

## Frequent Questions

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### **Why should Catholics be buried in a Catholic Cemetery?**

All through life, the Catholic Church is present to the living by baptizing their young, celebrating their growth and development, blessing their marriages and praying for them during times of illness. Since death is a natural part of life, it is only fitting that the Catholic community be present at the time of death. Death, as seen through the eyes of a Christian, is not the end; it is simply a natural passageway to everlasting life. Burial in a Catholic cemetery is a statement of continued belief in that everlasting life, even in death.

As people of faith, our burial places share an important meaning for us, since they are sacred places. Each visit to the cemetery is a reminder to us of the love, fellowship and faith that we shared with our deceased family members and friends. It is also a reminder to us of our own mortality and belief in the Resurrection.

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### **May non-Catholics be buried in a Catholic cemetery?**

The Church expects that Catholics will be buried in a Catholic cemetery. To avoid breaking family ties, however, non-Catholic members of Catholic families including spouses, children, parents and other relatives may also be interred in a Catholic cemetery. Other Christians with a connection to the Catholic community may also be buried in a Catholic cemetery, in certain circumstances.

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### **Does the Catholic Church permit cremation?**

Yes. Although the Catholic Church strongly prefers burial of the full body, the Church does permit cremation unless it is evident that cremation was chosen for anti-Christian motives. The Order of Christian Burial contains provisions for the cremation of the body after the final commendation that concludes the funeral liturgy. In situations where it is not possible for the body to be present, the Church has authorized a Funeral liturgy in the presence of cremated remains. This liturgy is also used in situations where cremation and committal have occurred prior to the Funeral liturgy.

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### **Can we keep cremated remains at home, or dispose of them ourselves?**

The Church requires that cremated remains of the body be treated and handled with the same respect and dignity given to the corporeal remains of the body. This includes the final disposition of remains. If cremation is chosen as the means of final disposition, the remains are to be buried in the ground of a communal cemetery – preferably a Catholic cemetery – or entombed in a communal mausoleum or columbarium. Therefore, cultural practices such as scattering cremated remains, keeping them at home, or interring them at some other location are not considered by the Church to be reverent or appropriate ways of disposition. Whenever possible, appropriate memorialization of the deceased should be utilized at the place of burial.

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### **How do I know that the cemeteries will be maintained even after it is full and generates no more revenue?**

A percentage of the cost of every grave, mausoleum crypt, or niche goes toward funding the perpetual care of each cemetery. These funds are held in special, protected accounts. The income that these accounts generate will assure that each cemetery is properly maintained in perpetuity. There are no monthly or annual maintenance fees. The Catholic Church will always be here to maintain its cemeteries.

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### **How do I go about making arrangements?**

The Diocesan Cemeteries have trained Family Services staff to provide you with any information you may need and assist you in making your selections from the many options that are available to you. Our Family Services counselors will be happy to meet with you and your family members, answer any questions that you may have, and show you the grounds and facilities at each of our locations and explain the services that we can provide. There is never any obligation on your part. For information and assistance with pre-need and at-need arrangements for Resurrection Cemetery in Madison call (608) 238-5561, or for Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Janesville and Mt. Tabor and Calvary cemeteries in Beloit call (608) 754-3472.

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### **Why are there restrictions on cemetery lots?**

Monuments and other items must conform to the regulations that govern different areas of the cemetery, and these vary by cemetery. These regulations are not arbitrary, but are carefully designed to enhance the overall character and beauty of each section of the cemetery. In addition, some restrictions are necessary to allow for the proper maintenance of cemetery grounds. It is important to realize that those who purchased lots did so with the understanding that these restrictions would be in place for their section and would be honored. Exceptions to these regulations cannot be made without changing the character of that section or the cemetery as a whole. This would be inherently unfair to those who purchased their lots with the expectation that the character of their cemetery would be maintained.

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### **Should I purchase my monument, vault, urn, and other items from the Catholic Cemetery or from outside sources?**

You are always free to obtain these items from the source of your own choosing. However, there are many reasons why it is to your advantage to purchase these items directly from your Catholic Cemetery.

