



## **SSPP COLUMBARIUM AND CEMETERY FAQs**

Updated April 30, 2021

### ***1. What is the Catholic Church's stance on Cremation?***

The Vatican lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics to choose cremation in the 1960s. In lifting the ban, the Vatican promoted the philosophy that the remains of the cremated bodies are to be treated with the same respect given to the corporeal remains of a human body.

The practice of scattering cremated remains or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. Respectful final disposition of cremated remains involves interment (burial) or inurnment, most typically in a columbarium niche. In all cases, the Church requires that the human remains be treated with due reverence.

### ***2. Will this cemetery and columbarium be consecrated?***

Yes, it will be liturgically blessed as a sacred ground for Christian interment or inurnment.

### ***3. How do I select and purchase a niche or plot?***

The SSPP Columbarium & Cemetery Committee will work with you to show you which plots and niches remain available for sale and will work through the paperwork with you. You can reach the Committee by calling the Parish Office at (410) 822-2344 and leaving a message or emailing the Committee at [SSPPCemetery@SSPPEaston.org](mailto:SSPPCemetery@SSPPEaston.org)

***4. How do I make a memorial gift in honor of a loved one or a donation in support of this Sacred Place?***

A donation of any size or gift in honor of a loved one is a special way to help support this Sacred Place. Gifts can come in the form of a naming opportunity, a memorial gift, or upon the death of a loved one, mourners can be directed to donate to the Columbarium & Cemetery in lieu of flowers. A list of naming opportunities can be found on the website, but please call the Parish office for the most current list.

Whether making a one-time gift, recurring gift, or pledge payments, donors can write a check made out to "SSPP Columbarium & Cemetery," donate stock, or by using the Parish's online donation service, pay by credit card, debit card, or the debit of one's checking account. Simply go to the We Share website <https://ssppeaston.weshareonline.org/> and click on the Sacred Place Columbarium & Cemetery box. For instructions on how to donate stock, please call the Parish office.

***5. Does the SSPP Cemetery offer 'green burials?'***

Yes. You should consult with the funeral home handling your funeral arrangements for details of their requirements. SSPP Cemetery does require an outer burial container, such as a grave liner.

***6. Is it better to purchase a plot or niche at time of need or in advance?***

That is a very personal and often economic decision. However, purchasing a plot or niche in advance of need provides peace of mind and assures loved ones that you are at peace with your eternal resting place. It may also reduce the financial burden on your loved ones.

***7. I have already purchased a niche or plot elsewhere but would like to switch to SSPP. Is that possible?***

Many cemeteries are willing to repurchase a niche or plot at your original cost. Some cemeteries may charge an administrative fee for this. You should check with your existing cemetery provider for their details

***8. I am not a Parishioner, nor am I Catholic. Am I able to purchase a niche or columbarium?***

Yes, the SSPP Columbarium and Cemetery niches and plots are available for purchase by people of all faiths.

***9. How many niches or plots are available for purchase now and over time?***

The columbarium and cemetery are designed to expand over time. The initial phase of the columbarium to be completed in 2021 will accommodate 250 companion niches in the walled **Memorial Garden**. As demand warrants, the decorative fencing installed between the brick columns in the Garden will be replaced with additional niche walls. Ultimately, the Memorial Garden will accommodate a total of 850 niches. The **Pavilion** will also be completed in 2021 and will initially offer 84 companion niches and ultimately, a total of 168 niches. All niches are designed to accommodate at least two urns.

In 2021, 123 plots will be available in the **Pieta Garden**, the section of the cemetery reserved for flat granite or bronze markers. An additional 92 graves will be available in the **Monument Garden**, the section reserved for granite headstones or family monuments. As demand warrants additional sections will be opened in both Gardens. Ultimately, the graveyard is designed to accommodate a total of approximately 384 graves.

Each grave is single depth only. A traditional casket burial and a single cremated remains burial may be interred in one plot. A plot is not intended for burial of cremated remains without a casket burial as well.

***10. What is the size of niches and what size urns will fit?***

All of the niches are designed to accommodate at least two urns. The exterior granite memorial face plate of every niche measures approximately 12" x 12" square. The interior dimensions of all but the bottom row of niches is just shy of 12" square. Most funeral homes will work with families to help select an urn that is appropriate for the niche.

To accommodate design and construction requirements, the interior height of the niches on the lowest row of each columbarium wall is shorter and will require smaller urns.

***11. What is the price of a niche and plot and what does it include?***

Please see the Price List for current pricing and details. The price of each niche or plot includes a perpetual care endowment. The price does not include costs related to the opening and closing of a plot or niche, the engraving of names on niches, nor grave site location markers, memorials or memorial foundations.

***12. When and how do I pay for my purchase?***

Payment is due in full at time of purchase. At this point we are only able to accept personal or credit card checks or money orders.

***13. What does my purchase entitle me to?***

Niche and grave site owners own a right to inurnment or burial only. Niche and grave site owners are not conferred any property rights in the columbarium, in any of its niches, or the cemetery, in any of its graves or burial sites, or in any of Saints Peter & Paul's property. Legal title to the

Columbarium and to all niches and to the Cemetery and to all graves or burial sites is held by SSPP at all times.

***14. What happens if my plans change after purchasing a plot or niche?***

Saints Peter and Paul will purchase the unused niche or plot at your original cost less that portion of the original purchase price that was allocated to the perpetual care endowment.

***15. Is it possible to have my pet buried or inurned with me?***

Yes, subject to certain terms. For details, see the Rules & Regulations.

***16. Who is responsible for the maintenance of grounds?***

The columbarium and cemetery are owned by Saints Peter & Paul Parish and the Parish is responsible for maintenance and perpetual care. The SSPP Columbarium & Cemetery perpetual care endowment will also provide funding.

***17. Who will manage the sales, administration, and record keeping?***

The Parish owns the columbarium and cemetery and is ultimately responsible for all aspects of this venture. The Parish is supported by a volunteer committee called the SSPP Columbarium & Cemetery Committee who will assist in the sales and administration.

The Parish has contracted with PlotBox, one of the largest cemetery and columbarium software providers in the world, to provide state of the art permanent and redundant record keeping. This software provider's services will enable the Parish to add a "Gravefinder" feature to its website in the future.

## ***18. Who Designed and is Building the Columbarium and Cemetery?***

Craig Reichbauer, of Reichbauer Studio, PLC in Richmond, Virginia was the landscape architect who developed the original concept plan and designed the columbarium and layout of the graveyard. Craig has been involved with several columbaria projects including the University of Richmond Columbarium and several Virginia parishes.

Greg Torchio, of Torchio Architects in Centreville, MD was the architect of the columbarium pavilion. Eickhof Columbaria Inc. is the niche fabricator.

Willow Construction of Easton, MD is the general contractor.

## ***19. How does the cost of cremation and inurnment compare to the cost of a traditional burial?***

What one spends on a funeral varies widely based on location and personal preferences. But, in general, the all-in costs related to cremation and inurnment are lower than a traditional full body burial, even after the higher cost of the columbarium niche is factored in. The difference in costs is magnified if considering these costs as a couple. Grave plots are single depth and a niche can hold at least two urns.

According to the National Funeral Directors Association's latest data\* for 2019, funeral costs related to cremation run about half of those associated with a full body burial. These NFDA costs for full body burial do not include the cost of opening/closing the grave, tent, grave location markers, the cost of the headstone or flat marker and its foundation, or the cost of a grave plot. The NFDA costs related to cremation do not include the nominal fee of opening/closing the niche, the engraving of the niche faceplate, or the cost of the niche.

\*<https://www.nfda.org/news/statistics>