



CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
CONFÉRENCE DES ÉVÊQUES CATHOLIQUES DU CANADA

NATIONAL LITURGY OFFICE

June 7, 2017

Re: Celebrating Funeral Liturgies with Cremated Remains: Clarification following the re-print of the “updated” *Order of Christian Funerals*

With the recent re-print of the *Order of Christian Funerals* there has been some confusion. It is important to note that The *Order of Christian Funerals* is not revised. In fact, it is in the queue albeit quite far down the line, for revision and retranslation by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). As it stands now, the Pastoral Notes read exactly as they did in the previous edition which is where the confusion is coming from in terms of celebrations with cremated remains. The following information should help clarify a few issues:

1. The *Order of Christian Funerals* updated material only includes:
 - a. Insertion of the NRSV Canadian version of the Lectionary readings in lieu of the former Jerusalem translation.
 - b. Insertion of some of the new NRSV Psalm settings published by the CCCB.
 - c. Insertion of the new responses and revised prayers as found in the *Roman Missal*. (As per directives received from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments).

2. The directives for funeral liturgies celebrated in the presence of cremated remains, as noted in the CCCB pamphlet [“Catholics and Cremation”](#) , remain unchanged. The 1984 indult from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments is still in effect. “The cremated remains are put into a dignified container that shows reverence toward the person’s remains. The container is then placed on a small table provided for this purpose. The liturgy will conclude with the Final Commendation. Signs of reverence toward the body, such as the sprinkling with holy water and the use of incense, may be used.” The Paschal Candle may also be lit and placed in an appropriate location.

In October of last year the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued an [“Instruction: *Ad resurgendum cum Christo, regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of ashes in the case of cremation*”](#). The full text is available on the National Liturgy Office website in the “Documents” section, under “Catholic Funerals”.

For Your Information: A Supplement to the *Order of Christian Funerals* for “Celebrations in the Presence of Cremated Remains” received approval by canonical vote from the English Sector Bishops of Canada. The ritual has been sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for approval. If approved, the prayers have been adapted (from any references to a body) and the rubrics are very clear including everything from the Entrance Procession to the Final Commendation and Farewell. It also includes appropriate prayers for the cemetery or crematorium.

We hope this information is helpful for you. Please don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions.