

# HERITAGE

*A newsletter for friends of The Catholic Cemeteries*

## Funerals help us *hush the busy world...*

By Dan Delmore

A favorite daily prayer of mine, by John Henry Cardinal Newman, asks God to support us all day long, *“till the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done...”*

The prayer tells us how important it is at day’s end to set aside our tasks and phones and to-do lists and relinquish ourselves to God’s care — as the prayer puts it, giving us *“a safe lodging, and a holy rest and peace at the last.”*

But in today’s fast-paced, on-the-go world, many of us have trouble slowing down and taking time for pause and reflection. That seems to be particularly true at the time of death of a family member or friend. There seems to be a rush to get things over with and back to “normal.”

It didn’t use to be that way. I vividly remember the days after my grandfather died many years ago. The rites took three full days as family and friends took part in vigils, said rosaries and attended the funeral itself.

In my work as a funeral director over the past nearly 40 years, I have seen a dramatic change in how our culture treats death. Often expediency plays a bigger role in funeral planning than the traditions and rituals of our faith. When that happens, I believe we have lost something important, not only a link to our past but also the therapeutic value of the funeral liturgy for grieving family and friends.

In the case of cremation, for example, the Church’s preference is that the body be present for the Funeral Mass and that cremation takes place afterward and prior to the committal. Because the body is considered the temple of the Holy Spirit, the service begins with welcoming the body, the sprinkling of holy water and the placement of the pall on the casket as reminders of the deceased’s baptism. This is the powerful message of the resurrection that is the foundation of our Catholic faith.

However, many people choose to have the body cremated before the funeral service, often with the urn present at the service. There may be valid reasons for this, but I always encourage Catholic families to consider the Catholic practice on cremation in their decision-making

because the liturgy, with the body present, offers beauty, meaning and solace.

Likewise, Catholic teaching calls for the cremated remains of the body to be committed to the ground or in a niche, preferably in a Catholic cemetery. Yet it’s very common today for people to not use a cemetery, instead scattering cremated remains or keeping them in a closet at home or dividing them up among family members. Sometimes families do nothing at all, leaving the urn of cremated remains of their loved one at our funeral home.

Besides not showing respect for the deceased, it results in a lack of closure, hindering the process of healing after a loss in the months and years that follow. With committal in a cemetery, on the other hand, we treat the cremated remains with dignity, and we have a place to visit, pray, remember and honor the individual who died. Committal is an essential piece in the Catholic funeral order and it has the power to bind families together generation after generation.

From beginning to end, from the vigil to committal, funerals tell us to stop and reflect on the important things of life — “to hush the



**Dan Delmore has been a funeral director since 1976.**

busy world.” For our departed loved ones, we can rest assured that God has provided them with *“a safe lodging, and a holy rest and peace at the last.”* 

*Dan Delmore is the owner of Gearty-Delmore Funeral Chapels. Dan is a member of The Church of St. Bartholomew in Wayzata and is active in Archdiocesan organizations.*

### Understanding the Order of Christian Funerals

**For the last 25 years or so, the means by which the Catholic Church ritualizes death is through what is called “The Order of Christian Funerals.”**

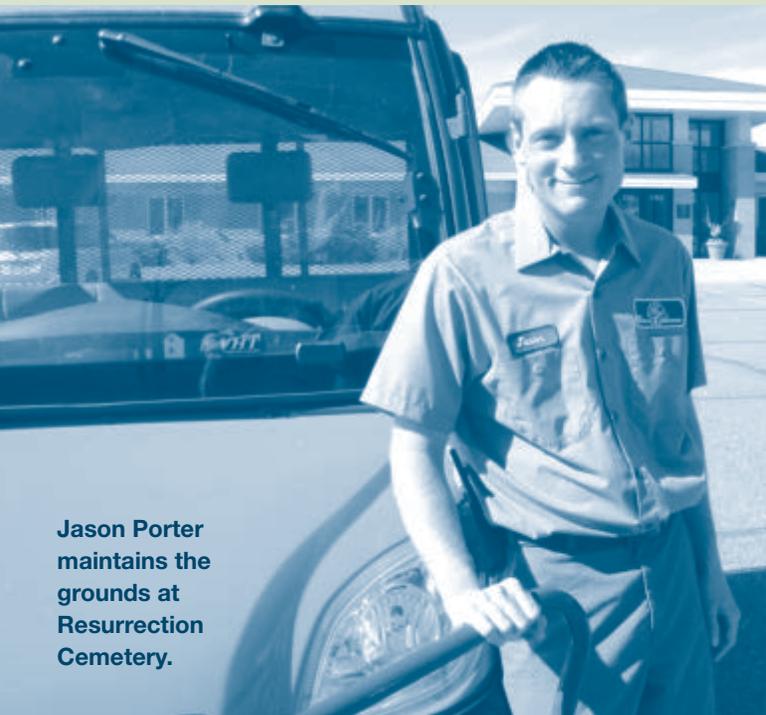
**Primarily, there are three major rites for the family, friends and parishioners to gather and celebrate the promise of the Resurrection and the life of a loved one — the Vigil, the Funeral Mass and the Committal and Burial.**

