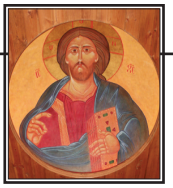
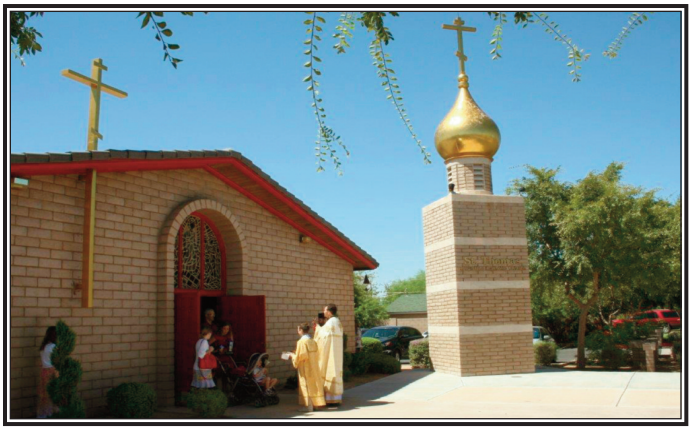
*GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!*



*GLORY FOREVER!*



# ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

**19 W. Bruce Ave. Gilbert, AZ 85233**

***Mailing Address:*** *P.O. Box 667 • Gilbert, AZ 85299-0667*

**Office Hours** 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM • Monday, Wednesday & Friday

*Please give a courtesy call or send an email before coming to the parish to make sure someone is in the office.*

Office: (480) 497-6726 • Fax: (480) 907-7819 • Pastor's Email: saint.thomas.pastor@gmail.com

**PARISH WEBSITE: www.stabcc.org**

**Served by:**

Father Michael Bezruchka, Pastor • Deacon Michael Sullivan

**Parish Advisory Board:**

Vince Antonios • Danny Forbes • Emma Gilsdorf • Cal Karnya
Cathy McCormick • Charlie Rawlins • Jeff Sims • Liz Zackowski

**Sunday Divine Liturgy:**

Vigil Vesper Liturgy (Saturday) at 5:00 PM
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM
Divine Praises at 9:45 AM

**Holy Mystery of Penance:**

Confessions are heard starting one hour before the scheduled Divine Liturgy is to begin for a total of 35 minutes. Confessions also available by appointment.

**Chaldean Catholic Holy Liturgy: Sunday at 6:00 PM**

## WELCOME TO ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE!

Our parish community welcomes all those visiting with us today. We thank you for joining our community in praising the Lord as we remember His great love and mercy for us. We hope that you will join us again soon and bring a friend. If, per chance, you are looking for a spiritual home based on the Sacred Scriptures, the teaching of the Apostles, the ancient Church Traditions in the context of a liturgical life and fellowship, please consider our parish! Speak with Father Michael or Deacon Michael if you would like more information.

# Liturgical Schedule

*25th Week after Pentecost*

**Tuesday** **November 1**
*Blessed Martyr Theodore Romzha, Bishop of Mukachevo (Transferred from Oct. 31)*
Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Philippians 3:7-11 and Luke 22: 24-30
*Intention-* Joann Millet by Joe Barnes

**Thursday** **November 3**
Divine Liturgy 7:45 a.m.
*Holy Martyrs Acepsimas, the Bishop; Joseph, the Priest; & Aeithalas, the Deacon.*
2 Thessalonians 2:13 - 3:5 & Luke 11:47 - 12:1
*Intention-* +Marge Bobick by Al & Helen Ferencz

**Friday** **November 4**
*Our Venerable Father Joannicus the Great. The Holy Martyr Nicander, Bishop of Myra. The Priest Hermas.*
Divine Liturgy 7:45 a.m.
2 Thessalonians 3:6-18 & Luke 12:2-12
*Intention-* Donald Thompson by Peter & Anna Broznak

**Saturday** **November 5**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy 5:00 p.m.
*Intention* - +Fr. Wes Izer by Fr. Wes' estate

