Mourning' understood this way is a much more active process than 'simple' grieving, such that Erna Furman can define it as "the mental work [expended] following the loss of a loved one through death." This need for work and the expenditure of not only psychic but actual physical energy in dealing with grief by mourning is central to an understanding of 'mourning' that has been fostered by William Worden (and his followers) who have popularized the identification and discussion of what they call the 'tasks of mourning.'

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[10] **RANDO**, 15-16. Her highlighting of the distinction between 'grief' and 'mourning' is mirrored by other authors such as J. William **WORDEN**, *Grief Counseling and Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner* (New York: Springer Publishing, 1991) [= **WORDEN**], 34; Naji **ABI-HASHEM**, "Grief, Loss, and Bereavement: An Overview," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 18 (1999): 309-11[= **ABI-HASHEM**]; and Erna **FURMAN**, "Children's Patterns in Mourning the Death of a Loved One," in *Childhood and Death*, ed. Hannelore **WASS** and Chas. A. **CORR** (Washington, DC: Hemisphere Publishing, 1984), 187.

[11] **ABI-HASHEM**, 309-10.

[12] **RANDO**, 15.

a.ii) Experience of ***grief reactions due to acute loss*** forms part of the universal lot of human persons who, virtually without exception, will sooner or later come to know personally the acute and permanent rupture of what British psychiatrist, John Bowlby, refers to as "attachment bonds" to "significant others"[13] (whether brought about through death or otherwise). These reactions are to be understood as 'normal' so long as: a) they are of an appropriate scope, duration and intensity (taking into account the magnitude of the loss in question and the underlying psychological make-up of the bereaved person); and b) they are either predictable or easily explicable in each unique instance of a given, identifiable loss occurring to a particular human person at a particular time in his or her life. 'Normalcy' of specific grief reactions also implies that such reactions are ultimately directed toward (or at least do not unduly impede) the eventual long-term restoration of some sort of effective bio-psycho-socio-spiritual equilibrium ('homeostasis') for the bereaved individual.

Grieving and mourning are not only 'normal' for human beings but they are also both 'natural' and 'necessary.' 'Psycho-archeologists' like Bowlby suggest that bonds of dependency (hence attachment) were vitally important for the survival of 'primitive man' (and continue to be so for infants and young animals). According to such theorists, crying, for example, served originally as a call for help, while anger was mobilized either to punish or protest against a suddenly and inexplicably absent guardian.[14] Thus, the most 'primitive' elements of grief can be understood developmentally as both adaptive and protective. Grieving and mourning do have an ultimate goal; although they cannot restore the missing 'attachment object' (the ostensible aim of our more 'primitive' grief reactions), they do aim to restore some sort of homeostasis resembling (qualitatively if not quantitatively) that which prevailed prior to bereavement. In other words, they are ultimately parts of an energy-consuming process of 'self-healing.'

Although normal grief should not be considered a disease, psychiatrist George Engel has compared it to a wound that requires healing, a gradual process which takes time (months or years) and which (like fleshly wounds) may eventuate in permanent partial losses of function or the

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[13] See **WORDEN**, 7-9, for a brief summary of Bowlby's 'Attachment Theory.'
[14] Ibid.; see also **RANDO**, 21-22.

formation of psychic scars.[15] 'Healthy' mourning that results in healing for the bereaved may, according to Rando, be interfered with "by unsound intervention, sub-optimal conditions for healing, or a lack of individual coping resources."[16]

In our present discussion, we will be focusing mainly on the normal accompaniments of acute grieving, although later on when we come to discuss the 'tasks of mourning,' we shall have an opportunity to deal briefly with certain of the more chronic features that typify what is generally designated as 'pathological' or 'abnormal' grief. Worden has provided us with a comprehensive, easily understandable, and well organized taxonomy of what he refers to as the "manifestations of normal grief" which he classifies into four groups: **(a)** feelings; **(b)** physical sensations; **(c)** cognitions; and **(d)** behaviors.[17] I shall attempt now to provide here a succinct *résumé* of his composite portrait of the 'normal griever.'

a.ii (a) ***Feelings*** in the acutely grieving person will include, most obviously, a sense of unutterable *sadness* about which, as Worden observes, "little comment is necessary." *Anger* (together with *sadness* manifested by weeping) were mentioned a moment ago as two of the most 'primitive' elements of grieving. Anger may often be stimulated by frustration that nothing could be done to save the life of the deceased; more regressively it may be directed (even if unacknowledged) at the actual deceased person for 'daring' to abandon their loved ones. *Guilt and self-reproach* are typically centred around some perceived neglect related to an event that occurred in the last few days before death; at other times, more chronic guilt-feelings may be aroused by the identification of defects in one's past relationship with the deceased. Most acute guilt feelings have little basis in fact, and will generally improve over time after a period of more careful reflection.

Anxiety and a sense of helplessness can reach near-disabling proportions, usually focused either around fears over one's inability to cope in the absence of the departed, or else on a heightened sense of one's own mortality and vulnerability. Feelings of *shock and numbness* are quite common in the early stages of grieving, and are liable to be especially profound when the death in question occurred with little or no warning. A sense of nearly unbearable *loneliness*

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[15] As summarized by **WORDEN**, 9-10 from the important and original article by George **ENGEL**, "Is Grief a Disease? A Challenge for Medical Research," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 23 (1961): 18-22.

[16] **RANDO**, 25.

[17] **WORDEN**, 22-31.

(particularly vivid after the loss of a spouse) is often coupled with a profound *yearning* for the deceased; a diminution of the latter may signal that the period of mourning is nearing termination. Lastly, some rather 'positive' accompaniments of acute grieving may include feelings described as those of *emancipation* or *relief.* Though experienced as mildly liberating, their presence in the unreflective individual may contribute to the burden of guilt already being borne. *Emancipation* is usually encountered when the deceased's presence in the life of the now-bereaved was experienced by them as over-bearing or oppressive. *Relief* is commonly seen in bereaved persons after a death that was preceded by a prolonged or particularly painful illness.

a.ii (b) The common experience of an assortment of ***physical sensations*** by 'normal' bereaved persons was first highlighted in the pioneering clinical work on grief by Harvard psychiatrist, Erich Lindemann, who identified what he called "somatic distress" as the first of his five cardinal symptoms of normal grief.[18] Common physical concomitants of acute grief as listed by Worden include: hollowness in the stomach, tightness in the chest or throat, over-sensitivity to noise, shortness of breath (with or without repeated sighing), lack of energy with accompanying fatigue, muscular weakness, and dryness of the mouth.[19] Certain of these may be misinterpreted by the bereaved as symptoms of organic disease, and in some instances may lead to an over-anxious identification with the terminal illness of the deceased. For example, a survivor whose loved one succumbed to a heart attack may seek medical attention because she or he incorrectly attributes grief-related sensations of chest or throat tightness to non-existent heart disease.

a.ii (c) ***Alterations of cognition*** are especially common in the earlier stages of normal acute grief, and may be manifested by a variety of thought patterns to which the bereaved is unaccustomed. Commonly reported alterations in thought include: a sense of bewilderment and disbelief over what has happened; confusion associated with disrupted or disordered thinking; an intense, almost obsessional, preoccupation with thoughts of the deceased; and a vivid non-

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[18] Erich **LINDEMANN**, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," *Pastoral Psychology* 14, no. 136 (1963) [= **LINDEMANN**]: 9-11. (This is a reprint of Lindemann's original article that appeared in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* 101 [1944]: 141-48). The four other cardinal symptoms of normal acute grief (besides somatic distress) are, according to Lindemann: 2) preoccupation with the image of the deceased; 3) guilt; 4) hostile reactions; and 5) loss of usual patterns of conduct. Lindemann's now-classic study was based on his clinical work with the bereaved families of victims of the horrendous Coconut Grove disaster, a fire with great loss of life that occurred in a Boston nightclub in 1942.

[19] **WORDEN**, 25.

hallucinatory sense of the ongoing presence of the deceased within the present time-space continuum.

Potentially disconcerting to the bereaved (and to those close to them) is the not infrequent occurrence of what are usually interpreted as visual or auditory hallucinations; their occurrence may suggest to the bereaved person or their relatives that he or she is becoming mentally ill. In actual fact, newly bereaved persons experience hallucinations very frequently, and rather than seeming threatening, they are often found to be 'helpful.' Worden notes sagely that "with all the recent interest in mysticism and spirituality, it is interesting to speculate on whether these are really hallucinations or possibly some other kind of metaphysical phenomena."[20]

a.ii (d) A variety of ***specific behaviors*** are reported frequently by the newly-bereaved, of which the most common are probably perturbations of sleep and appetite, repetitive absent-minded behaviour, and social withdrawal. Crying is of course also very common and is widely perceived and believed to be of therapeutic value.[21] Less frequently encountered grief-induced behaviors may include restless over-activity ('akithesia') as well as periods of incessant searching and calling out for the deceased. Some survivors will tend to visit places or carry about objects that remind them of their loved one; more rarely, other people will shun places or things that set off unwanted feelings of grief. Worden notes that this latter reaction of 'suppression,' if taken to extremes (such as rapidly disposing of all traces of the deceased including his or her body), may lead later to an unhealthy and complicated grief reaction.[22]

a.iii) Rando has concisely outlined for us the attempted characterization of ***stages or phases in normal grieving*** that has preoccupied bereavement theorists for a long time.[23] Thus, the pioneers Freud (1917) and Lindemann (1944), both of whom we shall touch upon shortly, outlined their

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[20] Ibid., 26.

[21] Ibid, 29. Worden states here that "tears do relieve emotional stress, but how they do this is still a question," noting that "further research is needed on the deleterious effects, if any, of suppressed crying." He also draws attention to the interesting report of W. H. **FREY**, "Not-so-idle-tears," *Psychology Today* 13 (1980): 91-92, which suggests that "the chemical content of tears caused by emotional stress is different from that of tears secreted as a function of eye irritation." Such a finding, by adding a physiological correlate to empirical observations about an emotional state, might help to corroborate the contention of psychological authorities who feel that emotional weeping has a protective or healing function for the human organism.

[22] Ibid., 28-29.

[23] See the review of this matter provided by **RANDO**, 23-36.

schemata for the phases of normal grieving or mourning over half a century ago; each stage they associated with the accomplishment of certain 'grief work' (Freud's term).[24]

Subsequently, the originally tripartite theory of Bowlby (1961) as modified by Colin Murray Parkes (1980) outlined four phases, those of: numbness; yearning and searching; disorganization and despair; and lastly, reorganization. George Engel (1964) described the following normal sequence of grief: shock and disbelief; developing awareness of one's loss; 'restitution' (or ritualized mourning); resolving the loss; idealization; and final outcome. The five stages – denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance – proposed in 1969 by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross to describe the approach of the dying to their imminent death have also been used (by her and others) to characterize the trajectory of grief for individuals following a bereavement. Therese Rando herself (1984 and 1993) proposes a tripartite scheme for normal grief characterized by successive phases of avoidance, confrontation, and re-establishment. Abi-Hashem (1999) acknowledges the contributions of all of the above while noting *en passant* more recent formulations by M. Osterweis and others (1984), and by G. M. and A. J. Burnell (1989).[25]

The wish to identify such 'stages' or 'phases' has probably been motivated largely by a realization that normal grieving and mourning are processes that move towards their eventual goal of having the bereaved come to terms with their loss so as to be capable of investing in other activities or persons in their daily lives. Clinicians may find the identification of 'stages' or 'phases' in grieving potentially useful since theoretically, such a framework permits the assessment of a griever's 'progress' or the detection of a deviant and potentially harmful grief trajectory.

More recent opponents of the earlier strict division of normal grieving into stages/phases insist that such stages can never be envisaged as discrete – for example, someone may *simultaneously* manifest characteristics belonging to several different so-called 'stages of mourning' – nor do these 'stages' necessarily always occur in a particular prescribed order. It is for reasons like these that Worden (1991) and his followers (including Abi-Hashem who was Worden's student) eschew discussion of stages or phases in grieving, and prefer to speak of successful

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[24] Sigmund **FREUD**, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, vol. 14 (London: Hogarth, 1961) [= **FREUD**], 244-45.

[25] **ABI-HASHEM**, 318-19.

mourning as a process involving the accomplishment of a set of three or four important 'tasks of mourning' (Worden)[26] or 'steps toward grief realization' (Abi-Hashem).[27] These tasks or steps may be undertaken by different persons at different rates and in a variable sequence.

Worden and many other clinical researchers strongly believe that the goals of the 'tasks of mourning' *can* be achieved by an expenditure of effort, and that when and if the several 'tasks of mourning' *are* accomplished, this will signal an end to mourning that will be evident to bereaved persons themselves by such things as the disappearance of pain (as opposed to sadness) when recollecting the deceased, or by the ability to respond spontaneously without distress to expressions of sympathy. Worden insists that 'finishing mourning' is *not* tantamount to forgetting about the deceased. Rather, nurturing memories of the one who has died become integrated into the ongoing life of the bereaved, so that their loved one remains for them a precious and integral part of their lives until they too join them in death.

To make his point, Worden concludes his introductory chapter with the following beautiful quotation from Sigmund Freud writing to his friend Binswager whose son had died:

> We find a place for what we lose. Although we know that after such a loss the acute stage of mourning will subside, we also know that we shall remain inconsolable and will never find a substitute. No matter what may fill the gap, even if it be filled completely, it nevertheless remains something else.[28]

IV.B.1.b Grief as 'work' and the 'tasks of mourning'

The notion of grief and mourning as 'work' originated with Sigmund Freud, who elaborated the idea of *Trauerarbeit* ('grief-work') in his 1917 seminal paper entitled "Mourning and Melancholia."[29] However, it was Erich Lindemann, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard, who in 1944 popularized the notion of 'grief work' which he described as having three components: "emancipation from bondage [*sic*] to the deceased, readjustment to the environment in which the deceased is missing, and the formation of new relationships."[30] The calibre of Lindemann's work is

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[26] **WORDEN**, 10-18.
[27] **ABI-HASHEM**, 318-21.
[28] E. L. Freud, ed., *Letters of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1961), 386; as quoted by **WORDEN**, 19.
[29] **FREUD**, 244-45.
[30] **LINDEMANN**, 11.

such that it has withstood the test of time, being incorporated with minor modifications into the theoretical frameworks of such later authors as: Parkes and Weiss (1983 – 'three tasks of grief work'); Rando (1984 – 'three basic tasks of grief'); Worden (1991 – 'four tasks of mourning'); and Abi-Hashem, author of a recent useful review article (1999 – 'four steps toward grief resolution').[31]

Pooling concepts and phraseology from these various authorities, one can propose the following *four tasks of mourning* as integral to WB, constituting thereby an important aspect of the psycho-spiritual state of bereaved persons out of which they will encounter and interpret BF. The tasks to be accomplished by the bereaved over time (and on which – arguably – BF may help to initiate work) are the following (employing mostly Abi-Hashem's formulation and wording)[32]:

i) "To admit that a loss has taken place and [that] it is final." This is of cardinal importance in combating *denial*, a universal defense mechanism;

ii) "To experience and express [a full] range of emotions, deep feelings, and private thoughts, including [both] pleasant and unpleasant ones, as related to the loss." The bereaved will be enabled thereby to overcome *suppression* of pain, a coping mechanism which is favored by the dominant culture's stress on minimizing overt displays of grief and sorrow;

iii) "To release the . . . deceased [loved one] by letting go, setting free, and saying good-bye." A corollary to this task includes learning to adjust to an environment from which the loved person has in fact been allowed to depart. The tendency for *clinging* to the departed loved one is an elemental human reaction in the face of loss through death, but it is liable to lead to serious psychological regression if not dealt with eventually;

iv) "To reinvest [mourners'] mental and emotional energy . . . in new relationships, endeavors, people, and projects." The goal of this step is, according to Abi-Hashem, to "break the condition of *stagnation* and transform . . . pain into purpose and mourning into mission."[33] Worden points out that it is a crucial part of this task for the bereaved "to emotionally *relocate* the deceased,"[34] rather than giving up their relationship with them.

I should like now to proceed to a more detailed examination of each of these four 'tasks' in turn, including in each discussion a consideration of the principal mal-adaptation(s) to bereavement that a particular 'mourning task' aims to address and combat.[35]

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[31] See: Colin Murray **PARKES** and Robert S. **WEISS**, *Recovery from Bereavement* (New York: Basic Books, 1983) as cited by **RANDO**, 27-28; **RANDO**, 18-21; **WORDEN**, 10-20; and **ABI-HASHEM**, 318-22.

[32] See **ABI-HASHEM**, 319-21.

[33] Ibid., 321.

[34] **WORDEN**, 16.

[35] In what follows, I propose to make use principally of the ideas of: **RANDO**, 20-36 and 180-84; **WORDEN**, 10-20; and **ABI-HASHEM**, 318-22. In order to reduce the volume of foot-noting here, where appropriate or necessary, I will indicate within the body of the text (in parentheses) the name(s) of the specific author(s) whose idea(s) I am utilizing.

1.b.i ***Task One: acknowledging that death is real – combating denial.*** "The first task of grieving," writes Worden (10), "is to come full face with the reality that the person is dead, that [he or she] is gone and will not return." This painful confrontation is rendered vitally necessary by the denial (or at least disbelief) that is a particularly common (and normal) initial reaction to acute bereavement. Such being the case, an essential prerequisite for the eventual achievement of a successful 'grief outcome' is the overcoming of denial in all its forms.

Denial is said to be the expression of a deeply rooted intra-psychic "act of refusal to any change of normality and an objection to any loss of familiarity in life, especially if these . . . have been long established and [have been] meeting the deep emotional needs of the survivor" (Abi-Hashem, 319). Such 'normal' denial is reinforced and may be prolonged by the societal climate of death denial that is rampant in North American culture; of this we shall speak at greater length later in the present chapter.

As an initial response to bereavement, denial is both understandable and normal, functioning in a protective way as a sort of 'psychic buffer' or 'emotional anesthetic' (Rando, 29). In immediate response to the event of the death of a loved one, there is often a period of near-total numbness; as this wanes, disbelief sets in, accompanied generally by other psychic phenomena such as confusion and disorganization, anger (especially in extroverted persons) or withdrawal (in introverts) (ibid.). Later on (but still relatively early in the grieving process), there tends to be a good deal of fluctuation back and forth between belief and disbelief, with the former coming to predominate gradually and eventually in healthy psyches. Acceptance (hopefully) does finally come about in a majority of people, but this is a complex intellectual and emotional process that ought to (and usually does) require months or even years for successful realization. Worden (13) suggests that in facilitating an eventual desirable outcome to a bereavement, "traditional rituals such as the funeral help . . . [with the] move toward acceptance."

Worden (11-12) observes that 'becoming stuck' with this first 'task of mourning' may take one or more of three forms: a) denial of the fact of the loss; b) denial of the irreversibility of death; and c) denial of the meaning of the loss. An instance of a) tinged with b) is the process that has been aptly described as 'mummification'; this was practiced, for example, by Queen Victoria who

for years after the death of her consort, Prince Albert, continued to order her husband's clothes and shaving gear to be laid out daily for use by him should he return! Bereaved parents (especially mothers) after the death of their child will often keep totally intact the room of their deceased child; this is common and 'normal' in the short term, but its continuance for years constitutes a form of denial. Denial of c), the *meaning* of a loss, is another common way in which bereaved persons seek to protect themselves from emotional pain; it may be reflected through statements to others such as "she was actually quite difficult to live with," or "we weren't really all that close."

The aforementioned positive attitude of Worden towards funerals and other mortuary rituals as facilitators of 'anti-denial' is shared by Rando (180-82). She notes in particular the potentially 'positive' effects of a ritualized viewing of the body of the deceased (something for which BF obviously and amply provides), painful though this may be for the bereaved survivors. Rando writes that "the body of the deceased is the best symbol of the individual and therefore the most effective one to focus upon in attempting to perceive the deceased in a new relationship, as someone who is no longer alive and will only exist in memory." She goes on to suggest that the cosmetic preparation of corpses for viewing is not designed to make the deceased appear alive (and hence does not contribute to denial); rather the practice is intended to provide the bereaved with a final "acceptable image" to aid in their later recollection of their loved one.

On the other hand, a thoughtful *opposition* to 'viewing the body' (as commended by Rando) is provided by Maurice Lamm and Naftali Eskreis,[36] writing in the respected *Journal of Religion and Health.* Although they start their case against viewing from within their own traditionalist Jewish perspective (in which 'viewing' a corpse is considered unbecoming and inappropriate), Lamm and Eskreis go on to elaborate some serious *theological* and *psychological* objections to the practice that could be of interest to Christian thinkers as well. They maintain that the current North American ritualized 'exposure' often entails disrespect for the deceased as a person created in God's image (for example, through inappropriate attempts at 'gallows humor'), and that, far from serving as a 'reality check,' the practice may actually promote denial, thanks to a sense of *un*-reality achieved through embalming and the cosmetic 'beautification' of corpses.

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[36] Maurice **LAMM** and Naftali **ESKREIS**, "Viewing the Remains: a New American Custom," *Journal of Religion and Health* 5 (1966): 137-43.

1.b.ii ***Task Two: working through and beyond the pain of grief – combating suppression.*** Worden (13) begins his discussion of this topic by noting his personal preference for the German word *schmerz* to describe the 'pain' of grief because as he says, "its broader definition includes the literal physical pain that many people experience [as well as] the emotional and behavioral pain associated with loss."

It is virtually impossible to experience grief without experiencing *schmerz* as the complex somato-psycho-spiritual pain that is apparently unique to bereavement; for almost all bereaved persons, in the most literal sense imaginable, grief is truly 'pain-full.' Some mourners will attempt to deal with their excruciating pain either by denying its existence or by attempting to suppress it. However, it seems as though the only way forward to healing is precisely *through*, and not around, the pain. The goal of the second 'task of mourning' is for mourners to experience and deal with their pain, knowing that one day it *will* pass; only in this manner can the bereaved avoid having to carry their pain around with them for the rest of their lives (Worden, 14). Hopefully, a stage will eventually be reached where it becomes possible to think about or be reminded of the lost loved one, and no longer experience pain but only a bittersweet mixture of sadness with pleasure.

Worden quotes approvingly an observation by the British psychiatrist, C. M. Parkes, who wrote: "If it is necessary for the bereaved person to go through the pain of grief in order to get the grief work done, then anything that continually allows the person to avoid or suppress this pain can be expected to prolong the course of mourning."[37] Mourners may try out or have thrust upon them various recipes for bypassing grief-*schmerz*. Worden (13-14) summarizes some of the commoner pain-avoidance measures that may be employed: thought-suppressant techniques to steer clear of painful memories; idealization of the dead; avoidance of situations that remind survivors of them; recourse to drugs or alcohol; indulgence in ceaseless diversions such as, for example, habitual travel. To make matters worse, members of the death-denying wider society, uncomfortable at overt grieving, may promote suppression in grievers by careless comments or reactions which imply that a particular person's grief is excessive, has gone on far too long, or is self-indulgent.

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[37] Colin Murray **PARKES**, *Bereavement: Studies of Grief in Adult Life* (New York: International Universities Press, 1972), 173; as quoted by **WORDEN**, 13.

Bowlby (quoted by Worden) has observed that "sooner or later, some of those who avoid all conscious grieving [will] break down – usually with some form of depression."[38] Bereavement theorists have long been aware of this possible association between grief and depression, and indeed, more than one authority on depression has observed that many (if not most) clinical episodes of depression are triggered by loss.[39] Thus, in Freud's pioneering 1917 work, entitled (significantly) "Mourning [= grief] and Melancholia [= depression]," the 'founding father' of psycho-analysis noted the obvious similarities between the two conditions. However, he went on to point out the additional presence in depressed persons of an intense inward-directed anger which, so Freud hypothesized, was deflected away from a lost 'love object' towards whom one had repressed and painful ambivalent feelings.[40] This opinion is essentially shared by later authors, including Worden who writes that "depression may serve as a defense against mourning [in that] if anger is directed against the self, it is deflected away from the deceased [which] keeps the survivor from dealing with ambivalent feelings toward the deceased" (Worden, 30).

We shall shortly be devoting time to a discussion of the utility that funeral rites possess, according to eminent mental health professionals, for addressing the 'tasks of mourning.' At this present juncture, to conclude our discussion of mourners' need to combat suppression of their pain (the second 'task of mourning'), I would like to highlight for our future reference the attention that BF, rare among Christian funeral observances, devotes to the valorization of overt lamentation. Thereby, there is created (at least potentially) what Harakas (citing Faros with reference to BF) designates as "a climate of therapeutic grief,"[41] something that may serve to provide mourners with a paradigm to imitate in the months and years ahead. Later on, in *Chapter Five*, we shall have further opportunity to speak of the foregoing matters at greater length.

1.b.iii ***Task Three: releasing the 'loss object' and adjusting to absence – combating clinging.*** As mourners begin slowly to acknowledge the external reality of their loss (the first

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[38] John **BOWLBY**, *Attachment and Loss, Vol. III: Loss, Sadness, and Depression* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 158; as quoted by **WORDEN**, 14.

[39] For example, Gerald Klerman expressed such an opinion to William Worden in a 'personal communication' cited by **WORDEN**, 30.

[40] **FREUD**, 243-50.

[41] **HARAKAS**, 156.

'task' of mourning) and to deal with some of the ensuing pain (the second 'task'), most of them (according to a prevalent – and credible – psychoanalytic theory) tend initially to seek refuge in a temporary and comforting internalized (and often idealized) mental image of the deceased. This intra-psychic process has been referred to as 'introjection,' and it is undertaken (according to theory) in an effort to soften the 'emotional blow' during the period while the external reality of what has transpired is becoming slowly but effectively internalized (Rando, 76-77).

Gradually thereafter, a process often referred to as 'decathexis' (ibid.) must begin in which, as a loss becomes internalized, psychic energy ('libido') heretofore invested in one's relationship with the deceased is gradually withdrawn, becoming available for eventual re-investment in new tasks, projects, and relationships. In this process, "the relationship to the lost person is not abandoned, but the [attachment] ties are so modified that a new relationship can be established" (ibid.). The failure to achieve successful decathexis can be referred to as 'clinging.'

Abi-Hashem (320) details 'steps' that can be taken (either on one's own or during therapy) for effective decathexis to be actualized. One starts by focusing on (and relishing) what one is missing in the deceased, and then gradually advances to the point of being able to admit to things that are actually *not* missed at all (and may even have been painful while they were being endured). One has thus begun to de-idealize the lost 'attachment object' and to recognize and reconcile the existence of emotional polarities in one's relationship with the deceased;[42] the process of loosening bonds is well underway. "It is usually a turning point in counseling," notes Abi-Hashem, "when the survivor realizes that the lost . . . person was not perfect or ideal and, in fact, that there are aspects about the lost that the bereaved did not really like or appreciate."

As a penultimate 'step' used by Abi-Hashem in his therapeutic sessions with clients, mourners are next prepared to begin literally to bid "good-bye for now" to their loved one at the close of a therapy session, this being (in Abi-Hashem's opinion) "an important exercise toward the final goal of saying 'good-bye for good' when [mourners] are ready." It is interesting for the purposes of the present dissertation to note here the considerable symbolic value attached by this therapist to a ritualized expression of leave-taking from the deceased 'love object.' In this context,

[42] There is certainly a good deal of therapeutic 'de-idealization' of a deceased 'love object' to be had through recourse to genuine prayer for the forgiveness of the departed person's sins.

one ought to reflect upon the potential contribution to eventual decathexis of the ritualized farewell (*aspasmós*) with which BF concludes.

An important corollary to decathexis – that of gradually adjusting to an external and internal environment from which the deceased is acknowledged to be missing – is explored by Worden (14-16). There are *three levels*, he says, at which such adjustment will need to occur. *First*, a bereaved person slowly becomes aware of (and hopefully adapts to) alterations in the external environment brought about by the absence of the deceased. A widow, for example, takes on new roles and acquires new skills as she starts to keep track of household finances or attempts to do minor repairs. *Second*, death for many bereaved "confronts them with the challenge of adjusting to their own sense of self" (Worden, 15). He points out here how difficult this can be, especially for a woman who has lost a 'significant other' (be it a spouse or a child) and whose sense of self-worth has been so largely defined by her relationship with and her caring for that 'other.' *Third*, it may be necessary to adjust to what Worden calls "one's sense of the world." Death and loss challenge one's fundamental values and beliefs, so one may be faced with the existential chore of making sense of what has transpired so as to regain control of one's micro-cosmos.

1.b.iv ***Task Four: 'relocating' the deceased in order to re-invest in new endeavours – combating stagnation.*** The 'successful' conclusion of mourning towards which these four tasks are striving can ultimately be envisaged, I believe, as having two basic goals for bereaved persons. First, they should hopefully arrive at a point where they will be able to remember or be reminded of their deceased loved one without experiencing automatic pain (whether that pain be sorrow, anger or guilt); this implies that remembering the dead should eventually become an essentially positive experience for the survivor, even though such remembrance may be tinged regularly or on occasion with feelings such as gentle nostalgia, wistfulness, or even sadness. The second principal goal is for bereaved persons to be so 'decathected' and generally liberated from all bondage to (or oppression by) their lost 'love object' that they will be free to go on with and enjoy their subsequent lives, something which for the average person will include forming and deriving pleasure and satisfaction from new commitments and attachments.

Satisfaction of these *twin goals* obviously requires that a suitable and meaningful new place be found for the deceased person in the ongoing psychic life of those who survive them; in other words, to use Worden's preferred term, it is necessary to "emotionally relocate" the deceased. Worden goes on to quote approvingly a pertinent observation by Vamik Volkan, an acknowledged expert in the field of complicated grief, who has written that "we can never purge those who have been close to us from our history except by psychic acts damaging to our own identity."[43] This being the case, one can certainly endorse the assertion that a goal of successful grief counselling (or simply of effective mourning) will be "*not* to sever the connection between the survivors and the lost, [nor] to help them totally forget, detach, or distance themselves from what they have lost, [but] rather . . . to help the bereaved transform, reshape, reframe, and reinterpret the former relationship by giving the loss a *new value, place, and meaning*" (Abi-Hashem, 321; emphases mine).

Rather than speaking about a "*former* relationship" (but without contradicting in any way the intent here of Abi-Hashem), Rando prefers to talk about developing a "*new* relationship" with the deceased. The characteristics of such a relationship will have to be decided to a large extent by the bereaved; it certainly requires at the very least "remembering the deceased in context as someone who [both] lived *and* died." Rando goes on to stipulate that "a clear, realistic image of the deceased needs to be developed," one that will "reconcile all the differing aspects of the deceased's personality and all the experiences the griever had with that person" (Rando, 78).

Most importantly, Rando reminds us, it will be necessary to find ways "to healthily remember the deceased as life continues, *without impeding decathexis or investment with others*" (ibid., emphasis mine). One of the healthiest ways to do this, she suggests, is by ritualization – begun at the funeral, and (ideally) continued later on through such things as "anniversary celebrations, prayers, commemorations, memorializations, and healthy identification" (ibid.).

In the light of Rando's opinion, it might be suggested, without much fear of contradiction I believe, that the Byzantine tradition has a demonstrable wisdom in this regard, starting (so I would maintain) with BF itself. With this observation in mind, I would like now to conclude our treatment of the 'tasks of mourning' by examining and reflecting upon certain opinions expressed by our

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[43] Vamik D. **VOLKAN**, "Complicated Mourning," *Annual of Psychoanalysis* 12 (1985): 326; as quoted by **WORDEN**, 16.

principal 'bereavement experts' on the important question (for our purposes) of the potential role of funerals in general in helping mourners to accomplish their work of grieving.

IV.B.1.c Some thoughts on the potential role of funerals in promoting 'grief work'

Amongst the several authors whose work we have been examining more intensively in *Chapter Four* thus far (as well as in several of the others whom we cited only *en passant*), there seems to be a near-universal consensus that the funeral service is able to play an important role in helping mourners to begin accomplishing their 'grief work.' To give but two pertinent examples of authors who specifically identify and focus upon some of the positives that funerals may provide in promoting healthy grieving, I would like to refer briefly to the opinions of Rando and Worden.

Rando, having alluded to some of the anthropological literature on the cross-cultural functions of funeral rites, concludes that "[these] customary practices aim at providing meaningful structures upon which bereaved people may lean, hopefully giving them some *sense of consolation* and *easing the transition* caused by the termination of personal interaction" (emphases mine).[44] With a nod to van Gennep, Rando goes on to suggest that there is a basic tripartite utility to funerals: a) as severance rites to separate the dead from the living (with concomitant validation of the life of the deceased) [= 'separation']; b) as rites of passage for mourners to assist them psychologically, socially, and spiritually [= 'transition']; and c) as a means for the community to affirm its own continuity and solidarity following a breach in its integrity through the loss of one of its members [= a form of 're-incorporation']. Although she offers many cogent criticisms of the contemporary state of American funerary practices, especially from the perspective of their inadequacy as an aid to mourners with their grief work, Rando nonetheless concludes (citing N. H. Cassem) that "doing away with funerals may result in a culture 'with even more juvenile death-denying ways, haunted by unresolved guilt, pent-up anger and half-finished relationships.'"[45]

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[44] **RANDO**, 175, quoting from V.R. **PINE**, "Comparative Funeral Practices," *Practical Anthropology* 16 (1969): 62. Pine uses here a truly amazing euphemism for 'death,' referring to it as "the termination of personal interaction." (!)

[45] Ibid., 177, quoting from N.H. **CASSEM**, "The First Three Steps Beyond the Grave," in *Acute Grief and the Funeral*, ed. V. R. **PINE** and others (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1976), 20.

Basically agreeing with Rando, Worden suggests that "[although] the funeral service has come in for considerable [recent] criticism, . . if it is done well, [it] can be an *important adjunct in aiding and abetting the healthy resolution of grief*."[46] He suggests that there are several important benefits that funerals can potentially confer: helping to make a loss real for the mourners (he favors viewing the body of the deceased); providing an opportunity for mourners "to express thoughts and feelings about the deceased"; reflecting publicly the life of the person who has died (which may aid in an eventual 're-location' of the deceased); and finally, attracting and cementing a social support network around bereaved families. However, in terms of funerals' making a really effective contribution to accomplishing the various tasks of mourning, regrettably in Worden's opinion, "one fact that dilutes the effect of funerals is that they happen too soon."[47]

The late Fr. Alexander Schmemann was critical of those who were tempted to try and valorize the Church's *mystêria* by presenting them as 'help' or 'therapy' for believers, and he tended to dismiss all such attempts as an unnecessary and unwelcome concession to the secular *zeitgeist*;[48] we shall have opportunity later in this dissertation to touch upon some of Schmemann's concerns about 'liturgy-as-therapy.' However, in order to start addressing in advance some of Schmemann's potential critiques of my present treatment of BF, and in order also to add some needed critical balance to the overly-therapeutic focus on funerals provided by the above-cited authors, I would like to conclude this section of *Chapter Four* by referring to the opinions of pastoral theologian Paul Waitman Hoon whom we encountered at the beginning of this chapter.

Hoon certainly agrees with Rando and Worden that "the wise management of grief must be initiated" at funerals. In this regard, he understands that a 'humanly adequate funeral' (reverting to Grisbrooke's terminology) must try and meet certain important pastoral needs: feelings need to be expressed (not repressed); "reality must be faced and the finality of death come to terms with"; "the support of a sustaining community must be evoked"; "the future must be opened up in faith and hope"; and lastly, "a transition into a new stage of life" needs to be negotiated for both the deceased and the mourners.[49]

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[46] **WORDEN**, 61; italics added for emphasis.
[47] Ibid., 62.
[48] See for example: **SCHMEMANN**, *Life*, 99, 108-09.
[49] **HOON**, 172. Hereafter, page references to Hoon will be inserted into the body of my text.

However, all this being said and noted, Hoon has an equal concern that "the funeral must embody integrity as *both* a psychological and theological experience" (171). Therefore, he disagrees forcefully with those of a reductionist bent who might contend that "the funeral is only for the living, a device for mourners to do their 'grief-work'." Rather, declares Hoon, "the funeral is kerygmatic before it is therapeutic" (172).

Believing that a Christian funeral is first and foremost an 'ecclesial event,' Hoon highlights its four important and desirable Christian characteristics (174-81). *First*, a funeral must be *kerygmatic* (including as a part of its proclamation of the Gospel certain downplayed elements such as judgment and *memento mori*) (175-6). *Second*, a funeral is to be *oblational*, a privileged occasion for offering to God "all things within the range of human experience: pain, brokenness, tears, sins, regret, remorse, guilt, repentance, fear, anger, [doubt], memories, thanksgiving, love, joy, hope, [and] vows" (177). *Third*, a funeral has an important *ecclesial* dimension in virtue of which worshippers at a funeral will approach God in priestly intercession for both the living and the departed, striving thereby to edify 'the Body' (179-80). *Lastly*, a Christian funeral must be *missional* so that "it grasps the people . . . with the great motif of death and resurrection not only as the figure of their life in the world to come but also of the paschal life they are to live out in their world, now" (181).

A part of our task in *Chapter Five* will be to try to integrate and synthesize the 'theological and psychological experiences' (Hoon) of Byzantine-rite Christian mourners present at BF, as well as to try and elucidate the ways (replying thereby to Alexander Schmemann) in which the 'Christian adequacy' and the 'human adequacy' (Grisbrooke) of BF's 'intended-sense-as-Text' are inextricably and paradoxically bound up with one another.

IV.B.2 *A Sociological Perspective: Three Societal Distortions of Death's Significance (Stanley Harakas)*

Thus far, although we have made references *en passant* to the *external* world that mourners inhabit, our focus has been mainly on their *milieu intérieure*. Now, I wish to turn to examine some of the principal social attitudes to death, dying and bereavement that confront (and often constrain)

mourners who inhabit western societies – attitudes, that is, that are prevalent and influential within WB's North American (and to a lesser extent European) cultural matrix.

In a recent publication, the American Greek-Orthodox theologian, Stanley Harakas, has pointed out how the dominant forces in contemporary American secular society tend to reinforce one or more of three principal stances toward death.[50] From the perspective of mainstream Christian tradition, all three of these stances must be viewed as embodying serious distortions of the Gospel, even though certain of them may appear to be based upon or to contain elements of truth. Modifying Harakas's nomenclature slightly, we may summarize the three distorted societal perceptions of death as: 'Death denied,' 'Death tamed,' and 'Death victorious.' In the following sections **2.a**, **2.b**, and **2.c** we shall deal with each of these in turn, discussing ways in which each particular distortion manifests itself within WB, and attempting to suggest how each embodies a serious misunderstanding of traditional Christian views on death.

IV.B.2.a 'Death denied': the socio-historical perspective of Philippe Ariès

Descriptions and decrials of the prevalent American (and to a lesser extent European) tendency to try and hide or camouflage death's reality have become commonplace in several different bodies of literature, some of which we have already touched upon in passing.[51] In a number of these texts, an especially powerful and eloquent voice to be heard is that of the French social historian, Philippe Ariès, whose views on the phenomenon of 'death denied' were first brought to the attention of an American audience through a series of lectures, later published, that were delivered in 1973 at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.[52] Subsequently, the core of this lecture material was greatly developed and expanded to appear in print in 1977 as a *magnum opus* entitled *L'homme devant la mort*.[53] Utilizing both these sources, I would like to summarize here the important elements of Ariès's understanding of the evolution of contemporary western societal attitudes to death, a development that he envisages as having passed through 'five stages.'

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[50] **HARAKAS**, 146-50.

[51] Works already cited or mentioned include: **HARAKAS**, 146-47; **HEINZ**, xvi; **HOEFFNER**, 490-91; **RANDO**, 5-8; **ROSCANU**, 33; and **SCHMEMANN**, ***Appendix II***, pp. 313-14.

[52] These lectures appeared in print in English as: Philippe **ARIÈS**, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, c1974) [= **ARIÈS**, *Attitudes*].

[53] For an English translation of this work, see **ARIÈS**, *Hour*.

Before doing so, however, it seems to me important that we bear in mind the nature of Ariès's studies. They are *not*, strictly speaking, 'sociological,' but rather, they are composed of a fascinating and complex mixture of information drawn from diverse fields including history, sociology, theology, esthetics, and psycho-analysis. Thus, for example, Ariès provides us with relatively few statistics or surveys – the customary data with which modern sociology has tended to deal. Likewise, he often departs from more 'orthodox' sociologic methodologies as, for example, when he prefers to search for explanations of observed social phenomena within the individual or collective human psyche rather than limiting himself to a study of discernible movements of the body politic. Nonetheless, I find his work basically convincing in its overall qualitative dimensions, and I believe that he provides us with a satisfying and generally believable interpretation of the evolution of attitudes to death in western societies.[54]

It is also appropriate at this juncture for us to remember that because Ariès generally focuses his attention upon societies of the Christian West, there is little specific information about attitudes to death or evolving funerary practices in those lands of the Orthodox East that are the motherlands of 'transplanted' Byzantine-rite Christians. We might note *en passant* that many of Ariès's observations and theories about the western past can in fact be applied *grosso modo* to the eastern present (especially when it comes to describing 'traditional' practices and attitudes surrounding death and dying in rural areas of Byzantine-rite homelands).[55] However, we may also accept, I believe, that many of Ariès's descriptions and theories about present-day 'death in France' or 'death in America' do possess considerable validity for conveying the situation in the 'urban East' as well; as Velkovska has reminded us regarding 'eastern' funerals, certain practices or problematics described for New York apply "also in cities like Moscow, Athens, Bucharest, or Sofia."[56] Thus, for 'western' Byzantine-rite Christians who are the subjects of the present

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[54] For a very reasonable discussion of various problems raised by the work of Ariès, see: Joachim **WHALEY**, "Introduction," in *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies of the Social History of Death*, ed. idem (London: Europa Publications, 1981), 4-13.

[55] For descriptions of death and funerary practices in some traditionally 'Byzantine' societies, see for example: Monk **ARSÈNE** (of Chèvetogne), "Du culte funèbre dans l'Église russe," *Irénikon* 1 (1926): 293-9; **DANFORTH**, 5-115; Hermann J. **GISLER**, "Coutumes funéraires chez les Bulgares," *Échos d'Orient* 6 (1903): 257-63, 390-6, 7 (1904): 27-31; and A. **MURGOCI**, "Customs Connected with Death and Burial among the Roumanians," *Folk-Lore* 30 (1919): 89-102. Many of these are doubtless quite outdated, but they may be assumed to have some ongoing relevance to the situation prevailing in certain rural areas of the countries concerned.

[56] **VELKOVSKA**, *Handbook*, 353.

dissertation, Ariès's theories may be taken as generally applicable, regardless of whether we are speaking about the westernized inhabitants of cities such as the aforementioned, or (in our own case) about members of the Byzantine-rite diaspora inhabiting the industrialized west.

a.i) Turning now to our consideration of Ariès's 'five stages' in the evolution of western attitudes to death, we may note how his *first stage* consists of a (probably idealized) portrait of the 'tamed death' of the first millennium, that traditional "old familiarity with death"[57] (so Ariès maintains) that typified Christian society until the latter Middle Ages, and that survived for the most part until the early modern era. In a not so distant past, one's 'dying' was generally the subject of a premonition that allowed one to begin to prepare for death and the hoped-for life beyond the grave. Usually lying recumbent on his or her own bed, the dying person undertook a life review, asked for forgiveness of others and extended the same, confessed to and received absolution from a priest, and was consoled by psalmody and prayers of commendation till death at last supervened. This was followed by prompt preparation of the corpse for burial, a procession to the place of burial (with perhaps an intermediate stop in church), and finally the interment.

Several things are noteworthy about this ritual (or rather series of quite matter-of-fact rituals). *First*, it was presided over by the dying person him-/her-self; for the most part, it was he or she who orchestrated the timing and occurrence of the various deathbed events. *Second*, it was a public ceremony with the dying person's bedchamber being temporarily converted into a public place into which there came freely all sorts of people from the community: parents, children, relatives, neighbors, and friends. *Third*, it presumed the coexistence of a single community comprising both the living and the departed; this sense of *communitas* was cemented in late Christian antiquity (Ariès maintains) by the relocation of cemeteries from their Greco-Roman situation *extra muros* to the precincts of urban churches where they came to serve as popular gathering-places. Notes Ariès: "The dead, [who] already mingled with the inhabitants of the popular quarters that had been built up in the suburbs [adjacent to the tombs of martyred saints], . . also made their way into the cities from which they had been excluded for thousands of years;

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[57] **ARIÈS**, *Attitudes*, 14. In the discussion of Ariès which follows, in order to reduce the number of footnotes, I shall include most references to two of Ariès's works (referred to as *Attitudes* and *Hour* respectively) in the body of my text.

henceforth there would be no difference between the church and the cemetery" (*Attitudes*, 18). *Fourth* and lastly, it was the situation of this final resting place *ad sanctos* that was important to the dead and their living relatives, rather than (as later on) the occupation by the deceased of an individual, 'private' grave.

a.ii) In many (if not most) respects, this predominantly communitarian scenario persisted in many European (and American) locales until well into the nineteenth century. However, starting as early as the eleventh or twelfth centuries (according to Ariès), there began to occur certain subtle modifications in attitude which for him characterize a *second stage* in the gradual evolution of western death-mores. "Beginning with the late eleventh century," Ariès informs us, "a formerly unknown relationship developed between the death of each individual and his [*sic*] awareness of being an individual. . . . Western man [*sic*] [came] to see himself [*sic*] in his own death: he discovered *la mort de soi*, one's own death" (ibid., 51-52).

This development was accompanied (whether as cause or effect) by a number of changes in the western European world-view, of which Ariès draws four in particular to our attention (ibid., 29-50). *First*, there arose a new emphasis in both theology and popular piety on the *eschaton* as primarily a time of 'Final Judgment,' drawing heavily on the imagery of Mt 25:31-33; the magnificent and awe-inspiring depictions of this event, found above the western doors of many medieval European cathedrals, date from this era. *Second*, the timing for each individual's 'last judgment' was gradually displaced in the popular imagination from the 'end times' to the end of this present life; the manner of one's death (and especially the making of a proper confession and the reception of absolution) became the principal determinant of one's eternal destiny. *Third*, thinks Ariès, there is noticeable in general European culture from the eleventh century onward a new-found fascination with processes of aging and decay, leading in the Renaissance era to a genuine horror of death coupled with a declining interest in 'eternity' and a novel stress on 'love of life.' *Fourth* (and finally), several remarkable and individuating new peri-mortem practices appeared; for example, there was a new emphasis on 'individualized' graves or tombs often including (for the wealthy) memorial inscriptions and life-like representations of the deceased.

a.iii) A *third stage* in the evolution of death attitudes as identified by Ariès is that of the advent (or rather the impending return) of 'death untamed' (*Hour*, 295); according to this understanding, "where [Christian] death had once been immediate, familiar and tame, it gradually began to be surreptitious, violent, and savage" (ibid., 608). This was a paradigm shift that coincided with the dawn of the modern era and its attendant promise of a natural world transformable by the exercise of the human intellect and the use of science and technology. Paradoxically, just as this sense of mastery over nature was arising, there seems to have grown up in western culture an 'equal and opposite' reactive sense that nature (especially as glimpsed through both death and erotic love) was in fact ultimately triumphant: just as the modern world was being born, "the omnipotence of nature asserted itself in two areas: sex and death" (ibid., 392).

This apparent "turning of the tide" (ibid., 297) manifested itself in an assortment of altered public attitudes and behaviors. A morbid preoccupation with sudden, 'un-natural' death and a dread of being buried alive became prevalent in many quarters. New emphases were forthcoming in various sorts of edifying literature on the need for daily *memento mori* rather than a medieval reliance upon the efficacy of deathbed conversion. A new focus was evident in both life and literature on 'cadavers' that was translated into a fascination with dissection and embalming, grave-robbing, vampirism, and necrophilia. Last of all (in this *résumé* of some of the more impressive or important examples of new death-related phenomena), there came about a weakening of the previously tight links between 'church' and 'cemetery,' with the appearance in countries such as post-revolutionary France of the public cemetery that was more secluded than the church-yard, and hence more removed from daily public view.

Summarizing this 'new reality' that is such an important prelude to the eventual denial of death in our time, Ariès observed the following:

> The order of reason, work, and discipline gave way before the assault of love and death, agony and orgasm, corruption and fertility. The first breaches were made in the realm of the imaginary, which in turn opened the passage to the real. Through these two gates, in the nineteenth century, the savagery of nature invaded the city of man [*sic*] just as the latter was preparing to colonize nature by expanding the frontiers of technological advancement and rational organization. It is almost as if society, in its effort to conquer nature and the environment, abandoned the old defense system that had surrounded sex and death, and

> nature, which had apparently been conquered, surged back *inside* man [*sic*], crept in through the abandoned fortifications and made him savage again.[58]

a.iv) In continuing to trace the evolution of modern western societies' death-mores, Ariès identifies his *stage four* with an initial (but ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to stem the return of death's 'savagery' to the heart of the human community through romanticism's focus upon a new and acceptable image of the 'desirable' death. Thus there grew up by the middle of the nineteenth century an idealization that Ariès labels and describes as 'the beautiful death.'

The three earlier stages had been largely focused upon the self-reflective human subject, who either consciously appropriated the universal and inexorable destiny of the human species or else struggled to find ways in which to personalize "one's own death" (*Attitudes*, 26). However, under the influence of the romantic movement, a new *externalized* focus came to dominate thinking about death. Observes Ariès:

> In the nineteenth century both [alternatives] declined in favor of a third sense, formerly confused with the first two: the death of the other. . . . Affectivity, formerly diffuse, was henceforth concentrated on a few rare beings whose disappearance could no longer be tolerated and caused a dramatic crisis: *the death of the other*. . . . The fear of death, born of the fantasies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was transferred from the self to the other, the loved one. The death of the other aroused a pathos that had once been repressed. The ceremonies of the bedroom or of mourning, which had once been used as a barrier to counteract excess emotion – or indifference – were deritualized and presented as the spontaneous expression of the grief of the survivors. . . . [Death] was exalted as a moment to be desired. Untamed nature invaded the stronghold of culture, where it encountered humanized nature and merged with it in the compromise of "beauty."[59]

This idealization of 'death as beautiful' produced the heart-rending deathbed scenes so beloved by readers of Victorian romantic novels, and led (especially in large North American cities) to the creation of magnificent cemetery-parks in tree-shrouded out-of-the-way locales. But, Ariès believes, all this 'beautification' was only possible because along the way, western society had lost its former notion of death as something intrinsically evil. Long gone were popular beliefs in either hell or the devil, and likewise, suggests Ariès, the dominant paradigm of 'heaven' was changed into a vague hope for "the reunion of those whom death has separated but who have never accepted this separation, a recreation of the affections of earth" (*Hour*, 611).

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[58] **ARIÈS**, *Hour*, 395; italics in the original.
[59] Ibid., 609-10; italics added for emphasis.

In arriving now at the dawn of our own era, it may be useful to preface our consideration of Ariès's final *stage five* by highlighting certain important changes that had taken place (according to Ariès) in a set of four fundamental 'themes,' which course through the historical development he had been surveying, and which are the following: i) the individual's self-awareness; ii) the defense of society against untamed nature; iii) belief in an afterlife; and iv) belief in the existence of evil. Having reached *stage four*, the 'beautiful death,' we may note Ariès's interpretation of developments to date round his four 'themes.'

First, the individual's self-awareness concerning dying and death had been deflected from introspection to a predominant external focus on death as affecting some beloved 'other.' *Second*, human society, which under the influence of the Christian dispensation had earlier succeeded in 'taming' natural death by contemplating it *sub specie aeternitatis*, once again found itself menaced by 'untamed death' which it became increasingly necessary to surround with idealizations bordering on deception. *Third*, substantive belief in some recognizable version of an 'afterlife,' Christian or otherwise, was becoming attenuated beyond recognition; and *fourth*, all of these were accompanied, and made possible (so Ariès believes), by a loss of belief in the reality of 'evil' as a significant force to be reckoned with in human affairs.

a.v) Not surprisingly then, in surveying Ariès's *stage five*, 'death denied,' we encounter evidence for the continued loss of any kind of normative transcendence in western social thinking regarding Ariès's 'four themes.' Perhaps more surprising is a realization of how relatively recent and rapid has been our society's shift to social mores which dictate that death be hidden or disguised as much as possible and public mourning suppressed. Thus, for example, the body of my grandfather (who died prematurely in rural Saskatchewan about sixty years ago) was 'laid out' traditionally in the family living room, and I am old enough to remember when many newly-bereaved persons still wore dark clothing in public for a variable period after a significant loss and then replaced mourning garb with a black arm-band worn for a year.

In chronicling more recent changes in our social attitudes to death and bereavement, Ariès avails himself of a diachronic approach, attempting to trace in stepwise manner the progressive appearance of a number of parameters that he feels characterize today's social ethos of death denial

(*Hour*, 559-601). He starts by reminding us that at least up until the post-World War One era, the death of a person continued to exert a significant impact on the space and time of the social group: 'dying' was acknowledged; death was heralded by the posting of notices that invited visitations to the home of the bereaved; a public funeral service was held in church (or sometimes at home in Protestant countries); burial was preceded by a public funeral procession (which passersby acknowledged by standing silently with men's hats removed); a period of formal mourning was observed often with regular visits to the cemetery, and with a continuing influx of relatives and friends into the bereaved family's home; only very gradually did life return to some kind of 'normalcy.' "The death of each person," observes Ariès, "was a public event that moved, literally and figuratively, society as a whole; . . it was society as a whole that had been wounded and that had to be healed" (ibid., 559).

Given the extent of public familiarity (and apparent comfort) with this praxis, it becomes all the more astounding (and incomprehensible) to contemplate the next series of changes; perhaps the collective 'grief overload' engendered by the carnage of the First World War necessitated some or all of the subsequent evolution. Deception of the dying as to the gravity of their condition, a not rare accompaniment of the 'beautiful death,' was increasingly practiced, aided and abetted by the counsel of the medical profession ("he'll give up if you tell him the truth") who became *de facto* the new 'stage-managers' of dying. With "rapid advances in comfort, privacy, personal hygiene, and ideas about asepsis" (ibid., 570), members of the public gradually became more 'delicate,' suggests Ariès, thereby promoting an increasing revulsion at the thought of death as something 'dirty.' This attitude, operating in tandem with undoubted improvements in scientific medicine, the desire for adequate pain and symptom control, and a more general 'medicalization of death' (ibid., 563), facilitated a gradual relocation of the dying to the confines of the hospital (which started in the thirties and had become widespread in North America by the fifties).

Once the dying were in hospital, their 'modest deaths' could occur 'cleanly' and 'privately' (ibid., 572), although (regrettably) this was accompanied by a rising incidence of unattended and lonely hospital deaths, often in the middle of the night (ibid., 571). Ironically, and most likely as a counter-balance to fears of a solitary 'death-in-hospital,' today's ideal of the 'good death' is often

that very mode of dying which was thought accursed in the medieval world: "the *mors . . . improvisa*, the death that gives no warning" (ibid., 587).

In this evolving scenario, following the death of their loved one, mourners were increasingly expected to hide their grief. "Society," in the opinion of Ariès, "refuses to participate in the emotion of the bereaved" (ibid., 580). Quiet discreet funerals tended to become the norm in America (and elsewhere). In Britain (and gradually throughout north-western Europe), cremation (often private, with or without attendant funerary rituals) rapidly achieved a position of dominance following World War Two. In the opinion of one British authority cited by Aries, cremation "in many cases . . . [was] chosen because it [was] felt to get rid of the dead more completely and finally than burial."[60] As a result of this and other trends, the 'old-fashioned' cult of cemeteries and their visitation by mourners began its gradual decline into at least partial abeyance.

Ariès concludes his treatment of 'Death Denied' by looking specifically at the attitudes to death in (North) America that were prevalent when he wrote his books in the seventies; aside from a rising incidence of cremations, and the obvious importance of the 'death awareness movement' (itself a mixed blessing as I shall attempt to show in a moment), Ariès's description is still remarkably *à propos*. He begins his remarks by noting that whereas visible 'public death' in Britain "has been evacuated efficiently and completely," in America on the other hand, "the elimination of death is less radical" in that it "has not completely disappeared from the urban landscape"; he points to the example of prominent funeral home advertisements in the United States and Canada to substantiate his contention (ibid., 596).

However, Ariès then suggests that there are in fact two rather distinct cultures of 'death denial' in North America (ibid.). On the one hand, there is a social tendency that seeks to continue to *hide* death to an extent even more thoroughgoing than in the United Kingdom. Thus (as Heinz has pointed out)[61] for an increasing number of deaths particularly among the elderly, funeral rites are virtually ignored, and instead there occur only prompt cremations followed by an

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[60] Geoffrey **GORER**, *Death, Grief, and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (London: Cresset Press, c1965), 45; as quoted in **ARIÈS**, *Hour*, 577. In 'Appendix Four' to his book (pp. 169-75), Gorer reprints his famous article, "The Pornography of Death" (originally published in *Encounter* magazine in October, 1955), in which he highlighted correspondences between present-day 'prudish' attitudes to death and dying and similar attitudes which formerly surrounded the open discussion of sex (in Victorian times, for example).

[61] **HEINZ**, 6.

unceremonious disposal of the 'cremains' in the 'memorial garden' patronized by the officiating funeral home.

In contrast to this first tendency (but equally death-denying in the opinion of Ariès), there is the dominant social attitude that seeks rather to *disguise* death. This is achieved through a whole panoply of devices provided by the 'funeral director' of one's choice.[62] The bodies of the dead are initially embalmed (a practice that became common during the American Civil War); then the corpse's visible parts (hair, face, hands) are 'beautified' through the application of elaborate cosmetic procedures. Following this, 'the remains' are placed in a luxurious coffin ('casket') with the deceased's head resting on a pillow, and then the open coffin with its 'occupant' is conducted to a room where 'visitation' with 'viewing the remains' will take place. Throughout and by means of all this, remarks Ariès, "it is of paramount importance to create the *illusion* of life" (ibid., 599).

In reaction to much of the foregoing, ever since the very early seventies in America, the so-called 'death awareness movement' has been growing; its initiatives in attempting to change the face of death in contemporary America have certainly borne fruit. Undoubtedly, the movement's most important 'founding mother' is the Swiss-born psychiatrist, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. She too, like the romantics, has aimed to 'tame death,' but rather than romanticizing or idealizing it, hiding or disguising it, Kübler-Ross and her followers have sought (in the assessment of Ariès) "not so much to 'evacuate' death as to *humanize* it" and in so doing "to reconcile death with happiness" (ibid., 614). To a further consideration and critique of some of the efforts (and effects) of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and her followers, we shall now turn.

IV.B.2.b 'Death tamed': Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and the contemporary 'death awareness movement'

In 1969, a landmark new book was published in the United States that was slated to become a focus of worldwide attention within a matter of months. Entitled *On Death and Dying*,[63] the work went on to sell several million copies and to be printed and re-printed in multiple languages

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[62] The American funeral industry has been the subject of considerable comment, of which the most famous is probably that contained in Jessica **MITFORD**'s classic, *The American Way of Death* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963).

