

People's Memorial Association members receive “member only” pricing at participating funeral homes. Catholics who wish to abide by the recommendations of the Catholic Church for burial or cremation stand to benefit from the reduced mortuary pricing and can incorporate the plans available to our members to plan economical yet dignified funeral services based on the guidelines of the Catholic Church. All our participating funeral homes are accustomed to working with all faith traditions and are familiar with Catholic customs. All our funeral homes will transport the deceased to a Catholic cemetery, or cemetery of choice.

The Order of Christian Funerals outlines the Church's order of rituals for the celebration of the death of one of its members. It reflects the theology and tradition in which burial, either interment or entombment, has been the principal manner of the body's final disposition.

Catholics and Cremation. In 1963, the Church lifted its ban on cremation. Canon 1176 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law states, “The Church earnestly recommends the pious custom of burial be retained; but it does not forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching”. The Church holds that the cremated remains of the body be treated with the same respect that the body was treated prior to cremation.

The Church *strongly* prefers the body of the deceased at the Funeral Liturgy, and for

cremation to take place afterwards. Those wishing to abide by this recommendation may wish to ask the funeral home about rental or cremation caskets. The PMA plans that include a “basic cloth covered casket” can be used for the Funeral Liturgy and may be used as the cremation container afterwards.

After cremation has occurred the Church requires that the cremated remains of the body be held in a “worthy vessel” and be buried or entombed. Scattering of cremated remains or keeping them at home is not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.

The Order of Christian Funerals of the Roman liturgy gives three types of funeral celebrations (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part 2, Section 2, Chapter 4, Article 2, #1686)

The Vigil

The vigil is intended to be a prayerful gathering for loved ones to console each other and pray for the repose of the soul of the deceased. The vigil can be held in the funeral home chapel with or a church. The word of God is proclaimed as a source of hope. The Rosary can be incorporated into the vigil liturgy with the Glorious Mysteries for the soul of the departed. During the Rosary, the “Eternal Rest” prayer is prayed after each decade instead of the Fatima prayer. The Church prefers the casketed remains be present for the vigil. However, it is not required to have the casket opened for viewing. The vigil is the time when loved ones can eulogize the deceased. *The Order of Christian Funerals* provides many options for the vigil from the

rich Catholic traditions of prayers and readings.

The Funeral Liturgy

The Church prefers that the body be present at the Celebration of the Eucharist. The Mass is celebrated in a Catholic Church and is not to be celebrated at the funeral home chapel. The Church prefers cremation take place after the Mass. The funeral liturgy in the presence of the cremated remains, while not preferred, is permissible. In 1997, the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship granted an indult to the dioceses of the United States to permit cremated remains of the body to be present at the Funeral Mass. The policy states: “that each diocesan bishop will judge whether it is pastorally appropriate to celebrate the liturgy for the dead, with or without Mass, with the ashes present, taking into account the concrete circumstances in each individual case, and in harmony with the spirit and precise content of the current canonical and liturgical norms.” “The liturgy of the Word during funerals demands careful preparation, for the funeral may include some faithful who rarely attend the liturgy, and friends of the deceased who are not Christians.” The homily must “avoid the literary genre of funeral eulogy and illumine the mystery of Christian death in the light of the risen Christ”. (Catholic Catechism Part 2, Section 2, Article 2, #1688) During the liturgy, the coffin is sprinkled with holy water and incensed. If a hymn is sung during this ritual, it should

reflect our faith in the resurrection and eternal life. Choosing hymns or songs that were the deceased person's favorite can be used if they are appropriate for the occasion and fitting for the liturgical celebration. It is customary to give the priest a stole fee for the Mass. This is not obligatory, but a stipend or honorarium is appreciated as recognition of the priest's time and services. You can call the chancery to see what the traditional amount is given for such a service.

The Rite of Committal

The final farewell is celebrated at the cemetery. A final prayer, "The Rite of Committal" is prayed as the cremated or casketed remains of the body are laid to rest. The ground or mausoleum where the body is to be disposed is blessed by the priest. The priest again is offered a stipend, which is especially appreciated if the cemetery is located far from the church. The funeral home will make arrangements with the family and the cemetery for scheduling the graveside service. If cremated remains are to be placed in a niche, a person other than the funeral home can transport the cremated remains to the cemetery. Again, the cremated remains are to be handled with utmost respect. Arrangements are to be made with the cemetery for the opening and closing of the grave or niche, and the service. The Church recommends a "worthy vessel" for storage of the cremated remains. Urns can be purchased from the funeral home, or can be purchased directly from a vendor.

Check with the cemetery before you purchase an urn for the size of the niche and regulations pertaining to materials they allow for urns. People's Memorial members receive a 15% discount on all urns purchased from a participating funeral home.

For More information

- Order of Christian Funerals-Ritual Edition--Liturgical Press
- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Funeral Mass--People's Edition--Liturgical Press
- Music Accompaniment for the Funeral Mass--Liturgical Press
- Order of Christian Funerals Music Accompaniment-Bilingual People's Edition
- Vigil Service and Evening Prayer: Leader's Edition
- Catholic Book of the Dead-Ann Ball--Our Sunday Visitor
- A Catholic Funeral-Patricia Rice --Liguori Publications
- Death, A Source Book About Christian Death—Liturgy Training Publication

www.acc-seattle.com

www.vatican.va

People's Memorial Association

206-325-0489

www.peoplesmemorial.org

Catholic Funerals and People's Memorial Association



The Transfiguration--Raphael

"Now I am going to tell you a mystery. Not all of us shall fall asleep, but all of us are to be changed—in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet. The trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"

(1Corinthians 15:51-53)