

St Ann Catholic Church Memorial Prayer Garden and Columbarium

Frequently Asked Questions
January, 2023

St Ann Catholic Church Memorial Prayer Garden and Columbarium

Dear St Ann Parishioners,

Christians have exercised special care for the dead since the earliest days of the Church. Indeed, Sacred Scripture shows us that, even before the birth of Christ, God's chosen people devoted themselves to burying the deceased and considered this an act of almsgiving (Tob 1:16-18). Among the means by which our parish exercises its care for the deceased is our columbarium, in which cremated individuals may be interred. This facility aids the Christian community in continuing its work of mercy within a changing modern culture.

Until very recently, after all, the Catholic Church forbade certain practices that some may now take for granted. Only in 1998 was permission given for cremated remains to be present during a funeral Mass – although preferably the body, present at Mass, would be cremated afterwards – while the permission for cremation itself dates back merely to 1963. These permissions reflected a change not in the Church's doctrine, but in her relationship to the surrounding world. Since the pagan practice of cremation had been founded on the belief that there was no life beyond death, the earliest Christians chose to forbid cremation so as to affirm their faith in the resurrection of the body. Today, however, the march of time has largely obliterated creation's link to denial of our resurrection faith; accordingly, the Church now permits cremation as an extraordinary means of laying the dead to rest.

We call this means extraordinary because the Church still recommends burying the bodies of the dead in order to acknowledge the body's sacred dignity as it awaits the return of its soul in the Resurrection. Cremation does not possess this rich symbolic value of our bi-millennial burial customs. Yet for those who avail themselves of the option to be cremated, the columbarium at St. Ann makes possible a great continuity with our funeral traditions. By offering interment on parish grounds, the columbarium expresses our continued communion with those who sleep in Christ. The very name "columbarium," or dove-cote, recalls the structure's similarity to doves' shelters among rocky clefts, whose appearance in Scripture (Song 2:14) St. Bernard interprets as the Christian soul sheltering in Christ's wounds. On a practical note, as well, the columbarium's location allows for a customary procession directly from Mass to the final resting place of the deceased.

After you have reviewed this material, if you would like to discuss the purchase of a niche, or if you have questions or want additional information, contact the parish office at 919-934-2084 to schedule an appointment with a staff member.

Yours in Christ,

Very Rev. Peter Grace

- ***What specifically is a columbarium?***

A columbarium is an arrangement of openings, either in a mausoleum, a room, or wall, into which an urn or other worthy vessel is placed for permanent memorial. These openings are typically approximately 12 inches square by 12 inches deep and are called “niches.” At St. Ann, the columbarium is a combination of walled structure niches, and the actual clear dimensions within each standard double niche is 11 ½” by 11 ½” by 11 ¾”. There are a limited number of family (or shared infant) niches available that are 11 ½” x 11 ½” x 19 ½”. The total number of niches available is 1,460 in the area of the first phase. There is space dedicated for a memorial wall that contains plaques where parishioners can purchase plaques in memory of deceased family members buried at other locations.

- ***If I choose to be cremated, what are the advantages of choosing the columbarium as opposed to a cemetery?***

This is a personal choice. Many people choose to be buried in a columbarium at their church, because of a strong desire to be laid to rest on the grounds of a church that they loved and served. They like the simplicity of the liturgy and want to preserve a nearness to the church and perpetuate a relationship that has been a lifelong pursuit. Those who choose to be placed in a columbarium at the church often are attracted by its religious focus and the nearness to the church. The proximity makes it convenient for visits by loved ones and for periods of meditation and reflection.

Also, the fee for being placed in one of the niches is usually less than the cost of traditional in-ground burial in a cemetery. Other factors that may influence your decision to choose interment in a columbarium are concerns about the environment, space available in a cemetery, and the flexibility cremation offers in ceremony planning and in the disposition of the remains. At St. Ann, perpetual care of the grounds surrounding the columbarium will be provided tastefully, including liturgies celebrated on All Soul’s Day (Nov. 2).

- ***Where is the St. Ann Memorial Prayer Garden and Columbarium located?***

The St. Ann Memorial Prayer Garden and Columbarium is located on the church grounds, near the front entrance to the church. The first phase of columbarium is located between the church and the parking lot. Currently, this phase has been completed with niche units installed within the center cross area only. There are 360 niches within this cross. An additional 1,100 niches will be added when needed around the perimeter of the circle area, surrounding the cross. These units will be added as soon as needed. The Memorial Prayer Garden and Columbarium provides an attractive location for grieving, prayer and meditation. Once this area of columbarium is completely filled (including the future 1,100 units around the circle), a second columbarium phase with additional niches will be constructed near the front of the church.