**Often times the temptation is to truncate these rites for the sake of convenience. Yet by having only an hour visitation before Mass, much of the richness of prayer, storytelling and remembering is lost. Instead, consider taking the time to honor the deceased by having a vigil (a wake) the evening before. The Funeral Mass is normally held in the parish church, the spiritual home of the deceased. It is wise to meet with parish personnel prior to death to plan the funeral according to parish guidelines. Lastly, is the committal and burial in the cemetery. It is the final ritual of prayer and a means of saying good-bye as we leave the loved one in a sacred place.**

**When cremation is the option, note that burial or inurnment takes on the same importance. We treat the cremated remains with the same respect as we do a full body.**

**Because there are many cemetery options to consider, it is important take the time to think through all the options and to plan accordingly.**

**For more information, visit The Catholic Cemeteries web site at [www.catholic-cemeteries.org](http://www.catholic-cemeteries.org) or contact your parish.** 



Jason Porter maintains the grounds at Resurrection Cemetery.

## Staff Profile

### Field worker Jason Porter: *“This job was a huge step forward...”*

Completing his first year as a full-time field worker at Resurrection Cemetery, Jason Porter sums up his job this way: “It’s another piece in building my life. I couldn’t be in a better place to work right now.”

Porter first came to Resurrection a year earlier as a temporary seasonal worker. After struggling with alcoholism throughout his 20’s, he had finally gone to treatment, and there, experienced a spiritual awakening and was ready for a new start.

“Over the years, I had mostly worked in retail, so I wasn’t sure about doing physical labor and working outside in all kinds of weather,” he said. “But with my checkered work history, I was very happy to get the job.”

To his surprise, Porter enjoyed the diversity of tasks, learning new skills and the camaraderie with cemetery staff.

“Coming out of treatment, it can be tough to find an environment that’s supportive. The people are great here and the cemetery is a calm, peaceful and spiritual place,” he said.

About the same time, he started back to college part-time, working towards a degree in psychology and spirituality at Metro State University.

After the temporary job was up, a full-time year-round position on the Resurrection field staff opened up and Porter was encouraged to apply. “When I found out I was hired last April, I was very excited. It was a huge step forward for me.”

This spring, with two years of sobriety under his belt and a year full-time at Resurrection, Porter will graduate from college.

While someday he would like to help others who have struggled with addiction, for now, he says, “I am where I am supposed to be. We’ll see where life takes me.” 🌳

# Partners in ministry reach out to parents who have experienced early pregnancy loss

Last December, during the second trimester of Tara Broman’s pregnancy, Tara and her husband Greg were devastated to learn their baby had died in utero. Several days later, Tara miscarried and had to be hospitalized at St. John’s Hospital in Maplewood.

In the midst of their grief, the couple was heartened to find out that HealthEast Care System is a partner with The Catholic Cemeteries in a program specifically for parents who have experienced early pregnancy losses due to miscarriage or other reasons prior to birth. The Fairview Health Services also partners in the ministry.

The program provides for the communal burial of fetal remains in the Children’s Section at Resurrection Cemetery as well as a quarterly burial and committal service for families.

“The miscarriage was an incredible shock to us and we didn’t know what to do. When the chaplain at St. John’s told us about the program, it was like a weight lifted off our shoulders,” said Greg, who with his wife and two children attend St. John’s Church in Little Canada. “It was very comforting to know that our baby would be treated with dignity and buried in a Christian cemetery, and also that we could have our baby’s name inscribed on the Wall of Remembrance at Resurrection.”