- Catholic Cemeteries will often sell these items at a lower cost than other suppliers for the same item, and our charges will never be higher than other suppliers for the same items.
- When items are purchased through Catholic Cemeteries, part of the cost of those items will go to help provide for the regular maintenance of our cemeteries.
- Because Catholic Cemeteries are a non-profit organization, there are no sales taxes when items are purchased directly from your Catholic Cemetery.
- When you purchase your monument through Catholic Cemeteries, any leveling, straightening or replacement of concrete footings that may be necessary over time due to settling or other causes will be done free of charge by our Cemetery staff, in perpetuity. Monuments purchased through other sources are solely the responsibility of the family and the dealer who sold the monument, and are done at the monument dealer's regular charge.
- When you purchase items directly through Catholic Cemeteries you will be assured that the monuments and other items you purchase are appropriate in size, design and color for the graves, crypts or niches that you have. You can be assured that monuments will not be too large or too small for your site, and that they will not be identical to monuments nearby. Our staff will work with you to be sure that the monuments, crypt lettering, vases and other materials you wish to purchase will be compatible with surrounding areas and visually pleasing, providing a lasting memorialization that will be satisfying for you and your family members for decades to come. In addition, by working through Catholic Cemeteries, you will never be pressured to buy more than you and your family feels that you can comfortably afford.
- The Catholic Church will always be there to oversee and maintain its cemeteries. Catholic cemeteries are never sold, as privately owned cemeteries sometimes are.

One of the advantages of pre-planning is that it gives you the opportunity to carefully consider these types of purchases without the pressure of trying to cope with them at a time of need. Our Family Services counselors are always happy to meet with you to discuss these options with you either at-need or pre-need. And there is never any obligation to you.

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### **What choices are available for in ground burials?**

Most common are single graves or multiple grave lots, which consist of two or more graves. At Resurrection Cemetery, lawn crypts are also available. Lawn crypts offer in ground burial in pre-constructed concrete vaults that allow for one or two caskets, which can represent a considerable savings over other options.

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### **What are Burial Service Fees, and why are they so expensive?**

Burial service fees - sometimes called opening and closing fees - actually include a variety of services provided by the cemetery. These include use of the chapel, administration fees and permanent record keeping (determining ownership, obtaining permission and the completion of other documentation that may be required, entering the interment particulars into the interment register, maintaining all necessary legal files and records, etc.); locating the grave and laying out the physical boundaries, excavating and filling in the grave; installation and removal of the lowering device; placement and removal of artificial grass dressing for the site, installing and removing a canopy to cover the site for grave-side services during inclement weather, leveling, tamping, re-grading and sodding of the site as well as re-leveling and re-sodding the grave if settling occurs.

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#### **What are burial vaults and grave liners?**

These are the outside containers into which a casket or urn is placed. Burial vaults are designed to protect the casket or urn, and can be made of a variety of materials but are most typically made of concrete. A grave liner is a lightweight version of a vault which simply keeps the grave surface from sinking.

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#### **Do I have to purchase a burial vault?**

The Department of Cemeteries requires that a vault or grave liner be used for all in-ground interments at our Catholic Cemeteries to insure that the ground at the burial site does not sink. In addition to being unsightly, sinking can also cause the family's monument to sink, shift or become damaged. For these reasons, a vault or grave liner is required.

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#### **Are there options available besides in ground burials?**

In addition to in ground burials, Resurrection, Mount Olivet and Mount Thabor cemeteries offer entombment in mausoleums as well as placement of cremated remains in a niche in a columbarium, or placement of an urn in a mausoleum space.

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#### **What is a mausoleum?**

A mausoleum is simply a large building designed to provide above-ground entombment. Each space within the mausoleum is designed to hold one or two caskets. Following a casket entombment, the crypt is sealed and a granite front is attached. Bronze lettering is attached to the front of the crypt for permanent memorialization. Niches are smaller spaces within the mausoleum to accommodate urns containing cremated remains.

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#### **What are the advantages of a mausoleum?**

Indoor mausoleum crypts are clean and dry and temperature controlled. They offer an attractive alternative to those who do not wish to be interred in the ground, and allow visitations by family members and friends in all seasons without exposure to the weather. Mausoleums also offer crypt and niche spaces facing the outside of the mausoleum.

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#### **What is a columbarium?**

A columbarium is a smaller structure for above ground entombment, that is designed to hold cremation urns. It can be a free standing structure, or incorporated as a part of a mausoleum. Following an urn entombment, a niche front of granite is attached. Bronze lettering is attached to the front of the niche for permanent memorialization.