

# **The Columbarium at Prince of Peace Catholic Church**

## **“Completing the Circle of Life”**

### **Frequently Asked Questions – Revised November 2015**

*The Columbarium at Prince of Peace is a place that reminds us of all the sacraments we celebrate as Christians. The burial liturgy and inurnment of the individual are the culmination of a person's earthly life in our shared community in Christ.*

#### ***What is a Columbarium?***

A Columbarium is a group of niches, typically within a wall of brick, stone, granite, marble or other earth materials, which contains the cremated remains of the departed. Our Columbarium currently consists of 216 niches and can expand into many more niches in the future. Each niche is approximately 8" x 8" x 12" and can accommodate up to two urns or one double urn.

#### ***Can Catholics be cremated?***

Yes. In May 1963, the Vatican's Holy Office (now the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith) lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics to choose cremation. This permission was incorporated into the revised Code of Canon Law of 1983 (Canon # 1176), 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 Holy See have authorized the celebration of a Catholic funeral liturgy with the cremated remains when the body is cremated before the funeral.

The Church encourages burial of the ashes in a final resting place. In the Prince of Peace parish survey conducted in 2005 67% (two-thirds) of the respondents indicated that cremation was a definite part of their final personal plans and another 17% were considering cremation.

*A copy of the results of the survey is located at the end of this document.*

#### ***Why have a Columbarium?***

The Church has traditionally been the natural repository and final resting place of deceased members of the Christian community. Burial within the church itself or in the adjacent churchyard was once common practice. The amount of land necessary for a burial ground is no longer available to most churches and a myriad of laws and regulations make it extremely difficult to establish a burial site. In recent years, cremation with inurnment of the ashes, rather than burial, has become more common. In this way, the remains of the deceased can stay on at the church that played such an important part in their lives.

In some cases, many people today are turning to cremation as an economical, dignified way to address the rising cost of funerals. As more and more people turn to cremation, the cost of traditional funerals will continue to rise. By creating a Columbarium at Prince of Peace, we are addressing the needs of those who choose cremation and would still prefer to be located on the grounds of the parish.

***What are the benefits to our congregation?***

A niche in a Columbarium is modestly priced, aesthetically pleasing, and ecologically sound. The ambiance of the Columbarium creates a comfortable meeting place for families and friends to gather in love and remembrance, a consoling link between life and death. Our theme at Prince of Peace is “Completing the Circle of Life”. By incorporating the Columbarium in the church community, we are truly bringing this message to the forefront of the church.

***Does the parish web site have any information about the Prince of Peace Columbarium?***

Yes! The website will be a living document that will be updated to address questions about the Columbarium, its purpose, how to acquire a niche and many other bits of information about the Columbarium. Certificates of Inurnment (applications to buy a niche) may be downloaded from a PDF file format. Other documents such as the bylaws and FAQ’s may be downloaded as well.

***What other resources are available on the Prince of Peace web site?***

Part of the Columbarium Committee’s planning included a section of the website dedicated to the PreCare and AfterCare needs surrounding your final planning. Items such as hospices, insurance and estate planning, dealing with grief and other topics will be referenced in this section of the website.

The following is a list of some supportive community resources that are available to those experiencing serious illness and death issues. More detailed contact information will be offered on the POP website in the future. This list is not meant to be exhaustive:

- ◆ Veteran’s Affairs benefits
- ◆ Social Security benefits
- ◆ Funeral planning information
- ◆ Financial Planning
- ◆ Local Elder Law and Estate Planning Attorneys
- ◆ Legal Resources such as power of attorney and living wills information
- ◆ Caregiver support groups and literature
- ◆ Hospice /Palliative Care information
- ◆ Grief and Bereavement support groups, counseling and literature
- ◆ Disease specific support groups and organizations
- ◆ Local Sitter and Homemaker resources
- ◆ Lifeline Personal Emergency Response Systems
- ◆ Senior Housing Resources including skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities and retirement communities
- ◆ Office of Senior Citizen Services/Local Area Agency on Aging
- ◆ United Way of Central Alabama’s Information and Referral program
- ◆ Affidavit Concerning Disposition of My Body

***Will the parish be offering other services?***

As they have done in the past, the parish staff will assist you in planning a funeral in coordination with a funeral home. The Columbarium Board has the responsibility of providing guidance for placement of a person’s remains during your time of need. As well, there will be presentations offered from time to time regarding issues such as estate planning, hospice care, nursing homes and other topics of interest to the parishioners of Prince of Peace.