*25th Sunday after Pentecost*

**Sunday** **November 6** **Tone 8**
Third Hour 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Ephesians 4:1-6 & Luke 8: 41-56
*Intention-* Parishioners of St. Thomas

*26th Week after Pentecost*

**Monday** **November 7**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Paremia readings: (1) Joshua 5: 13-15; (2) Judges 6, 2, 7, 11-24; and (3) Isaiah 14: 7-20
Hebrews 2:2-10 & Luke 10:16-21
*Intention-* + Sir Michael Bacovcin by Peter & Anna Broznak

**Saturday** **November 12**
Memorial Divine Liturgy for the deceased 9:00 a.m.
1 Thessalonians 4: 13-17 & John 5: 24-30
*Intention-* +Evelia Muniz Sosa by Hope Esperanza Lopez

**Saturday** **November 12**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy 5:00 p.m.
*Intention* - +Monta Lee Tomley by Nicholas and Andrea Kowalczyk

*26th Sunday after Pentecost*

**Sunday** **November 13** **Tone 1**
Third Hour 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Ephesians 5:9-19 & Luke 10:25-37
*Intention-* Parishioners of St. Thomas
Potluck Sunday

*27th Week after Pentecost*

**Wednesday** **November 16**
Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew
Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
1 Corinthians 4: 9-16 & Matthew 9: 9-13
*Intention-* +Barbara Bronson by Ted & Christy Bronson

**Saturday** **November 19**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy 5:00 p.m.
*Intention* - +Wilma Ihnat by Fr. & Mrs. Michael Kirila

*27th Sunday after Pentecost*

**Sunday** **November 20** **Tone 2**
Third Hour 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Ephesians 6:10-17 & Luke 12:16-21
*Intention-* Parishioners of St. Thomas

*28th Week after Pentecost*

**Monday** **November 21**
*Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple*
Festal Matins 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Hebrews 9:1-7 & Luke 10:38-42 & 11:27-28
*Intention-* In thanksgiving for Diane Hvasta by Doreene Stacy

**Thursday** **November 24** ***Thanksgiving Day***
Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.
1 Timothy 6:6-11, 17-19 & Luke 12:13-15, 22-31 [or Luke 12:42-48]
*Intention-* In thanksgiving for our country of America by Fr. Michael Bezruchka

**Saturday** **November 26**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy 5:00 p.m.
*Intention* - for the health of Doreene Stacy by Mike & Barb Little

*28th Sunday after Pentecost*

**Sunday** **November 27** **Tone 3**
Third Hour 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Colossians 1:12-18 & Luke 13:10-17
*Intention-* Parishioners of St. Thomas

*29th Week after Pentecost*

**Wednesday** **November 30**
*Holy and Glorious Apostle Andrew the First-Called*
Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
1 Corinthians 4:9-16 & John 1:35-51
*Intention-* Barnes Family by Ted & Christy Bronson

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PHILIP'S FAST:** It is the tradition of our Byzantine Catholic Church to fast in preparation for Christmas beginning November 15. Although the fast is optional, the season is penitential in our Ruthenian Metropolia in America. The traditional fast is to abstain from meat and dairy all days of the fast through Christmas Eve's Holy Supper, and to abstain from wine and oil on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The minimum fasting required by the Church for most of the year is abstinence from meat on Fridays since Jesus died on the Cross on Good Friday. Eating no meat on Wednesday is also encouraged throughout most of the year as the betrayal of Judas began two days before Good Friday. We are encouraged to prepare for Christmas by doing MORE than the minimum our Ruthenian Church requires. Fasting helps us empty ourselves of sin to make room for God in our hearts. For this reason, our fast must be accompanied by prayer. Prayer and fasting will bear fruit in great spiritual joy on the glorious feast of the birth of our Savior. So let's get ready!

**BURIAL, CREMATION, AND RESURRECTION:** On October 25, the Vatican published new instructions explaining why burial is preferable to cremation, how cremation must be handled and proper burial of cremated remains. Bishop John requests that you read these important instructions. See the flyers in the narthex or online in PDF format.

