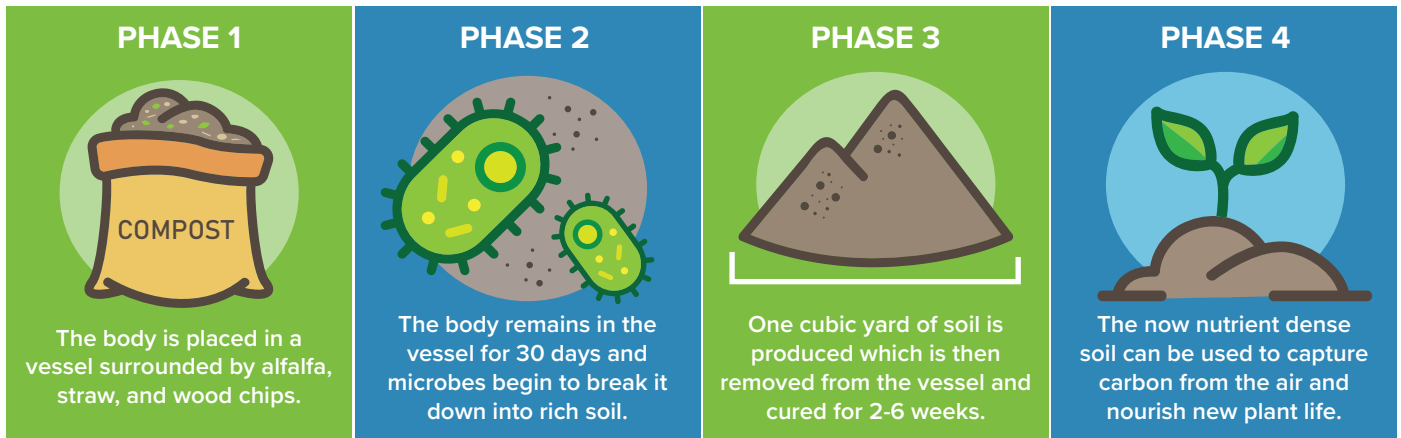




CATHOLIC CHURCH'S TEACHING ON HUMAN COMPOSTING

How Does Human Composting Work?



OVERVIEW

What is Human Composting?

Human composting is a process for the final disposition of human remains in which microbes convert a deceased body into compost. It is also called natural organic reduction or terramation.

As of 2024, It is currently legal in 7 states.

KEY POINTS FROM THE USCCB STATEMENT:

What does the Catholic Church teach?

The United States Conference of Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Doctrine stated in March 2023 titled: "On the Proper Disposition of Bodily Remains," which states in part: "The end result of the human composting process is also disconcerting, for there is nothing left but compost, nothing that can point to and identify as remains of the body." It also states, "There is nothing distinguishably left of the body to be placed in a casket or an urn and laid to rest in a sacred place where Christian faithful can visit for prayer and remembrance."

GUIDANCE FROM CATHOLIC CEMETERY CONFERENCE:

Based on the USCCB Guidance, the Catholic church does not promote or endorse the use of Human Composting, clearly stating that the process fails to show due respect to the bodily remains of the deceased in a way that gives visible witness to our faith and hope in the resurrection of the body.

PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Pastorally, suppose remains are presented to a Catholic Cemetery after the process. In that case, the Catholic cemetery cannot accept those remains since there is no body present that can be received. However, with the agreement of its Bishop, the Catholic Cemetery may allow for inscribing the name of the deceased loved one on a family memorial, preceded by "In Loving Memory of" or as explicitly allowed by the cemetery rules and regulations.