



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

## Catholic Burial Information & FAQ's

### About the Diocesan Catholic Cemeteries

- The Catholic Diocesan cemeteries are operated by the Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is a not-for-profit organization that operates the diocesan cemeteries and mausoleums. One of our associates will be happy to show you our facilities and answer and questions you may have about Catholic cemeteries, Catholic burial rites, pre-need planning, and family burial arrangements or the difference between Catholic cemeteries and for-profit commercial cemeteries.
- For a Catholic, burial in a Catholic cemetery is a final act of faith, a public witness to one's membership in a community of faith, to one's belief in the resurrection of the body and everlasting life. The Catholic cemetery is a sacred place set aside by the Church for the burial of the faithful and it reflects the Church's teaching and traditions. The Catholic cemetery is an extension of the parish community where those who have worshipped together in life now rest together in peace, awaiting Christ's return in glory.
- Catholic cemeteries are dedicated to the perpetual care and maintenance of its properties. *All of the money we receive is invested back into the organization for maintenance and development of new Catholic cemeteries for the future. A percentage of funds from all purchases is set aside strictly for perpetual care.*

### Types of Burial or Entombment

- Two of the diocesan Catholic cemeteries have mausoleums for those who prefer above ground entombment. Other options include garden crypts and traditional in-ground burial.

### About Cremation

- **What is cremation?**  
Cremation is the reduction of the body of a deceased person to recoverable bone fragments through a process that combines intense heat and evaporation. After cooling, the fragments are pulverized. These fragments usually weigh four to 10 pounds.
- **Is it necessary to obtain permission from my priest in order to be cremated?**  
No, it is not a requirement, but it may be helpful to discuss your questions and decisions with your priest or parish counselor.
- Catholics may be cremated as long as doing so does not reflect a denial of the Church's teaching on the resurrection of the body. If you are interested in cremation as an option for yourself or a loved one, please ask. Additional information about [cremation](#).



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### Who may be buried in a Catholic cemetery?

- Non-Catholic spouses or relatives of Catholics who purchase the right of burial in a Catholic cemetery can also be buried there. Catholic cemeteries have a long tradition of dedicated service to the Catholic community including non-Catholic's spouses, children, parents and other relatives. Christians with a connection to the Catholic community may also be buried in the Catholic cemeteries.
- **Are people of all nationalities welcome?**  
The Diocese makes a special effort for all of the faithful to feel welcome. At Resurrection we have just opened Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine with a view of providing people of Hispanic heritage with a place that honors their culture and background.
- **Can someone who committed suicide be buried in a Catholic cemetery?**  
Yes, it is recognized that those who die from the act of suicide deserve understanding and compassion. The deceased may have been suffering from a serious psychological issue or overwhelming fear and confusion. Therefore, the Church offers funeral and burial rites for those who have died as a result of suicide. The American edition of the Catholic ritual includes prayers for this specific situation.

### Availability of space

- All of the diocesan Catholic cemeteries have space available. Both Resurrection Cemetery and Holy Cross have many spaces available. St. Andrews and Mt. Calvary cemeteries have fewer spaces, but we are able to provide some burials at this point.
- **Can more than one person be buried in a single grave?**  
We will bury one full-body and one cremation, or two cremations in a single grave. There is a fee for the second burial.

### Pre-planning

- **What is the right time to consider making final arrangements?**  
Now, while you are able to make such decision in a calm manner and when the cost of burial arrangements is more affordable. By making arrangements in advance, Catholic families can avoid confusion at the time of bereavement and assure themselves of burial and arrangements in the location they desire and at a price they wish to pay. Catholic cemeteries provide a two-year financing option, that is interest-free. More information about [pre-planning](#).
- **Can I get a grave/graves near my family?**  
At Resurrection Cemetery this is usually possible. This will be more difficult in the older sections of the other cemeteries. You can purchase as much burial space as needed for your family, and you may designate in writing those for whom the burial space has been reserved.



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- **Do all graves in your cemeteries cost the same?**  
Yes, all graves are the same cost.
- **Do I have to pay all the money up front?**  
No. Catholic cemeteries provide a two-year financing option, that is interest-free.
- **Are credit cards an accepted means of payment?**  
Yes, VISA and MasterCard are accepted.
- **I've already made arrangements at a public cemetery. What can I do?**  
Usually burial space in other cemeteries can be re-sold, directly by the purchaser or some cemeteries will repurchase the plot or crypt.