**RITUALS:**

Rituals are symbolic activities that help human beings to express their thoughts and feelings about life’s important events. There are lots of rituals that people carry out during their existence but most of the times they don’t realize that at that moment they are taking part in a ritual: everybody’s routine for example is a result of many rituals: getting up, having breakfast,…

Rituals strongly depend from your culture, religion and socio-economic context and for this reason they are always changeable. Relevant rituals our Western culture has been practising are baptism, birthday, weddings and funerals and each of them has its own characteristics and functions.

**FUNERAL RITUALS:**

The funeral ritual is a public, traditional and symbolic ritual and means of expressing beliefs, thoughts and feelings about the death of someone loved.

Rich in history and rife of symbolism, the funeral ritual has its precise functions and purposes here summarized:

1. First of all, funerals make people acknowledge the reality of the death and help people to see and greet a loved person for the last time.
2. Unavoidably, people feel the loss in their hearts and react by crying and suffering internally: indeed, funerals help people to concentrate on the fact of the death.
3. People will soon shift their relationship with that person from one of physical presence to one of memory; funerals are meaningful because they allow people to highlight individually the major events and characteristics of the deceased and, later, share with other people some memories spent with that person and learn something else about him or her. It is very important that the memory of that person will remain vivid.
4. People tend to reflect about the reason of the death, life and death’s meanings; funerals communicate a cultural view about these relevant themes and reinforce the idea that everyone will die. It’s the reason why our culture is afraid of the death and undervalue the importance of the funeral rite.
5. As all social beings’ lives are given meaning in relation to the lives around us, when someone dies, people develop a ‘new-self identity’ and funerals represent a way for providing social acknowledgment.
6. It is meaningful to have parents and friends around that, despite of the loss, make you fell still existing! In a way or another, funerals are the public venue for support from others and being supported in grief. In conclusion, taking part in a funeral means that we care this person and we give support and a message of hope to the living, who don’t feel alone anymore.

**WAR MEMORIALS:**

Memorials, such as a funeral, represent a way for remembering something about someone dead.

An important example of memorials could be found in war memorials: buildings, statues, graves, epitaphs or other edifice to celebrate a war or victory, or to commemorate those who died or were injured during a war.

The first kind of memorials have a political aim: they were erected to glorify war and to favour the enrolment of soldiers into an army. They are the more ancient: the oldest war memorial in the United Kingdom was Oxford University's All Souls College to celebrate the Hundred Years War. Common soldiers that were dead during a war were almost never buried.

But during the WW1 things began to change: after the war many countries saw massive devastation and loss of life and people become aware of war’s negative aspects. As it was almost impossible to take the fallen back to England and bury them, lots of people and families felt the need to gain a place where they could mourn. The result was that small village communities erected lots of memorials, most of the times against the government’s will. Differently from the previous ones, these memorials for the first time didn’t glorify war: their aim was to commemorate the fallen and preserve their memory enlisting their names. They became pacifist memorials and quickly spread in churches, public buildings, factories, railway stations, collieries, schools and so on. An important example can be found in the tomb of the unknown soldier in Westminster Abbey which represents any British fallen soldier during the Great War and became a symbol of hope for the living.

But lots of memorials continued to be exploited for a political aim and not for moral reason. This is the example of the Cenotaph (in England), which became a sort a compromise for pleasing the population and calming down the clash between the social classes of that time. The Cenotaph -erected in Whitehall, in central London- was designed by the architect Edwin Lutyens and quickly became a focal point of national grief for all those many thousands of people who had lost loved ones in the war. The Cenotaph –free from any nationalist or religious reference- wanted to commemorate any soldier of the world and this aspect made him soon very popular.

In conclusion, with different forms and characteristics, memorials are spread all over the world and most of the times reflect the most relevant features of the civilization who built them.

Definizione ricordo e memoria:

Italiano:

**Ricordo:**

1. Il ricordare; il ricordarsi
2. Ciò che serve a conservare o a rinnovare la memoria di qualcuno o di qualcosa

**Memoria:**

1. Facoltà della mente umana di conservare, ridestare in sé, al momento opportuno, e di collocare nello spazio e nel tempo nozioni, esperienze passate, cose viste o sentite e idee acquistate; capacità di ricordare

Fonte: Dizionario Italiano Olivetti

English:

**Memory:**

1. the mental ability of keeping and recalling facts, events, or experiences: long- and short-term memory. [*uncountable*](http://www.wordreference.com/definition/mass%20noun)
2. this ability as possessed by an individual *[countable](http://www.wordreference.com/definition/count%20noun)*
3. the length of time over which remembering extends [*countable*](http://www.wordreference.com/definition/count%20noun)
4. a mental picture kept in the mind;  
   a recollection. [*countable*](http://www.wordreference.com/definition/count%20noun)
5. the state or fact of being remembered [*countable*](http://www.wordreference.com/definition/count%20noun)