**SPECIAL INTENTION ENVELOPES:** Please do not drop your special intention requests for prayers into the same basket with the Sunday collection, UNLESS you use the envelopes in the narthex entitled Intention for Divine Liturgy. The money placed in the special intention envelope is a stipend for the priest, who will then pray for your intention at a Divine Liturgy. You must write what the Liturgy intention is for or write something general such as "special intention for the living." The person writing the intention can even stay anonymous but something must be written on the envelope or else it will be treated as a tithe envelope. The priest prays at two prescribed places silently for that intention, though he is free to pray for that intention before and after Divine Liturgy as well.

**The Sunday Collection basket** is for donations to the church for tithes, building fund, etc. Please use your numbered envelope. If you do not have your envelope, you may use a blank envelope or a general envelope from the narthex, NOT a Liturgy Intention envelope. Using the correct envelope will remove confusion between donations to the parish and your personal special intention requests.

**HOW TO CONTACT THE PASTOR:** Call the OFFICE phone, 480-497-6726. Press 1 to reach the parish office. Press 2 to be forwarded to Fr. Michael's cell phone. If you have the rectory number, 480-584-6676, please delete it, as it is part of an alarm system and has no voice mail set up. If you find that number in an old published parish directory, cross it out. Remember, the office phone is always listed on the front page of the bulletin.

**CLASSES IN THE PARISH HALL:** For anyone wishing to view the eparchial online classes together with other parishioners, you are invited to join us on Tuesday nights at 8pm in the hall: Nov 8, 15, 22, 29 and Dec. 13. Special note: On Thursday, Dec. 15 at 7pm, Fr. Michael will give his class at the hall on the Traditions of Christmas and Theophany while it is broadcast online.
REGISTER FOR ONLINE CLASSES: If you prefer to view the classes online, registration is still open. The second Tuesday night course series begins November 8; there are also individual, one-time classes on various Thursdays. For more information and to register for Fall 2016 Online Adult Education Classes, visit: http:// eparchyofphoenix.org /faith_formation

ECF BIBLIOGRAPHY: We are still working on the ECF bibliography for catechesis at home. Please be patient. If you have any suggestions, there is still a little more time to send them to Kris Forbes at kris@krisforbes.com. Hurry! Deadline to submit ideas is November 9.

**VOTING:** There is much a stake at this election and we should not be ignorant of what is more important. If you need guidance in forming your conscience for voting in this election, please pick up the "Catholics in the Public Square" short booklet in the narthex. Whoever wins the election also needs our prayers. Thank you!

**SPECIAL TOURS AND DIVINE LITURGIES**: Parishioners are encouraged to join us for Divine Liturgies at 7:45am on Thursday, Nov. 3 and Friday, Nov. 4. These are for Seton Catholic Prep students who want to learn more about our Byzantine Catholic Church. Liturgies will be followed by an educational tour of our church.

**SILENT AUCTION AND OKTOBERFEST** - Our Oktoberfest was incredible!! Great food, company, and fun; beautiful decorations; and wonderful auction items that raised much-needed money for our parish. Donors included regional companies and parishioners: AP Nursery, Baci Italian Bistro, Basha's, Buca di Bepo, Charleston's, Cheddars Restaurant, Claim Jumper Restaurant, Grimaldi's Pizza, AZ Diamondbacks, Desert Botanical Garden, Freddy's, Flancer's Restaurant, Garcia's Mexican Restaurant, Gilbert House, Joyride Taco, Longhorn Steakhouse, Nando's Mexican Restaurant, Native Grill & Wings, Olive Garden, Outback Steakhouse, On The Border Mexican Restaurant, The Perch, Red Lobster, Rigatony's, Sal's Gilbert Pizza, Someburro's, Trader Joe's, TC Eggington's, Teakwoods, Thisty Lion Gastro Pub, Treeland Nursery, Va Bene Italian Restaurant, Valle Luna, Vincintorio's, Whitfill Nursery.

