

Cremation for Catholics in Florida

Questions and Answers



**"BUT AS FOR ME, I KNOW THAT MY VINDICATOR LIVES,
AND FROM MY FLESH I SHALL SEE GOD;
MY INMOST BEING IS CONSUMED WITH LONGING."**

- Job 19: 25,26

As Christians, we profess faith in the incarnation of the Word made flesh and His bodily resurrection, which we will share on the Last Day. We are reminded of the words of Saint Paul who wrote to the Corinthians: *"You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within the Spirit you have received from God. You are not your own. You have been purchased, and at a price. So glorify God in your body".* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Q1: Does the church allow cremation of the body?

A1: Catholics may choose cremation, provided it in no way expresses a denial of the Catholic teaching of the dignity of the body, created by Almighty God to be a temple of the Holy Spirit and destined to share fully in the Resurrection of the just on the Last Day.

Although the church understands that certain circumstances and preferences may exist for individuals or relatives to seek cremation, she maintains as a first preference the funeral rites with the body present and its immediate burial in a cemetery.

Q2: What is the first step in considering cremation?

A2: Catholic faithful are encouraged to seek the counsel of their pastor before choosing cremation.

Q3: If cremation is chosen, when should the body be cremated?

A3: The church recommends that the body be cremated after the funeral, thus allowing for the presence of the body at the funeral Mass. When pastoral circumstances require it, however, cremation and committal may take place even before the funeral liturgy.

Pastors in Florida can grant permission on an individual basis for cremated remains to be present at the funeral Mass.

Q4: How should the final disposition of the cremated remains be handled?

A4: The final disposition of cremated remains should always reflect the Christian belief in the bodily resurrection and the respect afforded to the human body, even after death.

Q5: What is the proper method for final disposition of the cremated remains?

A5: The church recommends that the burial or entombment of the cremated remains occur without delay, once the cremation process is completed.

Cremated remains are to be placed in an urn (or other suitable container) and either buried in the ground or at sea, or entombed in a columbarium.

Catholics are strongly encouraged to be buried or entombed in a Catholic cemetery or the Catholic section of a non-Catholic cemetery.

Q6: What practices for handling cremated remains are to be avoided?

A6: 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 the church requires. Such methods of disposing of cremated remains are inconsistent with the due respect and honor that the church wants to preserve for her departed children.

The practice of a common grave, ground or niche where the cremated remains of several persons are scattered, poured, buried or combined without individual urns is to be completely avoided in Catholic cemeteries. Catholics should not select this practice for the final disposition of their mortal, cremated remains.

Q7: Can cremated remains be divided or combined with those of others?

A7: Each urn is to contain the cremated remains of only one person. The cremated remains of one person are not to be divided but rather are always kept in the same urn.

Q8: Can cremated remains be buried at sea?

A8: The cremated remains of the body may be properly buried at sea in the urn, coffin or other container in which they have been carried to the place of committal.

The answers provided here are excerpted from the Statement and Policy on Cremation, approved by the Bishops of Florida, December 4, 2006. For complete text of this policy, please contact your pastor or visit www.flacathconf.org/policies/cremation12-06.pdf.