- ***My spouse is not a Catholic and I want to be buried with my spouse. Are there any provisions whereby we can be placed in the same niche?***

Yes. Each standard double niche will hold two urns. Your non-Catholic spouse can have a funeral rite in St. Ann Church and then be placed in your columbarium double niche. Alternatively, your spouse may have a funeral service at a church of their choosing, and then be interred at St Ann. All funeral services conducted at St Ann, however, will be in accord with Roman Catholic rites. Exceptions require approval of the Pastor.

- ***Who may be interred in St. Ann's Columbarium?***

The columbarium is intended primarily for the use of the parishioners of St. Ann Parish. However, with approval by the Columbarium Committee, the purchaser may inter immediate family members who are not parishioners. However, this exception is limited to the spouse, parents, grandparents, siblings, children and grandchildren of the purchaser. The family members do not have to be Catholic.

- ***May non-parishioners purchase a niche in St. Ann's Columbarium?***

A limited number of niches may be available for purchase by active and registered Catholics from other parishes and may be purchased with the agreement of the Columbarium Committee and the approval of the Pastor. There is an increased charge for purchasers who are non-parishioners of St Ann Catholic Church. The purchaser may inter only family members, which is limited to the spouse, parents, grandparents, siblings, children and grandchildren of the purchaser. The family members do not have to be Catholic. The Pastor must approve any exceptions.

- ***What is the cost of a niche?***

The price of a niche in the columbarium is outlined below. The price includes the engraving of the granite faceplate (Style 1 or 2 only), the right of interment in the St Ann Columbarium, the opening and closing of the niche, and perpetual care. No additional fees will be charged for openings or maintenance. The price does NOT include the urn. The purchaser will be required to purchase an urn separately from another source or from St Ann Church. The purchased urn(s) will need to be sized to fit within the niche as size indicated above. The current pricing for each type of niche is shown below.

A **standard double niche** is intended to house two members of the same family, with restrictions as noted within this document. A purchaser of a standard double niche, may also include 1 or 2 infants within the niche, with its parents only as follows:

1. Infant's urn(s) must fit within the niche along with the other two urns
2. Payment Options:
 - a. Infant's name NOT included on the niche faceplate - \$500 per infant
 - b. Infant's name added to the niche faceplate: \$1,500 per infant (2 maximum)

A **shared niche** offers the opportunity for a single individual to purchase a space for the remains of one person to share a niche with another person. In this case, the single purchaser will share a niche with another purchaser to be identified and determined by the Columbarium Committee and the Pastor of St. Ann Church. If an individual does not want to share a niche with someone from another family, that

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individual has the option to purchase a standard double niche to preserve the entire niche for themselves.

All pricing includes perpetual care and maintenance. Urn, Funeral and cremation costs are not included.

The niche prices are as follows:

Niche and Plaque Pricing Once Construction Effective June 1, 2022

	Shared Niche	Double Niche
Registered Parishioner of St Ann Catholic Church in Clayton	\$ 2,750	\$4,500
All others (such as non-parishioners)	\$ 4,500	\$6,500
Memorial Plaque (12" x 12" and includes Inscription Style 3)	\$1,500	\$1,500
Anonymous Infant Shared Niche	\$ 500	
Named Infant Shared Niche	\$1,500	

St Ann Church offers a solid brass urn for purchase. Current price for these urns is \$125.00. In the future, St Ann Church will also offer a small urn for infants. The pricing of that urn will be confirmed, but is anticipated to be between \$50 and \$100. It is also anticipated that a few urns may be donated by individuals or a ministry for families that need an infant urn but can't afford to purchase. Distribution of these donated urns will be up to the discretion of the Pastor and the Columbarium Committee.

Pricing will be reviewed annually by the St Ann Columbarium Committee with any changes in pricing approved by the Pastor of St Ann.

- **What are payment options for purchasing a niche?**

There are 3 payment options for purchasing a columbarium niche. In all cases, 100% of the niche cost must be completed prior to interment of anyone within a niche. The payments options are outlined below.