Parishioners and friend donors included: Antonios Family, Carole Bullock, Martha Coonrod, Al Ferencz, Forbes Family, Cal & Deb Karnya, Nicole Hvasta, Jeff Sims, Marilyn Reiling, Deacon Michael & Donna Sullivan, Liz Zackowski, Doreen Stacy, Charlie & Carol Rawlins, Kathy Richard.

Thank you to all who helped plan and cook the delicious food! An especially big thank you to Liz and Martha for organizing the sophisticated silent auction! If you would like to share your photos, please email them to Martha Coonrod (unasenorita @gmail.com), Liz, or Fr. Michael.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PARISH ADVISORY BOARD:** Bishop John Pazak has approved eight members for the parish advisory board for a three year term. We thank them for serving the parish in this capacity.

**HOLY SUPPER:** A sign up sheet for Holy Supper with different food items will be posted in the hall. Please don't be afraid to try a new recipe. See Liz Zackowski for recipes.

**PRIEST MEDICAL INSURANCE COLLECTION:** Every parish pays $1,100 per month to the eparchy, which partially covers health insurance premiums for the active and retired priests of our eparchy. Each month the eparchy absorbs the extra cost and, each year, asks for additional contributions to cover these extra costs. Bishop John requests that we contribute $100 per family. Some can give more, others less. Please give something. We will take up this collection both on October 30 and November 6. Thank you!

**NEED HELP WITH COFFEE SOCIALS:** More people are needed to help with setting up and bringing food or snacks for the coffee socials. Please call Liz (480) 759-1070 or email her (lizzack74@gmail.com) for more information or to help.

**BISHOP APPEAL REBATE:** We received $6,017 from the eparchy as a 30% rebate of the funds collected and submitted for the Bishop's Appeal. Thank you for your generosity in helping our bishop. As you can see, it pays big dividends for our parish too!

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

- Saturday, Dec 10: Church cleaning & decorating
- Sunday, Dec. 11: St. Nicholas visits (8:30am - 3:00pm): need 15-20 helpers. Lunch provided.
- Saturday, Dec 17: Holy Supper with Nativity Play
- Friday, Dec. 23: Royal Hours - 7:00 pm
- Saturday, Dec 24: Christmas Eve vigil - 7:00 pm
- Sunday, Dec 25: Divine Liturgy - 10:00 am.

**MASTER CALENDAR:** For those who want to plan ahead for the year, we have printed a master calendar of the liturgical schedule and parish activities. It is subject to change, but, for the most part, we will follow this calendar through August 2017. Copies are available in the back of the hall. If you subscribe to Kathy Richard's weekly bulletin email, we ask that you kindly download and print the electronic version. Thank you!

**YEAR OF MERCY CONCLUDING SOON:** This important Jubilee Year dedicated to God's mercy concludes on November 20. The Lord desires to show us His immense, great mercy. But we need to recognize our need for Him and make room. We especially need to offer up our lowliness and failures to Him so He can transform it into a life filled with His love and life. Glory to Jesus Christ whose love for us is incredible!

## Remember Those Who Request Our Prayers

*O Divine Physician of Souls and Body, rest your healing and protecting hand upon your servants:*

