



Sacred Gateway Conference 2020

Important Quotes from Patrick Kennedy's Presentation

Rudolf Steiner on ritual and the Funeral Service

A True Ritual is a Mirror of Spiritual Ritual

"If I may give an example, let me speak of one part of that great and all-embracing cult which has found its place in the Christian Community, and with which the majority of you are already familiar. Let me remind you of the ritual for the burial of the dead, as it is given in our Christian Community.

Watch the order of this ritual. There rests the coffin, containing the mortal remains of the dead. And before the coffin a ritual is enacted. Prayer is uttered by the priest. Other things could be introduced to make the ceremony more complicated, but the help it can be to humanity can also be clothed in simplicity. What is this ceremony? Let us suppose, my dear friends, that here we have a mirror and here again some object. You see the reflection of the object in the mirror. You have the two things – the original and the reflection. Similarly, when a ritual for the dead is enacted, there are the two things. The ritual enacted by the priest before the coffin is a reflection. It is a reflection, and it would be no reality if it were not a reflection. What does it reflect? The acts of the priest as he stands before the dead body have their prototype in the super-sensible world. For while we celebrate the earthly rite before the physical body, and the etheric body is still present, on the other side the heavenly ritual is enacted by the Beings beyond the threshold of earthly existence. Over yonder, the soul and spirit are received by what we may call a ritual of welcome, just as here on earth we assemble before the dead for a ritual of farewell. A cult or ceremony is only true when it has its origin in reality.

Thus you see how the super-sensible life works into earthly life and permeates it. If we celebrate a true ritual for the dead, a super-sensible ritual is enacted simultaneously. The two work together. And if there is sanctity, truth and dignity in the prayers for the dead, then the prayers of the Beings of the Hierarchies in

the super-sensible world echo in the prayers for the dead and weave in them. The spiritual world and the physical unite.”

From *Karmic Relationships* - volume II, lecture 15, June 27, 1924

On The Social Significance of a true Funeral Rite

“It is of far greater importance for the general life of man whether right or wrong funeral services are held than all the regulations of town councils or parliament – strange as that may sound, – for the impulses working in life come from the human individuals themselves when they are in right relation to the dead. To-day people wish to regulate everything by an abstract structure of the social order. They are pleased when they do not need to think much over what they are to do. Many, even, are glad if they are not obliged to reflect upon what they ought to think. It is quite different when one has a living consciousness, not merely of a vaguely pantheistic connection, but of a concrete one with the spiritual world. One can foresee a permeation of the religious life with concrete ideas when it is deepened by Spiritual Science.”

From *Earthly Death and Cosmic Life*, lecture 3, 5th February, 1918