

Did You Know ---

We have a cemetery in our backyard? Not really, but we do have a columbarium (literally, a dovecote, from the Latin word for dove...columba). It is a system of small vaults to hold the ashes of the cremated dead. It is in a beautiful garden setting between the rear of the church and the lagoon, near the outdoor Way of the Cross. While it has been in the plans since early in the history of St. Francis by the Sea, it was built in 1995 and dedicated on All Souls Day that year.

There are 44 low brick modules approximately 5 feet by 7 feet. Each can be fitted with a cast bronze frame having openings for 48 niches, a total of 2,112 spaces. Each niche is covered with a bronze plate giving the name, year of birth and year of death of the deceased. In the case of double niches for couples or other family members, a single plate covers the two niches.

The Columbarium is available to members of St. Francis by the Sea, Holy Family and St. Gregory the Great parishes. Niches may also be obtained for past members, under certain conditions, and for the parish member's immediate family. Please call the parish office for current prices.

While the Church prohibited cremation at one time, current regulations provide for it as an option to traditional earth or crypt interment (providing it is not chosen for reasons contrary to Christian teachings). There are a number of reasons the choice for cremation is often made such as: availability of burial space, difficulty in shipping the body to a distant place and financial considerations.

The Columbarium provides a reverential place for inurnment of our beloved deceased. It reposes the ashes of those who have crossed over to eternal life in a setting close to familiar surroundings in which they worshipped. To the living it provides a garden spot for visitation, remembrance and prayer, as well as a setting for liturgical and sacramental services. A plaque is placed at each side of the area.

Engraved is the following message:

The Columbarium

Where lives are commemorated,
Deaths are recorded,
Memories are made tangible
And love is renewed.

- - - This is a columbarium - - -

Which exists because life is worth
Loving and remembering
- - - Always.