

## Cremation at St. Bernadette

The practice of cremation has become common and is an acceptable practice in the Church. Instructions in the Rite of Christian Burial remind us that the cremated remains are to be treated with the same respect and in same manner as of to a body prepared for burial.

### **Burial**

The Church is absolutely clear that the cremated remains are to be afforded the same dignified Rite of Christian Burial as that of a human body. Under no circumstances are the cremated remains to be kept at home, scattered or divided up and distributed to family and friends. This action would constitute a serious violation of the Church's teaching and a fundamental disrespect to the deceased. The Rite of Christian Burial says:

"The remains of cremated bodies should be treated with the same respect given the corporeal remains of a human body. This includes the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport and their final disposition. The cremated remains of a body should be entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium; they may also be buried in a common grave. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea from the air or on the ground or keeping the cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires."

## **Funeral**

When a family has a funeral plan and provisions have been made for the entombment of the cremated remains, the Church celebrates by using the Rite of Christian Burial since there will be a Christian funeral and a burial. In this case, the cremated remains are brought to the Church for the service and are carried to the place of burial immediately following. A meal is offered by the Church for the family after the burial.

When a family has no funeral plans and no provisions have been made for entombment or the family has chosen to keep the remains at home, even temporarily ("We will bury her when we go back home in 6 months"), the Church can not use the Rite of Christian Burial since there is no Christian burial and thus no funeral. In this case, the family is invited to bring friends to any scheduled Weekday Eucharist. The name of the deceased will be mentioned but there will be no funeral and no Memorial Service. The cremated remains are not present since that would be like bringing an unburied body to the Church. No meal is offered since there is no funeral.

## **An Acceptable Practice**

The practice of cremation has been accepted by the Church and is, today, quite common. The Church is, though, quite clear regarding the proper disposition of the cremated remains.