
Interchurch Families

BURIALS

Burial, or cremation followed by committal of the ashes at a later date, is, of course, a matter of personal choice; interchurch marriage partners will probably be aware of one another's feelings, and some will long ago have made a decision together. Some couples may have bought a plot in a local cemetery; others make arrangements at the time of the first funeral (see the stories of Frank and Felicity, Emily and Edward, and Gwen and Gerald in TWO CHURCHES – ONE FUNERAL, the first section of this pack).

Claire and Carl

Claire is a Roman Catholic married to Carl, an Anglican, living in British Columbia, Canada. They have bought a double plot in a Catholic cemetery. Afterwards Carl wondered if there might be some objection to his being interred there. The answer (from the diocese of Vancouver) was that there is absolutely no problem with Carl being buried beside his wife. This is so even if he were not worshipping either in his own or his wife's church. There is a recognition that the relationship between him and God is just that, between him and God. As the chancellor of the diocese said, "In death we are all made equal."

The fact that he is married to a Catholic wife makes him one with her, and he therefore has full rights to be buried beside her in the same unity of their marriage.

The Ecumenical Directory of the Southern African Bishops' Conference (1998) states:

"The burial of members of each other's churches should be determined on the local diocesan level. In terms of this *Directory* deceased members of other Christian churches may be buried with Catholic rites, especially in the case of a deceased spouse (DE n.120). Deceased Catholics may in turn be buried with the rites of another Christian church, should there be a justifying reason for doing so."



'You live in your marriage the hopes and difficulties of the path to Christian Unity.' *Pope John Paul II, York 1982*

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