HERITAGE

NEWS FOR FRIENDS OF THE CATHOLIC CEMETERIES

To Bee or Not to Bee - by Joan Gecik

Bee Delivery & Placement

One of the Bee Hive Frames

I have always been someone concerned with the environment. After reading Pope Francis' encyclical, "Laudato Si," on care for our common home, I became even more resolute to look for ways to care for the earth. At The Catholic Cemeteries in St. Paul & Minneapolis, we studied and embraced Natural Burial. While not everyone will accept this as a way to leave a lighter touch on the earth, we have found that many people were just waiting until this option became available. We became the first Catholic cemetery in Minnesota to have natural burial and to receive national certification from the Green Burial Council.

Then, one day, someone from staff forwarded a phone call to me. I was told it was some environmental person, and everyone knows that "those kind of calls" come to me. I talked with someone representing Alveole, a social enterprise originating in Montreal, which offers a service of installation and maintenance of bee colonies in urban and suburban areas across Canada and the United States. I scheduled a meeting with them and included my Operations Manager. We were sold within a few minutes. We had exactly what they needed: a lot of undeveloped land, an area that was away from people and somewhat in the vicinity of our natural prairie development that is part of our Natural Burial area.

By teaming with Alveole, we would become a host site for hives that would eventually be installed with businesses in the Twin Cities areas. We would have a few hives of our own for pollination and honey. Best part? A beekeeper would be assigned to us. Yes, it meant that we would not be responsible for taking care of the hives, but would benefit from having them. Each hive has 10 frames that go into each super, or box, that makes up the hive.

Bees can fly up to 10 miles from the hive, usually staying within 2 miles, and since they were ensconced in a prairie, they wouldn't need to range very far for food. We found a section of the cemetery where the hives would not be visible from the street, roadways, or areas where people visit. The hives were delivered near the end of May with a little help from my field manager, and we have not even noticed our new neighbors.

Bees are responsible for pollinating one-third of what we eat, on top of being vital to our ecosystems and biodiversity, which is why their global population decline is so alarming. Their progressive extinction is mainly due to industrial agriculture – monocultures, the ubiquitous use of pesticides, and loss of habitat – but also climate

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To Bee or Not to Bee (continued from page 1)

change. It isn't just the honey bee that's in danger; all insect and animal pollinators are subject to the same pressures and threatened by the same factors.

Our cemeteries are invested in their protection to ensure a commitment to all living beings. Honey bees have become the unlikely ambassadors of something incredibly important and much larger than themselves: the rapid changes we must invoke to ensure our food systems remain sustainable. This is why we're shedding light on honey bees, so that citizens grow attached to them and that we may ultimately harness that attachment to ensure a commitment to all living beings as well as a transformed view of the environment. Once a person begins to take an interest in the world of bees, environmental challenges that were once distant and abstract suddenly appear much more urgent and important. Bees allow for all of those who pay attention to the world around them to better understand the importance of pollinators for the health of our ecosystems and biodiversity as a whole.

By reaching people here in the Twin Cities with our message, we have the power to change the agricultural systems that are so hostile to insects. We can achieve this by educating the city dwellers who create the demand for all this food about these systems, and telling them about the choices they can make to create a different kind of demand for food that is produced without harming bees or destroying the environment.

We plan on giving the hives a year to see how they fare in our fields, and then will begin to offer some educational experiences for the public. Again, we do not need to do these interactions, the beekeeper will take care of all of it. The beekeeper will do regular visits to check on the hives and how the bees are doing. Eventually we will gain some honey from our hives that can be given away or sold.

We are not looking to go into the honey producing business, but it is good to know that our cemeteries can be places to help sustain the environment even as we care for grieving families. For more information visit www.alveole.buzz or info@alveole.buzz

Brittany Buckles (Beekeeper) & Paul Auge (Field Manager)

Middle School Students visit Resurrection

Forty plus middle school students from St. Jude of the Lake in Mahtomedi and St. Peter Claver in St. Paul showed up at Resurrection Cemetery on April 22 to explore possible careers with cemeteries. Jonquil Shipman, Director of Operations and Project Management, started the students with a rock, paper, scissors icebreaker, which became very competive.

