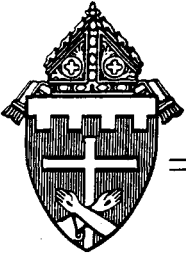


*Series 4500 - Catholic Cemeteries and
Burial (October 1971)
(Cemetery Department)*



Catholic Cemeteries
Archdiocese of San Francisco

C-2

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HOLY CROSS CEMETERY
Colma

MOUNT OLIVET CEMETERY
San Rafael

HOLY CROSS CEMETERY
Menlo Park

COPY

Date: November 16, 2001

To: Jack M. Hammel
Legal Counsel

From: Kathy Atkinson *KA*

RE: Archbishop Leveda's Request for All Archdiocesan
Policies

As per your request of November 5th, enclosed please find the Christian Burial Policies of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. They are in chronological order with the oldest on top.

I was unable to locate the finalized version of the "Ecumenical Guidelines" from December 1979, but the draft and revisions from Msgr. McKay are included, as we do operate under these perimeters.

Please call me with any questions.

Series 4500

4500 CATHOLIC CEMETERIES AND BURIAL

4510 Introduction

4520 Christian Burial Regulations

4530 Guidelines

4531 Wake Service.

4532 The Funeral Rite.

4533 The Place of Burial and the Burial Rite.

4533.1 Catholics should be Buried in a Catholic Cemetery.

4533.2 Burial of Catholics in Non-Catholic Cemeteries.

4533.3 Clergy Activity for a Catholic Burial in a Non-Catholic Cemetery.

4533.4 Burial of Non-Catholics in Catholic Cemeteries.

4533.5 Clergy Activity in a Catholic Cemetery for Non-Catholics.

4534 Cremation.

4540 Guidelines on Procedure

4550 Pastoral Recommendations.

Oct 1971

4500 CATHOLIC CEMETERIES AND BURIAL

4510 INTRODUCTION:

The Catholic Cemetery Department has responsibility for the burial and care of the burial places of the deceased members of the Catholic community of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. The Cemetery staff is also committed to serving the many pastoral needs of our people at the time of a death in their family. Anyone needing assistance or information relative to death or burial is encouraged to contact a Catholic Cemetery office.

The following regulations have been promulgated by the Archdiocese of San Francisco as guidelines for matters pertaining to Christian burial.

4520 Christian Burial Regulations

From the very beginning of the Church to the present time, Christian Burial has been an important and integral part of Catholic life. The Catholic dogmas and doctrines relating to death and resurrection have been clearly and dramatically demonstrated and practiced in all aspects of the death and burial of the faithful. The Catholic's belief in death as the entrance into eternity, his hope in a resurrection, his recognition of the value of prayer for the deceased, his reverence for the body which remains, his sense of the mystery and sacredness which surround death - all of these realities should be reflected in the atmosphere and ceremonies which are part of our response to death and our care of the deceased.

The Christian response to death must stand as symbol and sermon of the central and pivotal Christian beliefs of man's life here and hereafter. The private and liturgical prayers, the meditation and reflection, and the ceremonies and rites connected with the funeral and committal unite us to the great paschal mystery with its hope of eternal union with Almighty God.

The events which surround death also call for a community response. The immediate family must bear the principal burden of sorrow. The community of relatives, friends and parishioners comes together to provide their prayerful support. The whole Christian community through the Church and its liturgy offers its prayers for God's mercy for the deceased and His strength for the bereaved.

OCT. 1971

When possible, those who were part of the Catholic community in life are buried together in death in a Catholic Cemetery. The Catholic Cemetery is a sacred place, blessed by the Church and protected by its Canon Law where the bodily remains of the deceased are laid to rest in a manner and surroundings which reflect the Catholic dogmas and customs pertaining to death and resurrection. The Catholic Cemetery is also a place of prayer, liturgy and meditation for the living; a community within a community; a holy place of deep religious and spiritual significance.

Because of these vital realities of Catholic life, Christian Burial is a rite which the Church provides for her faithful departed and as a source of strength, hope and encouragement for the bereaved family and friends. This rite consists of three principal parts: The wake, the funeral rite and the committal in a blessed burial place. Each part has its distinct role and each must reflect the realities of the circumstances of both the deceased and the mourners.

The Church authority has the obligation and responsibility to determine what parts of the burial rite a person has a right to and what form these rites will take. The following guidelines and regulations for Christian Burial have their foundation in the general law of the Church and the liturgical decrees.

