

**SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH OF
RALEIGH**



Columbarium Handbook

COLUMBARIUM

Q. What specifically is a columbarium?

A. A columbarium is an arrangement of openings into which an urn, containing the cremated remains of a deceased person, is placed for permanent interment. These openings are approximately 12” square by 12 inches deep and are called “niches”. At Saint Joseph’s, the columbarium is a freestanding structure containing 96 niches.

Q. If I choose to be cremated, what are the advantages of choosing the columbarium as opposed to a cemetery?

A. This is a personal choice. Many people are interred in a columbarium because of a strong desire to be laid to rest on the grounds of the church that they have loved and served. Proximity makes it convenient for visits by loved ones, and for periods of meditation and reflection. Also, the cost of interment in a columbarium is usually considerably less than the cost of burial at a cemetery. Other factors that may enter into your decision are concerns about the environment and space availability at a cemetery.

At Saint Joseph’s, care of the grounds surrounding the columbarium will be tastefully, continually, and perpetually provided.

Q. Where is Saint Joseph’s Columbarium situated?

A. Saint Joseph Columbarium is on the church grounds near the front entrance of the church.

Q. My spouse is not a Catholic and I want to be buried with my spouse. Are there any provisions whereby we can be placed in the same niche?

A. Yes. Each niche holds one or two urns. Your non-Catholic spouse may have a funeral rite at the columbarium and then be placed in your columbarium niche. All interment liturgies, however, will be in keeping with Roman Catholic rites; exceptions require approval by the Pastor.



Q. What happens at the funeral Mass with cremated remains?

A. A journey, which began at baptism, comes to conclusion as we enter into eternal life. Significant attention should be given to the primary symbols of the Catholic funeral liturgy, as stated in the *Order of Christian Funerals* and its commentaries. The paschal candle and sprinkling with holy water are primary symbols of baptism and will be used during the Mass.

During the funeral Mass, the cremated remains are treated with the same dignity and respect as a deceased body. The remains are sealed in an urn, which is carried in procession in the ossuary by pallbearers (usually two).

Photos and other mementos may be used at a vigil, but are generally not appropriate during the Mass.

Q. How much time elapses from the funeral Mass until the remains are interred in the columbarium?

A. If the body is present at the funeral Mass, the funeral director will advise you on the time necessary to do the cremation. This is usually less than a week. The interment then follows shortly thereafter.

If the cremated remains are present at the funeral Mass, typically interment immediately follows the Mass.

Q. Is a ritual conducted when the remains are interred in the columbarium?

A. Yes. The Rite of Committal is very similar to the service conducted at a gravesite in a cemetery.



Q. Who may be interred in Saint Joseph’s columbarium?

A. The columbarium is intended primarily for the parishioners of Saint Joseph’s Parish. Therefore, any active registered members of the parish may purchase niches.

The purchaser, however, may inter family members who may not be parishioners, but this is limited to the spouse, parents, grandparents, siblings, children and grandchildren of the purchaser. The family members do not have to be Catholic. The Pastor must approve any exceptions.

Q. May non-parishioners be interred in Saint Joseph’s columbarium?

A. A limited number of niches will be available for purchase by active and registered Catholics from other parishes, and they may be purchased with the agreement of the Columbarium Committee. There is an increased charge for non-parishioners. The stipulations regarding interment of family members are the same for non-parishioners.

Q. What is the cost of a niche?

A. The price of niche in the columbarium is:

<u>Niche Contains:</u>	<u>Parishioner*</u>	<u>Non-parishioner</u>
One person (e.g., one urn)	\$2600	\$4000
Two persons (e.g., two urns)	\$3200	\$5700

The price includes the niche, the urns, the engravings on the niche’s faceplate, opening and closing of the niche during interment, and the perpetual care of the environs of the columbarium. The interment of three or four persons in one niche is limited to immediate family members of parishioners only.

Payment is due in full before the interment.

A parishioner is someone who has been a registered member in good standing (contributing time, talent and treasure) of Saint Joseph Catholic Church for at least 6 months.. Payment in advance can be arranged monthly or quarterly, spread over one year, or upon death if that occurs within that year. Please contact our financial administrator if you are interested.

