



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Cremation

Can Catholics be cremated?

Yes. Current Church Law allows Catholics to be cremated. However, Catholic traditions earnestly recommend the custom burial in the ground, in a mausoleum or columbarium. (Code of Canon Law, #1176).

What should be done with the cremated remains?

The Catholic Church teaches that the cremated remains should be treated with the same respect as the body of a dead person. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the remains as well as the manner in which they are handled and their final burial in the ground, mausoleum or placement in a special place for cremated remains called a "Columbarium". (Order of Christian Funerals # 416)

It is recommended that cremation take place after the funeral liturgy. This allows for traditional viewing and leave taking for family and friends as well as the presence of the body at the wake and the funeral liturgy. However, the Catholic funeral liturgy may take place in the presence of the cremated remains.

What about scattering the cremated remains or keeping them at home?

The practice of scattering the cremated remains, or keeping the cremated remains or keeping the cremated remains in the home or other place is not in accord with the reverence shown to the dead in the constant tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church.

Are there special places for the proper burial of cremated remains in the Diocesan Cemeteries?

Yes. The cremated remains can be buried in the ground at a regular grave site, or in a mausoleum or in a columbarium. All of these allow for identification of the deceased person and the placing of a memorial.

How can I find out more about Catholic Funerals and cremation guidelines?

Visit [Worship Resources for new information about cremation from the Vatican](#), or e-mail your question to the [Diocesan Cemeteries](#).