

## **WHAT TO DO WHEN A CATHOLIC DIES**

1. Inform promptly the Parish Priest of the deceased for arrangement of bereavement service, i.e. funeral service and burial service.
2. Please note that only Catholic faithful could be buried in a Catholic Cemetery. Catechumens who have received the Catholic Rite of Becoming Catechumens (Catechumens) may be buried in a Catholic Cemetery. However a person who has not received any catechetical instructions, even though he or she had been or was baptized at the moment of death or when unconscious, could not be buried in a Catholic Cemetery.

### ***Permission for Burial in Catholic Cemeteries***

3. A Burial Permit in the Catholic Cemetery (“Burial Permit”) must first be obtained before the deceased is permitted to be buried in a Catholic Cemetery.
4. The “Burial Permit” could only be issued by the Parish Priest, Assistant Parish Priest or Permanent Deacon of the Parish (Parish Clergy) of the deceased upon production of a Certificate of Baptism or Catechumen, subject to paragraph 2 above. “Burial Permit” must bear the signature of the authorizing person and the official seal. When a “Burial Permit” is issued, the Certificate of Baptism of the deceased, if produced, is to be retained by the said Parish Clergy. Where the genuineness of the Certificate of Baptism or Catechumen is in doubt, a careful investigation should be made.
5. Parish Clergy may only issue a “Burial Permit” in respect of a Catholic or a Catechumen who, at the time of death or admission to hospital, resided in their Parish. However, it is not a sufficient reason for refusing burial in a Catholic Cemetery simply because it happens that the deceased or the applicant is unknown to the Parish Clergy. The Parish Clergy should investigate the deceased's right to Catholic burial.
6. The Parish Clergy of the deceased should notify the parish where the deceased was baptized by forwarding to the latter either the Certificate of Baptism of the deceased or a Notification of Death form. The death of the deceased is to be entered in the baptismal register under the column *Adnotationes*.

7. All Clergy are required to adhere to these instructions strictly in order to ensure this policy is implemented accordingly.

### ***Procedures for Burial (including Ashes after Cremation) in Catholic Cemeteries***

#### ***(a) For Burial***

8. The applicant should first apply for
  - (a) (i) a Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 10); or
  - (ii) a Certificate of Order Authorizing Burial of Body (Form 11);  
as appropriate, issued by the relevant government departments in the Joint Office set up by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Immigration Department and Department of Health; and
  - (b) a “Burial Permit” from the Parish Clergy with the production of the Certificate of Baptism or Catechumen of the deceased.
9. Discuss with the Parish Clergy concerning the date and time of funeral and burial arrangements.
10. Make arrangements with a funeral parlour or an undertaker for funeral and burial services.
11. Arrange directly with the Staff of the Catholic Cemetery in which the family wishes to have the deceased buried for the allocation of grave, date and time of burial by presenting the “Burial Permit” and the Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 10) or the Certificate of Order Authorizing Burial of Body (Form 11).
12. Confirm with the Parish Clergy the date and time for the funeral and burial rites.

#### ***(b) For Burial of Ashes after Cremation***

13. The applicant should first apply for a Cremation Permit (Form 3) issued by the relevant government departments in the Joint Office set up by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Immigration Department and Department of Health and a “Burial Permit” from the Parish Clergy with the production of the Certificate of Baptism or Catechumen of the deceased.

14. After cremation, the applicant should collect the cremated ashes and obtain a Permit to Take Away Cremated Ashes from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, together with the “Burial Permit”, Ashes, Memorial Data, Photograph, Required Fees and contact the Staff of Cemetery Office in which the family wishes to have the deceased buried for the arrangement.
15. According to the present discipline of the Diocese, Catholics may choose to have their bodies cremated. It is not necessary to seek any special permission from the Diocese for cremation.
16. The rites ordinarily performed at the cemetery chapel or at the graveside may be conducted in the funeral parlour or in the chapel of the crematorium. If there is no other suitable place for the rites, they may be officiated in the crematory hall itself, provided that the liturgical service is carried out with respect and dignity.
17. Confirm with the Parish Clergy the date and time for the funeral and burial rites.

***Important Points to Note:***

***(a) On Funeral Service and Burial Service Providers***

1. The Catholic Cemeteries, under the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, provide burial services. However, the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong does not own or operate any organization providing funeral and burial services. The Diocese has not specifically appointed, entrusted or recommended any particular funeral service or burial service providers. The Diocese has no business relationship or partnership of any nature with any funeral or burial services providers rendering such services.
2. Bereavement Ministry Groups are set up in parishes under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong to offer free assistance to parishioners seeking help in organizing funeral and burial services for their deceased’s family members. Such assistance is rendered free, as a gesture of Christian solidarity and an act of love and charity. No fees or commission is charged. Clergy officiating at funeral and burial services are carrying out their duties in a spirit of love and charity. These services are also free of charge. Clergy in the Diocese do not enter into joint business ventures or have any dealing with funeral service or burial service providers.
3. In accordance with Diocesan regulations, family members or friends of a recently

deceased should contact the Parish Priest of the deceased promptly and make arrangements with him directly for funeral and burial services. Such arrangements should not be left in the hands of third parties, especially those requesting pecuniary rewards for the arrangements. It is also highly inappropriate to delegate third parties to look for clergy to officiate at funeral and burial services.

***(b) Services provided by Offices of Catholic Cemeteries and Parish***

4. The Burial Permit in the Catholic Cemetery is issued free of charge.
5. For exhumation and relocation of human remains, exhumed human remains or ashes, or for a co-burial in a Catholic Cemetery, etc., application must be made to the Catholic Cemeteries by the recognized representative for a Permission for Exhumation which is issued free of charge by the Superintendent of the Catholic Cemeteries.

Note:

Recognized Representative means any person holding the official receipt or the replacement receipt of the burial ground allocated to the deceased buried therein.

6. The applicant should deal directly with the Staff of the Catholic Cemetery in which the family wishes to have the deceased buried and not through a third party. The Catholic Cemeteries do not have agents for handling these arrangements. The Staff of Catholic Cemeteries are all employees of the Catholic Diocese and no commission or gratuities are to be offered for services rendered. The standard charges to be paid are posted in the Cemetery Offices. When in doubt, please contact the Superintendent of the Catholic Cemeteries.
7. The burial lots and niches are all allocated according to the serial order of the respective cemeteries.
8. Except for co-burial, the ashes after cremation can only be placed in designated niches in the Catholic Cemeteries.
9. At the request and certification of the respective Parish Priest, free services or services with reduced charges are provided for destitute persons and the poor.
10. If you are approached by persons promising you or offering you favours, in return for pecuniary rewards, regarding burial lots and niches other than the Rules of the Catholic Cemeteries and relevant notices posted in the Cemetery Offices, please

report immediately to the I.C.A.C.

11. Please report all complaints to:

The Superintendent of Catholic Cemeteries

Cheung Sha Wan Catholic Cemetery Office, Kowloon.

Tel: 2745-4220

Fax: (852) 2307-2585

E-mail: [ccemstraphael@catholic.org.hk](mailto:ccemstraphael@catholic.org.hk)