In February, the Bromens attended the Prayer Service of Burial and Committal in the Resurrection Cemetery Chapel Mausoleum along with a few dozen other families who had experienced similar loss. Following readings, songs and prayers, each family received a lighted memorial candle and attendees processed by car to the gravesite for prayers and burial.

“The service was very healing for us,” said Greg. “After the miscarriage, our family and friends were very supportive, but may not have understood the magnitude of our loss. At the service, our loss felt validated. We were not alone in our grief.”

Sheila Priebe, a labor and delivery nurse who recently retired from the HealthEast System, said HealthEast’s partnership with The Catholic Cemeteries has been a positive step toward affirming parents who experienced early pregnancy loss.

“This program lets families know they have a right to bury their babies, and provides a dignified and meaningful way to do it, at no cost to them,” she said.

Besides the two health systems, Gill Brothers Funeral Services takes part, providing the small white caskets for the fetal remains and transportation. Also participating are Deacon Bill Umphress who presides over the service and John Evans who provides music. Several volunteers from St. Peter’s Parish in Mendota offer hospitality.

“We are very grateful for the sensitivity and generosity of everyone involved in this ministry and outreach to grieving parents,” said Sister Fran Donnelly, B.V.M., Director of Life Transition Ministries for The Catholic Cemeteries. “It is a partnership in the best sense of the word.”

For Greg and Tara Broman, the program came to them as an invaluable gift. “We are eternally grateful for the compassion and comfort provided by this ministry.” 🌳



The Broman family.

## If you would like to support this ministry...

**The Catholic Cemeteries ministry to bereaved families who have lost children by miscarriage or other reasons prior to birth is supported through the Archbishop Harry J. Flynn Compassionate Assistance Fund, which covers the cost for the markers and other related expenses. This Fund also helps to defray some of the costs of a burial for families who are in need of special assistance. To make a gift or to learn more, visit our web site at [www.catholic-cemeteries.org](http://www.catholic-cemeteries.org).** 🌳



St. Agnes students at work raking around the graves.



An 8th grader uncovers an historic gravemarker.

Photos provided by Mother Marie Andre of St. Agnes School.

## Cleaning graves at Calvary It's dirty work, but St. Agnes 8th graders love it

Historic Calvary Cemetery is not far from St. Agnes School in St. Paul, but until recently, it wasn't on the field trip roster for St. Agnes 8th graders.

That has changed, thanks to religion teacher Joan Decker. For the second year in a row, Decker, and fellow teacher Mother Marie Andre, have brought the school's 8th grade class to Calvary for an experience that combines hard work, service, acts of mercy and a compelling history lesson.

On a chilly afternoon last October, 45 students piled off the bus, each with a new pair of work gloves. Grabbing rakes and tools, they went to work clearing off the leaves and digging away the turf that has gradually covered the graves of religious sisters as well as graves in the infant section.

Also that day, each student had the opportunity to make a rubbing of a marker of one person for whom they will pray for during the next year. They also learned about early settlers in St. Paul who are buried at Calvary in a history lesson by Linda Radtke, Calvary office manager.

Decker said that initially, some students felt hesitant or a bit fearful about a trip to a cemetery, but not for long.

"Our students fell in love with Calvary. They are in awe of the history of the cemetery and the religious people buried there who served the Church so long ago," she said. "Visiting Calvary is a very positive experience for these students and we plan to do it annually."

Decker got the idea while visiting family graves at Resurrection Cemetery. She and her husband stopped at the graves of the Hawthorne Dominican sisters, who served at Our Lady of Good Counsel Cancer Home in St. Paul.

"My husband remarked that cleaning up the historic graves would be a great service project, and I thought that would be something our 8th graders could tackle," she said.

Jon Louris, operations manager of The Catholic Cemeteries, said the help of volunteers like the St. Agnes 8th graders is greatly appreciated.

"Over the decades, hundreds of old gravestones have become overgrown and keeping them clear is beyond the capacity of our small staff," Louris said. "These young people are doing a great service that honors the memories of those who served the church many years ago." 🌳

### Student reflections...

After the field trip, religion teacher Joan Decker asked her students to reflect on the acts of mercy they had performed at Calvary. Here are several excerpts:

*"I saw Christ in the people who maintain the graves every day. This work is outside and hard because there are so many graves and a lot of land..."*

*"When doing the work at the cemetery my classmates didn't complain and only kept working and it turned out great..."*

*"I don't think very many people appreciate those who came before us and have died. Doing this project helped me learn that Christian service means it is more important to serve others before yourself..."* 🌳

## Updates



### Granite benches made possible by generous donors

The spring/summer 2013 issue of *Heritage* included a brief item about the infant section of Gethsemane Cemetery in New Hope, seeking a donor to help underwrite the costs of a new bench where parents and grandparents could sit and pray while visiting the graves of their infants.