- Option 1: A single Payment of 100% of the cost at time of execution of purchase agreement.
- Option 2: 2 payments – 50% at execution of purchase agreement, and 50% within next 12 months upon completion of purchase agreement.
- Option 3: Monthly payments over a 18-month period paid as follows: 10% at time of execution of the purchase agreement, 5% monthly for 18 additional months following the execution of the purchase agreement. (for example, for a \$4,500 niche, 10% down would be \$450, and 5% payments would be \$225.00/month for 18 months total)
- Memorial Plaque must be purchased using Payment Option 1 – 100% at time of purchase.

- ***Will these prices ever change?***

Yes and no. The prices included in this document are current as of the date of this document noted in the footer at the bottom of each page. Price increases for post-construction are shown above. Future prices may be raised at any time without notice. However, once you have purchased a niche, there will be no further charges, even if the purchase price should rise in the future.

- ***What proof will I have that I purchased a niche?***

A contract will confirm the Right of Interment of cremains purchased with the payment of the appropriate fee for a specified niche in the St. Ann Columbarium. A copy of the executed agreement will be kept in the church files, and the purchaser will also receive a copy of the agreement. In addition, once the purchaser has confirmed its niche location, and the niche has been paid in full, a certificate of purchase signifying the actual niche purchased will be provided to the purchaser, with a copy maintained in the church files.

- ***I purchased a double niche for myself. If I later decide to add another person, can I do so?***

Yes, assuming the second person meets the qualifications previously described.

- ***I purchased a double niche for myself and my spouse/child. If circumstances change, and I later decide to change the person that I am to be interred with in my double niche, can I do so?***

Yes, assuming the “new” second person meets the qualifications previously described.

- ***May more than two people be interred in a niche?***

No. There is not sufficient space in a niche for more than two urns, with one exception. Under this sole exception, parents of a deceased infant may include an infant’s cremains (maximum of 2 infants) within a standard double niche with the parents. Under this exception, the purchaser (parents) must pay an additional fee as outlined above.

- ***May I supply my own urn?***

Yes. The price of the niche does NOT include the urn. All Purchasers are required to purchase their own urns, which shall meet the standards of worthiness set down by the U.S. Bishop’s Committee and will be appropriately sized to fit inside the niche. Urns are available through many other sources, including most likely the funeral director performing the cremation services. St Ann Church may decide to provide urns for purchase at a future date. Purchaser must confirm that the urns to be used will fit within the niche sized as noted above.

- ***What happens if I purchase a niche in the columbarium, then move away?***

Upon receipt of your request to sell the niche back to the church and a copy of the purchase contract for the niche, it is up to the discretion of the Columbarium Committee and the Pastor of St. Ann Church to decide if a repurchase is appropriate and accepted. If it is decided to repurchase, then the church would provide a refund of your original purchase price, less an administrative fee plus any incurred expenses, if any, for those who have purchased the Right of Interment but no longer plan to exercise this right. The administrative fee is currently set at \$250. However, the Columbarium Committee will decide each case individually based on the "Policy Statement of the Columbarium Committee." The administrative fee of \$250 may be adjusted periodically in order to account for any rise in costs over time.

- ***May I decorate the area near my niche with flowers?***

No. The columbarium site will be perpetually maintained in a manner designed to be beautiful, serene, holy and edifying under the direction of the Columbarium Committee. Additional floral arrangements, flags, statues, or other decorations may NOT be placed on or near a niche or any other location in the Memorial Garden and Columbarium.

- ***How are niches assigned?***

You may choose an available niche at the time of purchase from any section in the columbarium where niches have been installed and made available for interment by the Columbarium Committee. If you choose not to select a niche location, the Columbarium Committee will select it for you.

- ***I am interested in purchasing a niche. What is the next step?***

Once you have made the decision to purchase a niche, the next step is to contact the parish office at (919) 934-2084. The staff at the office will arrange for a member of the Columbarium Committee to contact you and provide assistance that you need including a copy of all documentation relating to the Columbarium and available methods of payment. Upon execution of the purchase agreement, and payment of the appropriate fee, you may choose a niche location. To reserve a niche, an executed purchase agreement, along with payment in accordance with one of the three payment options noted elsewhere is required. Full payment is required prior to interment. A contract for purchase of the Right of Interment will be provided to document the transaction.