[63] See **KÜBLER-ROSS**; references are to the paperback edition.

particularly throughout Europe and the Americas. Its author was a diminutive, rather eccentric, chain-smoking[64] Swiss-American psychiatrist by the name of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. This quite unusual and highly charismatic woman, through her numerous books, articles and seminars, was to become the principal *guru* of the contemporary 'death-awareness movement'[65] which in turn led to the creation of innovative programs of palliative care for the terminally-ill.

Basing her work on personal interviews with over two hundred dying patients in a Chicago hospital, Kübler-Ross obviously intended that her book would help to force 'Death' and society's neglect of the terminally-ill out of their American closets and into full public view. She seems to have possessed a genuine zeal to combat what she diagnosed as a severe American societal neurosis – namely, death-denial – and her compassionate concern to improve care for the dying cannot be called into question. But, by her attempts to 'naturalize' death, to portray it as part of a great 'circle of life,' and thereby to make it more palatable to both the dying and their families, Kübler-Ross (in the opinion of many) may have inadvertently unleashed new forms of death-denial.[66]

I intend now to summarize the more important conclusions of Kübler-Ross's seminal work, especially her theory of the 'five stages' of 'normal' dying. Thereafter, I propose to present theoretical criticisms of her work that have been offered from psychological perspectives, and to examine certain trenchant Christian theological objections to her *schema*. I shall close my discussion of 'death tamed' by highlighting ways in which Kübler-Ross's contribution impacts upon WB, either directly or indirectly.

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[64] I throw in this observation, which gives more than a hint of Kübler-Ross's feisty and counter-cultural character, because (as a typically self-righteous ex-smoker who is also a physician), I was much amused to hear from a colleague how Dr. Kübler-Ross (who was an MD), when speaking in Montreal in the mid-90s, actually interrupted an address she was giving to a large audience of professionals, and left her hearers to sit for five minutes in a university amphitheatre while she went outside for a cigarette!

[65] Examples of such assessments in print include the following: 1) H. Paul **SANTMIRE**, "Nothing More Beautiful than Death?," *Christian Century* 100, no. 38 (Dec., 1983) [= **SANTMIRE**]: 1156, writes of Kübler-Ross's first book that "this enormously popular work has come to function as the Holy Writ, as it were, of the death and dying movement"; and 2) Lucy **BREGMAN**, "Dying: A Universal Human Experience?," *Journal of Religion and Health* 28 (1989) [= **BREGMAN**]: 59, who, writing in a very similar vein, believes that Kübler-Ross's landmark work "began a whole movement of 'death awareness' and has helped give shape to contemporary [American] culture's apprehension of this particular human phenomenon." Bregman continues: "Many other psychological thinkers have studied dying persons, but only Kübler-Ross's name is recognized by the general public."

[66] See, for example, the observations of Roy **BRANSON**, "Is Acceptance a Denial of Death? Another Look at Kübler-Ross," *Christian Century* 92 (May 7, 1975): 464-68 [= **BRANSON**].

Although this present section of *Chapter Four* is supposed to be dealing with the *sociological* context of the bereaved *living*, much of our current discussion of Kübler-Ross and her theories will be devoted to aspects of the *psychological* state of the *dying*. This may initially strike the reader as an apparent digression, but I believe that it is a relevant and necessary one to take because of the remarkable extent to which the *psychological* theories about dying propounded by Kübler-Ross and her followers have exerted (and continue to exert) a tremendous *sociological* impact on the realm of the living.

Central to Dr. Kübler-Ross's interpretation of the process of human dying is the elaboration of a theoretical psychological scheme of 'five stages' through which, in her clinical opinion, most dying persons will pass if granted sufficient time and support. (She also believes that the family members of dying patients "undergo . . . stages of adjustment similar to the ones described for . . . patients."[67]) Kübler-Ross's five stages – denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance – are presented in precisely this particular order in her book, although she concedes that they might not be an invariant feature of the psychological evolution of every single person's dying.[68]

However, although it may be possible for her to allow for some individual variation in the occurrence, duration or sequence of the intermediate stages of anger, bargaining, and depression, it seems to be Kübler-Ross's firm belief that a patient who lives long enough ought to be capable of passing from an initial state of denial (of varying intensity and duration) into a final stage – acceptance – in which "he [*sic*] is neither depressed nor angry about his 'fate' . . . [and in which] he will contemplate his coming end with a certain degree of quiet expectation" (KR, 112). Dying, in other words, can and ought to be viewed as affording humans with an opportunity for a final and unique experience of personal growth.

George Kuykendall, an American Presbyterian pastor (who appears psychologically sophisticated as well), offers us a carefully reasoned *résumé* and critique of Kübler-Ross's theory.[69] His attempted rebuttal of Kübler-Ross's *schema* on both psychological and theological grounds

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[67] **KÜBLER-ROSS**, 168.

[68] See ibid., 263: "These *stages do not replace each other* but can exist next to each other and *overlap at times*." (emphases mine). To reduce footnoting in the present discussion, I shall hereafter include references to page numbers from Kübler-Ross's book (referred to as 'KR') within the body of my text.

[69] George **KUYKENDALL**, "Care for the Dying: A Kübler-Ross Critique," *Theology Today* 38 (1981): 37-48 [= **KUYKENDALL**]. To reduce footnoting, references to this work will be cited in the body of my text.

may be usefully studied, since it provides us with an eloquent example of a Christian criticism that finds Kübler-Ross's 'stages' neither psychologically nor theologically satisfactory.

For Kuykendall, the most "puzzling" claim by Kübler-Ross is that "imminent physical death," a condition filled with physical, mental, and spiritual pain, actually "brings on psychological growth" rather than the "psychological distress and regression" that common sense might lead one to expect (38). In order for her to arrive at such a conclusion, Kuykendall suggests, it was necessary for Kübler-Ross to adapt and modify Freudian psychoanalytic theory to such an extent as to contradict her "impeccably Freudian" starting point. "As she traces the dying individual's progress through the five stages," observes Kuykendall, "[Kübler-Ross] gradually transforms Freud's *rigorous realism* into a decidedly optimistic idealism" (ibid.).

Kübler-Ross begins her trajectory with patients' initial 'denial' (*stage one*) which she understands (in Kuykendall's words) as "a means of avoiding an idea or notion too painful to contemplate" (ibid.). In Kübler-Ross's opinion, denial is a temporary and *healthy* response that affords patients some 'breathing space' while they "mobilize other, less radical defenses" (KR, 39). Kuykendall disagrees with her from his psychoanalytical perspective,[70] interpreting the denial of the dying (like all denial) as basically an 'unhealthy' refusal to "recognize and deal with painful ideas," and thus as a symptom of incipient depression.

For Kübler-Ross, denial is an inherently unstable stage that patients quickly replace with 'anger' (*stage two*), a less radical defense than denial (in her opinion). Again, Kuykendall disagrees, seeing patients' anger as another symptom of their deepening depression; "far from being a [positive] development, dying patients' anger denotes an accelerating collapse of their psychological functions" (39). The 'bargaining' (usually "with God," notes Kübler-Ross [84]) that constitutes *stage three* in her scheme is, according to Kuykendall, "the last effort of seriously depressed people to maintain some real contact with the world, before sinking into a purely

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[70] In constructing his psychoanalytic refutation of Kübler-Ross's theory of 'five stages,' Kuykendall (38, note 7) acknowledges his indebtedness to the following sources: Myer **MENDELSEN**, *Psychoanalytic Concepts of Depression* (New York: Spectrum, 1974); Kurt **EISSLER**, *The Psychiatrist and the Dying Patient* (New York: International Universities Press, 1955); Ruth L. **MONROE**, *Schools of Psychoanalytical Thought* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966); and Anna **FREUD**, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (New York: International Universities Press, 1966).

subjective existence"; the dying "have regressed to the state where they believe that their wishing can really control the world" (ibid.).

When denial and anger have abated, Kübler-Ross says, then 'depression' sets in (*stage four*), typically of two different sorts requiring two different forms of management. 'Reactive depression' (KR, 85-86) occurs as a response to all that has been lost, and is liable to dissipate rather quickly either with simple counselling or through practical reassurances such as, for example, that dependents will be cared for. 'Preparatory depression' or 'anticipatory grieving' on the other hand (KR, 87-88), the dying person's reaction to the impending loss of all love objects, is more insidious and most often silent; it is best 'dealt with' by quiet support communicated through presence and gestures. In Kübler-Ross's view, it is a necessary prelude to advancing into the final stage of 'acceptance'[71]; Kuykendall points out that Kübler-Ross believes that at this stage, the dying are decathecting, so that they "will find a final acceptance much easier" (Kuykendall, 40; KR, 87).

Kuykendall finds bizarre the suggestion that, as the dying become more depressed, we should basically leave them alone to decathect; "surely grief caused by impending death," he says, "calls for consolation and even diversion." Psychoanalytically, thinks our critic, this fourth stage of Kübler-Ross's heralds the advent of a depressive illness of near-psychotic proportions, which the dying can only 'handle' by retreating into their inner world. "Far from being the stoic retreat into personal dignity that Kübler-Ross envisions," observes Kuykendall, "depression is . . . a regression into infantile mental functioning" (40).

If dying patients have enough time and 'help,' they ought to arrive at Kübler-Ross's *fifth stage*, that of 'acceptance' in which, according to her as we noted earlier, they "will contemplate [their] coming end with a certain degree of quiet expectation" (KR, 112). Now, the dying are "void of feelings," basking in "the final rest before the long journey," (KR, 113), having entered into a state similar to earliest infancy, "a time of passivity, an age of primary narcissism when we experience the self as being all" (KR, 120).

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[71] For assistance with summarizing briefly Kübler-Ross's views on depression, I am indebted to: Howard J. **CLINEBELL**, review of *On Death and Dying*, by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *Pastoral Theology* 21, no. 202 (March, 1970): 60.

Kuykendall is mystified by Kübler-Ross's desire to call this stage 'acceptance' for "the behavior described seems more like exhaustion and depletion" (Kuykendall, 40). That the dying have now reached an infantile state, he can accept. He notes, however, that it is not enough for Christians simply to passively 'accept' the withdrawal of the dying; rather, they should be moved to realize that now "dying individuals have the greatest need for our care in their weakness and despair" (ibid.). From Kuykendall's psychoanalytic perspective, this pre-terminal state represents "the complete collapse of all mature psychological functioning"; it is "meaningless" to describe this as a state of acceptance, because "the very psychological capacities by which one might accept or reject a situation have collapsed" (ibid.).

In concluding his psychological assessment of Kübler-Ross's theories, Kuykendall suggests that neither common sense nor psychoanalysis can support her contention that the move by the dying through her 'stages' represents any sort of 'developmental progress'; "if there is such a movement, it is a regressive, not a developmental pattern" (41). But beyond this, he really questions whether such a 'pattern' as Kübler-Ross's exists at all. In support of this assessment, Kuykendall quotes approvingly the following opinion of Edwin Shneidman:

> While I have seen in dying persons isolation, envy, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, I do not believe that these are necessarily "stages" of the dying process, and I am not at all convinced that they are lived through in that order, or, for that matter, in any universal order. What I do see is a complex clustering of intellectual and affective stages, some fleeting, lasting for a moment or a day or a week, set, not unexpectedly, against the backdrop of that person's total personality.[72]

Kuykendall relentlessly continues his critique of Kübler-Ross. Having denied both of her major claims – first, that there is such a thing as a 'typical' psychological process of dying, and second, that this process can be viewed as one of 'psychological growth' – he then goes on to accuse Kübler-Ross of having allowed her own world-view to shape her interpretation of the experiences of her dying patients. In particular, he resolutely denies her suggestion that "there once was a 'Golden Age' when people did not fear death as we do today" (41; referring to KR, 5-6), and he interprets her 'stages' as a description, not of what actually *is*, but rather of what once *was* and might become so again through better socialization and education. "People raised properly will

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[72] Edwin S. **SHNEIDMAN**, "Death Work and Stages of Dying," in *Death: Current Perspectives*, ed. idem (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publications, 1976), 446; as quoted by **KUYKENDALL**, 41.

'accept death as a part of life'"; thus, for Kübler-Ross, her stages "are not empirical descriptions of how people *actually die*, but *a prescription for how they should die*" (42; emphasis mine).[73]

This attribution of prescriptive status to Kübler-Ross's stages, and their acceptance as virtually normative by many members of the quasi-religious 'death awareness movement,' prompts one to raise the whole question of the need, beyond psychological evaluation, for additional moral, philosophical, and theological assessments of Kübler-Ross's claims. Given the theological nature of the present dissertation, I would like to conclude my consideration of Kübler-Ross's 'taming of death' by examining some of the theological literature that assesses or criticizes her contributions, starting with the concluding portion of Kuykendall's own important and helpful paper.

From his Christian perspective, Kuykendall is most concerned by the nature and extent of the individualism to be found in Kübler-Ross's work, particularly because (in his opinion) it "legitimates the emotional abandonment of the dying" (47). If the dying are capable of 'accepting' their deaths and 'making it on their own' (according to Kübler-Ross's paradigm), then those accompanying the dying are justified in leaving them alone in their withdrawal and thereby saving themselves a good deal of pain. Kübler-Ross views the dying as individuals who need help to die acceptingly rather than as, in Kuykendall's words, "covenant partners with whom one would maintain fidelity until they die" (ibid.).

In accompanying the dying, continues Kuykendall, the goal of Christians cannot be "to bring about a 'proper' psychological orientation to death, but [rather] to point the dying beyond the burdens and pains of dying to the steadfast love of God" (ibid.). Agreeing fully with the spirit of Kuykendall's perspective here (and writing at about the same time), Lutheran pastor H. Paul Santmire suggested that rather than "encourag[ing] the dying to let go of the solidarity of human companionship, . . some communal reality, such as that suggested by the biblical image of the New Jerusalem, [is surely] more appropriate as a goal for the end of life."[74]

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[73] The prescriptive nature of Kübler-Ross's 'stages' (especially her final stage of 'acceptance') has been noted and commented upon by various other authors, including: **BRANSON**, 464; **BREGMAN**, 59-60; Bonnie J. **MILLER-MCLEMORE**, "The Death and Dying Movement: Psychologies and the Formation of Culture," *Second Opinion* 9 (1988): 29, 33; **SANTMIRE**, 1156; Paul R. **SWANSON**, "Some Considerations on Death and Dying," *Dialog* 11 (1972) [= **SWANSON**]: 172; and William **WORDEN**, review of *On Death and Dying*, by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *Journal of Pastoral Care* 25 (1971): 136.

[74] **SANTMIRE**, 1157.

In addition to this faulting of Kübler-Ross for her neglect of the corporate dimension to dying, various Christian authors have leveled other important criticisms against her work. Stanley Harakas, Lucy Bregman, and others have been struck by her tendency to 'spiritualize' death in a quasi-Gnostic fashion. Bregman notes how Kübler-Ross apparently changed from an "extinction model of death" in *On Death and Dying* to "a transition model" in her later works, and she finds it strange that for Kübler-Ross, "one's particular beliefs and expectations about death are really separable from one's immersion in the dying process."[75] Citing examples from *On Death and Children*,[76] one of Kübler-Ross's later works, Bregman thinks it "odd" to find her implied criticism of patients' denial of death's physical reality coexisting unabashedly alongside an "exuberant endorsement of the view that *death as we know it does not really exist*" (emphasis mine). Dying, according to the later Kübler-Ross, is essentially a 'spiritual' process in which "*the soul* merely changes from caterpillar to butterfly."[77] Harakas, responding to Kübler-Ross's repeated espousal of this sort of neo-Gnostic thinking marvels at how "the body is again strangely ignored in this materialistic age."[78]

Equally distressing or frustrating for certain authors is Kübler-Ross's seeming inability to accept that human death is evil, dark, and tragic. Of course, such views on death are understandably difficult to integrate with a philosophy like hers that envisages the end of life primarily as part of a great natural cycle, akin to the demise of a "falling star" which is nothing but "one of a million lights in a vast sky that flares up for a brief moment only to disappear into the endless night forever."[79] Roy Branson assesses Kübler-Ross's views on death as a form of "classical naturalism" that contrasts strikingly with "the view of 'orthodox Christianity' that death is the result of sin." Branson admits that many 'moderns' tend to have trouble with this 'orthodox' view of death, but he quotes approvingly from theologians Reinhold Niebuhr, Oscar Cullman, and John Macquarrie, noting that Macquarrie in particular "like many theologians writing today, would

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[75] **BREGMAN**, 60.
[76] Elizabeth **KÜBLER-ROSS**, *On Death and Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1983).
[77] **BREGMAN**, 60.
[78] **HARAKAS**, 148.
[79] **KÜBLER-ROSS**, 276.

be far clearer than Kübler-Ross that death, whatever else it is, is a part of the human condition of sinfulness."[80]

A perhaps unconventional voice worth listening to at this juncture is that of Bartholomew Collopy, a Jesuit who taught at Fordham. His eloquent plea for Christian theologians (and other contemporary thinkers) to reflect at greater length upon death's undoubted 'dark side' is addressed not only (or even primarily) to Kübler-Ross and her circle but, more importantly, to those Christian thinkers whose "theological analysis of death displays as assumption that which should more aptly function as final hope: the belief that death is undone."[81] The first part of Collopy's article is devoted to considering (and criticizing) what he refers to as "pre-theological models [that] . . . are positive, 'illumined' ones, offering an explication that denies death's darkness or . . . tempers it."[82]

One of three groups singled out for critique by Collopy are those 'bright models,' in particular Kübler-Ross's, that view death as "naturally acceptable":

> It is worth emphasizing here that Kübler-Ross does not perfunctorily pass over or dismiss these dark stages [of anger and depression]. On the contrary, her analysis of them is careful, compassionate, clearly aware of the suffering and isolation which make dying so awful. . . . Nevertheless, despite this great sensitivity to the dark stages and their therapeutic needs, Kübler-Ross persistently interprets these stages as preparatory and provisional. . . . Whatever the cautions and concerns of her praxis, . . her systematic explanation gives an absolute priority to the stage of acceptance. Obviously [this] acceptance model does not depict death as an ultimately dark and destructive reality. Whatever darkness attends death comes from *our* distorted individual perceptions and wider social practices.[83]

In drawing to a close this brief survey of theological objections to Kübler-Ross's attempted 'taming' of death, it is perhaps useful to note Santmire's attempted mediation between two sets of opinions regarding Kübler-Ross's theories. On the one hand, supporters of Kübler-Ross may point to the 'peace' and 'serenity' that acceptance can bring to the dying and their families. On the other hand, her opponents (Santmire included) fear that counselling 'acceptance' in the face of death comes dangerously close to 'giving up,' and they believe it is legitimate and necessary that Christians contend against "the principalities and powers" (Eph 6:12) of death to their last breath.[84]

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[80] **BRANSON**, 467.
[81] See B. J. **COLLOPY**, "Theology and the Darkness of Death," *Theological Studies* 39 (1978): 22.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., 28; italics in the final sentence were added for emphasis.
[84] **SANTMIRE**, 1158.

Attempting to adjudicate between these perhaps equally attractive points of view, Santmire turns for assistance to the example of Jesus confronting his own death, as this is presented to us in the four Gospels, and writes the following:

> The Markan and Matthean Christ struggled with death . . . and the cross was an absolute ending, a *finis*. So [their] Crucified Christ cries in anguish: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34, Mt 27:46). From this angle of vision, only the resurrected Lord offers the final fulfillment, the *telos* of human life, as *Christus Victor*. The Lukan and the Johannine Christ, in contrast, is finally at peace with death. Death appears to be both the *finis* and, in some measure, the *telos* of his life. Accordingly, he says on the cross: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" (Lk 23:46) and "It is finished" (Jn 19:30).
>
> The mystery of death as it is portrayed in the New Testament requires us to hold on to both images, the struggle and the peace. We are not permitted by the New Testament witness to take some kind of romantic, sentimental or stoic detour around the anguish of death in order to arrive, by whatever stages, at the moment of final peace in this world. The New Testament will not have us beautifying or etherealizing death at any stage. Death always remains "the last enemy" in life, as Paul says (1 Cor 15:26). Peace in the death experience, according to the New Testament, comes only through trust in the faithfulness of the God who has power over death, not through any direct contemplation of death itself.[85]

I mentioned near the beginning of the present section ***IV.B.2.b*** that my decision to devote considerable attention to Kübler-Ross and her theories concerning the *psychological* state of the *dying* might seem out of place in a discussion supposedly devoted to the *sociological* context of the bereaved *living*. I justified my decision by pointing out the extent to which Kübler-Ross's work can be shown (as I believe it can) to have had a remarkable *sociological* impact on the realm of the living, including a number of unfortunate consequences that I shall indicate in a moment.

In fairness to Kübler-Ross, however, I believe it is necessary to acknowledge unreservedly the debt we all owe her for her contribution to improving our society's care of the terminally ill. Collopy extols her "reverence for human dying,"[86] while Bonnie Miller-McLemore, noting first how Kübler-Ross "confronted the realities of denial and depersonalization . . . and soothed the troubled spirits of those facing death," concludes: "For this serious reconsideration of life's ending, we owe Kübler-Ross and those who followed her our appreciation."[87]

Nonetheless, this 'appreciation' for Kübler-Ross's positive contribution should not blind the unbiased observer to certain negative attitudes which her theories have fostered; indeed,

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[85] Ibid.

[86] **COLLOPY**, 28.

[87] Bonnie J. **MILLER-MCLEMORE**, "The Death and Dying Movement: Psychologies and the Formation of Culture," *Second Opinion* 9 (1988): 29-30.

Santmire questions whether the North American 'death and dying movement' (which, basing itself largely on Kübler-Ross's work, has sought to offer society "a remedy for a deeply seated pathological condition") may not, on closer analysis, turn out "to be more an expression of the pathology than [its] cure."[88] Among the most important 'pathological' consequences of Kübler-Ross's work, I would cite the following three interconnected examples, all of which are liable to condition significantly the reception of BF by bereaved Byzantine-rite Christians.

First, by stressing the 'naturalness' of death (thus downplaying its 'dark side') and by seeking to 'spiritualize' dying, Kübler-Ross, perhaps inadvertently, has reinforced the attempts of nineteenth-century western societies to 'beautify' death; in the assessment of Ariès, she has sought "to reconcile death with happiness."[89] *Second* (and as a corollary to my first point), I believe that Kübler-Ross's 'naturalization' of death, arising out of her promotion of the need for 'death-acceptance' on the part of both the dying and their grieving loved ones, seriously risks contributing to western society's already prevalent 'de-legitimization' of overt grieving, thereby effectively disenfranchising many mourners. *Third* and lastly, I wish to stress my belief in the particular validity of those critics of Kübler-Ross who accuse her of downplaying the communitarian dimensions of death through her stress on 'dying' as an essentially individual and private act.

I am convinced that all three of the foregoing attitudes – a blindness to death's intrinsic ugliness, the disenfranchisement of grievers, and the deprecation of death's social dimension – are among the serious sequelae within WB of the work of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross.

IV.B.2.c 'Death victorious': the last and greatest deception? (cf. Mt 27:64)

As a focus for my discussions of WB thus far, I have attempted to associate each of two principal 'death distortions' with the name and ideas of a particular prominent author (whether as a *descriptor* in the instance of Ariès and 'death denied,' or as a probable *contributor* in the case of Kübler-Ross and 'death tamed'). However, in coming now to a discussion of 'death victorious,' I

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[88] **SANTMIRE**, 1156.
[89] **ARIÈS**, *Hour*, 614.

am not convinced that it is possible to do likewise for this, the third of the contemporary world's "significant perspectives on death" according to Stanley Harakas.[90]

In introducing us to 'death victorious,' Harakas observes that "our age harbors a belief that death in its full magnitude is all that can be hoped for"[91]; my own awareness as a palliative-care physician of the increasing prevalence of this reductionistic assessment of death in today's world led me elsewhere to suggest that Christians must "battle against death becoming for us the one all-encompassing, menacing and cataclysmic reality of our lives, the 'last word' about Life."[92]

Despite the perception of observers such as Harakas that 'death victorious' has become a prominent thematic in the day-to-day life of most western societies, the theme is still sufficiently ill-defined at an intellectual level that it successfully resists either an Ariès-style definitive description or the self-conscious advocacy of a Kübler-Ross. Nevertheless, its essentially negative and highly destructive character as, ironically, a 'philosophy of life' renders it, in my opinion, more potentially lethal than either of the two previous distortions.

Continuing my reliance upon Harakas as one useful observer of contemporary societal 'perspectives on death,' I would like now to note his cataloguing of those facets of life in present-day western societies[93] that, in his opinion, give evidence for an assessment of death as "*all* that can be *hoped* for" in this present life (emphasis mine).

Harakas begins his accounting of these evidences by referring *first* to the rising incidence of suicide and euthanasia. He suggests, without furnishing any particular evidence for his contention, that their social prominence as alternative endings to life has "resurfaced since the inauguration of the nuclear age." Harakas makes no mention here either of 'assisted suicide' or of the activities of Dr. Jack Kevorkian, two relatively recent 'death-phenomena' appearing on the North American scene; probably this reflects the fact that these discussions were just beginning to attract widespread attention at the time Harakas was writing in 1990.

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[90] **HARAKAS**, 146.
[91] Ibid., 149.
[92] Cyprian Robert **HUTCHEON**, "The *Euchelaion* – Mystery of Restoration: Anointing in the Byzantine Tradition," *Worship* 76 (2002): 39.
[93] See **HARAKAS**, 149-50.

As his *second* evidence for death's impending victory in our society, Harakas cites the existence of various "secular eschatological stances," a term he uses to refer to the activities of organizations or movements that are militant in their efforts to combat the twin spectres of nuclear holocaust and ecological catastrophe. The necessity for the coming into existence of such movements attests to society's "widespread acceptance of annihilation" as a real possibility, although it is perhaps gratifying that there are such groups of activists who "seek somehow to overcome . . . the dominance of death" and "the total destruction of the human race."

The *third* and final indicator, highlighted by Harakas, of the 'dominance of death' in secular American culture is the "proliferation [of] a wide range of hedonistic pursuits." The examples he mentions include: the 'recreational' use of drugs, a certain "self-absorption in frenetic rock music," the emergence of numerous 'New Age' spiritualities and "mysticisms," and "the grasping after technological wonders to fend off the eventual victory of death." As a perhaps humorous (because far-fetched) example of the latter, he points to the activities of certain groups in the United States whose members are devoted to achieving an "ersatz immortality" by having their ashes rocketed into space, where they will orbit the earth for several million years.

Having surveyed all of these examples, drawn from the latter decades of a twentieth-century society that once-upon-a-time saw it as both helpful and hopeful to proclaim the 'death of God,'[94] Harakas suggests that they have become prevalent precisely because at our time and place in history, "*hope* seems to have disappeared from our consciousness," so that "*death* in its full magnitude *is all that can be hoped for*" (emphases mine). In light of Harakas's stress here on 'lack of hope' as the key to an overall definition of 'death-as-victorious,' I propose to conclude Section ***IV.B.2***'s consideration of 'Societal Distortions of Death's Significance' by some discussion of the broad topic of 'hope' together with its antithesis, 'despair,' defined by the *Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1996) as the "complete loss or absence of hope."

Among the terminally-ill patients who were studied by her, Kübler-Ross was much impressed by her finding that, regardless of the particular psychological 'stage' into which they

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[94] See, for example, Thomas J. J. **ALTIZER** and William **HAMILTON**, *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, c1966) and Richard L. **RUBENSTEIN**, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, c1966).

seemed to fall, "the one thing that usually persist[ed] through all these stages [was] hope."[95] The hope (or hopes) which they entertained, whether realistic or not, helped sustain the dying through their roughest days and nights; the disappearance of hope from the conversation of patients, in Kübler-Ross's experience, was "usually a sign of imminent death," generally within twenty-four hours or less.[96]

Because of her repeated observation of the mortal consequences of patients' losing hope, and because of her own 'hope' that patients would survive long enough to reach the final stage of 'acceptance,' Kübler-Ross was able to appreciate this need of the dying for some kind of hope. Although she cautioned caregivers against ever deliberately lying to patients, she suggested that those working with the dying ought to try and find other ways to "share with them the hope that something unforeseen may happen."[97] In Kübler-Ross's own therapeutic sharing with patients, the one supposedly desirable, seemingly 'miraculous,' and frequently 'unforeseen' outcome she struggled to achieve was for them to be able to say (as did one woman quoted in Kübler-Ross's book): "I think this is the [hoped for] miracle – I am ready now and not even afraid any more."[98]

Affirmations such as this one were interpreted by Kübler-Ross as evidence of the human person's amazing capacity for continued growth, psychologically and spiritually, right up to 'death's door,' of our ability to learn to place our own dying into a hopeful and meaningful context. It was evidence of this sort that may well have prompted Kübler-Ross to entitle her third book *Death: The Final Stage of Growth.*[99]

However, certain of Kübler-Ross's critics have voiced implicit queries about the exact nature and role of 'hope' in her *schema* by questioning what exactly she means when she speaks of 'good dying' as entailing 'growth.' Toward the end of his generally positive review of Kübler-Ross's *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*, Thomas J. Sullivan asked: "If death is the final stage of growth, then growth toward what?"[100] In an almost identical vein, Harakas confessed irritatedly that he found Kübler-Ross's title "strange," and then commented about her book that "nothing is

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[95] **KÜBLER-ROSS**, 138.
[96] Ibid., 140.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] **KÜBLER-ROSS**, *Death: The Final Stage of Growth* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975).
[100] Thomas J. **SULLIVAN**, review of *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*, by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 15 (1976): 214.

ever said [in it] about *why* one should grow, in *what direction* growth should move, or *what impact* eternal life after death would have on this life."[101]

A Lutheran pastoral theologian, Paul Swanson, in an article that appeared several years prior to the publication of *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*, was already beginning to pose similar questions of Kübler-Ross and her followers, basing himself entirely on his reading of her first work, *On Death and Dying*. After acknowledging the importance of 'hope' (and thus of a certain 'futurity') within Dr. Kübler-Ross's appreciation of the ideal 'good death,' Swanson continued as follows in an interrogative tone:

> For the patient who has adjusted to the reality that he [*sic*] will soon die, what are the . . . sources of hope [for what] lies ahead? Are they only related to the desire to bring this life to a sense of completion wherein there is satisfaction in accomplishment and a measure of reconciliation and peace in relation to the more intimate sources of friendship that are now being left behind? . . . Or, are the strivings of the person in this stage of acceptance of his [*sic*] imminent death concerned with a certain . . . "redemptive firming up" of what has been, . . seeking a certain separating out of "the things that are left behind" in a manner in which there can be an appropriate carryover to "the things that lie ahead" in a new life in a new world?[102]

One might be excused for evaluating 'hope' of the sort that Kübler-Ross *claims* to have observed in (and desired for) her 'accepting' patients as nothing more than a self-deceptive psychic numbing that permitted them to arrive at and pass through 'the end' with a minimum of intra-psychic discomfort. Yet, if 'dying' according to Kübler-Ross is capable of being understood as a unique and hope-inducing occasion for human growth, one suspects that she must have glimpsed more than occasionally in her dying patients certain yearnings and hopes for a 'safe passage' through and *beyond* death.

Indeed, Kübler-Ross has described for us vividly her own personal encounter with 'near-death' from childhood pneumonia, in the pre-antibiotic era when, as she remembers, "there was little hope that I would survive." Writing many years later of the episode, the future psychiatrist recounted how she 'survived' her hospitalization psycho-spiritually by "dreaming about my 'retreat in the hills,' a little wild forest with a lot of underbrush where I could disappear to when someone . . . upset me." Summing up her otherwise dastardly experience of rigidly enforced in-hospital

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[101] **HARAKAS**, 148; italics in the original.
[102] **SWANSON**, 174.

isolation, Kübler-Ross opined that "if it had not been for my vivid dreams and fantasies, I am sure that I would not have survived [that] sterile place."[103]

It seems to me that in Kübler-Ross's account of her long-ago brush with death, she has described for her readers, albeit in 'non-religious' terms, a self-transcending and future-directed *experience* of hope ("retreat in the hills") – one that has much in common with the 'hope' experienced by persons operating out of the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition, and that differs quite substantially from the quasi-fatalistic and minimalist 'hope-as-acceptance' that Kübler-Ross identified as her clinical goal for her dying patients.

Swanson, whom we quoted earlier, suggests that the basis of hope for the dying within a specifically Christian frame of reference may be envisaged in binary fashion as "rendering meaning to death as closure to life in this world" and simultaneously "as entrée to continuity and ever fuller realization in the world beyond." "Correlative validation" for such a dual process is to be found, proposes Swanson, from three sources drawn from the realms of nature and faith, namely: "the psychology of grief work, the Christian theology of Resurrection, and observations from the natural world that there must be an ending so that there can be a new beginning." The last-mentioned of these – a perspective that finds validation for 'hope' as much in various cyclical natural phenomena as in the narrative of Christ's rising from the dead – perhaps needs no particular elaboration. However, let us briefly examine each of Swanson's other two validating 'correlatives.'[104]

First, the dying person, like the bereaved, is engaged in 'grief work' that has as one of its major objectives (as seen earlier) the accomplishment of decathexis. Such a process of 'letting go' (akin in many ways to Kübler-Ross's 'acceptance') is only achievable psychologically, according to Swanson (expressing a viewpoint with which I concur), "when there is the possibility [or] probability of receiving or finding something or somebody else to take its place" (175). That successful decathexis *is* achieved by many dying persons is an empirically verifiable matter (supported, for example, by Kübler-Ross's own data); hence, one must presume that these same persons have attained death supported by some sort of 'lively hope' for the future.

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[103] **KÜBLER-ROSS**, *Final Stage*, 122.

[104] See **SWANSON**, 175-76. In the following paragraphs, quotations will be identified within the body of my text by referring to the appropriate page number within Swanson's text.

Second, classical Christian faith has "argued long and hard with Hellenistic and Platonic philosophies as to the inadequacy of the impersonal symbol of immortality in terms of mere continuity" (ibid.); the 'Resurrection symbol' with its radical *dis*-continuity of a death that leads to an entirely new beginning would seem to accord closely with much human experience (at least from the perspective of the faithful bereaved). However, there is a *less* discontinuous 'intimation of *immortality*' reported by many dying persons as an experience of their having simultaneously "'one foot in the here-and-now' and 'one foot in the beyond'" (176).

Even this, it seems to me, can be squared easily enough with certain biblical understandings and expressions of 'Resurrection faith.' For example, Paul's description of the baptismal experience of dying and rising with Christ (Rom 6:3-11), or the Johannine understanding of an 'eternal life' that begins here and now (Jn 5:24, 17:3) would support an intuition of Christian hope that, as Swanson says, "the future is now and the 'Resurrection life' begins now, be it [only] as a foretaste of that fuller realization beyond one's life in present time" (ibid.). Some such hopeful understanding of our Christ-given 'present futurity,' it seems to me, is precisely that which provides many dying persons (and their loved ones) with a needed foundation from which "to struggle with the reality of the pain and tasks [of grieving] on a day-by-day basis and thus work through the stages of the grief and death-and-dying process" (ibid.).

In our basically post-Christian society, the hope with which many of our contemporaries approach death may appear to us no longer self-consciously and recognizably 'biblical' in its specific content, but I would argue that it has tended to remain so in its essential 'shape.' During my years as a physician, I have been privileged to observe the deaths, some 'good' and some not so good, of numerous children, adolescents, and adults. This personal experience has convinced me that a genuine acceptance of (as distinct from Kübler-Ross's resignation to) one's impending 'exodus' is necessarily coupled with and fueled by an implicit or explicit trust in the 'gracious' character of an available and supportive reality – one that is sufficiently powerful to impel the dying person to embrace willingly a 'something better' that awaits them (even if that 'better' be concretized or rationalized into simple relief from either pain or the incessant necessity for struggle).

In writing these words, I am reminded of a well-known essay by Paul Tillich where he described the Christian experience of the quintessentially gracious character of Ultimate Reality as "simply accepting the fact that you are accepted."[105] While my second-hand experience of others' dying convinces me that Tillich is very likely onto something true and important in his intuition of the trustworthiness of the 'Ground of our Being,' I am nevertheless struck by a certain incongruity between Tillich's essentially *naturalistic* ground for one's living and dying in trust on the one hand, and the classical Judeo-Christian apprehension of a trust (hence hope) that is grounded in the awesome '*un*-naturalness' of the mighty acts of YHWH, the God of Israel.

I have become convinced that many, if not most, experiences of transcendent hope amongst persons inhabiting present-day Western societies are probably based upon a lingering remembrance of that faith, hope and trust in the Living God that enlivens both traditional Christianity and Judaism, and that once upon a time animated entire societies in both Christendom and Israel. It is likely to be a residual and subliminal faith of this sort, in my opinion, that continues to fuel and make believable so many deathbed experiences of hope as well as the naturalistic theological syntheses of a Paul Tillich.

As the memory of faith-as-trust (and its attendant hope) grows dimmer and more attenuated in western (and westernized) societies, it is not surprising to observe replacement by a climate of despair that, as Harakas suggests, underlies most of the 'death-as-victorious' phenomena that he enumerates. Such also seems to be the view of the famous American OT scholar, Walter Brueggemann, who after an illuminating discussion of OT hope (equally applicable to 'NT hope') as trust in a future given by YHWH, writes that "a strong case [can] be made that a defining mark of a postindustrial, technological world is *despair*, the *inability to trust in any new and good future that is promised and may yet be given*" (emphases mine).[106]

A particularly vivid but excruciating North American example of the accelerating societal displacement of hope by despair is afforded us, in my opinion, by the pathetic figure of Dr. Jack Kevorkian, the Michigan pathologist who was repeatedly indicted for murder on account of his self-

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[105] Paul **TILLICH**, "You are Accepted" in *The Shaking of the Foundations* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1964), 163.

[106] Walter **BRUEGGEMANN**, *Reverberations of Faith: a Theological Handbook of Old Testament Themes* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 102.

confessed compliance with at least forty patients' requests for 'physician-assisted suicide.' Derisively dubbed 'Doctor Death' by the media for his advocacy of Michigan citizens' unfettered 'right to die,' Dr. Kevorkian has been assessed by the eminent psychiatrist, Dr. Paul McHugh of Harvard University, as "certifiable" under Michigan law because he is "dangerous to others," dominated as he is by the "monomania" of his "overvalued idea."[107] Far from being offended in any way by his societal critics, Kevorkian apparently sees himself as a sort of missionary, devoted to converting others to his passionately espoused beliefs. Indeed, as noted by Orthodox ethicist, Vigen Guroian, "Kevorkian . . . has embraced the [media's] label [as Dr. Death] because death is in fact the passion of his life."[108]

Under some circumstances, it might have been possible to dismiss Kevorkian as a fringe figure espousing an untenable minority point-of-view. But the unfortunate facts of the matter, as noted by Dr. McHugh, are that "although [Kevorkian's] acts are illegal by statute and common law in Michigan, no one stops him [and] many citizens, including members of three juries, believe he means well."[109] Although one can only hypothesize as to reasons for the Michigan citizenry's support of 'Dr. Death,' the pervasive despair of his desperate victims is evident from their biographies and via the videotaped interviews with them that were retained by Kevorkian. Through such documents, according to McHugh, we can witness the "seduction of vulnerable people – . . by isolating them, sustaining their despair, revoking alternatives, stressing examples of others choosing to die, and sweetening the deadly poison by speaking of death with dignity." The Harvard psychiatrist goes on to ask: "If even psychiatrists succumb to this complicity with death, what can be expected of the lay public?"[110] At least some of them, suggests McHugh, are probably reminding themselves that they too may be in desperate need of Kevorkian's services some day.

For many newly bereaved members of western societies (the inhabitants of WB) who are confronted by the personal challenge of beginning the 'tasks of mourning,' it must often appear that the social world they inhabit is bent on impeding the successful accomplishment of the task that lies

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[107] Paul R. **McHugh**, "The Kevorkian Epidemic," *Christian Ethics Today*, 3, no. 1 (February, 1997); viewed online at www.christianethicstoday.com/Issue/009/Issue_009_February_1997.htm. This article originally appeared in *The American Scholar*, Winter 1997. The reference here is to pages 1 and 4 of an 8-page downloaded version of the article, printed in an 11-point font.

[108] Vigen **Guroian**, *Life's Living toward Dying* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), xv.

[109] **McHugh**, "Kevorkian Epidemic," 1.

[110] Ibid., 6.

before them. In the preceding pages, we have examined three of the more prominent of these impediments: a widespread and pervasive climate of death denial; a burgeoning 'death awareness movement' that seeks to tame death by 'naturalizing' it; and an increasingly post-Christian philosophical climate that intuits despair and self-destruction as the only logical response to death's inevitable tragedy.

Under such uncongenial social circumstances, the decision even to proceed with funeral observances is increasingly construed by many onlookers as either a meaningless or a profligate act. The funeral's traditional function as an important 'rite of passage' is thus being called into question, a matter with which we shall now concern ourselves in the final section of *Chapter Four.*

IV.B.3 *An Attenuated Transitus: a Brief Anthropological Perspective*

According to van Gennep whom we have cited several times previously in the present text, rites of passage are characterized by three successive phases: those of 'separation,' 'transition,' and 'incorporation.' However, he noted that "although a complete scheme of rites of passage theoretically includes *preliminal* rites (rites of separation), *liminal* rites (rites of transition), and *postliminal* rites (rites of incorporation), in specific instances, these three types are not always equally important or equally elaborated."[111]

In discussing funerals as rites of passage, Therese Rando has pointed out how closely van Gennep's three phases parallel the "three tasks of grief work" described by Erich Lindemann and referred to earlier.[112] Rando also reminds us that "virtually all societies and cultures have been found to have some form of funerary rituals."[113] Commenting on the near-universal nature of funeral observances, van Gennep observed that, whereas one might expect separation rituals to be prominent in funeral ceremonies, in actual fact according to his anthropological data, "rites of separation are few in number and very simple, while the transition rites have a duration and complexity sometimes so great that they must be granted a sort of autonomy."[114] In the case of

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[111] **VAN GENNEP**, 11; italics have been added for emphasis. The terms relating to 'liminality' are derived from the Latin *limina* = threshold.
[112] **RANDO**, 179.
[113] Ibid., 173.
[114] **VAN GENNEP**, 146.

Christian funeral observances, although it is obvious that they contain important elements of 'separation' and even of 'incorporation' for both the mourners and the deceased, various authors[115] appear to concur with van Gennep's assessment that funerals, as *rites de passage*, accord a unique status to their 'liminal' or 'transitional' content. Thus Speck, for example, describes funerals from the mourners' perspective as belonging to "the period *between* Good Friday and Easter Day."[116]

Although Heinz agrees that the funeral belongs particularly to the liminal 'phase of transition' (and indeed is often its most important, or even unique, surviving remnant), he highlights the dilemma of many bereaved persons for whom the period of transition "is of unknown and unexamined length and is almost totally without social or cultural support." Heinz goes on to develop this theme further when he writes:

> While this open-ended period of liminality typically can provide powerful, if also terrifying, threshold experiences, American culture suggests that suppressing grief and getting right back to work is "the best medicine." Typically, individuals are left to make their own way into the stage of reincorporating themselves into the life and community of society. There are no prescribed societal closures around the new status of the bereaved, nor any means of dealing with the "pollution" of the bereaved. So some individuals get stuck in melancholic grief, and others foolishly rush their reintegration.[117]

In defiance of the *zeitgeist*, faithful Christians continue to assert that their own deaths (and those of their departed fellow-believers for whom they grieve) can acquire 'meaning' insofar as those deaths are joined to the death and resurrection of Christ – a 'process of transition' initiated years earlier (in most instances) in the waters of baptism. This notion that one's faith in Christ is ultimately sealed through being joined to him in his *transitus* – his passover – would seem to have a solid anthropological grounding. For what else is one talking about when one speaks (with van Gennep and others) of the process of *transition* as part of rites of *passage*? It is in this spirit that one can read words written by Philippe Rouillard:

> The modern world tries to elude death in every possible way. It is agreed that the dying man [*sic*] should not know that he is going to die; that the presence and transit of bodies should not affect the peace and concerns of the living; that the signs of death and mourning should be hidden. Contrary to this dehumanizing tendency, the Christian liturgy takes great pains to declare loudly and intelligibly the reality and meaning of this last passage: the

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[115] See, for example: **AINSWORTH-SMITH**, 84-89; **HEINZ**, 130; **IRION**, 93; **SPECK**, 104-06; and **WILLIMON**, 103-05.

[116] **SPECK**, 105; italics added for emphasis.

[117] **HEINZ**, 131.

> dying Christian does not fade into the mist but is carrying out one of the major tasks of human existence. The ritual is intended to help the dying man [*sic*] to live his death as a man and as a believer, and it is intended to help his family to see the luminous aspect of Christian *transitus*. Experience shows that, in an atmosphere of faith, it is possible to celebrate truly paschal funeral services which show the meaning of the Christian pasch as well as Christ's passover.[118]

If the 'world of the bereaved' that contemporary western mourners inhabit – surrounded by a non-supportive and death-evading culture, and obliged to struggle desperately alone to begin their work of grieving – is a world that is no longer permeated by Rouillard's "atmosphere of faith," then the task of celebrating funeral rites that maintain the "delicate balance"[119] between lamentation and rejoicing becomes an ever greater challenge. It is to a consideration and assessment of BF's attempts at mediating such a 'delicate balance' for mourners that we shall now direct our attention in *Chapter Five*.

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[118] **ROUILLARD**, 81.
[119] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 61.

CHAPTER FIVE

RE-READING BF IN THE 'WORLD OF THE BEREAVED' (WB): THE WAY TOWARDS *PASCHA*

To introduce this final chapter of my dissertation, I want to highlight three observations, already touched upon earlier, that I will reflect upon and amplify in the coming pages.

First, in *Chapter Four*, I drew attention to an astute observation about funerals made by psychologist Therese Rando who pointed out how the successive phases of van Gennep's *rites de passage* ('separation,' 'transition,' and 're-integration') correspond remarkably well to Erich Lindemann's three basic tasks of 'grief work' (decathexis, adjustment to absence, and investment in new relationships).[1] In a similar vein, we may note with interest the suggestion of Paul Sheppy that van Gennep's phases in the context of Christian funerals can also be related to the paschal mystery,[2] such that each ritualized 'phase' of a mourner's passage through the events between the death and burial of their loved one has a certain correspondence to the happenings of each successive day in the paschal *triduum*. Hence, analyzing matters from van Gennep's anthropological perspective, one may legitimately conclude that the 'ritual shape' of an effective Christian funeral is capable of being correlated positively with both its psychological and theological goals.

Second (and with the intention of refining slightly my first observation), it may be recalled how often I have referred positively to Grisbrooke's contention that 'successful' Christian funerals ought to maintain a critically 'delicate balance' between their simultaneous need for both Christian and human 'adequacy.'[3] This understanding acknowledges that a funeral, an essentially ecclesial event, also has a definite role to play in what Hoon describes as "the wise management of grief."[4] However, as Hoon also insists, "the [Christian] funeral is kerygmatic *before* it is therapeutic,"[5] a stance that may be taken as nuancing somewhat Grisbrooke's assertion so as to accord a certain priority to the Christian funeral's paramount need for 'Christian adequacy.'

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[1] **RANDO**, 179; **LINDEMANN**, 11.
[2] **SHEPPY**, "Shaping," 3.
[3] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 66.
[4] **HOON**, 172.
[5] Ibid.; italics were added for emphasis.

Third, when assessing BF's *kerygma* in *Chapter Three*, I tried to suggest in my conclusion to the chapter that the 'theological genius' of BF may well reside less in its antinomic presentation to mourners of 'lamentation' alongside 'celebration' and more in its transfigurative offer to human grievers of help in "making [their] funeral lament into a song [of] 'Alleluia'" (KON). I believe that BF seeks to accomplish this goal firstly by acknowledging and legitimizing human grieving, and then by inserting it firmly and unequivocally into the paschal mystery of Christ (as viewed especially from the vantage point of Holy Saturday). Thus, contrary to what Alexander Schmemann has asserted concerning BF's 'lamentation stratum,' I consider that it is *essential* to BF's 'Christian adequacy' rather than being a regrettable detraction from it.

In the succeeding pages, through my proposed *relecture* of BF from the stance of Byzantine Christian mourners who inhabit the contemporary West's 'world of the bereaved' (WB), I hope to demonstrate the following two inter-related contentions (assigning no priority to one over the other). Firstly, I hope to show (as I believe) that BF (at least potentially) is a psychologically efficacious *Christian* rite-of-passage. Secondly, I want to support my apprehension that BF's psychological and anthropological efficacy is intimately intertwined with and highly dependent upon its theological efficacy (its 'Christian adequacy' in Grisbrooke's sense) as BF offers to inform and transform mourners' grief by conforming it to Christ's own *Pascha-transitus* from death to new Life. In other words, I seek to convince my readership of my perception that BF's 'human adequacy' (especially through its inclusion of a 'lamentation stratum') both depends upon and determines BF's 'Christian adequacy.'

In attempting to accomplish this goal, I shall begin in section *V.A* by dealing with three of BF's more important 'frameworks' (or 'matrices'): 1) as a 'rite of passage' (BF's *anthropological* matrix); 2) as attempted 'grief therapy,' inviting and catalyzing mourners to begin their 'grief work' and supporting them as they do so (BF's *psycho-social* matrix); and 3) as an epiphany of the 'paschal mystery' (BF's *theological* matrix). These discussions will be relatively brief attempts to collate and/or amplify material that in many cases has already been dealt with earlier in my dissertation to a greater or lesser extent.

Having set forth these preparatory considerations, I will then turn in section *V.B* to examine systematically and in some detail 'BF's Engagement with WB,' viewing BF as a *rite de passage* that invites and empowers mourners to live out the paschal mystery of Christ through their experiences of bereavement.

V.A *Preparations for Re-reading BF through WB*

V.A.1 *Christian Funerals (Including BF) as 'Rites of Passage' (van Gennep): an Anthropological Matrix*

There have been several junctures thus far (including one at the conclusion of *Chapter Four*) where I have referred to van Gennep's theory of 'rites of passage' either in the context of a discussion of funeral rites or in relation to processes of dying and bereavement. To anyone at all familiar with the literature that deals with Christian funerals from within the broad perspectives of pastoral care and practical theology, it will be quite obvious that there is nothing particularly original about my use of van Gennep's work. However, since one of the frameworks I have chosen for relating BF and WB is that of *rite de passage*, it seemed to me both necessary and helpful to review some of the pertinent literature, most notably in works by British and American authors,[6] that deals with Christian funerals in these terms.[7]

From a survey of the various texts produced by the authors under consideration, we may draw at least four helpful conclusions, of which the first two are of a rather general, and perhaps even obvious, nature. *First*, the anthropological notion of a 'rite-of-passage' when applied to funerals is a multi-dimensional construct, useful for analyzing the funeral from at least three varied and important points of view: psychological, theological (or philosophical), and sociological (Ainsworth-Smith, 62; Heinz, 132-33; Irion, 90; Speck, 98-99). *Second* is the observation (more a reminder) by various authorities that the 'passage' which a funeral marks is one that is being

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[6] Authors who will be considered in the discussion that follows include (with their countries of origin and dates of publication in parentheses): **AINSWORTH-SMITH** (UK, 1984); **GRAINGER** (UK, 1988); **HEINZ** (USA, 1999); **IRION** (USA, 1966); **ROUILLARD** (France, 1979); **SHEPPY**, "Shaping" and **SHEPPY**, "Transition" (both UK, 1997); **SPECK** (UK, 1997); and **WILLIMON** (USA, 1979). In order to reduce the number of footnotes in this section, citations will be made in parentheses within the body of my text.

[7] Another work of particular interest and relevance here was discussed at greater length in *Chapter Two*, namely **DANFORTH**; see especially his Chapter Three, 35-69, entitled "Death as Passage."

'experienced,' so to speak, by both the mourners *and* the deceased to a greater or lesser degree (Ainsworth-Smith, 79; Grainger, 68-74; Heinz, 130; Irion, 94; Rouillard, 73, 76; Sheppy, "Transition," 48-49; and Speck, 102). The person who has died is passing, both literally and in the imagination of the survivors, from his or her accustomed place in the 'land of the living' to some new abode in the 'realm of the dead' (however the latter may be envisaged). At the same time, a mourner considered as someone's spouse, to cite but one obvious and common example, must begin a 'passage' from being someone's life-mate to a new role as their widow or widower.

Third, although funerals have undoubted significance as activities of 'separation' and 'incorporation,' most of the authors consulted stress the particular importance of funerals as 'rites of transition' (Ainsworth-Smith, 86-89; Grainger, 69-71; Heinz, 131; Irion, 93; Rouillard, 80-81; and Sheppy, "Transition"). Peter Speck in particular begins his article by quoting approvingly from a Victorian author, J. Calhoun who, writing out of an entirely unrelated context, observed that "the interval between the decay of the old and the . . . establishment of the new . . . must . . . necessarily be one of uncertainty [and] confusion" (98). Speck follows this up by his observation that indeed, one of the hallmarks of the transitional phase of bereavement is the intense psycho-spiritual 'chaos' it induces, and he concludes that under such conditions, "some rite of passage . . . might provide the boundaries of safety within which the individual can experience the chaos" (100).

Van Gennep referred synonymously to the middle 'chaotic' phase of transition as being a 'liminal' one, a designation he derived from the Latin word for 'threshold' or 'entrance.' This perception of death as a passage-way into a 'mysterious' future (understanding 'mysterious' here in its Pauline sense of Col 1:26) definitely colors the traditional Roman Catholic funeral liturgy as well as its 1969 revision, both of which, as Rouillard notes (80), contain a profusion of 'gate' images. Mourners and deceased alike are entering into the "region and shadow of death" (Is 9:2 *LXX*), an experience that is fraught with anxiety-inducing uncertainties even for persons of faith. Rouillard reminds us that "almost all cultures have presented death [for the deceased] as the start of a dangerous journey" (74), while Heinz has pointed out how, for so many contemporary American mourners, the liminal phase of transition has become one "of unknown and unexamined length, . .

almost totally without social or cultural support," and hence replete with "terrifying threshold experiences" (131).[8]

In contrast to the foregoing realistic but rather intimidating scenario, a more positive and helpful aspect of the time of transition focused round the funeral has been pointed out for us by William Willimon who reminds his readers that "the funeral service itself has an important educative function," namely "to interpret the meaning [for the bereaved] of the crisis of death" (104). For mourners who have just entered a period of liminality, while great comfort may be afforded them by relatives and friends "just standing beside [them] and upholding them with presence," this is equally "an important time for talking about things that, while difficult to discuss, must be spoken of" (104-5). In addition to the 'kerygmatic' functions of a Christian funeral, the occasion also affords other 'moments' for the instruction (often subliminal) of mourners in such matters as the need for beginning one's grief work and for creating a new role for oneself within one's family and community (Ainsworth-Smith, 85).

A *fourth* and final conclusion stressed by several of the authors under consideration was their perceived need for a theologically 'adequate' Christian funeral service to possess a paschal 'shape'; *this is a critically important constraint in my opinion, one that I shall be examining at length in the latter half of this chapter.* In the literature surveyed here, there is the example of Rouillard's article on Roman Catholic funeral rites that demonstrates (77-81) how they interpret the final *transitus* of Christians by means of a series of images and actions that are derived from the twin biblical narratives of Israel's Passover from Egypt and the 'new Passover' of Christ. Speck, a British Anglican priest who particularly emphasizes the transitional function of funeral liturgies, likewise suggests that "for the bereaved the transition phase of the rite of passage . . . is the period between Good Friday and Easter Day" (105).

Speck's sentiments are echoed and endorsed in an aptly-titled article, "Towards a Theology of Transition" that was written by his Baptist compatriot, Paul Sheppy. Somewhat unusually

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[8] Heinz's concern is echoed by **RANDO**, 183, who observes that "recent sociological changes [in American society] have decreased the mourning period, . . taken away the markings that previously identified the bereaved as individuals requiring special consideration, . . . [and] left Americans without prescribed roles and norms and often with unrealistic expectations about how to act after the death of a loved one."

(perhaps) for a person of his British 'Free church' background, Sheppy appears possessed of a well-tuned liturgico-theological sense, something that comes to the fore when he writes elsewhere:

> In shaping the funeral, . . . it is important that we do not belittle the reality of the loss that death brings. To do so denies the abandonment of Good Friday. It is important that we do not avoid the sense of numbness and unreality so often experienced in bereavement. To do so ignores the transition of Holy Saturday. It is important that we do not suggest that people will eventually "get back to normal." To do so misses the resurrection life to which God summons the living and the dead. We are not called to repeat the past; our obedience is to a new order of existence.[9]

Bearing the foregoing useful observations in mind, we may summarize the principal ways in which BF, like most other Christian funeral rites, can be analyzed as a 'rite of passage' in van Gennep's terms. However, just prior to doing so, it is important for us to bear in mind that van Gennep's 'three phases' in a rite of passage such as a funeral do not necessarily present themselves to the observer as any sort of pre-arranged sequence of discrete phenomena, but rather are typically encountered in an overlapping and discontinuous manner.

Thus, BF's processes of 'separation' include: the presence of the open coffin with the deceased's exposed body in the midst of the assembly culminating in the rite of the Aspasmos or 'Last Kiss'; the procession out of the church; and finally the burial. Rites of 'transition' have two principal foci: first, the procession into church followed almost immediately by a protracted 'Holy Saturday' meditation centered around the chanting of the Amomos psalm and EVL; and second, the repeated entreaties of the synaptês, GOS, KON, and numerous hymnographic refrains that the departed be granted 'rest' (*anápausis*). Finally, elements of 'incorporation' (for the deceased) are particularly discernible: in the Gospel lection ("the hour is coming *and now is* when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God"); and in the singing of 'Eternal Memory' at the conclusion of the service in church, and again at the end of the interment.

V.A.2 *BF as a Supportive Catalyst for Beginning Grief Work: a Psycho-social Matrix*

I wish now to review briefly the tasks of 'grief work' that I identified in the previous chapter, and to highlight certain important ways in which BF can be understood (in my opinion) as facilitating these tasks. In addition, it strikes me that this particular discussion affords us an ideal

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[9] **SHEPPY**, "Shaping," 3.

opportunity for re-visiting and attempting to address Fr. Alexander Schmemann's previously-mentioned concerns (which I share only in a very qualified way) about any infelicitous confusion or attempted admixture of 'liturgy' with 'therapy.'

In section ***IV.B*** of *Chapter Four* above, invoking an understanding of 'successful' grieving as a process that demands the expenditure of a great deal of psychic energy by mourners (their "grief work"), I amalgamated ideas gleaned from several experts in the field of bereavement in order to come up with the following list of the four principal 'tasks of mourning':[10]

i) to admit that a loss has taken place and that it is indeed final (combating *denial*);
ii) to experience and express a full range of thoughts and emotions in relation to the loss (combating *suppression*);
iii) to release the deceased loved one through 'letting go' and saying good-bye, and thereby to begin adjusting to an environment from which the loved person has in fact been allowed to depart (combating *clinging*); and
iv) to reinvest mental and emotional energy in new relationships and projects, having first redefined (not given up) one's relationship with the deceased (combating *stagnation*).

