

Burial in the Catholic Church – the “Do’s,” the “Don’ts,” and the “Why’s”

In this life on earth, we have a soul that is united to a body. When we are called from this life, our immortal soul leaves the body behind, at least for a while, until that time when we will be reunited one day, body and soul at the time of the Second Coming of the Lord. It is this belief that we profess at each weekend Mass in the Nicæan Creed when we say, “I believe in the resurrection of the body and life of the world to come.”

As such, then we also recall that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God, and that the human body is more than just something that is used temporarily by the soul and can be cast aside when it is no longer useful.

Just as the Lord Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, in his earthly body in a glorified state, the Lord has also promised that our souls will be reunited one day with our bodies in the Final Resurrection.

Since we believe that one day our immortal souls will be reunited with our bodies, the Church has always held that the body of someone who has died should always be treated with the greatest of dignity and respect. This also draws from Christianity’s Jewish roots, one of the many things that were carried forward into Christianity by the first Christians in the early centuries of the Church. And this is why at a Funeral Mass, the body of the individual who “is asleep in Christ” (to use the phrase of St. Paul that is so prominent in the Funeral Mass) is given such a central part of how the prayers for the dead are offered by the Church. This is done with a procession of the body into the church, accompanied by the family of the deceased, and sprinkled with holy water and covered with a white pall that is a symbol of the new life baptism promises. At the end of the Funeral Mass, the casket is incensed, once again according the body a great dignity, as it was made a “temple of the Holy Spirit” through baptism.

As a result, the Church has always provided for cemeteries for those who have died to await their own “resurrection of the body” when the Lord returns. (Some might be interested in knowing that it has been a long-standing custom for those who are laid to rest to be facing east, the direction of the rising of the sun and the direction from which it was thought by the early Church that the Lord would return.)

In 1963, the Church, for the first time, allowed for or “permitted” cremation, providing that it was not done out of a rejection or denial of the Christian belief about the resurrection of the body. But it still remains for the Church that “the preferred method for honoring the remains of the dead, however, remains burial of the human body.”

In a document from 2016, at the direction of Pope Francis, the Church added to this, that if a body is cremated, the remains (ashes) should be buried as a body would be buried, and not remain in the possession of family members, such as in a home. Nor should they be scattered in the air or on land or in the sea or “preserved in mementos, pieces of jewelry or other objects.”

More recently, the Bishops of the United States released a statement in 2023 against two contemporary “trends” relating to the proper disposition of bodily remains called “alkaline hydrolysis” and “human composting.”

In alkaline hydrolysis, the body is placed in a metal tank containing a chemical mixture of water and alkali in high temperature and pressure to speed decomposition, dissolving the body. In human composting, the body is laid in a metal bin surrounded by composting material that causes microbes and bacteria to break down the body, aided with heat and oxygen. Both of these newer practices, the US Bishops note, do not show adequate respect for the human body, nor express hope in the resurrection.”

In their document, the US Bishops concluded by reminding us that “Human beings are not pure spirits like the angels. We share in the physicality of the material order” being both body and soul and that we will at the end of time our soul will be reunited with our body. The Bishops remind us that “the way we treat the bodies of our beloved dead must always bear witness to our faith in and our hope for what God has promised us.”

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS



Benefit Brunch

Proceeds to Benefit Divine Providence Community Home

February 4, 2024

8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

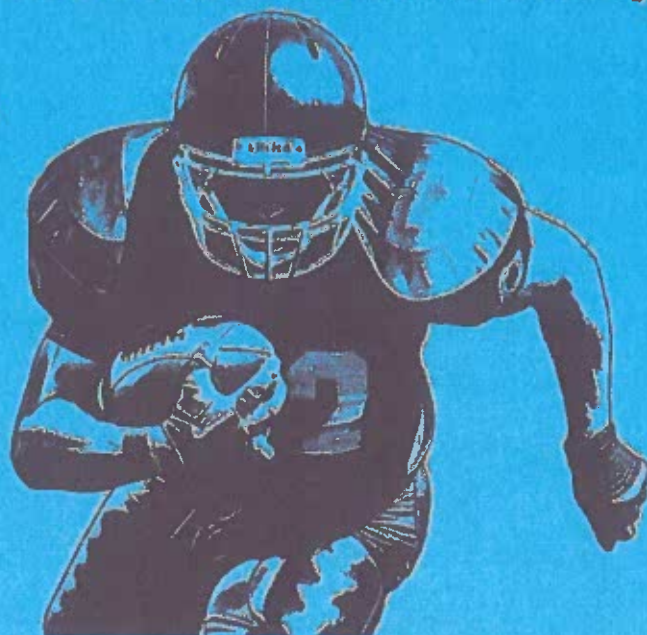
St. Mary's School Cafeteria • Sleepy Eye

ADULTS: \$8.00

AGES 5-12: \$4.00 • UNDER 5: FREE

All You Can Eat! (Take Out Orders Available)

- Fresh Scrambled Eggs with Smoked Ham
- Golden Potatoes
- Famous KC Donuts
- Coffee
- Juice
- Milk



Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council #3134



St. Mary's School, Sleepy Eye, MN
Catholic Schools Week
January 27 – February 2, 2024



Forming Faithful Disciples
Since 1883

Saturday, Jan. 27

**Mass 5:30 p.m. w/ HS Schola *Cantorum*
Guest Speakers at Mass**



Sunday, Jan. 28

**Mass 9:30 a.m. with Elem. and MS Choir
Weekend Liturgies with Guest Speaker**



**Monday, Jan 29
Color Day**

**Drive-by Doughnuts for Parents: 7:20 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
Board Games with Elem & MS/HS students: 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.**

**Tuesday, Jan. 30
Cozy/Comfort**

**Elementary School Service Projects During Day
MS/HS Service Projects: 12:45 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.**



**Wednesday, Jan 31
Spirit Day**

**Divine Mercy Chaplet/Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament: 2:30 p.m.
Family Fun Night: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, Feb. 1
Jersey Day**



**Business Appreciation Day - Staff Delivers Cookies to Businesses
Classes go to Adoration/Exposition in Church During the Day**

**Friday, Feb. 2
Dress Up Day**

**All- School Mass and St. Blaise Blessing: 8:15 a.m.
Shared Activity Time with Elementary/MS-HS: 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Prize Announcement: 3:00 p.m.**



St. Mary's Catholic Schools Week Family Fun Night

**Wednesday, January 31, 2024
5:00 – 7:00 p. m.**

Auditorium (Middle School)

Lightning Tag
Glow in the Dark Basketball
Card & Yard Games

Gym (High School)

Dodgeball Tournament

Field House

Top Golf (K-5)
Cosmic Bowling (K-5)
Obstacle Course (PreK-5)
Kids' Games & Activities (PreK-5)

Elementary Library (Middle School)

Escape Room

Cafeteria

Dinner 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
After Prom Fundraiser will be serving
Pulled Pork Mac & Cheese Bowls /\$8

BINGO 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.



Free Fun & Games for the entire family!