Jamie Moloney, Director of Pastoral Outreach, shared why we bury our dead and the Catholic rituals we use. Jonquil explained her role in managing all areas of the grounds. She then introduced Jordan Jones, Field Worker at Calvary Cemetery in St. Paul. Jordan described some of the work of a field staff person. Operating equipment, cutting grass, trimming trees, and digging graves are some of the responsibilities for field staff.

When asked about ghosts, Jordan kept the children spellbound as he detailed a few unexplained experiences he has had when working out at the cemetery.

The day ended with a scavenger hunt. Students were asked to find graves with the same first or last name as they have, or the oldest dated marker. After the field trip, Sullivan Johnson from St. Jude of the Lake drew a picture of a monument and graciously shared that with us. If you know of any group who would like to arrange a similar field trip for students, call us at 651-228-9991 to make arrangements.

Cemetery Updates

CALVARY

- Old entry cleaned up, seeded and closed off by fencing.
- Former roads have been leveled, seeded and will be laid out and pegged.
- Roads were sealed.
- Removed trees damaged in summer storms.

GETHSEMANE

- Placed 2 new columbaria in the Rosary Garden area.
- Concrete replacement in front of the office and mausoleum.
- Road and catch basin repairs.
- Asbestos removal in maintenance shop.
- Because of the hot summer, newer graves needed re-sodding.

RESURRECTION

- Lexington Ave. area was cleaned up and landscaped with pollinator friendly grass.
- New entry signs were installed on both Lexington Ave. and the back entry off the frontage road.
- New tablets for the Children's Memorial were installed. Landscaping still to be completed.
- Had to remove a number of trees due to summer storm damage.
- Completed road expansion and curbing in front of the Chapel Mausoleum.
- Pond restoration continues.
- Landscaping around corporate offices begun.

Resurrection Cemetery New Children's Memorial Tablets

ST. ANTHONY'S

- Working on getting water pipes rerouted after a pipe break in the middle of Central Ave.
- Cleaning out and reseeding of areas where grass fungus was found.

ST. MARY'S

- New concrete work and accessibility ramps installed near mausoleum.
- Retaining walls replaced next to mausoleum and in front of office.
- Removed trees damaged in summer storms.

Please note that December's

Mass of Remembrance

has been cancelled at both Resurrection and Gethsemane cemeteries, due to ongoing Covid and flu concerns. We hope to resume the Mass again next year. Thank you.

Scavenger Hunt Winners!

Due to the popularity of last summer's photo contest, this year The Catholic Cemeteries held a Symbols Scavenger Hunt and we're happy to announce the winners! First place went to Antoinette Sveom!

2022 Symbols Scavenger Hunt Winners!
1st place - Antionette Sveom
2nd place - Mary Moudry
3rd place - Julia Moudry

Antoinette is very familiar with The Catholic Cemeteries. Starting with her step-great-grandfather and grandfather, who were superintendents of St. Anthony's Cemetery in the early 1900s, to her grandfather moving to St. Mary's Cemetery in the 1920s-1930s, she comes from a long line of cemetery people. She has at least 30 relatives buried in St. Anthony, another 30 at St. Mary's, and still more at Calvary Cemetery.

Embarking on this hunt, Antoinette said her eyes were opened to the beauty of the monuments, previously focusing only on the names and dates engraved on the headstones. Being unaware of certain symbols and their meanings, she is now curious about the meaning of a broken pillar, or a handshake.

Thank you to all who participated in this Scavenger Hunt, and we hope you will continue exploring the beauty of our cemeteries and remembering those who are buried there.

Joan Gecik (executive director) & 1st place winner, Antoinette

Why Can't I Decorate the Grave How I Want?

