

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church

Columbarium

Frequently Asked Questions

Can Catholics be cremated? Yes, the bodies of Catholics may be cremated. Cremation is permitted if the body is not cremated as a statement against Christian belief in the resurrection of the dead. Families do not need to ask permission of the Church for a loved one to be cremated.

May the cremated remains be mixed with the remains of other individuals, pets, or other objects? No, this practice has never been acceptable.

Where are the cremated remains to be placed? The cremated remains must be buried in a grave or placed in a niche in a mausoleum known as a Columbarium. They are never to be kept in the possession of the family, or scattered, since these practices are not the reverent disposition of the body the Church requires.

What is a Columbarium? Simply put, a Columbarium is an edifice that houses cremated remains. The name Columbarium is derived from the Latin Columba or “dovecote”, the dove being the symbol of God’s Spirit and of peace. For many people raised in the Catholic Church, a Columbarium may be a new concept though it has its roots in the early church. The Columbarium at Our Lady of the Lake (OLL) will offer people the option of burial on OLL property.

Where is the OLL Columbarium located? The Columbarium is located behind the southwest corner of the Church.

To whom is the OLL Columbarium available? The Columbarium shall be used only for the cremated human remains of current and former members of OLL parish, friends of OLL, or any family member of the current OLL member. The Pastor of

Our Lady of the Lake shall have the authority to make exceptions. No placement of cremated remains in the Columbarium should be permitted without an appropriate service determined by the Pastor.

Whom do I contact to make inquiries? Inquiries regarding the purchase of placement rights should be addressed to the OLL office at 205-525-5161. For purposes of clear understanding, an agreement does not constitute a sale of property, but is merely the provision of a burial space. All ownership of land, Columbarium and gardens remain with Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church.

How and when can I reserve a niche? Purchase of placement rights in a Columbarium niche can be made by an individual before death, or by the family of the deceased following death. An appointment must be made with the OLL office to complete and sign the appropriate documents. It is recommended that copies of these documents be provided to family members at the time of the initial purchase and signing of the contract with Our Lady of the Lake Parish.

What are the benefits of reserving a niche in advance? Prearranging your funeral and related expenses, such as purchasing placement rights in a niche in the OLL Columbarium, is the best way of ensuring that your wishes are honored. Just as one prepares a will to ensure that Property is distributed properly, one should prepare instructions to ensure that one's wishes regarding final disposition are followed. In the planning process you will have a chance to research your options and make a carefully thought-out decision.

By planning and contracting with the crematorium, funeral home and OLL in advance, you accomplish several major goals:

- Your survivors will be certain of your wishes since your instructions will be in written form.
- Your survivors will be more likely to follow your wishes unless extenuating circumstances prevent them.
- When you have set money aside to pay for final services, your family will not be burdened by the expense, nor will they be tempted to alter your plans for financial reasons.

What do I get when I reserve a niche at the OLL Columbarium? A niche reservation allows the right to place the cremated remains of two human bodies.

This applies to all niches. Purchasing placement rights in a niche in the Columbarium includes the niche only. The urn and faceplate engraving are not included.

Only urns approved from OLL may be used in the Columbarium. The urn may be sent with the body to the crematory for emplacement of the cremated remains. Once the cremated remains are enclosed in the urn, a permanent cap is affixed. After the urn is placed in the individual's reserved niche, the faceplate is reattached and installed after engraving. Engraving is to be managed by the OLL Board and Pastor. Engraving costs are borne by the signer.

How does the actual placement of the cremated remains in the Columbarium work? No placement of cremated remains in the Columbarium shall be permitted without an appropriate service. The service will be planned by the Pastor in consultation with the deceased's family. Only the Pastor or someone designated by the Pastor may conduct the service. Funeral or memorial services may be held at OLL or at the Columbarium.

May the cremated remains be present for a Funeral Mass? The cremated remains should be present for the funeral Mass. If no remains are present, the Funeral Mass prescribed in the ritual is not celebrated. A memorial Mass in this instance is more appropriate

What about floral arrangements and other mementos in the Columbarium? Flowers and other mementos will be allowed in the Columbarium only at the time of placement of the urn. No other adornments will be allowed.

Are there facilities at OLL available for a reception following the placement service? Yes, arrangements can be made through the OLL office.

Do I need to ask permission to be cremated? No, but it is a good idea to discuss your reasons with your Pastor, Deacon, or other parish minister. Don't forget to address your wish to be cremated with your family. Put your directive in the form of a legal document such as a will, living trust or other planning document with your funeral director.

May I scatter the ashes? No. "The practice of scattering cremated remains on the lake, 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.” (Order of Christian Funerals, Appendix II)

What happens at the Funeral Mass with cremated remains? 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 should be used during the funeral Mass. During the 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 may be carried in procession and or/placed on a table where the coffin normally would be with the Easter candle nearby.

The body is always laid to rest with solemnity and dignity. So too, the Order of Christian Funerals provides for the interment of cremated remains. (Order of Christian Funerals, #428)

Have other churches constructed Columbaria? Yes. St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Cathedral of St. Paul, Our Lady of Sorrows and Prince of Peace Catholic Church have a Columbarium.

I have a burial plot at a cemetery but am interested in a Columbarium niche.

What alternative do I have? You can advertise your cemetery plot for sale in the classified ads of the newspaper, online, or you can donate your cemetery plot to the Birmingham Catholic Diocese.

What about care and permanency? Our church staff designated with that responsibility will perpetually manage the Columbarium. At present, a special Columbarium Board will oversee the initial sale and they will report to the OLL Parish Council.

In the event of destruction of the Columbarium, destruction of the Church or extreme damage to the church grounds resulting from an accident, natural disaster, or act of God, the Church shall cause the re-inurnment of the ashes with a relocated facility or the precinct of another Christian Church. If such is not available, the Board shall cause the ashes to be disposed of in accordance with the Catholic doctrine and legal manner.

Who will administer the activity of the Columbarium? A Columbarium Board will be formed soon. This Board will have representation on the Parish Council and report directly to the OLL Pastor.

How will niches be offered? Who can be inurned here? Beginning the weekend of January 15th and 16th, the niches will be offered to the congregation.

Only human remains may be inurned at the OLL Columbarium. Our four-legged friends will need another final resting place.

The burial service will be as prescribed by the Pastor of OLL in consultation with the family, and in accordance with the regulations of the Diocese of Birmingham.

How are arrangements for cremation and inurnment made? Arrangements for cremation can be made through a funeral home. The funeral home will assist the bereaved with the funeral and burial arrangements and services and will assist in coordinating plans with the Church. Once an inurnment is to be arranged, call the parish office, and confirm the inscription on the front panel of the niche and to arrange a Mass or Memorial service if you so desire. The niche price does not include cremation, the urn, engraving and related funeral expenses.

Will there be a funeral/committal service? Yes, traditional services may continue as usual in the Church, and may include the committal service at the Columbarium.

May a particular niche be chosen? Yes, niches will be offered on a “first come, first served” basis after receipt of full payment and execution of all required documents.

Who is paying for the Columbarium? The OLL Columbarium is funded by the sale of the niches and the OLL building fund.

How does the cost of cremation and inurnment compare with the cost of traditional burial? The cost of inurnment in a Columbarium is typically much less expensive than traditional burial, depending on the procedures and services selected.

What if I purchase a niche and decide I not longer want it? Niche sales may be cancelled by written notification. The sales price paid (without interest) will be refunded only after the niche is resold.