

ST. MARY MAGDALEN COLUMBARIUM / SHRINE OF THE CROSS

Cremation and the Catholic Church

In Christ Jesus, God chose to share our human nature in a human body, giving every human body special dignity. This special reverence for the body continues even in death; that is the reason the Catholic Church recommends that the bodies of the faithful departed be buried "in the earth from which we are made."

Cremation was forbidden for centuries because it was viewed as a pagan practice and even used by some as rejection of our belief in the resurrection of the dead. The world has changed and many choose cremation for practical reasons. As a result, this prohibition was lifted in May of 1963.

While there is still a preference for the body to be cremated after the funeral Liturgy, the funeral can be celebrated with the cremated remains of the body. The urn containing the cremains is placed in a special, small casket called an ossuary. The ossuary is placed in the same location in the church as a coffin. With the Easter candle nearby, the cremains are sprinkled with baptismal water and covered with a large white cloth at the start of the funeral Liturgy.

What is a columbarium?

A columbarium is an arrangement of openings or niches used as a permanent resting place for urns containing the cremated remains of an individual person. Each niche comes with one or two brass urns that are purchased along with the right of inurnment. Each niche will be covered and sealed once the niche is filled. Our Resurrection Tower has three levels and will contain over 1100 niches.

What is the Shrine of the Cross?

The Shrine of the Cross is located near the entrance to our parish. It has a crucifix with a statue of Mary Magdalen standing at the foot of the cross. Soon after the shrine was created, parishioners asked to have their cremains buried nearby. A large memorial stone was placed there to record the names of those whose cremains were buried there; within a couple of years a second stone was added.

Now we are expanding this area with a plaza of large stones around the shrine. This allows individual spaces for each person or couple. Each burial space will be marked with an engraved stone.

How many sets of cremains may be placed in each niche or burial space?

Each niche is capable of holding the remains of two people. Each stone at the Shrine of the Cross is 12 by 12 inches and each stone is capable of accommodating two sets of names and dates.

How will those interred at St. Mary Magdalen be memorialized?

There will be no public admission to the interior of the Resurrection Tower. Each niche within the columbarium will be numbered. The name (first name, middle initial and last name) will be engraved on the exterior of the tower along with the year of birth and the year of death.

Each space at the Shrine of the Cross will be covered with a 12 by 12 inch stone. This stone will be capable of being engraved with the name (first name, middle initial and last name) and the year of birth and the year of death.

Who may be interred at St. Mary Magdalen?

The columbarium is intended to be a lasting resting place for the parishioners of St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church.

However, a parishioner may inter immediate family members who are not parishioners; this is limited to the spouse, parents, or children of the parishioner. The family members do not have to be Catholic.

My spouse is not a Catholic can I be buried or interred in the same niche with my spouse?

Yes. Each niche holds two urns which are purchased from the parish. Your non-Catholic spouse may have his\her cremains interred after the funeral service according to his\her own religious tradition. It is also possible to have a funeral Liturgy at St. Mary Magdalen, whether it is a full Mass of the Resurrection or a Funeral Service (with no Mass), which would be in accord with the rites of the Roman Catholic tradition.

Can my name be engraved when my spouse's name is engraved?

Yes, your first name, middle initial and surname and the year of your birth may be inscribed at the same time as your spouse's information is inscribed; leaving the year of death to be inscribed at a later date. The expense of the engraving is incurred at the time of the interment.

What is the cost of a niche?

The initial cost for a niche in our Resurrection Tower has been set at \$2,300. That cost will increase at some point in the future at the discretion of the parish Finance and Pastoral Councils.

What is the cost of a space at the Shrine of the Cross?

The cost of a space at the Shrine of the Cross has been set at \$400. That cost will increase at some point in the future at the discretion of the parish Finance and Pastoral Councils.

Are there any additional costs?

There will be additional costs which will be assessed at the time of interment. This added expense will cover the costs associated with engraving of name(s).

What proof will I have that I purchased a niche or a space?

Anyone who purchases a niche will receive a certificate that specifies the niche or space has been reserved and the amount paid.

The right to use the niche or space may not be resold or transferred to another person. If someone decides not to use their space or niche, the certificate can be returned to the parish and the parish will refund whatever amount of money was paid on the certificate.

Can we purchase these over a period of time?

The spaces around the Shrine of the Cross may be purchased with 50% down, with the remainder of the cost being paid over the next 12 months. Niches may be purchased with 50% down, with the remainder of the cost being paid over the next 24 months.

The space at the Shrine or a niche in the tower must be paid for in full before the space or niche is used for an interment.

How will these two sacred spaces be cared for?

There is a cost for both the niches in the Resurrection Tower and the spaces around the Shrine of the Cross. A restricted, perpetual care fund has been created with 15% of the payment for either place. This fund will provide for the care and maintenance of both these places as well as Liturgies celebrated on a regular basis for all those who are interred in either place.

May I decorate the area near my niche with flowers?

Cut flowers, and when appropriate a small flag, may be placed at the Shrine of the Cross or the Resurrection Tower, but no potted plants or flowers, statues, or other decorations may not be placed on or near a space at the shrine or by the tower.

How are niches in the Resurrection Tower assigned?

The niches will be assigned in the order in which they are purchased.

How are spaces at the Shrine of the Cross assigned?

A specific space may be chosen by the parishioners at the time of the purchase.