If we consider each of these tasks in turn (as we shall do in a moment), I believe it is not difficult to identify for each task certain particular 'moments' within BF that can be envisaged as directing the mourners' attention to the 'grief work' that they must now begin to undertake.

The successful completion of a bereaved person's *Trauerarbeit* (utilizing here Freud's own original term) will typically require at least eighteen to twenty-four months to be achieved, though periods of up to several years are neither unusual nor abnormal.[11] Hence, one might conclude that it is highly improbable for a single brief ritual like BF to accomplish any substantial amount of 'grief work' at such an early stage in the grief trajectory and in such a short period of time. This opinion, however, is definitely *not* shared by bereavement theorists like Rando, Worden and others, some of whose work we examined in *Chapter Four*. So, for example, Worden insists that "the funeral service, if done well, *can be* an important adjunct in aiding and abetting the healthy resolution of grief,"[12] while Rando, theorizing at a more fundamental level, reminds us that "funerary rituals are *created* by the psycho-social tasks demanded by death."[13]

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[10] As I noted earlier in *Chapter Four*, I am particularly indebted for this particular formulation of the four tasks of mourning to **ABI-HASHEM**, 319-21.
[11] **WORDEN**, 18; **SPECK**, 107-108.
[12] **WORDEN**, 61; italics added for emphasis.
[13] **RANDO**, 173; italics added for emphasis.

Speaking both realistically and in the light of opinions such as these, it seems to me reasonable to conclude that funerals can at least *facilitate the beginning* of mourners' grief work, firstly by identifying (explicitly or implicitly) the tasks that lie ahead, and secondly by suggesting or 'modeling' certain techniques and practices that will prove to be either essential or at least useful in the ultimate successful accomplishment of the various tasks of mourning. Speck seems to me to state the matter well when he writes that "the funeral has the capability of encapsulating the full process of separation, transition and incorporation and thus enabling the bereaved to move forward in their grief; *it does not do the grief work for them but it can act as a catalyst.*"[14]

Besides this capacity for funerals to assist individual mourners in initiating their grief work, it is important at this juncture to mention another invaluable function of public funeral rites, namely their inherent potential for conveying to the bereaved a tangible expression of much-needed and generally welcome support from a community. The latter is often comprised not only of immediate family and close friends, but also of a much wider circle of persons from various walks of life who had less intimate relationships with the deceased. Rando speaks in a manner both insightful and compassionate when she writes:

> Through the funeral, the community shows that it recognizes that the mourners now have a new relationship with the deceased, and that it wants to help them maintain this new relationship through memory, commemoration, and ritual. There is a manifestation of shared loss. These rituals strengthen the relations among the living as well. The consolation of those who care gives acceptance to the mourners' feelings and affirms that they are not alone in grief. The mourners' path back into the social group is smoothed by the support gained from others through their presence, thoughtful gestures, and expressions of feelings of sadness and loss. Indeed, *if the funeral is conducted in the absence of others, it will not serve to meet the needs of the bereaved individuals.*[15]

Observations such as these will require little explanation to the majority of Byzantine-rite Christians even in North America, since generally speaking, they have tended to maintain a well-developed sense of *communitas* at both the ethnic and ecclesial levels.

Having noted, then, certain theoretical considerations about the psycho-social supportive functions of funerals in general, I would like to highlight a few of the more obvious or important

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[14] **SPECK**, 105. This opinion is evidently shared by **HEINZ**, 132, who writes that "the task of the funeral [from a psychological perspective] is to initiate the mourners on the long journey of grief work."

[15] **RANDO**, 183; italics added for emphasis.

ways in which BF can be understood to be promoting the initiation of the four principal 'tasks of mourning' that I listed above. Although we shall discuss each task discretely and consecutively, it is important to remember what was said earlier, namely that these tasks as a group are liable to be tackled synchronically and not necessarily in the particular order given here.

The *first task* for many mourners (and arguably the most important one since without it none of the others can easily proceed to completion) is for them to admit the reality and finality of the loss they have sustained and thereby to begin to combat the denial which is a universal and initially protective defense mechanism. One important way to accomplish this task utilizes a means that is recommended by bereavement professionals and incorporated fully into BF's ritual, namely viewing the body of the deceased. As Rando observes, this experience (together with others such as receiving condolences at a wake and witnessing the placing of the coffin in its grave) "graphically illustrates to the bereaved that [a] death has indeed occurred," so that "even if it cannot be emotionally accepted at the time, the memories of these experiences will later help to confirm to the bereaved the reality of the loss of the loved one."[16]

Task two in our list encourages mourners to permit themselves to experience and express a full range of thoughts and emotions regarding their losses. At first glance, this aspect of grief work might appear as something easily accomplishable by Byzantine-rite mourners in general who are typically of eastern European and Mediterranean ethnic backgrounds. While it *is* true that these 'eastern' cultures (in contrast, say, to those of northern and western Europe) tend to permit and encourage the outward display of all sorts of strong emotions, many of them also have equally strong taboos that limit the circumstances and manner under which grief may be openly expressed. In rural Greece for example, according to Danforth's study, although women are generally fond of *ritualized* public lamentation, many of them for reasons of privacy prefer to express their *deepest* grief only to close relatives, but at the same time they are often reluctant to do so for fear of causing pain to their kinfolk. They may thus become caught on the horns of a dilemma that constricts their therapeutic grieving to an extent almost as great as the self-limitations imposed on many members of western cultures.[17]

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[16] Ibid., 180.
[17] **DANFORTH**, 11-14 and 144-45.

In the light of these cultural considerations, it is neither surprising nor unusual to find a prominent outward display of grief (through uninhibited weeping, for example) at Byzantine-rite funerals[18] (even in the diaspora). At certain more emotionally charged moments in the service, profuse weeping is sometimes combined with audible sobbing or other outpourings of intense grieving. The particular 'ritual moments' in BF that 'permit' and even encourage such overt lamentation may vary somewhat from one ethnic tradition to another; however, common moments for heightened expressions of grief may include: the singing of KON; the rite of the 'last kiss'; the chanting of 'Eternal Memory'; and, of course, the burial.

In Freudian psycho-analytic terms, the *third task of grieving* – saying good-bye – is essentially that of decathexis, a psychic process that was discussed more fully in *Chapter Four.* It needs to be noted, however, that the brutality of 'classical' decathexis, with its insistence that since "the love object [i.e., the deceased] no longer exists" therefore "all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object,"[19] is mitigated somewhat by *task four*'s encouragement for mourners to relocate their beloved dead and to maintain an ongoing (though necessarily redefined) relationship with them. Within the overall context of BF, particular moments where 'Christian decathexis' is modeled and facilitated would certainly include the *aspasmos* and the interment. However, in a very real sense, the entire ritual content of the period between death and burial can be viewed as an extended process of 'Farewell' that finds its particular focus around more intense moments like the two just specified.

Finally, the goal of *task four*, that mourners will eventually be capable of investing in new relationships and projects, has an important prerequisite to which we alluded a moment ago. In his 1991 book, Worden revoked an earlier description of the fourth task of mourning as "withdrawing emotional energy from the deceased and investing it in another relationship," having come to appreciate that this wording "sounded too mechanical, like one could merely pull a plug and reattach it someplace else." Benefiting from insights that he had gleaned from the work of Vamik Volkan, an expert in complicated grieving, Worden revised his earlier version of the 'fourth task' by concluding that the bereaved, in order to form healthy new relationships, ought *not* to "give up

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[18] Ibid., 72-74.
[19] **FREUD**, 244.

their relationship with the deceased," but rather that they must "find an appropriate place for the dead in their emotional lives."[20]

Within an analysis of BF that seeks to view the 'world of BF' from within the 'world of the bereaved,' this revised fourth task of Worden's can be used to support an observer's appreciation for the funeral's intrinsic 'wisdom' in including so many repeated entreaties that 'rest' be granted to the departed. Likewise, the profuse and polysemic imagery of KON, GOS and EVL lends support to the service's ardent desire that mourners be enabled, with respect to their deceased loved ones, to trust "that the Lord God [will] establish their souls where the righteous rest" (Synaptê for the Departed). Finally, the Gospel's promise that the dead already "hear the voice of the Son of God and live" (Jn 5:25), and the committal of the departed to God's 'eternal memory' together hold out to mourners the prospect of their being able someday to relinquish their loved one to that "place of light, verdure and refreshment" for which the presiding clergy repeatedly pray (GOS).

All of the foregoing examples serve to illustrate various ways in which BF can be viewed as assisting mourners with what Hoon has characterized as "the wise management of grief."[21] Interestingly, this entire aspect of the Byzantine-rite 'liturgies of death and dying' seems to have been left virtually untouched by Fr. Alexander Schmemann both in his seminars on BF (see *Appendix II*) and in his classic work, *For the Life of the World* which includes a Chapter Six that is entitled "Trampling Down Death by Death."[22] I would suggest that this perhaps surprising *lacuna* may be at least partially explicable from several different perspectives.

One possible explanation for Fr. Schmemann's apparent reticence about discussing death-induced loss and grief may relate to the generally abstract context out of which he was writing, even though in his lectures, for example, he approaches the subject of 'death' with the same passionate enthusiasm that characterized his treatment of most subjects that he cared to write or speak about. In both the sources that I mentioned in the preceding paragraph, Schmemann is talking for the most part about the 'problem of death' rather than about what Richard John Neuhaus distinguishes as "the catastrophe of death" – our sudden and shattering awareness of "the singularity of *a* death [be

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[20] **WORDEN**, 16-17.
[21] **HOON**, 172.
[22] **SCHMEMANN**, *Life*, 95-106 (chapter 6).

it] the death of someone we love with a love inseparable from life, or . . . the imminent prospect of our own dying."[23] Death-as-problem in the abstract can reasonably be expected to have preoccupied someone who was not only one of the twentieth century's premier Orthodox theologians but also an eminent 'Russian religious thinker.' In the context out of which Fr. Schmemann was writing, therefore, it may have been perfectly natural for him to have excluded any discussion of bereavement *per se* which, after all, is an intensely *personal* experience of the "catastrophe of death." That Fr. Alexander was absolutely capable of more personal and experiential reflections on death-as-catastrophe is suggested by passages in his recently published journals[24] as well as a tantalizing reference to "my death" in the penultimate paragraph of Chapter Six of *For the Life of the World.*[25]

A second plausible explanation for the scant attention Schmemann paid to 'bereavement' in his liturgical works on death and dying is that he was merely reflecting what Galadza takes to be an inherent weakness in the present-day Byzantine liturgical tradition as a whole, namely its relative lack of 'personalism' and 'contextualization.' Galadza notes that "modern people tend to seek the divine in personal relationships more than their ancestors did," and although this seeking may sometimes result in "a shallow anthropomorphism," he nonetheless wonders whether "Byzantine worship adequately feeds this hunger for personalism."[26] If this assessment is valid for Byzantine liturgy *per se* then perhaps it holds equally true for Byzantine liturgical theology, in which case Fr. Alexander's relative silence on the more personal aspects of death in Byzantine liturgy may merely reflect the intrinsic nature of his topic as this has been traditionally understood.

The foregoing two suggestions, however, pale into insignificance as explanations for Fr. Schmemann's inattention to the "wise management of grief" in comparison with the strong prejudice that apparently conditioned most of his attitudes towards anything that might be called 'practical' or 'pastoral' theology or liturgy. In the closing chapter of his now classic work *For the Life of the World*, Schmemann warned against those who seek to make Christianity attractive and

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[23] Richard John **NEUHAUS**, "Born Toward Dying," *First Things*, no. 100 (2000): 15.

[24] For example, see **SCHMEMANN**, *Journals*: 278 (a visit to his mother); 283 (his wife's illness); 286 (the death of a childhood friend); and 298 (his sixtieth birthday).

[25] **SCHMEMANN**, *Life*, 106. The paragraph from which this quotation is taken was included by Fr. Thomas Hopko in the homily he delivered at the Divine Liturgy on 16 December, 1983 that preceded Fr. Schmemann's burial; see **HOPKO**, "Two," 47-48.

[26] **GALADZA**, "Restoring," 250.

'relevant' to the modern world by presenting it as a form of 'therapy.' He saw this tactic as just another capitulation to secularism (his great *bête-noire*) because (so he argued) once Christianity (and, by implication, Christian liturgy) is presented as 'therapy,' the criterion for judging the 'adequacy' of its vision becomes the 'help' it can offer for solving human problems rather than the truth it proclaims. In such a scenario, noted Fr. Alexander, "if a man [*sic*] changes religion, it is usually because he finds the one he accepts as offering him 'more help' – not more truth."[27]

Fr. Schmemann was seeking here to guard Orthodox liturgical theology against what he saw as a significant and dangerous temptation in its meeting with secularist modernity (and post-modernity). But I think that by overstating his case for a total mistrust of 'the therapeutic,' Schmemann was in grave danger of "throwing the baby out with the bath-water" (to quote an old aphorism). The major problem with so many contemporary attempts to correlate the Gospel and therapy is surely *not* the attempt *per se*, but rather that the 'therapy' which is offered is all too often presented to the world in the world's own terms (as some sort of adjunct to Jungian analysis or group therapy, for example).

The concept of the Christian *mystêrion* having a 'therapeutic' dimension is at least as old as the Gospel itself.[28] Thus, in all three synoptic gospels, Christ is remembered as having said: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk 2:17 and parallels). The author of the epistle of James, writing in the eighties or nineties of the first Christian century, first urges those who are sick to call upon the *presbyteroi* of the local church for prayer and anointing in order that "the *Lord may raise* [*them*] *up*," and then exhorts his general readers: "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, *that you may be healed*" (Jas 5:14-16; emphases mine). In the early second century, Ignatius of Antioch, writing to the church at Ephesus (XX: 2), refers to the eucharist as the "medicine of immortality [and] an antidote against death" (*phármakon athanasías, antídotos tou mê apothanéin*).[29]

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[27] **SCHMEMANN**, *Life*, 109. For other expressions of Fr. Schmemann's mistrust of 'theology-as-therapy,' see **SCHMEMANN**, *Church*, 121-22, and **FISCH**, 91-92. One can also speculate about the extent to which Schmemann's attitude was conditioned by the anti-Bolshevik climate of suspicion (within the post-revolutionary Russian *émigré* community) of any and every programmatic attempt at 'helping'.

[28] Metropolitan Hierotheos (**VLACHOS**) of Nafpaktos, Greece, for example, adjudges *all* theology to be therapeutic; see his *Orthodox Psychotherapy* (Levadia, Greece: Birth of Theotokos Monastery, n.d.)

[29] Thomas **CAMELOT**, trans. and ed., *Ignace d'Antioche, Polycarpe de Smyrne: Lettres/ Martyre de Polycarpe* [Greek critical text and French translation], SC 10 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969), 76.

These early and venerable witnesses from Tradition compel one (I believe) to argue vigorously *against* Fr. Schmemann's implication that 'liturgy' and 'therapy' are mutually exclusive categories. If we acknowledge instead that they can and do have a significant interface, then we may be able to endorse BF's ritually-enacted 'therapeutic' offer to turn 'funeral laments' into 'Alleluias.' However, this endorsement will be possible *only* because we have assessed the offer as being a 'Christianly adequate' (hence 'therapeutic') expression of the Gospel message, and *not* primarily because BF can be shown to be a 'humanly adequate' adjunct to certain forms of bereavement therapy. Further than this, we will strengthen our case immensely by arguing and attempting to demonstrate that BF actually 'works' as therapy in large measure *because* it is firmly grounded in and conformed to the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.

V.A.3 *BF as Proclamation of the Paschal Mystery: a Theological Matrix*

Earlier, in *Chapter Three*, I prefaced my discussion of 'resurrection' in BF by highlighting the renewed emphasis on the paschal mystery of Christ that has come to characterize much western Christian liturgical praxis in the Catholic, Anglican and Protestant traditions in the wake of the Second Vatican Council.[30] I then went on to suggest that BF, in spite of its rather sombre overall tonality (imparted to it by its protracted contemplation of death and the mystery of Christ's Holy Saturday *anápausis*), nevertheless possesses a fundamentally paschal 'shape.'

Participants in BF, so I would maintain, are being guided very firmly, yet subtly and with deliberate eschatological ambiguity, toward an appropriation of the mysterious paradox of the departed who now rest with the 'Holy Saturday Christ,' and yet who are already being joined to the 'Easter Christ.' As Constas points out (in his discussion of a type of Byzantine eschatological thinking that certainly undergirds BF), although the departed human soul's "tarriance [*sic*] between death and resurrection . . . [is] a universal *lex mortuorum*," at the same time there is consolation to be had from knowing that the righteous departed "now endure this experience in solidarity with [the dead and risen] Christ, to whom they [are] mimetically linked."[31]

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[30] See: Irmgard **PAHL**, "The Paschal Mystery in its Central Meaning for the Shape of Christian Liturgy," and W. **RORDORF**, "A Response to Irmgard Pahl," *Studia Liturgica* 26 (1996): 16-48; and Maxwell **JOHNSON**, "The Paschal Mystery: Reflections from a Lutheran Standpoint," *Worship* 57 (1983): 134-56.

[31] **CONSTAS**, 103.

In order to give substance to the foregoing assertions, it seems to me worthwhile at this point to recapitulate the broad outlines of what I said in *Chapter Three* about the 'paschal shape' of BF, whereby mourners are being invited through liturgy to emulate and enter into the paschal mystery of Christ. Lazor has suggested that BF embodies a movement which 'descends' to penitential desolation and then 'ascends' from there to the proclamation of resurrectional joy.[32] This trajectory of 'descent-depths-ascent,' it seems to me, is precisely what helps make present to the members of the assembly at BF the *transitus* of Christ (and hence of the departed and eventually of themselves) in the paschal mystery. Let me try and support this assertion by highlighting those sequential elements of BF which serve, I believe, to mark the various movements and points along the trajectory that Lazor describes for us.

One begins with the actual death of the newly-deceased by which, according to Bobrinskoy, he or she in union with Christ begins his or her passage through the "doorway . . . of our ultimate Pascha, our passage *from death to life*, rather than from life to death."[33] For the newly-bereaved, their own ensuing doleful 'descent to death' is necessarily dominated by a contemplation of their loved one who, perhaps all unintentionally, is emulating Christ himself, "our God who descended into Hades," the realm of the dead (TRIS). For the deceased on the other hand, the 'descent to death' (which they now share with the entombed Christ in his 'Blessed Sabbath' rest) marks their potential entry into a time and place "whence pain, grief and sighing have fled away" (GOS), a state which those grieving may scarcely begin to imagine.

Gathered round the still and often peaceful countenance of a departed sister or brother, the assembly hears chanted verses from AMOMOS, a hymn which in the context of BF celebrates the entry of the departed with Christ, who alone is "Blameless in the Way," into the 'way' which is Holy Saturday: "Hear my voice, O Lord, in accordance with your mercy; in accordance with your judgment give me life; Alleluia [v.149]. Rulers have persecuted me for no reason; and my heart has been in awe of your words; Alleluia [v.161]. My soul will live and praise you; and your judgments will help me; Alleluia [v.175]."[34] The spirit of these assurances continues in the ensuing EVL,

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[32] **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 118.

[33] **BOBRINSKOY**, 242; italics are in the original.

[34] This particular selection of verses is included in most Greek books (though not usually in Slavic ones) as part of an abbreviated Stasis Three of the AMOMOS; see ***Appendix I***, 296.

which look to God to accord the dead "the longed-for fatherland" and the restoration of their "former beauty."

For the mourners keeping vigil, the 'time of descent' is an incomparably painful and deeply troubling one, full of sentiments that may resonate with lines which are read from psalm 50: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love (51:1 RSV). . . . Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me (v.11)." The grieving are now being invited to identify with that pain and perplexity in the face of death that is expressed in the hymns attributed to St. John of Damascus: "I grieve and lament when I contemplate death. . . . What is this mystery? . . . How have we been handed over to corruption and yoked with death?" (IDML, tone 8).

Upon completion of the psalmody, the Canon (when taken), and IDML, a gradual change of direction takes place within BF's liturgical trajectory. Introduced by the singing of the Beatitudes and the following PROK, there begins a movement of 'ascent' towards God's promises of resurrection and restoration for the departed,[35] and the possibility through them of eventual hope and consolation for the grieving. "In your Kingdom, remember us O Lord; blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven; blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted (Beatitudes). . . . Blessed [then] is the way on which you journey today, [O soul], for a place of rest has been prepared for you" (PROK). At last, the service's lights, incense and white vestments may seem more 'appropriate' to the attendees.

The assembly is being readied to hear the resurrectional promises of the Word of God, something that may fortify them for the imminent, painful moments of ASP and burial. "Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so too through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess 4:14). "The hour is coming *and is* [*even*] *now*, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who have heard will live. . . . All who are in the tombs will hear his voice; and they will come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, but those who have done ill to the resurrection of judgment" (Jn 5:25, 28: emphasis mine).

Possibly now, some mourners may be glimpsing a first ray of truthfulness in the suggestion of the Ikos that their "funeral lament" is capable of being transformed into "a song [of] Alleluia."

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[35] In certain Slavic communities within the Byzantine tradition, this movement of 'ascent' is highlighted by a move of the clergy at this point from the body of the church into the sanctuary.

This is the mysterious paradox that is enshrined at the heart of BF and that invites – and potentially empowers – mourners to live out the paschal mystery of Christ through their experiences of bereavement. To the inherently difficult and potentially painful encounter between the mourners' 'World of the Bereaved' and the 'World of BF' we shall now turn at last as we seek to integrate and synthesize the anthropological, psycho-social, and theological dimensions of BF.

V.B *BF's Engagement with WB: Inserting Human Grieving into the Paschal Mystery*

At the very beginning of the first sub-section of the first section of the first chapter of the present work, I introduced into my dissertation the notion of liturgical 'shape' – a term coined by Dom Gregory Dix in 1945. Subsequently, I have made repeated reference throughout my text to the 'shapes' of things in a variety of different contexts – the 'shape' of BF's overall *ordo*; the matutinal or Holy Saturday 'shape' of specific aspects of BF; the 'shape' of other liturgical units or offices; the 'shape' of a particular ritual action such as a procession; the more abstract anthropological 'shape' of ritual actions in general; the external biological 'shape' (*morphê*) that characterized living beings in Hellenistic antiquity; the 'shape' of a person's *transitus* through death; the 'shape' of mourners' grief trajectories; the 'shape' of our human hopes.

Obviously, I have felt quite free to emulate Dix liberally in his borrowing of this property of 'shape' from the 'real world' of material objects. I have then gone on and taken advantage of the inherent plasticity that is one of the defining features of 'shape' in order to transpose this quintessentially 'physical' term into the 'spiritual' realm of ideas where I have already made repeated and possibly excessive metaphorical use of it. This being the case, I do hope nonetheless that I may be pardoned if I make one last use of 'shape,' this time to assist me in imaging (and imagining) a template for the final synthesis of my dissertation wherein I seek to analyze BF from the hermeneutical vantage point of WB.

In *Chapter Five* thus far, I have discussed in section *V.A* what I intuit as constituting the three principal 'frameworks' or 'matrices' of BF. (I note here how both these words denote *infra*-structures that are intended to support the final 'shape' of some larger ultimate structure or creation, in this case a conversation.) Now in section *V.B*, I shall try to create a 'shape' that will rest upon

and be upheld and moulded by my three supporting frameworks (anthropological, psycho-social, and theological), but which will not be too restricted or rigidly defined by them.

Since this is a theological dissertation, I wish personally to accord primacy in 'shaping' my final synthesis to what I discern as BF's inner theological framework – the Christian paschal mystery that, according to Louis Bouyer, "*is* Christ, who once died and rose again from the dead, making us die in His death and raising us to His life, . . [through] the cross and the empty tomb rendered actual."[36] This fundamental Christian *mystêrion* is neatly encapsulated (it seems to me) by the line from BF that enshrines its most important and paradoxical conclusion (as I have tried to show) – namely that humanity's response to Death "to which all we mortals will go" can be and has been changed (even – or perhaps especially – under the most devastating and tragic external circumstances) by Christ and in Christ from "funeral lament" to "Alleluia" (KON).

At the same time, it is obvious that BF is pre-eminently and outwardly a human rite of passage in van Gennep's terms in which there can be detected definite ritual and textual elements that belong to each of the three phases of separation, transition and incorporation. As a funerary rite of passage, BF (in the opinion of Rando) can be expected to possess a positive correlation with those "three tasks of grief work" (expandable perhaps to four) that will necessarily preoccupy mourners in the weeks and months ahead and that were initially identified by Lindemann – "emancipation from the bondage of the deceased [decathexis]; readjustment to the environment in which the deceased is missing [transition]; and formation of new relationships [incorporation]."[37] One of our tasks now is to try and demonstrate how it may be possible for Byzantine Christian inhabitants of WB, having their traditional recourse to BF following the death of a loved one, to begin their grief work through BF's mediation to them of the paschal mystery.

In the title of the present section ***V.B***, I speak about *inserting* human grieving into the paschal mystery. This concept of 'insertion' (a term of my own devising, to the best of my knowledge) will be alluded to or employed metaphorically by me at various times in the pages that follow. It seems to me well-suited for attempting to convey my firm conviction that the personal, unique and disintegrative human experience of acute bereavement can be radically reevaluated and

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[36] Louis **BOUYER**, *The Paschal Mystery*, trans. Mary Benoit (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1950), xiv.
[37] **RANDO**, 179; **LINDEMANN**, 11.

reintegrated by being referred to and enveloped by a controlling 'external' paradigm (the paschal mystery) that claims to be healing and universal. My assumption will be that the 'enveloping context' of Christ's Passover through Death to New Life, mediated to mourners through their contact with BF, is capable of affording them an opportunity to begin having their grief conformed to and shaped by a transcendent and ultimately healing *mystêrion* that, like their present plight, began under circumstances of total darkness and defeat.

In the following pages, we shall enter into the paschal mystery (in section ***B.1***) on the 'Great and Holy Friday' where the separation of death and the painful process of decathexis have their beginnings. In section ***B.2***, the transition to repose (*anápausis*) in the 'Blessed Sabbath' will preoccupy us. Last of all, we shall emerge in section ***B.3*** into that 'New and Holy Pascha' where resurrection is encountered and the prospect of re-incorporation looms large for both the bereaved and their loved ones.

V.B.1 *Great and Holy Friday: Death and Decathexis*

V.B.1.a The 'problem of Death': the death of Christ as one's own death

In his now outdated but still fascinating study of Greek Orthodoxy in the period shortly after the Second World War, the British author Peter Hammond speaks of "the desolation of the holy and great Friday, when every bell in Greece tolls its lament and the body of the Saviour lies shrouded in flowers in all the village churches throughout the land."[38] This quotation forms just one small part of a half-page-long single sentence (that nevertheless manages to obey all the rules of an old-fashioned and grammatically impeccable syntax!) in which, by citing this observation alongside numerous other examples drawn from Greek church life, the writer aims to support his conclusion that "for the Greek Christian the Gospel is inseparably linked with the liturgy."

I have chosen the foregoing vignette, for reasons that I am about to enumerate, because its elements strike me as comprising an appropriate *point d'entrée* into my pastorally-focused *relecture* of the Byzantine-rite 'Liturgy of Death.' *First* of all, the Greek Orthodox contemplation of and

[38] Peter **HAMMOND**, *The Waters of Marah: The Present State of the Greek Church* (London: Rockliff, c1956), 52.

lamentation over the dead Christ is an occasion (like BF) with a thoroughly liturgical context. The icon of the "body of the dead Saviour" that "lies shrouded in all the village churches" is not there merely as a vestige of some pious custom; rather it has been placed there as the culmination of a procession that forms part of the Vespers service of Holy Friday.[39] *Second*, as is the case with virtually every Byzantine liturgical 'happening' (including every 'proper' observance of BF), this event is necessarily a fully communal and public one. *Third*, we are dealing here (as at every funeral) with an instance of 'desolation' whose reality will have differing degrees of vividness for the various participants who partake of it. *Finally*, the one being lamented (as is true of the deceased at funerals) possesses both his own personal and individual uniqueness as well as a more generalized 'iconic' identity as the face of 'Death-in-general.'

This last observation is a particularly relevant point, it seems to me, for our setting out to appreciate the 'Good Friday' aspect of BF. In terms of the service's overall 'paschal shape,' there is scarcely a single direct reference to the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Instead, BF evokes the remembrance (*anámnêsis*) of Christ's death (an element that certainly *is* present within the service) by more indirect means, of which the most obvious and important is the chanting of the AMOMOS psalm – the great 'Psalm of the Dead' in the Byzantine tradition.[40]

Psalm 118 (119), identified by some commentators as one of three 'Torah psalms' in the Psalter, is a celebration of the perfectly righteous person who is lauded for having total devotion and obedience to the God of Israel and the fulfillment of his commandments.[41] However, according to a mainstream Christian exegetical tradition that goes back at least as far as Origen in the late second century,[42] the only truly righteous man, the only one who is indeed perfect in his obedience

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[39] This particular liturgical action – the processional deposition of the *epitaphios* icon – is a relatively late 'mimetic' development in the evolution of the Byzantine-rite celebration of Holy Friday. See Robert **TAFT**, "A Tale of Two Cities: The Byzantine Holy Week Triduum as a Paradigm of Liturgical History," in *Time and Community: In Honor of Thomas Julian Talley*, ed. J. Neil Alexander (Washington DC: The Pastoral Press, c1990), 31-32.

[40] Alexander Schmemann observes that psalm 118 (119) has a definite "'funereal' connotation for the average [Byzantine-rite] believer" due to the fact that "in our liturgical practice today this psalm is used *only* at funeral services." See **SCHMEMANN**, "Blessed Sabbath," 4.

[41] See James L. **MAYS**, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 128-35. According to Mays, the Psalter's other 'Torah psalms' are psalm 1 ("Blessed is the man [LXX: *anêr*] . . . whose delight is in the law of the Lord" [vv. 1a, 2a, RSV], and psalm 18 (19) which, beginning at verse 7, includes a paean of praise for the Torah: "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul" (psalm 19:7, RSV).

[42] *La chaîne palestinienne sur le psaume 118 (Origène, Eusèbe, Didyme, Apollinaire, Athanase, Théodoret)*, Vol. I, intro., text, and trans. Marguerite **HARL**, SC 189 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1972), 128-31.

to his heavenly Father, is Christ himself, who "humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross" (Phil 2: 8, NIV). For this reason, the AMOMOS, interspersed with short poetic stichs to form a liturgical composition referred to as 'The Lamentations' or 'The Praises' (*Encomia*), comprises the core of the matutinal liturgy of Holy Saturday (celebrated by anticipation on the evening of Good Friday) when, over the iconic "body of the dead Saviour" (Hammond), Christ's perfect obedience 'unto death' is both extolled and lamented.

Alexander Schmemann points out that "the sorrow of [Good] Friday is . . . the starting point of the Matins of Saturday [that] begins as a funeral service, a lamentation over a dead body."[43] Undoubtedly, the fact that the particular Face-in-Death contemplated by worshippers on Holy Saturday is believed by them to be that of the Incarnate Son of God imparts a unique significance to that Face's also serving as the representative countenance of 'Death-in-general.' Yet, there is a very real and truly legitimate sense in which the Church at Holy Saturday Matins is conducting another 'ordinary' burial office. Viewed from this perspective, every newly-bereaved human being may be able to recognize his or her own pain in the doleful cries of Holy Saturday lamentation which the *Encomia* place in the mouth of Christ's Mother as she contemplates the death of her son: "My heart is torn in pieces by a mother's grief. Who will give me water and springs of tears, that I may weep for my sweet Jesus? O hills and valleys . . . and all creation, weep and lament with me, the Mother of our God."[44]

These few lines have been prompted by a unique instance of specific loss that has assumed a universal dimension of truly cosmic proportions. No doubt in the mind of the poet, this expansiveness was largely a reflection of the identity of the Person being mourned, yet it *does* correspond as well to the experience of many acutely bereaved persons for whom the sheer immensity of their loss threatens to dwarf all else in their microcosm.[45]

This tendency for a specific occasion of loss to give rise to a more global expression of grief is reflected in the IDML of BF that are attributed by tradition to St. John of Damascus and that form the second lengthy 'set piece' of BF's usual parochial *ordo* (following after psalm 118). In a

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[43] **SCHMEMANN**, "Blessed Sabbath," 4.

[44] Stasis 1 of the *Encomia*, vv. 68-70; see *The Order of Matins and the First Hour for Holy and Great Saturday* (Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1996), 31.

[45] See: **LINDEMANN**, 9-10; **RANDO**, 22-23, 33-34; and **WORDEN**, 26.

series of texts that are replete with existential pain and bewilderment (yet under-girded by an obvious profound trust in God's goodness and providence), the hymnographer ponders the mystery of human death in terms that one could easily imagine as having been prompted either by the events of Good Friday or by a recent acute bereavement. Thus grieves St. John: "I weep and lament when I contemplate death and see the beauty fashioned for us in God's image laid in the tomb, without form, without glory, without shape. O the wonder! What is this mystery which has happened to us?" (IDML, tone 8).

Reverting now to our earlier consideration of psalm 118 (119), we must concede that for a majority of bereaved Byzantine-rite Christians, the presence of psalm 118 (119) at the heart of BF is unlikely to evoke spontaneously all the theological associations with Good Friday-Holy Saturday that can be deduced by students of liturgy, for example. But one is surely well within the bounds of a reasonable probability in assuming that for those mourners present at BF who are at all familiar with the Byzantine tradition, the psalm's opening words "Blessed are the blameless in the way," intoned according to their typical 'funereal' melody, will automatically conjure up past associations with many specific instances of Death-in-general – the deaths of other close loved ones, relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and – quite possibly – the annual Holy Friday remembrance of the death of the Son of God as well.

The representative character of the death of Christ, contemplated through AMOMOS as the potential paradigm for the death of every Christian, is made more specific in the series of short hymns, (EVL), that comprise a sort of conclusion to AMOMOS. There, the connecting link is that of *martyría*, understood by EVL in its dual connotation of both '*martyr*-dom' and 'witness' or 'testimony.' According to EVL, the Christian martyrs who "were slain like lambs" for proclaiming their faith, have emulated (and thereby borne witness to) the blameless death of their Lord and Master, the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29).

However, it is not only through the quite exceptional and extreme means of actually being *executed* for one's faith that ordinary believers are enabled to join their Lord in his *martyría* and thus to receive a martyr's crown. Rather, each and every person who has "trod in life the hard and narrow way" that consists in self-sacrificially taking up "the Cross as a yoke" is deemed to have

"followed [Christ] in faith" and therefore to have become worthy of the "heavenly rewards and crowns" that have been prepared for them. To follow Christ voluntarily after the paradigm of the Holy Martyrs – up to and into death itself – thus falls within the grasp of all persons who are able to accept Christ's invitation to join their deaths to his.

Of course, in the Christian understanding, it is not enough for a Christian simply to be "united with Christ in a death like his" (Rom 6:5). As Bobrinskoy reminds us, it is only "within the mystery of Christ dead *and resurrected* [that] death acquires a positive value, . . . [becoming for us] the indispensable doorway, as well as the sure sign, of our ultimate Pascha, our passage *from death to life*."[46] However, we shall delay until later any detailed consideration of the actualization within BF of the unitary paschal mystery of Christ and of BF's attempt to place human death squarely within that context.

To return once more to BF's implied connection between the 'mystery of Death' and the 'mystery of Good Friday,' one may (and indeed must) legitimately wonder whether or not BF – with its subtly-constructed and rather impersonal Byzantine symbolic connection between 'Death-in-general' and the death of Christ – also makes available sufficient means for 'inserting' the particular death of a specific human person into its theological *schema*.

Earlier, I referred to a distinction made by Richard John Neuhaus between the "the problem of death" – 'Death-in-general' considered as a theological or philosophical quandary – and "the catastrophe of death" which Neuhaus understands as our sudden and shattering awareness of "the singularity of *a* death."[47] My question at this juncture (and in the light of Neuhaus's distinction) thus concerns the extent of BF's provision for including within its meditation on 'Death-of-Christ'/'Death-in-general' the uniquely 'catastrophic' death of the unique human person who is being commemorated during a particular funeral service.[48]

It seems to me that BF actually does quite well in this regard, striving to impart a personal dimension to its more general treatment of death in a couple of very significant ways. *First* and most importantly, there is the presence at most observances of BF of an open casket containing the

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[46] **BOBRINSKOY**, 242; italics are in the original.
[47] **NEUHAUS**, 15.
[48] Once again I wish to highlight Peter Galadza's contention, noted earlier, that Byzantine liturgy in general is arguably deficient in its personalist dimension. See **GALADZA**, "Restoring," 250.

visible and tangible physical remains of the deceased. *Second*, throughout BF, there are repeated mentions of the deceased by his or her name – during the various recitations of the 'Synaptê for the Departed,' in the ekphônêsis of GOS, and as part of the introductory chant to 'Eternal Memory.' In the paragraphs that follow, I propose to examine these two particular instances of BF's 'personalism' in greater detail.

At contemporary funerals in the western world, it has become a relative rarity for the casket bearing the body of the deceased to remain open during the actual service, although it *is* typically left open during the hours of funeral home visitation that (at least in North America) are frequently held for a day or two prior to the actual burial service. In local communities belonging to a variety of different Christian traditions (including the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran churches), it is often a specific liturgical requirement of those communities that the casket be kept shut and covered with a white pall during the funeral in church. This latter practice is intended to call to mind the white garments with which the deceased was clothed at baptism when he or she embarked upon "the passage from this world to God (John 13:1)."[49]

By contrast, in the evolution of the Byzantine tradition, it became a liturgical norm for the face of the deceased to be left visible during the funeral service although, as Alexander Schmemann points out, this was probably *not* a universal custom in Christian antiquity.[50] As evidence for his contention, Schmemann cites the fact that, according to tradition, the funeral of a priest or a monk (which is a 'liturgically conservative' occasion) is supposed to be served with the face of the departed *covered* (by a eucharistic chalice-cover in the case of a priest, or by a monastic cowl in the case of a monk or nun).[51] This practice (when observed) serves to emphasize the fact that priests who serve in life as the iconic presence of Christ in their communities, and professed monastics who have been 'clothed with Christ,' are no longer their 'own persons' in a certain sense (although this observation of course applies to *every* baptized Christians).

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[49] **LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION**, "Chicago Statement on Worship and Culture: Baptism and Rites of Life Passage," *Studia Liturgica* 28 (1998): 250. One might note here *en passant* the relative scarcity of specific baptismal imagery or gestures within BF.

[50] ***Appendix II***, p. 322.

[51] See **GBN-3**, 215, 252.

In the case of an 'ordinary' funeral, however, it is clear from a perusal of BF's hymnographic texts that the visible (and tangible) presence of the body of the deceased is iconically necessary for BF's integral presentation of the Christian anthropology that underlies its vision of human death.[52] The body serves first of all as a *memento mori* for those present at the funeral. It enters the church essentially as a 'corpse' – as an unsightly image (*eikôn*) of the tragedy which is death, whereby our integral body-soul union undergoes dissolution into its 'component parts,' one of which now lies before the assembly as a lifeless cadaver, the symbol of 'Death-in-general.'

However, this corpse also possesses an individual, unique identity (particularly focused in its visible face) that serves as a vivid 'icon' of the person-hood – both fallen and restored – of one specific human being. Paul Lazor reminds us that the deceased has a unique and venerable identity as "a baptized, chrismated and communing member of the body of Christ," and that, as such, he or she "is permeated by him who, having risen, is 'the first fruits of all those who have fallen asleep' (1 Cor 15:20)."[53] For this reason, the body is reverenced liturgically (for example, by means of repeated incensations) with a respect resembling that accorded the relics of a saint. This attitude of quasi-veneration for the body of the deceased arguably moves to its climax during the rite of the Aspasmos, the giving of the 'Last Kiss' which concludes the service in church.

BF's intrinsic 'wisdom' in insisting upon a liturgical recognition of and public respect for the unique and embodied person-hood of the deceased is supported by a previously-noted observation of Therese Rando. Expressing her psychological opinion about the need for mourners to view and have contact with the physical remains of the deceased, Rando writes that "*the body of the deceased is the best symbol of the individual*, and therefore the most effective one to focus upon in attempting to perceive the deceased in a new relationship, as someone who is no longer alive and will only exist in memory" (emphasis mine).[54]

The second important focus of 'personalism' within BF is the audible use of the baptismal name of the deceased during the repeated recitations of the 'Synaptê for the Departed' and the

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[52] Consider, for example, phrases such as: "I am an image of your ineffable glory" (EVL); "Bring me back to your likeness, my ancient beauty" (EVL); and "I grieve and I lament when . . . I see the beauty fashioned for us in God's image lying . . . without glory" (IDML, tone 8).

[53] **LAZOR**, 'Original,' 98.

[54] **RANDO**, 180-81.

ekphônêsis of GOS. In fact this merely conforms to customary Byzantine-rite liturgical practice whereby the Church's sacramental and liturgical Mysteries are always conferred upon the faithful by name. During the reception of Holy Communion, for example, the placing of the consecrated bread and wine into the mouths of communicants is accompanied (typically) by the formulaic declaration: "The servant of God (Name) partakes of the precious Body and Blood of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and unto life everlasting."

The Judeo-Christian biblical tradition as a whole has emphasized the significance of naming or being named as a powerful means of conferring a unique and defining individual identity upon the person or object being named.[55] In keeping with this respect for the 'power of the name,' the Byzantine tradition has tended to treat the name of a person with great respect, and to view it as a sign and seal of his or her Christian person-hood. The so-called 'Christian name' is revered because of its link to a person's initiation into the Church (when the name was 'officially' conferred), because of its customary lifelong identification of Byzantine Christians with a particular patron saint, and because it usually provides a cherished connection with some specific ancestor in the faith (be that a grandparent, god-parent, or other close family connection). In this context, then, the insistent 'naming' of the deceased during BF is in keeping with a long and well-established tradition that sees this as a quintessentially 'personalizing' gesture.

For the bereaved at BF, the visible presence of the body of their newly-deceased loved one and the audible repetition of his or her Christian name together provide two particularly potent means for (in Rando's words) "attempting to perceive the deceased in a new relationship as someone who is no longer alive."[56] Here we encounter BF's powerful antidote for a *denial* of death that, on the one hand, can serve initially to protect the deceased from a surfeit of psychic trauma, but which, on the other hand, if allowed to persist, can retard or delay an eventual successful outcome for the mourners' grieving.[57] One can also highlight here, it seems to me, the testimony to a pervasively death-denying wider society (some of whose members are often present at BF) that is

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[55] See, for example: Gen 2:19-20 (Adam *names* the created species); Gen 32:24-29 (Jacob's combat with a stranger who is only released after Jacob is *re-named* 'Israel'); Ex 3:1-8 (God's disclosure of his ineffable *name* to Moses); Acts 4:12 (Peter commends the *name* of Jesus as that "by which we must be saved"); and Phil 2:10 (Paul's praise of Jesus' *name* before which "every knee should bow").

[56] **RANDO**, 181.

[57] See **WORDEN**, 10-13.

potentially proffered by BF's insistence on confronting and acknowledging the fact that another human death has taken place.

V.B.1.b The beginning of separation and decathexis

Not only does BF seem to demand (for reasons both theological and pastoral) that the painful reality of Death (as *a* death) be squarely faced, it also insists that the even more painful process of decathexis be embarked upon forthwith, and it provides several potentially effective means for doing so. Its adamancy in this regard calls to mind the almost indecent haste with which it was necessary to dispose of the body of Christ after his 'Good Friday' death by crucifixion because of the approaching dual solemnities of the Sabbath and Passover. That the twin grieving processes of *chôrismós* ('separation') and *aspasmós* ('farewell') took place much too hastily for the comfort of the newly-bereaved friends and family of Jesus is suggested by their decision (recorded by all three synoptic gospels) to re-visit his tomb and anoint his battered body more thoroughly in the early hours of the first 'Easter Sunday' (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1-2; Lk 24:1).

BF's emphasis on processes of decathexis and on the need for mourners to decathect serves the functions of focusing, facilitating and modelling a necessary movement that may well have begun days, weeks or even months earlier with the realization that the death of a loved one was imminent, that certainly (of necessity) has been going on since the time of the deceased's actual death, and that will need to be continued for months or years into the future. There are at least three principal moments within BF that are actually or potentially decathectic; we shall briefly examine each of them in turn.

A *first* moment of decathexis can be envisaged as being centred around the processions into and out of the church building, and from the church building to the grave-site. In the typical North American Byzantine-rite context, these once-important actions persist in only the most vestigial fashion. There is usually *no* ceremonial accompaniment whatsoever for the process of transferring the body of the deceased from the place of death (most often a hospital or other institution, seldom nowadays at home) to the place where the body will be prepared for burial and then 'waked' (almost always at a commercial funeral establishment). Thereafter, following a day or two of

funeral home 'visitation' (during which TRIS may be served on one or more occasions), quite commonly a final TRIS is served prior to transporting the body to church.

In moving the coffin with its contents from the church door to its position during BF (either in the center of the nave or on the solea), there generally takes place a 'mini-procession' with the solemn intoning of 'Holy God.' At the funeral's conclusion after ASP, a similar procession takes place in the reverse direction and then from the church door to the waiting hearse. Finally, on arrival at the cemetery, there will usually be a final ceremonial movement from the funeral limousine to the grave, again usually executed with the singing of TRIS. This entire extended trajectory, from place-of-death to place-of-rest,[58] interrupted only occasionally and briefly by liturgical solemnities, can nonetheless serve to initiate symbolically the much more extended and extensive processes of decathexis that are to follow.

We should note here, however, that the procession from church to grave in particular has traditionally been viewed less as a painful rite-of-separation and more as "marking the triumph over death."[59] Thus, Grisbrooke notes that "the committal procession after the service . . . was almost always and everywhere a triumphal, not a mournful, procession."[60] However, in spite of this observation, I suspect that for a majority of contemporary mourners, be they Christian or secular attendees at BF or any other public funeral ritual, the long, slow ride to the cemetery retains scarcely any trace at all of this primitive note of rejoicing. Rather (in my experience) this interlude tends to be treated either as a time of silent introspection or else as affording a moment of privacy and welcome relief from the public solemnity of the occasion.

BF's *second* important moment of decathexis surrounds the visible presence of the body of the deceased in the center of the church, something of which we spoke above. Although, almost certainly, there have already taken place several confrontations with the body (for example, in the hospital or home where death occurred and at the funeral home), I believe there is often a real sense in which the final *exposée* in church serves as a painful reminder that the dreaded moment of final

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[58] **RANDO**, 178, regarding the funeral procession, notes that it "conveys a symbolic message . . . [because] it acknowledges the finality of what has occurred through the movement of the deceased from the place of death and/or the final service to the place of final disposition."

[59] Theodore **STONE** and Sister Anselm **CUNNINGHAM**, "The Chicago Experimental Funeral Rite," in *Death and Burial: Theology and Liturgy*, ed. Johannes Wagner (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), 51.

[60] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 77.

separation is drawing near. This sense of impending or actual 'final farewell' (*aspasmós*) to a loved one is actualized in ASP whose rituals and hymns of vivid lamentation I have discussed more fully on several previous occasions.

The *final* moment of physical separation (as opposed to the psychological work of decathexis that will occupy the coming months or years) arrives when, after the exit processions from church to hearse and from hearse to grave, one comes to the time of burial. In traditional Byzantine-rite homelands, it is at this juncture – rather than at the conclusion of the church service – that the coffin is usually shut for the last time. Given Rando's observation that "the body of the deceased is the best symbol of the individual," it is arguable that for most Byzantine-rite mourners, the finality of burial – the closure of the coffin, its deposition in the grave, the symbolic scattering over it of earth and/or ashes, the sealing of the grave "until the Second Coming" (a practice among certain Slavs), the filling of the grave, and the departure from the cemetery – represents an acutely painful moment of actualized decathexis. A concrete example of this from popular culture (for those old enough to remember!) was provided by the graphic portrayal of the moment of burial of the young Zhivago's mother in David Lean's film version of Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*.

The helpful (if distressing) closure potentially afforded the bereaved through standing by and watching or helping while the grave is actually filled is unfortunately (in my opinion) nowadays denied to most North American Byzantine-rite mourners. Many of them (in keeping with the local practices of funeral directors) may even leave the cemetery with the coffin still resting on its supporting straps over the open grave, awaiting its interment. It seems to me that the customary burial practices of Jews and Moslems manifest an inherently superior wisdom in this regard, and are hence possessed of a definite superiority as acts of closure or decathexis.[61]

I believe firmly that the foregoing 'moments' when taken together can be envisaged as fulfilling simultaneously an important function within each of the three principal matrices – anthropological, theological and psycho-social – that support BF's 'shape.' Of the three, the

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[61] See Ron **WOLFSON**, "How We Bury," in *Jewish Insights on Death and Mourning*, ed. Jack **RIEMER** (New York: Schocken Books, c1995), 126-27. Having highlighted the Jewish tradition's insistence that it is "for each and every one of us to provide the blanket of earth for the final rest [of the departed]," Wolfson concludes his piece by observing: "As you leave the cemetery you take one last, long look back, knowing that with this ending comes a beginning. The funeral is over; the mourning can now begin."

anthropological aspect may be passed over quickly as it is certainly the easiest one to discern. Within BF as a rite of passage, the ritualized moments of decathexis it provides obviously fulfill the role of a pre-liminal 'rite of separation' for both the deceased and the mourners.

Theologically, BF's 'decathectic moments' highlight the lamentable and cosmic tragedy whose *dénouement* is symbolized for Christians by the drama of Great and Holy Friday. According to the Byzantine theological tradition,[62] we live in a world where death-in-Adam had become humanity's tragic lot (Rom 5:12). This fate could only be set right by the agonising descent-to-death of the Incarnate Son of God who thereby filled even death itself with the healing presence of God. Until that great and final day when death as the "last and greatest enemy" of humanity (and God) will be finally and totally defeated (1 Cor 15:26), it remains a doleful obligation for human beings to continue to experience the terrible disintegration and separation that form the most unfathomable aspect of the 'mystery of death.' Prior to the *eschaton*, it is only through our being united to Christ in a death like his that this separation can be ended through our being ultimately recreated and made alive in him who is the 'New Adam' (Rom 6:5; 1 Cor 15:22).

Finally, in assessing BF-as-separation from the vantage point of WB, it is perhaps the *psycho-social* matrix that commands our greatest attention. Several of the four 'tasks of mourning' that I identified as intrinsic to WB are, I believe, addressed in preliminary fashion by BF's processes and rites of separation. These same processes and rites also serve, it seems to me, to counteract potent distortions of the significance of death that, as we saw earlier, are rampant in western societies, namely our social preferences for either hiding or denying death, or for taming its inherently tragic nature at the personal, existential and social levels.

First, the possible *denial* of death's reality, both by the immediate mourners as well as by the wider society represented at BF, is certainly inhibited by the visible body of the deceased, by hearing his or her name mentioned repeatedly as a particular person who has died, and by the decathectic moments of the ASP and interment. *Second*, a stimulus toward combating the unwise *suppression* of grief is provided by various modalities within BF's separation rituals, including the plaintive funeral chants, the sombre wording of the hymns (especially of IDML and ASP), and the

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[62] See **MEYENDORFF**, *Byzantine*, 143-46.

typical communitarian permission to express pain openly that contributes to the generally poignant and heart-rending character of the rituals of ASP and interment. *Third* and lastly, these same two rituals, besides rendering improbable the 'taming' of death's tragedy, can serve as a forceful, almost brutal, symbolic reminder of the futility on the part of the newly-bereaved of any attempt at protracted *clinging* to their deceased loved ones.

V.B.2 *The 'Blessed Sabbath': Transitus and Rest*

At several previous junctures when we have discussed van Gennep's theory of *rites de passage* with reference either to funerals in general or to BF in particular, mention has been made of the fact that the three stages of a funeral passage – its rites of separation, transition, and incorporation – can be envisaged as applying equally to both the mourners and the deceased.[63] This observation seems to me especially pertinent to our present intention of exploring and analyzing BF in its aspect of a 'rite of transition.'

Earlier in this chapter, we reviewed some of the literature on Christian funerals as rites of passage and noted that several of the authors who were cited placed particular emphasis on the funeral as a transitional ritual.[64] *Anthropologically* speaking, this is the core of every funereal *rite de passage*, the *limen* or threshold that must be crossed by both the deceased and the mourners in their passage from old status to new. It is a precarious and mysterious time in which chaos threatens; hence the need for rituals that attempt to provide a sense both of order and direction.

From a *theological* perspective, Holy Saturday as *transitus* commonly represents at a popular level nothing more than a sort of amorphous pause between the sombreness of Good Friday and the jubilation of Easter. Alexander Schmemann has noted[65] that, within this movement from Friday to Sunday, "for a good majority of churchgoers . . . sorrow is simply *replaced* by joy." "But," he continues, "according to the . . . liturgical tradition, . . . the sorrow is not simply replaced

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[63] See especially the extended pastoral-theological treatment by a British Anglican in **AINSWORTH-SMITH**, 79-101, as well as the pertinent psychological comments of **RANDO**, 179, and the observations of **HEINZ**, 130-31 (who writes from the perspective of what might be termed 'religious sociology').

[64] **AINSWORTH-SMITH**, 79; **GRAINGER**, 68-74; **HEINZ**, 130; **IRION**, 94; **ROUILLARD**, 73, 76; **SHEPPY**, "Transition," 48-49; and **SPECK**, 102.

[65] **SCHMEMANN**, "Blessed Sabbath," 3.

by joy, but is itself *transformed* into joy." How this same process can begin to be applied to human grieving is an important transitional task undertaken by BF's extensive 'Holy Saturday stratum.'

Psycho-socially, for the newly-bereaved, the 'phase of transition' is a time that mandates the growing (if reluctant) acceptance and continued mourning of a particular death, twin processes that are quick to attract the comforting presence of a wider community of co-mourners who, according to Willimon, will be found "standing beside [the mourners] and upholding them with presence."[66] This also marks the beginning of a long period that, according to Lindemann,[67] is primarily one of "readjustment to [an] environment in which the deceased is missing." As a corollary to this observation, it strikes me as both natural and 'normal' that many mourners who are beginning their 'readjustment' will have significant, often unvoiced, thoughts and hopes about the 'whereabouts' and 'well-being' of their departed loved one. Few newly-bereaved persons, however, will have as yet begun to comprehend, let alone assimilate, the true nature of the paschal transition from 'lament' to 'Alleluia' that BF proposes to them.

In the following pages, I will first discuss the anxiety-provoking and uncertain *transitus* being embarked upon by mourners and then, secondly, their intended contemplation of the 'Holy Saturday rest' that BF so insistently entreats on behalf of the newly-departed.

V.B.2.a The mourners' uncertain *transitus*

American author Donald Heinz, whom we have referred to or cited on previous occasions, has commented on the rather attenuated and uncertain transition that most contemporary 'western' mourners are obliged to undertake in a society that no longer recognizes any special status for the newly-bereaved.[68] This potentially bewildering and anxiety-laden state of affairs is mirrored to a certain extent, it seems to me, by BF's own depiction of the mourners' plight. However, in contradistinction to the ambiguous signals sent out to them by the wider society, BF attempts to guide the bereaved forcefully but gently through the morass of adaptation.

As noted above, Sheppy has highlighted for us the danger to both the mourners and their would-be Christian consolers of seeking "to avoid the sense of *numbness* and *unreality* so often

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[66] **WILLIMON**, 104-5.
[67] **LINDEMANN**, 11.
[68] **HEINZ**, 131.

experienced in bereavement" (emphases mine) because, as he warns, "to do so ignores the transition of Holy Saturday."[69] Alongside this pertinent observation may be placed that of Speck, also noted previously, who characterizes the transitional period for the bereaved as being "experienced as *chaos*" (emphasis mine) and observes that "what we [Christian communities] frequently have to offer is some structured order, some rite of passage, which might provide the boundaries of safety within which the [grieving] individual can experience the chaos."[70]

These three particular qualities (jointly signaled to us by Sheppy and Speck) of the psycho-spiritual state of the newly-bereaved – namely, their powerful sense of the total *unreality* of their situation, their paralyzing intra-psychic *numbness*, and their experience of bereavement as *chaos* – have been commented upon, along with various other characteristics of acute grief, by the psychological professionals whose works were touched upon in *Chapter Four*.[71] It seems to me that together, these three particular traits can provide us with a very useful 'grid' for analyzing the potential contribution of BF to mourners who are compelled to navigate the 'psycho-spiritual cataract' induced by the loss through death of their loved ones. Thus, in the next few pages, I shall deal in turn with BF's proffered help to grievers in combating their frequently profound senses of: **i)** *unreality*; **ii)** *numbness*; and **iii)** *chaos*.

a.i) The apparent ***unreality*** for the newly-bereaved of their painful situation is, of course, prompted in large measure by their near-universal tendency (facilitated by society's widespread death denial) to refuse to accept the material reality of what has transpired. Commenting on this, Worden observes that "when someone dies, even if the death is expected, there is *always* a sense that it hasn't happened [so that] the first task of grieving is to come full face with the *reality* that the person is dead, that the person is gone and will not return" (emphases mine).[72]

We suggested earlier that this 'Holy Friday' task had already been begun by means of BF's ritualized processes of 'acceptance' (through a reality-promoting confrontation with the deceased's body-as-corpse) and 'decathexis' (focused around ASP and the burial). However, these twin activities of 'acceptance' and 'decathexis,' that are so theologically and psychologically integral to

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[69] **SHEPPY**, "Shaping," 3.
[70] **SPECK**, 100.
[71] See: **ABI-HASHEM**, 312; **LINDEMANN**, 9-10; **RANDO**, 30-35; and **WORDEN**, 24-26.
[72] **WORDEN**, 10.

BF's attempts at a 'Good Friday' *initiation* of healthy grieving, are also basic components of its 'Holy Saturday' work of promoting *transition*, of modelling and facilitating the months-long (often years-long) process of moving from separation towards re-incorporation, from lament to 'Alleluia,' from 'old death' to 'new life' in the paschal mystery of Christ. As Rando notes, "participating in the funeral ritual – standing at a wake and repeatedly looking at the deceased in the casket, attending a funeral service, accepting the condolences of others, witnessing the casket at the grave – graphically illustrates to the bereaved that the death has occurred [so that] *even if it cannot be emotionally accepted at that time, the memories of these experiences will later help to confirm to the bereaved the reality of the loss of the loved one*" (emphasis mine).

