

City plans to bury bodies in Gosnell case

by [Sarah Pulliam Bailey](#) in the [July 10, 2013](#) issue

Despite repeated requests from religious leaders and antiabortion activists, city officials in Philadelphia plan to cremate and bury the 47 bodies recovered from the office of abortion provider Kermit Gosnell.

In May, Gosnell was convicted on three counts of first-degree murder. He waived his right to appeal but has 30 days to reconsider his decision.

Once the appeal period is over, on June 15, the city will follow its normal procedures by conducting cremation and burial, city spokesman Mark McDonald said. McDonald did not have information on when it would take place.

After Gosnell's arrest in 2011, Cardinal Justin Rigali petitioned the district attorney's office for the bodies of those aborted. The bodies were being retained for the trial. After it ended and Gosnell was sentenced to life in prison, Rigali's successor, Archbishop Charles Chaput, renewed the request to bury the bodies.

Francis Maier, special assistant to Chaput, said no city officials contacted the archdiocese regarding what they planned to do with the bodies. Maier said officials in the DA's office and medical examiner's office have not responded.

"I'm in the dark about what's going on," he said.

The case drew attention from across the country with gritty details about Gosnell's clinic. Investigators found bodies stuffed in cat litter, bags, boxes and juice containers. Prosecutors charged that Gosnell routinely performed late-term abortions and used scissors to puncture the spines of babies born alive. —RNS

This article was edited on June 28, 2013.