



Bishop Hurley talks with students from Corpus Christi School in Holland

M

y dear friends,

All Souls Day and Cremation

On All Souls Day, Nov. 2, we remember in a special way those who have died. In many parishes a Book of Remembrance with the names of the deceased is put in a place of honor in the church during the month of November. It is not required but a worthy practice. It is our long and ancient tradition to pray for the dead.

One of the recent trends in our society has been the practice of cremation. Until the late 1960's it was forbidden and thought to be a denial of our belief in the resurrection. That, of course, is no longer true. However the Order for Christian Funerals provides some helpful guidance with regard to the practice of cremation. I thought some sections of the Order of Christian Funerals regarding cremation might be helpful given the growing practice in our own community.

"413. Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better

expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites."

"415. Sometimes, however, it is not possible for the body to be present for the Funeral Mass. When extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of a body the only feasible choice, pastoral sensitivity must be exercised by priests, deacons, and others who minister to the family of the deceased."

#417. The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, 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. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. Whenever possible, appropriate means for recording with dignity the memory of the deceased should be adopted, such as a plaque or stone which records the name of the deceased."

When the choice has been made to cremate a body, it is recommended that the cremation take place after the Funeral Liturgy. In this case, the Vigil for the Deceased and related rites and prayers, as well as the Funeral Liturgy

are celebrated as they are provided in this ritual.

Thanksgiving Day

November 25th is Thanksgiving Day, a special time for us to be thankful for all the blessings we have received. Though our society and the church face many difficult challenges, we have much for which to be thankful. We live as a people who believe that God walks with us and this is really the source of our hope.

New Year of Grace

Sunday, Nov. 28, is the First Sunday of Advent and the beginning of a new year of grace. As we begin this new year of grace, on Saturday, November 27, 2010, the Holy Father will celebrate "A Vigil for all Nascent Human Life" at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. He has asked us to join him in prayer on that day for the gift of human life. It is Thanksgiving weekend and many may be travelling, but I encourage all to share in this special prayer the purpose of which is to thank the Lord for his total self giving to the world and for his incarnation which gave every human life its worth and dignity. It is an opportunity to invoke the Lord's protection over every human being called into existence. I am most grateful for those who work tirelessly to build a culture of respect for every human life, from conception to natural death.

God's blessings to all,
Bishop Walter A. Hurley

Red Mass

AT CATHEDRAL OF SAINT ANDREW



A >> The Lawyer's Oath of Office is administered by U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr. who attended the Red Mass and delivered the keynote presentation at the dinner which followed.

B >> Renewing the oath - West Michigan judges and lawyers renew the Lawyer's Oath of Office at the conclusion of the Red Mass.

C >> Father Thomas Vesbit, Father R. Louis Stasker, Father Edward Hankiewicz, Father John Geaney, CSP, Monsignor William Duncan, and Bishop Walter Hurley listen as the Gospel is proclaimed during the Red Mass Oct. 25 at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew.



Photos by Carla Foster