Although I have spoken here about a process of 'acceptance,' I wish to emphasize that this 'acceptance' differs radically from the homonymous phenomenon described by Kübler-Ross and discussed in *Chapter Four*. There, with the help of others, I criticized her concept of a necessary 'acceptance' of death by the dying (and by extension their loved ones) as being an overly passive process, and suggested that this view likely contributed in the later Kübler-Ross to what one critic described as her "exuberant endorsement of the view that *death as we know it does not really exist.*"[73] Such an overly spiritual 'acceptance' of death stands in obvious contrast to the realistic physical acceptance of death's harsh reality that BF mandates for mourners.

a.ii) The psychic ***numbness*** experienced by the newly-bereaved is basically a normal and protective phenomenon, one that according to Worden "probably occurs because there are so many feelings to deal with that to allow them all into consciousness would be overwhelming."[74] The gamut of such *feelings*, either actually experienced or waiting to be experienced, will vary from one bereaved person to the next, but (as we saw earlier) will typically include sadness, loneliness, anger, guilt, self-reproach, helplessness and anxiety. This range of 'normal' feelings is often coupled with less easily-acknowledged (but equally normal) sensations such as relief or emancipation.[75]

Because this variegated list includes certain items that may not appear to grievers as 'positive' feelings with respect to their deceased loved one, it is worth highlighting Abi-Hashem's

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[73] **BREGMAN**, 60.

[74] **WORDEN**, 25. According to Rando, the normalcy of 'numbness' so impressed British theorist Colin Murray Parkes that he included it as the first of his four 'stages' of normal grief; see **RANDO**, 25.

[75] **WORDEN**, 22-24.

recommendation that bereaved persons, whether truly 'numb' or not, often need to be helped "to *experience* and *express* a range of emotions, deep feelings, and private thoughts, including *pleasant and unpleasant ones*, as related to the loss [so as to] eventually stop the coping mechanism of suppression" (emphases added).[76] Within BF, it seems to me, there are two particularly important means by which such experience and expression are potentially facilitated.

First, there is a global valorization and encouragement of overt lamentation throughout BF that is focused particularly around moments and texts such as those of the IDML and ASP. There, mourners see modeled for them, in archaic but comprehensible language, expressions of the pain and perplexity of human bereavement with which they may well be able to identify. "What pleasure in life remains without its share of sorrow? . . . . I grieve and lament when I contemplate death and see the beauty fashioned for us in God's image lying in the grave [IDML] . . . . What is this parting, what the grieving, what the lamentation? . . . Truly all the pleasant and glorious things of life are vanity and corruption [ASP]." One sees here (and can hopefully relate to) an intensely 'personal' expression of grief that is intertwined with the simultaneous depiction of a more 'existential' pain and bewilderment before the mystery of death.

BF's *second* important means (in my assessment) for dealing with some of the complexities of the mourners' feelings is through its pervasive climate of intercession for the newly-departed. For example, one's loss-induced anxieties or feelings of inadequacy concerning one's relationship with the deceased might both be assuaged to a certain extent through one's joining in the moving entreaty of KON: "With the Saints give rest to the soul of your servant, O Christ, where there is no toil, nor grief, nor sighing, but everlasting life."

However, even more importantly it seems to me, intercession offers the bereaved a realistic and thoroughly Christian way of dealing with feelings of ambivalence toward the departed. This latter, by no means rare, predicament is commented upon by Abi-Hashem:

> Generally, it is assumed that the nature of a relationship was positive and the major emotional expression of grief is the feeling of sorrow and sadness. However, in many cases, the relationship with the lost was ambivalent or conflictual and, consequently, the survivors struggle with a mixture of feelings. They vacillate between anger, relief, guilt, and sadness. Their sorrow is usually coupled with resentment. They grieve also "what

[76] **ABI-HASHEM**, 320.

they have endured" and "what could have been" rather than "what they actually had" (as in the case of abandonment, mistreatment, or abuse).[77]

Under such painful and bewildering circumstances as these, the particular wording of BF's intercessions for the departed could prove helpful. It is acknowledged, openly and without hesitation, that the deceased person has sinned during his or her life since before God "there is no one who lives and does not sin" (GOS). Moreover, at various junctures, it is recognized that in sinning, the deceased *may* have done so without deliberate intent ('involuntarily'), and without full knowledge ('in ignorance') of the consequences of their transgressions.

Cognizant of all this, the assembled mourners and their supporters nonetheless entreat God repeatedly that the departed will be "pardoned his or her every offence" (TRIS) without regard to the particular circumstances or consequences of their actions. In such an atmosphere of intercession, those who may well have been "more sinned against than sinning"[78] in their relationships with the deceased can avoid any tendency to idealization by freely acknowledging the evil done them by the deceased while leaving their final judgment in the hands of God.

a.iii) The ***chaos*** and ***disorganization*** engendered by a fresh bereavement have been commented upon by a number of observers.[79] In this context, as Speck has pointed out, the funeral as a rite-of-passage can "provide the boundaries of safety within which the individual can experience the chaos."[80] This is an observation that accords well with the opinion of Rando to the effect that "funerals . . . counter the loss of predictability and order frequently accompanying the death of a loved one [by] prescribing a defined social role and providing things to do at a time when self-directed actions and purposeful behavior are not easily attainable." These functions of the funeral in Rando's opinion have assumed an even greater importance in contemporary societies given, for example, the scope of recent changes in the American sociology of mourning that have "left Americans without prescribed *roles* and *norms* . . . about how to act after the death of a loved one." In this regard, concludes Rando, "there are no *guidelines* on how to be a mourner and few *models* to emulate."[81]

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[77] Ibid.
[78] William **SHAKESPEARE**, *King Lear*, Act IV, scene ii.
[79] See, for example: **HEINZ**, 130-31; **RANDO**, 25, 30, 32; **SPECK**, 100; **WORDEN**, 26.
[80] **SPECK**, 100.
[81] **RANDO**, 183; italics added for emphasis.

As a would-be provider of "boundaries of safety" and protective "roles," "norms," "guidelines," and "models" for the bereaved amidst the chaos of their bereavement, BF utilizes two significant modalities, namely *ordo* and *communitas*. The *ordo* or 'shape' of BF provides an orderly framework, grounded in the folk-wisdom of an ages-old tradition, for the accomplishment of the anthropological, pastoral and theological goals that have been set out more fully in Section *V.A* of the present chapter.

An adequate adherence to this *ordo* requires the presence of a *community* that plays important roles both psycho-socially and theologically. Psycho-socially, according to Rando, the community at a funeral: a) gives recognition to the mourners' "new relationship with the deceased"; b) bears testimony to a social sense of there having occurred a "shared loss"; c) validates the public expression of the mourners' feelings; and d) assists in smoothing "the mourners' path back into the social group."[82] Theologically, as Hoon suggests in terms that few Byzantine Christians would dispute, the funeral is an "act of the Church" through which the Body of Christ "declares at the crisis of death in no uncertain terms the Faith that it holds and that holds it." Besides this *confessional* aspect to the funeral as an ecclesial-communitarian event, Hoon notes that the presence of the community renders actual the *priestly* and *intercessory* aspects of funerals by which Christians serve and intercede for one another through "the worship of the local ecclesia" which thereby "joins with that of the whole Ecclesia to transcend time and space."[83]

BF's ordinal and communitarian frameworks strive here to provide a 'shelter' to mourners from the threat of chaos, one in which they may abide in relative safety as they patiently await direction for their uncertain future. In this regard, BF makes its intentions abundantly clear from its very beginning where these comforting words of Psalm 90 (91) are chanted: "[God] will overshadow you with his wings; . . . you will not be afraid of terror by night, of the arrow that flies by day; of the thing that prowls in darkness, of mishap or of the noonday devil."[84]

The bereaved now find themselves at the very beginning of a probably lengthy and definitely uncertain *transitus* between 'letting-go' and 're-incorporation.' The time has come for

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[82] Ibid.
[83] **HOON**, 179-80.
[84] Psalm 90:4-6; see ***Appendix I***, p. 294.

them to face squarely the painful reality of the particular death that has occurred and to undertake the difficult processes of adaptation and readjustment to an environment from which the deceased is now unaccustomedly absent. It is only by crossing over this *limen* that those grieving can hope realistically for their eventual entry into some sort of 'new life.'

Although this period is an undoubtedly chaotic one for mourners (as we have just suggested), BF can assist Byzantine-rite mourners by helping to transform it into what anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (cited by Speck) describes as a time of "fruitful chaos" whereby "the confusion and disorientation experienced by people can lead to the emergence later of a new life."[85] As proposed to the bereaved by BF, there are, I believe, three potentially "fruitful" tasks for them to occupy themselves with during the otherwise chaotic period of transition; I would identify these three as: a) *keeping vigil*, b) *making intercession*, and c) *learning to hope*.

Heinz has criticized the attitude towards mourners of an "American culture [that] suggests that suppressing grief and getting right back to work is the 'best medicine'"; such unsupportive and potentially damaging societal prescriptions tempt all too many newly-bereaved persons, in Heinz's opinion, to "foolishly rush their reintegration."[86] As inhabitants of societies that tend to value this sort of 'quick fix,' western Byzantine-rite Christians are instead offered some distinctly counter-cultural advice by the entire *ethos* of BF, which embodies the ancient Christian practice of *keeping vigil* over the departed. The assembly convenes not to *do* anything in particular for either the departed or the bereaved, but rather simply to 'keep watch' with both – thereby modelling a disposition of patient attendance upon the Lord (the first of my three suggested 'transitional tasks' for the bereaved) that can be emulated by mourners in the weeks and months that lie ahead.

Throughout this context of watching and waiting, there is woven a recurring thread of *intercessory prayer* for the departed – a second 'transitional task.' This prayer has two principal ends in mind: first, that the departed may be "pardoned every offence, both voluntary and involuntary (*sugchôrêthênai pan plêmmelêma ekoúsión te kai akoúsion*" – 'Synaptê for the Departed'); and second, that the one who has died (frequently represented as his or her 'soul' [*psychê*]) will be accorded 'rest' (*anápausis*) by God. Of the former modality, we have already

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[85] **SPECK**, 100.
[86] **HEINZ**, 131.

spoken briefly in the present chapter; of the second we shall talk more in a moment. At the present juncture, it suffices to observe that, although the motivations for praying on behalf of a departed loved one may well include disparate feelings such as anxiety, loneliness or guilt, the assuaging of any or all of these during the coming prolonged period of transition (and even well beyond it) may be facilitated (hopefully) by intercessory petitions of the type that BF proposes to its participants.

For someone to pray in this manner (even if it is done mainly out of habit or desperation or grudging adherence to some ill-understood ethnic social convention), it implies that 'deep down' that person at least aspires to a disposition of *hope* regarding the continued 'well-being' of their deceased loved one. Such an attitude of hope is invited by images that are scattered throughout BF's 'Text': of a good and trustworthy God who is *philánthropos*, of a God who "descended into Hell and did away with the pains of those who had been bound" (TRIS), of a God who has "trampled down death and crushed the devil giving life to [his] world" (GOS) and who is therefore "the resurrection, the life and the *anápausis*" (GOS) of his departed servants.

Granted that it may well be much too early for most newly-bereaved persons to begin to understand what BF is suggesting when it entreats God to keep their loved ones in his 'Eternal Memory,' nonetheless through BF's judicious use of hopeful words and images, certain 'intimations of immortality'[87] are being spread abroad (if I may be pardoned the use here of such an '*un*-resurrectional' turn of phrase). If the human capacity for trust and hope is, as I believe, something that can (or rather must) be learned and practiced, then for those mourners with "ears to hear" (Mk 4:9; cf. Mt 11:15, Lk 8:8), BF offers to teach them, as their third 'transitional task,' how to begin to *live in hope* so that eventually, their *epitáphios thrênos* (KON) may be transformed into a 'song of Alleluia.'

V.B.2.b The entry into *anápausis*

In *Chapter Three* of the present dissertation, I devoted considerable time to an attempted 'unpacking' of the various interweaving images of that 'rest' (*anápausis*) that BF so insistently implores God to grant to the newly-deceased. In addition, I noted in BF a general attitude toward

[87] This is the title of a well-known poem by Victorian poet William **WORDSWORTH** (1770-1850).

the 'after-death' that combines a certain agnosticism (or at least lack of precision) with what could be termed an attitude of deliberate 'eschatological ambiguity.' BF achieves this latter (with reference to the *eschaton*) by juxtaposing and overlapping images of an already actualized 'eschatological rest' with Christ, on the one hand, with 'intimations' (mainly through the lections) of a pending resurrection from the dead like Christ's own, on the other hand.

In fact it should come as no great surprise to discover such 'eschatological ambiguity' in BF for, as Meyendorff has pointed out, it is characteristic of the overall approach of the Byzantine theological tradition to matters of eschatology. For Byzantine Christian thought, he writes, "the eschatological state is not only a reality of the future but a *present experience*, accessible in Christ through the gifts of the Spirit."[88] An important result of this fundamental apprehension was the general reluctance of the Orthodox Church to make "exact doctrinal statements on the 'beyond.'" Its basic eschatology, particularly as expressed through the liturgy, was a "fundamentally Christocentric" one, observes Meyendorff, a stance that was in keeping with NT texts such as St. Paul's proclamation: "You have *died*, and your *life* is hid with Christ in God; when [he] who is *our life* appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Col 3:3-4; emphases added).[89]

Such a paradoxical understanding of Christ (and therefore of redeemed humanity *in* Christ) as being simultaneously 'dead' and 'alive' was a popular theme in the Middle Byzantine iconographic tradition which, as Constas shows us, was fascinated by two images of the "death-sleep" of Christ – the so-called *Anápeson* ('crouching down') image that depicts Christ-Emmanuel as the reclining 'Lion of Judah' (cf. Gen 49:9; Rev 5:5), and the 'Man of Sorrows' icon (referred to also as 'Extreme Humility' or the 'Bridegroom and Judge'). These images depict the paradoxical simultaneity of Christ's being 'asleep' in his crucified, dead humanity, and yet fully alive and therefore 'awake' in his divinity. In keeping with the general "christomimetic tradition" that Costas sees as "deeply enculturated" in Byzantium, this state of being 'asleep-awake' with Christ was widely understood to represent the state of the dead between repose and the *parousia*.[90]

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[88] **MEYENDORFF**, *Byzantine*, 219.
[89] Ibid., 221-22.
[90] **CONSTAS**, 103-05.

This same 'asleep-awake' imagery also informs, and is informed by, the theology of 'Holy Saturday' in the evolved Byzantine tradition where Christ is contemplated as the incarnate God who, in his divinized humanity, 'rests' in the tomb on the 'Blessed Sabbath' from his Good Friday work of the 'new creation' (cf. Gen 2:2-3), even as he anticipates (and proleptically participates in) the full and final realization of that same work through his resurrection from the dead on the 'third day.'[91] Thus, the Byzantine contemplation of 'Holy Saturday' can be seen to enshrine the same kind of 'eschatological ambiguity' (combining the 'already' with the 'not-yet') that we discerned in BF, and both can be shown to reflect a fundamental theological apprehension that is to be found alike in Byzantine liturgy, theology and iconography.

As commentators like Schmemann and Lazor have convincingly demonstrated,[92] BF's liturgical theology enshrines at its centre an extended parallelism between the Christ of Holy Saturday, resting in his tomb, and the newly-departed for whom a similar state of rest is repeatedly besought. We shall first examine briefly the means by which this attempted parallelism is carried out, and then consider how it might be received by the newly-bereaved at BF.

In detailing the analogies between BF and the liturgical observance of Holy Saturday in the Byzantine tradition, we may attend to Lazor's succinct presentation:

> [BF] follows the form of matins, of the Matins of Great and Holy Saturday in particular. For the one who has died, this day is a personal Holy Saturday, a personal entrance into Christ's Sabbath rest and entombment, into Christ's 'trampling down death by death.' Psalm 119, the great messianic psalm chanted over the icon of the entombed Christ during the Matins of Holy Saturday, occupies nearly the entire initial portion of the service [of BF]. This psalm delights in the law of God and praises the victorious Messiah who fulfills it. In him is health, joy and life. As the troparia which follow the psalm [EVL] are sung, the priest, following the pattern of Great Saturday Matins [in the Slavic tradition] censes the whole church while carrying a candle: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it' (John 1:5).[93]

In the eyes of the mourners, one may assume that a certain simplistic resemblance between Christ and their departed loved one can be appreciated to the extent that, like Christ during the interval between Good Friday and the first Easter morning, their loved one has died, now lies in repose before the assembly, and will shortly be laid in the grave.

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[91] See **SCHMEMANN**, "Blessed Sabbath."
[92] See ***Appendix II***, pp. 329-33; and both **LAZOR**, 'Original,' and **LAZOR**, 'Revised.'
[93] **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 118.

The Holy Saturday Orthros ('Matins') service will be familiar to most mourners raised in the Byzantine tradition since it is among the most popular services of the entire Holy Week array and generally takes place – by anticipation – on Friday evening when most working people are free to attend. As the bereaved see the *leipsana* ('relics') of their loved one 'laid out' in the centre of the church (just like the *epitáphios* icon at Holy Saturday Orthros), as they stand holding candles and watch while the body (like the *epitáphios*) is repeatedly incensed by the serving clergy, as they hear intoned the funereal chants of the AMOMOS and later the EVL, it does not seem improbable that a significant number of the attendant mourners at BF will be reminded of the sombre yet gentle tonality of the Holy Week services in general, and perhaps of Holy Saturday Orthros in particular.

The 'linchpin' that may hopefully serve to connect the two events of Holy Saturday and BF in the 'spiritual psychology' of the bereaved is the assembly's intercessory repetition: "Give rest . . . *anápauson . . . pokoï.*" This 'rest' as conveyed through the various texts of BF can most certainly be linked in the religious imagination with Christ as 'his' rest, something that he once experienced in the flesh and now offers to bestow upon all his own.

It is Christ's "repose" (*katápausis*) where all his "holy ones find rest" (*anapaúontai*), according to one of the TRIS troparia. It is a "place of green pasture . . . [and] refreshment" whose shepherd is the Lord himself [GOS; cf. Psalm 22 (23)]. It is a divine haven of "refuge" (*kataphugê*) and "protection" (*sképê*) where, according to Psalm 90 (91), the Lord "overshadows" and "encircles" those dwelling in his presence. It is "the source of life," "the door of Paradise," the beginning of "unending life," "the longed-for fatherland," the place where "the choirs of the Saints and all the Just shine out like beacons," where one is saved from "the everlasting fire" (EVL). It is an amazing 'locale' in which one can already bask "in the light of [Christ's] countenance" and contemplate the "sweetness of [his] beauty" (IDML, tone 1). It is a healing abode where "there is no toil, nor grief, nor sighing" (KON). It is the doorway to the Kingdom for which we entreat entry from Christ in the words of the 'Good Thief': "Remember us Lord when you come in your Kingdom" (Beatitudes). It is the "bosom of Abraham" in which the indigent Lazarus reclined and to which countless succeeding generations have had recourse (APOL).

This wealth of 'rest-full' imagery, conveyed through the medium of a chant that is sad yet engaging, and interspersed with repeated litanies that entreat rest, can scarcely fail to penetrate the hearts and minds of a majority of its hearers. Perhaps (some mourners may be wondering to themselves) it really *is* safe to *release* the beloved one into God's care, to *relocate* him or her in "a place of light, a place of green pasture, a place of refreshment" (GOS), thereby glimpsing the third and fourth of the 'tasks of mourning' that we outlined previously.

For those among the bereaved who are possibly of a more 'theological' mind-set (either by practice or instinct), who may be able to understand and even accept that their loved one has been joined to Christ "in a death like his" (Rom 6:5), and who can also sense the truth of the analogy between the 'Sabbath rest' of Christ and their loved one's 'rest with the Saints,' – for such as these perhaps the time has come for them to begin to intuit that the participation of their beloved departed in the Christ of 'Good Friday' and 'Holy Saturday' must of necessity entail for them as well their ultimately "being united with [Christ] in a resurrection like his" (Rom 6:5).

V.B.3 *A 'New and Holy Pascha'*[94]*: Resurrection and Re-incorporation*

I indicated at the outset of this present section *V.B* that I was choosing (perhaps eclectically) to organize its contents – an attempted *relecture* of BF from the standpoint of Byzantine Christians inhabiting WB – in a tripartite 'shape.' This 'shape' was suggested to me by my detection of a certain innate 'three-ness' within each one of three principal theoretical frameworks underlying BF – psycho-social, anthropological, and theological. By organizing my discussion in this manner, I am attempting to integrate and synthesize materials that I introduced in *Chapters One* through *Four* of my dissertation, in order to try and demonstrate that BF as a Christian rite-of-passage possesses for its participants both human and Christian 'adequacy.'[95]

As I attempt to assess BF's 'human adequacy,' I have been drawing upon theoretical materials that relate principally to its psycho-social and, to a lesser extent, anthropological frameworks. In *anthropological* terms, BF is obviously a funereal *rite de passage* that according to

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[94] This phrase is taken from the 'Paschal Stichera' sung at the conclusion of Paschal Matins, and repeated at various other services throughout the paschal season.

[95] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 66.

van Gennep's tripartite *schema* includes rites of 'separation,' 'transition,' and '(re)-incorporation.' From a pastorally-focused *psychological* standpoint, BF can likewise be conceived of as a tripartite enterprise whose three sections, based upon Lindemann's original 'tasks of grief work,' are moments of decathexis, adaptation, and reinvestment.[96]

For purposes of undertaking a pastoral-theological evaluation of BF's 'Christian adequacy,' – centred (as I contend) around its proposal to mourners to help change their 'funeral lamentations' into eventual 'songs of Alleluia' (Ikos of KON) – the paschal mystery of Christ's 'Passover' (*Pascha*) from lamentable 'Death' into laudable 'New Life' struck me as a particularly appropriate and relevant theoretical framework. Since this *is* primarily a theological dissertation, I have chosen to use the three days of the paschal *triduum* as a heuristic device for organizing what is essentially an encounter and a conversation, with psychological, anthropological and theological dimensions, between BF on the one hand and bereaved Byzantine-rite Christians on the other.

Pascha – the NT and patristic Greek form of the Hebrew *Pesach*, 'Passover' – has become the common Byzantine Christian name for the springtime Sunday festival referred to by English-speaking Christians as 'Easter.' However, *Pascha* designates most correctly the entire *triduum* – Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday – through which, since the fourth century, Christians have contemplated and celebrated the unitary paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and his Passover from death to new life. In employing '*Pascha*' in the title of this concluding section of *Chapter Five*, I signal my intention to attend to both its English senses. Although much of what I have to say concerns the specifically 'resurrectional' aspects of BF, I also plan to conclude by reflecting upon its overall transformative promise to change threnody into alleluia.

It has been pointed out previously that the specific content of BF which refers directly to the paschal 'New Life' *of* and *in* Christ, whether that be references to the actual resurrection of Christ *or* the consequent resurrection of human persons, is really very modest in quantity. Therefore, it will be helpful to begin our reflections by summarizing for our further consideration those materials within BF that can be construed one way or another as being 'resurrectional' in character or tonality. For the purposes of this brief discussion, it seems logical to distinguish (in a

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[96] **LINDEMANN**, 11.

somewhat arbitrary fashion) between the very few 'resurrectional referents' that are direct or specific, and a number of other more subtle referents that are best thought of as 'intimations of resurrection.'

The most obvious and explicit mentions in BF of a resurrection *of* or *from* the dead are contained in the two scripture readings, taken respectively from the Apostolos (1 Thess 4:13-18) and the Gospel (Jn 5:24-30). In the epistle-reading, the assembly is reassured by Paul that "since we believe that *Jesus died and rose again,* even so, through Jesus, God *will bring with him those who have fallen asleep*" (emphases added). The uncompromising 'futurity' and blunt material realism of this text provide a contrast to the more temporally ambiguous, 'spiritual' words that are read from John's Gospel: "The *hour is coming*, and *now is*, when *the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live*; . . . all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, *those who have done good to the resurrection of life*, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (emphases added).

Such a relative paucity of references within BF to resurrection might suggest initially to the observer that 'resurrection' is of minimal significance in the overall theology of this funeral office. However, one needs also to bear in mind the position of these crucially important Bible readings within the overall 'shape' of BF. They actually constitute the dramatic climax of the entire service, forming as they do the culmination of a relatively 'bright' thematic hiatus that is bracketed by the sober and sombre moments of the IDML at one end and the ASP at the other. Between these two thematically 'heavy' moments is an almost joyous *inclusio* comprising «Beatitudes-prokimenon-Epistle-alleluiarion-Gospel» whose high point is undoubtedly the twin scripture lections. Within the generally 'dark' overall texture of BF, the dramatic insertion of a bright interlude that is climaxed by the proclamation of resurrectional promises serves to give to 'resurrection' a centrality that is belied by the actual amount of time the service devotes to its presentation.

At various earlier junctures in my dissertation, I have already discussed the significance of a number of other items within BF that can be understood as alluding to the eventuality of 'resurrection.' I propose to proceed now to a brief itemization of seven of what I consider to be the

more credible of these, while conceding in advance that not all of them will be interpreted as self-evidently 'resurrectional' by every single attendant at BF.

As the *first* in our list, one ought surely to underscore GOS, BF's one and only prayer that is repeated throughout the service. Second only to the scripture lections, GOS enshrines BF's most explicit instance of resurrectional spirituality by its celebration of Christ who has "trampled down death and crushed the devil [and] given life to [his] world." *Second*, I would re-emphasize an observation made above in section ***V.B.2.b*** concerning BF's protracted contemplation of the 'Holy Saturday Christ,' with its attendant inference that since the Lord has conquered death through his descent to Hades, those united to him in death already share by anticipation in the victory of his resurrection. *Third*, there is the visible presence of the deceased's body in the middle of BF's assembly where it functions paradoxically as both a 'corpse' and a set of venerable 'relics.' As a form of the latter, the remains of the newly-departed represent a partially 'spiritualized body' (cf. 1 Cor 15:44) that has been impermanently sanctified through its participation in the Christian Mysteries but that nevertheless palely foreshadows its own eventual glorified state. Closely related to the foregoing paradox, a *fourth* item concerns the EVL that likewise proclaim the venerability of a Christian's body and entreat its eventual glorification: "I am an image of your ineffable glory though I bear the marks of offences; . . . bring me back to your likeness, my ancient beauty."

The three remaining 'resurrectional allusions' in BF are relatively minor but worth noting nonetheless. *Fifth* is the introduction to the Beatitudes that invokes Christ's remembrance of all the faithful, living and departed, at his ultimate *parousía*: "Remember us Lord when you come in your Kingdom." *Sixth*, one might cite BF's overall 'matutinal shape' that includes elements such as EVL and a Gospel reading that are especially typical of Sunday resurrectional Orthros. An abundance of lights at BF and the increasingly common practice for the clergy officiators to wear white vestments may serve to enhance a Sunday Orthros-like atmosphere. *Seventh* and finally, there is the occasional practice of some Byzantine Slavs whereby at the interment, the grave is "sealed until the second coming of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ."[97] Taken together, elements of some or all of the foregoing may well serve in the eyes of many mourners both to

[97] See **GALADZA**, *Order*, 81; and **SERAPHIM**, 53.

prepare for and heighten the resurrectional tonality that is imparted to BF by the NT scriptural readings.

However, alongside the content of these readings (that *may* be reinforced for the bereaved by some of the subtler 'resurrectional intimations' just enumerated), there is one other 'high point' within BF that can and must be construed as fundamentally resurrectional in its intent. I speak here of the exclamation 'Eternal Memory' that is sung repeatedly: at the end of servings of TRIS (for example, at the place of death and at the funeral home); thereafter at the conclusion of the actual funeral office in church; and finally on completion of the interment ritual.

This brief chant, comprising a three-fold commendation of the deceased to God's 'eternal memory,' is characteristically given out in a solemn manner to a plaintive and tear-provoking melody. However, in spite of this melancholic character (or perhaps *because* of it), the intoning of '*Aôniá ê Mnêmê*' is without doubt one of the most genuinely 'popular' moments in all of BF. Although this popularity *might* be partially accounted for by the underlying theological profundity of the hymnic exclamation under discussion (something we attempted to demonstrate in *Chapter Three*), such an assumption is belied by many mourners' typical misinterpretation of 'Eternal Memory' as basically an expression of their own personal resolve never to forget their loved one. However, even this undoubtedly sentimental distortion may be open to reinterpretation as an implied 'resurrectional intimation,' as I shall try to suggest in a moment.

In the east Slavic Byzantine tradition, the singing of 'Eternal Memory' is often introduced by the following chanted phrase: "Grant eternal rest in blessed falling asleep, O Lord, to the soul of your newly-departed servant (Name) and make his/her memory to be eternal."[98] According to Greek, Arabic and some Slavic usages on the other hand, the commonly used introductory phrase goes: "Eternal [be] your memory, our brother/sister, worthy of blessedness and ever-remembered."[99] These phraseologies, if we attend carefully to their wording, can help to provide us with a context for adducing connections within BF between 'Eternal Memory' and resurrection.

The ineffable nature of humanity's pre-resurrectional repose in death, of that "*eternal rest* in blessed falling asleep" (in the Slavic use) or the "blessedness" (in the Greek use) that is invoked

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[98] See **GALADZA**, *Order*, 82; and **SERAPHIM**, 54.
[99] See, e.g., ***Appendix I***, 294, and **GBN-3**, 212. **HAPGOOD**, 391, gives both phrases as alternatives.

by the just-quoted introductions to '*Aôniá ê Mnêmê*,' is presented throughout BF by means of an array of metaphors that combines present reality with implied futurity as we have demonstrated. For those who grieve, however, the most important consideration in all of this is undoubtedly the reassurance many of them seek that it is legitimate to hope that their loved one is truly safe and therefore still 'alive' in God's keeping, now and 'unto the ages of ages.' Only if this longed-for reassurance is a real possibility, it seems to many of the newly-bereaved, will it *ever* be possible for them to consider their own eventual *re-incorporation* into the 'land of the living.' Such a potential return for them may be actualized only through their coming to trust that their deceased loved ones have indeed been safely incorporated into that "place of light, verdure and refreshment" that GOS entreats for them.

Mourners long to see vindicated their deepest existential hopes that God is trustworthy, and yet many of them dare not rely upon such intuitions as they may already possess. Their skepticism is precisely what underlies (I suspect) the pathetic diminution of 'Eternal Memory' to a lowest-common-denominator meaning which implies that "at least we, your family and friends, will never forget you." Nevertheless, even as they endorse this rather maudlin sentiment, many bereaved persons simultaneously yearn for (and intuit the reality of) something far more substantial and 'eternal' than this reductionism. Such longed-for 'substantiality' is precisely what BF attempts to provide through its incessant and polyvalent evocation of 'eternal rest' for the deceased and its concluding commendation of the faithful departed to God's 'eternal memory.'

However, be all this as it may, one fundamental and characteristic 'eternal hope' has lain at the heart of the Christian community down through the ages; a hope that rests upon BF's announced intuition that "since Jesus died and rose again, through Jesus God will bring *with him* those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess 4:14); a hope that precludes Christians (according to St. Paul) from grieving "as others do who have no hope" (1 Thess 4:13); a hope that therefore can serve to unlock or 'decode' for the bereaved the deepest, essential meaning of God's 'eternal rest' and God's 'eternal memory' for the departed – this "sure and steadfast hope" (Heb 6:19) that is Christ's offer to them and to us of an 'eternal *life*' that entails our passing over (*metabaínô*) "from death to life" (Jn 5:24). Elsewhere in this same Gospel lection, read at BF, Christ's promise of 'eternal life' for

those (including the dead) who hear his words is qualified as "the *resurrection* of life," a state that is contrasted, in Christ's words, with the "resurrection of judgment" that awaits evildoers (Jn 5:29).

To be kept in God's 'eternal memory' means therefore to be eternally *alive* in, with and through Christ who, according to the ekphônêsis of GOS, is "the resurrection and the life and the repose of [his] departed servants." Thus, at some future moment – a moment that is locked away for the present in the same 'eternal memory' of God that sustains those who have died – the integral and relational human person-hood of all the living and all the dead is to be restored as they pass decisively "from death to life." For now, mourners can live with hope for the advent of that day when they, in company with their beloved departed, "will always be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:17).

In addition to the important role that the various resurrectional elements play in determining BF's 'theological adequacy,' these same elements need to be viewed concurrently, I believe, as contributing enormously to BF's 'human adequacy' by addressing important psycho-social parameters that define and constrain the lives of bereaved Byzantine Christians. I therefore propose now to draw brief attention to some of the specific ways in which elements from BF's 'resurrectional stratum' can be understood as contributing both to an initiation of certain of the 'tasks of mourning' as well as to a refutation of major societal distortions of the true significance of death from a Christian perspective.

Of the four 'tasks of mourning' that were identified in *Chapter Four* as an expanded version of Lindemann's original three, the first two – that focus on the need of the bereaved to combat the *denial* of death's reality and the unhealthy *suppression* of thoughts and emotions – have been shown to be well addressed through BF's 'Good Friday' and 'Holy Saturday' aspects. Likewise, the decathectic moments proper to these beginning and middle phases of the paschal *triduum* invite mourners to combat their unrealistic *clinging* to a deceased love one – the third 'task of mourning' – and thereby to begin their adjustment to an environment from which the physical presence of the dead person is now absent. I would argue, however, that this latter undertaking will be immensely facilitated for the bereaved if at the same time as they begin to 'let go' of the deceased they are able to 'release' him or her both theologically *and* psychologically into God's

merciful care. I believe that this latter action is well attended to by BF's 'resurrection stratum' as I have been attempting to demonstrate.

However, it is as a catalyst of the fourth 'task of mourning' – namely, the need for mourners to combat *stagnation* and eventually invest in new relationships and life projects by redefining their relationship with their dead loved ones – that the characteristics of 'BF-as-Easter-Sunday' make their potentially greatest contribution. What is sought here by the bereaved, I would contend, on behalf of both the living and the deceased is their mutual *re-incorporation* into the 'secure status' (anthropologically speaking) that both enjoyed *before* death intervened. Ultimately, only if the departed are securely consigned to some 'realm of the dead' will survivors be able to return safely to the 'land of the living.' Hence, it becomes necessary to *relocate* the deceased, and so to redefine the terms of the bereaved person's ongoing relationship with them.

For grieving Byzantine Christians, a possible way forward in this regard is laid out and facilitated for them by BF. In expectation of the *parousia* and the resurrection that are promised by BF's epistle and gospel readings, the dead are to enjoy 'eternal rest' through our committal of them to safe-keeping in God's 'eternal memory.' Since it is one and the same 'eternal memory' that calls into being and sustains both the living and the dead, those who are left to mourn can remain connected to and in communion with their relocated departed loved ones. This essentially eucharistic relationship is a matter that BF may once have enshrined but now scarcely hints at; for Orthodox Christians it ought to find its truest actualization in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.[100] Viewed psychologically, such an ongoing yet redefined relationship with the dead, in the opinion of bereavement experts such as Worden,[101] is essential for a successful re-incorporation of mourners into an effective, engaged life in the everyday world.

In addition to its promotion of a beginning to the grief work of the bereaved, BF can also be envisaged as assisting them in "the wise management of grief"[102] through its critique, both explicit

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[100] See Peter **GALADZA**, "Lost and Displaced Elements of the Byzantine Funeral Rites: Towards a Pastoral Re-appropriation," *Studia Liturgica* 33 (2003): 65-66 [= **GALADZA**, "Lost Elements"].

[101] See **WORDEN**, 16-18. Worden quotes approvingly the following opinion by Schuchter and Zisook, 1987: "A survivor's readiness to enter new relationships depends not on 'giving up' the dead [loved one] but on finding a suitable place for the [departed] in the psychological life of the bereaved – a place that is important but that leaves room for others" (S. **SHUCHTER** and S. **ZISOOK**, "The Therapeutic Tasks of Grief," in *Biopsychosocial Aspects of Bereavement*, ed. S. Zisook [New York: Grove, 1987], 117).

[102] **HOON**, 172.

and implicit, of those contemporary western social attitudes to death that permeate WB. In *Chapter Four*, following Harakas, we characterized three of the more prevalent of these distortions of death's significance as "death denied," "death tamed," and "death victorious."[103] We have already shown how BF, through its 'Good Friday' and 'Holy Saturday' theologies, resoundingly counteracts the prevalent denial of death's reality that Ariès has so brilliantly critiqued in American society. Likewise, BF speaks eloquently against the misrepresentation of 'death tamed' through its eschewal of every attempt to suppress or disguise death's profound tragedy and its attendant sorrow. *En passant*, we might pause to emphasize here how effectively BF opposes any attempted 'spiritualization' of death such as that which her critics have accused Kübler-Ross of espousing.[104] To counteract any such endeavour, BF posits a vigorous materialism in its contemplation of death; a similar though more muted attitude of physicality informs its depiction of resurrection through the means we elaborated above.

However, within the context of our overall discussion of the relationship between BF's resurrectional aspect and its psycho-social utility, one of the most significant 'social' contributions of the former to the latter must be seen to lie in its resounding rebuke to those mounting strains in the contemporary world which, wallowing in hopelessness, proclaim that Death is victorious. Despite the extent and nature of BF's own meditation on the innate tragedy of death – and here it might appear sometimes to risk joining contemporary advocates of a despair to which the funeral office itself ultimately refrains from succumbing – BF nonetheless maintains a fundamentally resurrectional stance to which it invites the conversion of all its participants and observers. This it achieves (as we have been suggesting) through its scripture readings, through GOS, and through all the lesser hints at resurrection that we detected earlier. Taken as an ensemble, these elements combine to insist that Christ, not death, is victorious. It is he who, in the words of GOS, has "trampled down death and crushed the devil" in order to impart "resurrection and life and repose" to all his faithful departed servants.

To conclude this final section of my dissertation's closing chapter, I want to revisit and try to clarify a matter that has been alluded to at various points throughout my text and that, near the

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[103] See **HARAKAS**, 146.
[104] Ibid., 148.

beginning of my discussion of BF's 'paschal shape,' I deliberately and specifically postponed for later consideration. At the particular juncture in question, in the context of my discussing BF's implied relationship between Christ's death and what Neuhaus describes as "the catastrophe of death,"[105] I reminded myself and my readers of wise counsel from Bobrinskoy who has cautioned us that it is only "within the mystery of Christ dead *and resurrected* [that] death acquires a positive value . . . . [as] our ultimate Pascha, our passage *from death to life*."[106] It is in the light of Bobrinskoy's observation that I wish to reflect upon the manner in which BF actualizes the *unitary* paschal mystery of Christ (and not just its 'component parts') as the healing paradigm into which are to be inserted the mysteries of human death and bereavement.

I have been explaining at considerable length throughout the latter half of the present chapter why I believe that mourners ought to be able to discern BF's fundamentally paschal shape, enshrining as it does the 'Good Friday' elements of acceptance and decathexis, the 'Holy Saturday' components of *transitus* and *anápausis*, and the 'Easter Sunday' promises of resurrection and re-incorporation. Now I wish to try and identify the ways in which BF proposes (as I believe) that these elements are to be interpreted, not discretely, but as the constitutive parts of a single, all-encompassing, continuous, and transfigurative reality – the paschal mystery – that unites in Christ his own and humanity's "passing over from death to life" (Jn 5:24). I believe there are at least three important ways in which BF endeavours to maintain an underlying unity in its presentation to mourners of the one paschal mystery of Christ; I shall briefly examine each of the three in turn.

First, there is BF's unitary nature as an anthropological rite-of-passage, one that opens with a painful movement of separation (the deceased's final processional entry into church) and concludes with a poignant affirmation of re-incorporation (the intoning of 'Eternal Memory' at the grave-side). Like most modern Christian funeral rites, BF combines into one single ritual event a series of ritualized stages to whose accomplishment many cultures have traditionally devoted days, weeks or even months.[107] Whatever might be the theological (let alone psychological or

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[105] **NEUHAUS**, 15.
[106] **BOBRINSKOY**, 242; italics are in the original.
[107] See, for example, the descriptions in **VAN GENNEP**, 146-51.

anthropological) arguments for decomposing this single rite into a series of happenings,[108] its present unitary form can nonetheless be seen to emphasize that the deceased's ritualized passage from death to new life, like the paschal mystery it reflects, is a continuum and not the sum of a series of discrete happenings.

Second, as I have been suggesting on a number of occasions throughout my dissertation, following leads provided me by Schmemann and Lazor, the conceptual focus of BF lies in its presentation and contemplation (through AMOMOS and EVL in particular) of the mystery of Christ's Holy Saturday descent into death and rest in the tomb.[109] Such a focus is evidence for me of the sheer genius underlying BF's mediation to the bereaved of the one paschal mystery. Even though it seems here that BF is concentrating on the significance of 'one day' (as it were) within the paschal *triduum* (thereby undermining any unified contemplation of the paschal mystery), the funeral's awareness of Holy Saturday may rather be interpreted as demonstrating an underlying 'wisdom' in its understanding of the plight of mourners, many of whom would find themselves hard pressed to shout 'Christ is Risen!' with any sense of triumph or conviction.

Instead of imposing on the bereaved what one renowned critic of the revised Roman Catholic funeral rites has termed their "controlling eschatological triumphalism,"[110] BF instead chooses to start precisely at the point where the grievers actually find themselves: namely in a sombre meditation upon the painful reality that has overtaken their loved one who, like the Holy Saturday Christ, lies dead and motionless before them as both corpse and relic. From this interpretive posture, participants in BF may then cast their gaze 'backwards' and 'forwards' (as it were) to gain an integrated view of the paschal mystery: 'backwards' upon the Holy Friday mystery of death (through IDML and ASP in particular), and 'forwards' to the paschal hope proclaimed explicitly for them in the scripture readings, GOS, and 'Eternal Memory,' and implicitly by the lesser 'resurrectional intimations' that we identified.

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[108] See, for example, the suggestions and justifications put forth in: **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 70-78; and Theodore **STONE** and Sister Anselm **CUNNINGHAM**, "The Chicago Experimental Funeral Rite," in *Death and Burial: Theology and Liturgy*, ed. Johannes Wagner (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), 51.

[109] See ***Appendix II***, pp. 329-33; and both **LAZOR**, 'Original,' and **LAZOR**, 'Revised.'

[110] Owen F. **CUMMINGS**, "How Adequate are the Postconciliar Catholic Funeral Rites?", *Antiphon* 3, no. 3 (1998), 19.

Third and finally (in a point that is closely related to, but not identical with, the foregoing), we may appreciate how BF inserts the bereaved into the paschal mystery of Christ by the 'descent-ascent' motif that characterizes both its overall liturgical shape (as Lazor[111] points out for us) and the tonality of its music.[112] One begins with the reality of *a* death contemplated under its 'Holy Saturday aspect' as we just observed. From that *point de départ*, there is a sober, almost penitential liturgical *descent* into the "shadow of death" (Mt 4:16; cf. Is 9:2 *LXX*) that is embodied in psalm 50 (51), the Canon (if taken), and finally IDML. Thereafter, inaugurated by the Beatitudes' introductory entreaty: "Remember us . . . in your Kingdom," BF's liturgical course gradually changes direction (to complete its paschal trajectory) as it enters into a time of *ascent* mediated through a resurrectionally 'rich' sequence of PROK, Epistle, Alleluia and Gospel.

The reality and centrality of the paschal mystery within BF will (hopefully) be persuasively communicated to the bereaved through BF's agglomeration of 'paschal moments' such as the three that I have just elucidated. The mourners at BF are being invited: to permit their departed loved one to participate in BF's ritualized *passage* from opening decathexis to concluding relocation; to modulate their own grief by the view from a 'Holy Saturday' vantage point that synchronically scrutinizes retrospective dying and prospective resurrection; and to be enveloped by an awesome liturgical drama that descends to the depths of lamentation before rising to the heights of evangelical assurance.

By virtue of the foregoing movements (and despite the effective disappearance from BF of certain specifically baptismal elements that were formerly part of it[113]), the present-day 'shape' of BF mediates to its participants the essentials of a profoundly baptismal spirituality, one that offers (as we have repeatedly pointed out) to change 'funeral lament' into 'Alleluia' (KON). If BF's counter-cultural intuition insists that Christian mourners must unreservedly 'immerse' themselves through contemplation in a death like that of Christ, it also provides them with more than adequate means "to be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom 6:5).

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[111] **LAZOR**, 'Revised,' 118.
[112] **TRUBACHEV**, 71.
[113] **GALADZA**, "Lost Elements," 65.

EPILOGUE - CONCLUSION

Since the late 1960s, there has been a noticeable shift in western Christian liturgy and theology toward a renewed emphasis on a celebration of, and conscious reflection upon, the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.[1] Among those aspects of western Christian church life that have been profoundly influenced by this new trend are the revised orders for Christian burial that are now in use in various ecclesial communities.[2]

One perhaps laudable feature of these revisions has been their restored accent on proclaiming and celebrating the resurrection of both Christ and Christians, while downplaying certain more traditional funereal elements that were thought to place undue emphasis on what might be termed the 'dark side' of death. Although some of these latter elements may well have been overdue for either reform or eradication, some critics, without denigrating the new stress on resurrection to be found in many Catholic and Protestant funeral rites, have suggested that at the same time a critically important balance has been upset between elements of celebration and those of lamentation.[3] Perhaps, as such critics seem to imply, western Christians need reminding that the paschal mystery starts on Good Friday and that it is inappropriate when commemorating a death to bypass that sombre beginning in order to jump directly into the brightness of Easter.

Given the pervasive climate of death denial that permeates many contemporary 'western' societies – an *ethos* that has stimulated discussion and invited assessment by numerous social scientists and others[4] – one could be excused for wondering if the motivation for recent revisions of western Christian funeral *ordines* has been entirely theological. In a social setting where many

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[1] For example, see Irmgard **PAHL**, "The Paschal Mystery in its Central Meaning for the Shape of Christian Liturgy," *Studia Litugica* 26 (1996): 16-38, and Maxwell E. **JOHNSON**, "The Paschal Mystery: Reflections From a Lutheran Standpoint," *Worship* 57 (1983): 134-56.

[2] Some examples of such new *ordines* include: Anglican Church of Canada, *Book of Alternativ Services* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 565-605; Episcopal Church [U.S.A.]. *Burial Services*, comp. J. B. **BERNARDIN** (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1980); *Funeral Services of the Christian Churches in England* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury, 1986); Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House and Philadelphia, PA: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, c1978), 206-214; and Cuthbert **JOHNSON**, *Christian Burial: The Ordo Exsequiarum 1969 with Related Liturgical Texts, Indexes and Bibliography*, Bibliotheca "Ephemerides Liturgicae," Subsidia, 69 (Rome: C.L.V. - Edizioni Liturgiche, 1993).

[3] See: Owen F. **CUMMINGS**, "How Adequate are the Postconciliar Catholic Funeral Rites?", *Antiphon* 3, no. 3 (1998), 19; Eamon **DUFFY**, "An Apology for Grief, Fear and Anger," *Priests and People* 5 (1991): 397-401; and **HOEFFNER**.

[4] To give but a couple of important examples of this, see *Chapter Four* above where we dealt at some length with **ARIÈS**, *Hour*, and **KÜBLER-ROSS**.

persons of good will shun the very mention of 'death' and 'dying' in a manner reminiscent of the Victorians' avoidance of discussions of sexual matters, it may indeed be wise to conclude that *Dies Irae* is truly a 'non-starter' and that 'celebration' (with a hint of resurrection) may be the only route to go!

Within the various churches that follow the Byzantine tradition and that lie for the most part 'beyond' the direct reforming influence of Vatican II and its aftermath in the west, there is ongoing adherence in principle to the use of a 'traditional' funeral *ordo* whose present-day 'shape' was effectively canonized by the sixteenth-century advent of printed euchologies. This *ordo* (which I have referred to throughout my dissertation as 'BF') gives a generous place to expressions of lamentation and obliges mourners to confront the tragic and painful reality of death. At the same time, BF does include proclamation of the 'Good News' of resurrection, albeit in a tonality which is perhaps surprisingly muted for a tradition that is renowned for its vibrant celebration of Easter. The central focus of BF's contemplation of the paschal mystery arguably lies less in Easter and more in a 'Holy Saturday spirituality' that concentrates on the relationship between the newly-deceased and the entombed Christ who has already defeated death through his cross and burial and who proleptically partakes of a resurrection that awaits its full actualization.

In the recent past, revisionist criticisms of BF's 'shape' and the prominence of its 'lamentation stratum' have been voiced by eminent Orthodox theologians, including most notably two former deans of Orthodox theological institutes in the west, Alexander Schmemann and Alexis Kniazeff. An observer of the Orthodox theological 'scene' in western countries might speculate in this regard as to the extent to which, unacknowledged by them, both men were influenced in their assessments of BF by specifically 'western' concerns and developments of the sort that became common after Vatican II. The comments, particularly of Schmemann,[5] leave one with the impression that a possible liturgical reform of BF was being mooted,[6] although as we observed in *Chapter Two* (with assistance from Grisbrooke[7]), Schmemann was generally reluctant to embrace reform overtly despite the fervour of his *aggiornamento*-style 'return to the sources.'

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[5] See ***Appendix II***, pp. 336-41 and 354-56.

[6] Ibid. See, e.g.: pp. 330 (third paragraph); 326-27; 347; 355 (bottom of page, end of last full paragraph); and 359 ("restoring meaning to life").

[7] **GRISBROOKE**, "Schmemann," 146-48.

Fr. Schmemann (following upon and expanding the earlier work of Knaizeff)[8] justified his own apparent revisionist attitudes to BF (and in particular to its 'lamentation stratum') by a diachronic analysis of BF's components that assessed the theological content of much of BF's prominent hymnography as embodying an unfortunate Middle Byzantine return to classical antiquity's 'cult of the dead.'[9] In so doing, suggested Schmemann, medieval Byzantine poets were effectively overshadowing or downplaying the emphasis on Christ's victory over death that typified the elements of BF's 'paleo-Christian stratum.' (*En passant*, it is noteworthy how in propounding his thesis, Schmemann apparently overlooked evidence for Christian attitudes to death reminiscent of BF's 'lamentation stratum' that are already detectable in certain fourth-century materials.[10])

Without specifically considering (or indeed denying) the possibility that some reform of BF may be long overdue (as the work of Schmemann seems to imply), my principal concern throughout the present dissertation has been to evaluate critically Schmemann's assessment of BF's theology in the light of my own assessment of the 'adequacy'[11] of the practical liturgical theology of BF's existing structure, especially as that theology may impact upon the psycho-spiritual 'world' of Byzantine Christian mourners. In carrying out my research, it has been part of my working hypothesis that the vivid confrontation with death's reality and tragedy obliged by BF is a useful and even necessary corrective to the effects of prevalent western societal attitudes to death that influence Byzantine Christians along with their fellow-citizens. BF's announced intention of changing threnody into Alleluia (KON) by means of its provision of a context for bereaved persons that legitimizes grieving as the necessary *prelude* to a subdued introduction of resurrectional hope can be shown to conform in important respects with the recommendations of contemporary bereavement theorists.

In *Chapter Five*, I chose to set my concluding synchronic appraisal of the 'adequacy' of BF's liturgical and pastoral theology within the context of the paschal mystery. Such an approach, as I try to demonstrate, conforms both to the theological vision of BF and to the practical psycho-

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[8] **KNIAZEFF**, 90-91.

[9] See ***Appendix II***, pp. 336-41.

[10] See: Robert **HUTCHEON**, "A Comparison of Death Imagery in Gregory of Nyssa's *Vita Macrinae* and the Byzantine Funeral Hymnography," *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christianity* 41-42 (2000-2001): 239-267.

[11] **GRISBROOKE**, "Committal," 66.

spiritual needs of the bereaved. Because of its insistence that an appropriation of the promise of Easter necessitates an antecedent acknowledgement of the pain of Good Friday and the bewilderment of Holy Saturday, BF's existing format can be shown to accord well in many respects with important anthropological, psycho-social and theological *desiderata*. This being the case, one is obliged to conclude that many of Fr. Schmemann's diachronically-based criticisms of BF in general and of its 'lamentation stratum' in particular were not well grounded.

Although there is little theological or pastoral justification in my opinion for proposing a reform of BF based solely on the negative assessments of Fr. Schmemann and others, I should like to conclude my dissertation by arguing, in the spirit of a recent article by Peter Galadza,[12] that there is certainly a place for some sort of 'conservative' revision of BF. Such a renovation might concentrate initially on bolstering existing (but generally underplayed) aspects of BF's present *ordo* that would help to accentuate its central 'threnody-to-Alleluia' paradox. Later consideration might then be given to restoring certain of what Galadza has referred to as "lost and displaced elements" of the Byzantine funeral offices.

As examples of the former, one could think of relatively non-controversial practices such as: the more frequent audible recitation of GOS; the return of psalm 90 (91) to BF's beginning in those traditions where it has fallen into desuetude; the insertion of a few additional (and appropriately chosen) verses into the staseis of the AMOMOS, particularly in the Slavic traditions; an incensation with the celebrant carrying a candle such as already occurs during EVL in the common east Slavic Orthodox practice; and finally, the institution of liturgical accompaniments for the reading of the Gospel such as a noticeable augmentation of the lighting and possibly a dramatic switch to 'bright' vestments by the serving clergy.[13] As a single example of a renovation of the second type – the restoration of various 'lost' elements – consideration could be given to replacing certain of the eight or more recitations of GOS (while perhaps keeping the same 'resurrectionl' ekphônêsis) with some of the prayers found in older euchologies such as, for example, the prayer for the consolation of mourners that Galadza mentions.[14]

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[12] See **GALADZA**, "Lost Elements."

[13] This latter is often done for the Gospel reading that comes in the middle of the Vesperal Divine Liturgy of Holy Saturday.

[14] See **GALADZA**, "Lost Elements," 67, where he quotes such a prayer from Codex Barberini 336.

If the strengths of BF in its present form, as I have tried to show, include its insistence that there is no by-passing Holy Friday on the way to Easter and that legitimate 'songs of lamentation' can eventually be transformed into 'Alleluias,' then the institution of simple measures to heighten these strengths is surely beyond all contention.

APPENDICES

***APPENDIX I*: The Byzantine-rite Funeral for Lay-persons (BF) with Greek and English Texts in parallel**

***APPENDIX II*: Four Previously Unpublished Talks on 'The Orthodox Liturgy of Death' by Father Alexander Schmemann**

APPENDIX I

THE BYZANTINE-RITE FUNERAL FOR LAY-PERSONS (BF) WITH GREEK AND ENGLISH TEXTS IN PARALLEL:

Greek Text adapted from the *Εὐχολογιον το Μεγα*[1] and the *Ἁγιασματαριον*[2] and English Translation by ©Archimandrite Ephrem Lash[3]

INTRODUCTION

Explanatory Comments by Fr. Ephrem Lash, translator

"This provisional translation of the Burial Service for Lay People is based on the text of the Large Euchologion [= ETM], which is to all intents and purposes identical to that in the Slavonic Trebnik [cf. Hapgood, 368-93]. The service is seldom performed in full, and the modern Greek books give it in the abbreviated form as it is commonly performed in Greek parishes. In current Greek use the service starts with the usual blessing by the Priest and Psalm 90 is omitted. I have included . . . the usual selection of verses from Psalm 118 used in Greek churches. The Canon, which is the one for Saturday Matins in Tone 6 in the Paraklitiki, is usually omitted, though the Russian use is normally to sing just the Irmoi . . . with the refrains. These Irmoi are not sung in Athonite use, except when they are used as Katavasias. The refrains given here are those used on the Holy Mountain. In Russian use the refrain for the first two Troparia is, 'Give rest to the soul of your servant fallen asleep'. The translation of the Canon attempts, I hope without too much infidelity to the original, to preserve Saint Theophanes' acrostic.

I have not included any of the prayers of absolution which are sometimes used at the very end of the service in church. They are not found in the Large Euchologion, though they do occur in the modern Greek books to be said by a Bishop, if one is present. The Trebnik gives a much less elaborate absolution, to be given by a Bishop, or in his absence by the Priest.

It will seldom be necessary to sing all the Prosomia provided for the moment of the final farewell. The model melody to which they are written is that of the Aposticha of Vespers of Good Friday, which are sung at the moment when the Epitaphios is brought out into the centre of the Church. This is almost certainly intentional.

The current Greek books begin the rite in the church with the usual blessing by the Priest, since nowadays the funeral may take place some time, even days, after the body has been placed in the church. The provision for the small litany between Psalm 118 and the Evlogitaria is quite anomalous, since it should follow the latter, and I have therefore omitted it. The modern Greek books also invert the rites at the graveside and provide a verse from Psalm 50, 'You will sprinkle me with hyssop', as the oil from the lamp is poured into the grave. This is not found in either the

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[1] ETM, 393-420 (cf. shorter version found in MEH, 195-218).
[2] HAG-2, 1-33.
[3] LASH.

Large Euchologion or the Trebnik. Customs at the graveside vary a good deal and so do the texts of the service books. These local customs are not detailed here.

The translation also provides all the texts necessary for a full Memorial Service, or Pannychida, except that the Russian books have a full Litany of Peace after Psalm 90 and the Canon is that in Tone 8."[4]

In addition to the foregoing comments by the translator (Lash), the following points are noteworthy:

1) the text of APOL for the conclusion of TRIS (pp. 293-94) is the slightly longer version given by Lash and MEH (that includes mention of the Israelite patriarchs and Lazarus "for four days dead" and that differs from that found in ETM and HAG-2);
2) the three staseis of AMOMOS (pp. 295-96) are abbreviated as per Lash, HAG-2, and MEH (whereas ETM gives the text of the entire psalm);
3) the number (six plus stichs for 'Glory' and 'Now and ever') and the order of EVL (pp. 296-97) is that given by Lash who in this respect seems to be following the usual Slavonic (and possibly Athonite?) books (e.g., Hapgood, 379) (cf. Greek books – ETM, HAG-2, and MEH – that omit stich #3 and reverse the positions of Lash's #2 and #5);
4) psalm 50 (51) is omitted by Lash, ETM and MEH, but is found in HAG-2, 12-13, and the usual Slavonic books (e.g., Hapgood, 380), so I have noted its place in this Appendix but have not provided the full text in either Greek or English since these are readily available in standard sources (e.g., Brenton, 727-28);
5) the full Canon given here (pp. 298-302) is that provided by Lash and HAG-2 and is essentially the same as ETM except the latter abbreviates some of the Irmoi;
6) the IDML (pp. 302-04), following Lash and MEH, include eleven troparia (one for each of the eight tones plus an extra for tones 2, 4 and 7) whereas ETM and HAG-2, like the Slavonic books, give only eight (i.e. one for each tone);
7) the Beatitudes (pp. 304-305) are included in their entirety (i.e. farsed with troparia beginning at the sixth beatitude) as is done by Lash who here follows ETM, HAG-2, MEH, and most Slavonic texts (e.g. Hapgood, 386-87);
8) the Greek texts of the Apostolos and Gospel readings are not provided here since they are readily available in standard sources (Fr. Lash's English translations *are* included);
9) the ASP (pp. 306-08) include eleven verses plus a long doxastichon and a theotokion as given by Lash, ETM and Hapgood (cf. HAG-2 and MEH which give fewer);
10) the concluding rites and the interment ritual are as given by Lash and HAG-2 (cf. ETM which provides only a brief outline).