***How will the niches be marked?***

Each niche will provide the person's legal name and dates of birth and death. These will be inscribed in a uniform size and font on the face of the granite door covering the niche, at the time of inurnment. The Church office will order the inscription prior to the inurnment.

***How will the niches be offered? Who can be inurned here?***

The niches will be offered to the congregation via the church bulletin, the Prince of Peace website ([www.popcatholic.org](http://www.popcatholic.org)) and in the church office. The Columbarium is reserved for the use of members of the congregation and their families as defined in the Church Rules and Regulations.

Sorry, but only human remains may be inurned at the Prince of Peace Columbarium. Our four legged friends will need another final resting place.

The burial service will be as prescribed by the Pastor of Prince of Peace, in consultation with the family, and in accordance to 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 or directly with a Crematorium. The funeral home will assist the bereaved with the funeral and burial arrangements and services and will assist in coordinating plans with the Church. If you decide to work directly with a Crematorium and not a funeral home, your family will be responsible for all coordination activities. Once an inurnment is to be arranged, call the parish office and confirm the inscription on the front panel of the niche cover and to arrange a memorial service if you so desire.

In order to inscribe the niche door, the panel will be removed and sent out for laser engraving. A temporary, blank panel will be used to cover your niche until the inscription is complete.

***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. The cost will not vary according to location.

***Who is paying for the Columbarium?***

The Prince of Peace Columbarium is funded solely by the sale of the niches. No money is being drawn from Prince of Peace church funds for neither this project nor its perpetual care.

### ***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 expansive than traditional burial.

Average funerals, as of this writing, range from \$12,000 to \$20,000 or more dollars. This does not include the cost of the plot and if a plot is available, a cost up to \$2000 to open and close that plot may be charged. Some funeral services are considerably more expensive. Funeral services are usually sold on an a la carte basis and many be less expensive away from large cities. The current cost of a PoP niche and cremation are as follow:

#### **Double occupancy niche**

Niche cost	\$2500.00 (includes 2 urns)
Cremation Cost	\$ 950.00 (for one, includes death certificate)

#### **Cost for a single occupant niche**

Niche cost	\$2500.00 (includes 1 urn)
Cremation Cost	\$ 950.00 (for one, includes death certificate)

Additional cost may be incurred if the family chooses a traditional viewing at a funeral home or at PoP. Embalming would be required first as well as other costs such as facility fees, body preparation, clothing and a rental casket for the service.

### ***How much will each niche cost?***

432 niches are currently constructed for the Prince of Peace Columbarium. These niches will be offered at \$2500.00 and that cost includes two complimentary urns provided by the Prince of Peace Parish. This will cover the cost of the niche, the name and relevant dates engraved on the niche cover, the opening and closing of the niche and perpetual care. No future assessments will be made.

Future expansion of the Columbarium at Prince of Peace may require a higher price due to the inflationary cost of construction.

### ***What happens once all of the niches are sold out?***

We are designing the Columbarium in such a way that it can be expanded very easily. Our first phase included a memorial wall and three sections of niches. As demand arises, we will plan for expansion of the Columbarium to form a complete circle representing the Circle of Life.

### ***May I have a name and/or dates engraved or etched on the urn?***

Yes. At a cost to the purchaser, the Church-provided urn may be etched with whatever the purchaser chooses. Etching may be done by any vendor the purchaser chooses. Several vendors, including retail stores like "Things Remembered", offer engraving. The company the Church employs to etch the granite niche cover has quoted a price of \$80 to etch the name and dates on a urn. It is the purchaser's responsibility to obtain the urn from the Church, take it to be engraved and pay for the engraving before the Inurnment is scheduled. The Visitation and Funeral Mass can occur before the Inurnment, but once the lid is placed on the urn, and the urn is placed in the niche, it cannot be removed without additional cost to the purchaser. After the urn is engraved or etched, the Church will not be responsible for storage.

### ***What is a Memorial Wall?***

A Memorial Wall is a place to have the name of one of your deceased loved ones inscribed on a black granite wall, which will be a focal point of the internal part of the Columbarium. We can incorporate up to 138 names of those family members or friends who may be interred elsewhere. The cost of the 4" x 8" section of the wall is \$495. When we sell out the Memorial Wall, we will consider incorporating plans for another wall in future expansion.

### ***Will there be a niche or two set aside for unexpected inurnments?***

There are no plans to set aside niches for future sale in the event of a sudden, tragic loss of a loved one. Much like planning for a traditional funeral and internment into the ground, we encourage everyone to plan ahead for the inevitable. Our long term plan is to accommodate up to 1080 niches. If necessary, in the future, an outer ring may be built around the "Circle of Life" to accommodate the needs of this growing parish.

