

General Norms for the Celebration of Roman Catholic Funerals In The Diocese of Raleigh

INTRODUCTION

1. The Funeral Rites of the Roman Catholic Church in the *Order of Christian Funerals* (1997) are celebrations which guide the Catholic community to pray for the deceased as well as those who mourn. These Rites necessarily embrace the death of the deceased, but also lead those gathered in faith by guiding their prayer for the mercy of God upon the deceased and hope for the fullness of God's Kingdom through the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ.

These norms are offered to assist Pastors, Parochial Vicars, Deacons, Pastoral Administrators, and their pastoral staff to assist them in effectively preparing the Funeral Rites for the deceased with family members and friends.

The *Order of Christian Funerals* is the only canonically approved liturgical rite in English for Dioceses in the United States of America. The USCCB has also approved *Ritual de Exequias Christianas* for the Funeral Rites in Spanish. Liturgical books in other languages must be approved by their proper Episcopal Conferences. Clergy and Ministers serving in communities with diverse languages should take care that they are using the current approved translation of the Latin, *Ordo Exsequiarum*.

These norms are promulgated by the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Raleigh on Divine Mercy Sunday, March 30, 2008 and effective May 11, 2008.

THE CATHOLIC FAITHFUL AND THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH AT THE TIME OF DEATH

2. Every Catholic, unless specifically excluded by the norms of law, has the natural right to receive the ministry of the Church at the time of death.

- a. In coordination with the Pastor or Pastoral Administrator and Pastoral Staff, the family of the deceased and the Funeral Director chosen by the family arrange the place and set the time for the Vigil, the Funeral Liturgy and the Rite of Committal.
- b. The Funeral Liturgy of Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass is the central element of the prayer of the Church for the dead. The Funeral Liturgy is a prayer for the mercy of God on the deceased and a solace for the living.
- c. The Church encourages the burial of Catholics in Catholic cemeteries (Canon 1180 §1). A cemetery may also have a section which has been dedicated for the burial of Catholics. Burial in the consecrated ground of a Catholic cemetery is a sign of baptismal commitment and gives witness, even in death, to faith in the resurrection of Christ.
- d. A child who dies before baptism or a stillborn or miscarried child may be given Catholic Funeral Rites if the parents intended to have the child baptized. The remains of fetuses or stillborn children should always receive reverent burial in accord with the Rites of the Church. These remains may be placed either in specific individual graves or in a common burial area.
- e. The *Order for Christian Funerals* provides a complete funeral liturgy for children who have died (*OCF*, 234-342). The various texts for a baptized child or a child who died before baptism make these rites fully adaptable to various situations, and offer consolation for those suffering the extraordinary grief which comes with the death of a child.
- f. Catechumens of the Church may also be given Catholic Funeral Rites.

- g. Catholic Funeral Rites, including the Funeral Mass, are also permitted for a deceased baptized non-Catholic who is reasonably presumed to desire the Rites of the Catholic Church. Such a decision may be guided by the regular worship of non-Catholics in the Catholic Church or those who may in some suitable fashion identify themselves with the Catholic Church.
- h. To foster and respect the unity of the family, non-Catholic members of Catholic families may be interred in a Catholic cemetery or a cemetery which has section dedicated for the burial of Catholics. With proper approbation from the Pastor, Clergy from ecclesial communities may conduct appropriate cemetery rites for these deceased non-Catholics according to their tradition, if the family so desires or if it was the expressed wish of the deceased.

FUNERAL LITURGIES

3. The principal liturgies in the *Order of Christian Funerals* are the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass, and the Rite of Committal.

VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED

- 4. The Vigil is often the first time family, friends and members of the parish community gather in remembrance of the deceased for prayer, remembrance, and support. The Vigil may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, in a suitable place associated with the church building or in the church building.
 - a. The Vigil for the Deceased is celebrated during the time scheduled for the wake and is the principal rite celebrated by the Church in the time following death and before the Funeral Liturgy. Devotions such as the rosary may also be prayed.
 - b. The Vigil for the Deceased may provide an opportunity for those unable to attend the Funeral Mass or Rite of Committal to participate in the Funeral Rites.
 - c. When no Priest or Deacon is available, it is permissible for a qualified lay minister to be designated by the Pastor to preside at the Vigil for the Deceased.
 - d. After the General Intercessions or at some other suitable time following the Vigil, a family member or a friend may speak in remembrance of the deceased (*OCF*, 62).
 - e. When the Vigil for the Deceased is celebrated in a church, a Priest or Deacon is to be vested in an alb, stole and cope. A qualified lay minister who presides wears lay clothing.
 - f. When a wake takes place in the church, the Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church (*OCF*, 82) is to be celebrated.
 - g. In addition to the Vigil for the Deceased Night Prayer from the Office for the Dead, (*OCF*, Part IV) may be prayed. Morning Prayer from the Office for the Dead may also be prayed on the day of committal.
 - h. The presence of a Cantor or other music minister at the Vigil for the Deceased can be helpful in leading the people in prayer, particularly in the singing of the Psalms and responses of the liturgy.

