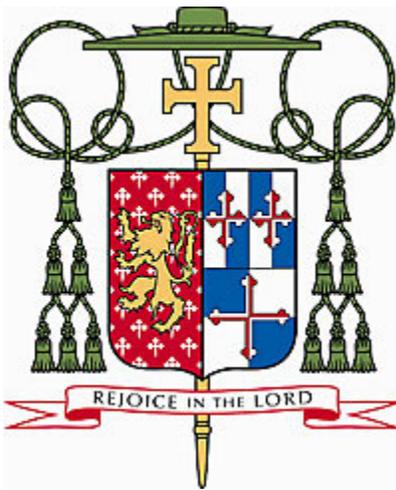


A Message from the Bishop

**MOST REVEREND W. FRANCIS MALOOLY, DD
BISHOP OF WILMINGTON**



Dear Friends in Christ,

The Catholic Church has a long history and experience of helping people prepare spiritually for death and assisting families facing the final illness, death, and burial of a loved one. An integral part of this tradition of service is providing families the opportunity and privilege of participating in the burial rites of the Church. These rites include a Wake in the funeral home, Mass of Christian Burial in the parish church, and final committal in a cemetery. The Church's traditions and treasury of prayers surrounding these rites inspire and comfort those left behind, as they benefit the soul of the

deceased.

For those considering cremation, it should be noted that the Church earnestly recommends that the first two stages of the funeral rite be celebrated with the body of the deceased present. Following the final commendation at the end of the Funeral Mass, the body is then cremated. As soon as possible after the cremation has taken place, arrangements should be made to inter or entomb these cremated human remains in a cemetery. Scattering of cremated remains or keeping them in the home is not permitted. In some instances the Church does allow cremated remains in church for the Mass of Christian Burial. The parish priest should be notified of this desire.

An integral part of the Catholic funeral rites is interment or entombment within the sacred surroundings of a Catholic cemetery. The Church has always maintained cemeteries as the resting places for those who have fallen asleep in Christ and are awaiting His return at the end of time. Burial of the Dead is a Corporal Work of Mercy, while prayer for the dead is a Spiritual Work of Mercy. Both of these actions are the core of Catholic cemetery ministry.

I commend to you the use of our Catholic cemeteries. I also encourage the faithful to visit our cemeteries and pray for those whose mortal remains are buried there. "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead." (2 Macabees 12:45)

May Our Lord bless you!

+ *W. Francis Malooly*

Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly, D.D.
Bishop of Wilmington

