

## ***Deacon Mike's Ask the Deacon Queen's Messenger Article for April, 2017***

### ***Can Catholics be cremated?***

Early Christians opposed Cremation because pagans often cremated their dead as a sign of disdain for the Christian's belief in the physical resurrection of the body. To protect belief in this doctrine of faith, the Church forbade cremation. That prohibition was lifted in 1963.

The Church still strongly recommends that the faithful be buried, but Catholics may be cremated so long as cremation does not demonstrate a denial of belief in the resurrection of the body (See the Catechism of the Catholic Church #2301)

Additionally, ***the cremated remains must be reposed in an appropriate cemetery facility***, and not set upon the house mantel as a conversation item or scattered in the "rose garden" etc.

### ***A seventh Day Adventist told me that when a person dies, they are asleep and aware of nothing. Does the Bible really teach this?***

No. Those who hold to "soul sleep" assert that once a person dies, they enter a state of unconsciousness until the second coming. Some use this claim to argue the saints can't intercede for us, since they are supposedly asleep.

However, Isaiah 14:9-10 tells us that the dead are agitated and are speaking. 1 Samuel 28 tells of Samuel conversing with Saul after his death. In 1 Peter 3:19, Jesus preaches to souls in prison. Why preach to sleeping spirits? Talk about a bored audience!

Try telling the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 not to worry, since he is just sleeping! If the dead are just sleeping, one must ask how Jesus communicated with them during his Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3), how they offer our prayers to God (Rev. 5:8), how they cry out in a loud voice in praise of God (Rev. 7:10), and how these "sleeping unconscious souls" cry out, "How long will it be, holy and true master, before you sit in judgment and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" (Rev. 6:10)

***Those who have died and in heaven are more alive than we are***, and they surround us like a great cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12:1)!!!! The book of James tells us that the "prayers of a righteous man avails much". Who among us is more righteous than those in Heaven? Praying to them is a good practice for all of us.