

# How do you control your final wish - funeral pre-need planning

**By Bruce Hultquist**

*Article provided by the Redemptorists*

If you went to meet the Lord today, our Catholic faith affirms that the spiritual body would enter into eternal life. However, what would happen to the natural body that is left behind?

Families come into my office almost every day. They have endured a tragedy and are grieving their loss. All too often, the deceased did not prepare plans for after death and the burden is thrust upon the remaining loved ones in the midst of their heartache. Family and friends can be saved from the confusion and frustration of making an individual's final decisions by planning desires in advance.

Most people only think about their funeral when they must, most often after they have experienced a loss. Preparing for what happens to our bodies after death is just as important as preparing our souls for eternity. Pre-need planning allows a person to be in control of what will happen to the body after death. It is the best way to ensure that the individual's final wishes are met, from what is done with the body to how the deceased will be memorialized. There are hundreds of decisions to make when planning the funeral and burial. Advance planning allows time for a person to consider the options and make thoughtful decisions.

Pre-planning also alleviates the financial burden for surviving family members. The burial alone can cost from \$2,000 to \$12,000, a price that in most cases can only be financed at 0 percent interest if the person pre-plans. These expenses can be tailored to fit any budget and will protect from future price increases, which can add considerable expenses to today's burial costs. For example, in 1992, a purchase of two plots cost only \$350. Today, those same two plots are valued at more than \$3,200. A portion of this will be put into a perpetual care fund that ensures the well-being of the cemetery.

It is vitally important to prepare our spiritual bodies for eternity, but it is also essential to make arrangements for the natural body that is left behind. Taking the steps to pre-arrange will relieve surviving loved ones of a heavy emotional and financial burden.

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