New Architectures for Funeral Houses in the Contemporary Secularized Italian Society. Premises and Results of an Interdisciplinary University Research Activity

Abstract:

Urbanization and Secularization contribute to evolve a new relationship toward death and dying. Whereas in the countryside 'burial chambers' and ancient spaces for traditional rituals are still in use inside the houses, the city ostracizes death and dead to special buildings: farewell rooms and funeral houses. Inside these new spaces one can have the possibility of a funeral "tailored" on the specific personality of the dead, according to the specific psychological personality he expressed during his life. These spaces are therefore places for a personalization of death, whereas the space itself cannot be personalized in the same way: while the ritual for the funerals is increasing its individual character in order to adhere more and more to the psychological personality of the dead, architecture for funeral specializes itself like a public space, which cannot adhere to the specific personality of each, but can only adhere to the common personality of all, that is to men's metaphysical essence. Architecture for funeral houses becomes in this way the better guarantee to preserve the dignity of each farewell, referring every life to its own metaphysical personality, proposing in the architectural design an interpretation of the universal Human Dignity.

Keywords: *architecture, secularization, urbanization, individualization, funeral houses, metaphysical personality.*