THE CATHOLIC CEMETERIES
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

Heritage

A newsletter for friends of The Catholic Cemeteries

Fall/Winter 2009

At death, the parish is a vital partner

Editor's note: *Catholic families have three main partners at the time of death of a loved one — funeral home, cemetery and parish. While each parish may have different procedures, all share a commitment to minister to the bereaved and to share the richness of the Order of Christian Funerals and its various rites. Whether you are planning funeral and burial arrangements in advance or at the time of death, it is important to remember that the parish plays a vital role, along with the funeral home and cemetery. This article profiles funeral planning at the time of death for families of one Catholic parish in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.*

Because death comes on its own timetable, Catholic parishes like Lumen Christi Catholic Community in St. Paul must be ready to respond at any time.

"When the phone rings, no matter how busy we are, we drop everything because a funeral takes precedence over just about every other activity of the parish," said Mia Ah Sani, pastoral minister at Lumen Christi, where 44 funerals were held last year.

"In some ways, planning a funeral is like planning a wedding, except it's done in just a few days," said Ah Sani. "There are so many things to plan and consider, at a time when families are in shock and very vulnerable."

Walking with and guiding families through this process is an integral part of Lumen Christi's bereavement ministry. It starts with the connection made in the initial phone call and continues through the many steps involved in planning the vigil, funeral and reception afterwards.

To be ready to respond on a moment's notice, Lumen Christi has crafted a worksheet that guides parish staff in their work with families who have just experienced a death. Besides addressing the basics of date, time and other logistics of the funeral itself, it also outlines the components of the Catholic funeral liturgy that must be determined — the selection of readings, Gospel message and music.

At a planning meeting with family members, Father Paul Feela, pastor of Lumen Christi, encourages the family to share stories about the deceased and to explore the faith dimensions of that person's life.

"We begin to hear examples how that person negotiated the struggles of life using faith. Oftentimes, the deceased was not overtly religious but the way he or she lived reflected the attitude of Christ in many ways," he said.

Continued on page 2

Mia Ah Sani

Father Paul Feela

Joan Gecik

You are invited...

Planning your funeral in advance

Have you ever thought about your own funeral? Doing some thinking about it and making preferences known can be a great help to families at the time of death.

The Catholic Cemeteries is hosting a session on pre-need planning of funerals in cooperation with the pastoral leadership of regional parishes, to be held Tuesday, December 1, 1-3 p.m., at Lumen Christi Catholic Community 2055 Bohland Ave., St. Paul. This event is free.

Speakers will include Father Paul Feela, pastor at Lumen Christi, on the Church's teaching about death. He is a former instructor of liturgy at the St. Paul Seminary. Vicki Klima will discuss the Order of Christian Funerals. She is currently on staff at Pax Christi parish and is the former director of the Worship Center for the Archdiocese.

The practical concerns of planning funerals will be discussed, with resources provided by The Catholic Cemeteries and area funeral homes. Participants will have the opportunity to visit with presenters and receive various materials to assist in planning.

Refreshments will be served. No reservations are necessary. For more information, call Sister Fran Donnelly, at The Catholic Cemeteries, 651-225-0537.

Pre-planning: Connecting with your parish

By Sister Fran Donnelly, B.V.M., Director of LifeTransition Ministries at the Catholic Cemeteries

Not only is pre-need planning a great gift to your loved ones, it also allows you the opportunity to reflect on the richness of the Church's rites and rituals, as well as God's promise of new life. Consider a conversation with someone from your parish as you contemplate your funeral needs.

- **Make an appointment with your pastor, the pastoral minister, the liturgist or other staff person in charge of funeral planning.**
- **Find out what guidelines the parish follows. Some parishes have a helpful checklist of things to be considered.**
- **Reflect on Scripture readings that are special to you. What Gospel story speaks to you of your own life? Ask for a list of the optional readings for a funeral in your parish. Perhaps you can use that list as a means of meditation on your life and on what death means for Catholic Christians.**
- **What are the hymns and music that are used for funerals at your parish? Which ones do you think appropriate for your own celebration of new life?**
- **What members of your family and which friends do you want to have certain roles in the various services?**
- **If you have not made arrangements with a cemetery, consider calling The Catholic Cemeteries to review burial options.**
- **If you have not made prior arrangements with a specific funeral home, your parish may assist with recommendations.**

A gift of comfort and compassion

Lucille Ridley with her prayer shawl.

Knowing that Bill Ridley was seriously ill, Mia Ah Sani felt an urge to stop by and visit the family one day in April 2007. As the pastoral minister at Lumen Christi Catholic Church, Ah Sani also wanted to deliver a prayer shawl to Lucille Ridley, Bill's wife of 56 years.

Hand-knitted or crocheted by Lumen Christi members, the shawls are a gift from the parish to comfort the sick, the bereaved or anyone in difficult or painful circumstances. "Our prayer shawl ministry is a way to let someone know that they are in our prayers and hearts and that they are not alone," said Ah Sani.

