

Region's First Columbarium opens 30th October 2006

St John's Cathedral, Norwich is to open a unique and special place of repose for cremated remains.

What is believed to be the region's first designated 'Columbarium' in a cathedral will be blessed by Bishop Michael Evans, Bishop of East Anglia following Mass celebrated at the magnificent neo-Gothic cathedral on Wednesday 1st November, Feast of All Saints.

The Columbarium - the word was used in Roman times for places of burial and comes from the Latin word for 'dovecote', reflecting the shape of the fittings - is sited in the beautiful vaulted undercroft at the East End of the cathedral. Four finely worked bronze cabinets, designed by the Cathedral Architect, Russell Taylor, and constructed in Scotland by H & R Developments each contain over 90 special niches that will house cremation urns. Each niche will be commemorated by an individual plaque.

"A common sight in East Anglia is a cemetery around an ancient church, a reminder that the living and the dead are one family of God", said Bishop Michael. "Our new Columbarium serves the same purpose, a focus for loving remembrance and prayer for those who have gone before us and who are still one with us in the Risen Christ."

Paul Allcock, a local independent funeral director, added that the Columbarium would offer an ideal solution for those who preferred a more spiritual focus for their cremated remains. "Funeral Directors are frequently asked to suggest alternatives to the municipal facility for commemorating ashes. We are delighted to have this option, at long last."

The Columbarium will eventually have space for several thousand urns and provide a fitting place of rest for members of the Diocese of East Anglia and their loved ones who wish to be associated with their Cathedral.

You are invited to attend the Blessing on Wednesday 1st of November at the Cathedral

Unthank Road Norwich, following the 10am Mass. Bishop Michael and the Dean the Rev James Walsh will be available for interview and you will have a chance to look behind the scenes at this Grade I-listed Cathedral.

For further information please contact:

Naomi Perowne
01603 615288

Patrick Limacher
01603 624615

Or Richard Swallow Media Adviser
07774 270905