

# **Guidelines for Christian Burial**

## **Canon 1176**

**§ 1:** Deceased members of the Christian faithful must be given ecclesiastical funerals according to the norm of law.

**§ 2:** Ecclesiastical funerals, by which the Church seeks spiritual support for the deceased, honors their bodies, and at the same time brings the solace of hope to the living, must be celebrated according to the norm of the liturgical laws.

**§ 3:** 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.

## **Cremation**

**(from the Order of Christian Burial)**

**413:** Although cremation is now permitted, 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.

**415:** When extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of the body the only feasible choice, pastoral sensitivity must be exercised by priests, deacons, and others who minister to the family of the deceased.

**417:** 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. 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.

By virtue 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.