

**DIRECTIVE ON THE INTERMENT OF
CREMATED REMAINS**

June 27, 1996

To: All the pastors, associate pastors and pastoral ministers of the Diocese of London

My Dear Friends:

I have recently been astounded and dismayed to learn that the ashes resulting from the cremation of deceased Catholics are frequently not buried. There is abundance evidence that some people are keeping ashes in their homes and that others are taking portions of the ashes for a piece of jewellery, for example, a locket. Such events are only comprehensible in the light of an astounding ignorance on the part of our people regarding the reverence owed to the bodies of the deceased.

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, consecrated in baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist to the service of God and destined for eternal life. It is totally inappropriate to use the remains of such consecrated bodies as mantle piece decorations or part of costume jewellery. This is a classical example of sentimental nonsense replacing fundamental doctrinal principle.

In the strongest possible terms, I exhort you to see to it that in any funeral rite in which you are involved, which concludes with cremation, that you take personal responsibility for advising the family of the appropriate treatment due to the sacred remains and that you make it your business to be present at and to assist at the Christian burial of the ashes.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. John Michael Sherlock
Bishop of London