Teresa Smith, †Joseph & Anna Hrynik, †Walter Hrynik, †John Hrynik, Luisa Garcia, Linda Garcia, Nena Desantos, Russell Hook, Deacon Michael Melnick, †Wilma Ihnat, Jason & Joshua Kowalczyk, Beth Hicks, †Patty Prestash, Olga Silva, Ted Bronson, Ana Maria Olvera † Msgr. Michael Nestor and Lawrence Ybarra, †Fr. Wes Izer, Art Krueger, Ilija Seat, Elaine E. and Fr. John Coleman & Carrie Thornton, †Barbara Bronson, Eleanor Shields, Teresa Rojero, Rosemary Ziarkowski, Helen Fellin, Lou Fellin, James Devlin, †Pete Nelson, Terence J. Faust, Clementina Mendoza, James Young, Cathy Simpson, †Marge Bobick, William Glenn, Dorothy Imlej, †Rev. Michael T. Bell, Mark Stefanski, Helen Dinegar, Paul John Hetherington, Hannah Joes, Fr. Fausto, Eric Shark, Kay William, Mary Ada, OFM, B.K. Burnette, Bob Sherman, Mary Kowalczyk, Kevin McBride, Lisa Kirila Mendez, Jonathan Coonrod, Sylvia Gutierrez, Elaine Brown, Linskey Family, Viviana Rodarte, Renata Paloian, OSBM, Monica Harris, Mike Little, Olga Chapkevich, Jerrine Sauntry, Alwyne Holder, Fr. Phil Acquaro, Fr. Chris Zugger, Alexandra, †John Bacovcin, Anita Batean, Bonnie Bennett, Mark D. Chapa, Michael Chapa, Ed Corwin, Gerald & Helen Dunn, Elizabeth Glenn, Nikki Heminway, Virginia Hill, Sonny Hopkins, Jaclyn Lentz, Anne-Marie Krytiuk, Erica Lupe, Richard Marchant (Al & Helen Ferencz' son-inlaw), Alice Posivy (Bullock), Lara Sparling-Ott, Carley Spears, Lorraine Teeling, Henry Zugger, Yoshiko, and all in the service of our country, especially from our parish family: Scott Karnya, Sam Karnya, Adam Young, Brandon Eyres (Michael & Anne Bacovcin's grandson), Patrick Whalen (Doreene Stacy's grandson), and the Mother of Reg Parker,

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|---|---|
| Julia Aguayo | Nov. 3 |
| Anne Bacovcin | Nov. 3 |
| Kris Forbes | Nov. 3 |
| Caroline Bronson | Nov. 3 |
| Paul Antonios | Nov. 6 |
| Jacob Aguayo | Nov. 8 |
| Florence Park | Nov. 10 |
| Danny Forbes | Nov. 12 |
| Lynn Sims | Nov. 16 |
| Beth Hicks | Nov. 17 |
| Dennis Bondra | Nov. 21 |
| Mignon Louise Thurow | Nov. 22 |
| Nicole Hvasta | Nov. 30 |

### ANNIVERSARIES

| | |
|---|---|
| Jeff & Janet Park | Nov. 7 |

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# Presentation of the Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation, 25.10.2016

This morning a press conference was held in the Holy See Press Office to present the Instruction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled *Ad resurgendum cum Christo*, regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation. The panel was composed of Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Fr. Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P., secretary of the International Theological Commission; and Msgr. Angel Rodríguez Luño, consulter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The document, as Cardinal Müller noted, is addressed to the bishops of the Catholic Church, but directly regards the life of all faithful, in part since in many countries there has been a continual increase in the number of requests for cremation rather than burial, and it is likely that in the near future cremation will be considered a commonplace practice. This development is accompanied by another phenomenon: the conservation of ashes in domestic environments, as commemorative items or their dispersal in nature.

The ecclesiastical legislation on the cremation of cadavers is regulated by the Code of Canon Law, which states: "The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the deceased be observed; nevertheless, the Church does not prohibit cremation unless it was chosen for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine". "Here it is necessary to reveal that, despite this rule, the practice of cremation is significantly widespread also within the Catholic Church. With regard to the practice of conserving ashes, no specific canon law exists. For this reason, some episcopal conferences have addressed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, raising troubling questions regarding the practices of conserving a funerary urn in the home or in places other than the cemetery, and especially that of dispersing ashes in nature".

"After consultation with the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts and numerous episcopal conferences and Synods of bishops of the Eastern Churches, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith considered it appropriate to publish a new Instruction with a dual aim: to reiterate the doctrinal and pastoral reasons for the preference for the burial of the dead, and secondly, to issue rules for guidance on the conservation of ashes in the case of cremation".