### ***May a purchaser sell or transfer a niche?***

Yes, provided that the niche has not been occupied and the front panel inscribed. No transfer of reservation of a columbarium niche may be made to another person, estate or corporation. However, the Church may repurchase a niche for just cause as determined by the Board. The repurchase price will be the original price less any cost of replacing an engraved niche door and a processing fee of \$100.00. Once an inurnment is complete, no refund will be made.

### ***What about care and permanency?***

The Columbarium will be perpetually managed by our church's Columbarium Board designated with that responsibility. A Columbarium Board was formed before the Columbarium was built and has representation on the Parish Council. It reports directly to the Prince of Peace Pastor. At present, the Columbarium Board oversees the niche sales, the church staff is the custodian of the Columbarium's finances and information is periodically reported to the Prince of Peace Parish Council.

In the event that Prince of Peace or The Columbarium shall be relocated or ceases to operate or in the event of destruction of The Columbarium, the Church or extreme damage to the church grounds resulting from an act of God, the Church shall cause the re-inurnment of the ashes with the re-located 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 Catholic doctrine and legal manner.

### ***How do I reserve space?***

Fill out the "Application for Certificate of Right of Inurnment" form and attach your check for the appropriate amount. Make the check payable to Prince of Peace Catholic Church. The form is available on the Prince of Peace website as a PDF file ([www.popcatholic.org](http://www.popcatholic.org)) or through the parish office.

Please note on the check that it is for the "POP Columbarium Niche # (tbd)".

### ***Where can I buy an urn and how much do they cost?***

Urns, other than the urns provided by PoP, may be purchased on line through the Internet or at your local funeral home. There are several companies that offer a wide selection of urns from which to choose. The cost of an urn from a traditional funeral home may be considerably higher. A listing of these sites and their links may be found on the Prince of Peace web site ([www.popcatholic.org](http://www.popcatholic.org)). Discounts for urn purchases are being offered through a parishioner owned business known as "Urns and Things".

**Keep in mind, there are space limitations inside the niches.** The size of an individual urn provided by PoP is 7" wide x 5 5/8" deep by 6 3/4" high. The urns provided by PoP will fit into all niches of our Columbarium and allow 2 urns per niche.

**If you plan to purchase or provide an urn (not use a PoP urn),** the maximum exterior and interior measurements must be known and verified before the inurnment date is finalized.

**There are 2 PoP Columbarium niche sections:** in the older sections (F, H, I) niches have a total height of 7", width of 6 ¾" and depth of 11 ¼"; in the newer sections (D, E, J), niches have a total height of 5 5/8", width of 6 ¾" and depth of 13.5". Provided urns must be no larger than these dimensions and account for one (1) or two (2) urns being placed into the obtained niche.

**If a non-POP urn is to be use and after it has been verified for exterior size (will fit inside the purchased niche), it is requested that this urn be provided to the crematorium so that the cremains will fully be placed into the urn.** Urns with thick sides (*small interior dimensions*) may not accommodate all the cremains when the cremains are initially processed.

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

No. However, you may want to discuss your reasons with your pastor, deacon or other parish minister.

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

The Church prefers that cremation take place after the full funeral liturgy with the body. However, in the American culture, cremation often takes place immediately or soon after death.

"Sometimes, however, it is not possible for the body to be present for the Funeral Mass. When extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of a body the only feasible choice, pastoral sensitivity must be exercised by all who minister to the family of the deceased." Order of Christian Funerals, Appendix II)

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

When cremation follows the funeral liturgy, embalming is usually necessary. When cremation follows soon after death, embalming is not necessary. Each state has its own regulations in this matter, but generally the rule is that a deceased human body that is not buried or cremated within 24 to 48 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 for cremation?***

No. 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 Mass, with cremation to follow, rental is an option. Many funeral directors offer regular caskets for rent, as well as the special cremation or shell casket that you may purchase.

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

It 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. 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. Some states regulate the transport of cremated remains. Ask the airline office or your state's Department of Public Health for specific instructions before preparing the cremated remains for transport by air. Where no legal regulations exist regarding transport of cremated remains, they can ONLY be sent in a standard shipping container by U.S. Mail. UPS, Fed Ex or other common carriers no longer transport cremains.

***May I scatter the ashes?***

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." (Order of Christian Funerals, Appendix II)

***May I bury the ashes at sea?***

Yes. 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 in to the sea. The burial of cremated remains at sea in this manner seems to be an appropriate alternative to the long-standing and revered custom of a traditional burial at sea. Please consult your local government for environmental regulations. (See Order of Christian Funerals, #405.4)

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

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.

