



DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

Office of Worship

Mailing Address:
Post Office Box 40200
St. Petersburg, FL 33743-0200
www.dosp.org/worship
727-344-1611

To: Priests, Deacons, and Parish Liturgy Coordinators
From: The Office of Worship
Date: August 8, 2024
Subject: Questions Regarding the Preservation of Cremated Remains

We are republishing the following information due to continued questions on this matter.

In early December, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith answered two *dubia* (questions) from the Archbishop of Bologna regarding the preservation of cremated remains. The DDF was asked 1) *“if it would be possible to prepare a defined and permanent sacred place for the commingled accumulation and preservation of the ashes of the baptized,”* with the basic details of each person indicated and 2) if a family may *“be allowed to keep a portion of their family member’s ashes in a place that is significant for the history of the deceased.”*

Ashes must be kept in a sacred place, such as a cemetery, so that they will be remembered in the prayers of the Christian community, their remains will be shown proper respect, and any unfitting or superstitious practices will be prevented.

Bearing this in mind, the DDF answered:

- 1) Yes, ***“a defined, permanent, and sacred place can be set aside for the commingled accumulation and preservation of the ashes of deceased baptized persons, indicating the identity of each person so as not to lose the memory of their names.”***
- 2) Yes, ***“the ecclesiastical authority, in compliance with current civil norms, may consider and evaluate a request by a family to preserve in an appropriate way a minimal part of the ashes of their relative in a place of significance for the history of the deceased person, provided that every type of pantheistic, naturalistic, or nihilistic misunderstanding is ruled out and also provided that the ashes of the deceased are kept in a sacred place.”***

It is important to highlight the continued emphasis on cremated remains being preserved in a sacred space. These affirmative answers do not allow families to divide their loved one’s ashes among family members or keep a portion at home. While there may be the case of a family receiving permission to divide a loved one’s ashes, for instance in the case of someone who spent a significant portion of their life up north in the summer and down here in the winter, the remains must be laid to rest in a cemetery.

As always, if our office can be of assistance in this or any other matter related to Divine Worship, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Father Victor Amorose
Director of the Office of Worship

Renee Lemire
Associate Director of the Office of Worship