"The Church, first of all, continues to recommend strongly that the bodies of the deceased be buried in the cemetery or in another sacred place. In the remembrance of the death, burial and resurrection of

the Lord, inhumation continues to be the most suitable form for expressing faith and the hope in bodily resurrection. Furthermore, the burial in cemeteries or other sacred places responds adequately to the piety and respect due to the bodies of the deceased faithful. Taking care of the bodies of the departed, the Church confirms her faith in resurrection and distances herself from attitudes and rites the see death as the definitive annulment of the person, a phase in the process of reincarnation or as a fusion of the soul with the universe".

"If for legitimate reasons the decision is made to cremate a cadaver, the ashes of the faithful must be conserved in a sacred place, that is, in a cemetery or in a church, or in an area specifically dedicated for the purpose. The conservation of ashes in the home is not permitted. Only in the case of grave and exceptional circumstances, in agreement with the episcopal conference or the Synod of bishops, may permission be granted for the conservation of ashes in the domestic environment. To avoid any form of pantheistic, naturalistic or nihilistic misunderstanding, it is not permitted to scatter ashes in the air, on earth, in water or in any other way, or to convert the cremated ashes into any form of commemorative item".

"It is hoped that this new Instruction may contribute to making Christian faithful more aware of their dignity as children of God. We are faced with a new challenge for the evangelisation of death. Acceptance on the part of the human person of being a creature, not destined for disappearance, demands that God is recognised as the origin and destiny of human existence: from the earth we come and to the earth we return, awaiting resurrection. It is therefore necessary to evangelise the meaning of death in the light of faith in the Risen Christ, ardent furnace of love, that purifies and recreates, awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. As Tertullian wrote, 'The resurrection of the dead is Christian men's confidence: by believing it we are what we claim to be'".

Fr. Bonino, in his presentation, emphasised that the practice of burial, on account of its high anthropological and symbolic meaning, harmonises on the one hand with the mystery of resurrection and, on the other, with Christian teaching on the dignity of the human body.

"As affirmed in the Gospel accounts, between the pre-Paschal Jesus and the risen Jesus, there are simultaneously discontinuity and continuity. Discontinuity, because the body of Jesus after resurrection is in a new state and has properties that are no longer those of the body in its earthly condition, to the point that neither Mary Magdalene nor the disciples recognise Him. But at the same, the body of the risen Jesus is that body that was born of the Virgin Mary, crucified and buried, and bears the traces. … Therefore, it is impossible to deny the real continuity between the buried body and the risen body, a sign that historical existence, both that of Jesus and our own, is not a game; it is not abolished by eschatology, but rather is transfigured. Christian resurrection is not therefore a reincarnation of the soul in an indifferent body; nor is it an *ex nihilo* recreation. The Church has never ceased to affirm that it is precisely the body in which we live and die that will be revived on the final day. Besides, it is the reason why the Christian people, guided by the *sensus fidei*, likes to venerate the relics of saints. These are not a simple memorial kept on a shelf, but are instead linked to the identity of the saint, once the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and await resurrection. Certainly, we are aware that even if the material continuity should be interrupted, as is the case in cremation, God is powerful enough to reconstitute our body precisely from our immortal soul alone, which guarantees the continuity of our identity between the moment of death and the moment of resurrection. But it remains that, at the symbolic level – and man is a symbolic animal – continuity is expressed in the most appropriate way by means of burial, 'a grain of wheat [that] falls in to the earth', rather than by cremation, which destroys the body brutally".

"Christianity, religion of incarnation and resurrection, promotes what the Instruction calls 'the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person whose body forms part of their identity'. … For Christian faith, the body is not all the person but it is an integral and essential part of

his or her identity. Indeed, the body is like the sacrament of the soul that is expressed in it and by means of it. As such, the body forms part of the intrinsic dignity of the human person and the respect due to it. This is why burying the dead is, already in the Old Testament, one of the works of mercy with regard to one's neighbour. The integral ecology that the contemporary world yearns for should therefore begin with respecting the body, which is not an object for manipulation according to our will for power, but rather our humble companion for eternity".

