

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Columbarium Project Update and Questionnaire

Dear Parishioners:

Several parishioners have inquired about the establishment of a Columbarium Garden on our parish grounds. A committee was established several months ago to evaluate feasibility, needs cost, style and most importantly estimated construction cost and long term/perpetual care/maintenance of the facility. The research has taken them to several sites and interviews with existing site managers and manufactures

BUT NOW WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU.

If you are holding a loved one's cremains in **hopes** you will be able to place them on Holy ground at our parish niche **or would like to purchase for the future**, then **Your response** is the most important piece of information we need to move forward.

Your feedback will provide the needed answer to 2 questions.

1) What is the current need **or** **2) What is the need likely to be in the future.**

The Columbarium Garden, if built, will provide niches that will hold 2 urns. We believe present estimated construction costs will hopefully provide an initial purchase price no greater than \$5,000 per niche, including **opening and engraving for the 2 urns**.

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM TO THE PARISH OFFICE
ONLY IF YES (circle) TO ONE OF THE QUESTIONS:**

1. Yes, I am holding a love ones' cremains. If a Columbarium Garden is constructed,
I am interested in purchasing a niche.

2. Yes, Although I am not holding a love ones' cremains, if the Columbarium Garden
is constructed, I **am** interested in purchasing a niche.


Name: _____ E- mail: _____

Phone: _____

ADDRESS: _____

We will let you know our decision on proceeding as soon as we hear back from you and others, who like yourself, would like to bring closure for your family or plan for the future.

Thank you,



Fr. John O'Connor, O.F.M. (Pastor)

The history and Theology of Cremation is explained on the back side of this paper

History and Theology of Cremation

The following is a brief history and theology of cremation taken from an introduction to the concept of Columbaria given by Father Scott of St. Thomas More parish in Chapel Hill, NC.

“Since the early days of the Church, burial of the dead on the parish grounds near the church has been desirable as it is symbolic of the cycle of life within the church. As pagans practiced cremation, believing that all life for that person had ceased, the early church fathers forbade cremation as a means of affirming our belief in the resurrection of the body.

On May 8, 1963, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics to choose the extraordinary choice for cremation while still recommending the practice of burying the bodies of the faithful.

Cremated remains were allowed into the church for the funeral Mass beginning in 1998, however, the *Church prefers that the Funeral Mass or the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass be celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased prior to its cremation.*

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. As stated above, the extraordinary choice of cremation is now permitted but it does not enjoy the same value as the burial of the body of the deceased.

The St. Thomas More columbarium is located between the existing church and the... Parish Center. A location near the church for the deceased has been a powerful symbol of our faith since the early church. It is a statement of our ultimate goal to live this life in Christ so that one day, through death, we can share in eternal life with God.”

The St. Francis Raleigh Columbarium is also located between the Church and the parking lot so that parishioners may walk through the Memorial Garden to the Church foyer and into the Church. The image here is twofold, going from death into life of resurrection as well as a powerful symbol of the communion of saints, that is, that we are all, living and deceased, one in the Lord.

Please complete the questionnaire on the reverse side of this paper.