

In Loving Memory Of

Vitaly Lupish

'Victor'



23 December 1935 - 9 June 2024

Memory Eternal

Order of Service

Service held on Tuesday, 18 June 2024
at Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Wallsend
Officiated Fr James Carles

The Russian Orthodox funeral service follows a traditional order that has changed very little in over 1000 years.

It begins with selected verses from Psalm 119 (118), "Blessed are the blameless in the way". This psalm sings of the victory of righteousness and life over wickedness and death. Because of this, it is an important part of all Orthodox Christian services for the departed.

The central part of the service is a canon, a liturgical poem in nine parts or odes, the composition of Saint Theophan, Bishop of Nicaea (775-845AD). After the third, sixth and ninth odes of the canon, the deacon intones the litany for the departed:

Again and again, let us pray to the Lord.

Again, we pray for the repose of the newly-departed servant of God, Vitaly, and that he may be forgiven every transgression, both voluntary and involuntary.

That the Lord God commit his soul to where the righteous repose.

The mercy of God, the kingdom of Heaven, and the remission of his sins, let us ask of Christ the Immortal King and our God.

The choir sings 'Lord have mercy' in response. As the deacon intones the litany the priest says this prayer quietly:

O God of spirits and of all flesh, Who hast trampled down death, and overthrown the devil, and given life to Thy world: Do Thou Thyself, O Lord, give rest to the soul of Thy departed servant, Vitaly in a place of light, a place of green pasture, a place of repose, whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing are fled away. Pardon every sin committed by him in word, deed, or thought, in that Thou art a good God, the Lover of mankind; for there is no man that liveth and sinneth not, for Thou alone art without sin, Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy word is truth.

And then this prayer audibly:

For Thou art the Resurrection, and the life, and the repose of Thy departed servant Vitaly, O Christ our God, and unto Thee do we send up glory, together with Thine unoriginate Father, and Thy most holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

The most solemn part of the service is the singing of the kontakion, a special hymn verse always to be found after the sixth ode of a canon. The Russian version has become well-known in the West as it was sung at the funerals of both Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and Queen Elizabeth II:

With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the souls of Thy servant, where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing, but life everlasting.

The kontakion is followed immediately by these verses:

Thou alone art immortal, who didst create and fashion man; but we mortals were formed of earth, and unto earth shall we return, as Thou who madest me didst command and say unto me: For earth thou art and unto earth shalt thou return, whither all we mortals are going, making as a funeral dirge the song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

There are two readings from the Holy Scriptures. The first is from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians (4:13-17):

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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 which 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.

The second is from the Gospel according to Saint John (5:24-30):

The Lord said to the Jews that came to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, 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. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves 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 condemnation. I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me”.

Following the readings a Prayer of Absolution is read. The faithful then come forward to pay their respects to the departed, giving – if they wish – the ‘last kiss’. As they do this, the choir sings verses such as this reflecting on the mystery of death:

What is this parting, O brethren? What is this wailing, what this weeping at the present hour? Come ye, therefore, let us kiss him who was but lately with us; for he is committed to the grave; he is covered with a stone; he taketh up his abode in the gloom; he is interred among the dead, and now is parted from all his kinsfolk and his friends. Let us beseech the Lord that he will give unto him eternal rest.

The service ends with the intoning of a short, solemn prayer:

In a blessed falling asleep, grant, O Lord, eternal rest unto Thy departed servant Vitaly, and make his memory to be eternal.

Candles and fragrant incense are a noticeable feature of Orthodox Christian funerals. The candles express the certainty that the departed one has passed into the eternal light of God's presence. The incense represents the ascent to heaven of our heartfelt prayers for the departed.

It is the custom in the Russian Orthodox Church for the coffin to be open during a funeral. A simple headband or "crown" – an ancient symbol of victory – bearing the words of an important prayer – "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!" – is placed on the forehead. A cross is placed in the hands, symbolising the departed one's confession of the Orthodox Christian faith.

Departed Orthodox Christians who are members of the clergy are buried in full vestments and with items appropriate to their rank. As Vitaly was a subdeacon, he will be buried vested in a sticharion and orarion (alb and stole) and with a copy of the Apostol, the volume of the Holy Scriptures that it was his role to read in church.

We thank you for the overwhelming

love and support at this time.

The greatest comfort during this time of sorrow, is the compassion, care and love our family and friends have shown us and the knowledge that Victor will be dearly missed.

Please join us for light refreshments following the service in the adjacent church hall.

A life with love is a life that's been lived.



I thought of you with love today

I thought of you with love today, but that is nothing new,
I thought about you yesterday, and days before that too.

I think of you in silence, I often speak your name,
all I have are memories, and your picture in a frame.

Your memory is my keepsake with which I'll never part.
God has you in His keeping, I have you in my heart.

Pettigrew

FAMILY FUNERALS