Msgr. Angel Rodríguez Luño, referring to the question of the scattering of ashes, remarked that it is a decision that "often depends on the idea that with death the human being is completely annihilated, as if it were its final destiny. At times it may even proceed from mere superficiality, from the desire to obscure or privatise that which refers to death, or from the spread of more than questionable tastes. It may be objected that in some case the decision to conserve in one's own home the ashes of a dear departed relative (parent, wife, husband, child) is inspired by the desire for closeness and piety, that it facilitates memory and prayer. It is not the most frequent reason, but in some case it may be this way. There is, however, the risk that it may produce forgetfulness or lack of respect, especially once the first generation has passed, or may give rise to unhealthy forms of mourning. But above all it must be observed that the departed faithful form part of the Church, they are the object of prayer and commemoration by the living, and it is right that their remains be received by the Church and conserved with respect throughout the centuries in the places that the Church blesses for the purpose, without being removed from the memory and prayer of other relatives and the community".

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Joint Press Release of the Argentine Episcopal Conference and the Holy See

Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation

Christians and Hindus: Promoting hope among families

Other Pontifical Acts

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# Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation, 25.10.2016

The following is the full text of the Instruction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "*Ad resurgendum cum Christo*", regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation, published today and signed by Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller and Archbishop Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, respectively prefect and secretary of the dicastery.

1. To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must "be away from the body and at home with the Lord". With the Instruction Piam et Constantem of 5 July 1963, the then Holy Office established that "all necessary measures must be taken to preserve the practice of reverently burying the faithful departed", adding however that cremation is not "opposed per se to the Christian religion" and that no longer should the sacraments and funeral rites be denied to those who have asked that they be cremated, under the condition that this choice has not been made through "a denial of Christian dogmas, the animosity of a secret society, or hatred of the Catholic religion and the Church". Later this change in ecclesiastical discipline was incorporated into the Code of Canon Law (1983) and the Code of Canons of Oriental Churches (1990).

During the intervening years, the practice of cremation has notably increased in many countries, but simultaneously new ideas contrary to the Church's faith have also become widespread. Having consulted the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts and numerous Episcopal Conferences and Synods of Bishops of the Oriental Churches, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has deemed opportune the publication of a new Instruction, with the intention of underlining the doctrinal and pastoral reasons for the preference of the burial of the remains of the faithful and to set out norms pertaining to the conservation of ashes in the case of cremation.

2. The resurrection of Jesus is the culminating truth of the Christian faith, preached as an essential part of the Paschal Mystery from the very beginnings of Christianity: "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve".

Through his death and resurrection, Christ freed us from sin and gave us access to a new life, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life". Furthermore, the risen Christ is the principle and source of our future resurrection: "Christ has been

raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep […] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive".

It is true that Christ will raise us up on the last day; but it is also true that, in a certain way, we have already risen with Christ. In Baptism, actually, we are immersed in the death and resurrection of Christ and sacramentally assimilated to him: "You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead". United with Christ by Baptism, we already truly participate in the life of the risen Christ.

Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning. The Christian vision of death receives privileged expression in the liturgy of the Church: "Indeed for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended, and, when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven". By death the soul is separated from the body, but in the resurrection God will give incorruptible life to our body, transformed by reunion with our soul. In our own day also, the Church is called to proclaim her faith in the resurrection: "The confidence of Christians is the resurrection of the dead; believing this we live".

3. Following the most ancient Christian tradition, the Church insistently recommends that the bodies of the deceased be buried in cemeteries or other sacred places.

In memory of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord, the mystery that illumines the Christian meaning of death, burial is above all the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body.

The Church who, as Mother, has accompanied the Christian during his earthly pilgrimage, offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of her grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope, the seed of the body that will rise in glory.

