



## Why Catholic Burial Matters

Catholic burial is more than a tradition—it is an expression of our faith in the resurrection of the body and the promise of eternal life. The Church teaches that our bodies, once temples of the Holy Spirit, are to be treated with dignity and respect, even in death.

## Core Principles of Catholic Burial

- *Sacred Ground*: Catholics are encouraged to be buried in a Catholic cemetery or another blessed burial place.
- *Funeral Rites*: The three principal parts are the Vigil (wake), the Funeral Mass, and the Rite of Committal.
- *Cremation*: When cremation of the body has been chosen, the ashes of the faithful must be laid to rest in a sacred place, that is, in a cemetery or, in certain cases, in a church or an area that has been set aside for this purpose, and so dedicated by the competent ecclesial authority
- *Prayer for the Dead*: The living have a sacred duty to pray for the souls of the departed.

## Catholic Cemeteries in the Diocese of Memphis

Our diocesan cemeteries provide sacred ground where loved ones can rest in the peace of Christ:

Historic Calvary Cemetery, 1663 Elvis Presley Blvd, Memphis, TN

All Saints Cemetery, 7500 East Holmes Road, Memphis TN

Mt. Calvary Cemetery, 1664 Highway 70 East, Jackson, TN

## Planning Ahead: Steps for a Catholic Burial

1. Choose Your Cemetery Plot or Niche - Contact one of the diocesan cemeteries to purchase in advance.
2. Specify Your Burial Wishes in Your Estate Plan - Include location, type of burial (casket or cremation), and details about the funeral liturgy.
3. Meet with Your Parish Priest - Discuss your wishes for the Vigil, Funeral Mass, and Committal.
4. Communicate with Your Family - Share your plans so they can carry them out without uncertainty.
5. Include a Catholic Funeral Directive - This ensures your burial follows Church teaching even if loved ones are unfamiliar with Catholic customs.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Why should I be buried in a Catholic cemetery?*  
Catholic cemeteries are sacred ground, blessed by the Church, where the faithful rest in the peace of Christ. Being buried here expresses our belief in the resurrection and keeps our remains in a place dedicated to prayer.
2. *Does the Church allow cremation?*  
Yes, cremation is permitted as long as it is not chosen for reasons contrary to the Catholic faith. Cremated remains should be placed in a cemetery—buried in the ground or entombed in a niche—and not kept at home or scattered.
3. *Can I pre-plan my burial?*  
Yes. Purchasing a plot or niche ahead of time can be an act of stewardship, relieving your loved ones of difficult decisions and ensuring your wishes are carried out.
4. *Can non-Catholic family members be buried in a Catholic cemetery?*  
Yes. Non-Catholic family members may be buried in Catholic cemeteries, provided this does not cause scandal or disrespect to the faith.
5. *What if I already own a plot in a non-Catholic cemetery?*  
You may still be buried there, and your grave can be blessed by a priest or deacon.
6. *What should I include in my will or estate plan regarding burial?*  
Clearly state your wishes for a Catholic funeral and burial, including the cemetery location, type of burial (casket or cremation), and any specific liturgical requests.

**Catholic Cemeteries Office**

901-373-1200

[cdom.org/catholic-cemeteries-office/](http://cdom.org/catholic-cemeteries-office/)