[4] Taken from ibid., opening page.

ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΑ ΝΕΚΡΩΣΙΜΟΣ ΕΙΣ ΚΟΣΜΙΚΟΥΣ

Τελευτήσαντος τινὸς τῶν Ὀρθοδόξων, εὐθὺς προσκαλεῖται παρὰ τῶν συγγενῶν αὐτοῦ ὁ Ἱερεύς. Καὶ ἀπελθὼν εἰς τὸν οἶκον, ἐν ᾧ τὸ λείψανον κεῖται, καὶ βαλὼν Ἐπιτραχήλιον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θυματὸν θυμίαμα, εὐλογεῖ συνήθως τὸν εὐλογητὸν Θεὸν, καὶ ἄρχονται οἱ συμπαρόντες τοῦ

ΤΡΙΣΑΓΙΟΥ, κ.τ.λ.

Ἅγιος ὁ θεός, Ἅγιος Ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος Ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς (x 3).

Δόξα Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι. Καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀνήν

Παναγία Τριάς, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. Κύριε, ἱλάσθητι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν. Δέσποτα, συγχώρησον τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῖν. Ἅγιε, ἐπίσκεψαι καὶ ἴασαι τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν, ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός σου.

Κύριε ἐλέησον, Κύριε ἐλέησον, Κύριε ἐλέησον.

Δόξα Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι. Καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς . . .

Ὁ Ἱερεύς· Ὅτι σοῦ ἐστιν ἡ Βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

Καὶ τὰ ΤΡΟΠΑΡΙΑ ταῦτα εἰς Ἦχον δ΄·

Μετὰ πνευμάτων δικαίων τετελειωμένων τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ δούλου (ἢ τῆς δούλης) σου, Σῶτερ, ἀνάπαυσον, φυλάττων αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν μακαρίαν ζωήν, τὴν παρὰ σοῦ, φιλάνθρωπε.

Εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν σου, Κύριε, ὅπου πάντες οἱ Ἅγιοί σου ἀναπαύονται, ἀνάπαυσον καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ δούλου (ἢ τῆς δούλης) σου, ὅτι μόνος ὑπάρχεις ἀθάνατος.

Δόξα Πατρὶ . . .

Σὺ εἶ ὁ Θεός, ὁ καταβὰς εἰς ᾅδην, καὶ τὰς ὀδύνας λύσας τῶν πεπεδημένων· αὐτὸς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ δούλου (ἢ τῆς δούλης) σου, Σῶτερ, ἀνάπαυσον.

Καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ . . . Ἀμήν. Θεοτοκίον

Ἡ μόνη ἁγνὴ καὶ ἄχραντος Παρθένος, ἡ Θεὸν ἀσπόρως κυήσασα, πρέσβευε τοῦ σωθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ δούλου (ἢ τῆς δούλης) σου.

THE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR LAY-PERSONS

When an Orthodox Christian dies the relatives at once send for the Priest. When he comes to the house where the body is lying he puts on his Epitrachelion and puts incense in the censer, then he gives the usual blessing and those present begin the

TRISAGION, etc.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (x 3).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

Our Father, in heaven, may your name be hallowed, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest: For yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Reader: Amen.

Then the following TROPARIA are sung in the 4th Tone:

With the spirits of the righteous made perfect in death give rest, O Saviour, to the soul of your servant; keeping it for the life of blessedness with you, O Lover of mankind.

In your repose where all your saints find rest, give rest, O Lord, to the soul[s] of your servant[s], for you alone are immortal.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

You are our God who descended into Hell and did away with the pains of those who had been bound; give rest, O Saviour, also to the soul of your servant.

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen. Theotokion.

O only pure and spotless Virgin, who bore God without seed, intercede for the salvation of the soul of your servant.

ΣΥΝΑΠΤΗ

Ὁ Διάκονος· Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, ὁ Θεός, κατα τὸ μέγα ἔλεός σου, δεόμεθά σου, ἐπάκουσον καὶ ἐλέησον.

Ὁ Χορός· Κύριε ἐλέησον **(x 3)**

Ὁ Διάκονος· Ἔτι δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ ἀναπαύσεως τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ κεκοιμημένου δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ (τοῦ δε) (ἢ τῆς κεκοιμημένης δούλης τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς δε) καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ συγχωρηθῆναι αὐτῷ (ἢ αὐτῇ) πᾶν πλημμέλημα ἐκούσιόν τε καὶ ἀκούσιον.

Ὁ Χορός· Κύριε ἐλέησον **(x 3)**

Ὁ Διάκονος· Ὅπως Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τάξῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ (ἢ αὐτῆς), ἔνθα οἱ δίκαιοι ἀναπαύονται.

Ὁ Χορός· Κύριε ἐλέησον **(x 3)**

Ὁ Διάκονος· Τὰ ἐλέη τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ ἄφεσιν τῶν αὐτοῦ (ἢ αὐτῆς) ἁμαρτιῶν, παρὰ Χριστῷ τῷ ἀθανάτῳ βασιλεῖ καὶ Θεῷ ἡμῶν αἰτησώμεθα.

Ὁ Χορός· Παράσχου, Κύριε.

Ὁ Διάκονος· Τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ὁ Χορός· Κύριε ἐλέησον.

Ὁ Ἱερεύς· Ὁ ΘΕΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ καὶ πάσης σαρκός, ὁ τὸν θάνατον καταπατήσας, τὸν δὲ διάβολον καταργήσας, καὶ ζωὴν τῷ κόσμῳ σου δωρησάμενος, αὐτός, Κύριε, ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ κεκοιμημένου δούλου σου (τοῦδε) (ἢ τῆς κεκοιμημένης δούλης σου τῆς δε), ἐν τόπῳ φωτεινῷ, ἐν τόπῳ χλοερῷ, ἐν τόπῳ ἀναψύξεως, ἔνθα ἀπέδρα ὀδύνη, λύπη, καὶ στεναγμός· πᾶν ἁμάρτημα τὸ παὶ αὐτοῦ (ἢ αὐτῆς) πραχθὲν ἐν λόγῳ, ἢ ἔργῳ, ἢ διανοίᾳ, ὡς ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλάνθρωπος Θεὸς, συγχώρησον· ὅτι οὐχ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος, ὃς ζήσεται καὶ οὐχ ἁμαρτήσει· σὺ γὰρ μόνος ἐκτὸς ἁμαρτίας ὑπάρχεις· ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου δικαιοσύνη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ ὁ λόγος σου ἀλήθεια.

ΕΚΦΩΝΗΣΙΣ

Ὅτι σὺ εἶ ἡ ἀνάστασις, ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἡ ἀνάπαυσις τοῦ κεκοιμημένου δούλου σου (τοῦ δε) (ἢ τῆς κεκοιμημένης δούλης σου τῆς δε), Χριστὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, καὶ σοὶ τὴν δόξαν ἀναπέμπομεν, σὺν τῷ ἀνάρχῳ σου Πατρί, καὶ τῷ παναγίῳ καὶ ἀγαθῷ καὶ ζωοποιῷ σου Πνεύματι, νῦν, καὶ ἀεί, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ὁ Χορός· Ἀμήν.

Ὁ Ἱερεύς· Δόξα σοι, ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, δόξα σοι.

Ὁ Χορός· Δόξα Πατρὶ . . . καὶ νῦν. Κύριε ἐλέησον **(x 3)** *Πάτερ ἅγιε, εὐλόγησον.*

Καὶ ἡ ΑΠΟΛΥΣΙΣ οὕτω·

Ὁ Ἱερεύς· Ὁ καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔχων, ὡς ἀθάνατος Βασιλεύς, καὶ ἀναστάς ἐκ νεκρῶν, Χριστὸς ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς παναχράντου ἁγίας αὐτοῦ Μητρός, τῶν ἁγίων ἐνδόξων καὶ πανευφήμων Ἀποστόλων, τῶν ὁσιῶν καὶ Θεοφόρων Πατέρων ἡμῶν, τῶν ἁγίων

LITANY FOR THE DEPARTED

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy, we pray you, hear and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy (x 3)

Deacon: Again we pray for the repose of the soul of the servant of God, N., who has fallen asleep, and that he/she may be pardoned every offence, both voluntary and involuntary.

Choir: Lord, have mercy (x 3).

Deacon: That the Lord our God may establish his/her soul where the righteous rest.

Choir: Lord, have mercy (x 3)

Deacon: The mercies of God, the kingdom of heaven and the forgiveness of his/her sins, let us ask of Christ, our immortal King and God.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O GOD OF SPIRITS AND ALL FLESH, who trampled down death and crushed the devil, giving life to your world; do you, Lord, give rest to the soul of your servant N., who has fallen asleep, in a place of light, a place of green pasture, a place of refreshment, whence pain, grief and sighing have fled away. Pardon, O God, as you are good and love mankind, every sin committed by him/her in word or deed or thought, because there is none who will live and not sin, for you alone are without sin; your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your word is truth.

EKPHONESIS

For you are the resurrection, the life and the repose of your servant N., who has fallen asleep, Christ our God, and to you we give glory, together with your Father who is without beginning, and your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Reader: Amen.

Priest: Glory to you, Christ God, our hope, glory to you.

Reader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy (x 3). Holy father, give the blessing.

The Priest gives the DISMISSAL as follows: May he who has authority over the living and the dead, as immortal King, and who rose from the dead, Christ, our true God, through the intercessions of his most pure and blameless Mother, of the holy, glorious and all-praised Apostles, of our venerable and God-bearing fathers, of the holy and glorious

ἐνδόξων προπατόρων Ἀβράαμ, Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ, τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ δικαίου φίλου αὐτοῦ Λαζάρου τοῦ τετραημέρου, καὶ πάντων τῶν Ἁγίων, τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ ἐξ ἡμῶν μεταστάντος δούλου αὐτοῦ ἐν σκηναῖς Δικαίων τάξαι, ἐν κόλποις Ἀβραὰμ ἀναπαύσαι, καὶ μετὰ Δικαίων συναριθμήσαι, ἡμᾶς δὲ ἐλεήσαι ὡς ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλάνθρωπος. Ἀμήν.

forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of the holy and righteous Lazarus, for four days dead, the friend of Christ, and of all the Saints, establish in the tents of the righteous the soul of his servant who has gone from us, give him/her rest in the bosom of Abraham, and number him/her with the righteous; and have mercy on us and save us, for he is good and loves mankind. Amen

Αἰωνία σου ἡ μνήμη, ἀξιομακάριστε καὶ ἀείμνηστε ἀδελφὲ ἡμῶν.

ΑΙΩΝΙΑ Η ΜΝΗΜΗ (x 3)

Eternal your memory, our brother/sister, worthy of blessedness and ever-remembered.

ETERNAL MEMORY (x 3)

Καὶ εἰ μὲν ἕτοιμα εἰσιν ἅπαντα τὰ τοῦ Ἐξοδίου, εὐλογεῖ αὖθις ὁ Ἱερεύς, καὶ ἀρχόμεθα ψάλλειν τὸ Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός . . . μετὰ φόβου καὶ πάσης κατανύξεως. Καὶ ἄραντες τὸ λείψανον ἀπερχόμεθα εἰς τὸν ναὸν, προπορευομένων τῶν ἱερέων μετὰ λαμπάδων, καὶ τοῦ Διακόνου μετὰ θυμιάτου.

If everything is ready for the Departure, the Priest again gives the blessing and we begin to sing the Trisagion with fear and great compunction. And having taken up the body we leave for the Church, the Priests going ahead with lights and the Deacon with the censer.

ΕΝ ΤΩ ΝΑΩ

Ὅταν δὲ ἐλθωσιν ἐν τῷ ναῷ, τὸ μὲν λείψανον ἀποτίθεται ἐν τῷ νάρθηκι, (ἢ ἐν τῷ μέσῳ τοῦ Ναοῦ).

Καὶ ἀρχόμεθα τοῦ ΨΑΛΜΟΥ 90

IN THE CHURCH

When they reach the Church the body is placed in the Narthex (or in the middle of the Church). And we begin

PSALM 90 (91).

Ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν βοηθείᾳ τοῦ Ὑψίστου, ἐν σκέπῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ αὐλισθήσεται. Ἐρεῖ τῷ Κυρίῳ· Ἀντιλήπτωρ μου εἶ καὶ καταφυγή μου, ὁ Θεός μου, καὶ ἐλπιῶ ἐπ' αὐτόν. Ὅτι αὐτός ῥύσεταί σε ἐκ παγίδος θηρευτῶν, καὶ ἀπό λόγου ταραχώδους. Ἐν τοῖς μεταφρένοις αὐτοῦ ἐπισκιάσει σοι, καὶ ὑπό τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἐλπιεῖς· ὅπλῳ κυκλώσει σε ἡ ἀλήθεια αὐτοῦ. Οὐ φοβηθήσει ἀπὸ φόβου νυκτερινοῦ, ἀπὸ βέλους πετομένου ἡμέρας. Ἀπό πράγματος ἐν σκότει διαπορευομένου, ἀπό συμπτώματος καὶ δαιμονίου μεσημβρινοῦ. Πεσεῖται ἐκ τοῦ κλίτους σου χιλιάς, καὶ μυριὰς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου, πρὸς σὲ δὲ οὐκ ἐγγιεῖ. Πλὴν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς σου κατανοήσεις, καὶ ἀνταπόδοσιν ἁμαρτωλῶν ὄψει. Ὅτι σύ, Κύριε, ἡ ἐλπίς μου· τὸν Ὕψιστον ἔθου καταφυγήν σου. Οὐ προσελεύσεται πρὸς σὲ κακά, καὶ μάστιξ οὐκ ἐγγιεῖ ἐν τῷ σκηνώματί σου. Ὅτι τοῖς Ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ ἐντελεῖται περί σοῦ, τοῦ διαφυλάξαι σε ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς σου. Ἐπί χειρῶν ἀροῦσί σε, μήποτε προσκόψῃς πρὸς λίθον τὸν πόδα σου. Ἐπί ἀσπίδα καὶ βασιλίσκον ἐπιβήσῃ, καὶ καταπατήσεις λέοντα καὶ δράκοντα. Ὅτι ἐπ' ἐμέ ἤλπισε, καὶ ῥύσομαι αὐτόν· σκεπάσω αὐτόν, ὅτι ἔγνω τό ὄνομά μου. Κεκράξεται πρός με, καὶ ἐπακούσομαι αὐτοῦ· μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰμι ἐν θλίψει· ἐξελοῦμαι αὐτόν καὶ δοξάσω αὐτόν. Μακρότητα ἡμερῶν ἐμπλήσω αὐτόν, καὶ δείξω αὐτῷ τὸ σωτήριόν μου.

One who dwells in the help of the Most High will live under the protection of the God of heaven; he will say to the Lord: You are my protector and my refuge, my God, and I shall hope in him. For he will deliver you from the hunters' snare, and from the word which troubles. He will overshadow you with his wings, and under his feathers you will have hope; his truth will encircle you with a shield. You will not be afraid of terror by night, of the arrow that flies by day; of the thing that prowls in the darkness, of mishap or of the noonday devil. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right, but it will not come near you. But with your eyes you will observe, and see the reward of sinners. For you, Lord, are my hope: you have made the Most High your refuge. Evils will not approach you, nor a scourge draw near your dwelling, because he has given orders to his Angels about you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you on their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You will walk on asp and basilisk, and trample down lion and dragon. Because he/she hoped in me, I shall deliver him/her; I shall shelter him/her, because he/she knew my name. He/she will cry to me, and I shall hear him/her, I am with him/her in trouble; I shall rescue him/her and glorify him/her. I shall fill him/her with length of days, and show him/her my salvation.

Καὶ μετά τοῦτο, γεγονωτέρᾳ φωνῇ·
Εὐλογητός εἶ, Κύριε, δίδαξόν με τὰ δικαιώματά σου.
Καὶ ψάλλεται ἡ ΠΡΩΤΗ ΣΤΑΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΜΩΜΟΥ Ψαλμου 118 εἰς Ἦχον πλ. β'. Ἐν δὲ τῷ τέλει ἑκάστου στίχου λέγομεν· Ἀλληλούϊα.

Μακάριοι οἱ ἄμωμοι ἐν ὁδῷ, οἱ πορευόμενοι ἐν νόμῳ Κυρίου.
Ἀλληλούϊα.
Ἐπεπόθησεν ἡ ψυχή μου τοῦ ἐπιθυμῆσαι τὰ κρίματά σου ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ.
Ἀλληλούϊα.
Ἐνύσταξεν ἡ ψυχή μου ἀπὸ ἀκηδίας, βεβαίωσόν με ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου.
Ἀλληλούϊα.
Κλῖνον τὴν καρδίαν μου εἰς τὰ μαρτύριά σου, καὶ μή εἰς πλεονεξίαν.
Ἀλληλούϊα.
Ἀθυμία κατέσχε με ἀπό ἁμαρτωλῶν, τῶν ἐγκαταλιμπανόντων τὸν νόμον σου.
Ἀλληλούϊα.
Μέτοχος ἐγώ εἰμι πάντων τῶν φοβουμένων σε, καὶ τῶν φυλασσόντων τὰς ἐντολάς σου.
Ἀλληλούϊα.

Δόξα. . . Ἀλληλούϊα.
Καὶ νῦν. . . Ἀλληλούϊα.

Ἕνα ΣΥΝΑΠΤΗ . . . ΘΕΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ . . .
ΕΚΦΩΝΗΣΙΣ

Καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἀρχόμεθα τῆς ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑΣ ΣΤΑΣΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΜΩΜΟΥ εἰς Ἦχον πλ. α'. Ἐν ἑκαστῳ δέ τέλει τοῦ στίχου, λέγομεν· Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου (ἢ τὴν δούλην σου).

Αἱ χεῖρές σου ἐποίησάν με καὶ ἔπλασάν με, συνέτισον με καὶ μαθήσομαι τὰς ἐντολάς σου.
Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου.
Ὅτι ἐγεννήθην ὡς ἀσκός ἐν πάχνῃ, τὰ δικαιώματά σου οὐκ ἐπελαθόμην.
Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου.

Σός εἰμι ἐγώ, σῶσόν με, ὅτι τὰ δικαιώματά σου ἐξεζήτησα.
Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου.
Ἀπὸ τῶν κριμάτων μου οὐκ ἐξέκλινα, ὅτι σύ ἐνομοθέτησάς με.
Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου.
Ἔκλινα τὴν καρδίαν μου, τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὰ δικαιώματά σου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα δι' ἀντάμειψιν.
Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου.
Καιρὸς τοῦ ποιῆσαι τῷ Κυρίῳ διεσκέδασαν τὸν νόμον σου.
Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου.
Δόξα . . . Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου.

And after this in a louder voice:
Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes.

And we sing the **1ST SECTION OF PSALM 118 (119)** in Tone 6, saying at the end of each verse, Alleluia.

Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. [cf. RSV v. 1]
Alleluia.
My soul has longed to desire your judgments at all times. [v. 20]
Alleluia.
My soul slumbered from weariness; strengthen me by your words. [v. 28]
Alleluia.
Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to covetousness. [v. 36]
Alleluia.
Dejection took hold of me because of sinners who abandon your law. [v. 53]
Alleluia.
I am a companion of all who fear you, and who keep your commandments. [v. 63]
Alleluia.
Glory. Alleluia
Both now. Alleluia.

LITANY FOR THE DEPARTED. . . 'O GOD OF SPIRITS AND ALL FLESH. . .' EKPHONESIS

And after this we begin the **2ND SECTION OF PSALM 118 (119)** in Tone 5, saying after each verse, Have mercy on your servant.

Your hands made me and fashioned me; make me understand, and I shall learn your commandments. [cf. RSV v. 73]
Have mercy on your servant.
For I have become like a wineskin in the frost; I have not forgotten your statutes. [v. 83]
Have mercy on your servant.
I am yours; save me, for I have sought your statutes. [v. 94]
Have mercy on your servant.
I did not turn aside from your judgments, for you gave me your law. [v. 102]
Have mercy on your servant.
I inclined my heart to do your statutes for ever, because of the recompense. [v. 112]
Have mercy on your servant.
It is time for the Lord to act; they have cast your law to the winds. [v. 126]
Have mercy on your servant.
Glory. Have mercy on your servant.

Καὶ νῦν . . . Ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου.
Σύναπτη . . . Θεος τῶν Πνευματων . . .
Ἐκφωνησις

Καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἀρχόμεθα τῆς **Τριτης Στασεως τοῦ Ἀμωμου** *εἰς Ἦχον πλ. α΄. Ἐν ἑκαστῳ δέ τέλει τοῦ στίχου, λέγομεν· Ἀλληλούϊα.*

Ἐπίβλεψον ἐπ' ἐμὲ καὶ ἐλέησόν με,
κατὰ τὸ κρίμα τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸ ὄνομά σου.
Ἀλληλούϊα.

Νεώτερος ἐγώ εἰμι, καὶ ἐξουδενωμένος,
τὰ δικαιώματά σου οὐκ ἐπελαθόμην.
Ἀλληλούϊα.

Τῆς φωνῆς μου ἄκουσον, Κύριε, κατά
τὸ ἔλεός σου, κατὰ τὸ κρίμα σου ζῆσόν με.
Ἀλληλούϊα.

Ἄρχοντες κατεδίωξάν με δωρεάν, καὶ
ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων σου ἐδειλίασεν ἡ καρδία μου.
Ἀλληλούϊα.
Ζήσεται ἡ ψυχή μου, καὶ αἰνέσει σε,
καὶ τὰ κρίματά σου βοηθήσει μοι.
Ἀλληλούϊα.
Ἐπλανήθην ὡς πρόβατον ἀπολωλός,
ζήτησον τὸν δοῦλόν σου, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολάς σου οὐκ ἐπελαθόμην.

Καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ **Νεκρωσιμα Ευλογηταρια** *εἰς Ἦχον πλ. α΄.*

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, δίδαξόν με τὰ δικαιώματά σου.

1) *Τῶν Ἁγίων ὁ χορὸς εὗρε πηγὴν τῆς ζωῆς καὶ θύραν παραδείσου· εὕρω κἀγὼ τὴν ὁδὸν διὰ τῆς μετανοίας· τὸ ἀπολωλὸς πρόβατον ἐγω εἰμί, ἀνακάλεσόν με, Σωτήρ, καὶ σῶσόν με.*

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, δίδαξόν με τὰ δικαιώματά σου.

5) *Ὁ πάλαι μὲν ἐκ μὴ ὄντων πλάσας με, καὶ εἰκόνι σου θείᾳ τιμήσας, παραβάσει ἐντολῆς δὲ πάλιν με ἐπιστρέψας εἰς γῆν, ἐξ ἧς ἐλήφθην· εἰς τὸ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν ἐπανάγαγε, τὸ ἀρχαῖον κάλλος ἀναμορφώσασθαι.*

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, δίδαξόν με τὰ δικαιώματά σου.

3) Omitted in all Greek versions; found only in Slavonic rescensions.

4) *Εἰκὼν εἰμὶ τῆς ἀῤῥήτου δόξης σου, εἰ καὶ στίγματα φέρω πταισμάτων· οἰκτείρησον τὸ σὸν πλάσμα, Δέσποτα, καὶ καθάρισον σῇ εὐσπλαγχνίᾳ καὶ τὴν ποθεινὴν πατρίδα παράσχου μοι, παραδείσου πάλιν ποιῶν πολίτην με.*

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, δίδαξόν με τὰ δικαιώματά σου.

Both now. Have mercy on your servant.
Litany for the Departed. . . 'O God of spirits and all flesh. . .' Ekphonesis

And so we begin the **3rd Section of Psalm 118 (119)** in Tone 3, saying after each verse, Alleluia.

Look upon me and have mercy on me, in accordance with the judgment of those who love your name. [cf. RSV v. 132]

Alleluia.

I am young and despised; I have not forgotten your statutes. [v. 141]

Alleluia.

Hear my voice, O Lord, in accordance with your mercy; in accordance with your judgment give me life. [v. 149]

Alleluia.

Rulers have persecuted me for no reason; and my heart has been in awe of your words. [v. 161]

Alleluia.

My soul will live and praise you; and your judgments will help me. [v. 175]

Alleluia.

I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek out your servant, because I have not forgotten your commandments. [v. 176]

After it at once the **Evlogitaria for the Dead** in Tone 5.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes.

1) The choir of Saints has found the source of life and the door of Paradise; may I too find the way through repentance; I am the lost sheep, call me back, O Saviour, and save me.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes.

2) You Holy Martyrs, who proclaimed the Lamb of God, and like lambs were slain, and have been taken over to the unending life which knows no ageing, plead with him to grant us abolition of our debts.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes.

3) All you who trod in life the hard and narrow way; all you who took the Cross as a yoke, and followed me in faith, come, enjoy the heavenly rewards and crowns which I have prepared for you.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes.

4) I am an image of your ineffable glory, though I bear the marks of offences; take pity on your creature, Master, and with compassion cleanse me; and give me the longed-for fatherland, making me once again a citizen of Paradise.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes.

2) *Οἱ τὸν ἀμνὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ κηρύξαντες, καὶ σφαγιασθέντες ὥσπερ ἄρνες, καὶ πρὸς ζωὴν τὴν ἀγήρω, ἅγιοι, καὶ ἀΐδιον μετατεθέντες, τοῦτον ἐκτενῶς, Μάρτυρες, αἰτήσασθε, ὀφλημάτων λύσιν ἡμῖν δωρήσασθαι.*

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, δίδαξόν με τὰ δικαιώματά σου.

6) *Ἀνάπαυσον, ὁ Θεός, τὸν δοῦλόν σου, καὶ κατάταξον αὐτὸν ἐν παραδείσῳ, ὅπου χοροὶ τῶν Ἁγίων, Κύριε, καὶ οἱ δίκαιοι ἐκλάμψουσιν ὡς φωστῆρες· τὸν κεκοιμημένον δοῦλόν σου ἀνάπαυσον, παρορῶν αὐτοῦ πάντα τα ἐγκλήματα.*

Δόξα. Τριαδικόν

Τὸ τριλαμπές τῆς μιᾶς Θεότητος εὐσεβῶς ὑμνήσωμεν βοῶντες· ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ Πατὴρ ὁ ἀναρχος, ὁ συνάναρχος Υἱός, καὶ θεῖον Πνεῦμα· φώτισον ἡμᾶς πίστει σοι λατρεύοντας, καὶ τοῦ αἰωνίου πυρὸς ἐξάρπασον.

Καὶ νῦν, Θεοτοκίον.

Χαῖρε, σεμνή, ἡ Θεὸν σαρκὶ τεκοῦσα εἰς πάντων σωτηρίαν· τὸ γὰρ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὕρατο τὴν σωτηρίαν· διὰ σοῦ εὕροιμεν παράδεισον, Θεοτόκε ἁγνή, εὐλογημένη.

Ἀλληλούϊα, Ἀλληλούϊα, Ἀλληλούϊα. Δόξα σοι, ὁ Θεός (x 3)

Σύναπτη . . . Θεος των Πνευματων . . . Ἐκφωνησις

Καὶ μετὰ τὴν Ἐκφώνησιν, ψάλλομεν τὰ παρόντα

Τροπαρια (Καθισματα) Ἦχος πλ. α΄.

Ἀνάπαυσον, Σωτὴρ ἡμῶν, μετὰ δικαίων τὸν δοῦλόν σου, καὶ τοῦτον κατασκήνωσον ἐν ταῖς αὐλαῖς σου, καθὼς γέγραπται· παρορῶν, ὡς ἀγαθός, τὰ πλημμελήματα αὐτοῦ τὰ ἑκούσια καὶ τὰ ἀκούσια, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ καὶ γνώσει, φιλάνθρωπε.

Δόξα

Καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ καὶ γνώσει, φιλάνθρωπε.

Καὶ νῦν. Θεοτοκίον

Ὁ ἐκ Παρθένου ἀνατείλας τῷ κόσμῳ, Χριστέ ὁ Θεός, υἱούς φωτός δι' αὐτῆς ἀναδείξας, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς.

Εἶτα τον Ψαλμον Ν΄ (50)

Ἐλέησόν με, ὁ Θεός, κατὰ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος σου, καὶ κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν σου ἐξάλειψον τὸ ἀνόμημά μου . . . κ.τ.λ.

Καὶ Ὁ Κανων, οὗ ἡ ἀκροστιχίς· Ἕκτον προσαυδῶ τοῖς ἀπελθοῦσιν μέλος.
Θεοφάνους. Ἦχ. Πλ. δ΄.

5) Of old you formed me from nothing and honoured me with your divine image, but because I transgressed your commandment, you returned me to the earth from which I was taken; bring me back to your likeness, my ancient beauty.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes.

6) Give rest, O God, to your servant[s], and settle them [him/her] in Paradise, where the choirs of the Saints and all the Just shine out like beacons; give rest to your servant[s] who has/have fallen asleep, overlooking all their [his/her]offences.

Glory. Triadikon.

Let us devoutly hymn the threefold light of the one Godhead as we cry: Holy are you, the Father without beginning, the Son likewise without beginning and the divine Spirit; enlighten us who worship you in faith, and snatch us from the everlasting fire.

Both now. Theotokion.

Hail, honoured one, who bore God in the flesh for the salvation of all; through you the human race has found salvation; through you may we find Paradise, O pure and blessed Mother of God.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to you, O God (x 3).

Litany for the Departed. . . 'O God of spirits and all flesh. . .' Ekphonesis

Then the following Kathismata in Tone 5.

Give rest, O our Saviour, with the just to your servant; and make him/her dwell in your courts, as it is written; overlooking, as you are good, their offences, willing and unwilling, and all of them committed through ignorance or through knowledge, O lover of mankind.

Glory.

And all of them committed through ignorance or through knowledge, O lover of mankind.

Both now.

Christ our God, who dawned on the world from a Virgin, making us, through her, children of light: have mercy on us.

And then **Psalm 50 (51)**

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your abundant mercy . . . &c.

And after it we immediately sing the following Canon for the Dead, whose acrostic is:
'I address my sixth song to the departed.'
A composition by Theophanes, in Tone 6

Ὠδὴ α'. Ὁ Εἱρμός

*Ὡς ἐν ἠπείρῳ πεζεύσας * ὁ Ἰσραὴλ * ἐν ἀβύσσῳ ἴχνεσι, τὸν διώκτην Φαραὼ* καθορῶν ποντούμενον, Θεῷ * ἐπινίκιον ᾠδὴν* ἐβόα ᾄσωμεν.*

Ἐν οὐρανίοις θαλάμοις διηνεκῶς οἱ γενναῖοι Μάρτυρες δυσωποῦσί σε, Χριστέ· ὃν ἐκ γῆς μετέστησας πιστόν, αἰωνίων ἀγαθῶν τυχεῖν ἀξίωσον.

Κατακοσμήσας τὰ πάντα, ζῶον μικτόν, μέσον με τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ταπεινότητος ὁμοῦ καὶ μεγέθους, ἔπλασας· διὸ τὴν τοῦ δούλου σου ψυχήν, Σῶτερ, ἀνάπαυσον.

Δόξα

Τοῦ παραδείσου πολίτην καὶ γεωργὸν κατ' ἀρχάς με ἔταξας, παραβάντα δὲ τὴν σὴν ἐντολὴν ἐξώρισας· διὸ τὴν τοῦ δούλου σου ψυχήν, Σῶτερ, ἀνάπαυσον.

Θεοτοκίον

Ὁ ἐκ πλευρᾶς διαπλάσας Εὔαν τὸ πρὶν τὴν ἡμῶν προμήτορα, ἐξ ἀχράντου σου γαστρὸς σάρκα περιβάλλεται, δι' ἧς τοῦ θανάτου τὴν ἰσχύν, ἁγνή, διέλυσεν.

Ὠδὴ γ'. Ὁ Εἱρμός

*Οὐκ ἔστιν ἅγιος ὡς σύ, *Κύριε ὁ Θεός μου,* ὁ ὑψώσας τὸ κέρας *τῶν πιστῶν σου ἀγαθέ,* καὶ στερεώσας αὐτοὺς * ἐν τῇ πέτρᾳ* τῆς ὁμολογίας σου.*

Νομίμως ἤθλησαν οἱ σοὶ Μάρτυρες, ζωοδότα, καὶ στεφάνῳ τῆς νίκης κοσμηθέντες, ἐκτενῶς τῷ μεταστάντι πιστῶς αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν βραβεύουσι.

Παιδεύσας πρότερον πολλοῖς τέρασι καὶ σημείοις, ἐμὲ τὸν πλανηθέντα, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων σεαυτὸν κενώσας, ὡς συμπαθής, καὶ ζητήσας εὗρες καὶ διέσωσας.

Ῥεόντων ἄστατον φθοράν, τὸν πρὸς σὲ διαβάντα ἐν σκηναῖς αἰωνίοις κατοικεῖν χαρμονικῶς ἀξίωσον, ἀγαθέ, δικαιώσας πίστει τε καὶ χάριτι.

Θεοτοκίον

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄμεμπτος ὡς σύ, πάναγνε Θεομῆτορ· μόνη γὰρ ἐξ αἰῶνος τὸν Θεὸν τὸν ἀληθῆ συνέλαβες ἐν γαστρί, τοῦ θανάτου λύσαντα τὴν δύναμιν.

*Ὁ Εἱρμός. Οὐκ ἔστιν ἅγιος ὡς σύ, *Κύριε ὁ Θεός μου,* ὁ ὑψώσας τὸ κέρας *τῶν πιστῶν σου ἀγαθέ,* καὶ στερεώσας αὐτοὺς * ἐν τῇ πέτρᾳ* τῆς ὁμολογίας σου.*

Ode 1. Irmos

As Israel marched on foot in the deep as on dry land and watched Pharao the pursuer drowning, they cried out: To God let us sing a song of victory.

[*At the prayers of your Martyrs, Lord, give rest to the soul of your servant.*]

In heavenly bridal chambers the noble Martyrs implore you, O Christ: Grant to your faithful servant[s] who has/have passed over from earth the enjoyment of eternal good things.

[*His/her soul will dwell among good things.*]

After setting all things in order you fashioned me, a living creature compounded midway between lowliness and greatness; therefore give rest, O Saviour, to the soul of your servant.

Glory.

Deputing me at the beginning as citizen and husbandman of Paradise, when I transgressed you commandment you banished me; therefore give rest, O Saviour, to the soul of your servant.

Both now. Theotokion.

Dresses himself in flesh from your immaculate womb, O Pure One, through which he has abolished death's might, the One who of old fashioned Eve our foremother from a rib.

All the Odes are sung in the same way.

Ode 3. Irmos

None is holy as you, O Lord my God, who have exalted the horn of your faithful people, O Good one, and established me on the rock of your confession.

Right skilfully, Giver of life, your Martyrs struggled and, adorned by you with the crown of victory, adjudge eternal redemption to the faithful one who has passed over.

Earlier, by many signs and wonders, you taught me, who had gone astray; at the last in your compassion for me you emptied yourself, and having sought me, found me and saved me.

Settle in joy in eternal dwellings, loving Lord, the one who has crossed over the unstable corruption of passing things to you, having justified him/her by faith and grace.

Theotokion.

Surely none is undefiled as you, O All-pure Mother of God; for you alone from all eternity, conceived in your womb the true God who abolished the power of death.

At once the Irmos. None is holy as you, O Lord my God, who have exalted the horn of your faithful people, O Good one, and established me on the rock of confession of you.

Συναπτη . . . Θεος των Πνευματων . . .
Ἐκφωνησις
Καὶ μετὰ τὴν Ἐκφώνησιν, **Καθισμα** *Ἦχος πλ. β΄.*

Ἀληθῶς ματαιότης τὰ σύμπαντα· ὁ δὲ βίος σκιὰ καὶ ἐνύπνιον· καὶ γὰρ μάτην ταράττεται πᾶς γηγενής, ὡς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή· ὅτε τὸν κόσμον κερδήσωμεν, τότε τῷ τάφῳ οἰκήσωμεν, ὅπου ὁμοῦ βασιλεῖς καὶ πτωχοί· διό, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, τὸν μεταστάντα δοῦλόν σου ἀνάπαυσον, ὡς φιλάνθρωπος.

Δόξα. Καὶ νῦν. Θεοτοκίον.

Παναγία Θεοτόκε, τὸν χρόνον τῆς ζωῆς μου μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς με· ἀνθρωπίνῃ προστασίᾳ, μὴ καταπιστεύσῃς με· ἀλλ' αὐτὴ ἀντιλαβοῦ, ἐλέησόν με.

Ὠδὴ δ΄. Ὁ Εἱρμός
*Χριστός μου δύναμις, *Θεὸς καὶ Κύριος,* ἡ σεπτὴ Ἐκκλησία *θεοπρεπῶς* μέλπει ἀνακράζουσα *ἐκ διανοίας καθαρᾶς,* ἐν Κυρίῳ ἑορτάζουσα.*

Σοφίας μείζονος δεικνύων γνώρισμα, καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ δῶρα πολυτελοῦς, Δέσποτα, χρηστότητος, τὰς τῶν Μαρτύρων χορείας τοῖς Ἀγγέλοις συνηρίθμησας.

Ἀφράστου δόξης σου τυχεῖν ἀξίωσον τὸν πρὸς σὲ μεταστάντα, ἔνθα, Χριστέ, τῶν εὐφραινομένων ἐστὶν ἡ κατοικία, καὶ φωνὴ καθαρᾶς ἀγαλλιάσεως.

Ὑμνοῦντα πρόσδεξαι τὸ θεῖον κράτος σου, ὃν ἐκ γῆς προσελάβου, τέκνον φωτός τοῦτον ἐργαζόμενος, τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὴν ἀχλὺν ἐκκαθαίρων, πολυέλεε.

Θεοτοκίον.

Δοχεῖον ἄχραντον, ναὸν πανάμωμον, κιβωτὸν παναγίαν, παρθενικὸν τόπον ἁγιάσματος, σὲ καλλονὴν τοῦ Ἰακὼβ ὁ Δεσπότης ἐξελέξατο.

Ὠδὴ ε΄. Ὁ Εἱρμός
*Τῷ θείῳ φέγγει σου, ἀγαθέ, * τὰς τῶν ὀρθριζόντων σοι ψυχάς * πόθῳ καταύγασον, δέομαι, * σὲ εἰδέναι, Λόγε Θεοῦ, τὸν ὄντως Θεόν, * ἐκ ζόφου τῶν πταισμάτων * ἀνακαλούμενον.*

Ὡς ὁλοκάρπωσις ἱερά, καὶ ὡς ἀπαρχὴ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης, οἱ Μάρτυρες, φύσεως· τῷ δεδοξασμένῳ προσενεχθέντες Θεῷ ἡμῖν τὴν σωτηρίαν ἀεὶ βραβεύουσι.

Τῆς οὐρανίου διαγωγῆς, τῆς διαμονῆς τῶν χαρισμάτων ἀξίωσον. Κύριε, τὸν προκοιμηθέντα πιστὸν οἰκέτην σου, παρέχων τῶν πταισμάτων τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν.

Ὁ μόνος φύσει ζωοποιός, τὸ τῆς ἀγαθότητος ὄντως ἀνεξιχνίαστον πέλαγος, τὸν τελειωθέντα τῆς βασιλείας τῆς σῆς ἀξίωσον, οἰκτίρμον, μόνε ἀθάνατε.

Litany for the Departed. . . 'O God of spirits and all flesh . . .' Ekphonesis
After the ekphonesis the **Kathismata** in Tone 6.

Truly all things are vanity, life is but a shadow and a dream, and vainly do humans trouble themselves, as the Scripture says: when we have gained the world, then we shall dwell in the grave, where kings and beggars are the same; therefore, O Christ God, give rest to those who have passed over, as you love mankind.

Glory. Both now. Theotokion.

All-holy Mother of God, do not forsake during my present life, do not entrust to human protection; but help me yourself and have mercy on me.

Ode 4. Irmos

Christ is my power, my God and Lord, the holy Church cries out from a pure mind in song befitting God, as it keeps festival in the Lord.

Manifesting the proof of your great wisdom and of your lavish goodness over gifts, O Master, you have numbered the choirs of Martyrs with the Angels.

You grant that he/she who has passed over may obtain your ineffable glory, O Christ, where those who rejoice have their dwelling, and where there is a sound of pure gladness.

Seize for yourself one who sing the praise your divine might, whom you have taken from earth, making him/her a child of light and purging away sin's gloom, O All-merciful.

Theotokion.

Immaculate vessel, all-spotless Temple, all-holy Ark, virginal Place of sanctification, beauty of Jacob; it is you the Master has chosen.

Ode 5. Irmos

With your divine radiance, O Good One, illumine, I beg, the souls of those who rise to you at dawn with love to know you, Word of God, to be truly God, calling them back from the gloom of offences.

Exalted is God, to whom the Martyrs were offered as a sacred holocaust and as firstfruits of nature, and they ever award us salvation.

To your faithful servant, who has fallen asleep before us, O Lord, grant a dwelling in heaven and a share of your gifts, giving him/her redemption of offences.

Hold worthy of your Kingdom him/her who has died, O Merciful and alone immortal, alone by nature the Giver of life, the truly unfathomable sea of goodness.

Θεοτοκίον.

Ἰσχὺς καὶ ὕμνησις ὁ ἐκ σοῦ, Δέσποινα, τοῦ κόσμου γεννηθείς· καὶ σωτηρία ἐγένετο τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἐκ τῶν τοῦ ᾅδου πυλῶν, ῥυόμενος τοὺς πίστει σὲ μακαρίζοντας.

Ὠδὴ ς'. Ὁ Εἱρμός

*Τοῦ βίου τὴν θάλασσαν * ὑψουμένην καθορῶν * τῶν πειρασμῶν τῷ κλύδωνι, * τῷ εὐδίῳ λιμένι σου προσδραμὼν * βοῶ σοι· Ἀνάγαγε * ἐκ φθορᾶς τὴν ζωήν μου, * πολυέλεε.*

Σταυρῷ προσηλούμενος, τῶν Μαρτύρων τοὺς χοροὺς πρὸς σεαυτὸν συνήγαγες, μιμουμένους τὸ πάθος σου, ἀγαθέ· διό σου δεόμεθα, τὸν πρὸς σὲ μεταστάντα νῦν ἀνάπαυσον.

Ἀφράστῳ τῇ δόξῃ σου, ὅταν ἔλθῃς φοβερῶς κρῖναι τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα ἐν νεφέλαις, εὐδόκησον, Λυτρωτά, φαιδρῶς ὑπαντῆσαί σοι, ὃν ἐκ γῆς προσελάβου πιστὸν δοῦλόν σου.

Πηγὴ ζωῆς πέφυκας, ἐν ἀνδρείᾳ θεϊκῇ πεπεδημένους, Δέσποτα· ὁ ἐξάγων τὸν δοῦλόν σου τὸν πρὸς σὲ πιστῶς ἐκδημήσαντα, ἐν τρυφῇ παραδείσου κατασκήνωσον.

Θεοτοκίον.

Εἰς γῆν ἀπεστράφημεν, παραβάντες τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν ἐντολὴν τὴν ἔνθεον· διὰ σοῦ δέ, Παρθένε, πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἐκ γῆς ἀνυψώθημεν, τὴν φθορὰν τοῦ θανάτου ἐκτινάξαντες.

Ὁ Εἱρμος· Τοῦ βίου τὴν θάλασσαν. . .

Σύναπτη . . . Θεος των Πνευματων . . . Ἐκφωνησις

Καὶ μετὰ τὴν Ἐκφώνησιν, <u>ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ</u>.

Ἦχος πλ. δ'

*Μετὰ τῶν Ἁγίων * ἀνάπαυσον, Χριστέ, * τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ δούλου σου, * ἔνθα οὐκ ἔστι πόνος, * οὐ λύπη, οὐ στεναγμός, * ἀλλὰ ζωὴ ἀτελεύτητος.*

<u>Ὁ ΟΙΚΟΣ</u>.

Αὐτὸς μόνος ὑπάρχεις ἀθάνατος, ὁ ποιήσας καὶ πλάσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον· οἱ βροτοὶ οὖν ἐκ γῆς διεπλάσθημεν, καὶ εἰς γῆν τὴν αὐτὴν πορευσόμεθα, καθὼς ἐκέλευσας ὁ πλάσας με καὶ εἰπών μοι· ὅτι γῆ εἶ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύσῃ, ὅπου πάντες βροτοὶ πορευσόμεθα ἐπιτάφιον θρῆνον ποιοῦντες ᾠδήν· τὸ Ἀλληλούϊα

Ὠδὴ ζ'. Ὁ Εἱρμός

*Δροσοβόλον μὲν τὴν κάμινον εἰργάσατο * Ἄγγελος τοῖς ὁσίοις Παισί· * τοὺς Χαλδαίους δὲ * καταφλέγον πρόσταγμα Θεοῦ, * τὸν τύραννον ἔπεισε βοᾶν· * Εὐλογητός εἶ, ὁ Θεός, * Ὁ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν.*

Λυτρωθέντες τῷ σῷ αἵματι οἱ Μάρτυρες τῆς πρώτης παραβάσεως, ῥαντισθέντες δὲ τῷ

Theotokion.

Strength and song and salvation for the lost he has become, the One born from you, Sovereign Lady of the world, delivering from the gates of Hell those who faithfully call you blessed.

Ode 6. Irmos

Watching life's sea rising with a tempest of temptations, fleeing to your calm haven, I cry out to you: Bring my life up from corruption, O Most merciful.

O Good One, nailed to the Cross you gathered to yourself the Martyrs who imitate your passion; and so we beg you, give rest now to him/her who has passed over to you.

Now be well pleased, O Redeemer, when you come terribly on the clouds in your ineffable glory to judge the whole world, for your faithful servant whom you have taken from the earth to meet you with shining radiance.

Guiding out by your divine manhood those who were bound, you are the source of life, O Master; establish in the delight of Paradise your servant who has departed to you in faith.

Theotokion.

To earth we were returned, having transgressed God's divine command; but through you, O Virgin, we have been raised from earth to heaven, having shaken off the corruption of death.

The Irmos. Watching life's sea rising with a tempest of temptations. . .

LITANY FOR THE DEPARTED. . . 'O GOD OF SPIRITS AND ALL FLESH . . .' EKPHONESIS

And after the Ekphonesis, **<u>KONTAKION</u>**.

Tone 8.

With the Saints give rest, O Christ, to the soul of your servant, where there is no toil, nor grief, nor sighing, but everlasting life.

<u>THE IKOS.</u>

You alone are immortal, who made and fashioned mankind; we mortals then were formed from earth and to that same earth we shall go, as You who formed me commanded saying: You are earth, and you will go back to earth; to which all we mortals will go making our funeral lament a song: Alleluia.

Ode 7. Irmos

An Angel made the furnace moist with dew for the godly Youths, while God's command consuming the Chaldeans persuaded the tyrant to cry out: Blessed are you, God of our Fathers.

Of the first transgression redeemed by your blood, the Martyrs, sprinkled with their own blood,

ἰδίῳ αἵματι, τὴν σὴν σαφῶς εἰκονίζουσι σφαγήν· Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, ὁ Θεός, ὁ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν.

Θρασυνόμενον τὸν θάνατον ἐνέκρωσας, Λόγε ζωαρχικώτατε, τὸν ἐν πίστει δὲ κοιμηθέντα πρόσδεξαι τανῦν ὑμνοῦντα καὶ λέγοντα, Χριστέ· Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, ὁ Θεός, ὁ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν.

Ὁ ψυχώσας με τὸν ἄνθρωπον φυσήματι θείῳ, θεαρχικώτατε, τὸν μεταστάντα βασιλείας, Δέσποτα, τῆς σῆς ἀξίωσον ψάλλειν σοι, Σωτήρ· Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, ὁ Θεός, ὁ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν.

Θεοτοκίον.

Ὑπερτέρα, πάσης κτίσεως, πανάμωμε, γέγονας, συλλαβοῦσα Θεὸν τὸν συντρίψαντα τοῦ θανάτου πύλας καὶ μοχλοὺς συνθλάσαντα, ὅθεν σε, ἀγνή, ὑμνολογοῦμεν οἱ πιστοὶ ὡς Θεομήτορα.

Ὠδὴ η'. Ὁ Εἱρμός

Ἐκ φλογὸς τοῖς ὁσίοις * δρόσον ἐπήγασας, * καὶ Δικαίου θυσίαν * ὕδατι ἔφλεξας· * ἅπαντα γὰρ δρᾷς, * Χριστέ, μόνῳ τῷ βούλεσθαι· * σὲ ὑπερυψοῦμεν * εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας.

Σταθερῶς τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐπιδεξάμενοι, τῷ τῆς νίκης στεφάνῳ κατεκοσμήθητε, Μάρτυρες Χριστοῦ ἀθλοφόροι, κραυγάζοντες· σὲ ὑπερυψοῦμεν, Χριστέ, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

Ἱερῶς τοὺς τὸν βίον ἀπολιπόντας πιστούς, καὶ πρὸς σὲ τὸν Δεσπότην μεταχωρήσαντας δέξαι, προσηνῶς ἀναπαύων, ὡς εὔσπλαγχνος, σὲ ὑπερυψοῦντας εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας.

Νῦν ἐν γῇ τῶν πραέων πάντας αὐλίζεσθαι τοὺς προκεκοιμημένους, Σῶτερ, εὐδόκησον· πίστει τῇ εἰς σὲ δικαιώσας καὶ χάριτι, σὲ ὑπερυψοῦντας εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας.

Θεοτοκίον

Μακαρίζομεν πάντες σέ, παμμακάριστε, τὴν τὸν Λόγον τὸν ὄντως ὄντα μακάριον, σάρκα δι' ἡμᾶς γεγονότα, γεννήσασαν· ὃν ὑπερυψοῦμεν εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας.

Ὠδὴ θ'. Ὁ Εἱρμός

Θεὸν * ἀνθρώποις ἰδεῖν ἀδύνατον, * ὃν οὐ τολμᾷ Ἀγγέλων ἀτενίσαι τὰ τάγματα· * διὰ σοῦ δέ, πάναγνε, ὡράθη βροτοῖς * Λόγος σεσαρκωμένος· * ὃν μεγαλύνοντες * σὺν ταῖς οὐρανίαις στρατιαῖς, * σὲ μακαρίζομεν.

Ἐλπὶς Μαρτύρων χοροὺς ἐνεύρωσε,

are plainly an image of your slaughter. Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

The arrogant death you slew, O Word, source of life; now therefore receive the one who has fallen asleep in faith, who sing your praise, O Christ, and say: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Having endowed me with life by your divine breath, O Master most divine, grant your Kingdom to him/her who has passed over, that he/she may sing to you, O Saviour: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Theotokion.

Even nobler than every creature you became, All-blameless, by conceiving God, who smashed the gates of death and shattered their bars; and so, O All-pure, we the faithful sing your praise as Mother of God.

Ode 8. Irmos

From flame you made a source of dew for the Saints and with water you consumed the sacrifice of a righteous man with flame. For you do all things, O Christ, simply by willing them. We highly exalt you to all the ages.

Displaying your struggles unshakeably, victorious Martyrs of Christ, you have been adorned with the crown of victory as you cry: We highly exalt you, O Christ, to the ages.

Ever gently receive the faithful who have left this life in holiness and have departed to you their Master, giving them rest as you are compassionate as they highly exalt you, O Christ, to the ages.

Place now in the land of the meek, O Saviour in your good pleasure, all those who have fallen asleep before us, having justified them by faith and by grace as they highly exalt you to all the ages.

Theotokion.

All of us call you blessed, All-blessed one, who gave birth to the Word who is truly blessed, and who became flesh for our sakes. We highly exalt him to all the ages.

Ode 9. Irmos

It is impossible for humans to see God, on whom the ranks of Angels dare not gaze. But through you, All-pure one, the incarnate Word has been seen by mortals. As we magnify him, with the heavenly armies we call you blessed.

Robust strength hope gave the choirs of

καὶ πρὸς τὴν σὴν ἀγάπην διαπύρως ἐπτέρωσε, τῶν μελλόντων τούτοις προτυπώσασα τὴν μὴ σαλευομένην ὄντως ἀνάπαυσιν· ἧς τὸν μεταστάντα, ἀγαθέ, πιστὸν ἀξίωσον.

Λαμπρᾶς καὶ θείας τυχεῖν ἐλλάμψεως, τῆς σῆς, Χριστέ, τὸν πίστει μεταστάντα εὐδόκησον τὴν ἐν κόλποις Ἀβραὰμ ἀνάπαυσιν· μόνος ὡς ἐλεήμων, τούτῳ δωρούμενος, καὶ τῆς αἰωνίου ἀξιῶν μακαριότητος.

Ὁ ὢν τῇ φύσει χρηστὸς καὶ εὔσπλαγχνος, καὶ θελητὴς ἐλέους, εὐσπλαγχνίας ἡ ἄβυσσος· ὃν ἐκ τόπου τούτου τῆς κακώσεως καὶ σκιᾶς τοῦ θανάτου, Σῶτερ, μετέστησας, ἔνθα καταλάμπει σοῦ τὸ φῶς, τοῦτον κατάταξον.

Θεοτοκίον.

Σκηνὴν ἁγίαν, ἀγνή, γινώσκομεν, καὶ κιβωτὸν καὶ πλάκα σε τοῦ νόμου τῆς χάριτος· διὰ σοῦ γὰρ ἄφεσις δεδώρηται τοῖς δεδικαιωμένοις διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σωματωθέντος ἐκ τῆς σῆς γαστρός, πανάμωμε

Ὁ Εἱρμός· Θεὸν ἀνθρώποις ἰδεῖν ἀδύνατον . . .

Martyrs and winged them ardently towards your love, foreshadowing for them the truly unshakeable rest that is to come; which rest grant, O Good one, that he/she who has passed over may attain.

That he/she who has passed over in faith may attain your bright and divine radiance, be pleased, O Christ, granting him/her, as you alone are merciful, rest in Abraham's bosom, and vouchsafing him/her eternal happiness.

Establish where your light shines forth, O Saviour, who are by nature good and compassionate, who desire mercy and are the abyss of compassion, the one whom you have taken over from this place of sorrow and of the shadow of death.

Theotokion.

Duly we know you, O Pure one, as the holy Tabernacle, Ark and Table of the Law of grace; for through you forgiveness has been given to those who have been justified through the blood of him who took his body from your womb, All-spotless one.

The Irmos. It is impossible for humans to see God, on whom the ranks of Angels . . .

Ἑνάπτη . . . Θεὸς τῶν Πνευμάτων . . . Ἐκφώνησις

Litany for the Departed. . . 'O God of spirits and all flesh . . .' Ekphonesis

Μετα δὲ τὴν Ἐκφώνησιν, ἀρχόμεθα
Τῶν Ἰδιομέλων Ἰωάννου Μοναχοῦ.

And after the Ekphonesis, we begin
The Idiomela
By Monk John, the Damascene.

Ἦχος α'.

Tone 1.

1) Ποία τοῦ βίου τρυφὴ διαμένει λύπης ἀμέτοχος; ποία δόξα ἔστηκεν ἐπὶ γῆς ἀμετάθετος; πάντα σκιᾶς ἀσθενέστερα, πάντα ὀνείρων ἀπατηλότερα· μία ῥοπή, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα θάνατος διαδέχεται· ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ φωτί, Χριστέ, τοῦ προσώπου σου, καὶ τῷ γλυκασμῷ τῆς σῆς ὡραιότητος, ὃν ἐξελέξω, ἀνάπαυσον, ὡς φιλάνθρωπος.

1) What pleasure in life remains without its share of sorrow? What glory stands on earth unchanged? All things are feebler than a shadow, all things are more deceptive than dreams; one instant, and death supplants them all. But, O Christ, give rest to him You have chosen in the light of your countenance and the sweetness of your beauty, as You love mankind.

Ἦχος β'.

Tone 2.

2) Ὡς ἄνθος μαραίνεται, καὶ ὡς ὄναρ παρέρχεται, καὶ διαλύεται πᾶς ἄνθρωπος· πάλιν δὲ ἠχούσης τῆς σάλπιγγος, νεκροί, ὡς ἐν συσσεισμῷ, πάντες ἀναστήσονται πρὸς τὴν σὴν ὑμάντισιν, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός· τότε, Δέσποτα, ὃν μετέστησας ἐξ ἡμῶν, ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἁγίων σου κατάταξον σκηναῖς, τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ σοῦ δούλου, Χριστέ.

2) As a flower withers and as a dream passes, so every human being is dissolved. But once again, at the sound of the trumpet, all the dead will arise as by an earthquake to go to meet you, Christ God. Then, Christ our Master, establish in the tents of your Saints the spirit of your servant whom you have taken over from us.

Ἕτερον ἐκτὸς Τυπικοῦ. Ἦχος ὁ αὐτός.

Another, outside the Typikon. Tone 2.

2a) Οἴμοι, οἷον ἀγῶνα ἔχει ἡ ψυχὴ χωριζομένη ἐκ τοῦ σώματος· οἴμοι, πόσα δακρύει τότε, καὶ οὐχ ὑπάρχει ὁ ἐλεῶν αὐτήν· πρὸς τοὺς ἀγγέλους τὰ ὄμματα ῥέπουσα, ἄπρακτα καθικετεύει· πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τὰς χεῖρας ἐκτείνουσα, οὐκ

2a) Alas, what an ordeal the soul endures once separated from the body! Alas, what tears then, and there is none to pity her! She turns towards the Angels, her entreaty is without effect; she stretches out her hands to men, she has none to help.

ἔχει τὸν βοηθοῦντα· διό, ἀγαπητοί μου ἀδελφοί, ἐννοήσαντες ἡμῶν τὸ βραχὺ τῆς ζωῆς, τῷ μεταστάντι τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν παρὰ Χριστοῦ αἰτησώμεθα, καὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Ἦχος γ'.

3) Πάντα ματαιότης τὰ ἀνθρώπινα, ὅσα οὐχ ὑπάρχει μετὰ θάνατον· οὐ παραμένει ὁ πλοῦτος, οὐ συνοδεύει ἡ δόξα· ἐπελθὼν γὰρ ὁ θάνατος, ταῦτα πάντα ἐξηφάνισται· διὸ Χριστῷ τῷ ἀθανάτῳ βοήσωμεν· τὸν μεταστάντα ἐξ ἡμῶν ἀνάπαυσον, ἔνθα πάντων ἐστὶν εὐφραινομένων ἡ κατοικία.

Ἦχος δ'.