By burying the bodies of the faithful, the Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body, and intends to show the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person whose body forms part of their identity. She cannot, therefore, condone attitudes or permit rites that involve erroneous ideas about death, such as considering death as the definitive annihilation of the person, or the moment of fusion with Mother Nature or the universe, or as a stage in the cycle of regeneration, or as the definitive liberation from the "prison" of the body.

Furthermore, burial in a cemetery or another sacred place adequately corresponds to the piety and respect owed to the bodies of the faithful departed who through Baptism have become temples of the Holy Spirit and in which "as instruments and vessels the Spirit has carried out so many good works".

Tobias, the just, was praised for the merits he acquired in the sight of God for having buried the dead, and the Church considers the burial of dead one of the corporal works of mercy.

Finally, the burial of the faithful departed in cemeteries or other sacred places encourages family members and the whole Christian community to pray for and remember the dead, while at the same time fostering the veneration of martyrs and saints.

Through the practice of burying the dead in cemeteries, in churches or their environs, Christian tradition has upheld the relationship between the living and the dead and has opposed any tendency to minimise, or relegate to the purely private sphere, the event of death and the meaning it has for Christians.

4. In circumstances when cremation is chosen because of sanitary, economic or social considerations,

this choice must never violate the explicitly-stated or the reasonably inferable wishes of the deceased faithful. The Church raises no doctrinal objections to this practice, since cremation of the deceased's body does not affect his or her soul, nor does it prevent God, in his omnipotence, from raising up the deceased body to new life. Thus cremation, in and of itself, objectively negates neither the Christian doctrine of the soul's immortality nor that of the resurrection of the body.

The Church continues to prefer the practice of burying the bodies of the deceased, because this shows a greater esteem towards the deceased. Nevertheless, cremation is not prohibited, "unless it was chosen for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine".

In the absence of motives contrary to Christian doctrine, the Church, after the celebration of the funeral rite, accompanies the choice of cremation, providing the relevant liturgical and pastoral directives, and taking particular care to avoid every form of scandal or the appearance of religious indifferentism.

5. When, for legitimate motives, cremation of the body has been chosen, the ashes of the faithful must be laid to rest in a sacred place, that is, in a cemetery or, in certain cases, in a church or an area, which has been set aside for this purpose, and so dedicated by the competent ecclesial authority.

From the earliest times, Christians have desired that the faithful departed become the objects of the Christian community's prayers and remembrance. Their tombs have become places of prayer, remembrance and reflection. The faithful departed remain part of the Church who believes "in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church".

The reservation of the ashes of the departed in a sacred place ensures that they are not excluded from the prayers and remembrance of their family or the Christian community. It prevents the faithful departed from being forgotten, or their remains from being shown a lack of respect, which eventuality is possible, most especially once the immediately subsequent generation has too passed away. Also it prevents any unfitting or superstitious practices.

6. For the reasons given above, the conservation of the ashes of the departed in a domestic residence is not permitted. Only in grave and exceptional cases dependent on cultural conditions of a localized nature, may the Ordinary, in agreement with the Episcopal Conference or the Synod of Bishops of the Oriental Churches, concede permission for the conservation of the ashes of the departed in a domestic residence. Nonetheless, the ashes may not be divided among various family members and due respect must be maintained regarding the circumstances of such a conservation.

7. In order that every appearance of pantheism, naturalism or nihilism be avoided, it is not permitted to scatter the ashes of the faithful departed in the air, on land, at sea or in some other way, nor may they be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewellery or other objects. These courses of action cannot be legitimised by an appeal to the sanitary, social, or economic motives that may have occasioned the choice of cremation.

8. When the deceased notoriously has requested cremation and the scattering of their ashes for reasons contrary to the Christian faith, a Christian funeral must be denied to that person according to the norms of the law.

The Sovereign Pontiff Francis, in the Audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect on 18 March 2016, approved the present Instruction, adopted in the Ordinary Session of this Congregation on 2 March 2016, and ordered its publication.

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 15 August 2016, the

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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Joint Press Release of the Argentine Episcopal Conference and the Holy See

Presentation of the Instruction Ad resurgendum cum Christo regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation

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