Decorating a loved one's gravesite is a part of personalizing their memorial and remembering them. It provides many families comfort knowing their loved one's grave has fresh flowers or another beautiful tribute decoration. However, many families aren't aware of the rules that come with grave decorations.

Every cemetery has rules and regulations around what can be done to "decorate" a grave. These get reviewed and updated occasionally. Most rules came into being for safety reasons around lawn care and how it is done. How a grave is decorated could cause a safety hazard to cemetery goers and maintenance staff. For example, glass of any kind is never allowed as it can shatter, get caught up in mower blades and be shot out as a deadly weapon. Food isn't allowed as it attracts animals, especially coyotes. When we see any of this, it is immediately removed from the gravesite.

Sometimes, decorations may be inappropriate or distracting to other cemetery goers. One person's sentimental decorations are another person's tasteless display. No cemetery wants to receive complaints from other families who don't like the sight of ad-hoc decorations (and yes, we do get these complaints). We will contact the family and ask them to clean up the gravesite and if it is not done within a few days, we remove everything. During mowing season, April through October, flowers, plants, and decorations will be removed weekly in order to carry out normal lawn care and maintenance procedures. Flowers placed at the time of a burial will be left for three days with the cemetery staff removing flowers after they become wilted.

What is allowed?

- Fresh flowers or artificial flowers if in a monument vase or temporary cone vase that you can find at the cemetery.
- Christmas Wreaths which are usually on a stand near the monument or on the grave.
- Small flags during Memorial Day, 4th of July, Veteran's Day.
- Christmas decorations can be placed on a grave, i.e. small tree or lighted ornament, as long as they are removed by March 1st.

Chapel mausoleums have similar rules, however, live plants or flowers are never allowed. Due to insects that can infest the whole mausoleum, any live flowers left after an interment will be immediately removed. Taping photos or notes to the shutter (the granite memorial front of the crypt or niche) will often damage the stone or leave an adhesive that attracts dirt. This can lead to an unsightly "marker" next to other shutters.

We are in conversation with a company that can provide a color portrait option for mausoleum shutters in the near future. Of course we will let you know when that becomes available, hopefully sometime this winter.

"Is there really nothing we can do to memorialize our lost loved ones at the sites their bodies lay?" We need to point out that the headstone "is" the memorialization – that's the entire point of the headstone. No cemetery is obligated to allow families to go above and beyond the installation of a stone of their choice by embellishing it or the grave it sits on. For a more complete updated list of our cemetery decorations, please see our website at catholic-cemeteries.org/decorations/

Saying Goodbye

Jon Louris, Operations Manager, retired at the beginning of May. A reception for Jon was held in September, where we shared food and stories before offering a blessing for him in his retirement years.

Congratulations Jon!!
Operations Manager

Emily Gorman, Executive Assistant & Media Coordinator at The Catholic Cemeteries Corporate Office, left her position to take a new position at the Catholic Community Foundation. Emily has been with The Catholic Cemeteries for 10 years working with cemetery property law, administration, and events planning. As the media coordinator, she was responsible for online content including social media sites that highlighted various aspects of the cemeteries, and designed postcards, programs, flyers, invitations, and more as needed for the cemeteries. We will miss her and wish her luck in her new endeavor.

Emily Gorman

From the Executive Director

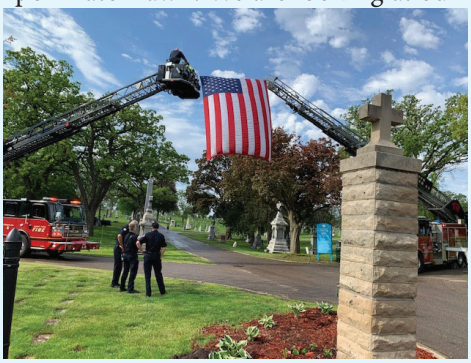
Joan Gecik,
Executive Director

Many people think of cemeteries as quiet places. It is here that we bury our loved ones, come to remember, reflect, and to pray. These are sacred grounds and hold the community's saints. A cemetery is a ministry. However, it is also a city. It has roads, lighting, grass, sewers, drainage, and infrastructure that helps to maintain it as a safe place.