4) Ὄντως φοβερώτατον, τὸ τοῦ θανάτου μυστήριον, πῶς ψυχὴ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος. βιαίως χωρίζεται ἐκ τῆς ἁρμονίας, καὶ τῆς συμφυΐας ὁ φυσικώτατος δεσμός, θείῳ βουλήματι ἀποτέμνεται. Διό σε ἱκετεύομεν· Τὸν μεταστάντα ἀνάπαυσον, ἐν σκηναῖς τῶν δικαίων σου, ζωοδότα Φιλάνθρωπε.

Ἕτερον ἐκτὸς Τυπικοῦ. Ἦχος ὁ αὐτός.

4a) Ποῦ ἐστιν ἡ τοῦ κόσμου προσπάθεια; ποῦ ἐστιν ἡ τῶν προσκαίρων φαντασία; ποῦ ἐστιν ὁ χρυσὸς καὶ ὁ ἄργυρος; ποῦ ἐστι τῶν οἰκετῶν ἡ πλημμύρα καὶ ὁ θόρυβος; πάντα κόνις, πάντα τέφρα, πάντα σκιά· ἀλλὰ δεῦτε, βοήσωμεν τῷ ἀθανάτῳ βασιλεῖ· Κύριε, τῶν αἰωνίων σου ἀγαθῶν ἀξίωσον τὸν μεταστάντα ἐξ ἡμῶν, ἀναπαύων αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἀγήρῳ μακαριότητί σου.

Ἦχος πλ. α'.

5) Ἐμνήσθην τοῦ προφήτου βοῶντος· ἐγώ εἰμι γῆ καὶ σποδός· καὶ πάλιν κατενόησα ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι, καὶ εἶδον τὰ ὀστᾶ τὰ γεγυμνωμένα καὶ εἶπον· ἄρα τίς ἐστι βασιλεύς, ἢ στρατιώτης, ἢ πλούσιος, ἢ πένης, ἢ δίκαιος, ἢ ἁμαρτωλός; ἀλλά ἀνάπαυσον, Κύριε, μετὰ δικαίων τὸν δοῦλόν σου, ὡς φιλάνθρωπος.

Ἦχος πλ. β'.

6) Ἀρχή μοι καὶ ὑπόστασις τὸ πλαστουργόν σου γέγονε πρόσταγμα· βουληθεὶς γὰρ ἐξ ἀοράτου τε καὶ ὁρατῆς με ζῶον συμπῆξαι φύσεως· γῆθέν μου τὸ σῶμα διέπλασας, δέδωκας δέ μοι ψυχὴν τῇ θείᾳ σου καὶ ζωοποιῷ ἐμπνεύσει· διό, Χριστέ, τὸν δοῦλόν σου ἐν χώρᾳ ζώντων, ἐν σκηναῖς δικαίων ἀνάπαυσον.

Ἦχος βαρύς.

7) Ἀνάπαυσον, Σωτὴρ ἡμῶν ζωοδότα, ὃν μετέστησας ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν ἐκ τῶν προσκαίρων,

Therefore my dear brethren, thinking on the shortness of our life, let us ask of Christ rest for him who has passed over, and for ourselves his great mercy.

Tone 3.

3) Everything human which does not survive death is vanity; wealth does not last, glory does not travel with us; for at death's approach all of them disappear; and so let us cry out to Christ the Immortal one: Give rest to him who has passed from us, in the dwelling of all those who rejoice.

Tone 4.

4) Truly most fearful is the mystery of death, how the soul is forcibly parted from the body, from its frame, and how that most natural bond of union is cut off by the will of God. Therefore we entreat you: Give rest in the tents of your just ones, him/her who has passed over, O Giver of life, Lover of mankind.

Another, outside the Typikon. Tone 4.

4a) Where is the attraction of the world? Where the delusion of the temporary? Where is gold, where silver? Where the throng and hubbub of servants? All dust, all ashes, all shadow. But come, let us cry out to the immortal King: O Lord, grant your eternal good things to him who has passed from us, giving him rest in the happiness which does not age.

Tone 5.

5) I remembered how the Prophet cried out: I am earth and ashes; and I looked again into the tombs and saw the naked bones, and I said: Who then is a king or a soldier, a rich man or a beggar, a just man or a sinner? But give rest, O Lord, with the just to your servant.

Tone 6.

6) Your command which fashioned me was my beginning and my substance; for wishing to compose me as a living creature from visible and invisible nature, you moulded my body from the earth, but gave me a soul by your divine and life-giving breath. Therefore, O Christ, give rest to your servant in the land of the living, in the tents of the just.

Tone 7.

7) Give rest, our Saviour, to our brother/sister, whom you have taken over from

κράζοντα δόξα σοι.

Ἕτερον ἐκτὸς Τυπικοῦ. Ἦχος ὁ αὐτός.

7a) Κατ' εἰκόνα σὴν καὶ ὁμοίωσιν πλαστουργήσας κατ' ἀρχὰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἐν παραδείσῳ τέθεικας κατάρχειν σου τῶν κτισμάτων· φθόνῳ δὲ διαβόλου ἀπατηθείς, τῆς βρώσεως μετέσχε, τῶν ἐντολῶν σου παραβάτης γεγονώς· διὸ πάλιν αὐτὸν εἰς γῆν, ἐξ ἧς ἐλήφθη, κατεδίκασας ἐπιστρέφειν, Κύριε, καὶ αἰτεῖσθαι τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν.

Ἦχος πλ. δ'.

8) Θρηνῶ καὶ ὀδύρομαι, ὅταν ἐννοήσω τὸν θάνατον, καὶ ἴδω ἐν τοῖς τάφοις κειμένην, τὴν κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ πλασθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ὡραιότητα, ἄμορφον, ἄδοξον, μὴ ἔχουσαν εἶδος· ὦ τοῦ θαύματος· τί τὸ περὶ ἡμᾶς τοῦτο γέγονε μυστήριον πῶς παρεδόθημεν τῇ φθορᾷ καὶ συνεζεύχθημεν τῷ θανάτῳ ὄντως Θεοῦ προστάξει, ὡς γέγραπται, τοῦ παρέχοντος τῷ μεταστάντι τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν.

ΟΙ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΣΜΟΙ Ἦχος πλ. β'.

Ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου μνήσθητι ἡμῶν, Κύριε, ὅταν ἔλθῃς ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.

Μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσι τὴν γῆν.

Μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.

Μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.

Ληστὴν τοῦ παραδείσου, Χριστέ, πολίτην, ἐπὶ Σταυροῦ σοι βοήσαντα τὸ μνήσθητί μου, προαπειργάσω· αὐτοῦ τῆς μετανοίας ἀξίωσον κἀμὲ τὸν ἀνάξιον.

Μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν Θεὸν ὄψονται.

Ζωῆς ὁ κυριεύων καὶ τοῦ θανάτου, ἐν ταῖς αὐλαῖς Ἁγίων ἀνάπαυσον, ὃν προσελάβου ἐκ τῶν προσκαίρων βοῶντα· μνήσθητί μου, ὅταν ἔλθῃς ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

Μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ κληθήσονται.

Ὁ τῶν ψυχῶν δεσπόζων καὶ τῶν σωμάτων, οὗ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ ἡ πνοὴ ἡμῶν, τῶν θλιβομένων παραμυθία, ἀνάπαυσον ἐν χώρᾳ δικαίων, ὃν μετέστησας δοῦλόν σου.

Μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Χριστός σε ἀναπαύσοι ἐν χώρᾳ ζώντων,

transient things, as he/she cries, 'Glory to you!'

Another, outside the Typikon. Tone 7.

7a) Having fashioned man in the beginning in your image and likeness, you placed him in Paradise to govern your creatures; but led astray by the envy of the devil he tasted the food and became a transgressor of your commandments; and so you condemned him, O Lord, to return again to the earth from which he had been taken, and to beg for rest.

Tone 8.

8) I grieve and lament when I contemplate death, and see the beauty fashioned for us in God's image lying in the graves, without form, without glory, without shape. O the wonder! What is this mystery which has happened to us? How have we been handed over to corruption, and yoked with death? Truly it is at God's command, as it is written, God who grants rest to him who has passed over.

Then THE BEATITUDES, Tone 6, as follows.

In your Kingdom remember us O Lord, when you come in your Kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy.

The Thief, O Christ, who cried out to you on the cross: Remember me, you proclaimed in advance to be a citizen of Paradise; make me also, the unworthy, worthy of his repentance.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Lord of life and death, give rest in the courts of the Saints to him/her whom you have taken from this temporary life as he/she cries out: Remember me, when you come in your kingdom.

Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Master of souls and bodies, in whose hand is our breath, the consolation of the afflicted, give rest in the land of the just your servant whom you have taken over.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of justice, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

May Christ give you rest in the land of the

καὶ πύλας παραδείσου ἀνοίξοι σοι, καὶ βασιλείας δείξοι πολίτην, καὶ ἄφεσίν σοι δῴη, ὧν ἥμαρτες ἐν βίῳ, φιλόχριστε.

Μακάριοί ἐστε, ὅταν ὀνειδίσωσιν ὑμᾶς, καὶ διώξωσι, καὶ εἴπωσι πᾶν πονηρὸν ῥῆμα καθ' ὑμῶν, ψευδόμενοι ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ.

Ἐξέλθωμεν καὶ ἴδωμεν ἐν τοῖς τάφοις, ὅτι γυμνὰ ὀστέα ὁ ἄνθρωπος, σκωλήκων βρῶμα καὶ δυσωδία· καὶ γνῶμεν τίς ὁ πλοῦτος, τὸ κάλλος, ἡ ἰσχὺς καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια.

Χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὅτι ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

Ἀκούσωμεν τί κράζει ὁ παντοκράτωρ· οὐαὶ οἱ ἐκζητοῦντες θεάσασθαι τὴν φοβερὰν ἡμέραν Κυρίου· αὕτη γάρ ἐστι σκότος, πυρὶ γὰρ δοκιμάσει τὰ σύμπαντα.

Δόξα.

Ἀνάρχῳ καὶ γεννήσει τε καὶ προόδῳ. Πατέρα προσκυνῶ τὸν γεννήσαντα, Υἱὸν δοξάζω τὸν γεννηθέντα, ὑμνῶ τὸ συνεκλάμπον Πατρί τε καὶ Υἱῷ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον.

Καὶ νῦν. Θεοτοκίον.

Πῶς ἐκ μαζῶν σου γάλα βρύεις, Παρθένε; πῶς τρέφεις τὸν τροφέα τῆς κτίσεως; ὡς εἶδεν, ὁ πηγάσας ὕδωρ ἐκ πέτρας, τὰς φλέβας τῶν ὑδάτων διψῶντι τῷ λαῷ, καθὼς γέγραπται.

ΠΡΟΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΝ, Ἦχος γ'.

Μακαρία ἡ ὁδός ἣ πορεύῃ σήμερον * ὅτι ἡτοιμάσθη σοι τόπος ἀναπαύσεως.

Στιχ. Πρὸς σέ, Κύριε, κεκράξομαι, ὁ Θεός μου, (μὴ παρασιωπήσῃς ἀπ' ἐμοῦ)

Ὁ Διάκονος· Σοφία.

Ὁ Ἀναγνώστης· Πρὸς θεσσαλονικεῖς α'. ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΥ ΤΟ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ. (Κεφ. Δ', 13-18).

Ὁ Διάκονος· Πρόσχωμεν.

Ὁ Ἀναγνώστης· Ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν περὶ τῶν κεκοιμημένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε . . . κ.τ.λ.

(See Greek New Testament for remainder of text)

Ὁ Χορός· ΑΛΛΗΛΟΥΙΑ, Ἦχος πλ. β'. Μακάριος ὃν ἐξελέξω καὶ προσελάβου, Κύριε.

living, open to you the gates of Paradise, make you a citizen of the Kingdom, and grant you forgiveness of the sins you committed in life, O Lover of Christ.

Blessed are you when men revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you for my name's sake.

Let us go out and see in the graves that man is bare bones, food for worms and stench, and realise what wealth is, what beauty, what strength, what loveliness.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

Let us listen to what the Almighty cries: Woe to those who seek to behold the dread day of the Lord; for it is darkness; for it will test all things by fire.

Glory.

I worship the Father, without beginning through birth or cause; I glorify the Son who was begotten; I praise the Holy Spirit who shines forth with the Father and the Son.

Both now. Theotokion.

How does milk gush from your breasts, O Virgin? How do you nourish him who nourishes creation? He knows, who made water spring from a rock, veins of water for the thirsty people, as it is written.

PROKEIMENON, Tone 3.

Blessed is the way on which you journey today, for a place of rest has been prepared for you.

Verse: To you I shall cry, O Lord my God, do not be silent towards me; never be silent towards me or I shall become like those who go down to the pit.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The READING is from the First EPISTLE of Paul to the Thessalonians. [4, 13-18]

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: Brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so too God will bring with him those who sleep through Jesus. We tell you this by the Lord's word, that we who are left alive at the Lord's coming will by no means precede those sleep. Because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, at the voice of an Archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are left alive will be snatched up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall all be with the Lord.

Priest: Peace to you.

Reader: And to your Spirit. ALLELUIA, Alleluia, Alleluia. Tone 6. Blessed is the one whom you have chosen and taken, O Lord.

(Στιχ. Καὶ τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτοῦ εἰς γενεὰν καὶ γενεάν.)

Ὁ Διάκονος· Σοφία· ὀρθοί, ἀκούσωμεν τοῦ ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου.

Ὁ Ἱερεύς· Εἰρήνη πᾶσι.

Ὁ Χορός· Καὶ τῷ πνεύματί σου.

Ὁ Ἱερεύς· Ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννην ΑΓΙΟΥ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΥ ΤΟ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ.

Ὁ Χορός· Δόξα σοι, Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

Ὁ Διάκονος· Πρόσχωμεν.

Ὁ ἱερεύς· Τό Εὐαγγέλιον (Κεφ. Ε', 24-31). Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος πρὸς τοὺς ἐληλυθότας πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἰουδαίους· ἀμὴν, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν . . . κ.τ.λ.

(See Greek New Testament for remainder of text)

Ὁ Χορός· Δόξα σοι, Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

Ἐκτενὴς

Καὶ μετὰ τὴν συμπλήρωσιν τουτών, λέγει ὁ πρῶτος τῶν ἱερέων, ἤ ὁ Ἀρχιερεύς τυχών, τὴν Εὐχήν Ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκὸς, μεγαλοφώνως, πλησίον τοῦ λειψάνου ἀπελθών· ὡσαύτως καὶ οἱ συμπαρόντες Ἱερεῖς ἅπαντες.

Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι, λεγομένης ἑκάστης Αἰτήσεως παρὰ τοῦ Διακόνου, ἐν ὅσῳ λέγεται ἡ Αἴτησις παρ' αὐτοῦ, λέγει τὴν ἄνωθεν Εὐχὴν ἕκαστος τῶν Ἱερέων κατὰ τὴν τάξιν αὐτοῦ, μυστικῶς, πλησίον τοῦ λειψάνου. Καὶ ἐκφωνεῖ· Ὅτι σὺ εἶ ἡ ἀνάστασις . . . Νῦν δὲ παρὰ τοῦ πρώτου τῶν ἱερέων, ἤ καὶ τοῦ Ἀρχιερέως λέγεται μεγαλοφώνως, ὡς ἀνωθεν εἴρηται.

Μετὰ δὲ τὴν Ἐκφώνησιν, γίνεται Ὁ ΑΣΠΑΣΜΟΣ. Καὶ ψάλλομεν τὰ παρόντα ΣΤΙΧΗΡΑ ΠΡΟΣΟΜΟΙΑ. Ἦχος β'. Ὅτε ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου σε νεκρὸν . . .

1) *Δεῦτε τελευταῖον ἀσπασμὸν δῶμεν, ἀδελφοί, τῷ θανόντι, εὐχαριστοῦντες Θεῷ· οὗτος γὰρ ἐξέλιπε τῆς συγγενείας αὐτοῦ, καὶ πρὸς τάφον ἐπείγεται· οὐκ ἔτι φροντίζων τὰ τῆς ματαιότητος καὶ πολυμόχθου σαρκός· ποῦ νῦν συγγενεῖς τε καὶ φίλοι; ἄρτι χωριζόμεθα ὅνπερ ἀναπαῦσαι Κύριος εὐξώμεθα.*

Verse: His/ her memory is from generation to generation.

Deacon: Wisdom, stand upright! Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace to all.

People: And to your spirit.

Priest: The READING is from the HOLY GOSPEL according to John. [5, 24-30]

People: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you!

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: The Lord said to the Jews who had come to him, 'Amen, Amen I say to you, that one who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life; and is not coming to judgement, but has passed over from death to life. Amen, Amen I say to you that the hour is coming and is now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who have heard will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to deliver judgement also, because he is son of man. Do not marvel at this; because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice; and they will come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, but those who have done ill to the resurrection of judgement. I can do nothing of myself; as I hear, I judge, and my judgement is just; because I do not seek my will, but the will of the Father who sent me'.

People: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you!

LITANY FOR THE DEPARTED

And after this is finished the senior Priest, or the Bishop, if one is present, says aloud the prayer O God of spirits and all flesh, going and standing near the body; while the other Priests do the same. Note that every time the Deacon says the Litany each of the Priests in order says this prayer quietly during the Litany as he stands by the body and then the conclusion out loud: For you are the resurrection . . .

And after the exclamation, the FINAL GREETING [*ASPASMÓS*] takes place, and we sing the following VERSES [*PROSOMOIA*] in Tone 2: When from the tree

1) Come, let us give the final kiss, brethren, to the dead, as we give thanks to God; because he/she has left his/her family and is hastening to the grave, he/she has no further care for things of no moment, affairs of the much-wearied flesh. Where now are his/her relatives and friends? Now as we are parted let us pray that the Lord will give him/her rest.

2) *Ποῖος χωρισμός, ὦ ἀδελφοί; ποῖος κοπετός; ποῖος θρῆνος ἐν τῇ παρούσῃ ῥοπῇ; δεῦτε οὖν, ἀσπάσασθε τὸν πρὸ μικροῦ μεθ' ἡμῶν· παραδίδοται τάφῳ γάρ, καλύπτεται λίθῳ, σκότει κατοικίζεται, νεκροῖς συνθάπτεται· πάντες συγγενεῖς τε καὶ φίλοι, ἄρτι χωριζόμεθα ὅπερ ἀναπαῦσαι Κύριος εὐξώμεθα.*

3) *Ἄρτι ἡ τοῦ βίου πονηρὰ λύεται πανήγυρις πᾶσα τῆς ματαιότητος· πνεῦμα γὰρ ἐξέλιπεν ἀπὸ σκηνώματος, ὁ πηλὸς μεμελάνται, τὸ σκεῦος ἐῤῥάγη, ἄφωνον, ἀναίσθητον, νεκρόν, ἀκίνητον· ὅπερ παραπέμποντες τάφῳ, Κύριον εὐξώμεθα δοῦναι εἰς αἰῶνας τούτῳ τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν.*

4) *Οἷα ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἐστίν; ἄνθος, καὶ ἀτμίς τε καὶ δρόσος ἑωθινὴ ἀληθῶς· δεῦτε οὖν, κατίδωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς τάφους τρανῶς· ποῦ τὸ κάλλος τοῦ σώματος; καὶ ποῦ ἡ νεότης; ποῦ εἰσὶ τὰ ὄμματα καὶ ἡ μορφὴ τῆς σαρκός; πάντα ἐξηράνθη ὡς χόρτος, πάντα ἠφανίσθησαν· δεῦτε, τῷ Χριστῷ προσπέσωμεν ἐν δάκρυσι.*

5) *Μέγας ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὀδυρμός, μέγας στεναγμὸς καὶ ἀνάγκη, ὁ χωρισμὸς τῆς ψυχῆς, ᾅδης καὶ ἀπώλεια, ἡ τῶν προσκαίρων ζωή, ἡ σκιὰ ἡ ἀνύπαρκτος, ὁ ὕπνος τῆς πλάνης, ὁ ἀκαιροφάνταστος μόχθος τοῦ βίου τῆς γῆς· πόῤῥω ἐκφευξώμεθα κόσμου ἅπαν τὸ ἁμάρτημα, ἵνα τὰ οὐράνια κληρονομήσωμεν.*

6) *Βλέποντες προκείμενον νεκρὸν, λόγον ἀναλάβῶμεν πάντες, τῆς τελευταίας ῥοπῆς· οὗτος γὰρ παράγεται, ὥσπερ παντὸς ἀπὸ γῆς, ὡσεὶ ἄνθος ἐξήνθησεν, ὡς χόρτος ἐτμήθη, ῥάκει σπαργανούμενος, γῇ καλυπτόμενος· ὅν περ ἀφανῆ λελοιπότες, τῳ Χριστῷ εὐξώμεθα δοῦναι, εἰς αἰῶνας τούτῳ τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν.*

7) *Δεῦτε οἱ ἀπόγονοι Ἀδὰμ, ἴδωμεν εἰς γῆν βεβλημένον, τὸν κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμῶν, ὅλην τὴν εὐπρέπειαν ἀποβαλλόμενον, λελυμένον ἐν μνήματι, σαπρίᾳ σκωλήκων, σκότει δαπανώμενον, γῇ καλυπτόμενον· ὅν περ ἀφανῆ λελοιπότες, τῳ Χριστῷ εὐξώμεθα δοῦναι, εἰς αἰῶνας τούτῳ τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν.*

8) *Ὅτε ἐκ σώματος ψυχὴ, μέλλει μετὰ βίας ἁρπᾶσθαι, ὑπό Ἀγγέλων φρικτῶν, πάντων ἐπιλάθεται τῶν συγγενῶν καὶ γνωστῶν, καὶ φροντίζει τὰ μέλλοντα, κριτήρια στῆναι, τὰ τῆς ματαιότητος, καὶ πολυμόχθου σαρκός. Δεῦτε τὸν Κριτὴν δυσωποῦντες, πάντες ἐπευξώμεθα, ἵνα, συγχωρήσῃ Κύριος, ἃ ἔπραξεν.*

9) *Δεῦτε ἐν τῷ τάφῳ ἀδελφοὶ, βλέψωμεν τὴν τέφραν καὶ κόνιν, ἐξ ἧς ἐπλάσθημεν· ποῦ νῦν πορευόμεθα; τί δ' ἐγεγόναμεν; ποῖος πένης ἢ πλούσιος; ἢ ποῖος δεσπότης; ποῖος δὲ ἐλεύθερος; καὶ οὐχὶ πάντες σποδός; κάλλος τοῦ προσώπου ἐσάπη, καὶ τὸ τῆς νεότητος ἅπαν, ἄνθος κατεμάρανεν ὁ θάνατος.*

2) What is this parting, O brethren? What the grieving, what the lamentation in this present instant? Come then, kiss him/her who a moment ago was with us; he/she is being entrusted to a grave, covered by a stone, left to dwell in darkness, buried with the dead; all we his/her relatives and friends as we are now being parted, let us pray that the Lord will give him/her rest.

3) Now the whole wretched festival of life's vanity is being dissolved; for the spirit has left its dwelling, the clay has turned black, the vessel has been broken, without voice, without sensation, without movement; as we escort him/her to the grave. Let us pray that the Lord will give him/her rest for ever.

4) What is our life? Merely a flower, a vapour and morning dew. Come then, let us look closely at the graves; where is the body's beauty? Where its youth? Where are the eyes and the form of the flesh? All have withered like grass, all have vanished; come, let us fall down before Christ with tears.

5) Great the weeping and lamentation, great the sighing and constraint at the parting of the soul; Hell and destruction, the life of transitory things, the insubstantial shadow, the sleep of error, the untimely fancied toil of earthly life. Let us fly far from every worldly sin that we may inherit the things of heaven.

6) As we look on one who lies dead let us accept this expression of the final moment; for he/she passes like smoke from the earth, he/she blossomed like a flower, was cut down like grass, is wrapped in a winding sheet, hidden in earth. When we have left him/her out of sight, let us pray to Christ to give him/her rest for ever.

7) Come, offspring of Adam, let us look at one in our image who has been laid in earth, who has discarded all his/her beauty, been dissolved in a grave by the rottenness of worms, wasted by darkness, hidden in earth. When we have left him/her out of sight, let us pray to Christ to give him/her rest for ever.

8) When the soul is about to be snatched by force from the body by fearsome Angels, it forgets relatives and friends and its concern is for its stand at the coming trial of vanity and much wearied flesh. Come, let us all beseech the Judge and pray that the Lord pardon all that he has done.

9) Come, brethren, let us look in the tomb at the ashes and dust, from which we were fashioned. Where are we now going? What have we become? What is a poor person, what a rich? What a master, what a free? Are they not all ashes? The beauty of the face has rotted and death has withered all the flower of youth.

10) *Ὄντως ματαιότης καὶ φθορὰ, πάντα τὰ τοῦ βίου ἡδέα, καὶ τὰ περίδοξα! πάντες γὰρ ἐκλείπομεν, πάντες θνῃξόμεθα, βασιλεῖς τε καὶ ἄρχοντες, κριταὶ καὶ δυνάσται, πλούσιοι καὶ πένητες, καὶ πᾶσα φύσις βροτῶν· νῦν γὰρ, οἱ ποτὲ ἐν τῷ βίῳ, τάφοις καταβέβληνται· οὓς περ, ἀναπαύσαι Κύριος εὐξώμεθα.*

11) *Πάντα τὰ τοῦ σώματος νυνὶ, ὄργανα ἀργὰ θεωροῦνται, τὰ πρὸ μικροῦ κινητὰ· πάντα ἀνενέργητα, νεκρὰ, ἀναίσθητα· ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ κατέδυσαν, ἐδέθησαν πόδες, χεῖρες ἡσυχάζουσι, καὶ ἀκοὴ σὺν αὐτοῖς. γλῶσσα τῇ σιγῇ συνεκλείσθη, ταφῷ παραδιδοται· ὄντως, ματαιότης πάντα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα.*

Θεοτοκίον

Σῶζε τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας εἰς σὲ, Μήτηρ τοῦ ἀδύτου Ἡλιου, Θεογεννήτρια· αἴτησαι πρεσβείαις σου, τον ὑπεράγαθον, ἀναπαῦσαι δεόμεθα, τὸν νῦν μεταστάντα, ἔνθα ἀναπαύονται αἱ τῶν Δικαίων ψυχαί· θείων ἀγαθῶν κληρονόμον, δεῖξον ἐν αὐλαῖς τῶν Δικαίων, εἰς μνημόσυνον πανάμωμε αἰωνιον.

Δόξα. Ἦχος πλ. β'.

Ὁρῶντές με ἄφωνον καὶ ἄπνουν προκείμενον, κλαύσατε πάντες ἐπ' ἐμοί, ἀδελφοὶ καὶ φίλοι, συγγενεῖς καὶ γνωστοί· τὴν γὰρ χθὲς ἡμέραν μεθ' ὑμῶν ἐλάλουν, καὶ ἄφνω ἐπῆλθέ μοι ἡ φοβερά ὥρα τοῦ θανάτου· ἀλλὰ δεῦτε, πάντες οἱ ποθούμενοί με, καὶ ἀσπάσασθέ με τὸν τελευταῖον ἀσπασμόν· οὐκ ἔτι γὰρ μεθ' ὑμῶν πορεύσομαι, ἢ συλλαλήσω τοῦ λοιποῦ· εἰς κριτὴν γὰρ ἀπέρχομαι, ἔνθα προσωπολημψία οὐκ ἔστι· δοῦλος γὰρ καὶ δεσπότης ὁμοῦ παρίστανται, βασιλεὺς καὶ στρατιώτης, πλούσιος καὶ πένης ἐν ἀξιώματι ἴσῳ· ἕκαστος γὰρ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἔργων ἢ δοξασθήσεται ἢ αἰσχυνθήσεται· ἀλλ' αἰτῶ πάντας καὶ δυσωπῶ, ἀδιαλείπτως ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ προσεύξασθαι Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ, ἵνα μὴ καταταγῶ κατὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας μου εἰς τὸν τόπον τῆς βασάνου, ἀλλ' ἵνα με κατατάξῃ ὅπου τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς

Καὶ νῦν. Θεοτοκίον. Ὁ αὐτός.

Πρεσβείαις τῆς τεκούσης σε, Χριστέ, καὶ τοῦ Προδρόμου σου, Ἀποστόλων, Προφητῶν, ἱεραρχῶν, Ὁσίων και Δικαίων, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, τὸν κοιμηθέντα δοῦλόν σου ἀνάπαυσον.

ΤΡΙΣΑΓΙΟΝ. Παναγία Τριάς . . . Πάτερ ἡμῶν . . . Ὅτι σου ἐστιν . . .

Καὶ τὰ ΤΡΟΠΑΡΙΑ ταῦτα εἰς ἦχον δ'·

Μετὰ πνευμάτων δικαίων . . . καὶ τὰ ἕτερα (εἰς σελ. 292).

ΣΥΝΑΠΤΗ . . . ΘΕΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ . . .
ΕΚΦΩΝΗΣΙΣ

10) Truly all the pleasant and glorious things of life are vanity and corruption! For we all depart, we shall all die, monarchs and rulers, judges and potentates, rich and poor and every mortal being. For now those that were once in life have been cast into tombs. May the Lord give them rest we pray.

11) Now all the body's organs are idle, that a little while ago were active; all useless, dead, insensible; for eyes are dimmed, feet bound, hands lie still and hearing with them, tongue is locked in silence, is entrusted to a grave; truly everything human is vanity.

Theotokion.

Save those who hope in you, All-pure Mother of the unsetting Sun, who bore God; with your prayers, we beg you, ask him who is supremely good to give rest where the souls of the righteous are at rest to him/her who has passed over; make him/her heir to good things in the courts of the just unto eternal memory.

Glory. Tone 6.

As you see me lying without voice and without breath, all weep for me, brothers and friends, relatives and acquaintances; for only yesterday I was talking with you, and suddenly the dread hour of death came upon me. But come, all who loved me, and kiss me for the last time; for I shall not walk with you again, nor speak with you any more; because I am on my way to the Judge, with whom there is no respect of persons; for slave and master stand alike before him, king and soldier, rich and poor, with the same rank; for each will be glorified or shamed in accordance with their own deeds. But I ask and implore you all, pray for me without ceasing to Christ God, that I may not be condemned because of my sins to the place of torment, but that he will establish me in the place of the light of life.

Both now. Theotokion, the same Tone.

At the prayers of her who gave you, birth, O Christ, and of your Forerunner, of the Apostles, Prophets, Hierarchs, Ascetics, of the Just and of all the Saints, give rest to your servant who has fallen asleep.

TRISAGION . . . All-holy Trinity . . . Our Father . . . For yours is the Kingdom, . .

Then the following **TROPARIA** are sung in the 4th Tone (as on page 292):

With the spirits of the righteous made perfect in death . . .

LITANY FOR THE DEPARTED. . . 'O GOD OF SPIRITS AND ALL FLESH . . .' EKPHONESIS

Μετὰ δὲ τὴν Ἐκφώνησιν, Δόξα . . . Καὶ νῦν . . . καὶ ΑΠΟΛΥΣΙΣ·

Ὁ ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν, Χριστὸς ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς παναχράντου αὐτοῦ Μητρός, τῶν ἁγίων, ἐνδόξων καὶ πανευφήμων Ἀποστόλων, τῶν ὁσίων καὶ θεοφόρων Πατέρων ἡμῶν καὶ πάντων τῶν Ἁγίων, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ ἐξ ἡμῶν μεταστάντος δούλου (ἢ τῆς ἐξ ἡμῶν μεταστάσης δούλης) αὐτοῦ ἐν σκηναῖς δικαίων τάξαι, ἐν κόλποις Ἀβραὰμ ἀναπαύσαι, καὶ μετὰ δικαίων συναριθμήσαι, καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐλεήσαι, ὡς ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλάνθρωπος. Ἀμήν.

After the ekphonesis, Glory . . . Both now . . . and . . . And the Priest gives THE DISMISSAL as follows:

May he who has authority over the living and the dead, as immortal King, and who rose from the dead, Christ, our true God, through the intercessions of his most pure and holy Mother, of the holy, glorious and all-praised Apostles, of our venerable and God-bearing fathers, and of all the Saints, establish in the tents of the righteous the soul of his servant who has gone from us, give him/her rest in the bosom of Abraham, and number them him/her with the righteous; and have mercy on us and save us, for he is a good God and loves mankind.

Αἰωνία σου ἡ μνήμη, ἀξιομακάριστε καὶ ἀείμνηστε ἀδελφὲ ἡμῶν (x 3)

ΑΙΩΝΙΑ Η ΜΝΗΜΗ (x 3)

Eternal your memory, our brother/sister, worthy of blessedness and ever-remembered.

ETERNAL MEMORY (x3).

ΕΙΣ ΤΩ ΤΑΦΩ

AT THE GRAVESIDE

Καὶ οὕτως ἄραντες τὸ λείψανον, ἀπερχόμεθα εἰς τὸν τάφον, ψάλλοντες τὸ Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός . . .

And so taking up the remains, we leave for the grave, singing the Holy God etc.

Καὶ τίθεται τὸ λείψανον ἐν τῷ μνήματι. Ὁ δὲ Ἱερεὺς ἄρας χοῦν μετὰ τοῦ πτύου, σταυροειδῶς ἐπιῤῥίπτει ἐπάνω τοῦ λειψάνου, λέγων·

And the remains are laid in the tomb. The Priest takes some dust with the shovel and scatters it crosswise over the remains, saying:

Τοῦ Κυρίου ἡ γῆ, καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς, ἡ οἰκουμένη, καὶ πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ.

The earth is the Lord's, and its fullness; the world and all who dwell on it.

Καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπιχέει ἐπὶ τᾷ λειψάνῳ κανδήλαν, ἢ την τέφραν τοῦ θυμιατηρίου. Καὶ οὕτω καλύπτουσιν, ὡς σύνηθες, τον τάφον, ἐπιλεγομένων τῶν Τροπαρίων, ἤγουν· Μετὰ πνευμάτων δικαίων . . . καὶ τὰ ἕτερα, καὶ ΑΠΟΛΥΣΙΣ (εἰς σελ. 293.).

ΑΙΩΝΙΑ Η ΜΝΗΜΗ (x 3)

And after this he pours the oil of the lamp, or the ash from the censer over the remains. And so they fill the grave, as usual, while saying the **Troparia** as above: With the spirits of the righteous made perfect in death . . . And the Priest gives THE DISMISSAL as earlier.

ETERNAL MEMORY (X 3).

Τέλος τοῦ ἐξοδιαστικοῦ τῶν Κοσμικῶν.

The conclusion of the Funeral Service for Lay-persons.

APPENDIX II

FOUR PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED TALKS ON 'THE ORTHODOX LITURGY OF DEATH': by Father Alexander Schmemann

INTRODUCTION

This document presents my transcriptions of tape-recordings of four talks delivered by Father Alexander Schmemann in the late 1970s. The tapes themselves are distributed by "Father Alexander Schmemann Books" (P.O. Box 1390, Place Bonaventure, Montréal QC, H5A 1H3), an institution based at the 'Sign of the Theotokos' Orthodox Church which is a parish within the Archdiocese of Canada of the Orthodox Church in America ('OCA').

From internal clues within the lectures (e.g., references to 'this Institute,' the mention of a date (p. 358), a reference by Fr. Alexander to his age), I am certain that the lectures were delivered on June 27 – 28, 1979, during a 'Liturgical Institute' held at St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, New York where Fr. Schmemann was Dean and Professor of Liturgical Theology.

In the context of the Institute, Fr. Alexander delivered four lectures dealing with the 'Liturgy of Death.' Talk I: 'Development of Christian Funeral Rites' (pp. 311-21) is an introduction to the other three addresses, and contains much material that is repeated and amplified in the subsequent three talks, whose titles are: Talk II – 'The Funeral: Rites and Practices' (pp. 322-35); Talk III – 'Prayers for the Dead' (pp. 336-47); and Talk IV – 'The Liturgy of Death and Contemporary Culture' (pp. 348-60).

The transcriptions themselves have not been edited to any significant extent, and reflect much of the style of the original addresses. In transcribing, the following conventions have been used:

- An ellipsis within square brackets [. . .] represents a deletion of spoken material because either: (a) it was inaudible or otherwise unclear in the tape; or (b) it was felt to be 'unnecessary' (e.g., extraneous asides, jokes, certain phrases in original languages other than English, etc.).
- An ellipsis of three dots without square brackets – . . . – corresponds to an ellipsis in the original talk due to such things as incomplete thoughts or 'pregnant pauses.'
- Material in square brackets [ ] normally is editorial, and represents: (a) minor rearrangements in syntax; or (b) an attempt to guess at what *might* have been said where there is either inaudible material or an incomplete sentence; or (c) the sources of scriptural quotations or allusions.
- Italicized words or phrases are used to highlight vocal emphases made by Fr. Alexander himself, or to identify words from languages other than English.

For ease of reference, the talks have been divided into numbered sections bearing titles of my own devising.

TALK I: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN FUNERAL RITES

I. A. *Death as a 'Practical Problem'*

I.A.1. *Some Introductory Observations*

[In] the Sunday troparion in the Fourth Tone, [we hear]: "Death is no more . . ." However, if taken literally, this quotation would bring this Institute to an end! I will assume [therefore] that for awhile, at least, we [will] *not* take it literally, and the question is of course: "How *do* we take that quotation?" Now, the purpose of this Institute is *practical.* It is an attempt to deal precisely [at] a practical [level] – and [this] means pastoral, liturgical, musical level[s] – with problems pertaining to that essential area of the Church's life and ministry [. . .] that can be termed [the] 'Liturgy of Death.' (Notice that I say the word 'liturgy' here not in its narrow, exclusively liturgical connotation, but in the meaning it had in the early Church – that indeed of an essential ministry and function, including in this particular case the Church's vision of [and] response to [. . .] Death.) And yet, to say this is already to attach some qualifications to the word 'practical.' For nothing in the Church – especially in an area of such magnitude and depth – can be simply reduced to the category of the practical, if 'practical' includes opposition to (if not a divorce from) the theoretical, from a vision, a faith, a tradition.

All practice in the Church is always first of all the practice of a theory, an epiphany of a belief. Thus, for example, when a French princess in the seventeenth century requests in her will that on the day of her funeral, one thousand Masses be served in the city of Paris [. . .], this request reflects a certain type of piety which in turn is rooted in a particular understanding of 'the theory,' of death itself. When, within the Church (and this time, our own Orthodox Church), there developed little by little a tremendously complex system of rules defining when one can or cannot pray for the dead, and then those very rules are consistently broken by the clergy themselves – so to speak by 'popular demand,' because the people want it – we have a clear proof that a shift in the very understanding of prayer for the dead has taken place, and demands not merely an enforcement of rules, but first of all the rediscovery of the *meaning* of those rules. Finally, when in the long history [. . .] of the cemetery – we see it first located *extra muros,* outside the city or the village, to constitute a distinct *necropolis,* a 'city of the dead,' then we see the cemetery moved to the very center of the 'city of the living' and become not only, as we say today, the 'church-yard,' but in fact the center of activities having nothing to do with death. (You'll be surprised to know that, during the Middle Ages, even joyful events took place in cemeteries, and no one was scandalized.) [. . . .] And so, when all this happens, then finally again we see [another transformation], in order [for cemeteries] to become the beautiful, hygienic and dreamy 'Forest Lawns' of our own time, and the very pride of our culture – we must realize [that] a tremendous change has occurred in the very *ethos* of our society, in its understanding this time not only of death, but of life itself.

I give these examples – taken, so to speak, at random, and belonging to different aspects of the problem with which we have to deal in this Institute – in order precisely to try to formulate the problem itself. What these examples prove is that we will not achieve much if in our 'practical' pursuits, we ignore or neglect the theological, historical and cultural framework which determines our present situation and, by determining it, reveals it to us as, precisely, the 'problem' – maybe even *the* problem for us, Orthodox Christians living in the West, in America, in this last quarter of the twentieth century, and desperately trying to be 'Orthodox' in a world, in a culture, not only alien, but in the last analysis openly opposed to the Orthodox faith and vision.

I.A.2. *The Challenge(s) of Contemporary Culture*

I.A.2.a. Secularism. Thus, I understand my task in these four keynote lectures as an attempt to outline – briefly, and in many ways tentatively – those more theoretical terms of reference, without which we risk [discussing] 'pseudo-solutions' to 'pseudo-problems.' And our first term of reference is, of course, modern culture itself. Whether we want it or not, death cannot be artificially isolated from culture, because culture is primarily a vision and an understanding of *life*, a 'world-view,' and is therefore, and of necessity, an understanding of death. One can say that it is by [its] attitude toward death that a culture defines and reveals its understanding of life – [its] understanding of the meaning and goal of life.

Now, I'm convinced that the Orthodox Christians, and more especially those living in the West, knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or subliminally, have adopted that culture, and this includes its attitudes towards death. For others, that attitude has been simply 'forced' on them, as the only possible one, [so that they] are not even aware of the radical discrepancy between that attitude and the one the Church will hastily reveal during that four hours spent in the church (spent by the casket, I mean, [. . .] on its way from the funeral home to the church to the cemetery). And this, especially in view of the fact that this hour itself – the short funeral service we have today – has been adjusted in such a manner as simply not to contradict the culture, but rather to supply it with a kind of alibi, with a proof of the culture's respect for the 'faith of our fathers' (which, as everyone knows, is expressed primarily in customs, rites, and ceremonies!).

Therefore, if our purpose (and indeed the purpose of the Church always and everywhere) consists in understanding, challenging, and transforming culture – any culture, anywhere – to transform it with her faith, embodied and preserved in her tradition, [then] we must begin with an effort to discern the ultimate meaning of our modern culture, and this means the meaning it ascribes to death. And here, my dear brothers and sisters, the essential and seemingly paradoxical fact is that our culture ascribes to death *no meaning whatsoever*. Or, to put it differently, the meaning of death in our modern culture consists in [its] having *no meaning*. I'll have to explain that, because [this is] the reality – this is not at all a paradox, but the natural (and I would even say inescapable) consequence of *secularism* which, as everyone knows and agrees, is the main, truly all-embracing characteristic of our culture.

Now, what is secularism within this context? Whatever else could and should be said about it (and for this we obviously have no time here), secularism is primarily an idea, an experience of

life, as having its meaning and its value in life itself, without any reference to anything that could be termed 'other-worldly.' As I have tried to show elsewhere in some other articles (and not only I, of course, but virtually all students of secularism), secularism is not to be simply identified with atheism or rejection of religion. Thus, we all know (or should know by now) that American secularism (different in this from, let's say, the Marxist one) is indeed *very*, almost pathologically, *religious*. It suffices, however, to glance through the titles of sermons (you know, [in] the Saturday papers, announcing what's happening at the Second Baptist Church, or the Thirty-first Presbyterian), or to read the list of various activities in any given parish (absolutely regardless of denominational identity) to realize that religion within a secularist culture (like the American one) pursues in fact the same goals as secularism itself – the goals of happiness, self-fulfillment, social and personal improvement. [. . .] Such goals may be lofty and noble – to relieve the world's hunger, to fight racism, [. . .] – or these goals may be very limited – to preserve our ethnic identity, to cultivate a kind of collective security. The fact which interests me here is that neither secularism in its totality, nor in its religious expression, has any room for *death as a meaningful event*, as the 'high time,' the *kairos* of human destiny. One can say without being cynical, or attempting to make an easy joke, that in our culture, the only real value of death for life is the cash value of a man's life insurance – this at least is tangible.

I.A.2.b. A 'conspiracy of silence' (death denied). Now, death of course is a fact, inescapable and, on the whole, unpleasant (I don't have to elaborate that one). As such (and I'm trying to summarize secularist reasoning), it must be handled and dealt with in the most efficient way, and this means in a way which will reduce to a minimum its unpleasantness for all concerned, beginning with the dying 'patient' (as he's described today – one is a 'patient' of death), and also the disruptive effects death could have on life and on the living. Hence, the complex yet exceedingly well-oiled machine devised by our society to deal with death, and whose unfailing efficiency is assured by the equally [florid] cooperation of the medical profession, the funeral industry, the clergy, and – last, but not least – the family itself – these are the co-conspirators!

This machine is programmed to supply in an orderly sequence many services. It makes death as easy, [as] painless, and [as] unnoticeable as possible. This is achieved first by *lying* to the patient about his real condition as long as this can be done, and then, when such lying is no longer possible, by drugging him into unconsciousness. Then, it makes the difficult post-mortem period as easy and as comfortable as possible too. Here, the function is that of the morticians, the experts in death, whose role in a way is vicarious. They perform in a friendly manner all that which, in the past, was performed by the family. They handle and prepare the body, *they* wear the black apparel of mourning which permits us to keep our . . . – our pink pants! They tactfully yet firmly manipulate the family at the most crucial moments of the burial, *they* cover the grave. They ensure [that] their expert, efficient and dignified performance takes the *sting* out of death, making [it all] into an experience which, although (let's accept it) melancholic and sorrowful, is in no way disruptive of life.

Now, by comparisons with the two essential 'specialists of death' – the doctor and the funeral director – the third element of the 'funeral machinery' – the priest, and in general, the

Church – seems to occupy a secondary and, for all practical purposes, subordinate position. The development which resulted in what the French scholar, Philippe Ariès (to me the best specialist in the history of death) called the 'medicalization of death' – that means its transfer to the hospital and its treatment as a shameful, almost obscene illness, disease, secret – this 'medicalization' has first radically reduced the part of the priest in the whole *dying* stage, [i.e.] before death. From the medical point of view – and more often than not today, on the part of the family – the priest is not *welcome* to disturb the patient by breaking to him the news of his imminent death. But he is absolutely welcome – inasmuch as he would accept (and he does it today more and more) to 'play the game,' to 'join the team' whose purpose is precisely to 'abolish death' as a meaningful event [. . .] by concealing it from the dying one himself.

In the second stage, the handling of the body (or, as the Church calls it, the 'relics of the deceased'), the Church has virtually surrendered to culture. She has no part in the preparation of the body, which is secretly transferred to the working room of the funeral home, and reappears in the church (excuse my expression) as a 'finished product,' projecting another image of our aseptic, hygienic, 'decent' way of life and death. Neither has the Church any part in the inventing and now in the selection of the casket, and she has not – at least to my knowledge, be it only once – protested against this transformation, [against] this horrifying, flashy object whose purpose is probably to make death, if not *desirable*, at least comfortable, solid, peaceful, and on the whole, harmless. And it is in facing that over-decorated contraption (which, if anything, makes us think of window displays, of wax figures in big department stores) – it is [in] facing that strange contraption that the Funeral Service is expedited, a service whose every word and act denounces the feelings, ideas, the world-view of which the modern funeral is, no doubt, the best, the most adequate and perfect expression.

Of the service itself, of the Church's celebration of death, I shall speak a little later. And if I begin – not with our Orthodox 'Liturgy of Death' but with the culture within which we have to celebrate it – it is because I want to make the point which is to me essential and decisive. Our culture is the first culture in the long history of mankind which *ignores death*, in which in other terms, death is not a term of reference for life or for anything in life. Modern man – even if he believes, as the majority of modern people seem to believe, in some sort of survival' (I pulled that from a poll: 'some sort of survival') – modern man does not live *this* life in function of that survival. For this life, death has no meaning. It is, to use a term taken from the vocabulary of economics, a 'total loss.' And therefore, the purpose of what I called the 'funeral machine' is to make that loss for us, the survivors, as painless, as smooth, and as unnoticeable as possible.

I.A.2.c. The 'humanization' of death (death tamed). It is true that recently, this 'conspiracy of silence' surrounding death in our secularist culture seems to have been somewhat cracking. Death has begun to be discussed, the conspiracy of silence is being denounced, and the tremendous success of [certain] books – [Elisabeth] Kübler-Ross's *On Death and Dying*, [Vladimir] Jankelevitch's *La Mort*, the collected volumes on the dying patient, Ivan Ilyich's book on this 'medicalization of death,' etc. – indicates a new and even *fashionable* interest in death. But, it would be wrong (at least I am convinced of that) to see in that interest a sign of search for the

rediscovery of the meaning of death. On the contrary, this interest seems to me to be nourished primarily by the desire to 'humanize death,' a desire akin to the growing search by modern man for what he thinks will 'humanize' his life. And you know what he is seeking and finding: natural food and natural birth, jogging, home-baked bread – all these 'mini-gospels' which he, the modern man, thinks will eliminate (or rather liberate) – him from being manipulated by 'systems.' ("Milk is a natural" – I wouldn't be surprised if in a few years we shall hear as a follow-up to that commercial something like "Death is a natural.") The doctors and the funeral directors conceal death, make it into a secret. Well, bring it back into life! Stop being ashamed of it! Face it in a mature and adult manner! And liquidate this: whatever mystery and tragedy, whatever sacredness and numinosity has still [been] preserved. Such seems to me to be the motivation behind the return of death as a theme, as an object of interest and study in our culture.

And it is not an accident, I'm sure, that even best-sellers dealing with that famous 'survival' today are written, without exception, by doctors! In secularism, *everything* – even rebellion – must be scientific. Even escape needs a scientific basis and approval. Today – do I have to prove it? – spirituality and mysticism are a 'science' which can be studied for credit in certain schools. You know that 'scientific' is our pursuit of happiness, and then 'scientific' is also the study of the 'after-death.' And if a poll, that is a scientific tool, tells us that 72% of [those] 'patients' [who have] gone through clinical death and [have] survived it, are sure that they have experienced *something*, [then] you better believe that there is that 'something.' Since however, that 'something' is in no way related to our life here and now, to any of its tasks and pre-occupations, it does not deprive death of its hopeless meaninglessness.

I.A.2.d. Death as 'neurosis.' And this leads me to my last remark concerning death and its place within our secularist culture. Being deprived of meaning, suppressed as the ultimate event giving meaning to life, death in our culture has become a *neurosis*, an illness to be treated therapeutically. Whether it is masquerade by the funeral industry, whether it is naturalized by the apostles of everything natural, death remains omnipresent, but precisely as a neurosis. It is that anxiety which fills the offices of psychologists, counselors, psychoanalysts of all obediences and shades, the real (though never-mentioned) theme of endless therapeutic conversations about adjustment, identity, self-fulfillment and normalcy. For deep down, beneath all the seemingly fool-proof and scientific fences built by secularism, man *knows* that if death has no meaning, life has no meaning either. And not only life [itself], but nothing *in* life has any meaning. Hence, the underlying despair and violence, the utopianism, the lust, and ultimately, the foolishness that constitute the real background, the dark sub-conscious, of our seemingly happy and rational secularist culture.

It is against this background, against this all-pervasive neurosis, that we Orthodox Christians are to scrutinize and above all to rediscover the true meaning of death and the way to death which are revealed and given to us by Christ. Wouldn't it be wonderful indeed if, to this secularized and meaningless death, and to the neurotic anxiety it generates by its very suppression, we Orthodox Christians could simply and triumphally, in [these] three days, propose the Orthodox idea and experience of death, the Orthodox way of facing and handling it? Alas, [in the light of]

what I've just said, [we see that] the situation is not that simple. The very fact that we have come here to discuss, to try to understand and to rediscover the Orthodox way of death and its meaning, unmistakably proves that something, somewhere, is wrong. What? Therefore, we must begin with an attempt to elucidate what is wrong, what happened to the Christian idea of death, and accordingly to the Christian *practice* [. . .], to the Christian *liturgy* of death.

I.A.3. *The Christian Roots of 'Secular Death'*

I.A.3.a. "Des idées chrétiennes devenues folles." The first thing we must remember when we try to answer these questions is that [this] secularism, which we denounce today as the source of all evils, was born and developed – first as an idea, as a philosophy of life, and then as a *way* of life – within a 'Christian culture' [which] means that the culture itself [was] born under the influence of Christianity. It is widely accepted today that secularism is a post-Christian *heresy*, and that its roots are to be looked for in the decomposition, the falling apart, of the medieval Christian civilization. Many of the basic presuppositions of secularism are, in the words of a French philosopher, "des idées chrétiennes devenues folles" – Christian ideas gone crazy. And this is what makes a Christian evaluation of secularism – and *fighting* it – so difficult. I don't know whether we realize that much of that religious fighting of secularism today is done from pseudo-spiritualistic, escapist, and Manichean positions. And those positions are not only alien, but indeed *opposed*, to Christian faith, even when they claim to be fully Christian and fully Orthodox.

I cannot (and I do not have to) develop the analysis of the Christian roots of secularism, that which made it precisely into a Christian heresy. The point I wish to make, because this is important for our subject, is this: one cannot fight secularism without having first understood what brought it into existence, without becoming at least aware of the Christian part in the responsibility for its emergence. And here, *death stands indeed at the very center.* For, as I said earlier, [his] attitude towards death is always the ultimate revelation of man's attitude towards life and towards being. It is here, it is at this level, that we have to locate the confusion which I have just spoken of, and the awareness of which has brought us to this Institute. The *essence* of that confusion, as also its cause, consists first of all in [. . .] the progressive separation, by the Christians themselves (and this in spite of the initial Christian faith and doctrine) of life from death, of death from life – in their treatment (spiritual, pastoral, liturgical, psychological) *apart* from one another, their treatment as two different *objects* or areas of the Church's care and concern.

I.A.3.b. *Memento mori.* To me, one of the best examples of this separation are [the] little sheets of paper with lists of names that the Russians at least (I don't know about the others) send to the priest with their prosphoras for commemoration at the Proskomide. You all know (those who know the Russian tradition) that the names of the living are inscribed on a paper with a *red* inscription on the top of it: "For the Health and Salvation" [. . .], and those of the dead under a *black* inscription: "For the Repose of the Soul." From my early days as an altar boy in the big Russian cathedral in Paris, I remember very vividly the classical experience of the normal Sunday. When the Liturgy is finished, there begins a long succession of private Panikhidas which, depending on the demand of the 'customer,' are served – some by the priest and the cantor, some by

the priest, the deacon, and a small choir, some by the priest, deacon and a *full* choir. There still exist churches in America (and you know that) in which, with the exception of Sundays, a 'black Liturgy' (that means a private special Liturgy for the dead) is served virtually every day. As we shall see later, the numerous and complex rules concerning the days on which one can or cannot have such special commemorations of the dead were established in order to somehow regulate this flood of funeral piety which threatened to engulf the Church in the middle ages.

However, what I wish to stress right now is precisely this *separation*, this experience of the Church in terms of *two areas*, practically independent from one another – that of the living [and] that of the dead, the one white, the other black. The relationship between the two in history varies. Thus, in the incredibly recent past, the Church, both in the East and in the West (although in different forms and styles) leaned more towards the black. Today, the trend seems to be reversed. The priest, who in that past spent most of his time dealing with the dead, and whose image in the popular imagination was that of a walking *memento mori*, today – both in his own self-understanding and in the popular image – is first of all a *guide*, a spiritual and even social leader of the living, an active member of the great 'therapeutic crowd,' busying himself with the spiritual, mental, and physical health of man.

Even more important, death today is an obviously important and permanent, yet *private*, sector in the Church. Private – and clerical; it is the priest and *not* the Church in her totality who deals with the dead, just as it is the priest, and not the Church, that has the "professional obligation" to visit the sick and the suffering. In fact, this 'clericalization of death' preceded its medicalization. It is the Church [which] first relegated death into a specialized 'department' and opened – psychologically [and] culturally – the door to its physical relegation into the anonymity of a hospital room. *Death is for the dead, not for the living.* They, the dead, are of course entitled to the decorum and the doubtful beauty of the funeral arrangements, to the incomprehensible yet deeply moving 'last rites,' to commemorations [on] special days and occasions, to flowers on their grave[s] on Memorial Day. And since, by doing all this, we, the living, fulfill our obligations to them, our conscience is clear. Life continues, and we may peacefully discuss the next parish affair. The separation works!

But the question remains, and is today more urgent than ever: "Is this separation *Christian*?" Does it correspond to, does it express, the Christian faith and the genuine teachings of the Church? Does it fulfill the Gospel, the Good News about that unique revolution – the only *true revolution* – that took place some two thousand years [ago], on the morning of the first day of the week, a revolution whose unique and eternal meaning is that it overcame and abolished, once [and] for all, *death as separation*? We have reached the crux of the matter. To this question [of whether the separation is Christian], obviously the answer is an emphatic 'No!' But [. . .] given our present situation – the situation which, when all is said, ought to be defined as the secularization of death in both culture and Church – [this 'No'] needs some explanation.

I. B. *The 'Christian Revolution'*

I.B.1. ***The Ancient 'Cult of the Dead'***

If I use the term 'revolution,' it is in order to emphasize the radical uniqueness of the change performed by the Christian faith in the human attitude towards death or, maybe better to say, a change in death itself. For death – do I need to prove it? – has always stood at the center of human pre-occupations, and is certainly one of the main sources of 'religion.' Regarding death, the function of religion from the very beginning, has always been to 'tame' it – this is the expression of Philippe Ariès, "apprivoiser la mort – to tame death" – to neutralize its disruptive effects on life. The so-called 'primitive man' is afraid (we should know that) not so much of death [but] of *the dead.* In all religions, the dead survive, but it is precisely this survival, the potential interference of the dead with the life of the living that the latter fear. In the vocabulary of the history of religion, the dead man is a *mana* [which] means a 'dangerous force,' a power which, unless it is neutralized, becomes a danger to life and to the living. Therefore the main task of religion is to keep the dead *separate* from the living – separate and satisfied. Hence, the burial places, the tombs, [were] kept *extra muros*, outside the city of the living. Hence, the numerous sacrificial meals (we should never forget that sacrifice originally was always a meal) offered not *for* but *to* the dead. Hence the special days for such sacrifices. Hence in all civilizations – without any exception – [there are] days believed to be especially dangerous, especially open to the invasion of life by the dead, and therefore, days which are set apart as *dies nefasti*, 'dangerous days.' The two worlds – that of the living [and] that of the dead – coexist and to some extent even interpenetrate one another. But, to be orderly and secure, that coexistence must be based on *separation.* And the task [of] assur[ing] that separation – and thus, [of] *orderly* coexistence – is precisely the task of religion.

Let me stress that this immemorial 'cult of the dead' – which has much to do with tombs, rituals, skeletons, sacrifices, calendars, [etc.] – has very little, if anything, to do with God whom we – erroneously – take to constitute the object of *all* religions, and of 'religion' as such. Not at all! The historian of religions [tells us that] God in religion is a 'late-comer'; it doesn't begin with God *at all.* And even today, his place in religion is very seriously challenged by almost anything – by the cult of the 'surviving dead' [*sic*] [. . .], or on the other hand, the pursuit of happiness. . . God is always a little bit in the background of religion! The primitive man knows *nothing* of our distinction between the natural and the supernatural. Death is *natural* for him, as natural as *Sheol*, the necropolis [or] 'city of the dead' – natural and at the same time, as [with] almost everything in nature, *dangerous*, and because of this, requiring the extra ties of religion – its 'know-how' in handling the dead. Religion appears, first of all, as the technology of death.