FUNERAL LITURGY OF MASS

- 5. The Funeral Mass is the central liturgy of prayer for deceased Catholics. The family members of the deceased Catholic are to be encouraged to celebrate the Funeral Mass by explanation of its effects for the deceased as well as the faithful who mourn.
 - a. The Eucharist is the heart of the Paschal reality of Christian death (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1689). In the celebration of the Eucharist, the Church commends the deceased to the mercy of God and most perfectly expresses Her communion with those who have died. The

celebration of the Eucharist during the funeral is an opportunity for the community of the faithful, and for the family, to “learn to live in communion with the one who has ‘fallen asleep in the Lord,’ by communicating the Body of Christ of which he is a living member and, then, by praying for him and with him” (*CCC*, 1689).

- b. The Introductory Rites of the Funeral Mass presume a greeting of the mourners who accompany the body of the deceased to the doors of the church. They are greeted by the Priest, liturgical ministers, and other persons who have gathered at the church. Liturgical planning must take into account the structure of the liturgy and the size of the Narthex or Gathering Space, and the architecture of the church.
- c. Family members who have accompanied the body to the church but who are infirmed and unable to stand for the blessing of the body are to be seated where the family will be seated following the procession into the church. Parishes are called upon to develop, in collaboration with Funeral Directors, policies which result in seating on both sides of the church and towards the front of the assembly area.

FUNERAL LITURGY OUTSIDE OF MASS

6. A Priest or Deacon is to preside at the Funeral Liturgy when it is celebrated outside of Mass.
 - a. The Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass (*OCF*, 177-203) is celebrated when a Mass is not possible or not deemed appropriate. It is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church, but it may also be celebrated in the funeral home, the home of the deceased or cemetery chapel (*OCF*, 179). The pastoral advice of the Pastor is essential in determining what is appropriate.
 - b. In an extraordinary circumstance, the family may choose to celebrate a funeral outside of Mass, and schedule a memorial Mass at a later date, when it is determined in consultation with the Pastor or Pastoral Administrator that this form of the Funeral Rites is a more suitable form of celebration.
 - c. When the funeral liturgy is celebrated outside Mass, the community nonetheless gathers to hear the message of the Paschal Mystery proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word and to commend the deceased to God.
 - d. The readings are chosen from among those in the Lectionary approved for Masses for the Dead.
 - e. Music is a normative element of this form of celebration, which includes the Processional Hymn, the Responsorial Psalm, the Gospel Acclamation, the Song of Farewell and the Recessional Hymn.

THE RITE OF COMMITTAL

7. The Rite of Committal is celebrated at the place of burial or interment of the body, but it is not permitted in the church building.
 - a. The Rite of Committal, whether at an interment chapel, a mausoleum or a cemetery, is a gathering of the faithful for prayer.
 - b. The place of burial is to be blessed, according to the norms of the law, unless it has already been dedicated as a Catholic cemetery.
 - c. Military honors and certain cultural or social rites, such as the placement of flowers, are permissible at the cemetery when appropriate. These should be arranged in advance with the Pastor or Pastoral Administrator and coordinated in such a way that they do not disrupt or distract from the integrity of the liturgical Rite of Committal. Funeral Directors may be called upon to assist in the coordination of these elements.

- d. If a lengthy time has passed since the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy, or if the funeral has been conducted overseas or in a distant state, the Final Commendation may be added to the Rite of Committal (*OCF*, 224-233).

