

32 Sunday OT C 2016
November 5-6
Frazee/Callaway

Homily

On the 15 of August, 2016, the Holy See recently offered an instruction on Cremation. With November being the month to pray for the departed faithful and in light of today's scriptures on the resurrection, it seems a good time to review offer some highlights from the instruction.

Let's start with the name of the document: *Ad resurgendum cum Christo*, To Rise with Christ! God has made us with bodies and souls—both of which have the character of immortality. The souls will endure after the death of the body AND our bodies, after resting in the grave, will rise in the resurrection of the just. We profess this in our creed every Sunday, "...and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead..."

The instruction begins by reminding us that Jesus Christ rose from the dead—his resurrection is the astounding testimony to his divinity. It also reveals our destiny: new life in resurrected bodies!

In their document on cremation, the United States Bishops remind us of this very point: "...our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, destined for future glory at the resurrection of the dead..."

God, who is omnipotent, can raise a body from death to new life no matter what the condition of the body. Bodies buried in a traditional manor or bodies cremated can and will be raised to new life.

With this bit of theological and faith background, let me get to some specific points in the instruction.

1. The Church insistently recommends that the bodies of the deceased be buried in cemeteries...by burying the bodies of the faithful, the Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body, and intends to show the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person whose body forms part of their identity.

If you are contemplating cremation for your body, please take this to prayer. The Church does not forbid cremation, but she insistently recommends the burial of the body.

2. When cremation is chosen, the ashes of the faithful must be laid to rest in a cemetery. The instruction continues, "...from the earliest times, Christians have desired that the faithful departed become the objects of the Community's prayers and remembrances. Their tombs have become places of prayer, remembrance and reflection...the reservation of the ashes of the

departed in a cemetery ensure that they are not excluded from the prayers and remembrances of their family or the Christian community...”

- a. keeping ashes of the departed in your home is not permitted.
- b. The ashes may not be divided among various family members
- c. The ashes may not be scattered in the air, on land, at sea or in some other way
- d. The ashes may not be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewelry or other objects

To summarize:

The church has a strong preference for the burial of the body. She believes that the burial of the body is the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body.

Cremation is not prohibited.

Ashes are to remain wholly together and must be buried in a cemetery—so that the whole Christian Community, including future generations, can exercise their duty to pray for and remember the dead.

If you have the ashes of a loved one at home, arrange for their burial as soon as possible. If you have been lax in praying for the dead, take on this practice starting today. Visit cemeteries periodically and pray for those who are at rest, awaiting the resurrection. If you never met them on earth, know that you will meet them in heaven. Your prayers now are the beginning of an eternal friendship. Pray for yourselves, that you may be in the state of grace at the hour of your death.