



## St. John Fisher Catholic Church

# Columbarium

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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# The Columbarium at St. John Fisher

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a columbarium?**

A columbarium is an arrangement of openings (niches), either in a mausoleum, a room, or wall, into which an urn or other worthy vessel is placed for permanent memorial. The St. John Fisher (SJF) niches are W 11-3/8" x H 13-3/8" x D 11-5/8". At SJF, the columbarium is an outside walled structure located on the church grounds between the new church, near the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, and the existing church structure.

### **If I choose to be cremated, what are the advantages of choosing the columbarium as opposed to a cemetery?**

This is a personal choice. Many people choose to be buried in a columbarium at their church, because of a strong desire to be laid to rest on the grounds of a church that they loved and served. They like the simplicity of the process and want to preserve a nearness to the church and perpetuate a relationship that has been a lifelong pursuit. Those who choose to be placed in a columbarium at the church often are attracted by its religious focus and the nearness to the church. The proximity makes it convenient for visits by loved ones and for periods of meditation and reflection.

Also, the fee for being placed in one of the niches is considerably less than the cost of interment in a cemetery. Other factors that may influence your decision to choose interment in a columbarium are concerns about the environment, space availability in a cemetery, and the flexibility cremation offers in ceremony planning and in the disposition of the remains. At SJF, the grounds surrounding the columbarium will be provided with reverence and respect.

### **Where is the St. John Fisher Columbarium situated?**

The SJF Columbarium is on the church grounds. The location is between the church and the parish activity center. The columbarium provides an attractive location for grieving, prayer and meditation. It is close to the church and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel which may also be used for prayer and reflection for the deceased and provides a haven during inclement weather.

### **My spouse is not a Catholic and I want to be buried with my spouse. Are there any provisions whereby we can be placed in the same niche?**

Yes. Each niche can hold up to two urns. Your non-Catholic spouse may be placed in your columbarium niche on SJF church grounds.

### **Who may be interred in St. John Fisher Columbarium?**

The columbarium is intended for the use of SJF parishioners and their immediate families.

### **What is the cost of a niche?**

A niche in the Columbarium Wall can be purchased as follows:

Single Use	\$9,000.00
Double Use	\$13,500.00

The purchase price includes the engraving on the faceplate of the niche. Out of respect for individual preferences, the urn is not included. However, if two urns are interred in the niche, the purchaser must be sure both fit within the dimensions of the Columbarium niche.

**Will these prices ever change?**

These are today's prices and may be raised at any time without notice. However, once you have purchased a niche, there will be no further charges, even if the price should rise in the future.

**Is the cost of the columbarium niche tax-deductible?**

A portion of the investment in a columbarium niche may be tax-deductible. It is best to seek the advice of your tax lawyer or accountant.

**What proof will I have that I purchased a niche?**

A "Certificate for the Right of Interment" will be issued to a purchaser after the payment of the appropriate fee for a specified niche in the SJF Columbarium and after a duly signed contract has been approved by the Columbarium Committee.

**I purchased a niche for myself. If I later decide to add another person, can I do so?**

Yes, assuming the second person meets the qualifications previously described and the right of interment of the second person has been purchased.

**May more than two people be interred in a niche?**

No. There is not sufficient space in a niche for more than two urns.

**What happens if I purchase a niche in the columbarium, then move away?**

After a "Certificate for the Right of Interment" has been issued, but before engraving of the name or interment of cremains, a purchaser may relinquish his or her rights back to SJF. At its sole option, the Columbarium Committee may return a portion of the purchaser's original purchase price. No portion of the purchase price will be returned unless and until the Committee has resold the interment right for the purchaser's niche. Under no circumstances will the Columbarium Committee return more than the lesser of the proceeds from the resale or the original purchase price, less administrative fees. The Columbarium Committee will decide each case individually based on the Policy Statement of the Columbarium Committee.

**May I decorate the area near my niche with flowers?**

The columbarium site is perpetually maintained in a manner designed to be beautiful, serene, holy, and edifying under the direction of the Columbarium Committee. Additional floral arrangements, pictures, flags, statues, or other decorations may not be placed on or near a niche or any other location in the Columbarium.

**How are niches assigned?**

You may choose an available niche at the time of purchase from any section in the columbarium. If you choose not to select a niche location, the Columbarium Committee will select it for you.

**I am interested in purchasing a niche. What is the next step?**

The next step is to contact the parish office at (310) 377-5571. The staff at the office will arrange for a representative of the church to contact you and provide whatever assistance that you need, including a copy of all documentation relating to the Columbarium and price.

Upon payment of the appropriate fee, you may choose a niche location. The order of selection will be determined by the order in which each purchase was made in relation to other such purchases. Payment in full

for the niche is required to secure a place in the selection process described above. Payment in full must be received before an available niche may be selected from the diagram. To reserve a niche, full payment is required at the time that the contract is signed.

## **The Church and Cremation**

### **As a Catholic, may I be cremated?**

Yes. The bishops of the United States and the Holy See have authorized the celebration of a Catholic funeral liturgy with the cremated remains.

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

No.

### **Can I scatter the ashes? May I keep the ashes on my mantle?**

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. Burial at sea of cremated remains differs from the scattering of ones ashes. Burial at sea is permitted as long as the cremains are inurned in an appropriate and worthy container, heavy enough to be sent to its final resting place in the sea.

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

No. 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 your body to be cremated you can make those wishes known in your will and in documents designed to help plan and prepare your funeral.

### **Must I honor my parent's or spouse's wish for cremation of their body?**

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.

### **Must cremated remains be buried or entombed?**

Yes. Respectful final disposition of cremated remains involves interment or entombment. Burial options include a family grave in a cemetery marked with a traditional memorial stone or an urn garden, a special section in a cemetery with small, pre-dug graves for urns. Another choice is to be interred in a columbarium.

## Funeral Rites

### **What happens at the Funeral Mass with cremated remains?**

A journey, which began at baptism, comes to conclusion as we enter into eternal life. 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 are used during the Funeral Mass. During the Funeral Mass, the cremated remains are treated with the same dignity and respect as the body. They are to be sealed in a worthy vessel. They are carried in procession and placed on a table adjacent to the paschal candle.

### **How much time elapses from the Funeral Mass until the remains are interred in the columbarium?**

If the cremated remains are present at the Funeral Mass, interment immediately follows the Mass.

### **Is a ritual conducted when the remains are interred in the columbarium?**

Yes. The Rite of Committal is very similar to the service conducted at a grave site in a cemetery.