



For Immediate Release
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Bishop Rojas to consecrate St. Theresa Columbarium Gardens

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. – Bishop Alberto Rojas will consecrate only the second piece of land in the Diocese of San Bernardino for Catholic burial on Nov. 20 when he performs the rite at St. Theresa Columbarium Gardens.

The Columbarium, a structure to place funerary urns containing cremated remains, is located at St. Theresa Catholic Parish in Palm Springs, 2800 E. Ramon Rd. It is among the first in Southern California and reflects a growing trend in California, where 60 percent of burials are now cremated remains, said Al Martini, Director of the Diocesan Office of Catholic Cemeteries.

The Catholic Church accepts cremation, as long as the remains are kept in a sacred place such as a columbarium at a church. The cremated remains should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they came. “This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, and the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium,” according to the Order of Christian Funerals’ Appendix on Cremation.

St. Theresa Columbarium Gardens is situated adjacent to the Adoration Chapel and Church entrance at St. Theresa’s. It contains 830 total niches; including premium niches made of Volakis marble from Greece as well as Brazillian Imperial Coffee Granite niches. There are single, double and family estate niches available for sale. A focal point of the Columbarium is a Veteran’s Wall containing niches reserved for military veterans and their families. About 40 niches have already been sold.

The decision to build the Columbarium was a response to a need expressed by many of the Catholic faithful, Martini said.

“Some Catholic families in the Diocese have been holding on to urns with cremated remains and had asked the Diocese for an appropriate place to inter them,” he said.

The consecration of land for Catholic burial can only be done by the Ordinary Bishop of the Diocese where it is located. Bishop Rojas will anoint the Columbarium grounds with holy water and recite special prayers of consecration. The only other consecration of land for Catholic burial that has taken place in the Diocese of San Bernardino was Our Lady Queen of Peace Cemetery in Colton, done by Bishop Gerald Barnes on May 5, 2005.

St. Theresa Columbarium Gardens is part of the Columbarium Network that is owned and operated by the Diocese of San Bernardino Cemetery Corporation. There are plans to add to this network at other locations in the Diocese including Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Arrowhead and St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish in Temecula.

The Consecration of St. Theresa Columbarium Gardens will take place immediately following the 10 a.m. Mass at St. Theresa Catholic Church on Sunday, November 20. The media is invited to attend.

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