

About St. Philip the Apostle's Columbarium

What is the Catholic Church's position on cremation?

In April 1997, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments granted an indult for the United States to allow the diocesan bishop to permit the presence of the cremated remains of a body at a Funeral Mass. Later that year, the Congregation confirmed the special texts and ritual directives (Prot. n. 1589/96/L for both indult and texts), which were then published as an appendix to the Order of Christian Funerals. The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, and 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 on the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. (no. 417)

What is a columbarium?

The word Columbarium comes from the Latin word "Columba," meaning dove. It has come to mean a structure with compartments, or niches, for holding urns. St. Philip's Columbarium will initially have 48 niches, where urns containing cremated remains are inurned. Each niche can hold two urns for a total of 96 inurnments. The niches are sealed with engraved fronts showing the name and life years of those inurned within.

What is the size of the niche?

The internal dimensions are approximately 12"X12"X12". It is large enough capacity to accommodate two standard size urns.

What is inscribed on the niche?

The person's or persons' full name(s) with the years of birth and death. No mottos, symbols or designations are permitted.

What is an urn?

Urn is the receptacles into which ashes are placed. The urns are not provided and must be purchased from an outside vendor.

How will the Columbarium be financed?

Funding for the initial Columbarium and Memory Garden has been provided through donor contributions. Funding for additional Columbaria, maintenance and perpetual care will be provided through the sale of niches and private donations.

Who can be inurned in the Columbarium ?

Inurnment in the Columbarium shall be limited to the cremated human ashes of a member or past member of the Church or their immediate family in good standing with the Church. Requests for the inurnment of others may be honored if the Pastor approves.

How much does a niche cost, and what is included in the price?

The price to purchase a niche is currently \$3,500.00 for current or former parishioners. The price includes the niche, engraved face plate with the name and life years of the person(s) whose remains are inurned, choice of available niche location, inurnment, opening and closing of the inurnment space, record-keeping, and maintenance in perpetuity. It does not include the cost of cremation, urns, or any other funeral expenses. Price may vary for approved non-parish members and is currently \$5,000.00.

Are there any financing options?

No. The niches and engraving must be paid in full at the time of purchase by check or cash only.

Who maintains records and operates the Columbarium and garden?

The St. Philip's Columbarium Trustees maintain all files and records for the Columbarium, including the identity and location of remains inurned. The perpetual care fund maintains the Columbarium, including the architecture and landscaping, and supervises all service providers.

May other items be inurned with the remains?

Applicants must have the prior written consent of the Pastor to place accompanying memorabilia in the niche. Placing the ashes of an animal in the Columbarium is against the approved liturgical norms and will not be permitted.

How many niches may I buy?

You may buy as many as needed. For example, families may purchase a group of adjacent niches if desired.

May I choose the location of the niche?

Yes. A map of the Columbarium will be provided at the time of purchase, and you may choose the location based on availability.

May I inurn my pet?

No. Placing the ashes of an Animal in the Columbarium is against the approved liturgical norms and will not be permitted.

May I have my niche inscribed before I die?

Upon purchase, you may have the names inscribed on the niche faceplate if desired, or you may wait until the decedent is inurned.

What about the cremains I already have?

You may have them inurned in the Columbarium after completion of the Columbarium Agreement and arrangement of a memorial service. Contact the Pastor to arrange a service and obtain the information to purchase a niche.

May ashes of two people be co-mingled in a single urn?

No. Complying with the teachings of the Catholic Church (*Ad Resurgendum cum Christo*), cremated remains may not be held so that both inurnments occur simultaneously and remains may not be commingled in one urn.

How are the rules set up?

The St. Philip's Columbarium Board of Trustees have adopted policies and procedures. They are designed to protect the current interests of both you and the Church and to preserve the decorum and appearance of the Columbarium over time. From time to time, the rules may be amended as the Church or the Trustees deem necessary.

How do I purchase a niche?

Submit a written application (Columbarium Agreement) and payment to the Church. These are available in the church office.

Do I own the niche?

No, the Columbarium Agreement is only a license to use the niche. No real property rights or interest is created.

May I change the list of people who may be inurned in my niche in the Columbarium?

Yes, during your lifetime, you may change the list of designated persons by a written amendment to the Columbarium Agreement and approval by the Trustees and signed by the appropriate representative and yourself. *The designated persons must meet the criteria established by the Trustees and Pastor as noted above.*

What if I decide later not to use the niche?

If there has been no inurnment and you decide that the niche is no longer needed, the Church may, at its discretion, repurchase the niche for 50% of the original purchase price. The user is responsible for any replacement costs if the faceplate has been engraved.

May I sell the niche to another person?

No; not directly. To ensure the proper criteria are maintained, any transfer or sale must be authorized in writing through the Board of Trustees. Contact a Trustee if this is desired.

May I remove the Urn from the Columbarium for any reason?

Cremated ashes remain the property of the family or estate of the deceased. If the survivors wish to remove all the cremated ashes, approval of the Church in writing, acting through the Trustees, shall be required. Please see the Columbarium Agreement for details.

Must I pay for an entire niche if I am single?

Yes. However, you may opt to share a niche with another person; if so, please make arrangements separately while jointly completing the Columbarium Agreement. This arrangement must be in place and approved at the time of the initial purchase.

Does the price include cremation?

No, the price does not include cremation. Arrangements for cremation should be made directly with a funeral home or cremation society.

What if affordability is an issue?

Please speak with the Pastor.

Do I need to provide any additional information?

The Church needs a copy of the decedents death certificate for record keeping purposes, which should be provided at a reasonable period of time after the decedent's passing. This does not need to be an original.

What records are maintained by Church?

St. Philip's will securely maintain a copy of this agreement, a copy of the death certificate after having the social security number of the decedent(s) redacted. The Church can maintain any reasonable genealogy documentation that is desired.