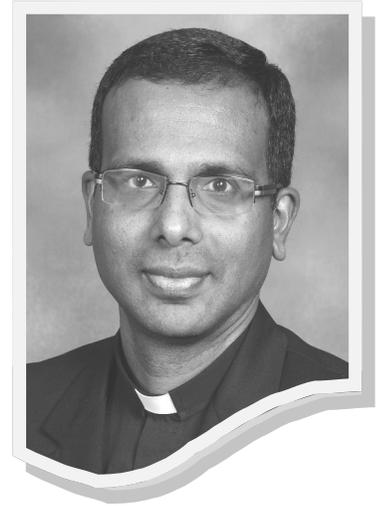




## From the Pastor



### Burial and Cremation for Catholics: Part III

**O**ur deceased loved ones need to find the resting place—not on a mantle or in the homes of the living. They need to find rest in God, and we need to let them go. They belong to the Church Triumphant (saints) and not church militant (living). After Peter and John had returned home after finding the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene stood at the tomb weeping. To her Jesus said, “Do not cling on to me,” meaning that His time has come to leave and she needs to let Him go.

“Only in grave and exceptional cases,” the instruction says, “local bishops may give permission for ashes to be kept in a private home.” Cardinal Muller said it was not up to him, but to local and national bishops’ conferences to determine what those “grave and exceptional” circumstances might be. Placing the ashes in a sacred place also “prevents the faithful departed from being forgotten or their remains from being shown a lack of respect,” which is more likely to happen as time goes on, and the people closest to the deceased also pass way, the instruction said.

In conclusion here is the summary:

The Church earnestly recommends the pious custom of burial be retained; but it does not forbid cremation, unless this is chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching.

It is generally preferred that cremation take place after the funeral Mass with the body present. If that is not possible the funeral Mass needs to be celebrated at least with the presence of cremated remains.

Cremated remains should be preferably interred in a Catholic cemetery or in a sacred ground in an appropriate container. This may be in the ground or in a niche, vault, or columbarium. The Church recommends that the place of burial be memorialized in a stable manner.

The ashes should not be placed in unsuitable receptacles such as jewelry, dishes, or space capsules. Nor should cremated remains be made into jewelry, artwork, or other objects of display.

Practices such as scattering the cremated remains over water or from the air, or keeping the cremated remains at home, are not considered reverent forms of disposition that the Church requires.

Other practices, such as commingling cremated remains or dividing up cremated remains among family members or friends, are not acceptable for Catholics. It would be acceptable, however, to place remains side by side in receptacles that would eventually disintegrate and mix the ashes after burial.

A Catholic funeral service with Mass is highly recommended for every Catholic who passes away. Unfortunately, it may be true, as I have encountered many times, that you may be the only one who is a practicing Catholic in your family, and your children would not think of a Catholic funeral service for you. Therefore, it is wise that you make plans while you are still here, and make those plans available in writing to the funeral home or to a responsible member of your family. Jan Michelsen, who is the Funeral Coordinator at St. Francis, can be reached at (541) 639-9990. She will be happy to assist you with making plans for a Catholic funeral. It is also important to let the Church know of the passing away of a Catholic in your family.

—Fr. Jose Thomas