- ***As a Catholic, may I be cremated?***

Yes; however, given the sacred dignity of the body, the Church recommends that the custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed to await the Resurrection. Cremation is now permitted, but it does not enjoy the same value as the burial of the body of the deceased. In May, 1963, the Vatican's Holy office (now the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith) lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics to

choose cremation. This permission was incorporated into the revised Code of Canon Law of 1963 as well as into the Order of Christian Funerals. It then became standard practice to celebrate the funeral liturgies with the body and then take the body to the crematorium. Most recently the bishops of the United States and the Holy See have authorized the celebration of a Catholic funeral liturgy with the cremated remains when the body is cremated before the funeral.

- ***Do I need to ask permission to be cremated?***

No.

- ***Can I scatter the ashes? May I keep the ashes on my mantel?***

No. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. Burial at sea of cremated remains differs from scattering. An appropriate and worthy container, heavy enough to be sent to its final resting place, may be dropped into the sea.

Similarly, it is not acceptable to divide the remains of a single person into multiple urns or storage locations.

- ***May anything be added to cremated remains such as cremated remains of other persons, pets, and other objects?***

No. The principle of respect for the cremated remains of a deceased Christian embraces the deeper belief in the individuality of each baptized person before God. Throughout history, the mingling of remains has never been an accepted practice, except in extraordinary circumstances.

- ***When should cremation take place?***

The Church strongly prefers that cremation take place after the full funeral liturgy with the body. The presence of the body most clearly brings to mind the life and death of the person and better expresses the values that the Church affirms in its rites. However, in some circumstances it may not be possible to have the body present. In those situations, a full funeral liturgy may be conducted with the cremated remains present.

- ***Who decides if I am cremated?***

In most cases you make the decision to be cremated. However, your survivors may decide to have you cremated, generally due to special family circumstancesbut rarely against your will.

- ***How do I make my wishes known?***

If you desire your body to be cremated you can make those wishes known in your will and in documents designed to help plan and prepare your funeral.

- ***Must I honor my parent's or spouse's wish for cremation of their body?***

Out of respect for loved ones, you will want to do all you can to carry out the wishes of the deceased concerning funeral services provided they are in keeping with Church practice. Yet, you must always keep in mind the therapeutic value to the family of celebrating the full funeral liturgy with the body present. This may significantly outweigh your reasons for cremation before the funeral liturgy.

- ***Is it necessary to embalm?***

When cremation follows the funeral liturgy, embalming is usually necessary. When cremation is to follow soon after death, embalming is not necessary. Each state has its own regulations in this matter, but generally the rule is that deceased human body that is not buried or cremated within 24 hours is to be embalmed or refrigerated. However, simple embalming and the use of a cremation casket need not involve excessive costs.

- ***Is it necessary to purchase a casket?***

No, it is not necessary to purchase a casket for cremation. The only thing required is a simple container in which the body can be transported and placed in the cremation chamber. If you choose to have the body present for the funeral liturgy, with cremation to follow, rental is an option. Many funeral directors offer regular caskets for rent, as well as the special cremation or shell caskets that you may purchase.

- ***What is the proper container for cremated remains?***

Appropriate, worthy containers, such as a classic urn, are proper for the cremated remains. At the present time, the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy has determined containers that are not acceptable. Although jewelry, dishes, statuary, and space capsules are examples of designer containers now being offered, they are unacceptable in Catholic funeral practices. It is also unacceptable to have cremated remains made into jewelry, dishes, and the like.

At St. Ann, Purchasers of a niche are able to select and purchase an urn of their own choosing from another source, as long as the urn is approved and is of a size that will fit within the niche provided. The cost of the urn is NOT included in the pricing for the niche. The St. Ann Memorial Garden and Columbarium and St. Ann Church are not responsible for any other costs such as funeral home charges, cremation costs, urns, etc.

- ***If I choose cremation, is it necessary to call a funeral home?***

Yes and no. In North Carolina, a registered funeral director always performs the embalming of the body (if necessary) and the cremation. However, you are not required to have a viewing of the body at that funeral home.

- ***Can a family member be present at the cremation?***

Family members may choose to be present at the initiation of the cremation process. Also, the family can choose to receive the cremated remains at the crematory or some other designated place, such as the church.

