



HOLY FAMILY CHURCH

35 South First Street - P.O. Box 156 - McGregor, MN 55760-0156

May 13, 2017

Dear Parishioners:

At a meeting of the clergy in the Brainerd Deanery, we found it important to offer some clarification on the practice of Cremation. There is much confusion that surrounds the practice of Cremation, so we are offering these thoughts to help all our parishioners as they make decisions regarding their final disposition, or that of their loved ones. Since the Church's long-standing tradition has been a bodily burial, it still remains the preferred method of final disposition. When cremation is chosen, the Church does prefer that the body of the deceased be present for the vigil and the funeral mass, since the presence of the body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in these rites. In this scenario, following the funeral liturgy at the parish church, after the cremation is completed, the family would gather as soon as possible for the Rite of Committal at the cemetery.

Directive for Treatment of Cremated Remains of the Body for Catholics.

In line with a new directive from Rome of how Catholics should handle cremated remains of their loved ones, as priests of Brainerd Deanery we would like to ask all our funeral directors to make it clear as much possible these basic guidelines when families come to prepare the funeral of their loved ones.

1. We know Cremation of the body quickly reduces the body to about four to ten pounds of bone fragments. The Church requires that these remains of the body be placed in a respectful vessel and treated in the exact same way that a family would treat a body in a casket.
2. Since the human body has an eternal destiny in any form, the Church requires that cremated remains of a body be buried or entombed immediately after the Funeral in the same timely manner as a body.
3. Cremated remains of a loved one are **Not** to be scattered, kept at home or divided into other vessels among family members, just as it is clear that these practices would never be done to a body in a casket. These practices are not in keeping with the Church's requirement that a body is accorded great honor even after death. Thus, the new directive gives the pastors the right to deny a Catholic funeral if these basic guidelines are not followed.

All of the teachings on the treatment of cremated remains of the body correspond with the Christian's foundational belief in eternal life—both body and soul—in Jesus Christ among the Communion of Saints. We pray and hope that we can be instruments of mercy as partners of this important ministry to bury the dead with dignity they deserve to the people we love and serve. We encourage all our parishioners to speak with their clergy regarding any questions they may have!

The Priests of the Brainerd Deanery

Fr. Kuriakose Nediakala, MCBS