***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 circumstances, but rarely against your will.

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

If you desire that your body be cremated you can make those wishes known in documents designed to help plan and prepare your funeral such as a pre-need funeral arrangement or a notarized affidavit expressing your wishes and designating the individual or individuals who are authorized to control the disposition of your remains.

***Do I have to honor my parent's or spouse's wish to cremate them?***

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.

***What funeral rites are celebrated when a person is cremated?***

All the usual rites that are celebrated with a body present may also be celebrated in the presence of cremated remains. The United States' bishops have written new prayers and have printed them as an appendix to the Order of Christian Funerals. During the liturgies, the cremated remains are treated with the same dignity and respect as the body.

The following rituals may be celebrated:

- Prayers after Death. This ritual is used immediately after death. The presence of the minister, the readings, and the prayers can be of great comfort to the family. (Order for Christian Funerals, #101-108)
- Gathering in the Presence of the Body. This ritual can also be of great comfort to family members and friends. It allows for a time of simple prayer and shared silence. (Order of Christian Funerals #109-118)
- Vigil for the Deceased. If cremation has already taken place, friends and family may still gather to pray. While it has been a tradition to pray the rosary in some regions, the Vigil for the Deceased in a Liturgy of the Word service, which includes prayer for the deceased and recognition of his/her Christian life. (Order of Christian Funerals #54-97)

***What length of time is there between death, cremation and the funeral Mass?***

The answer to this question depends on various factors, just as in the case of funerals with the body. The place of death, the location of the crematory, scheduling a time for cremation, the schedule at the parish church, and other circumstances impact the timing. Once all arrangements have been made, you should generally allow at least one day between death and the celebration of the funeral liturgy.

*Note: If the Church-provided urn is being engraved, this item MUST be completed before the Inurnment date is finalized. Once the urn lid is placed on the urn, it cannot be removed. Once the urn is placed in the niche, it cannot be removed without additional cost to the purchaser. Also, once the urn is taken by the purchaser for any reason, the Church is no longer responsible for the urn. The Church does not store/restore urns after the purchaser has taken position of the urn.*

***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. A small pall may be placed over the urn or the urn could be placed in an “urn box” provided by the parish and covered with a pall. Photos and other mementos may be used at the vigil, but are not appropriate for the Mass.

Funeral arrangements must be reviewed and finalized with the parish priest who will officiate at 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).



### ***Canon Law on Cremations***

Can. 117 S 1 Christ's faithful who have died are to be given a Church funeral according to the norms of law.

S2 Church funerals are to be celebrated according to the norms of the liturgical books. In these funeral rites the Church prays for the spiritual support of the dead, it honors their bodies, and at the same time it brings to the living the comfort of hope.

S3 The Church earnestly recommends that the pious customs of burial be retained; but it does not forbid cremation, unless this is chosen for reasons that are contrary to Christian teaching.

A common practice is the entombment of the cremated remains in a "columbarium". It is an arrangement of niches, either in a mausoleum, a room or wall into which an urn or other worthy vessel is placed for permanent memorial.

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## Prince of Peace 2005 Columbarium Survey Results

The results of the recent Columbarium Survey are in and the Pastoral Council would like to thank our parishioners for their interest and guidance in developing a Columbarium for Prince of Peace. Based upon the survey results below, about 84% of the respondents would consider reserving a Columbarium niche if available at Prince of Peace. Based upon your positive feedback regarding a Columbarium for our parish, the Pastoral Council has made the decision to move forward with this project.

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1.) Are you considering cremation as part of your personal plans?

Yes	102	67%
Maybe	26	17%
No	24	16%
	152	100%

2.) If a Columbarium were available at POP, would you consider reserving a niche for your final resting place?

Yes	103	68%
Maybe	25	16%
No	24	16%
	152	100%

3.) Would other members of your family desire to reserve a space in the POP Columbarium?

Yes	55	36%
Maybe	67	44%
No	30	20%
	152	100%

4.) Would the convenience of arranging all of your funeral needs through POP be helpful to you?

Yes	128	84%
Maybe	18	12%
No	5	3%
	151	100%

5.) Should the POP Columbarium be available to anyone or just to church members and their family?

Anyone	52	34%
Unsure	8	5%
Church/Family members only	92	61%
	152	100%

6.) Would you be willing to serve on a committee for developing, managing and promoting the Columbarium for Prince of Peace?

Yes	40	26%
Maybe	7	5%
No	100	66%
	147	100%