The revised funeral ritual with the adaptations of the American National Conference of Catholic Bishops is effective and mandatory after November 1, 1971. All funeral and burial services conducted in the Archdiocese of San Francisco must comply with the directives and rites presented in this revised ritual.

At the time of death there is a great need for effective, sensitive pastoral care on the part of the priest. The parish clergy will be expected not only to offer support and consolation, but will be the ones responsible for determining, in accordance with the guidelines here presented, the rights of the deceased for Christian Burial and will have the obligation of conducting services for the wake, funeral and/or committal. It is essential that the priest exercise his responsibilities in these matters conscientiously and in keeping with the directives of the Church.

4530 Guidelines

The following guidelines are presented as the Christian Burial policies of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

OCT. 1971

4531 Wake Service

It is customary for a brief period prior to burial to have a gathering of the family and friends of the deceased. At this time the body may be viewed, the family and friends have the opportunity to pray privately and as a group while offering to one another strength and encouragement in their grief and loss.

On at least one occasion during this wake period, a service should be offered in which the community of those in attendance might join their prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased while providing consolation and reflective thought for the mourners. The wake service should be conducted in a manner which is suitable for the devotional needs of those present. The prayers and readings contained in the burial ritual may be used, the rosary may be recited, a brief talk may be given by the priest. Whatever is done should be appropriate to the age, personality and religious background of the deceased and consideration must be given to the needs and expectations of the mourners. The wake service may be conducted in a funeral home, in the Church, or in the home of the deceased.

4532 The Funeral Rite

The bodies of those persons who have been baptized Catholics and who die in communion with the Church should be brought to the Church for the funeral rite. Since the Eucharistic Celebration is the central prayer of the faithful Catholic during his lifetime, it is most appropriate that the Mass and final commendation prayers be offered as the funeral rite. The liturgy should be carefully planned with appropriate choice of music, vestments, texts and homily, all of which should take into consideration the needs of the participating community, while following to the directives of the Church's approved ritual.

The Mass must not be offered as part of the funeral rite for those persons who are not entitled to a full Catholic funeral according to the current law of the Church; those who have rejected the Church and shown no change of heart prior to death; those who have specifically requested that the funeral Mass not be celebrated.

In the case of those baptized Catholics for whom a Mass is not to be celebrated, it may be advisable to offer a paraliturgical service. After careful consideration of the deceased person's background in relation to the Church, the needs of the bereaved family and the attitude of the com-

munity at large, the priest may offer a service of scripture readings and prayers which are appropriate for the conditions and circumstances of the case. This service is usually conducted at a funeral parlor. If in the judgment of the priest, after careful consideration of all circumstances, it is prudent to do so, the body may be brought to the Church for a para-liturgical funeral service. Here again the priest must see to it that the liturgical service in these cases reflects the realities of the situation.

If the Catholic relatives of a non-Catholic request that a priest offer a service for a deceased non-Catholic, he may do so at the funeral home. Here again, the content of the service should be appropriate for the circumstances of the situation and the persons involved.

The funeral rite traditionally has been conducted on the morning of the burial. However, if the family so requests, the funeral rite may be conducted the evening before the burial. In some cases, the evening service may be more convenient for the family and may provide an opportunity for a greater number of people to participate.

This choice, as to whether the funeral is to be the night before or on the day of the burial, must be made by the family of the deceased.

The casket is not to remain open during the funeral rite in the Church, nor should any flowers be placed on or around the casket for the rite. In accordance with the directives of the funeral ritual the casket should be covered with a pall. The American flag may cover the casket in the case of those who are deceased members of veteran or military groups.

4533 The Place of Burial and the Burial Rite

4533.1 Catholics Should be Buried in a Catholic Cemetery

Catholic Cemeteries have been established and managed by the Church as an integral part of its religious belief and rite. The community of those who shared the same faith in life is maintained in death in the Church Cemetery which reflects the doctrine and liturgy of Catholic belief. The Catholic Cemetery is also protected by the Church's law providing the assurance of permanence, reverence and respect for the remains of the deceased. It is a place of prayer for and devotion to the souls of the faithful departed.

4533.2 Burial of Catholics in Non-Catholic Cemeteries

Because of circumstances which in the judgment of the proper Church authority are reasonable and acceptable, Catholics may be buried in other than a Catholic Cemetery.

Conditions or circumstances recognized as acceptable for a request burial in a non-Catholic Cemetery are:

- 4533.21 A request to be buried with a spouse, children or parents who are interred in a non-Catholic Cemetery.
- 4533.22 A convert whose family is interred in a non-Catholic Cemetery.
- 4533.23 A request to be buried in a National Cemetery as part of the military community.
- 4533.24 A request to be buried in an ethnic Cemetery, e.g., Italian, Chinese, etc.
- 4533.25 A request to be buried in a plot which was purchased in a non-Catholic Cemetery at a time when a Catholic Cemetery was not reasonably available.