- ***How are cremated remains transported?***

Transportation of cremated remains is a matter of personal choice. Individuals personally carrying a deceased person's ashes will often have the added responsibility of packing and transporting the urn. Using the principle of respect for the body, you may wrap the container of cremated remains with the possibility of sending it as accompanying baggage or take it along as carry-on luggage. Ask the airline office or the state's Department of Public Health for specific information about your region of travel before preparing the cremated remains for transport by air. Where no legal regulations exist regarding transport of cremated remains, most cremationists ship cremated remains in a standard shipping container by U. S. Mail, UPS or other common carrier.

- ***Must cremated remains be buried/entombed?***

Yes. Respectful final disposition of cremated remains involves interment or entombment. Burial options include a family grave in a cemetery marked with a traditional memorial stone or an urn garden, a special section in a cemetery with small, pre-dug graves for urns. Another choice is to be interred in a columbarium.

- ***What Funeral rites are celebrated when a person is cremated?***

The Church strongly prefers that the cremation take place after the full Funeral liturgy with the body. However, when this is not possible, such as when the remains must be transported over a long distance, all the usual rites, which are celebrated with a body present, may also be celebrated in the presence of the cremated remains. In an appendix to the Order of Christian Funerals, the United States bishops have included prayers to be used when the cremated remains of a loved one are present in church.

The following rituals may be celebrated:

- Prayers After Death
- Gathering in the Presence of the Body

- Vigil for the Deceased
- Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass
- Rite of Committal

- **Should I schedule a Funeral Mass before or after cremation?**

The Church strongly prefers cremations to take place after the Funeral Mass. However, if it is not possible for the body to be present at the Funeral Mass, an indult has been granted by the Holy See which provides for the celebration of the Mass or Funeral liturgy with the cremated remains in church.

- ***Do I need permission to have cremated remains in church for the Funeral liturgy?***

The indult granting the diocesan bishops of the United States authority to permit a Funeral liturgy in the presence of cremated remains (in place of the body) requires two things. First, the diocesan bishop must authorize this practice for his diocese. The bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh has already authorized it. Second, each individual case requires approval of the Pastor of St. Ann.

- ***What happens at the Funeral Mass with cremated remains?***

A journey, which began at baptism, comes to conclusion as we enter into eternal life. Significant attention should be given to the primary symbols of the Catholic Funeral liturgy, as stated in the Order of Christian Funerals and its commentaries. The paschal candle and sprinkling with holy water are primary symbols of baptism and are used during the Funeral Mass. However, the pall is not used. Photos and other mementos may be used at the vigil, but are not appropriate for the Mass. During the Funeral Mass, the cremated remains should be treated with the same dignity and respect as the body. They are to be sealed in a worthy vessel. They are carried in procession and placed on a table adjacent to the Easter candle.

- ***How much time elapses from the Funeral Mass until the remains are interred in the columbarium?***

If the body is present at the Funeral Mass, the funeral director will advise you on the time necessary to cremate the body. Usually, it is a day or two. The interment then follows. If the cremated remains are present at the Funeral Mass, typically interment immediately follows the Mass. However, engraving of the name and dates on the niche face plate must be completed after niche has been paid in full, and after death certificate has been supplied to the church. There is a typical 2 week period from submission of the face plate for engraving prior to when face plate will be ready to install. As such, if the family of the deceased wishes to have the niche faceplate at time of committal, then timing of funeral must be scheduled to allow for this engraving to occur.

- ***Is a ritual conducted when the remains are interred in the columbarium?***

Yes. The Rite of Committal is very similar to the service conducted at a grave site in a cemetery.

- ***What will occur for cremated remains that exist when death occurs prior to availability of columbarium niche?***

During the initial development of the Columbarium, it is anticipated there may be a short period of time where someone purchased a niche, and death occurs prior to the availability of the initial niches being constructed. In this case, the cremated remains will be stored in an approved Urn. The Urn and cremated remains will then be stored at an approved secure location that is agreed to by the Pastor and the family while the niche is being constructed. The Urn and cremated remains would then be transferred to the purchased niche as part of a ceremony where all existing Urns and remains would be transferred to purchased niches at the initial opening of the St Ann Columbarium.

- ***Can I get a key to the niche for access?***

No. Only authorized personnel of St Ann Church will be allowed access to open and close niches. Niches will only be opened to allow interment of cremains. Keys or access to the niches will not be provided to Purchasers or family members.