Ah Sani picked up the phone and asked Lucille if she could come by with communion for Bill and the gift of a soft ivory-colored prayer shawl. "Lucille told me to come right over. I was very warmly greeted by the family and gave Lucille the prayer shawl, which she spread over Bill. The family gathered around his bed, everyone received communion, we said the Lord's Prayer, and I concluded the service." said Ah Sani.

Minutes after Ah Sani left their home, Bill died.

For Lucille, the pastoral minister's timely visit and the gift of the shawl were an enormous comfort at the most sorrowful point in her life. "In some ways, it was a beautiful death to me. It meant so much to me," she said.

Several months later, Lucille, her children and grandchildren visited Bill's grave at Resurrection Cemetery, where they held hands and prayed together. The entire family then drove to Lumen Christi to take part in the parish's annual All Souls Day service of remembrance for those who have died.

Since then, Lucille has become a parish funeral volunteer, preparing and serving the meal after a funeral. At home, she keeps the prayer shawl close by, tucked into a pillow sham on her bed.

"Bill died with it on him, so it will always be a special comfort to me," she said.

"As you wrap yourself in the prayer shawl of comfort... May the Mother of mercy, the Father of faithfulness and the Spirit of compassion Wrap you in their all-eoncmpassing love this day... "

Excerpt from *Prayer for Comfort* by Cathleen O'Meara Murtha

At death, the parish is a vital partner, *continued from page 1*

"We explore what Gospel values were reflected in their loved one's life. If we can begin to discern this and let it help shape the choice of funeral readings, music and homily, survivors often gain a deeper understanding of the connection between their loved one and the lived Christian message," said Father Feela.

In this way, the funeral liturgy becomes less of a tribute and more a celebration of the shared faith journey of all believers as exemplified by that person's life.

"Every time the death of a Christian comes about, it can be a challenge to faith," Father Feela said. "The funeral planning process can be a healthy and helpful way to begin to make sense of this death through the Christian lens."

Each family is unique. For some the Catholic liturgy may be an integral part of their own lives. Others, however, may have had no connection to the Church even if their loved one did.

"For those who have not been involved with a parish, this can be a time of catechesis and outreach for the parish. We try to help them understand the meaning of the liturgy and offer them ideas of Scripture and music," said Joan Gecik, pastoral administrator at Lumen Christi.

"What is wonderful is when people feel they have been well cared for during this experience," she added, "they often decide to return to the Church."

Updates...

Mark Your Calendar: Special Masses to be held December 5

Masses of remembrance will be celebrated at Gethsemane Cemetery and Resurrection Cemetery in the chapel mausoleums on Saturday, December 5, 2009. Invitations are being sent out to the newly bereaved. For more information, contact the cemetery office at Gethsemane or Resurrection.

Knights of Columbus assist at St. Mary's Cemetery

On September 16, the Hennepin-Minneapolis Council #435 of the Knights of Columbus continued its tradition of service to St. Mary's Cemetery in Minneapolis. That day, Paul Aeschliman, Philip Harr and Philip Jarosz showed up at St. Mary's at 8 a.m. ready to work. The three "cemeterians for a day" manually edged the entire sidewalk that runs along 46th Avenue on the south end of the cemetery, between Chicago Avenue and 14th Avenue — about six city blocks. They swept up the sand and debris and then blew off the sidewalk.

"Paul, Phil, and Phil worked non-stop and did a magnificent job on the sidewalk. We are so appreciative of their dedication and great work that makes St. Mary's look its best," said Jon Louris, operations manager and field manager at St. Mary's and Calvary cemeteries.

Taking a break at St. Mary's Cemetery are Knights of Columbus members (left to right) Philip M. Jarosz, Paul Aeschliman and Philip R Harr.

New columbarium to be added at Resurrection Cemetery

A new columbarium for the burial of cremated remains will be constructed at Resurrection Cemetery in the coming months. The free-standing niche bank will be located near the northwest corner of the first mausoleum building completed in 1981. A columbarium on the southwest corner of this mausoleum is nearly full as are the niche units in the mausoleum proper. This columbarium is especially well suited for those families interested in cremation burial near the same facility where deceased loved ones may already be entombed. For more information about the new columbarium and special pre-construction pricing, please call Resurrection and ask to speak to a family service counselor.

Discovering the value of pre-planning

The Catholic Cemeteries continued to host its free pre-planning seminars in 2009, with several sessions offered at Resurrection and Gethsemane cemeteries in May and October.

At each session, participants learn about funeral and cemetery options, have the opportunity to ask questions about areas of concern, and receive a personal planning guide that also highlights the Catholic Order of Christian Funerals, cremation in the Catholic Church and other topics.

"We get very positive feedback from participants, who say they appreciate learning more about an event that no one really likes to think or talk about," said John M. Cherek, executive director of The Catholic Cemeteries stated. "Attendees leave with information to take home and review with their families. Letting your wishes be known to your loved ones in writing is good for everyone."