Now, it is only against the background of that immemorial 'cult of the dead,' in reference to that [pained] death, that we can understand the uniqueness of what I call the 'Christian revolution.' It is a revolution in the first place because its first and essential dimension is the radical shift [. . .] of religious interest *from death to God.* (It seems like self-evident – the greatest revolution of all time.) It is no longer death – or even 'after-death' – that is the main, the ultimate preoccupation of Christian faith; it is God. And this radical change is prepared already in the Old Testament which is the book, above all, of the thirst and hunger for God, the book of "them that seek him" and whose "heart and flesh rejoice in the living God." Indeed, there is plenty of death and dying in the Old

Testament, and yet – read it! – there is no curiosity [about] death, no interest in it apart from God. If death is lamented upon, it is because it is separation from God – the impossibility to praise him, to seek and to see and to enjoy his presence. The very survival of man in *Sheol*, in the dark kingdom of death, is above all the pain of being separated from God, the darkness and the despair of solitude. Thus, in the Old Testament, death has already lost its autonomy [and] is no longer the *object* of religion, [having] no meaning in itself, but only in relation to God.

I.B.2. *The Defeat of Death*

But, of course, it is in the New Testament, . . that we find the fulfillment of the 'God-centered' understanding of death, of the revolution initiated, announced, prepared in the Old Testament. What does this Gospel announce? First, that in the life, in the teachings, in the crucifixion, in the death, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, death is revealed as 'the Enemy,' as the corruption that entered the world created by God and which transformed it into a valley of death. "And the last enemy shall be abolished – death" [1 Cor 15:26]. No question anymore of taming it, of making it 'natural,' or of beautifying it. It is an insult to God who has *not created death*. Second, the Gospel announces that death is the fruit of sin; "through sin," writes St. Paul, "death entered the world" [Rom 5:12]. Death is the ransom of sin, of man's disobedience to God, man's rejection of life in God, and with God, the rejection of God for the sake of man's life in himself, the result of man's alienation from God . . . [TAPE INTERRUPTED IN ORIGINAL]

. . . . [Third, Christ has defeated death] by trampling it with his own death. He has no death in him, yet he accepted it voluntarily, and this acceptance is made up entirely of his obedience to his Father, of his love for creation and for man. Under the guise of death, Divine Love itself enters *Sheol*, overcoming the separation and solitude. Dispelling the darkness of Hades, Christ's death is a divine and a radiant act of love, and in his death, therefore, the spiritual reality of death is abolished. And finally, the Christian Gospel announces that with Christ's resurrection, a new life – a life which has *no death in it* – is given to all those who believe in him and are united with him: united with him first through baptism, which is their own descent into Christ's 'deathless death,' their own partaking of the glory of his resurrection; united to him through anointment [*sic*] with the Holy Spirit, the giver and the content of that new Christ-life; [and] united to him through Eucharist which is their participation in his glorious ascension to heaven, and their partaking at his table in his Kingdom of his immortal life. And thus, death is no more; death has been swallowed up by the earth [cf. 1 Cor 15:54].

I.B.3. *Early Christian Origins of the Liturgy of Death*

For the early Church, we are now coming to the origins of the Christian liturgy of death. These joyous affirmations which we still repeat at our weekly resurrection vigils are true – literally. Indeed, if anything should strike a student of the early Christian worship, and more especially of the early Christian funeral, it is the *absence* of any interest in or any preoccupation with, the physical or biological death. And also – and this is even more striking and significant – the absence of any

interest in and preoccupation with the 'after-death,' with the 'state of the deceased' between death and the final resurrection, that state which in later theology will be called 'intermediate,' and which, in the West, [will] be dealt with in the doctrine of purgatory. As to the East, it will become the object of a kind of 'para-theology,' about which the serious theologians seem not to know, even today, whether this is to be taken seriously or dismissed as popular devotion, if not sheer superstition.

Nothing of that in the early Church! Obviously, Christians buried their dead. More than that, when we study *how* they buried them, we learn that they buried them, in fact, in accordance with the entire funeral tradition of the society in which they lived – be it Jewish or Greco-Roman. They do not seem anxious to develop their own specifically Christian funeral rites. No 'apostolic commission' on Christian funerals! No development of their own practices. They even used the funeral terminology of the cultures surrounding them. We don't [realize] probably – or some of us do not know – that [in] the earliest prayer [with] which I'll deal tomorrow at a certain length: "God of spirits and of all flesh . . ." – that in this early prayer of absolution which we still use, the terms [in] which that faith is couched are pagan, for the dead are dwelling in "a place of brightness, a place of verdure, a place of repose." No problem with taking pagan symbols as long as we know what we mean by them.

And so externally it all looks as if nothing has happened. Christian catacombs are in fact cemeteries absolutely similar to the non-Christian catacombs or cemeteries. If the Church survives under the persecutions, it is precisely as a *collegium funeralium*, a society supplying cheap funerals to its members, just like our immigrant brotherhoods in America, whose main purpose was to get buried. The Eucharist, celebrated on the anniversary of a martyr's death, on his tomb, to a pagan outsider totally looked like a *refrigerium*, the sacrificial meal which pagans offered to their own dead. Nothing seems to have changed, and yet, *everything* has changed, for what changed is *death itself*. Or rather, death has been changed radically – I would say ontologically, if you want – by Christ's death. Death is no more as separation, for it has ceased to be separation from God, and thus, separation from life. And nothing expresses better the certitude that this radical change has taken place than the inscriptions we find on Christian graves, like this one, preserved on the tomb of a young girl – a simple inscription : "She is alive!"

The early Church lives in the quiet and joyful certitude that those who have fallen asleep in Christ, *en Christô*, are alive. Or, to quote another early formula of our funeral rites: "[They] are there where the light of God's face visits them" [. . .]. She asks no question as to the nature and the modality of that 'being alive' before the final and common resurrection and the last judgment – questions which, much later, will constitute in fact the only problems dealt with in the last chapters of dogmatics, the so-called treatise *De Novissimis*, 'On the Last Things.' And she does not [ask] all these questions – not because, as the Western theologians think, of the 'under-developed' state of theology, the absence then of a more elaborate systematic eschatology. She does not ask these questions because, as we shall see, she is freed from that individualistic – one can almost say 'egocentric' – interest in death as *my death*, as the fate of *my* soul after *I* die, interest which will appear later and virtually overcome the eschatology of the early Church.

For the early Christians, the common resurrection is precisely *common*, and this means a cosmic event, the fulfillment of all things at the end of time, the fulfillment in Christ. And this is not only the dead; it is [. . .] the dead and the living and the whole creation of God that are waiting for that glorious fulfillment. In this sense, to quote St. Paul, we – by 'we' I mean the living and the dead – we are all dead, not only those who have departed this life, but all those people who have died in the baptismal death, and partaken of Christ's resurrection in the baptismal resurrection. They're *all dead*, says [St. Paul], and the life of all – not only the life of the dead but the life of the living as well – that life "is hidden with Christ in God" [Col 3:3]. But I repeat – because we are so used to all that, to all this as a kind of music that we don't identify or analyze anymore – that life is hidden *with Christ*, and Christ is alive. Death has no power on him [cf. Rom 6:9]. Thus, whether alive or dead, whether in "this world whose fashion is fading away" [1 Cor 7:31], [. . .] having gone from it, we are all alive in Christ, for we are united to him, and in him [we] have our life.

Such then is the Christian revolution concerning death. And unless we understand its truly revolutionary, truly radical character – revolutionary in relationship to religion, to all that man put into that mysterious reality of death – unless we understand all that, we cannot understand the true meaning of the Church's dealing with the dead. And we have no criteria for discerning in the long and complex history of the Christian 'celebration of death' the genuine tradition from deviations and surrenders to the old 'cult of the dead,' or (to quote the frightening words of Christ) the surrender to "the dead burying their dead" [Lk 9:60]. What a horrible picture! – can you imagine that? Yet it is this discernment that we need today more than ever. For let us face it – the death which our secularist culture forces on us is, strange as it may seem at first, the *old pre-Christian death* – death naturalized, tamed, humanized, disinfected, deodorized, banalized, and soon to be delivered to us with a medical certificate [as a] guarantee of survival [. . .]. But we know and we believe – or at least we should know that we as Christians believe – that God has created us, has brought us "into his marvelous light," as St. Peter says [1 Pet 2:9] – not for a 'survival after death' (be it eternal), or [put] differently, not for an 'eternal survival in death,' but for *communion* with him, for that knowledge of him which alone *is* life, and *is* life eternal.

When man, preferring himself to God, turned away from God and died (for there is no life without God), when (in other terms) he made the whole [of] life into separation, corruption, and solitude, God himself in the Man Jesus entered that kingdom of death, trampled it down, "and upon those in the tombs bestowed life." It is this life, or rather, it is God – the giver of the content of life and not death – that we ultimately celebrate in our funeral rites, in our 'liturgy of death' [whose] genuine meaning [is] hidden today even from those who perform it (for such is our fascination – one can almost say our morbid love – for the 'old death'). The meaning of [the truly Christian] celebration of death is that it eternally "makes the funeral dirge into the joyful song: Alleluia!" – the song of those who, beyond this life, beyond this death, see God and him alone, of those whose soul has a "desire and longing to enter the courts of the Lord," whose heart and flesh "rejoice in the living God" [cf. Psalm 83 (84)]. It is to this celebration of the living God in the liturgy of death that we shall now – tomorrow – turn our attention.

TALK II: THE FUNERAL: RITES AND PRACTICES

II. A. *Introductory Orientation*

[. . .] My theologian side should add that the 'Liturgy of Death' – you know it already – includes not only the funeral rites as [its] subject but also the complex Byzantine system of prayers for the dead. There exists no comprehensive study of the historical development of that tradition – only [a] few (usually marginal) monographic studies of some of its particular aspects. The funeral rites as well as the various forms of what we call the commemoration or 'prayer for the dead' are treated therefore usually as a kind of homogeneous whole, as something which appeared in its present form – if not on the Day of Pentecost, at least within the Octave of Pentecost [. . .]. [Yet] in reality, this whole area constitutes in our tradition the least homogeneous part of our liturgical tradition. It is made up of layers belonging, not only to different historical periods, but (which is much more important for us in this Institute) they belong also to different spiritual, different theological, psychological and cultural mentalities.

Therefore, beginning now, today, an analysis of the Orthodox Liturgy of Death, I must warn you now that this analysis in the present state of affairs, must of necessity be a very tentative one, based not only on clearly established facts, but also on some hypothetical guess-work. Also (and of necessity given our limitations of time) this analysis must be a very general one. Many details, many particular developments [could be dealt with] such [as], for example, the appearance of the coffin, the casket – it's a very exciting chapter --- early man [and] civilization[s] up to the end of the Middle Ages never heard of those boxes we use today [lined] with satin. . . One of the main points was that even in church the dead [person] was on a bed. (Of course, [it's a] horrible idea [?to imagine] what today that bed would have become -- a caster-convertible, obviously.) And yet, the point is that the appearance of that casket is a very, very interesting fact, not only theologically, so to speak, but culturally and from all other points of view [. . .]. Or the other practice which has a rather complex and extremely interesting history is what we would call today the "viewing of the body," and especially of the face. You know, for example, that the priest today remains the only one whose face theoretically shouldn't be seen after death. I mean theoretically because today it is not done. I have attended many funerals of priests where [their faces were] not covered. That covering of the face was a *general* rule, not only for priests. Now, it would take one full lecture not simply to describe [these practices], but to analyze why [they're] important, what happened, what stands behind [them] in the deepest human attitudes toward life and death. But that has to be left out, because as I said, we have no time.

Neither shall I be able to extend my explanations to all funeral rites. You probably know (and if you don't know, I'm sure in [the] seminars you're having that it's being taught to you) that the Orthodox tradition has today distinct funeral services: one for the laity, one for the priests, one for the monks, one for infants or children, and finally, a special ritual for the funeral to be performed during the Bright Week. Now, this surely is a relatively late development. This differentiation also presents a great interest, this kind of keeping your ranks in death. For the same reason – lack of time – I'll

have to deal with those elements which these services have in common and therefore obviously antedate the subsequent differentiation – priest, layman, and so on. Since our preoccupation here in this Institute is not primarily historical, but practical – the preoccupation with the *meaning* rather than with the history for the sake of history – we shall use that history only as much as it helps us to understand our own situation and the practical needs it implies.

II. B. *Pre-Constantinian Christian Funerals: Speculations*

II.B.1. *Continuity of Forms/ Discontinuity of Meanings*

I said in my first lecture yesterday that the early pre-Nicene, pre-Constantinian Church had no developed liturgical form for the funeral of her members. One of the reasons for that absence [which] must be obvious to everyone was the state of persecution – the denial on the part of the Roman Empire of any legal status to the Church. Thus, whether they wanted [to] or not, the early Christians, when burying their dead, had to do it in the manner common to the society within which they lived. This doesn't mean, however, that while accepting that common manner supplied [. . .] by 'culture,' they were not aware of the radical difference between them – Christians and 'culture' – in the very understanding of death. On the contrary, and I tried to make this point as strongly as I could in my first lecture, it is precisely here, in attitudes toward death and the dead, that lie the most decisive difference between Christians and the pagan world surrounding them.

Therefore here, as in fact in virtually all other aspects of Christian worship, the first fact, the first dimension which we have to take into consideration is that of a law which I [. . .] define as the 'law of continuity and discontinuity' which implies simply that in the history of worship, what we have usually (if not always) is the continuity of *form*. Christianity [. . .] has not invented any rites. Eucharist, the sacred meal, follows the sacred meal which is one of the earliest, the most initial of [human] religious institutions. Prostrations, candles, processions – all that is not Christian by origin. So this is what I call the 'continuity of forms.' And yet, it would mean to understand *nothing* in the history of worship if we did not understand that the same form can express in fact a totally different meaning. That is what I call the 'discontinuity of meaning.' This law applies not only to the liturgy of death, but also (although of course differently) to baptism (we know today the long, pre-Christian history of this rite of baptism, immersion [in] water); [to the] eucharist, the sacred meal; [to] the religious measuring of time, calendar, etc.

The history of Christian worship (and in this it is maybe even more complex than the history of any other worship) is at least in one of its dimensions the history precisely of an *interaction* – [the] interaction between the old form[s] and [the] new meaning[s] [they] acquired in Christian faith. [It] is important as you will see [to understand that] you can reduce that interaction to the following sequence. In a first movement it is the new meaning that acts on the old forms and transforms, christianizes, them so as to make those old forms more and more into the adequate expression, into an epiphany of the new meaning. There comes, usually, a second movement, a movement in which we see a sort of [reactivation] of the old form and a progressive erosion of the new meaning, if not a complete return or surrender to the old meaning.

I will give you one example [. . .] of that law, and that is the rather complex history of Sunday, of *the* Christian day, in the history of the Church. Sunday appears as one of the most original Christian institutions, the 'Lord's Day,' connected with the entire faith of the Church. And all that meaning of Sunday comes to it because in the calendar it is *prima sabbati*, the first day 'after Sabbath.' And this 'after Sabbath' is exactly the meaning of Sunday – after the seven days, after time, [there comes] the first day of the new time, of the new creation, of the time no longer enslaved to the mortal time of this world. Yet the whole history of Sunday in the Church is a history of its progressively losing that meaning. The whole [of] medieval canon law, at first the western and then practically the eastern, makes Sunday into a Christian Sabbath. You don't work if you are a follower of [the] Ayatollah Khomeini on Friday, if you like Menachem Begin on Saturday, and if you make the sign of the cross the Orthodox way on Sunday. The rules are the same – no work, no this, [no that], day of rest, *New York Times* (Sunday edition!) – all those *notae sabbati* are there. It has lost [its meaning] completely in the [popular] mentality, [though] not in the liturgy (but who listens to liturgy?!). . . It has lost entirely its initial Christian meaning. It [has] become for some mysterious reason – 'by the will of God!' – the Sabbath; the [day of] rest moves from Saturday, either to Friday or to Sunday, but it has nothing to do with its initial [meaning]. So this is what I call 'interplay,' and we shall see a similar process of interaction in the history of the Christian [liturgy] of death.

But now at this moment, we are still at the beginning of the first mood, that of a progressive christianization of the funeral rites expressive as such, in their old form, of pagan culture, of pagan religion, or if you [prefer], of 'religion' period. At this early stage, the 'christianization' [. . .] is hardly visible because of [its] having no possibility to be expressed in externals. (You couldn't organize under the Emperor Nero a procession with a cross, a good choir following, and the singing of a wonderful *Vichnaya Pamyats*!) So this newness is almost entirely confined to the *faith*, to the experience of these rites in the light of the faith.

II.B.2. *A Radically New Perspective on Death*

Yet, if one has eyes to see and ears to hear, one can reconstruct, one can truly enter into that experience which is above all the experience of a radical change, a radical newness – not of the rites of death, [but] *of death itself.* Take, for example, the art of the catacombs which technically speaking can be termed 'funeral art' for it decorates what is a cemetery. Why is it – and all historians of iconography know [this] – why is it that the main and almost exclusive theme of that art is not death – not even after-death – but [rather] the symbols of baptism? Ninety percent of catacomb art is baptismal – little fishermen, [for example]. Now why [is this]? The answer is a very simple one; what those symbols reveal and signify is the experience of *baptism as death.* Baptism is the 'death of death.' Baptism is the *paliggenesía,* the regeneration, the birth into the new life in Christ, into the life in which death has no more power.

Take that inscription which I mentioned yesterday, and which we find on the grave of a Christian girl: "She is alive," an inscription which by no means is an exceptional one – there are thousands of those. Take the appeal sent by Ignatius of Antioch while he is [being] transferred to Rome to be executed, appeals he is sending to friends who tried to save him. He is begging them not

to save [him]. Why? "Now," he writes, "I begin to live." Take finally the passionate statement Saint Paul addresses to the Philippians [which] ends with that admirable sentence: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" [Phil 1:21]. All this is the true context within which we can understand the silence of the early Church about funeral practices, the apparent absence of that interest in death, and even more in 'the dead' and in their survival – interest which is the very essence of the pagan cult of the dead. For, as I said yesterday, "death is no more." The dawn of the day without evening, of God's Kingdom, illuminates the horizon of time. In the Eucharist, Christ is present, the Church has access to his Kingdom, and thus writes Saint Paul (listen to this!): "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature or creatures shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" [Rom 8: 38-9]. Now notice how in this text the word 'death' (and that obviously means the physical, the biological death) is just one item, just one of the many potential obstacles which no longer – this is the Good News – can separate us from God. More than that, for the faithful, for the one whose life is in Christ, death from being 'enemy' ("the last enemy to be destroyed is death" [1 Cor 15:26]) has been transformed into a friend, into a gain.

Reading these texts, looking at the mysterious light which we experience in the dark and narrow funeral corridors of the catacombs, we can easily imagine an early Christian funeral, for as you will see, [this] has survived (at least theoretically, normatively) until today. What is that funeral? It is made up first of all of the same eternal – we can say 'natural' – gestures which man used from time immemorial. It begins at home, the 'natural' place of death, for we are very far yet from the dead being 'exiled' into the faceless anonymity of the hospital. Here at home the body is washed and prepared for [its] last earthly pilgrimage, the procession to the grave. And that procession begins from the home to the cemetery which, as I told you yesterday, is outside the city. Probably nothing external, for the reasons I've just explained, distinguishes this Christian funeral from any other. Yet, at the grave, especially if the interment is in the catacombs (that was not a general rule, but almost), probably a psalm is sung, a scriptural lesson is read, a prayer is recited. Which psalm? Which lesson? What prayer? We do not know. It is my guess, however, that at least one prayer and one hymn that have survived in our present burial service can be traced back to that early period, if not in [their] very wording, at least in spirit and style.

II.B.3. *Surviving 'Primitive Elements' in Today's Funeral*

II.B.3.a. A prayer: "O God of spirits . . ." The prayer – and let me spend some time on that prayer – is the one which today is repeated all the time during the burial service (and throughout all the commemorations [of the departed]), repeated at the end of each litany. It is the prayer: "O God of spirits and all flesh, who has trampled down death and overthrown the devil and given life unto the world," and whose end constitutes the doxology, the *ekphonesis* of the litany: "For thou art the resurrection and the life and the repose of thy departed servant, O Christ our God . . ." Now, this prayer – or more probably its earlier version – was read at the end of the burial, as the prayer concluding the service or, to use a later terminology, as the 'absolution,' the ultimate commitment of

the deceased to God. I have two reasons which make me think that this prayer was, and theoretically is still, unique.

The first and very formal reason I find in a rather confused and strange rubric which is still printed in our liturgical books (at least the Slavonic liturgical books), and according to which, at the end of the burial service, after the Gospel (and you can check in Hapgood): "And while the deacon recites the litany," (here I quote the rubric), "the priests each secretly recite this prayer standing near the dead, and the exclamation shall be made aloud: 'For thou art the resurrection, . . .' Then the principal priest or the bishop shall recite aloud the prayer which he had said above, 'O God of spirits. . .'" Then the 'last kiss' is given, the sticheras are sung of which we shall speak later, and the body is taken to the cemetery. Now, it is clear that something is 'wrong' with this rubric --- that the one [. . .] who composed it [must have] tried to reconcile somehow *two practices*, not quite knowing how to do it.

One [is] obviously an early practice: it mentions, for example, the bishop who just comes there out of nowhere --- there's not one word about the bishop in any funeral service and here the bishop [comes and] has to recite that; now what for? Why the bishop? And also it implies several priests; what does [that] mean? It obviously [reflects] the earlier, episcopal structure of each local community when the bishop was the normal celebrant, and therefore the normal celebrant of the funeral surrounded with priests. And thus, [we have] a burial service which has not yet become a *treba*, a private, more or less family, affair. In this earlier practice, and this is my main point, the prayer "O God of spirits and all flesh. . ." clearly constitutes the solemn conclusion of the service.

In the second, later practice, this prayer lost its uniqueness, because it became the concluding doxology for each of the several parts of the service – we will come to that, [the] multiplication of the various parts. In today's practice [. . .] it is read first at the conclusion of the Trisagion at home (with which our funeral service begins in the books, before the transfer of the body to the church). It is read then, in the second place, after each of the three parts [. . .] of psalm 119, "Blessed are the undefiled . . ." which inaugurates the funeral service at the church. (This practice of dividing the psalms into [. . .] *kathismata* probably was borrowed from the monastic chanting of the psalter, because we find there those 'Little Litanies' and an exclamation.) --- With that we have already four repetitions. Finally, when at a later date, a Canon of nine odes was introduced into the funeral service, it brought with it the recitation of the 'Little Litany' after the third, the sixth and the ninth odes [. . .] and then finally, at the end, twice again. So the prayer today is to be read, theoretically at least, eight times, and because of this as I have said, it lost its uniqueness and also its function as the final, the ultimate, the crowning prayer. Moreover, as [with] all prayers introduced by Little Litanies, it became a 'secret' one, not read aloud. (For the history of the Little Litany is very simple; it begins as invitation to listen to the prayer: "Let us pray to the Lord," [followed by] prayer [and] doxology – then it *replaced* the prayer, and remained as only litany and doxology.)

No wonder then that our poor [monastic] 'compiler,' [. . .] looking at all that, counting that prayer, having to do something with the bishop, and so on and so forth --- this poor compiler did not know how to reconcile [the prayer's] uniqueness in the early practice with its later dissemination throughout the whole service. And then what he did is what many compilers did (and this is a

warning to all Typicon-lovers!, because for fifty percent [the Typicon] is the work of those people who sat with those totally contradictory rubrics and glued together a service.) [. . .] So, in order to satisfy everybody, [the compiler] made all priests (this is what the rubric says today) to read that prayer secretly, while the deacon chants the litany, and then, that mysterious bishop [has] to repeat it aloud after the litany.

My point in saying all this is that the very confusion of that rubric is to me an evident proof of the early origin and the unique position in the funeral of the prayer "O God of spirits . . ." And yesterday, just to be quite sure that I'm not advancing a 'monumental heresy' here, I spent two hours going through the manuscripts published by Dimitrievsky in his *Euchologion.* In virtually [every] euchologion of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there are prayers there for almost anything – for example, for making friends, for pacifying the enemies, for blessing horses, almost anything is there – but there is only *one* 'prayer for the dead' and always the same: "O God of spirits and all flesh . . ."

My second proof [of the prayer's antiquity] comes from the vocabulary used in the prayer, that means from the words and images in which it is couched. Let me first make here a remark whose importance I hope you will fully realize later. Our present funeral service, the one that we know today, consists almost entirely of psalms and [hymnody], which means of texts meant to be sung, of music – canons, kontakions, sticheras, kathismata, prokimena, etc. Put differently, it has virtually no prayers in it, with the exception precisely of the one we are about to analyze, the prayer "O God of spirits . . ." One prayer for all that music! The significance of this fact we shall discuss when we come to our next theme – prayer for the dead.

What I want to stress right now is the rather substantial difference in words, and more than words, in the style, in the tonality, between this particular prayer on the one hand, and the funeral hymnography on the other hand. From that point of view, the prayer "O God of spirits . . ." is unmistakably representative and expressive of that *early* tonality [of] which I spoke a few minutes ago, composed in that early era. It begins first of all with a solemn and victorious reference to what could be defined as the 'paschal content' of the Christian faith concerning death. Death is 'trampled down,' the devil is 'overthrown,' 'life' is given to 'the world.' It ends with the confession of Christ as "the Resurrection, the Life and the Repose" of the one who has departed this life. Now, it is precisely these words (and that is what I have to analyze tomorrow in greater detail) – it is these words, these (as I call them) 'paschal references' – the destruction of death, the victory over the devil, the triumph of life – it is these terms that are virtually absent from the funeral hymnography which today constitutes not less than two-thirds of the burial service, and (what is even more important) gives it a tonality different from that of the early Christian experience of death. We shall come to that new tonality. Now, let's remember with the help of that unique prayer, "O God of spirits . . ." that the initial, the original *key* of the Christian funeral – the key also of that "christianization" of the burial – that key is precisely expressed in this prayer.

II.B.3.b. A hymn: "With the saints . . ." [the Kontakion]. As to *the hymn* which I mentioned earlier [i.e., as dating from Christian antiquity], it is the one which our present service calls the Kontakion: "With the saints give rest . . ." We know of course that the *kontakion* as a hymnological *genre* appeared much later. My interest, therefore, is not in the funeral Kontakion itself

(which, by the way is a very huge and very beautiful composition, preserved in its totality today only in the funeral of a priest – although it has nothing to do specifically with the priest – it is obviously the kontakion in its original form.) But I'm not dealing right now with this Kontakion as such; I'm interested in fact [by] only the very beginning, and that means the formula "with the saints – *so svyatim.*" Even a quick and superficial analysis would show that this formula, with some variations – "with the souls of the righteous," "in the abode of those who are glad," "in the habitation of the just," [etc.] --- must have belonged to a very early stratum of the funeral liturgy, for it appears and reappears in the later hymnography, whose words, whose entire tonality reflect a substantially different and precisely *individual* approach to an understanding of death.

A good example here is the Funeral Kontakion itself in its full form. It is as if the author (who was a genius) [. . .] [used] as [his] starting point the existing and traditional formula "with the saints" [which] means, if you use the language of the early Church, "where there is neither sickness nor sorrow nor sighing but life everlasting." [It is as] if he used that traditional formula, and then somehow forgets it and proceeds in an entirely different key in which death is presented [in a manner] just the opposite [to] what we have heard – as 'dust' and 'ashes' and 'worms.' From the "place of brightness," from "with the saints," all of a sudden we turn ourselves not with the saints, but with the worms! Death is (and I quote that Kontakion) "where all is silence and there is no man who says 'Alleluia'." And there, in that death – and this is the main point – *man is alone*, man is *separated* – and that means *not* "with the saints." But the early Church believes and says "with the saints." And since in the early Church, the word 'saint' is applied not to 'canonized' saints only, but to every member of the Church who died 'in Christ' and even who lives 'in Christ,' this formula means 'with the Church,' in unity with all those who are *en Christô* – in Christ – and therefore *alive* in the land, not of the dead, but of the living.

And it is here in the meaning, and even more in the power of this short formula "with the saints" that we find the origin, the roots, the beginning of the first and the most radical and most visible christianization of death in the early Church. What is that act that is truly revolutionary? – the return of the cemetery to the city – precisely because the dead must be with the living because they are *alive*. This is a revolution which historians of culture know [but which] the theologians and liturgiologists pay no attention to – this progressive transfer of the *necropolis*, the 'city of the dead' to the very heart of the city of the living, [to] the church and the space surrounding the church – the church-yard. This transfer is the most visible and spectacular expression of the 'Christian revolution'; the dead return among the living because they are alive, because 'death as separation' has been overcome. Christians are not only resting "with the saints," they are buried *ad sanctos* – "among the saints" – and where the saints (the Church) are, the Risen Lord is in the midst of those who love him.

This transfer, to be sure, did not take place overnight. But once it took place, it is the Christian temple, it is the church itself that became the focus and the *locus* of the funeral, of the liturgy of death. And [that liturgy's] main emphasis now was laid on the presence of the deceased, the presence of the body in the church, and on the meaning of that ultimate *synaxis*, the assembly of the Church as the Body of Christ, partaking of this new and deathless life [by partaking in] the *synaxis* for her deceased member. So, from the early funeral which is 'procession' from home to cemetery

(because there is persecution, because we can't do otherwise), we are coming now to the 'second layer,' to the second core, and that is to the funeral service in the church.

II. C. *The Primitive Funeral's 'Shape': Holy Saturday Parallels*

II.C.1. *The Funeral as Procession: From Place of Death to Place of Rest*

Let me immediately tell you what I consider to be the key to this second stage, this second 'layer' of our Orthodox funeral service – the key to its liturgical, theological and spiritual understanding. It is, beyond any possible doubt, the obvious relation of this 'layer' to the liturgy of Holy Saturday, and more specifically to the truly unique Matins of that 'blessed Sabbath,' the seventh day on which Christ (and I quote the Holy Saturday sticheras) "having destroyed Death by his descent into death rests [from] all his works; [. . .] Life sleeps." I have no time, and in fact I do not need to enumerate here the still tentative answers given to the questions concerning the 'whens' and the 'hows.' That means, when did this service appear? how did it develop?, etc. The important [thing] for us is that once the funeral service was transferred to the church, it sooner or later (and it doesn't matter too much when exactly) took the form of a vigil, similar not only in structure, but also in spirit and meaning, to the one the Church celebrates in the early morning of the middle day of [the] *triduum paschale*. Don't forget that "Pascha" in the early Church was the name of three days – Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Now the first day, Friday, is the Pascha of the Cross – *pascha stavrôsimon*; then [on] the third day is the *pascha anastásimon* – the Pascha of the Resurrection; and in between, we have that Great and Holy Saturday, the 'blessed Sabbath,' the blessed rest, [when] Christ descended into death. And the important fact for us is this identification of *our death* with the Holy Saturday.

Before we enumerate and explain the various elements of this funeral vigil, let's remember that this – chronologically the second layer – did in no way abolish the first, the one which began in the home of the deceased, continuing as a procession to the cemetery, and ending with the solemn commitment of the deceased to the "God of spirits and of all flesh." The new funeral vigil in the church is rather a 'stop-over,' a pause in what remains essentially a procession, a movement, a transfer. [There is] another confused and confusing rubric [. . .], this time concerning the beginning of the service, [which] once deciphered [concerns] precisely this transfer to the church.

The rubric in question follows the short service which we have today at [the funeral] home, and which is in fact the essence of the early Christian funeral – Trisagion, "God of spirits . . ." [and then] the procession. Now we have that service today at [the funeral] home, which is the "Trisagion" of our commemorations [of the departed], what the Russians call *Litiya*. It consists of censing the body, the reciting in the usual manner of the Trisagion, "All-holy Trinity . . ," the Lord's Prayer, the troparia "With the souls of the righteous," the litany, and the prayer "O God of spirits . . ." and then the dismissal. In our liturgical books, we find the rubric which I have in mind and I quote: "And if all things are now ready for the departure, the priest begins again: 'Blessed is our God . . .' and we begin to sing 'Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal.' And taking up the mortal remains of the departed, we come bearing tapers unto the church, preceded by the priest and by the deacon with the censer. And when we come to the church, the remains are deposited in the church, and the beginning is . . ."

Here I interrupt the quotation, or rather the wrong translation of the text, because in fact, there is no new beginning. [The text] says "the beginning is . . ." and there is no new beginning! The rubric simply says [. . .] "and we begin psalm 91" and "they (that means the people, the choir) begin to sing psalm 91: 'Whoso dwelleth under the [shelter of the Most High] . . .'" and so on. Now we have here a confusion of *three beginnings* – the beginning of that whole service (the Trisagion or Litya), "Blessed is our God"; [then] we have the beginning which follows the words ". . . and when everything is ready. . ."; and finally we have a non-existent beginning "when we come to the church." [. . .] And this is what the "other compiler" (let's call [him] scientifically 'Compiler B') tried somehow to explain, and to combine into this mysterious rubric with its 'again.'

What do we begin 'again?' First of all (and this is a simple explanation I'm giving to that), the Trisagion at home is a late addition, in [the] sense that the Trisagion already is a part of the procession. That part – the washing of the body and so forth, even if it was shaped by ritual – still was a family affair. Not private, not secret as it is today, not limited to the family alone, but it was not liturgical in the narrow sense, that of the specifically liturgical acts: prayer and the participation of the clergy. So the liturgy at home is the washing of the body and the preparation. And then when, as the rubric says, "all is ready," here is the Church, here is the priest, the deacon, the taper-holders, and [the priest] says "Blessed is our God," and that is the beginning of the liturgical part which will end at the cemetery.

Today, what confuses us is that the service, as *one service*, as one procession, has been broken, and when it's broken, what appears is endless beginnings and endless dismissals. We dismiss ourselves three times during the funeral and still cannot parts ways – neither with the deceased, nor with ourselves! We begin all the time having not finished what we began earlier. So even on a very simple and formal level, that confusion has to be taken care of, and I hope it will be in the history of the Church [that] this Institute will be marked as the denunciation of the unnecessary beginnings and ends! Because you know what happens is that then we lose the Christian, essentially spiritual, mystical and [cosmic] idea of 'the beginning and 'the end' which is reflected in our liturgy. Then it becomes a 'liturgical fuss.'

So my point is that from the beginning to the end, from the home to the last 'Amen' at the grave, we have here one service, one celebration – the *entrance* or even *our entrance together* with the deceased brother or sister into the deathless death of Christ. And the tone of this solemn entrance (and here we are approaching the elements of that vigil in the church) is given, announced from the very beginning by the processional hymn which we sing while the body is carried to the church, the famous Trisagion: "Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! have mercy on us." [This hymn] once it appeared, became immediately a very crucial song in the Church. We use it at the funeral bringing the body to the church, taking the body to the grave after [. . .]. But, we know it is the same processional that we sing at the end of the Matins of Holy Saturday, as we celebrate by a procession around the church Christ's descent into death so as to liberate the universal Adam and Eve [. . .] from bondage and corruption. So, 'number one' of that Holy Saturday analogy [is] the same song of Christ the Victor: "Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal!"

II.C.2. ***The Service in Church***

II.C.2.a. Psalmody: i) ***Psalm 119.*** Second, we are now in the church standing around [the departed] – or to quote another rubric "near the dead" – and we begin *the psalmody*. Today's rubrics prescribe to begin with the psalm 91, but for all kinds of reasons which it would be impossible adequately to discuss here, I am personally convinced that it is a later addition, borrowed probably from the monastic funeral. Be [that] as it may, there can be no doubt that *the* psalm, whose psalmody constitutes the liturgical and the theologically *essential* part of the service – truly the key to its meaning – is psalm 119: "Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way and walk in the law of the Lord." To explain even briefly the unique place and function of this psalm in Orthodox worship would require hours which unfortunately we do not have. (By the way, I am dangerously close to the end, and I am not about to finish completely! All I can give you here is a kind of summary. Without this summary however, we would probably miss the ultimate meaning of the Orthodox liturgy of death.)

Everyone who has read, be it only once, this psalm (the longest in the psalter) knows (I'm sure) that it is a passionate hymn to the divine Law, a glorification of God's saving commandments. "My delight shall be in thy statutes and I will not forget thy word" [v. 16]. These are the words of a man who is not really obedient to God's commandments, but who finds delight in them, for whom they are life and light, the contents and the meaning of life. It is this psalm which, formally speaking, exalts that which seems to stand at the very heart of the Old, not the New, Testament, that is 'the Law.' It is this psalm that the Church heard and therefore used (and therefore uses even today) as revealing the saving and eternal meaning of Christ's death.

Truly this psalm is the psalm answering the question: "What is Christ's death?" And this because what [the Church] heard in this psalm (and taught us to hear in it) is the unique, the all-embracing, the all-consuming love for God. And first of all, and above everything else, the love of Jesus Christ for his Father, his total obedience to his Father as the fulfillment of that love. The love of the commandments of God, to be obedient to them, to find in them delight in life itself, is to love God, for in his commandments, he reveals himself and reveals his love. Thus, what eternally burns and illumines and manifests itself in this truly unique psalm is the love of Man for God, his thirst and hunger for God and God alone, in whom is all light, all knowledge, all wisdom, all beauty, all joy. It is because he loves his Father and is obedient to him that Christ voluntarily accepts death – he who, as the Son of God, as the New Adam, has neither sin nor death nor corruption – these fruits of disobedience – in him. On Holy Saturday, to the question we address to him at the beginning of the service: "O Life, how dost thou die?", he answers from the grave, and he answers in the words of psalm 119.

What this psalm says is that this voluntary death being nothing but love, nothing but obedience, nothing but the ultimate fulfillment of God's commandments, is therefore a 'deathless death,' the death conquering and destroying the ultimate enemy of God. Hence, the unique position of this psalm in the Church's liturgy. It is used in the first place at the weekly resurrection vigil as the celebration by the Church of the Lord's Day. Sadly enough, all that remains from that psalm in our curtailed Sunday Matins are the so-called 'Troparia after the Undefiled' [= the Evlogitária], each of

which begins [with] the verse: "Blessed are thou, Lord, teach me thy statutes" – troparia which 'seal' (so to speak) with paschal joy the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, the meaning revealed by the psalm. Then secondly, [we have] the use of that psalm at the Matins of Holy Saturday [as] I just mentioned, as well as at Matins one week before [on] Lazarus Saturday. [And we have] its use, finally, at the burial service. The function of the psalm in all these services is identical. It consists not only in referring each of them to the event – crucial and decisive for the Christian faith – of the death of Christ, but to reveal that unique death in its very *reality*, in its lasting, truly eternal reality and meaning for the Church, and through the Church, for the world and for each one of us.

Now, how in the light of this, can we define the specific function performed by psalm 119 in our burial service? The answer is very simple although [perhaps] not quite the one expected by the average Orthodox [Christian]. Its function is to identify *this dead* (as every brother or sister departing this life in Christ) [. . .] with Christ himself, their death with his death. Though indeed, what does it mean that we are 'dying in Christ' or, as Saint Paul writes, "sleep[ing] in Jesus" if not that his unique death, the only deathless death, is given to us as our death? that our death is accepted into Christ's death so as to be purified, healed, freed of death. The death [which] enters into his death is purified, healed and liberated from death – [from] death as corruption and separation, [from] death whose "sting is sin" [1 Cor 15:56], so as to become the entrance – not into death, not even into some mysterious 'survival' – but, in unity with Christ (who is the Life of all life), into the land of the living, in a place truly "of brightness, a place of verdure, a place of rest," "where the light of God's countenance shines," "where all [the] righteous dwell."

What this psalm reveals to us is that each death is [an] entrance into the wide and the bright quiet of the Great and Holy Saturday, of the blessed Sabbath, into the morning of the day without evening of the Kingdom. Thus, what the early Church knew and experienced from the very beginning, what she witnessed to and affirmed by her lapidary inscriptions on the tombs – "He is alive," "She is alive" – has now become a liturgical solemnity, unique in its depth and beauty.

Alleluia. To each verse of the psalm, the Church responds with the singing of 'alleluia' (with the exception today of the second [stasis]). And since 'Alleluia' is indeed one of the keywords of the funeral service, the great majority of the Orthodox hear it a something precisely funereal, sad, if not [tragic]. But its true function and meaning is exactly the opposite. 'Alleluia' is one of the most, if not *the* most, joyful words of the Church. It is an exclamation of joy, and more specifically of joy provoked by the presence of God, by his coming to those who love him. It is, in other words, 'Presence' itself, witnessed to, manifested in song. And if it is so overwhelmingly used at the funeral, it is because it is the very sign, the very reality of the funeral as being transformed into a *Christian* funeral, and this means into the celebration of death as entering into the countenance, into the presence of the Living God – who is God of the living, *not* of the dead. The meaning of the Christian burial, in the words of the Kontakion, is that it "makes the funeral dirge into 'Alleluia'."

The Evlogitaria. As in the weekly resurrection vigil, the chanting of psalm 119 is followed by the singing of a set of special troparia or hymns which, as I have said already, signify or better to say 'express' the reception by the Church of psalm 119, her solemn and joyful 'amen' to it, to what it reveals and affirms. Although these troparia, as sung today at the funeral, differ from those sung each

Sunday, their tonality, the vision they exalt and affirm, is the same. It is that of Christ's victory, by which Man is restored to his pristine beauty, to the image of God's "ineffable glory," victory by which he finds the "fountain of life" or as the troparion says, "the door to the home country of the heart's desire. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia." And while the choir sings these truly triumphant hymns, the priest censes the body, the altar and the entire assembly, filling the church with the fragrance of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of life, and whose coming is always the *parousía*, the coming and the presence here and now of the world to come.

II.C.2.a. Psalmody: ii) *Psalm 51.* Second in today's *ordo* of the burial service, as in the Matins of Holy Saturday, the chanting of psalm 119 with the troparia is followed by psalm 51, the penitential psalm: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord." Then the Canon with its usual ingredients – the kathismata, the sedalia (sitting hymns) after the third ode, the Kontakion after the sixth ode. Then [come] the eight sticheras ascribed to Saint John of Damascus, at the place where in a normal Matins, we would have the psalms called "The Praises." Then the Beatitudes with their own troparia, then the reading of the Epistle and Gospel lessons, and finally the concluding part of the service, centered on the ritual of the 'Last Kiss.' Of all these elements, only psalm 51 (or 50 – the *Miserere)*, maybe the Beatitudes, and certainly the scriptural lessons, seem to me to have belonged to the original *ordo* of the funeral service after it began to be served in the church. All the other elements which, I stress again, are all hymnographical, musical, belong to a later layer with which we will have to deal tomorrow. [They] embody an approach, a tonality, substantially different from the one I have just tried to analyze – whose main expression is psalm 119.

Of psalm 51, just a short remark about it. It is just like psalm 119, it has always occupied a very special and unique position in Christian worship. Again, this unique position comes to it from Church's hearing it as the expression of something absolutely essential, truly central in her faith. What is it? Certainly more than *just repentance* with which one usually identifies the psalm [or] rather, it *is* repentance, but understood and experienced as the total and radical change of the entire vision of life, the change implied in the Greek word *metánoia*, 'transformation,' putting upside down of the very understanding by Man of his life. "Repent ye for the Kingdom of God is at hand" [cf. Mk 1:15]. Repentance here is above all 'conversion' and that conversion has become possible because the Kingdom of God is at hand, because it has been manifested, revealed, in the coming of Christ. It is this conversion – conversion from which stems the whole [of] life, on which the whole [of] life is always founded – that the Church hears in psalm 51. It is the best, the fullest, the most perfect expression (or rather, confession) of the true content of repentance, of its meaning above all as the passage from the old life, "shaped in wickedness and conceived in sin" [cf. 51:5] into the new life made up of joy and gladness – the confession (in short) of the faith as certitude, of the certitude that those who repent, accept Christ, believe in him, have their sins forgiven and the presence of God restored to them. As the use of this psalm, not only at services that may be termed 'penitential' (as, for example, in the sacrament of penance), but virtually at all services, and within these services as the confession of and thanksgiving for the new life bestowed upon us in the Church. In a way, in [the funeral] service, following psalm 119, psalm 51 is a confession, simply, of the resurrection. "Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice" [51:8].

II.C.2.b. The Word of God: i) *The Prokeimenon.* Now we come to the climax of the service, the proclamation of the Word of God, the proclamation to the Church (and this means, of course, to the one whose *transitus*, whose entrance into the land of the living the Church celebrates). There is no need to speak much about this 'proclamation'; it suffices to listen to it – to listen, first of all, to the Prokeimenon whose function in our worship [. . .] is to set the 'tone' for the 'Liturgy of the Word,' or in the words of the prayer read at the [Divine] Liturgy "to open the eyes of our understanding" to the comprehension of the proclamation of the Gospel. Here is the Prokeimenon: "Blessed is the way in which thou shalt walk today, o soul, for a place of rest is prepared for thee." Thus – the affirmation of death as 'blessedness,' of entrance into death as a 'blessed way.' This affirmation has been prepared by the entire service, and thus, it is its climax, its ultimate epiphany. You remember the service began with "Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord" [Ps 119: 1]. It has taken us to the Beatitudes, the affirmation by Christ himself of the blessedness awaiting those who in this world live by his new commandments. And now, it takes us to this ultimate, solemn and joyful affirmation of our certitude; Death is no more. And therefore, blessed is the way which takes us to Christ.

But – and this is the meaning of the verse following the Prokeimenon – this blessedness is only in God, only in Christ. It says: "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord, my strength." The way is blessed because it is the way to God. Without God, any 'after-death,' any 'survival' is still death, is still going down into the pit. But even conquered and transformed, abolished as separation from God and thus from life, made into blessedness – death is *not* the ultimate fulfillment. It is still 'a way' – the way to the resurrection, to the final victory of God, to the new heaven and earth, to the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God when God shall be "all in all." It is for this ultimate victory that the Church waits. This waiting being her very life, it is for that victory that also wait all her members, whether they are alive or dead.

II.C.2.b. The Word of God: ii) *The Epistle.* It is therefore the announcement and the proclamation of that ultimate victory and fulfillment that we hear at the end of the service in the Word of God. "Brethren, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. . . . For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord" [1 Thess 4:14, 16-17]. I do not remember from my student days what the scholarly exegetes make of this text of Saint Paul. (It seems to me that it must be thoroughly demythologized and even then, it hardly makes any sense to their "modern man.") What indeed is the meaning of all those strange words – the shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God? Why clouds? What clouds? Maybe some ancient mythology? I do not know. But I know one thing. I know that every time I read or hear this text, especially at a funeral, I hear a man speaking, a man who has seen, who knows something so marvelous, so totally overwhelming, so ineffably joyful and beautiful, that he has no words to describe it, and this because there are *no words* that can describe it. Like a child [. . .] [out of] the fullness of that experience [. . .] he uses the poor words that he knows, the words which he feels reflect somehow all that glory, all the joy. And I also know that one

can spend a life, a whole life, studying and writing books about the 'Christian ideal of death' and the 'Christian doctrine of the resurrection,' and what-not, without in fact [recognizing that] all is said, all is revealed, all is given once and for all in the simple, childish affirmation "and we shall ever be with the Lord." This indeed is what Christianity is [all] about.

II.C.2.b. The Word of God: iii) ***The Gospel.*** "Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!" with a verse fulfilling the Prokeimenon: "Blessed is he whom thou hast chosen and taken, O Lord." And then the Gospel lesson which, theoretically at least, forms the end of the church part of the funeral [. . .]. Of the 'Last Kiss,' and the procession to the grave, I shall speak in my next lecture, in the context of the second, hymnographical layer of the Orthodox burial, the one which takes us to the other dimension of the liturgy of death, that of the prayers *for* the dead. In the church, however, at that central 'pause,' that 'visit to the church,' and before the procession resumes, the last words we hear are the words of Christ: "He that hears my word and believes in him that sent me *has* everlasting life. He shall not come into condemnation but has passed from death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live" [Jn 5: 24-5]. This is the layer of the Funeral which I call 'Holy Saturday.'

TALK III: PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

III. A. *The Funeral's 'Second Layer' (Hymnography)*

III.A.1. ***General Remarks***

Until now, we dealt almost exclusively with the Funeral, the service which by its very nature is unique and non-repeatable, and which under normal circumstances implies and demands the presence of the *body* of the deceased. Now we must deal [with], turn our attention to, the other aspect of the Orthodox 'Liturgy of Death,' and that is the commemoration of, or the prayer for, the dead, which as we all know, occupies an important place in our liturgical tradition and in the Church's liturgical life. Let me tell you immediately that for a student of [the Orthodox] liturgy, this particular area not only presents great difficulties (mainly due, as with the other dimensions, to an almost total lack of serious study) – but it also is a dangerous, [. . .] truly 'loaded' area! For, if on the one hand, the 'commemoration of the departed,' – prayer for the dead – is without any doubt an integral part of the Church's tradition, nowhere else (on the other hand) is the *meaning* of that tradition so easily misunderstood and misinterpreted, and nowhere else, therefore, is the very attempt (and that's what we are doing) to discern the real tradition from its misinterpretations more likely to provoke a storm. (Never touch the commemoration of the dead! That's where you risk – if not your life – at least your salary!)

Therefore it is here, in this area, that we encounter two formidable powers at work – one, the old yet never dying 'religion of the dead,' and second, 'culture' which (whatever the world-view shaping it) feels always endangered by what I earlier called the 'Christian revolution.' Since, however, we cannot escape or by-pass this subject (our seminar would have been certainly mutilated), let us proceed, and proceed first of all by selecting a starting point which as much as possible will make our investigation orderly and consistent. It seems to me that the best starting point is supplied by that 'second layer of the funeral' which I left out of my presentation yesterday and which, as I said, consists almost entirely of hymnography. I will try to show that in this funeral hymnography, we find – not, of course, the origins of the Church's prayer for the dead outside the funeral [. . .] [something which] has always been present in Christian worship – but [rather] [. . .] the direction taken, little by little, by the development of [the] commemoration of the dead.

Now, one remark about hymnography. Here I must immediately mention a fact which, although it transcends the funeral liturgy as such, has had a very, very significant impact on it. It is the fact, well known to all historians of Byzantine worship and Byzantine liturgical music – the fact of the progressive expansion of liturgical hymnography at the expense of the non-hymnographical – especially scriptural – elements. Now we all know that certain groups of sticheras, for example "Lord I have cried . . ."or 'the Praises,' which at first were but refrains to the verses of psalms, managed to push those psalms out. Yesterday, the sticheras we sang at the end of the Canon – there were two of them – were obviously, or should have been, sticheras on the Praises, because those psalms of the Praises were a very important element of Matins. Now the sticheras survive, the psalm disappears –

and that happens all the time. Who today, for example, except specialists, remembers [. . .] that the original Canon [of] nine odes consisted at first of the singing of, indeed, the great biblical canticles. If Moses and his miracle at the Red Sea is mentioned in every first *irmos* of every canon, the reason [is that at one time the entire canticle] was sung and now it survives only in Lenten services, and even there in a reduced and curtailed form.

III.A.2. *A Return to the 'Cult of the Dead?'*

III.A.2.a. Changed attitudes to death. So this is a very important fact to understand [not only in] the whole development of Byzantine worship, but also (as you will see) [in understanding] the situation of the prayer for the dead. For nowhere [else] has this general trend led to more significant consequences than in the Church's liturgy of death. Why? Because when that funeral hymnography made its appearance, it already reflected and expressed an attitude towards death (one could say a 'feeling of death') different from the one we found in the 'first layer' of the funeral, the one that I tried to show yesterday depends in its spirit as well as forms on the Matins of Holy Saturday. When (within this 'Matins of Holy Saturday' which we serve for *each* Christian), hymnography entered, it brought with it a different approach to death, and this is what we have to keep in mind if we want to understand anything. Therefore, it is these differences that we must briefly analyze and expose, because better than anything else they reveal the general direction, the general spirit acquired within Christian society [through] the commemoration of its deceased members.

III.A.2.b. Specific changes: i) *Separation*. The first difference, the *first change*, concerns (if you would excuse my terminology) the 'participation' of the deceased himself in the funeral service. What characterizes the first 'Holy Saturday layer' is the almost total absence of any liturgical differentiation between the dead and us, the living, in the service itself. It is not *our* service for *him*, the dead, and it is not *his service* in the sense of the dead being opposed to [or] separated from us by his death. It is the service of the Church in her totality which includes the dead and the living. It is the celebration by the Church of *Christ's* death into which we all enter by means of the service, of which we all partake because we are the Church and the Church is Christ's. Therefore, the words *we* utter [are his] – we sing psalm 119 but it is also he [Christ] who speaks. The 'I' who speaks is him. The words which we utter as our deceased brother's or sister's [. . .] – psalm 119 – are *our* words or rather Christ's words given to the dead as they are given to the living. The only prayer which, in this earlier layer (and I made this point already), can be identified as a prayer *for* the dead is the 'prayer of absolution': "O God of spirits and all flesh . . ." which was probably read at the grave as the prayer of the ultimate commitment of the body to God.

With the appearance of hymnography, the very tonality of the service begins to change. What that hymnography introduces is precisely a distinction, a differentiation. It introduces two different roles, one played by the living, one by the dead. In these hymns, we pray *for* the dead, but, to put it very abruptly, *he no longer prays with us* [. . .]. Before *we* prayed and it was our common prayer – his and ours – that was the real 'handling' of death. Now there is a radical change; we the living, putting [on] black vestments, distributing candles, and all that, are serving *for* him, but he is not praying with us. Why? The hymnography answers: because death is silence. How can he say

anything when death is silence? Let me quote again from the Kontakion: "There – in death – all is silence and no man says 'Alleluia.'" And then when, at the very end of that hymnological development, the dead is given again a voice [and] begins to speak (as in the 'last sticheras'), this voice [. . .] speaks not to God any longer, but it speaks *to us*, the 'survivors,' begging *us* to help him with our prayers in his solitude, teaching *us* not to dream of sweetness in this life, but only [. . .] to "groan ever with a moan: 'Alleluia.'" The most *joyful* hymn of the Church – 'Alleluia' – is now moaning and groaning, and even of that [the departed] is deprived, because there, no one sings 'Alleluia.' Whereas for the early Church it was absolutely clear [. . .] that Sheol has been itself filled with 'Alleluia,' now there is [only] silence there and we [stand] around [and] 'groan' and 'moan': Alleluia!

III.A.2.b. Specific changes: ii) ***Gloom and darkness.*** The *second change*, related obviously to the first one, concerns the very idea or [. . .] 'feeling' of death. Would you believe me if I told you [. . .] that in the full hymnographic material of our funeral service, there is *not one single reference to the death of Christ or to his resurrection* – not one! It is as if our death had nothing to do with Christ's death, were not transformed by it into a blessed way to God. In the funeral hymnography, death is again horror and separation, gloom and darkness. Where the early Church says: "there is no separation," the funeral hymn says: "Lo! we are parted." Where the early Church sees her departed brother in the "place of brightness where the light of God's face shines," the funeral hymn says: "he takes up his abode in the gloom." Where the early Church says: "with the saints," the funeral hymn says "he is interred among the dead."

This funeral hymnography, especially the two groups of sticheras – at the end of the Canon [the Idiómela attributed to John of Damascus] and at the 'Last Kiss' – may be good (I would not say 'great') poetry. It is a poetry, however, whose inspiration is obviously different from that revealed in the 'Holy Saturday layer' of the funeral. Now, it is the physical, the biological death that occupies again the center of the stage – the horror of decomposition, the ugliness of death – and it is upon that ugliness that the hymn invites us (better to say *orders* us) to gaze. "Let us gaze upon him who is laid low in the earth, all comeliness stripped off, dissolved in the grave by decay, by worms in darkness consumed, and hidden by the earth."

III.A.2.b. Specific changes: iii) ***Life as 'unreal shadow.*** Hence, the *third change*, the most subtle one, which concerns the 'after-death,' the 'eternal rest' for the granting of which to the deceased we are invited by the hymnography to "beseech the Lord." I call this change *subtle*, because it is a change – not of vocabulary which, on the whole remains, traditional – but of its *meaning*, of its semantics (as we would say today), or (to use this word once more) of its tonality. The best example is precisely the word 'rest.' It has been used by the Church from the very beginning: *Requiet in pacem* – "he rests in peace." This inscription is very common on Christian graves, and it has been used because, as the 'name' of death, the term is common – common both the Old Testament and to the culture within which the Church began her earthly pilgrimage. Yet, it is precisely because it is common to the Bible and to the pagan culture, that this word 'rest' as a metaphor for death allows for two different readings, carries with it possibly two different sets of connotations.

It is clear that the early Church hears and uses it primarily in its biblical or Jewish connotations: "And on the seventh day, God *rested* from all his work" [Gen 2:3]. ([Likewise], on the 'Blessed Sabbath,' Christ *rests* from all his work, from re-creating the world.) It is of this 'divine rest' that man partakes in the holy rest of the Sabbath, which is the divine institution unifying the entire Old Testament. This 'divine rest' thus is not opposed to *life* [. . . .]. On the contrary, this divine rest is the true fulfillment of life, for it reveals by bringing its [sacramentality] the meaning of life, makes Man to rejoice in all his work. The Sabbath, the 'divine rest' thus in fact sanctifies the whole life by giving meaning to its totality, by fulfilling all work, just like our Sunday, the 'day of the Lord,' the day of the Eucharist, makes the whole week into a meaningful remembrance of what we had [received from God] [. . .] and [gives] meaning to all work. So in the Bible, 'rest' is primarily and essentially *God's* rest, or, as the Bible constantly says – '*his* rest.' In the epistle to the Hebrews, Saint Paul [*sic*] writes: "They shall not enter into *my* rest" [Heb 3:11] and a few verses later: "A promise is left to us of entering into *his* rest" [Heb 4:1].

Death as such – natural death – is *not* rest as such for "there is no rest in Sheol" which is separation from God, and therefore from *his* rest. It is Christ who, by entering death, made it into '*his* rest,' into a new and holy Sabbath. "We who believe," says Saint Paul, "do enter into rest" [Heb 4:3]. [The] *requiet in pacem* on a Christian grave, therefore, is synonymous [with] 'he rests in Christ,' for to quote once more Saint Paul: "Christ is our peace who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us" [Eph 2:14]. And this rest finally is *life*, because Christ is alive, and because all those who rest in him are alive – alive [at] this 'stage of the game' by the hope of the resurrection and life eternal.

In the funeral hymnography, although the vocabulary, the metaphor, is the same – 'eternal rest' – [the] meaning has changed. And it has changed because the context in within which ['rest' is] used has changed. The 'rest' for which we now pray, that it be given after death, is *radically opposed to life*. In the scriptures – do I have to prove it? – and in the early Church, this life is never presented as *meaningless*. It has become sinful, corrupted, mortal, immersed in evil – but neither sin nor corruption make it meaningless. It remains in its essence a wonderful gift of God, God's creation, about which God said that it was 'very good.' As [for] the funeral hymnography, it is as if the main purpose of its being sung is precisely to reveal life as meaningless. "This transitory life," proclaims one of the hymns at the Last Kiss, "is a shadow unreal," [. . .] "an elusive dream." "The trouble of life on earth is a phantasm importunate." And it is death, the horrible and ugly death, which in the words of another hymn, is "a great weeping and wailing, a great sighing and agony, and hell and destruction." It is death indeed that makes life into a meaningless illusion, into a "shadow unreal" and an "elusive dream." This new image, this new feeling of both life and death [alters] 'eternal rest,' transforming it . . . into a thing in itself, a reality no longer related either to this life or to death. Life is meaningless and death is horrible. But there exists somewhere – 'there,' beyond life and beyond death, and separated from both of them – a 'place of rest' into which the soul can be received by the mercy of God.