LITURGICAL MINISTRIES IN FUNERAL LITURGIES

8. In keeping with the norms found in the *Order of Christian Funerals*, Priests and Deacons are to share in the responsibility for planning and implementation of the funeral liturgies together with qualified parish lay pastoral ministers.
 - a. A pastoral visit to the family by the Priest or Deacon celebrating the funeral liturgies is normative and part of the ministry and presence of the Church prior to these celebrations.
 - b. Part of this ministry of the Priest to the grieving family members may also include the celebration the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This may be appropriate when family members have not actively participated in the life of the Church for some time.
 - c. Preparation of each Funeral Liturgy can assist in the consolation of the family members and friends who are in mourning. Priests, Deacons and/or qualified lay pastoral ministers are to assist in this planning process with final approval of the liturgy plan by the Pastor or Pastoral Administrator in consultation with the Presider for the liturgy. The *Order of Christian Funerals* states that family members may participate in liturgical ministry where appropriate (*OCF*, 15). The family of the deceased may also suggest persons to place the pall or appropriate Christian symbols on the casket at the reception of the body at the doors of the church. Note: Only Christian symbols are to be placed on the casket, such as the Bible or Crucifix of the deceased. The family may also choose those who will participate in the offertory procession of bread and wine for the Funeral Mass (*OCF*, 152).
 - d. Priests are to preside at the Funeral Rites, especially the Mass. The celebration of the funeral liturgies is especially entrusted to the Pastor or Parochial Vicar. When no Priest is available, Deacons, preside at Funeral Rites. When no Priest or Deacon is available for the Vigil or the Rite of Committal, a qualified lay minister may preside at this Rite (*OCF*, 14).
 - e. Participation of the lay faithful as liturgical ministers is encouraged, where appropriate in the celebration of the various liturgies of the *Order of Christian Funerals*. These ministries may include Readers, Cantors, Musicians, Ushers, Pallbearers and, according to existing norms, as Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion (*OCF*, 15).
 - f. Music selected for the *Order of Christian Funerals* should be appropriate for Catholic liturgical prayer. The texts of the music should be expressive of the Paschal Mystery: the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ.

MUSIC IN THE FUNERAL LITURGY

9. It is the pastoral responsibility of parishes to provide liturgical music at all Funeral Masses. The same liturgical norms applied to music at Mass apply to a Funeral Mass.
 - a. An instrumentalist, preferably an Organist; a Cantor, and even a Choir where possible should assist the full participation of the assembly in the hymns, responses, and acclamations of the Funeral Rites (*OCF*, 33). The Funeral Choir is often composed of those parishioners who are retired, self-employed, or whose work gives them a flexibility of schedule in order to serve in this ministry.
 - b. Certain musical texts of the Funeral Rite are primary and should be sung at the Funeral Mass. They include: the Responsorial Psalm, the Gospel Acclamation, the *Sanctus*, the Memorial Acclamation, the Great Amen, the Communion Hymn for Song, and the Song of

Farewell. These should be sung by the assembly rather than by a cantor, choir, or soloist alone.

- c. In the *Order of Christian Funerals*, the Cantor leads the assembly in song. With the exception of the Responsorial Psalm, which is sung from the Ambo, the Cantor ordinarily leads the assembly from a Cantor Stand.
- d. Some form of hymnal or worship program is preferable to assist the participation of the assembly. This program should contain the name of the deceased, the scripture citations for the Liturgy of the Word, and words and music for the liturgy. Certain musical texts of the Funeral Rite are primary and should be sung at the Funeral Mass. Copyright licenses and permissions are necessary, and many parishes have found annual licenses to be both convenient and inexpensive. A separate sheet may be prepared for the participation of the faithful in the Rite of Committal at the cemetery.
- e. The selection of music for the funeral liturgy is often a sensitive issue for bereaved families, parish musicians, and pastoral staff. The choice of music for Catholic funerals must be in accord with all the norms governing music in liturgy, especially those found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, the *Order for Christian Funerals*, and *Sing to the Lord* (110-114).
- f. The Principle of Progressive Solemnity, described in *Music in Catholic Worship*, applies to the rites found in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. Application of this principle to the choice of music may be guided by common musical repertoire of the assembly.
- g. The request for popular secular music is not to substitute for the music of the Funeral Liturgy. There are three standards of judgment proposed in *Sing to the Lord*: 1) the text of the music, the form, the placement and style must be congruent with the nature of the Catholic liturgy (*STTL*, 126-129); 2) the music must be technically, aesthetically and expressively appropriate irrespective of musical idiom or style (*STTL*, 134-136); 3) the music must assist in the prayer of the assembly (*STTL*, 130-133). The application of such a standard is suggested as an effective pastoral means to guide the appropriate selection of music for the funeral liturgy.
- h. As music is a preeminent expression of the prayer of the participants in any liturgy, recorded music is not to be used within the liturgy to replace the Congregation, the Choir, the Organist, the Cantor, or other musicians (*STTL*, 94).

