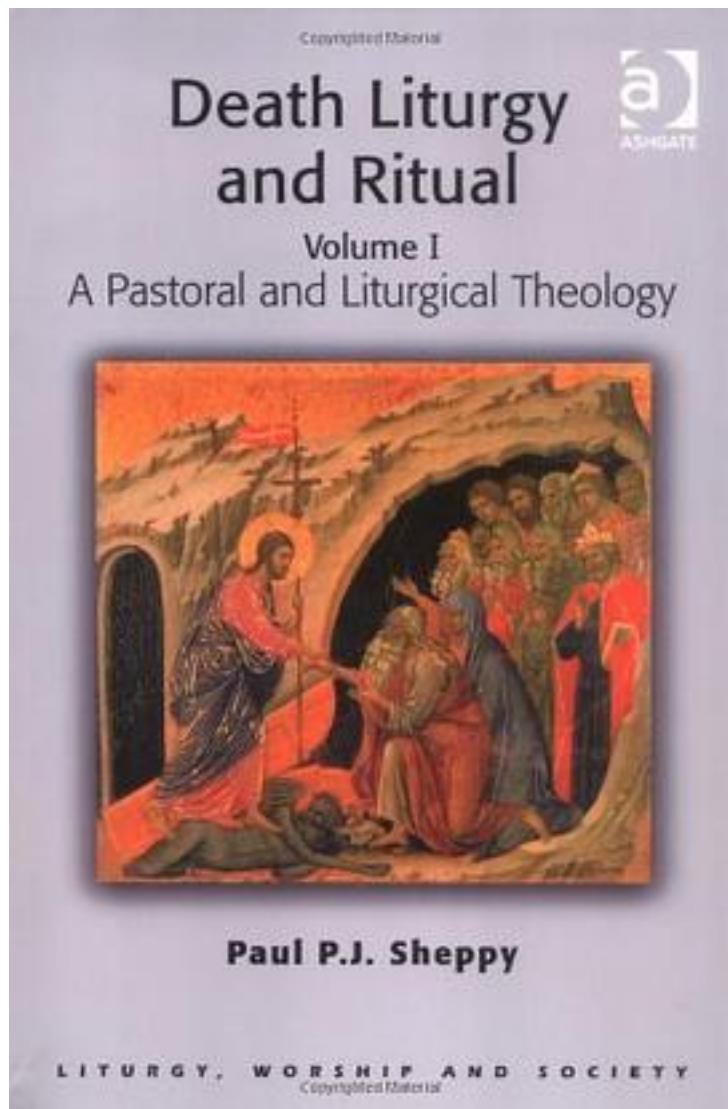


Death, Liturgy and Ritual



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At the beginning of the 21st century, the Christian Church continues to minister to the dying and the bereaved. However, it does so in a rapidly changing world. The traditional understandings of death and life after death are challenged by the disciplines of medicine, the law, philosophy, psychology and anthropology. This two-volume study of Christian funerary theology and practice presents an account of funeral rites and the central issues involved for compilers and users. The author writes from direct experience of conducting funerals and of drafting liturgical resources for others. In Volume I, Dr Sheppy argues that the Church ought to construct its theological agenda in dialogue with other fields of study. He argues for a Christian statement about death that finds its basis in the Paschal Mystery, since human death must be explained by reference to Jesus' death, descent to the dead and resurrection. Using the three phases of van Gennep's theory of rites of passage, the author shows how the Easter triduum may be seen as normative for Christian liturgies of death. Volume II reviews a wide range of current Christian funeral rites and examines how they reflect both the Church's concern for the death and resurrection of Christ and the contemporary secular demand for funerals which celebrate the life of the deceased.

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