

## Does The Catholic Church Permit Cremation?

Cremation of the deceased is becoming more common in recent years. At one time, the Catholic Church did not allow cremation but that changed about sixty years ago. Unfortunately, most Catholics are unaware of the Church's regulations concerning the disposition of cremains.

According to Church guidelines, the cremains should be handled in a manner much like the body would be in a funeral when the body is placed in a casket and the casket is buried.

In 2016, the Church issued the following definitive guidelines concerning cremation:

Remains should be treated with reverence at all times, including when being handled or transported.

The ashes should be placed in an urn or other proper container.

A stand or table is prepared in the place in church that is normally occupied by the casket.

The vessel in which the remains are contained may be carried to the prepared place during the entrance procession at the Mass or it may be placed in the prepared place before the beginning of the liturgy.

The body may be cremated either before or after the ceremony, depending on each situation.

The burial takes place in a sacred location such as a cemetery, mausoleum or crypt.

The burial should take place immediately following the Funeral Mass unless there are circumstances that would justify waiting a reasonable time. This should be discussed with the parish priest and a reasonable time for the committal should be set.

The Rite of Committal is celebrated at the burial site.

A gravestone or memorial plaque should be placed at the burial site to record the memory of the deceased.

Cremains are not to be scattered nor are they to be exhibited in the home.

If you have questions about cremation, please contact your parish priest.