

**WHAT IF MY LOVED ONE WANTED THE CREMATED REMAINS TO BE HANDLED BY ONE OF THE DISAPPROVED PRACTICES?**  
“He is not here. He has been raised.” (Luke 24:6) Retaining cremains for personal use does not give us a hold on that person. We believe our loved one’s *personhood* or *soul* is not on earth but before our Loving Savior Jesus Christ. (*Catechism* §997-1001). Our loved one’s body, and our own, belong to God even in death, and must be honored intact in the manner set forth by the Lord God in Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

We understand that you would want to follow your loved one’s wishes. However, it is reasonable for the Church to expect that Catholic burial practices, rooted in faith in the resurrection of the body, be observed in Catholic churches and cemeteries. We are sorry, but it is not appropriate to violate canon and liturgical law to fulfill the wishes of your loved one.

### **SAYING GOOD-BYE**

Catholic Burial Directives offer a family ways to commend their loved one – soul and body – into God’s care with the utmost dignity and love, in the Catholic Tradition. Families do this poignantly by properly observing Catholic burial practices.

This pamphlet is provided for your information. Please contact the church office for specific questions regarding these directives. **These directives are an important part of honoring your loved one in a Catholic Liturgy that is consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church on the Dignity of the Human Person.** Discuss these with your family. Let them know you want to follow these Catholic burial practices. **Please be aware of these practices before contacting a funeral director, certainly before any arrangement is made for the handling of the body of your loved one.**

*This document is provided through the generosity of the parishioners of*

**St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Church**  
**585 South Third Street**  
**Rogers City, Michigan 49779-1911**

Telephone: 989.734.2753

FAX: 989.734.7671

StIgnatius-Mount Calvary Burial Directives(7).pub

**St. Ignatius of Loyola Church,  
Mount Calvary Cemetery**

## **DIRECTIVES FOR CATHOLIC BURIAL**

Sources: The *Catechism*  
The *Code of Canon Law*  
Diocese of Gaylord  
Secretariat on Worship and  
Formation for the Divine  
Liturgy



*The Holy Souls in Purgatory*

## WHY DOES THE CHURCH HAVE DIRECTIVES ON BURIAL?

The Catholic Church has always respected the Dignity of the Human Person from conception to natural death. That Human Dignity does not leave the body at death. The body has served the living person as a Temple of the Holy Spirit, and therefore deserves to be revered after death. Because the Church desires that we “pray what She believes,” (*Catechism* §1124) the manner in which human remains are presented to God in the funeral liturgies must adhere to the faith in the resurrection of the body. (*Catechism* §2300)

### FUNERAL LITURGIES

The Catholic *Order of Christian Funerals* provides for the following possible elements:

A **VIGIL SERVICE**, usually held the night before the funeral Mass: this takes the form of a Liturgy of the Word or the Liturgy of the Hours;\* a **MASS**, which should take place shortly after death; and a **COMMITAL**, the burial or interment. At times, the committal has to be postponed, as when a death occurs during winter, until the ground thaws.

\* *Although the recitation of the Rosary is not a part of the liturgical order for funerals, it may be prayed in addition to the vigil service, but does not replace the vigil service. At St. Ignatius we offer morning prayer from the Office for the Dead for families choosing to have no vigil service.*

Continuing from the outline of the funeral liturgy to the burial itself, we now consider legitimate Catholic options for burial.

**MODERN BURIAL** techniques use embalming, metal caskets and vaults in burying human remains are fully in accord with Catholic Teaching. When choosing Modern Burial, the family and the church must arrange for the burial of an embalmed body according to local law.

**TRADITIONAL OR GREEN BURIAL** is distinguished from Modern Burial. People who want to protect the ecosystem by using biodegradable materials may select this option in accord with Catholic Teaching. Traditional or Green Burial therefore has these distinct aspects:

- **The body of the decedent is not embalmed.**
- **Burial must occur within 48 hours of death** to be compliant with civil law.
- The body may be placed in a biodegradable coffin or wrapped in a biodegradable blanket or shroud.
- A burial vault is not necessary.

**Sources:** Diocese of Gaylord “Directives for Catholic Burial”, page 2.  
The 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1176 §3.  
The *Catechism*, § 2300-2301.

**CREMATION** is permitted by the Catholic Church. However, out of respect for Human Dignity as outlined on page 2 of this pamphlet, the Church prefers:

- The body be present for the funeral liturgy/(ies).
- Cremation before the burial liturgies, though not preferred, is permissible.
- The cremated human remains be buried (interred) intact as soon as possible after the liturgies and cremation. This is similar to the requirement that un-cremated human remains be buried as soon after the liturgies as possible.

**THE CHURCH DISAPPROVES THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES WITH CREMATED HUMAN REMAINS** because they show disregard for the integrity of the human body. These are also contrary to the mystery we celebrate at the funeral liturgies, which is faith in the resurrection of the body:

- The scattering of human remains into the wind, or over the water or earth.
- The mixing or comingling into the same vessel or urn of another person’s cremated remains.
- The division and distribution of parts of the cremated remains among several vessels and places, or away from a public cemetery, columbarium or mausoleum.
- The composition of jewelry or other keepsakes with cremated human remains or parts of human remains.

**Sources:** Diocese of Gaylord “Directives for Catholic Burial”, page 2.  
The 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1176 §3.  
The *Catechism*, § 2300-2301.