

Many Catholics are still confused about cremation. Why?

At one time the church prohibited cremation in the majority of circumstances, and some people are still unaware of the changes that took place more than 40 years ago.

In 1963 the Catholic Church lifted the restriction against cremation. The practice of cremation was incorporated into the Order of Christian Funerals in 1997.

Does the Church view cremation any different than burial in ground or in a mausoleum?

Cremated remains represent the sacred body. The Catholic Church teaches that the cremated remains must be treated with the same dignity and respect as a full body.

What are the Church's teachings when a family wishes to add a second family member's remains to an existing family urn?

Since the human body was the temple of the Holy Spirit during life, was fed at the Eucharistic table, and will share in the bodily resurrection, contemporary cultural practices like scattering from the air or keeping the cremated remains at home are not considered reverent forms of disposition that the Church requires.

Other practices such as commingling cremated remains among family members or friends are not acceptable for Catholics. A companion urn for the requests of sharing a vessel for cremated remains is suggested. Place each of the two individual's plastic bags of remains into the urn side by side. This is the simplest solution when transferring multiple remains into a double urn. In this case the couple's remains are together inside the urn, but are not commingled.