

## Important Information about Cremation

Cremation is permitted by the Church, but 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 (Order of Christian Funerals no. 413).

Ideally, if a family chooses cremation, the cremation would take place at some time after the Funeral Mass, so that there can be an opportunity for the Vigil for the Deceased in the presence of the body (during “visitation” or “viewing” at a church or funeral home). This allows for the appropriate reverence for the sacredness of the body at the Funeral Mass: sprinkling with holy water, the placing of the pall, and honoring it with incense.

When cremation takes place before the Funeral Mass, 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, and 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. *The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains on the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.* (OCF no. 417) In addition, cremated remains are not to be made into jewelry, cremation diamonds, cremation art or any other method of display.

Peace,

*Fr. Gerard*