We've had a busy, though dry, summer. Because of the drought, the cemeteries didn't look their greenest, although with the August rains, they greened up quickly. Because we are trying to be more eco-friendly, we did not attempt to water everything. New areas that were being seeded did receive more attention, but many times the grass will go into a dormancy mode until the rain returns.

The Resurrection pond project is coming along slowly. The invasive species that surrounded the pond needed to be removed and then prevented from becoming re-established. We will have native prairie grasses established around the pond. Once that is in place, we are hoping to install a fountain to help with the water clarity.

Along the lines of being more environmentally responsible, we worked with the group Alveole, to be a hosting spot for honey bees both at Resurrection and Gethsemane Cemeteries. The hives are out of sight and distant from any public areas. You can read more about this project in the front page article. We are also establishing pollinator lawn areas. For us, it is simply over-seeding pre-existing turf as part of lawn renovation. We began this with the Lexington Ave. clean up in which we removed the old fence, dead trees, and overgrowth, replacing it with pollinator lawn. We are looking at our other cemeteries to see where we can do similar landscaping.



Memorial Day at Calvary Cemetery

Memorial Day Mass was held at most of our cemeteries. In spite of the rain, and some Covid concerns, it was successful. We feel we now have a handle on how to move forward with new norms in holding outside events.

Three "Bishops and Brew King" tours were scheduled for Calvary Cemetery in June. With a limitation on the number of attendees, plus the unusually hot weather in late June, these grew to seven tours with almost 90 attendees! We hope to do more tours in 2023 that will include tours at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Calvary Cemetery Tours

In August we did something new. The entire cemetery staff participated in a monument inspection day at our historic cemeteries. We were trained on how to evaluate the safety of monuments, recording any concerns that were found. Monuments were ranked according to level of concern - needing immediate attention or re-inspected in a year's time. Monuments are the property of the owner, who have the responsilibity of ensuring monuments are safe. For monuments that are over a hundred years old, most likely there is no family to contact. If the monument is loose or broken, the monument is then laid on top of the grave. I believe this was the first time we have ever done something like this on a grand scale. We learned a lot about each of the cemeteries as we did this work and luckily, we had perfect weather for this project.

We will continue to work on the betterment of all our cemeteries. Often, it seems to be a slow work in progress, but we are committed to our forever-future.

Cremation

"Cremation is the preparation of the body for memorialization." This is the tag-line for CANA-Cremation Association of North America. It is also what we believe. Just because the body is cremated, it is still the human body in another form. We believe that since the body was imbued with the breath of God, it was the home of the Holy Spirit. We honor and respect the body, in whatever form it takes. For us, this means it should be buried/interred in a permanent place.
We know that with cremation in MN being at 71% in 2021, there needs to be clearer education about what we, as Catholics, are to do with the cremated remains of our loved ones. If choosing cremation, every family needs to answer these questions:

Q. What are you going to do with your loved ones cremated remains?
Often the answer is, "we're going to keep them at home." While initially, that plan sounds fine, we never have the answer to the follow-up question.

Q. So, what's the long term plan? Who will care for them after you have died?
There usually isn't an answer to this question. Yet, because these are human remains, there needs to be a plan that includes the survivors. When there is no plan, often human remains become abandoned or left behind.

It has been said that we protect and secure the things we hold dear. Yet, often we find cremated remains left in attics, closets, garages, storage facilities and even in Goodwill stores. Some are left abandoned at church doors or never picked up at funeral homes. Some people scatter the cremated remains at a lake cabin, bury them in their own back yard, or dump them on a relative's grave at a cemetery. Some are made into jewelry, tattoo ink, or put into bullets. None of these methods show respect for one who was baptized into a community of love-one who was a child of God.

