

CREMATION

Policy: *By virtues of an indult granted by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy, including Mass, in the presence of the cremated remains of the body of a deceased person, may be permitted by the Diocesan Bishop on a case by case basis. (OCF 426 and Diocese of Sacramento Directory 2006, Guidelines for Christian Burial) It is the desire of Bishop Jaime Soto that pastors catechize their community about the care of the body after death and the Church's recommendation for the body to be present at the Funeral Mass. In the presence of this understanding, pastors have the Bishop's delegation to determine when it is appropriate to celebrate the Funeral Mass in the presence of the cremated remains.*

Guidelines:

1. The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the deceased be observed; nevertheless the church does not prohibit cremation unless it was chosen for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine. (*canon 1176.3*)

2. When the choice has been made to cremate a body, it is urged that the cremation take place **after** the Funeral Liturgy. '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.' (*OCF 413, US Bishops Committee on the Liturgy*) Continuing effort should be made on the part of pastors and associate pastors to catechize the faithful on this point. (*OCF 414*)

3. In cases when cremation has already taken place prior to the Funeral Rites, with permission of the Diocesan Bishop, it is appropriate that the cremated remains be present for the full course of the funeral rites, including the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Liturgy and the Rite of Committal. The Bishops Committee on the Liturgy has had additional rites and texts for the "Order of Christian Funerals" prepared to provide for the presence of the cremated remains of a body, including adaptations of the rites for the Final Commendation and the Committal. (*OCF Appendix NCCB Reflections*)

4. 'The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they came. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition.' (*OCF 417*)

5. 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 in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.' 'Whenever possible, appropriate means for memorializing the deceased should be utilized, such as a plaque or stone that records the name of the deceased.' (*OCF #417*)