

Can Catholics be cremated?

from Through Death to Life, Joseph M. Champlin

The Church permits cremation so long as it is not chosen because of a denial of belief in the resurrection or denial of any other Catholic teaching. When cremation is chosen, the *Order of Christian Funerals* urges that the body be present in church for the funeral when at all possible, with cremation taking place afterward. When it is not possible or practical to have the body present for the funeral, liturgical norms allow the Funeral Mass to be celebrated in the presence of the cremated remains, providing the local bishop has granted this permission. Whether cremation occurs prior to or following the funeral, cremated remains are to be treated with the same respect as is given to the human body. They should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The Church does not permit the scattering cremated remains nor the keeping of these in homes.

Who can be buried in St. Joseph Cemetery?

Non-Catholic family members of those interred in St. Joseph Cemetery may also be buried in St. Joseph Cemetery. Catholics who are not parishioners of St. Joseph Parish may be buried in this cemetery. Contact Liz Neil, 734.426.8483, to purchase gravesites.

Do you have to be a member of St. Joseph Parish to have a funeral celebrated here?

Those who are not parishioners of St. Joseph Parish may be buried from St. Joseph Parish. Contact Fr. Brendan Walsh at 734.426.8806 to make arrangements.

Can funeral arrangements be made in advance?

Yes. Contact Fr. Brendan Walsh at 734.426.8806 for funeral preplanning. Contact Liz Neil, 734.426.8483, to purchase gravesites.

Should I go to this funeral?

by Rose Robertson, FAITH Magazine, July 2014

Funerals are so uncomfortable. I never know when it's appropriate to go or what to say. Are there some guiding principles to follow? Should I go? As an adolescent, I remember being upset by the lively conversation at my grandfather's wake. My mother explained that funerals provide a place for people to reconnect and share stories. Funerals are essentially for the living. She said that regardless of how those present knew my grandfather – directly or vicariously – it was his life that aligned them in some way. Simply put, whether we know the deceased or an extension of them, our participation at his or her funeral supports the survivors and validates the existence of both the living and the deceased – it is about love, collective presence and prayerful support. If we knew or were close to the deceased, this time also affords us a chance to begin dosing ourselves in the reality of their earthly absence and to say our goodbye. I never know what to say ... There are no magic words that can make this difficult situation any easier. What we might be tempted to say – it was their time, God needed another angel, they lived a long life, at least you had them for x amount of time, etc. – does little to bring comfort when someone's heart is torn apart by death. "I am so sorry for your loss/pain/ heartache," or just a hug, is enough. Our discomfort compels us to fill the silence when the real importance lies in supporting the bereaved. It is about embracing the corporal work of mercy to bury the dead, a work motivated by Christian love, and one that is essential to living the life of holiness and goodness as exemplified by Jesus. The simple gift of your presence does more than any words ever could.