THE HOMILY AND THE APPROPRIATE PLACE FOR A EULOGY

10. Only a Priest or Deacon may give the Homily during the Funeral Rites. Qualified lay ministers may give an instruction on the readings in accord with liturgical norms and *OCF*, 27.

11. The Homily is to join the death of the deceased to the Paschal Mystery of Christ. It is to include the reality of the need for the Mercy of God, speak of the hope of eternal life, and avoid the presumption that the deceased now enjoys the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven.

12. Excellence in preaching is of critical importance to evangelization, especially at a moment when the faithful who live apart from the regular life of the Church may yearn for a message of faith and Christian hope.

13. A eulogy is not to be given where a Homily is prescribed (*OCF*, 27), although examples from the life of the deceased may be used by the Priest or Deacon in the Homily. The literary genre of eulogy is not a homiletic form. Rather, the Homily is to “illumine the mystery of Christian death in the light of the risen Christ” (*CCC*, 1688) as proclaimed in the readings from Sacred Scripture.

14. The Vigil for the Deceased is a more fitting time for individuals to give a eulogy to share remembrances of the deceased. Often, one or more speakers are chosen by the family. The remarks are to be simple, brief, and prepared, with the tone remaining one of faith and hope.

15. Although more ample opportunities are possible at the Vigil for the Deceased, a eulogy of no longer than three to five minutes may given by one person and take place at Funeral Mass after the Prayer After Communion or at a Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass after the General

Intercessions. The remarks are to be simple, brief, and prepared, with the tone remaining one of faith and hope.

GENERAL PARTICIPATION OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

16. The Corporal Works of Mercy are a ministry of consolation which belong to the entire parish community, especially those involved in the pastoral care the dead and comfort to those who mourn.
- a. Regular catechesis is encouraged to help parishioners understand their role in ministering to those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.
 - b. Parish policies, procedures and ministerial resources are to be developed and communicated clearly to parishioners so they may take full advantage of these resources at the time of death.
 - c. Funeral Directors provide an invaluable service to families and to the Church. Often a Funeral Director is the first response to a family who has experienced the death of a loved one. It is important for the Parish Pastoral Staff and local Funeral Directors to cultivate an attitude of mutual respect and effective collaboration. Pastors, Pastoral Administrators, and Parish lay Pastoral Ministers should have a good working relationship with local Funeral Directors. Funeral Directors should be encouraged to study of the *Order of Christian Funerals* as part of their regular in-service training.

BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY

17. The establishment of a Bereavement Ministry is encouraged for every parish in the Diocese of Raleigh.
- a. Bereavement Ministry is a part of the ministry of the Church and an expression of the Corporal Works of Mercy: “Those who are baptized into Christ and nourished at the same table of the Lord are to be responsible for each other” (*OCF*, 8). This ministry of charity, attending to the ill, the dead, and those in mourning, is a call to all of the faithful. This includes prayer for the dead and may include the offering of a meal following the Funeral Rites to those in mourning. The faithful are to be instructed and given example by the Clergy and lay Parish Pastoral Ministers of how to exercise this care.
 - b. Bereavement Ministry necessarily extends itself beyond the conclusion of the Funeral Rites to include the days and weeks after burial when those who mourn remain in particular need of the ministry of the Church.

SCHEDULING FUNERAL LITURGIES

18. Each Parish should have a clear policy on how to schedule a Funeral Liturgy so that it may be communicated to parishioners and local Funeral Directors. While local policy should take into account the availability of the Priest or Deacon, the daily Mass schedule of the parish, the Parish School schedule (if applicable), and other parish events. Above all, sensitivity to the grieving family should be paramount in scheduling the Funeral Liturgy.
19. If the Funeral Mass is celebrated in the evening, a sufficient length of time should separate it from the celebration of the Vigil for the Deceased. The schedule for the Rite of Committal, ordinarily the next day, should be announced and the faithful invited to reconvene at that time.
20. The Vigil for the Deceased should be celebrated at a convenient time. The time may be published in the newspaper obituary notice.