- Q. Will these prices ever change?**
- A.** Yes and no. These prices are today's prices and may be raised at any time without notice. However, once you have purchased a niche or a memorial engraving, there will be no further charges, even if the prices should rise in the future.
- Q. I purchased a niche to accommodate one person. If I later decide to add another person, can I do so?**
- A.** Yes, assuming the second person meets the qualifications previously described. You will be charged the difference between the price you paid for the one-person niche and the price of the two-person niche that is in effect at the time you purchase it.
- Q. May I supply my own urn?**
- A.** No. The urn is included in the cost of the purchase of the niche. The urn meets the standards of worthiness set down by the U.S. Bishop's Committee and is appropriately sized to fit inside the niche.
- Q. What happens if I purchase a niche in the columbarium, then move away?**
- A.** As long as no remains have been interred in the niche, your original purchase price, less \$100 and any incurred expenses, will be refunded. However, the Columbarium Committee will decide each case individually.
- The niche cannot be transferred to any other entity than Saint Joseph Catholic Parish of Raleigh.
- Q. What is the process / obligations for remains that have been inurned and the family desires to move the urn to another location?**
- A.** Removal of an urn will only be allowed for a permanent move to another facility. Upon a written notarized request of a surviving member(s) of the deceased person's family a niche may be opened and the contents removed. Saint Joseph Catholic Parish will rely on the notarized document as showing evidence of authority and shall not be required to make further inquiry. Any opening of the niche will be done at a time convenient to St. Joseph Catholic Parish and the family shall pay any expenses relating to the opening. (Including a new faceplate if needed).

FUNERAL RITES

- Q. What funeral rites are celebrated when a person is cremated?**
- A.** In the *Order of Christian Funerals*, the United States bishops have included prayers that are used when the cremated remains are present in a church. The following rituals may be celebrated:
- Prayers After Death
 - Gathering in the Presence of the Body
 - Vigil for the Deceased
 - Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass
 - Rite of Committal
- Q. Should I schedule a funeral Mass before or after cremation?**
- A.** The Church prefers cremation *after* the funeral Mass. However, an indult has been granted by the Holy See which provides for the celebration of the Mass with the cremated remains in church.
- Q. Do I need permission to have cremated remains in church for the funeral liturgy?**
- A.** The indult granting authority to perform a funeral liturgy in the presence of cremated remains (in place of the body) requires a bishop's authorization. Although the Bishop of the Dioceses of Raleigh has authorized it, it is customary that you inform the Pastor prior to cremation.
- Q. What duration of time occurs between death, cremation, and the funeral Mass?**
- A.** The answer to this question depends on various factors, such as the place of death, scheduling a time for cremation, the Church calendar, and the schedule of the parish. Consult your funeral director and the parish office for details.

- Q What is the proper container for cremated remains?**
- A.** The U.S. Bishop’s Committee on the Liturgy has determined that urns must be simple and unadorned. Ostentatious urns, statuary, and space capsules are examples of “designer” containers now being offered that are *unacceptable* in Catholic funeral practices. It is also *unacceptable* to have any part of the cremated remains be made into jewelry, dishes, art works, etc.
- At Saint Joseph’s, an approved urn will be furnished. It is included in the purchase fee for a columbarium niche.
- Q. If I choose cremation, is it necessary to call a funeral home?**
- A.** Yes. In North Carolina, a registered funeral director always performs the cremation. It is important to note you are not required to have a viewing of the body at that funeral home.
- Q. Can a family member be present at the cremation?**
- A.** Although not customarily done, family members may choose to be present during cremation.
- Q. How are the cremated remains transported to the church?**
- A.** Typically, the cremated remains are delivered directly to the church by the funeral director at the time of the funeral. They can also be collected from the funeral home by a family member or friend and brought to the church.
- Q. Must cremated remains be buried or interred?**
- A.** Yes. Respectful final disposition of cremated remains requires burial, or interment in a columbarium, as a final permanent resting place.