Two generous couples stepped forward, and today, two beautiful granite benches grace the infant section. Both prefer to remain anonymous but shared some thoughts about their gesture.

*"The newsletter item struck our hearts. We have five beautiful children, but my wife also had a miscarriage and that was a very sad thing. We hope the bench offers some comfort to parents who have lost a child."*

*"We live close to Gethsemane and in nice weather, I walk through it almost every day. The children's section has always been special to us. When we read about the need for the benches, we knew we wanted to help."*

### Calvary Columbarium dedication and open house coming soon

Calvary Cemetery will dedicate its new columbarium after mass on Memorial Day. Fr. Kevin McDonough, pastor of St. Peter Claver parish in St. Paul and Incarnation/Sagrado Corazon de Jesus in Minneapolis, will preside. In addition, an open house will be held on Friday, June 13, Saturday, June 14, and Sunday, June 15 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM each day. This beautiful columbarium is located off of Front Street near the five garden mausoleums at the Victoria Street entrance to the cemetery.

Since the need for additional cremation burial spaces is critical at historic Calvary Cemetery, interested family members may want to inquire now about purchasing as the inventory of niches may quickly diminish. Special discounts are extended, and interest free financing is available to open house attendees on this weekend. Refreshments will be served.

To learn more, contact Michael LaBelle, family service counselor, at 651-488-8866.

# HERITAGE

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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, 9 a.m. to noon at Resurrection and Gethsemane.

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT

[www.catholic-cemeteries.org](http://www.catholic-cemeteries.org)

## The Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

**CALVARY CEMETERY**  
753 Front Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55103  
651-488-8866

**GETHSEMANE CEMETERY**  
8151 42nd Avenue N.  
New Hope, MN 55427  
763-537-4184

**RESURRECTION CEMETERY**  
2101 Lexington Ave. S.  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120  
651-454-5072

**ST. ANTHONY'S CEMETERY**  
2729 Central Avenue NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55418  
763-537-4184

**ST. MARY'S CEMETERY**  
4403 Chicago Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
651-488-8866



- Special recognition of veterans at all cemeteries
- Refreshments at all cemeteries
- Dedication of the new columbarium at Calvary Cemetery

Mass will be held at 10 a.m. RAIN OR SHINE at **Gethsemane Cemetery, St. Anthony's Cemetery, St. Mary's Cemetery, Resurrection Cemetery and Calvary Cemetery.**

### MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND HOURS

Each Cemetery office has extended hours as follows:

Saturday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

## Grave decorations for Memorial Day

During the days before and after Memorial Day, artificial flowers, potted plants, decorations or other ornaments are allowed. These types of decorations can be placed on graves beginning at noon on **Thursday, May 22**, and remain there until **Sunday, June 1**. Decorations should be removed by this date; otherwise, the cemetery staff will begin pickup on **Monday, June 2**. After that time, we request fresh-cut flowers only during the growing season.

## Memorial Day flowers available for purchase

Over the Memorial Day weekend, a variety of floral bouquets are available for purchase at Resurrection, Gethsemane, St. Mary's, and Calvary Cemeteries. Flower stands are located near the entrances of each cemetery.

## Recognizing veterans over Memorial Day weekend

As in 2013, this Memorial Day, The Catholic Cemeteries will offer a special salute to all veterans as part of the masses beginning at 10 a.m. at each of the five Catholic cemeteries. Pins honoring veterans present for the masses will be distributed. In addition, cards will be available to write names of veterans, both living and dead, who will be remembered in prayer during mass. Cards are available in the cemetery offices a week before Memorial Day or on Memorial Day prior to mass.

Traditionally, before Memorial Day, a local Boy Scout troop and a veteran's group place American flags at Resurrection Cemetery and Gethsemane Cemetery, respectively, on those gravesites of veterans marked by gravestones provided by the Veterans Administration (VA). For families visiting the graves of veterans not marked with a VA-provided gravestone, flags can be purchased for a minimal charge at the outdoor flower stands in both cemeteries. In addition, a limited supply will be available in the cemetery offices one week prior to Memorial Day.