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Dear Parishioner

Some time ago, the Vatican enquired about the treatment of the remains of those who have been cremated. The concern was that, in many parts of the world, these remains are not being treated with appropriate respect.

Why our bodies are sacred

As we know, the human body is sacred. For the Christian, this is even more true for several reasons..

First, through Baptism, Christ, the Son of God, has made a home within us, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit [John 14:17, 23]. And as St Paul challenged the Corinthian Christians whose parish was cursed with divisive gossip and failing in the mutual love Jesus taught, "Do you recognize yourselves as people in whom Jesus Christ is present?" [2 Corinthians 13:5].

Second, with the Holy Spirit dwelling within, our bodies are also Temples of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus which Jesus shares with us [1 Corinthians 6:19]. He shares with us too his divine nature to empower us to live as he taught [2 Timothy 1:3]. Our bodies are part of the Body of Christ – the people in whom the Spirit dwells and seeks to draw together and well as move to fulfil the Christian mission to the world. [1 Corinthians 6:15].

The remains of our bodies, therefore, cannot simply be discarded after we die. They are sacred because God has dwelt within them.

Placed in Sacred Ground

Traditionally, for these reasons, Christian burial has been in consecrated ground. In many places, this has been in church grounds, and in Australia, areas of cemeteries have been blessed.

The Vatican suggested that the same practice is appropriate for cremated remains. Cremation does not make the remains of loved ones less sacred.

Cathedral Columbarium

Over the past few years there has been discussion in the parish about establishing a columbarium for the remains of cremated Catholics. It has now been decided to establish a columbarium in the wall opposite the Cathedral sanctuary.

The cost of internment will be more or less the same as the cost at the Bunbury cemetery. The new columbarium will be established once 20 places have been booked by those who wish for their cremated remains or for their loved ones to be interred in consecrated ground.

Anyone who wishes to make a booking or to inter someone who has died already should contact Deacon Ian Lewis at the parish office.

God bless
Bishop Gerard Holohan