21. Funeral Directors are asked to respect the correct names of the various liturgical rites in written obituary notices. Proper terms such as “Vigil for the Deceased”, “Funeral Mass”, “Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass”, and “Rite of Committal” are encouraged. Funeral Directors are also encouraged to verify the correct name of the Clergy who will be presiding at the Funeral Rites.

22. Funeral Masses are not celebrated on solemnities of obligation, on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, or on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter Season. At a Funeral Mass celebrated on Ash Wednesday, ashes are not to be distributed.

CUSTOMARY OFFERINGS

23. The celebration of the Funeral Rites of the Church are an expression of the Corporal Works of Mercy. Because of the value of this pastoral ministry the parish is discouraged from assessing any fee. If an offering is accepted it is to be placed in the general parish account or used as restricted funds as designated by the family of the deceased.

24. The offering on the occasion of a funeral does not include the professional fees for the Organist, Cantor, or other support services, unless this is part of the employment agreement for the professional musicians. Fees for musicians should be established on the parish level by the Pastor in consultation with the musicians involved and are not to be collected on the day of the funeral liturgy. Each parish is to have a plan for assisting families with financial hardship. Priests and Deacons whose responsibilities include the spiritual care of patients or residents at various institutions and hospitals may extend the ministry of burial of the poor when the deceased has no relatives to make such an arrangement. Funeral Directors should be informed that no offering is expected from the poor or those unable to afford an offering.

25. Should funds be given to the parish in memory of the deceased by those outside the immediate family, an address list of donors is to be provided to the family so that they may offer their gratitude as they deem appropriate.

THE PLACEMENT OF THE FLAG AND PERSONAL MEMORABILIA

26. For Funeral Masses with military honors for United States military personnel, active duty or retired, it is customary that the casket enter and exit the church draped in the flag of the United States. The flag is removed upon entry so that the casket may be sprinkled with holy water and the pall placed for the Funeral Liturgy as a reminder of the baptism of the deceased. At the end of the liturgy recessional, the pall is removed and the flag is once again draped over the casket.

27. Personal memorabilia, such as pictures or cards, are often requested to be present during the Funeral Rites as a reminder of the deceased or as a means to express affection. For liturgies celebrated inside the church building, the proper place for such memorabilia is in the Narthex or Gathering Space so as not to draw attention away from the primary signs and actions of Catholic liturgical worship such as the paschal candle, altar, the ambo, and the celebration of Holy Eucharist.

CREMATION AND THE USE OF COLUMBARIA

THE SACRED DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN BODY

28. Man is the living image of God, God's creation and the minister of His plan (*Evangelium Vitae*, 52). Having been immersed into the sacramental grace of Baptism, Man is given the way to perfect this ministry when in Christ the human body becomes a temple of Holy Spirit. When someone dies, we are reminded of each way that the deceased carried out the ministry of God's plan through the gift of the body. The body of the deceased is one that having been fed by the Word and by Sacraments, communicated gestures of faith, hope, kindness, compassion as well as courage in the face of great adversity.

29. The body is also a visible reminder to us of the bonds of family and the expressions of friendship which are irreversibly bound to this person now deceased (*OCF Appendix Cremation*, 411). In addition, having known the reality of sin and the struggle of the deceased to be faithful to God we may also be reminded of how God's mercy was present in life to assist the deceased in the struggle with sin and the way of conversion unto salvation.

31. It is because of the entirety of God's action in human life, from its beginning at the moment of conception to its end in natural death that the Church assigns great reverence to the body of one who has died.

A PREFERENCE FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE BODY

32. The reverence by the Church for the human body in death extends to the Funeral Rites. The body is once again sprinkled with baptismal holy water, recalling how the deceased was immersed into the death and new Life of Christ. The body is then clothed with the funeral pall, a reminder of how the deceased was clothed with the new Life of Christ and hope for the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven. The body of the deceased is then brought into the assembly where one can visibly be reminded of all of the human gestures which bound the deceased to us in life and where we are prompted to pray for God's mercy for the deceased person that they may now know the fullness of God.

