



Cultural Phenomena

Burials (25)

15:00 minutes

Two-track audio

00:14 Undertakers prepare the deceased before the burial. In the Chapel of Rest family and friends take their leave in peace and dignity.

03:08 In Switzerland nearly every second person opts for cremation, with the figure rising. After a cremation at 800 degrees Celsius all that remains is a little ash and bone.

05:48 Burial and ceremonial sites are among the oldest testimonies of human civilisation. In ancient Egypt embalmment prevented the bodies of the wealthy from decomposing. In Hinduism the god of fire, Agni, accompanies the souls of the dead after cremation. Jews and Muslims reject cremation. In both religions graves face the east.

08:34 The form of a funeral also depends on the significance of the deceased. Hundreds of thousand mourners crowded into St Peter's Square in Rome to attend the memorial ceremony of Pope John Paul the Second. Mass graves, on the other hand, are anonymous. Thousands of crosses stand row after row in war cemeteries.

09:39 The traditional burial in an individual grave is losing in importance. Alternatives are the burial of urns in communal graves, the scattering of ashes or cemeteries located in forests.

11:44 Dying, death and burials used to be integral parts of everyday village life. The deceased were laid out at home, and funeral processions passed through the village to the cemetery. But funeral rites are forever changing.