III.A.2.b. Specific changes: iv) ***Prayer <u>for</u> (not <u>with</u>) the departed.*** Hence, finally, the *fourth and last change* introduced by hymnography – not only into the funeral service itself but into

the entire area of the Church's relationship with death and the dead – [. . .] consists in placing at the very center of this whole area, as its main content, the *intercession for the dead*, the prayer for their acceptance into this place of rest. As I said before, when the deceased at the end if this historical period, receives – so to speak – his 'voice,' it is to us that he speaks. "I beg and implore you all that you will pray without ceasing unto Christ that I be not doomed." In the early funeral, the one I call 'Holy Saturday,' as well as in the entire area of the Church's commemoration of the dead (of which we'll speak in a minute), the relationship between the deceased and the living is primarily that of 'communion,' of an indestructible unity in Christ. Put differently, the early funeral and the early commemoration of the dead, are above all an epiphany of Christ's victory [over] death. Death is no longer separation. Now, this relationship becomes more and more that of an intercession *by* the living *for* the dead, a relationship that obviously posits, as its very condition, a separation between them.

It is not an accident, of course, that in our parish practice psalm 119 is usually reduced to just a few verses at the funeral. It would be wrong, however, to explain this curtailment merely by the desire to shorten the service (that's our usual excuse!), because in fact, the funeral remains (and I'm sure [here that] I have a 'cloud of witnesses'!) an extremely 'popular' service [. . . .] and that popular piety, if anything, has *added* new elements absent from the liturgical books. Every funeral I go to I find a new element which as a liturgiologist I had ignored, and I don't know whether it is my ignorance or the creativity of the 'funeral mind' of the Church. So, it is not at all [a desire to shorten the service that results in the abbreviation of psalm 119]. It is very simple. If psalm 119 which (we have seen) is so central, so essential, in the early funeral has all but disappeared, it is because that 'new piety' [. . .] really does not know what to do with it, does not understand why it is there in the first place. Why *does* one long for the divine commandments, and so forth? – Give us death! So it disappears from there, because [one] does not know what to do with that psalm, because the very spirit of the service has by now changed.

III.A.3. ***Loss of 'Eschatological vision'***

At this point, it would be very useful to attempt to analyze the various factors – spiritual, theological, ecclesiastical, cultural – which generated and determined this evolution, [an] evolution which – let us not forget – took place within a Christian culture, in a world which claimed to be a Christian world, a *Christianikón políteuma*. Unfortunately, for this, the most interesting part of the [topic] we discuss here, we have no time right now. Let me only say, without developing this statement, that the common denominator, the common root, of all these factors – however much they may differ from one another – was the virtual disappearance – not from doctrine, not from the essential Tradition, but from Christian mentality and piety – of the eschatological vision proper to the early Church.

'Eschatology' is the name given to the understanding by religion [. . .] of the ultimate destiny of the world and of Man, to the doctrine of the so-called 'last things.' The early Church (and with this, everyone agrees) was eschatological *par excellence*. Her whole faith, her whole life, was shaped by her joyful and confident expectation of Christ's return in glory, on the common resurrection, and of the consummation of all things in God. "Come, Lord Jesus; *Maran atha*!" This

is the ultimate expression in the liturgy, in prayer, of her faith and of her worship. This eschatology (and [here] I am approaching my important point) can be termed 'cosmical' [*sic*], and it is distinct as such from the individual or personal one. To put it differently, and in somewhat over-simplified terms, its interest is not in what happens to *me* when *I* come to the end of *my* life and die, but [in] what will happen to the entire creation when Christ returns in glory and when, in the words of Saint Paul, "all things shall be subdued unto him, and he himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" [1 Cor 15: 28].

Then, for reasons that it is impossible to explain here, the eschatological interest [. . .] begins to shift from this [cosmic] interest to the personal – to the personal 'fate' of Man after he dies, to his personal salvation. For a Christian of the early period, death stood at the center of his whole life, as it stood at the center of the Church's life – but [it was] the death of Christ, not [Man's] death. [Man's] death was, so to speak, taken care of by Christ's death in baptism, the sacrament of dying with Christ and of entering into his death as life; in the Eucharist which was – each week on the Lord's Day, the day of the Kingdom – the proclamation of Christ's death [and] the confession of his resurrection, and thus, the *phármakon tês athanasías*, the 'medicine of immortality.' Death as separation, as gloom and corruption, was conquered, overcome, abolished.

Now, however, in this individualized, personalized eschatology, *death reappeared* – death, not as a spiritual reality, not as a death whose "sting is sin" – but the physical, the biological death [with its] physical, visible separation. It became the most important moment of life, truly its *kairos* which obscured [and] pushed into the background the eschatological horizon of the early Church. For an early Christian, his whole life in the Church was preparation for death, just as the whole of life was communion with the dead, fallen asleep in Christ. Now, death becomes – little by little – the object, the subject of a 'special preparation.' [In our own day], there are special counselors in dying (soon to be licensed by the state!) that [have] appeared in [our midst]. [. . .] Death is made into a special department within the life of the Church. There appeared – little by little – a specialized literature aimed at preparing Man for death, or describing [in great] detail the fate of the soul after death, a kind of 'post-mortem guide' to what happens. Last, but not least, there developed within the Church a special system of services and prayers for the dead – a system which now we must consider.

III. B. *Remembering the Dead*

III.B.1. *A 'System' of Commemorations?*

Everyone familiar, even superficially, with Orthodox worship and the *Typikon* regulating it knows of course that a substantial part of it is especially devoted to the commemoration of the dead. Included in that system are special days of commemoration, special commemorative parts of daily services (like, for example, the daily Midnight Service, *Mesonyktikon*, which [includes] prayer for the dead; or Friday Vespers and Saturday Matins). This system also includes rules and rubrics regulating such commemorations within the wider context of the Church's liturgical life.

Before we speak of the forms and the meaning of that 'liturgy of commemoration' (as it could be called), it is to this last point – to the rules regulating it – that I would like to address myself. What

is the *object* of that regulation? What are these *rules* regulating and *how* [do they do so?]. The answer is very simple, yet very important for what I am trying to say in this lecture. All those rules regulate almost exclusively [a set of] 'private' commemorations, and this means those services the initiative [for whose] celebration does not belong to the Church as such, but is [an] initiative that can be termed 'private,' that of the family, a particular group or an individual. In other terms, what virtually the totality of these rules regulates and establishes [is] *when* one can or cannot hold such private commemorations – the specific days [and] specific times on which they are permitted, and the specific days [when] they are forbidden. Thus, for example, [. . .] private commemorations – *panikhidas, litiyas, trisagia* – are forbidden on the days of great feasts, on Sundays, during Bright Week, and they are permitted under certain conditions on weekdays, etc. Now why is this important? Because even a simple analysis of the philosophy reflected by these rules shows without any doubt that they are, in fact, *restrictive* – the result of the Church's desire to restrict, to control and to limit such private commemorations.

Let me stress once more that virtually *none* of these commemorations is *prescribed* by the Church – [one] is not under 'obligation' to go to them, even those which an overwhelming majority of Orthodox consider [. . .] as 'sacred obligations' – like commemorations on the ninth [day, the fortieth day, the anniversaries, and so on]. Moreover, even the form of these private commemorations, whether the Russian *Panikhida* or the Greek *Trisagion*, [was] not supplied by the Church, not composed by the Church, for they are nowhere to be found in the liturgical tradition as such. What they are in fact ([as even] a brief analysis would show [. . .]) is an extremely shortened and condensed *ordo* of the funeral, of a service which by its very nature is 'non-repeatable.' It is precisely this symbolic 're-enactment' of the funeral in the private commemorations that obscured the original meaning of such prayers as "O God of spirits and of all flesh," the Trisagion's place in the funeral, and so on. Thus, it all looks as if the Church wanted to keep 'under control' something which she herself did not initiate, something however which, unless controlled and regulated, would have probably flooded and engulfed her entire worship. All this also means that when we try and understand the meaning of the commemoration by the Church of her deceased members, we must first of all [differentiate] this 'private' commemoration (the one subject to all those restrictive rules and controls) from the one we find, in fact, from the very beginning in the Church's essential *lex orandi.*

Concerning this *essential* tradition, this *lex orandi*, we must say this. For the early Church (and not only for the early Church, but for the entire unbroken liturgical tradition which, I submit, [. . .] must be valid today as it was valid a thousand years ago) – the *whole* worship [and liturgical life] of the Church concerns the dead exactly to the same degree to which it concerns the living. This tradition which I call 'essential' simply ignores the polarization between the dead and the living – in liturgical terms, that means [not] having a 'special department' for [either] the living or the dead. It ignores it because the very concept of worship, the very idea, the *newness* of the Christian experience of the Church as *leitourgia* implied the experience of that liturgy, of that common and corporate act, as [a] 'communion of saints,' *communio sanctorum*, which transcends and overcomes the separation of the dead from the living [and] of the living from the dead.

III.B.2. ***The Eucharist as Remembrance***

It is this *leitourgía* whose essential function is precisely to *unite* all of us in Christ, the living Lord, and this means in his risen and deathless Life. If the early Church has no special 'funeral department' in her liturgical life or ministry, no special services for the dead, it is not because she forgets them [. . .]. It is because her *entire* liturgical life – beginning with the celebration of the Lord's Day as the 'eighth day' (the day after the day of death) and also as the 'first day' (the first day of the New Creation) – this whole worship is in deep reality the celebration of the victory over death, or more precisely, over 'death as separation.' If, thus, the entire liturgy of the Church concerns the dead, [if] it is (in the deepest meaning of that word) their *commemoration*, [then] the true unique center and source of that commemoration is the Eucharist – *not* [. . .] the special 'commemorative Eucharist' which in Russian acquired the name of [. . .] the 'Liturgy for the Dead,' but the Eucharist as such, the Divine Liturgy, by which (whenever we celebrate it) we proclaim Christ's death and confess his resurrection.

Zikkaron. To call any particular Eucharist 'commemorative,' distinguishing it from another, presumably 'non-commemorative,' Eucharist is in fact meaningless, for the Eucharist *is* commemoration. It is not that there is commemoration *in* the Eucharist; [rather the Eucharist] *is* commemoration. And it is as commemoration that it was instituted by Christ. "Do this," he said, "in remembrance of me." 'Commemoration,' 'remembrance,' 'memory' – all these terms are translations of the Hebrew word *zikkaron*, memory. But the Hebrew 'memory' is not, as it is for the modern Man, a passive faculty, the ability of Man 'to remember' – [rather] it is to re-live in imagination that which no longer exists, that from which [a person] is separated by time, by distance or by death. 'Remembrance,' 'memory,' is an active and above all a *divine* faculty, a divine power. All that exists – and this is a very brief summary of [an] exciting aspect of biblical faith – exists because God keeps it in his memory, because he *remembers* it. God remembers us and we are alive, and death therefore is falling out from the memory, from the remembrance, of God. [. . . .]. "What is Man that thou rememberest him?"

This divine remembrance is thus truly life-giving, and it is this 'life-giving remembrance' which is bestowed upon the Church as her foundation, as her life. It is bestowed upon her because the Church is the Body of Christ, because *we* are *members* of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. "Do this in remembrance of me." Eucharist is the *zikkaron*, the memorial of Christ. But because Christ is the true Life of *all life*, it is the memorial, the remembrance and therefore the keeping [and] preserving in life of all those who are 'in Christ.' We remember in him the creation of the world and lo!, in the Eucharist, the heavens and [the] earth are restored to us as being full of his glory. We remember that unique night when he "desired with [great] desire" to eat the Passover with his disciples, and thus inaugurated in the Upper Room the Kingdom, and beyond – at his Table in his Kingdom. We remember his saving death, and it is given to us as our death and as our salvation. We remember his resurrection and we become witnesses of it and we confess it. We remember in him one another and we are united to one another. We remember our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in him – and there is no separation, no death between them and us. And thus: "*Remember* O Lord . . ." and "May the Lord God *remember* in his Kingdom . . ." – this is the essential prayer of the Eucharist, the

prayer by which we daringly and boldly, in Christ, affirm Christ's victory over the separation of death, the prayer of love which maintains in life, in Christ, all those who are either alive, or asleep, in him. "Remember O Lord . . ." means "preserve him (or her) in thine own deathless Life," "keep *them* alive."

'*Naming.*' From the earliest days, the essential form of that remembrance has been 'naming' – naming those whom we remember with the life-giving remembrance of God. They are not at all mistaken, those who want names to be mentioned at the Divine Liturgy [. . .]. Naming is a liturgical act, and when I stand at the Table of Oblation and pronounce these endless names – those of the living [and] those of the dead – the 'Mystery of remembrance' is at work. Behind each name, unknown to me, there is life created by God – a man adorned with the ineffable beauty [and] called to Eternal Life; and by naming him [. . .] it is as if I, the priest, I the Church, I 'in Christ,' had the power to call him back to life, into the marvelous light of Christ – making him enter again and again into Christ's deathless life of which we partake at the Eucharist. [This is] the meaning of the diptychs also in which the names of the living and the names of the dead are remembered *together*, [. . .] all the names of the living in the land of the living.

III.B.3. *Prayer for the Dead*

III.B.3.a. One in Christ. Therefore, it is in this remembrance, expressed and fulfilled above all in the Eucharist but not only in the Eucharist, that we must also see and find the real meaning of the other dimension of the commemoration of the dead – the one that can be termed 'intercession,' 'prayer *for* the dead.' First of all, let me tell you that the early Church totally ignored our present distinction between praying *to* and praying *for* the dead. Today we pray *to* the saints, but we pray *for* the 'ordinary' dead. It has even become the main, spectacular point of a canonization – last *panikhida*, first *molieben*. With this, an early Christian would not [have] understood what has happened: wasn't he a saint before? did we promote him? [. . .] In the early Church, the intercession [was] mutual – we, the living, intercede for the dead just as they intercede for us. *Ora pro nobis*, pray for us, is an almost *passe-partout* inscription on early Christian tombs, and not only on those of the martyrs (that means 'the saints' in our modern understanding of this word). It is precisely this *mutual* character of intercession that reveals its first and essential meaning – its meaning as, first of all, communion of love in Christ. I'm sure you will all agree that the simplest, the most immediate and direct expression (and thus definition) of 'love' is that it is 'desire to be together.' This is clear and simple and needs no Kant to define it. Even for the most human, the simplest love, a separation be it only of two days is suffering, for as a French poet said, "only one being is missing and the whole world is empty." And so, our prayer for one another and especially for those who are visibly separated from us by death, is, above all, 'love' – human love but also divine, the one which God poured into [all] hearts, Christ's love by which we pray not only for our own, but, despite our sadness, also for all those whom God loves and makes into the object of our love. And if the dead are in Christ, if they love him, they love us, they are with us, they *pray* for us.

This love in Christ, transcending in our coming 'death as separation' is also the content, the meaning, of the special 'days of commemoration,' of those Saturdays of the universal

commemoration of the dead which the Church has instituted before and during Lent, before Pentecost, Meatfare Saturday, and so on. *Why* on those particular days? [. . .] Because Lent is the time of our pilgrimage to Pascha, [. . .], the [quintessential] time of the restoration in us of the state of wholeness, of the effort to overcome the broken-ness instilled in us by sin. This Lenten effort, being first of all an effort of love, requires as its pre-condition the recovery of that unity in love which we constantly betray. Lent is restoration of unity with the dead through prayer; with the living through forgiveness; [and] with the whole world through fasting. As to Pentecost, the 'birthday of the Church,' the commemoration of the dead is precisely the actualization by us, within us and within the Church, of that unity of love which alone makes the Church 'Church.'

III.B.3.b. For the remission of sins. In this intercession and commemoration we also pray God that he may forgive the sins 'voluntary and involuntary' committed by the dead. We pray, to quote the liturgical formula, "in memory and for the forgiveness of sins." What is the meaning of that prayer used by the Church from the very beginning, and from which the western medieval theology has kind of 'pulled' the doctrine of purgatory, the doctrine of merits, of all that 'funeral accounting,' of the surfeit of grace, of the Church's 'capital of good deeds' that can be (so to speak) 'deposited' to somebody else's account and so on. This is a formidable area of scholastic theology, all coming from this very simple prayer for the dead. But what is its meaning in the light of what I have tried to say about the faith of the Church in the dead being 'alive in Christ,' being in a "place of brightness, a place of verdure, a place of repose?" What does that prayer involve, imply?

Something like this, it seems to me, although I cannot develop [it very much here for] it would take us very far from the liturgy. 'Sin' in the Orthodox understanding is not only a particular act, a concrete transgression, which it is in the power of the Church to 'absolve' when a man repents. Sin – and I can't find a better word – is a kind of *eternal sadness*, for it is knowledge of the immense betrayal of God by Man, and in Man by the whole Creation. One cannot be a Christian and be free of that sadness, of that knowledge, of that burden, and the Saints know it better than anybody else. In this sense, this 'instant salvation' preached by hard-core evangelicals [. . .], or today also [. . .] [favoured somewhat by the] charismatic movement ("Joy! Joy! Joy!") – no, all that joy cannot abolish the sadness, the irreversibility of sin. It *has* been committed, it is forever, it will be a scar [on] the Creation even in its ultimate glory. So one cannot be Christian and forget about that. And thus, [for] as long as this world exists, there can be no prayer without repentance, without acknowledgment of sin, without a cry to God for forgiveness. It is true of the living and it is true of the dead. "Have mercy upon us, O Lord!" stands at the very heart of our prayer, and whether we pray for ourselves, for others or for the dead, no one is excluded from that cry. And thus, 'remember,' 'have mercy,' 'forgive' – this is the triune content of all the Church's intercession.

III.B.3.c. The need for regulation. Now we can say a few words about the prayer for the dead – the services for the dead which I called 'private,' and which, as we have seen, are the object of several rules and regulations. On the one hand, in the light of what has been said about the commemoration of the dead by the Church, it must be clear that this commemoration, rooted [and] founded as it is in the very nature of the Church, in her very faith, [has] its liturgical, corporate expression but, of necessity, [it] also [possesses] a personal expression. It is natural, it is normal, for

each one of us to pray for those whom we love, for whom we long, for those who, in this world, are separated from us by death. This personal or individual prayer is of the same nature as the Church's corporate prayer. It is the same love, the same communion, the same remembrance; it is, in short, the overcoming of death as separation. It is natural for us to remember, depending on the culture in which we live, those who are dear to us by visiting their graves, and to observe the various significant dates and so on, and also to ask the Church to pray for them and with us on these occasions.

The reason, however, why the Church regulates these personal commemorations, [and] controls and limits them, is simple – if only we have understood the Christian attitude towards death, if only all that I have tried to say in these lectures, however imperfectly, about the relation of our death to the death of Christ, [of] death as the entrance into Christ's blessed Sabbath, [of] death as no longer separation – if [only] all this has any meaning to us. What the Church wants to prevent by all those rules is precisely the return to the 'old death,' to death as separation, and the surrender of the Christian experience to the old cult of the dead. There is no more *heretical* word in the whole Christian vocabulary than the word '*private*,' 'separated.' The whole meaning of what I tried to say is this: what the dead brothers and sisters (who have fallen asleep in the Lord) need is not a return to the separation and the solitude of death – and this means above all [that] they need the Church, the Church as the presence of the living Christ, as life and unity in him, as partaking in him of his deathless life. Death – and this is the *whole point* – has ceased to be 'private,' because it has ceased to be separation. The danger of our private commemorations lies in this precisely, that they so often take us back to the 'old death' and the old 'cult of the dead,' away from the Christian transformation of death.

I mentioned in my first lecture that experience in early life when, after the Sunday Liturgy in a good Russian cathedral, there were something like fifteen *panikhidas* – one shorter than the other. (Try to ask people to combine them in one! Try to unite their dead! I don't know who was more ardent, more energetic, in *not* combining them – the priest or the 'customers' – for the priest to combine means a loss [of income] [while] those who are 'combined' feel they lose a kind of 'respect' for *their* dead.) So, what I'm saying here [is] that the return of the 'old death' is not theoretical, is not academic. [. . . .]. That is what the Church is afraid [of], of taking us back to the 'old death,' to the old cult of the dead, away from the Christian transformation of death.

It is precisely in order *not* to separate the dead from the Lord's Day and its joy, that the Church forbids private commemorations on Sunday. (It's not because [we're] dealing with death, being sad, and today is our day, the day of the living. [. . .].) It is in order not to deprive [the departed] of what we know on Sunday that the Church forbids those private celebrations. It is in order not to separate him [or her] from the 'day of the dead' *par excellence* – Pascha – that private commemorations are not permitted during Bright Week, [for the departed] are 'in' the Pascha. ([Another] little "souvenir" I have is of a lady [coming] to me in my little parish in France, and asking me to serve a *Panikhida immediately* after the Midnight Service at Easter. I said that it was impossible, [to which she replied], "But Father, my late husband loved it so much" [. . .] What would we add by a little 'mini-pseudo-funeral' added to that triumphant destruction of death? [. . . .]) When finally these private commemorations are permitted, on those days it is sad, it is indeed

tragic, to see them made into private – 'our own' – commemorations, apart (so to speak) from the Church.

For the Orthodox Church, the time, the hour, has come – *not* to reform the liturgy of death (God forbid!), not to *modernize* it (God forbid!) – but simply to rediscover it. To rediscover it in its truth and glory [which] means in its connection with the faith of the Church; [in] its connection with the meaning for the dead, for us, for the whole world and for the entire Creation of Christ's deathless death; in its connection with Baptism and Eucharist, with Lent and Pascha, with indeed the whole life of the Church, and with the whole life of each one of us, her members. This rediscovery is needed first of all *by the Church* – there's too much confusion and too much betrayal in that area – but it is also needed by our secularist culture, for which, whether we know it or not, we *are* responsible. How are we to rediscover it? What are the practical steps towards it? To mention some tentative answers to these questions will be the subject of my last lecture tomorrow.

TALK IV: THE LITURGY OF DEATH & CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

IV. A. *A Plan for Practical Action*

IV.A.1. ***General considerations***

IV.A.1.a. Culture. We may, or rather, we must [now] return to our present situation and to the question, "What are we to do practically?" – (a) given our faith; (b) given our liturgical tradition; and (c) given our situation. We have to try to put all that together now (and, believe me, it's not a very simple task). May I remind you first of all (so that my presentation be as clear as possible today) that by 'our culture,' I mean primarily a *secularistic* society, and by 'secularistic,' I mean primarily again a view of life, an experience of life, a way of facing and mainly of *living* life [. . .] which has no reference to death – this is my main point – *without any reference to death.* So, this secularistic culture (as I said in my first lecture) *suppresses* death – by means of its 'medicalization' for example, (removing [death] from the land of the living), [or] by funeral arrangements which sort of try to [harmonize death] with culture, to reduce the degree of 'unpleasantness' of the whole operation. This is one approach of secularism to death – [that of] *suppression.* The second way [by which] secularism deals with death [. . .] is [by] what I would call (for lack of a better term) its 'humanization.' By this, I mean its 'naturalization' – to treat [death], as the modern world likes to say, in a 'mature' way, without any *tremulo,* so to speak. Both [these] trends – [both] 'suppression' and 'humanization' – [tend to render] death meaningless, [as something] which has to be 'handled,' but this 'handling' doesn't give any particular meaning [to] life. And even if [. . .] it's fashionable today at cocktails on Park Avenue to discuss the problems of 'survival' (there are [whole] books [written about it]), [and] even if that 'survival' enters into the 'humanization' of death [. . .] – [that] 'survival' [has] no meaning for what I'm doing *today,* for what I have to do between now and 5 o'clock this afternoon – it does not give any specific *meaning* to life. So, this is our culture.

IV.A.1.b. Faith. Then, I come [to our faith]. What is our faith? It can be again enumerated very simply, although behind each of [these]sentences there stands a [wealth] of experience, of vision [. . .] [about death]. [First], death [. . .] in Christian doctrine is the 'sting of sin'; it is not an answer to the question only about the biological or physical death. 'Death' in the Christian vocabulary means 'separation from God' – as a result of sin – a kind of 'ontological catastrophe' which [has] made Creation, or rather Man's life, into what it was not when God created it – different from that – and that this death has the 'sting of sin.' As separation from God, death [in this sense] – not the physical, not the physiological death – but this 'death as sin and separation' has been abolished by Christ's death [Second], therefore, the dead – those who sleep – are alive in Christ.

IV.A.1.c. Hope. The early Church doesn't elaborate on that, but you can say that this 'being alive' fundamentally has as its content what we would call the 'hope of the resurrection.' Hope here is not simply a kind of vague expectation; [. . .] [it is] much more than that. It is not only faith, it is almost an anticipation of that. And here – although I really never thought that it was the duty of theology to give us definitions of what, right now, [is happening] to Mrs. Smith who died in 1886 – that kind of theology to me has as its main threat, its main enemy, 'curiosity.' And much of the

dealing with death is based – not on theology or faith – but on simple curiosity [. . .]. But that hope of the resurrection . . . don't forget that Sheol, the biblical state of death, is precisely the place of 'no hope' and that is expressed in that famous [quotation from] Dante, the inscription on Hell [which reads]: "Abandon all hope you who enter." Now with Christ, hope of the resurrection can enter. This hope [. . .]is not the hope for simply my own miraculous reappearing, but it is of course a cosmical [*sic*] hope for the victory of God. The common resurrection [as we shall see a little later] cannot be separated from this ultimate prayer of petition: "Thy Kingdom come!" The hope of the resurrection itself is an essential part of this coming and triumph of the Kingdom of God.

IV.A.1.d. Liturgical tradition. So, after 'culture' [and] 'faith,' [we turn] now to our liturgical tradition. It can be divided in two parts. First of all, concerning the burial, the funeral – we spent some time on that – in the handling of the death of the body, we have (as I tried to explain [in a] very general and insufficient [way]) [. . .] discerned two essential 'layers': one which I called the 'Holy Saturday [layer],' the entrance into death as into '[Christ's] rest'[. . .] (this is one essential layer of the funeral); and the second, (again, to be brief [. . .]) [is one which we might call] the 'layer of lamentation and fear.' So [we have two 'strata'] – [that of] 'Holy Saturday' and [that of] 'lamentation and fear.' In the second area of our liturgical tradition, we had that [aspect of] 'commemoration' – this time dealing not with death as such, but with 'the dead' after death – the [so-called] 'prayers for the dead.' Here again, [. . .] we find two essential layers. We have first – something which has been forgotten, but it's still there and has to be rediscovered – [. . .] the *whole* liturgy as 'commemoration,' that the dead are not excluded from any part of the liturgical life of the Church, certainly not from Easter, certainly not from the Eucharist, certainly not from any of the essential expressions of our [life]. Then [second, we have] commemoration in the form of *private* commemorations. So, you see, in all these layers of the liturgical tradition [there] is complexity.

IV.A.2. *A Plan for Action*

IV.A.2.a. A quest for catholicity. Now, the question [. . .] after this reminder of what *has* been said is: "How are we to put that all together, to overcome confusion?" (a confusion [which] comes, in a way, from the richness of all that, not necessarily from its defects, not from a kind of under-development). It's very difficult to be 'catholic' (not to be Roman Catholic – that is relatively easy, or it *was*!), but to be catholic is difficult because 'catholicity' means 'holding together' things which, as Paul teaches, even restored by baptism, we find it difficult to do. We find it difficult to reconcile lamentation with resurrection, we find it difficult to see all things at the same time as God sees them. So what we are trying to do here is, first of all, to produce an effort of catholicity, trying to see how all these things – culture or no culture, twentieth century or no twentieth century, my own condition or your own condition in life – all this is to be transcended to reach the 'catholic vision.'

We had, historically (I began my theological life as a Church historian), [. . .] a kind of 'death-centered Church' which still survives [. . .] here and there. [This is] a Church in which the priest fundamentally thinks of himself as the one who 'services' people at the crucial moments of their existence – "hatch, match, dispatch" [. . .] – that's where he's needed. Otherwise he's a kind of great counselor, social leader, [. . .], the man to discuss how to paint the church (insisting that he, the

priest, has to decide how to paint it, and not anybody else!). [Thus], there was that 'death-centered Church,' [but] we are in danger today (let me tell you) of becoming a "life-centered Church," [of] transforming the Church [. . .] – not [into something] one, holy, catholic and [apostolic] – but [into] Boy Scouts, young adults, old adults, etc. – [all kinds of] 'activist' things [. . .]. It's time we discovered that, even if it has fifty-five clubs [. . .], all those clubs have one thing in common – they are all made up of potential corpses! That is what our 'death-denying' culture [. . .] makes us forget. So from the 'black Church,' we may come today into a Church which will thank 'culture' all the time for this very peaceful and rapid 'liquidation of death,' so that we can finally 'deal with life.' Another brokenness of catholicity!

So how are we, in other terms, to make all this 'meaningful?' How [are we] to keep together life and death, lamentation and praise, alleluia and tears? How to make all this meaningful not only for me, for you, for my parishioners – [but] how to make it also a presence, an action, a power in the [wider] culture. These are the tremendous problems we face today, and although I have no hope that we can resolve them, I consider this Institute very important because, believe it or not, no one, [any]where, has given it any thought so far in the Orthodox Church.

My word, as I finished my lecture yesterday, was 'rediscovery'; the kind of strategy for reaching that catholicity [of which I have been speaking] is first of all based on rediscovery: to rediscover, for example, that 'Holy Saturday' in a funeral that today *sounds*, but not *is*, but sounds as mainly 'lamentation.' Historical, archaeological rediscovery is not enough; what we need is a synthesis – a synthesis to which we can be converted. I think I can say (and each one of you can say) that I cannot preach, I cannot teach anything unless what I preach and teach is truly my faith. We like so much in theology to always quote somebody else, a sort of 'safe escape' – "Saint Athanasius said . . ." (God forbid that I should say it.) It's a kind of 'pseudo-humility'; we say "God exists" because Gregory of Nyssa said so – but maybe God exists because *I* say he exists also – [and after all,] I'm closer to you than Gregory of Nyssa! So this kind of theology which always gets it through the filter of somebody in Caesarea of Cappadocia is not only a beautiful thing called the 'neo-patristic revival'; it's also a kind of *reduction* of theology to *history*, to quotations, to footnotes. And the most hateful part of it is this: "You know, Maximos [the Confessor] makes a very interesting point . . ." – and then we have a symposium about that point! So we must, first of all, try to have that rediscovery as *our own return* to something which then will live in us. And, if it lives in us, it will illumine life around us, without [our] even knowing it. Therefore, the whole point of that rediscovery is to lead to a re-conversion which will make it *my* faith, and not only my faith because I'm intelligent, [. . .] but *my* faith as the Church's faith – or rather, of course, the Church's faith as mine.

IV.A.2.b. The need for education. I think you will all agree (and you don't need any lecture to prove that) that the first step in that practical process has only one name, only one origin and that is – 'education.' [In] our Church, our death (or death in general) has never been taught, has never been preached about [. . .] Even now, our preaching at funerals usually takes the form of a kind of eulogy. (We all of a sudden discover, when the man – thank God – cannot answer, how wonderful he was! We never thought that before he died. We had all the reasons to believe that he was an average,

ordinary misfit! – and now, all of a sudden [. . .].) That's not preaching of death – that's 'crowning the lie.'

So, we can say that, although theoretically speaking, the liturgy itself is teaching, is itself an *icon* of our doctrine, it has ceased [being so] for various reasons – because of its language, because of its mutilation, and [so forth]. That kind of thing began very early, when some good Byzantine poet (because he really couldn't control his inspiration) defined 'hell' only as a place where there is nothing else to do but to groan and to moan: 'Alleluia!' The liturgy is no longer a revelation – it has to be revealed through teaching, through catechesis. Now (and I repeat once more) death, the whole complex of death, has never stood (at least for the past [few] centuries) in the center of the Church's teaching, education, theology. It has been kept somewhere in a special department. Education, of course, involves children, involves adults, involves preaching, involves also – and how! – theological education. There is a tremendous task facing us of [. . .] 'centering' our theology where it is centered in the Gospel. "If Christ is not risen, our faith is in vain" [1 Cor 15:14]. The world was converted to Christianity not so much by the subtleties of the Palamite controversy! – but by this impossible, unheard-of affirmation that "death has been trampled down by death." Whose death? Christ's death. How could he? because he is the Son of God. What does it mean 'Son of God?' because he was obedient to his Father . . . and you're back to Trinity, and you're back to Christology – but (to use [terminology] which I rarely use, but which is good here) – from the 'existential situation.' This is how – by rediscovering what 'happened to death' – that we can truly rediscover even the mysteries of the inner Trinitarian life.

IV.A.2.c. Educational goals. I would define the *theme* of that teaching (here I cannot go into details [. . .]) as [. . .] [showing how] death must transcend those three areas [into] which we have sort of 'exiled' it, reduced it: [namely 'dying,' 'burial' and 'commemoration']. Death, for example, in a theological curriculum, usually appears in pastoral theology at the moment of preparing a man for dying. How do you do that? Let's compare notes. [Whose 'techniques' are we mainly employing?]. So, first of all, it's recipes. But what is the ultimate meaning of that preparation? Usually, within our culture, it's to make it 'easy' for someone, to 'comfort' them. Therefore, before we do that, we have to understand death as a theme – just as 'the end' [or] the 'kingdom of God' is not one chapter of theology; it is a *dimension* of theology, because it is a dimension of our faith. Everyone who is a Christian is, first of all, the one who believes that something [has] happened to his life – and to his death! And therefore, they are inseparable. This is the liberation of death from the 'problems of dying,' how to prepare for death. [So likewise, there must be liberation from] the 'problem of burying,' and from the 'problem of commemoration.' All these things, important as they are, [. . .] must be the result, the outcome, of the faith [about] dealing with death which permeates the whole life of the Church – death as, indeed, the central theme of Christianity, of faith, and of the Church. Short of that, nothing will happen. If we still keep death separated from everything else, as *a* problem among other problems that we face, we will not succeed in our education.

IV.A.2.c. Goals: i) ***Rediscovering death as tragedy.*** In other terms, the first rediscovery in the Church and in education must be the rediscovery of death itself. That sounds like a very naive thing, because we all die so we can't 'not know.' But, death has been concealed in its meaning;

[hence] the 'rediscovery of death' [becomes crucial]. That means the rediscovery, first of all, of the Christian versus the secular versus the humanistic understanding of death. Of death, first of all [. . .] as *not* created by God, as *not* (in the deepest sense of that word) a 'natural' event, as something ultimately '*un*-natural' and therefore tragic. The rediscovery [of death] as 'punishment for sin' [. . .]: where is that in today's funerals? [. . .]. But, unless we rediscover the very serious situation – that death in humanism is treated as very unpleasant, but sort of 'morally neutral'[. . .]. But, if we rediscover that, first of all, death in this world, on the one hand, is an all-powerful 'queen,' but, on the other hand, that 'queen' is a usurper. No one's death has legitimacy; every time somebody, somewhere, dies, it is an insult to God [. . .], God has not created death. So then, we will understand that death, finally, is *tragedy*, because it is *separation* – separation not only from those who love me or whom I love, but separation from God himself. All this means that the Christian view of death – and this where it parts ways with the humanistic ones – is tragic. In common English today we can say [many things are] 'tragic' – for example, a toothache – but I mean 'tragedy' in the Greek sense of the word, that is *tragôdia* – not simply as something which better be solved. 'Tragedy' is a clash, a conflict which transcends the passing unpleasant experiences of our life. So first of all we have to make this rediscovery – of *death as tragic.*

IV.A.2.c. Goals: ii) ***Rediscovering death as victory.*** The second rediscovery we have to make in our education, in our preaching, in our teaching, in our theologizing is, of course, *death as victory.* Death remains a tragedy, [but] [also] death remains a victory. I've spoken so much about death having been abolished by Christ. But, you see, in Christian terms, this means that *every* death has to be abolished. For example, my death has not yet been abolished, because I haven't died yet. It still can be a refusal of Christ, it still can be – not a tragedy [. . .] – but the ultimate sin. Therefore, death [must be understood] as a victory which has to be won all the time. That's why the Church remains in this aeon – not simply to say: "By the way, sit down and relax; two thousand years ago all problems [were] taken care of [. . .]." Each time it is the same struggle, each time it is the same 'descent' and 'ascent,' each time it is facing the uniqueness of each life, the uniqueness of each death. It would be horrible indeed if having listened to all that Holy Saturday theology, somebody would come to a room where a child has died and say to the parents: "Big deal! Christ is risen!"

In fact, we always forget that there is this Christian dimension to everything which is that of suffering. One of the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith is the mystery of suffering. 'Physical death' – yes, God hasn't created that – [so similarly] Christ does not abolish suffering as suffering. He gives it new meaning; he is victorious in that he says: "If you suffer, you suffer with me because I have suffered with you." He does not simply say: "You don't suffer; it's an illusion, you know." That's where the thing becomes so difficult. So death as a victory – where does it take place? I would say it takes place on many levels. It takes place in the consciences, in the souls of those who suffer, but it also takes place (or rather the crowning point of that victory is) precisely the *liturgy of death.* That vigil is not a nice beautiful service in memory of someone! Why I have stressed so much that we pray with [the departed] and he [sic] prays with us, why I have stressed that it is the Church speaking on behalf of all of us, living and dead, because it is in this vigil, it is in this burial service, [there] happens that which happens every year on Holy Saturday. We are standing around the grave,

we are lamenting, the Mother of God says: "Oh ye trees and hills and all you men, lament with me, the Mother of your God." And then [comes] that answer at the end of the Ninth Irmos of the Canon: "Do not lament me, O Mother . . ." Do not lament me for you understand, you know (or should know) . . . and then she [. . .] confesses that hope of the resurrection. Before the rediscovery of Christ's death as victory, that rediscovery is celebrated (and therefore is fulfilled) precisely in the Funeral Service itself. It is then that we understand that death is to be transformed each time. We cannot say: "No, he didn't die"; this is where Christian Science is not of great help to us . . . [. . .] a fact is a fact. Before the transformation (or, if you want, the rediscovery) at each funeral of the paschal nature of baptism, of Eucharist . . . all that comes about in this service.

IV.A.2.c. Goals: iii) ***Rediscovering death as hope.*** Finally, [there is needed] the rediscovery of death – not as the 'final stage,' not even for those who are alive and in blessedness, not even for the saints – but death [as the reality] whose specific content is 'hope.' You probably have heard that we have today a new [theological] trend (in the West, every six months we have a new one!) which is called the 'theology of hope.' Unfortunately, when you go to those books, the one hope we would like to find there is *not there* [. . .]. [We don't find] that ultimate hope which is the essential novelty of [Christian] death. Yes, we are still dead. Yes, the trumpet, the shout, the descent – all that has not taken place. But we know – we almost know as St. Paul knew – *how* it will happen, although the terms he used seem incomprehensible. And therefore, that quiet – just as on Holy Saturday – before the procession, before the closed door, before "Christ is risen from the dead," before all that – nothing of that has happened, and yet it is the 'Blessed Sabbath.' There is already that peace. The black vestments have been taken away, and that grave in the center of the church blooms; with all its flowers, it is Life already which triumphs.

This is why, looking at Holy Saturday, I would suggest as a kind of 'therapeutic advice ([although] I am not a great fan of [such] advice) precisely not to be interested very much in that famous 'intermediate state.' When you ask me: "Where is my poor [loved one]?", I would suggest therapeutically [. . .] [not to look in books, ancient or modern, but to] think of Holy Saturday. [If it doesn't exist in your parish], quickly, forget about death and restore Holy Saturday! Abolish everything else! Announce a moratorium on burials [. . .] [until the Holy Saturday service is restored]. This is the real discovery of 'death as transitory' because there is a real hope [. . .] – a certain knowledge of the Kingdom of God, some foretaste. If we can say after the Liturgy in this world [. . .]: "[Grant] us to partake more fully of you in the day without evening of thy Kingdom . . ," if even now, without knowing, looking [through] a dark mirror as through some fog, we already have the foretaste of that Kingdom of God. In the best moments of our lives, we know what we say when we say "Thy Kingdom come!" and we know why the merchant sells everything in order to buy that one jewel, why people leave the world in order to be there and only there – if that is possible *here*, how much more of that is already [the portion of] those who at least don't have to [. . .] [contend with worldly cares].

So, [our first educational goal is] the rediscovery of Christian death as tragedy and sin, as an ontological catastrophe, as something unnatural, as something about which we will always have to lament because God has not created death. Second, [we need to] rediscover death in its relationship to

the victory over death performed by Christ, and which is the theme of the funeral celebration. Finally, [we must rediscover] death as that stage which is made, not of groaning and moaning, but of that growing Light [described by] the Hymn to the Theotokos which [speaks of] "the Dawn of the mysterious Day." We always sleep at the best moment of the day, when nothing yet has appeared, and already some light in the East announces hope [. . .].

After [looking at the goals of] this education, [. . .] [we need to devote time to discussing] the techniques of that education ([but] I have no time for that, as you [will] understand). But this is [our] 'agenda.' But maybe I should give you only one example of the seriousness of the problems [confronting us]. Yesterday, in our little priestly 'rap session,' we discussed a little bit [our concerns about our] children. When do our children in America learn that death exists? [. . .] And what do they learn about it? [. . .] They certainly do not learn anything about this whole tragedy of dying, because no one is ever dying in their apartment! On the contrary, we evacuate [the dying ones] immediately in order not to disturb the kids who must have their 'normal life.' [. . .] [The kids ask]: "Where is Baba?" and we always answer: "with God"; it sounds like she just left for Cincinnati! The discovery of death, even in 'death-centered' cultures, is always a shock [. . .]; [in America, it is one for which our children are totally unprepared].

IV. B. *Renewing and Reconciling the Funeral's Layers: 'Lamentation,' 'Holy Saturday,' and 'Commemoration'*

We come [now] to the third aspect, our *liturgical tradition*, and here I can only treat one problem. The real problem which we face today (and it's a real one) is how to reconcile, how to hold together, those 'two layers' which I, with purpose, opposed to each other so strongly yesterday – the 'Holy Saturday layer' and the one that I called the [layer of] 'lamentation and fear.' I have proven to you, I hope, that there are these two different 'themes' – two different reactions to death, two different ways of handling it – in one service. And not particularly in order to justify every word that came to us from Byzantium or from Russia or from Greece or from any other place – but [rather] because of the Church's faith, we must now try to see that *both these layers are integral parts of the liturgy of death.*

In many ways, the lamentation and fear and sorrow' layer is, if not chronologically, the first one, and it is the 'Holy Saturday' which is the second one. How do I justify this? because the 'first layer' [i.e., of lamentation] doesn't even need liturgy, it is simply death itself! It is somebody *dying* – you lose your husband, you lose your wife, you lose your child – this is what constituted always a ritual . . . in all cultures, except ours. The body at home – we know that in Russia, for example, it was for three days on the dining table, and not because there was no other table, but because it was a very 'liturgical' act. [There is] a famous line of Derzhavin, the eighteenth century Russian poet: [. . .] "Where there was a banquet of food, we have now death." [. . .]

What is the common theme of all that? [It is], first of all, a kind of expression of that sorrow, of [a] tragedy and [its] uniqueness. This is very biblical. Christ cries at the grave of Lazarus; who are we *not* to cry? who are we *not* to weep? [. . .] [Yet] this is exactly what our modern culture tries to help us *not* to do. (As one man said [at a funeral], when I expressed to him my condolences on the

death of his brother: "Oh, these things happen!") Sure, "they happen" – but is that the attitude [of someone grieving]? Eternal damnation also 'happens' – nothing to rejoice about! Therefore, this lamentation and also the fear [are to be expected]. What fear? Of course, it [may be the case] that very often we are exploiting that theme of fear, and unfortunately, the hymnology tries that also. It's not the fear of worms, it's not the fear of the mysterious and the unknown. The 'fear' which we should have is the fear of God. Yesterday, [. . .] [someone] asked me: "How do you deal with that fear?" I said: "We shouldn't destroy it, we should channel it, we should partake of it." But, the whole Christian life has been deprived today of the fear of God, because all our sins [so we are taught] are mainly dangerous things for our health! "Don't overeat because it's bad for your heart" – and so on. From that point of view, this lamentation . . . [TAPE INTERRUPTED IN ORIGINAL]

. . . . For example, time. I know that the Kingdom of God is to come, or I *hope* that I believe in that, I *hope* that somehow my life is sort of still directed by that faith. And yet, you know, a happy day which comes to an end – isn't it sad always? All that happens in life which you cannot stop, all disappearing – that tonality is very Christian – because this brokenness in time, the brokenness in space, the impossibility of keeping [away] this 'iron law' of aging, and disappearing into weakness, into senility, into lack of memory – all that is still the sad reality of this world, and therefore the lamentation, the fear and sorrow, all those levels have their place. It is we crying eternally with Christ, who hears about his friend, about the one whom he created in his "ineffable beauty," of whom [Martha says]: "Lord, don't approach! He has been four days there and he stinks" [Jn 11:39]. Listen to that "he stinks" in the light of the first word about Man said by God: "And God saw it was very good" [Gen 1]. Now that "very good" is there in decomposition.

So this lamentation [is] human and even sentimental – [. . .] we don't have to be Stoics. That philosophy, beautiful and admirable as it is, is not a Christian philosophy. We have to be patient, but we don't have to be stoical. (Just like in a marriage in which the husband and wife, loving one another, still shout at each other from time to time – [it] has more chances [of surviving] into eternity than a marriage in which they are always polite with each other, but accumulate that silent hatred.) [. . .] Lament and cry even when somebody dies and you know you'll see them again in the resurrection. Don't suppress that with a "big deal, these things happen" – this is less Christian. We are not only *homo sapiens*, not only *homo adorans*, but we are [also] 'crying animals,' and that capacity [for] tears, the 'gift of tears' given to us, is something which [we] have also to include in the liturgy. [However], we can discuss technically where the place of that lamentation is, how it is to be, [what is to be] the form of it – [perhaps] that kind of "worms and groaning and moaning" center is [. . .] only one aspect of that lamentation. But let me very clearly say that this lamentation has its place.

As to the 'second layer' which I treated in these lectures as the first one, [that of] Holy Saturday – *it has to be restored.* Just as Holy Saturday has to be restored in the parish, that second layer [of the funeral] – what happens in the church – has [also] to be restored. Again, there are technical problems, liturgiological problems here – [though] I think we [have made] a good beginning here [. . .].

Now finally, the third aspect of that religious tradition, the 'commemorations' – and especially the 'private' commemorations. What is needed here (and that sounds easy although it is

very difficult) is to relate those two things. The rules and regulations concerning the private [commemorations] must be understood as restricting them, *not* because death is a special sad and negative part of the Church's life – but to understand those private commemorations in the light of the Church *as* commemoration, of the Eucharist *as* commemoration. If that is understood, then this (what I called yesterday) the 'return of the old death,' the return of 'death as separation,' will be overcome. Here, I would suggest of course, a much deeper understanding of the Eucharist in that perspective, for truly Eucharist and Pascha are the two 'death-centered' realities in the Church.

IV. C. *On the Secularization of Death*

IV.C.1. *The Roots of Secularism*

I began, and I will finish, with our Christian responsibility for secularism, because what we deal with today is that 'secularist death.' It is hoped – not maybe an overwhelming hope – that if we Orthodox (or rather – we who should take that word 'Orthodox' seriously, we [who] claim [that], being the true church, we should have the right answer) we should have the answer not only in books for St. Vladimir's Press to publish, but [that] each parish should become a little focus of action *on culture*. Always the same paradigm, you know, twelve fishermen and the world following them. And therefore, let's never forget that if we do not surrender in advance, if we do not wake up in the morning repeating to ourselves [that] we are [only] one per-cent of the total American population [divided into] fourteen ethnic jurisdictions [. . .], if we do not do that, but say [rather] after our morning prayers, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . . I [can do] everything in the Lord who strengthens me" – then we *can* shake [our culture], or at least we can be a challenge [to it].

People are converting to Orthodoxy today, I hope, not only because all of a sudden they discover an interest in icons (or something of that nature), not because they *think* it's Zen Buddhism (although it isn't!), or because simply "it's so refreshing when you live in Kansas City [*sic*] . . ." So therefore, if they feel behind all that [is] the reality of 'something else,' another Life, another Death – Life understood in the light of that new Death, Death understood in terms of Life – then the culture is not a kind of 'appendix' here to please Harvey Cox! Not at all – because the Liturgy is a witness, the Church is a witness, the parish [is a witness] . . . (Don't believe your parish statutes [when they say that] the parish exists to fulfill *your* spiritual needs – not at all! It exists to serve God, and that is a totally different operation; . . . [the parish] exists as a witness in the world.) So, I would say, *there* is our Christian responsibility for what happened – first of all, for that 'secularization of death,' for that disappearing of 'death' in Death (although it was made into Death through death). And I will answer [that] there probably are three thousand and forty-two reasons for that, including the sin of the bishops [*sic*], their nominalism, their . . . [etc.]

But I'm not interested in all those factors, because I think that what ultimately led to that catastrophe within the Christian world – the transformation of Christianity, of the *Christianitas*, of the *Oikoumenê* into a secularistic world – the world which after two thousand years of Christianity produced --- 'the consumer.' The deified man, the man [to] whom God has said: "I want you from all

eternity at my table in my Kingdom" today is 'the consumer' – the one who has [rights?] that his chewing gum is always checked by the Federal [Food {and Drug}(?)] Administration. We have prophets and saints of that 'consumer faith' – that horrible [Ralph] Nader [*sic*] or whoever he is – the sad figure . . . the one who makes me think whenever I touch bread: "What does Mr. Nader say about that?" The consumer counting calories and jogging at the age of sixty because he is begging for two more years of life [. . .]. All that is secularism – not as a caricature, but [in its] essence.

If the 'gospel' that I will hear today on the 7 o'clock news is ". . . made for the 80s car" – it will be something absolutely new, it will be the *eschaton*, when everything is announced to be as 'salvation' – and obviously what is [portrayed as] salvation on TV is always some [junk thing ?] [like a] new razor – then you can *measure* the catastrophe. It is happening in Islam. No one deified man there, and [yet] today, headed by their horrible [*sic*] Khomeini, they are leading a revolt against the 'consumer man' [. . .]. (They don't want that cheap life which the West proposed to them *plus* Christianity; they hate it today.) It is only within Christianity that that consumer [exists]. This is [a] serious problem [that] should deprive us of all triumphalism immediately and forever. When you go to Confession, from now on, spend less time on your 'impure thoughts' – reduce that a little bit; it has flooded confessions – and confess a little bit: "I confess to you, my God and Lord, that I have contributed somehow to this world being the Hell of consumerism and of apostasy."

IV.C.2. *The Loss of Eschatology*

And then, what is the reason for that, what is the historical reason? Very simple – it is the abandonment by Christians of the early Christian eschatology, and that means, in very simple, non-theological terms, of the belief in the Kingdom of God. [For] Christ, the Apostles, and the Church, the *kêrygma* – the announcement – was *not* the announcement of something partial, even not the announcement of salvation. "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand" [cf. Mk 1:15] – the Kingdom of God, *that* is the theme of Christianity. We believe in God, *not* because he promises to us survival, [. . .] [*not* because He] satisfies our happiness in this world, and also gives us, as a kind of bonus, a wet and pleasant survival. [Rather], we are believing in a God who revealed to us that he created this world, so that ultimately, *at the End* (and 'end' in Greek is *eschaton*), God will be all things, "all in all." [We believe] that in Christ, each one of us will find the "image of his ineffable glory," that we will be all, as the Pentecost prayer says, "anointed with the Holy Spirit" and become prophets, kings, priests, and that ultimately, the glory of God, the *Shekinah*, communion, presence, knowledge, wisdom – all that will triumph, and the world will become truly the *Temple* of God, and of Eternal Life. That was the faith, that is why martyrs died happy. . .

And then, that eschatology began to weaken. Why? Oh, there are historical reasons – static society, the abandonment of the idea of history, of the moving forward somehow – I cannot go into that; it's an important subject, a tremendously important subject. But the fact is (and I mentioned it yesterday) that from this glorious eschatology, which still sounds every day when we go to church, every time we pray "Thy Kingdom come" – all that became *my* life, *my* salvation, *my* interest – or, as somebody told me when I tried to convince him to come to church: "Now Father, explain to me, what

would I get out of it?" [. . .] Personally, I never got *anything* out of the Church, [so] I [have] always understood those 'happy atheists' [who prefer] enjoying their *steak au poivre*.

The moment you seriously think about Christianity, it is immediately a Cross. "In this world you shall have tribulation" [Jn 16:33]. It is knowing that I sin, that after living in this world for 58 years, I haven't [taken] one step closer to God. You get *nothing* out of it, so [one likes to] forget about it from time to time. So for this reason, [one is tempted to] 'sell' [Christianity] – "What do you get out of it?" – peace of mind (that means 'indifference'!) [. . .] – and all that which becomes 'serving the customer' – the one who suffers, we have to comfort him; the one who rejoices, we have to rejoice with him --- sure, we have to do that, but in what perspective? For what reason? Where is the end of everything? What gives the meaning to June 28, 1979? That it's one irreversible day on the way to the Kingdom of God. Then, my dear friends, everything we do today becomes important, then life acquires meaning. And that is why this eschatology of the Church was pushed into the background.

What happened was that this eschatology, Christian eschatology, became secularized, became preached *against* the Church. What is our utopianism today? What is Marxism, if not a de-christianized eschatology? What is this whole idea of 'progress' (by which we live, by the way, even we Christians --- tomorrow, bigger and better!) [which nobody is against]? (Of course the Kingdom of God, of course "Thy Kingdom come"; the American Congress does nothing else than to say "Thy Kingdom come," but [their] 'kingdom' will be in this world . . . A Marxist society which [leaped?] from the 'kingdom of necessity' into the 'kingdom of freedom,' that famous 'just and humane society').

It is not an accident that all our advertisement in television has acquired an eschatological taste – always contributing to that final destiny of Man. Why? because we've built this [satanic] world. But it's a foolish Christianity, it is *la vérité chrétienne devenue folle*, it is Christian truth that has gone crazy in all that. The horizon is closed, and fallen Man invents those little consolations – [. . . progress], or those Chekhov heroes who sit there dying of tuberculosis, and saying "Yes, but the future generations will be *happy* [. . .]." And people *die* for the next generation! (In my good Christian selfishness, I never could [understand] why I should die so that some distant Negro [*sic*] in Ghana in 2000 years will have a second car! Why should I sacrifice the precious little time that I have in this world where people die? Communists die, Marxists die, only Christians survive – they are still asking "What do I get out of the Christian faith?" All the others are ready to die for their utopia.)

So what happens is [that] today this eschatological optimism of secularism is cracking, progress ends up in those lines at the [gas-pumps?]. War? Eternal peace? There are still a couple of Baptists who meet in Nyack to discuss 'eternal peace' in this world, [where] every serious man knows – the Bible knew it all the time – [that] there will be wars until the end. All these little 'divinities' – 'eternal peace,' 'bread for the whole world,' the March of Dimes – all that terminology today means nothing. (Why "dimes" when even a dollar has no meaning?) So there is a crack, but if that crack were leading people to . . . . Nowadays, they abandon not only secularism (thank God if they abandon secularism!) [and] consumerism, [but] they [also] abandon eschatology. What they want today [is]

escape – the wet and pleasant womb of Zen Buddhism. Irresponsibility! – what is that, that blah! blah! blah! about 'spirituality' which makes me hope that this word will disappear for twenty-five years from our vocabulary? What? It is an escape. It is a denial of responsibility. It is a denial in fact of Christian eschatology once more, but this time on 'religious' grounds. And that is this narcissism which permeates our culture in secularism and also in that [. . .] for catastrophe.

IV.C.3. ***Restoring Meaning to Life***

It is (and here I am coming to my conclusion) [. . .] by restoring death and the liturgy of death in the proper form that we restore the meaning of life – *this* life – because in this life *nothing is ever lost.* What I do now, what I say now [. . .] – all this has meaning now, because it has an eternal meaning. It is the return to the real Christian understanding of eschatology, *not* as an interest in after-death, but [as] the belief that the goal of everything, of every word, of every moment of time, of every preoccupation in this world [is eternal]. [. . .] If you live in this faith, if you truly know that "Thy Kingdom come," "Come! Lord Jesus," is the true meaning of life and death, because it refers everything to the ultimate consummation of all things in God – then life becomes meaningful, and death becomes meaningful, because life is full of that 'deathless death,' and death is full of that Life which is Hope [. . .]. We don't need to go immediately and preach all that in banks and supermarkets, we don't need to open 'Reading Rooms' like Christian Scientists [. . .], we should not post in the papers "Come to us Orthodox! we have the meaning of life, the meaning of death . . ." – what we have to do first of all is to rediscover, to restore and to live by that faith. And God will show where and how, from inside that culture, that 'light of Orthodoxy,' that 'victory of Christ' will begin their work.

When the Apostles died (and I don't know why they believed that the victory was there – this victory that "overcomes the world"), [there was still to be] a hundred more years of the No! to Christianity – and yet, it won. And so, we can finish this whole Institute, [at least] in its intellectual form, [by taking away] what expresses what I am trying to say. What gives meaning to what we are discussing about death and life – its best expression [is still to be found] in Romans 8:8 where everything is subordinated, everything in this world, to one overwhelming and victorious faith: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, – and that means even of religion! – not powers, not things present, – this world – nor things to come, – the wet and pleasant survival! – nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

So, when we say "Thy Kingdom come!", we should add to that: "Thy Kingdom come NOW!" It may be an insignificant thing that I am doing, but it is my power as a Christian to relate my 'now' to the eternal Kingdom. And I should say: "Thy Kingdom come EVER". We don't know how much longer history will continue, how much longer we'll have to be in this mysterious pilgrimage, but whenever it is, let everything be "Thy Kingdom come!" – and finally, ALWAYS, for ever, life, eternity.

If that is with us, all that we have said here about death becoming meaningless, and life therefore being meaningless, and [about] all that world which breathes that meaninglessness, which

has to cover itself with noise constantly [. . .] so as not to face its emptiness, then again the Christian *kêrygma*, the faith of the Church, the life of the Church, the liturgy of the Church, *will* – whether *we* want it or not, whether *we* are *worthy* of it or not – start all over again that eternal revolution which Christ compared to fire. "I have come in order that fire may come and how I suffer until it is kindled [. . .]" [Lk 12:49]. With a little bit of that spirit for us, and with the help of God, even death will become what it has become in Christianity – the victory of God and the promise of his eternal Kingdom. Thank you.

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