

POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES FOR OPERATION MORTUARIES IN THE DIOCESE OF PHOENIX

- I. General Principles.
 - A. When those making arrangements seek to use the mortuary, the mortuary staff will provide the same basic services that other mortuaries provide, but with greater pastoral care and sensitivity to Church teaching. The first step should be to contact the parish of the deceased. If there is no existing relationship with a parish, the parish where the deceased had domicile will be presumed to be the point of contact for Mass or other services.
 - B. A goal of the mortuary is to evangelize and reconnect separated families with the Church. This can be facilitated by arranging to use the parish church, providing support from the mortuary staff and by supporting bereavement ministries that are offered directly by the mortuary or through a parish or other agency of the Diocese.
 - C. Funeral and Memorial Masses will not be conducted in the mortuary chapel. This does not preclude the use of the chapel for Masses on special occasions that serve the welfare of the Catholic community rather than the desires of individual families. (While many such Masses will require a larger space than the mortuary chapel allows, e.g. Masses on Memorial Day and All Soul's Day, Masses at these times or for similar cases could be held in the mortuary chapel.)
 - D. If those seeking to use the services of the mortuary express their intention to engage in practices that are not in conformity with the teaching of the Church, those persons will be informed that their desires cannot be accommodated and a referral will be made to other local mortuaries.
 - E. The mortuary will not offer any service or product that is not consistent with Church teaching.
 - F. Those who contact the Catholic mortuary for services will be provided with well prepared materials that explain Church teaching, for example, that the burial of the body is preferable to cremation and that cremated human remains are to be properly interred.
 - G. The job description for the Mortuary Director will require that he/she is an active Catholic who is in good standing with the Church.

II. The chapel.

- A. While there will not be a fixed altar in the mortuary chapel, the chapel will be designed in such a way that a suitable fixed altar could be added to the chapel at some future time.
- B. Permanent pews will be installed in the mortuary chapel.
- C. While available for additional uses, such as viewings of deceased persons or other non-liturgical activities or events, the chapel will be decorated in a manner consistent with its sacred purpose.
- D. Use of the chapel for services for those who are not Catholic.
 - 1. It may be used by a Catholic priest, deacon or bereavement minister who is conducting a service for a non-Catholic member of a family when the Catholic family wishes to use the mortuary and its services.
 - 2. Ministers of Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities whose baptism is recognized as valid by the Catholic Church may conduct services in the mortuary chapel for deceased non-Catholics at the request of those seeking to use the mortuary and its services. This permission does not extend to celebrations of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper according to the rites of that Church or Ecclesial Community.
 - 3. The chapel may not be used for services that would be conducted by clergy or other religious leaders from faith traditions that are not Christian as understood by the recognized validity of baptism. If approached for such services, families seeking to use the mortuary will politely be informed of this restriction. An option would be to use a viewing room but, if necessary, those who approach the mortuary for services will be referred to other local mortuaries.

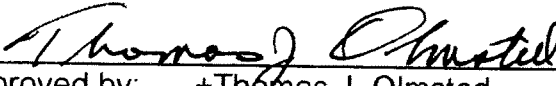
III. Mass and other liturgical Rites at the mortuary.

- A. Funeral and Memorial Masses will not be permitted in the chapel of the mortuary.
- B. Funeral Masses should be offered in the parish church of the deceased to celebrate their unity with the People of God with whom they worshiped and lived out their baptismal vocation.
- C. When the deceased was not active in a parish community, the preferred option is for the mortuary to assist in arranging the Funeral Mass at the parish in which the deceased had domicile, or the parish of surviving family members.

- D. The mortuary should assist those who have come to make arrangements for the deceased to appreciate the value of celebrating the life of the one who has died by fully entering into the Rites that the Church provides at the time of death.
- E. The mortuary should develop services to the families of deceased persons that avoid making the costs of transportation to and from the parish church such that it discourages the celebration of the Funeral Mass at the parish.
- F. Proper liturgical practice must be followed as promulgated in the approved texts, especially the *Order of Christian Funerals*. Any questions should be referred to the Diocesan Office of Worship.

IV. Cremation.

- A. The mortuary staff will have well prepared informational materials available to provide to those who may not know or understand the teaching of the Church with regard to cremation, funeral Rites and other relevant issues.
- B. The mortuary will develop services that do not make the internment of cremated human remains in a cemetery cost prohibitive.
- C. As part of the check list that is used when families come in for services and cremation is requested, those making arrangements will be asked what disposition is being made for the cremated human remains.
- D. If those making arrangements express the intention of engaging in a practice of disposition of the cremated human remains that is not consistent with the teaching of the Church, the family will be informed of Church teaching and should they expressly reject that teaching, the mortuary will be required to decline their business and refer them to another local mortuary.
- E. Mortuary staff will not be required to go beyond asking what disposition of the cremated human remains is planned and will only be required to refuse service when the intention expressed clearly violates Catholic Church teaching.
- F. The opening of the mortuary will provide an opportunity for educational information on cremation to be promoted through *The Catholic Sun* and other means.


 Approved by: +Thomas J. Olmsted
 Bishop of Phoenix

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 Date