

What happens at the Funeral Mass with cremated remains?

Significant attention should be given to the primary symbols of the Catholic funeral liturgy, as stated in the Order of Christian Funerals and its commentaries. The paschal candle and sprinkling with holy water are primary symbols of baptism and are used. During the Mass, the cremains should be treated with the same dignity and respect as the body. They are to be sealed in a "worthy vessel." They may be carried in procession and/or placed on a table where the coffin normally would be with the Easter candle nearby. The body is always laid to rest with solemnity and dignity. So too, the Order of Christian Funerals provides for the interment of cremated remains (Order of Christian Funerals, #428).

Canon Law on Cremation

Can. 117 S1 - Christ's faithful who have died are to be given a Church funeral according to the norms of law. S2 - Church funerals are to be celebrated according to the norms of the liturgical books. In these funeral rites the Church prays for the spiritual support of the dead, it honors their bodies, and at the same time it brings to the living the comfort of hope. S3 - The Church earnestly recommends that the pious customs of burial be retained; but it does not forbid cremation, unless it is chosen for reasons that are contrary to Christian teaching. A common practice is the entombment of the cremated remains in a "columbarium". It is an arrangement of niches, either in a mausoleum, a room or wall into which an urn or other worthy vessel is placed for permanent memorial.

Pricing/Other Information

The price for one Niche is \$2300. The Niche can hold the cremains of two people.

Payments may be made by check, credit card or cash. The cost covers the Urn, the engraving of the marble as well as the upkeep and care of the Columbarium.

A budget plan can be worked out for those unable to pay the full amount upfront.

Memorabilia is not allowed. In the case of a deceased military person Inured in the Columbarium, a medallion for the branch of service may be added beside the name on the niche.

Although you may purchase your desired niche ahead of time, no engraving will be done until the cremains are inurned.

Engraving will only consist of the name of the deceased along with date of birth and date of death.

Other changes to prices and policy will inevitably come about.

Contact the Parish Office for more information.

The Columbarium at St. Teresa's Church



Blessed are those who have died in the Lord; let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest here in peace! Amen.

QUESTIONS / ANSWERS

What is a Columbarium?

A Columbarium is a group of niches, typically within a wall of brick, stone, granite, marble or other materials, that contains the cremated remains (cremains) of the departed.

Can Catholics be cremated?

Yes. In May 1963, the Vatican's Holy Office (now the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith) lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics to choose cremation. This permission was incorporated into the revised Code of Canon Law of 1983 (Canon # 1176), as well as into the Order of Christian Funerals. It then became standard practice to celebrate the funeral liturgies with the body and then take the body to the crematorium. The bishops of the United States and Holy See have authorized the celebration of a Catholic funeral liturgy with the cremains when the body is cremated before the funeral. The Church encourages placement of the cremains in a final resting place.

Why have a Columbarium?

The church has traditionally been the natural repository and final resting place of deceased members of the Christian community. Burial within the church itself or in the adjacent churchyard was once common practice. The amount of land necessary for a burial ground is no longer available to most churches and a myriad of laws and regulations make it extremely difficult to establish a burial site. In recent years, cremation with inurnment of the cremains, rather than burial, has become more common. In this way, the remains of the deceased can remain at the church that played such an important part in their lives. In some cases, many people today are turning to cremation as an economical, dignified way to address the rising cost of funerals. As more and more people turn to cremation, the cost of traditional funerals will continue to rise. By creating a columbarium at St. Teresa's, we are addressing the needs of those who choose cremation and would still prefer to be located on the grounds of the parish.

What are the benefits to our congregation?

A niche in a columbarium is modestly priced, aesthetically pleasing, and ecologically sound. The ambiance of the columbarium creates a comfortable meeting place for families and friends to gather in love and remembrance, a consoling link between life and death.

How will the niches be marked?

Each niche will provide the person's legal name and dates of birth and death. These will be inscribed in a uniform size on the face of the granite faceplate covering the niche. The church office will take care of ordering the inscription.

Who can be inurned here?

The columbarium is reserved for the use of members of the congregation and their families. Only human remains may be inurned at the columbarium.

How are arrangements for cremation and inurnment made?

Arrangements for cremation are made through a Funeral Home. Prior to going to the Funeral Home a visit to the Church should be made to discuss the pending funeral, obtain an urn and confirm the inscription to go on the faceplate of the niche.

QUESTIONS / ANSWERS

May a particular niche be chosen?

Yes, niches will be offered on a "first come, first served" basis. The cost will not vary according to location.

What about care and permanency?

The columbarium will have perpetual care funded by the sale of the niches.

How do I reserve a niche?

Reservations of a Niche will be done through the Parish office.

May I scatter the ashes?

No. "The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires." (Order of Christian Funerals, Appendix II)

Who decides if I am cremated?

In most cases you make the decision to be cremated. However, your survivors may decide to have you cremated, generally due to special family circumstances, but rarely against your will.

How do I make my wishes known?

If you desire that your body be cremated you can make those wishes known in your will and in documents designed to help plan and prepare your funeral.

Do I have to honor my parents or spouse's wish to cremate them?

Out of respect for loved ones, you will want to do all you can to carry out the wishes of the deceased concerning funeral services provided they are in keeping with Church practice.

What funeral rites are celebrated when a person is cremated?

All the usual rites that are celebrated with a body present may also be celebrated in the presence of cremated remains. The United States' bishops have written new prayers and have printed them as an appendix to the Order of Christian Funerals. During the liturgies, the cremated remains are treated with the same dignity and respect as the body.

What length of time is there between death, cremation and the funeral Mass?

The answer to this question depends on various factors, just as in the case of funerals with the body. The place of death, the location of the crematory, scheduling a time for cremation, the schedule at the parish church, and other circumstances impact the timing.