If we are honest about it, we know that there are conflicting messages about cremation. Because the state of MN says that cremation is the final disposition of the body, family members often are not instructed that the cremated remains should be buried or interred at a cemetery. For some individuals, there may be financial difficulties in providing a final resting place. For others, society's attitude of "death as an inconvenience" means that there is no ritualization, no memorialization and no burial.

Resurrection Cemetery Columbarium/Ossuary

This past October, we offered the "Bringing Them Home" program to the entire Twin Cities area for individuals who have cremated remains at home. This program ensured that anyone who could not afford to bury/inter a loved one, could do so in a communal crypt at either Resurrection or Gethsemane chapel mausoleums. We would then have permanent records of these individuals as well as a permanent place for families to visit, knowing that we would care for their loved one forever.

At The Catholic Cemeteries, we have a variety of ways that we can inter cremated remains. One way that is getting more notice is our ossuary. The ossuary is a communal burial space within a columbarium in which cremated remains are placed. Each individual is placed in a velvet sleeve, so that the cremated remains do not co-mingle. For one price, the interment also includes memorialization of the individual's name, along with year of birth and death, on a band around the columbarium. We have a columbaria/ossuary at Resurrection and will be placing one at Gethsemane next Spring.

Losing a loved one is painful, but we are called to grieve and mourn with hope, trusting in the Resurrection. We believe that every person is a child of God and deserves a resting place and to be remembered.

**For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed,
we have a building from God, a house not made with hands,
eternal in the heavens.
–2 Corinthians 5:1**

An opportunity to give

Please join us in supporting the ongoing ministries and beautification of The Catholic Cemeteries. Your tax-deductible contribution can be used to provide for burial of the poor, ministry to bereaved parents and families, and to beautify the cemeteries.

TO MAKE A GIFT

- **By check.** Clip and complete this form and mail with your check to: The Catholic Cemeteries, 2105 Lexington Ave. S., Mendota Heights, MN 55120
- **Online.** Go to catholic-cemeteries.org and click on "Donate."

I want to support the ongoing ministries and beautification of The Catholic Cemeteries:

___$1,000 ___$500 ___$250 ___ $100 ___Other $_____

Please direct my gift to:

__ Calvary __ Gethsemane __ Resurrection
__ St. Anthony's __ St. Mary's

I would like my gift to be used in the following way(s):

___Unrestricted Donation

___Statuary and Beautification Fund

___John Ireland Memorial Tree Fund (trees, landscaping, and gardens)

___Archbishop Harry J. Flynn Compassionate Assistance Fund

___Children's Memorial & Healing Garden at Resurrection

___Peaceable Kingdom Garden at Resurrection Chapel Mausoleum

___Children's Memorial & Healing Garden at Gethsemane

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If this contribution is given in memory/in honor of an individual, please print his/her name. Thank you.

___ In memory ___ In honor_____
Name

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FALL/WINTER 2022

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Joan Gecik, Executive Director

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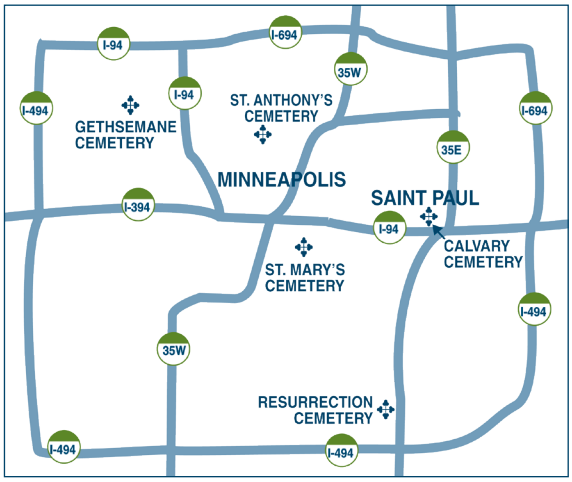

CEMETERY HOURS

Every day of the year, cemetery grounds are open from dawn to dusk (generally 5 p.m. in the winter). You may reach all cemetery offices by phone or email Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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