4533.3 Clergy Activity for a Catholic Burial in a Non-Catholic Cemetery

In those situations in which a Catholic is to be buried in a non-Catholic Cemetery, the priest should conduct the committal service. He should bless the individual grave and should follow the usual ritual for the burial of a Catholic.

4533.4 Burial of Non-Catholics in Catholic Cemeteries

Since the family unit traditionally has been preserved even in death, non-Catholics may be buried in a Catholic Cemetery with their Catholic family members.

4533.5 Clergy Activity in a Catholic Cemetery for Non-Catholics

Committal services for non-Catholics may be conducted by a Catholic priest or by an ordained minister of another communion. If requested, patriotic or fraternal services may be conducted for the burial of a non-Catholic in a Catholic Cemetery. On those occasions

when a non-Catholic is to be buried in a Catholic Cemetery, it is reasonable to allow committal services to be conducted by those with whom he shared a particular belief or community. If the family requests a Catholic priest to conduct the service, he should provide a rite, which in his judgment, is appropriate for the circumstances and the people involved.

4534 Cremation

On May 8, 1963, the Holy Office issued an instruction on Cremation which allows considerable latitude to those Catholics who request that their bodies be cremated. Reasons which justify a request for cremation may be of either a public or private nature as long as they are not motivated by a "denial of Christian Dogmas or because of a sectarian spirit or through hatred of the Catholic religion or the Church."

While allowing cremation in cases of necessity, this document strongly emphasizes the fact that burial is the preferred manner of interment in imitation of our Lord's burial.

4540 Guidelines on Procedure

Funeral arrangements should be made with a priest. Usually this is a priest of the deceased's parish. However, the family may carry out the expressed wishes of the deceased to be buried in a Church other than his parish Church. This contact with the bereaved family gives the priest a valuable opportunity to offer his condolences and encouragement. At the same time the priest can arrange all of the details of the wake and funeral and services with the members of the family. Under no circumstances should an undertaker be allowed to make arrangements which properly are the responsibility of the parish priest.

All cemetery arrangements must be made directly with the Cemetery personnel. This direct contact between the family and the Cemetery authorities is essential because of the important legal implications involved in burial.

A "Christian Burial Certificate" should be signed by the parish priest for presentation to the Cemetery authorities. This certificate gives assurance to the Cemetery officials that the person for whom it is issued may be buried in a Catholic Cemetery.

OCT. 1971

4550 Pastoral Recommendations

The priest has an important pastoral responsibility to instruct and motivate his people to a greater understanding and deeper appreciation of all aspects of death and burial in the Catholic tradition. Special attention should be given to familiarizing the people with the contents of these guidelines, especially with those items, such as cremation, about which there may be some confusion or misunderstanding on their part.

In preaching and teaching the spiritual and religious significances of death and burial should be stressed. Funeral and burial practices should reflect Christian simplicity rather than expensive material display. The value of having Masses and prayers offered for the deceased should be strongly encouraged. It is also commendable and Christian to offer gifts to worthwhile causes in memory of the deceased.

Because of the achievements of science and medicine, particularly in the matter of organ transplants, occasionally requests are made to donate organs or to donate one's body to science. Such requests are legitimate and not contrary to Christian principles. However, in keeping with Christian respect for the body, when it is possible and practicable, arrangements should be made for burial or cremation of notable parts of the body or the body itself upon completion of the scientific research.



Catholic Cemeteries Archdiocese of San Francisco

HOLY CROSS CEMETERY
Colma

MOUNT OLIVET CEMETERY
San Rafael

HOLY CROSS CEMETERY
Menlo Park

Date: June 24, 1998
To: Bishop Patrick J. McGrath
From: Kathy Atkinson *KA*
RE: Policy Changes

Pursuant to our discussion on Tuesday, June 16, 1998, would you please be so kind as to sign the following policy changes for the Cemetery Department and return them to me:

- 1) Effective immediately, when the Director of Cemeteries is a lay person, in the absence of a priest, they have the authorization to sign Christian Burial Certificates.
- 2) Effective July 1, 1998, ordained deacons of the Archdiocese will receive a 10% discount when selecting a grave in one of the Archdiocesan cemeteries for his own burial. This applies to the cost of the grave only.

Patrick J. McGrath
Signature

June 25th 1998
Date