THE EXTRAORDINARY CHOICE OF CREMATION

33. Given the sacred dignity of the body, the Church recommends that the custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed to await the Resurrection. Cremation is now permitted, but it does not enjoy the same value as the burial of the body of the deceased (*OCF Appendix Cremation*, 413). This value is the aforementioned signs of the Funeral Rites which seek to visibly connect the deceased to the action of God throughout the entirety of their life, their death, and in Christ their eternal Life with God. Such value is certainly less possible with the non-descript character of cremated remains. It is for this reason that cremation of the body is an extraordinary choice.

34. Should the choice for cremation be made, it is made only as long as it has not been chosen for reasons contrary to Catholic teaching (Canon 1176 §3, *CCC*, 2301). When cremation of the body is the only feasible choice, pastoral sensitivity must be given by the Priests, Deacons, Pastoral

Administrators, and other lay pastoral ministers who attend to the family and friends of the deceased (*OCF Appendix Cremation*, 415).

- a. If the extraordinary choice for cremation has been made, it is preferred that the Funeral Mass or the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass be celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased prior to its cremation. (*OCF Appendix Cremation*, 411-438).
- b. Given the significance of having the body of the deceased present for the Funeral Liturgy, when arrangements involving cremation are being made, the Priest, Deacon, Pastoral Administrator or lay pastoral minister is to recommend that: a) following a wake, the Funeral Liturgy be celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased person, and that following the Funeral Liturgy, the body of the deceased be cremated; b) the Funeral Mass conclude with the Final Commendation in the church; c) at an appropriate time, usually some days later, the family gather at the cemetery for the burial of the cremated remains. The Rite of Committal takes place at this time with the inclusion of the proper prayers for the committal of ashes (*OCF*, 406.3).
- c. If cremation has already taken place before the Funeral Liturgy, the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy may take place in the presence of the cremated remains of the deceased person. The cremated remains of the body are to be placed in a worthy vessel. A small table or stand is to be prepared for the cremated remains at the place normally occupied by the casket. The funeral urn may be carried to its place in the entrance procession or placed on this table sometime before the liturgy begins.
- d. Special circumstances occur, such as health concerns or out-of-state or overseas transport, which may prompt families to arrange for cremation before making funeral arrangements. If cremation has taken place, the Priest, Deacon, Pastoral Administrator, or lay pastoral minister is to recommend: a) a gathering with family and friends for prayer and remembrance of the deceased; b) the celebration of a Funeral Liturgy; c) the gathering with family and friends for the interment of cremated remains at the cemetery for the Rite of Committal.
- e. Cremated remains are to be treated with the same dignity afforded to the body of the deceased, and should be entombed or buried, whether in the ground or at sea.
- f. The *scattering* of cremated remains on the ground or on the sea or keeping any portion of them for personal reasons is not reverent to the sacred dignity of human remains and therefore not permitted. It should be noted that burial at sea of cremated remains differs from scattering. An appropriate and worthy container, heavy enough to be sent to its final resting place, may be placed into the sea.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLUMBARIA

35. Given the extraordinary choice of some of the faithful for cremation, the Parish may choose to construct a Columbarium on parish grounds. Such construction is not to be an expression of the ordinary disposition for the remains of the deceased. Catechesis must be provided to the faithful in the Parish as to the sacred dignity of the body and the value which the Church assigns to the body in the Funeral Rites. This catechesis must also include references and contact information for local Catholic cemeteries, local cemeteries with a dedicated Catholic section, or other appropriate local cemeteries where burial of the body of the deceased may take place.

- a. When a Parish chooses to construct a Columbarium, a proposal must be presented to the Diocesan Building and Real Estate Commission for approval of its construction in keeping with the Master Site Plan for the Parish. The Columbarium must be located on the Parish grounds so as to allow adequate privacy for prayer for the deceased and the consolation of God for those who mourn. The site location must also be one of dignity on the Parish grounds so as to communicate the reverence the Church affords to the deceased. The site must also be close to the Parish church building so as to provide ease of access from the church following a Funeral Liturgy.

- b. Detailed construction plans must also be presented to the Diocesan Building and Real Estate Commission for approval. The construction materials must be of noble and lasting character, such as marble or granite. A provider for prefabricated Columbaria may be consulted for products which may best complement the design of the extant Parish buildings.
- c. Legal forms for the right of burial in the niches of the Columbarium must be developed by the Parish and submitted to the Diocesan Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer for approval prior to the sale on any niches.
- d. As part of the purchase for the right of burial, the Parish may decide to standardize the burial urns to allow for proper placement of the cremated remains within the Columbarium.