For more information about The Catholic Cemeteries pre-planning programs and services, please call the main office at 651-228-9991. ***Also, see sidebar on page 1 for information on the December 1st pre-planning session.***

Various seed mixtures are being tested at Resurrection Cemetery to find the optimum sod replacement mixture.

Resurrection Cemetery hosts grass seed test plots

As many lot owners in The Catholic Cemeteries know, the replacement of turf on a new grave can be a challenging process. Traditionally cemeteries have used sod to replace the turf removed when a grave is dug. Depending on the quality and seed composition of the sod, together with soil conditions and water availability, The Catholic Cemeteries field staff may have to replace sod several times during the growing season or the following year, depending on the severity of frost during the winter.

In an effort to find more efficient and effective methods to replace turf on graves, The Catholic Cemeteries has partnered with the Twin City Seed Company in establishing several seed test plots at Resurrection Cemetery. The purpose of this trial is to develop a unique seed mixture that can withstand the diverse climate changes in Minnesota and provide a healthier, longer lasting turf. The first test plots were planted this past summer and this fall additional plots were added to test dormant seeding over the winter months. Twelve to twenty 3' x 10' test plots will also be planted in 2010. "Hopefully the results of these test plots will yield an ideal seed blend to be used in our cemeteries," said Dave Kemp, strategic planning/project manager and field manager at Resurrection Cemetery.

Remembering a beloved child: A special opportunity

The Children's Memorial and Prayer Garden at Gethsemane Cemetery offers a special way for bereaved families to memorialize a beloved child. Paving bricks that border the walkway leading to the Memorial are available for inscription of the child's name and years of birth and death. A contribution of $250 covers the cost of the memorial brick and inscription and supports the endowment for the care and maintenance of the Memorial, which was dedicated in 2008. For more information, please call 651-228-9991.

THE CATHOLIC CEMETERIES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

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753 Front Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55103
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GETHSEMANE CEMETERY
8151 42nd Avenue N.
New Hope, MN 55427
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RESURRECTION CEMETERY
2101 Lexington Ave. S.
Mendota Heights, MN 55120
651-454-5072

ST. ANTHONY'S CEMETERY
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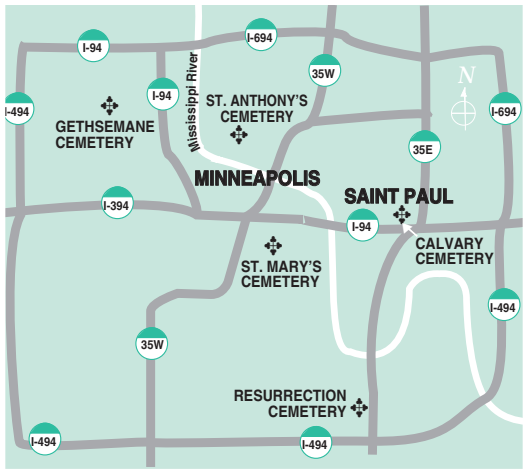

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Remembering at the holidays

The holidays are a wonderful time to consider a special way of remembering your loved one — a memorial gift to The Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Three donor funds support our mission to provide beautiful places of prayer and remembrance as well as our ministry to those who mourn. All donors are recognized annually in The Catholic Cemeteries' *Heritage* newsletter. Gifts either **in honor** or **in memory** of a loved one are welcome. All gifts to The Catholic Cemeteries are tax deductible.

Please use the enclosed envelope for your gift. Thank you!

Children's Memorials and Healing Gardens

These beautiful memorial gardens at Resurrection Cemetery and Gethsemane Cemetery are focal points for ministry to parents, grandparents and family who have experienced the loss of a child. At Resurrection Cemetery, for a donation of $500, names of infants or young children may be engraved on the memorial wall. At Gethsemane Cemetery, for a donation of $250, names of children of all ages may be engraved on paver stones.

Archbishop Harry J. Flynn Compassionate Assistance Fund

The Catholic Cemeteries provides a sacred resting place for all who believe in the Resurrection of the Lord, no matter what their economic status. The fund helps cover the associated costs of burial for those whose families are unable to pay for burial services. The fund also supports The Catholic Cemeteries ministry to bereaved families who have lost children by miscarriage or other reasons prior to birth.

John Ireland Memorial Fund

The beauty of trees and plants plays a significant role in the experience of visiting a cemetery. This is an area of exceptional need because storms and diseases have taken a toll over the years on the cemeteries' trees and plants. Gifts to this fund help with the planting of new trees, landscaping and shrubbery throughout the cemeteries.

Our Appreciation

Our thanks go to those listed below for gifts given between October 1, 2008, and September 30, 2009.

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Cemetery Hours

Every day of the year, cemetery grounds are open from 8 a.m. to dusk (generally 5 p.m. in the winter). All cemetery offices are normally open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon at Resurrection and Gethsemane.

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