

Policy 4-6.2 Policy & Guidelines on Cremation

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix adheres to the Liturgical Norms on Cremation as stated in the Order of Christian Funerals, Appendix 2, "Cremation" to determine best practices on Cremation and Catholic Funerals.

Presence of the Body at the Funeral Liturgy

"Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites." (OCF, #413) When Cremation is desired, it is ordinarily done following the Funeral Liturgy. In this case, the vigil and the funeral itself are celebrated as normal, with the body present.

"Sometimes, however, it is not possible for the body to be present for the Funeral Mass. When extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of a body the only feasible choice, pastoral sensitivity must be exercised by priests, deacons, and others who minister to the family of the deceased." (OCF #415) If there is a serious reason, it may be possible to celebrate the Funeral Liturgy in the presence of cremated remains. With the permission of the local ordinary, a funeral may be celebrated in the presence of cremated remains with some variations in the funeral rite.

Respect for the Cremated Remains of a Body

"The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium." (OCF #417) Following the funeral, the body is cremated, and the remains must be interred in a timely fashion – buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. They may never be scattered over land or sea nor should they be incorporated into a work of "art." A priest or deacon should accompany the remains to the cemetery and perform the prescribed liturgical rites. If the grave or niche has not been blessed, the priest or deacon is to do so at this time.

Approved by:

+ Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix

Date

Sr. Jean Steffes, C.S.A.
Chancellor

Date