



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON

SECRETARIAT OF COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

November Toolkit – *All Souls Day Homily Helps*

Resurrection of the Body

- The Fourth Lateran Council defines as dogma that all persons will be resurrected, and that resurrected body will be the *same* body.
- “The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection” (CCC 2300).
- “To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must ‘be away from the body and at home with the Lord’” ([Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo](#)).
- “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve” (1 Cor 15:3-5).
- “... so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life” (Rom 6:4).
- “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep ... For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life” (1 Cor 15:20-22).

Catholic burial practices & teaching

There is a rising problem with increased improper burial practices. Only 33% of Catholics receive a full-body burial.

- *Improper interment of ashes* – It is a common practice not to bury cremated ashes. Some individuals keep ashes in their homes, scatter them in multiple areas or turn them into material objects.
- *Green burials* – Green burials remove the emphasis from the human person and focus on the utility of a “sustainable” and eco-friendly burial.
- *Aqua Cremation* – This process involves discarding human remains via flushing the body out with water and chemicals and returning by-products to nature.

Full-Body Burial vs. Cremation

- While cremation is permissible, full-body cremation in a Catholic burial site is the preferred option. The Catholic Church has permitted cremation for Catholics since 1963.
- “Following the most ancient Christian tradition, the Church insistently recommends that the bodies of the deceased be buried in cemeteries or other sacred places. In memory of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord, the mystery that illumines the Christian meaning of

death, burial is above all the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body” ([Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo](#)).

- “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. She cannot, therefore, condone attitudes or permit rites that involve erroneous ideas about death, such as considering death as the definitive annihilation of the person, or the moment of fusion with Mother Nature or the universe, or as a stage in the cycle of regeneration, or as the definitive liberation from the “prison” of the body” ([Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo](#)).
- “The reservation of the ashes of the departed in a sacred place ensures that they are not excluded from the prayers and remembrance of their family or the Christian community. It prevents the faithful departed from being forgotten, or their remains from being shown a lack of respect...also it prevents any unfitting or superstitious practices. For the reasons given...the conservation of the ashes of the departed in a domestic residence is **not permitted**. In order that every appearance of pantheism, naturalism or nihilism be avoided, it is **not permitted** to scatter the ashes of the faithful departed...nor may they be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewelry or other objects” ([Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo](#)).
- “When the deceased notoriously has requested cremation and the scattering of their ashes for reasons contrary to the Christian faith, a Christian funeral must be denied to that person according to the norms of the law” ([Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo](#)).
- “The Holy Office established that “all necessary measures must be taken to preserve the practice of reverently burying the faithful departed”, adding however that cremation is not “opposed per se to the Christian religion” and that no longer should the sacraments and funeral rites be denied to those who have asked that they be cremated, under the condition that this choice has not been made through “a denial of Christian dogmas, the animosity of a secret society, or hatred of the Catholic religion and the Church.” ([Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo](#)).

Heaven, purgatory and hell

Heaven:

- “All who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ. They are like God forever, for they see Him as He is, face to face” (CCC 1023).
- “This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity — this communion of love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and the blessed — is called ‘Heaven’” (CCC 1024).

Purgatory:

- “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of Heaven” (CCC 1030).

Hell:

- “We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love Him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against Him, against our neighbor, or against ourselves...To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God’s merciful love means remaining separated

from Him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell’” (CCC 1033).

Saint quotes: *On the importance of praying for the holy souls in purgatory*

- “What great power the holy souls in Purgatory have over the Heart of God! If we realized this fact and averted to all the graces that we could gain through their intercession, these souls would not be forgotten.” – St. John Vianney
- “We must empty purgatory with our prayers.” – St. Pio of Petrelcina (Padre Pio)
- “As we enter Heaven, we will see them, so many of them coming towards us and thanking us. We will ask who they are, and they will say a poor soul you prayed for in Purgatory.” – Ven. Fulton Sheen
- “Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.” – St. John Chrysostom
- “One of the holiest works, one of the best exercises of piety that we can practice in this world is to offer sacrifices, alms, and prayers for the dead.” – St. Augustine
- “To assist the souls in Purgatory is to perform the most excellent of the works of mercy.” – St. Francis de Sales

Ways to pray for the souls in purgatory

- *St. Gertrude’s Prayer:* “Eternal Father, I offer You the most precious blood of thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, for those in my own home, and in my family. Amen.”
- Have Masses said on the anniversaries of the deaths of your loved ones.
- Offer up your holy communion for them or offer any prayers for them.
- Go to a cemetery on All Souls Day and pray for them to receive a plenary indulgence.