- Any person requesting such opening and removal shall release St. Joseph Catholic parish from any liability in connection with such action and as a condition of precedent to such action, shall agree to indemnify and hold St. Joseph Catholic Parish harmless from any costs (including legal fees and court costs) incurred in connection with such opening and removal. Both parties will sign a document reflecting the actions taken. All expenses related to this process will be paid before the niche is opened.
- Q. May I decorate the area near my niche with flowers?**
- A.** The columbarium site will be perpetually maintained in a manner designed to be beautiful, serene, holy, and edifying. It is requested that you do not add additional floral arrangements, flags, statues, or other decorations.
- Q. What are the hours the Columbarium will be open for visitation?**
- A.** The intent is for the Columbarium to be open 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This is subject to change if circumstances warrant.
- Q. How are niches assigned?**
- A.** You may request a specific niche and it will be assigned to you if it has not already been purchased. If you choose not to select a niche location, one will be assigned to you.
- Q. My family members are buried in another city. Can I remember them at the site of Saint Joseph columbarium?**
- A.** Yes. A special tower is provided at the columbarium and contains inscriptions that commemorate loved ones who may be interred elsewhere with a display of the name of the deceased. These are known as “memorial engravings.”
- Q. What is the cost of a memorial engraving?**
- A.** The price of memorial engraving is \$225 for a parishioner and \$325 for a non-parishioner.
- Q. I am interested in purchasing a niche or a memorial engraving. What is the next step?**
- A.** You may call the parish office at (919-231-6364, or email: secretary@stjral.org,. For a niche purchase, you will be provided with a legal contract defining your right to that niche. For a memorial engraving, a receipt of your purchase will be sent to you.

THE CHURCH AND CREMATION

- Q. As a Catholic, may I be cremated?**
- A.** Yes. In May 1963, the Vatican's Holy Office (now known as the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith) lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics to choose cremation. This permission was incorporated into the revised *Code of Canon Law* of 1983, and its liturgies were written in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. At that time, it was standard practice to celebrate the funeral liturgies with the body present, and have the body cremated following the ceremony. More recently, however, the bishops of the United States and the Holy See have authorized the celebration of a Catholic funeral liturgy with just the cremated remains present.
- Q. Do I need to ask permission to be cremated?**
- A.** No, but it is a good idea to inform the Pastor of your intention.
- Q. Can I scatter the ashes? May I keep the ashes on my mantle?**
- A.** No. 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, are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. Cremated remains, like a body, are to be placed in a final permanent resting place.
- Q. May anything be added to cremated remains, such as cremated remains of other persons, pets, and other objects?**
- A.** No. The principle of respect for the cremated remains of a deceased Christian embraces the deeper belief in the individuality of each baptized person before God. Throughout history, the mingling of remains has never been an accepted practice, except in extraordinary circumstances.
- Q. When should cremation take place?**
- A.** The Church *prefers* that cremation take place after a funeral liturgy with the body present. The body most clearly brings to mind the life and death of the person and better expresses the values that the Church affirms in its rites. Nevertheless, it is permitted to have a funeral liturgy with the just cremated remains present.

ABOUT CREMATION

- Q. Who decides if I am cremated?**
- A.** You make the decision to be cremated while you are alive. However, your survivors could decide for you if your desires are not previously known. Rarely is it necessary to act against your wishes.
- Q. How do I make my wishes known?**
- A.** You can make our wishes known by informing the loved one who will be responsible for your funeral, or in documents designed to help plan and prepare your funeral. (They are available from a funeral director). It is not a good idea to specify your funeral arrangements in your will, because it may not be read until some time after the funeral.
- Q. Must I honor my parent's or spouse's desire for cremation?**
- A.** Out of respect for loved ones, you will want to do all you can to carry out the wishes of the deceased concerning funeral services, provided they are in keeping with Church practice. You should keep in mind, however, the therapeutic value to the survivors by celebrating the funeral liturgy with the body present. This may outweigh your reasons for a liturgy with only the cremated remains present.
- Q. Is it necessary to embalm?**
- A.** When cremation is to follow soon after death, embalming is not necessary. When cremation follows the funeral liturgy, embalming is usually required. Each state has its own regulations in this matter, but generally the rule is that a deceased human body that is not buried or cremated within 24 hours is to be embalmed or refrigerated.
- Q. Is it necessary to purchase a casket if I am cremated?**
- A.** No, it is not necessary to purchase a casket for cremation. If you choose to have the body present for the funeral Mass with cremation later, then rental of a casket is an option. Most funeral directors offer casket rental.