

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Priests and Pastoral Ministers
FROM: Father Nicholas Smith
DATE: 10 January 2017
RE: Internment/Inurnment of Cremated Remains

On October 25, 2016, The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith promulgated an Instruction entitled *Ad resurgendum cum Christo* regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation.

Archbishop Carlson sent the Instruction to all priests and deacons in a memorandum dated October 25, 2016. The Instruction in its entirety can be found at <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/10/25/161025c.html>.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us about the care and respect for the body of the deceased:

The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection. The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy; it honors the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit (2300).

The body (cremated remains) of the deceased Christian is either buried in the ground (internment) or entombed in a mausoleum (columbarium, in the case of cremated remains) (entombment) until the resurrection on the Last Day.

The Rite of Committal of the body (cremated remains) is an integral part of the *Order of Christian Funerals*. However, there is the tendency to detach the Rite of Committal from the other rites of Christian burial. Unless it is impossible to bury or entomb the body after the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy, Church norms call for the internment of the body promptly after the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy. In the event that the remains are cremated after the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy, arrangements should be made for internment/inurnment as soon as possible, so the cremated remains of the body are not kept in the funeral home or the family home. Cremated remains are to be given the same dignity and respect as the body.

The Office of Sacred Worship respectfully reminds all pastors, associate pastors, and pastoral ministers that when arranging funerals at your parishes, to pastorally remind family members that if cremation is part of the planning, the internment/inurnment of the cremated remains must be done promptly after the Funeral Mass or cremation (cf. *Order of Christian Funerals* #430).

Should you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you for the important ministerial work you do to bring the compassion of Christ to those who mourn the loss of a loved one.