

Cemetery Sunday

Let the Healing Begin

Sunday, November 5, 2017 is Cemetery Sunday. In the Archdiocese of Chicago, we will gather the faithful together to pray and recite the rosary at 2:00 pm. All are welcome, but special attention is given to those who have lost a loved one during the past year. In our particular ministry of service as cemeterians, that represents some 15,686 new additional souls that we have been privileged to care for. It is a time for the faithful to be united in prayer and to let them know that they are not alone in their grief and that they need not be afraid.

I would like to share with you some of the ways that we make Cemetery Sunday special.

We start with a major advertising campaign announcing Cemetery Sunday with big “Come Join Us” signs at each of our cemetery entrances that will remain up the entire month of October thru the Sunday date in November. This is accompanied by announcements in both our bi-monthly Catholic newspaper and in the local weekly and daily major secular newspapers.

Two weeks prior to the date of Cemetery Sunday stand-alone signs are placed throughout the entire cemetery grounds. A special individual invitation of welcome is mailed to each family that has experienced the loss of a loved one from last mid-October to the current mid-October.

In addition to the mailing, we have sign boards placed in each of our chapels listing their deceased loved one’s name. No words can adequately express the sense of pride, joy and comfort that they experience in finding and pointing to their loved one’s name, amongst as many as 3,000 other names at our larger cemeteries, to those who have come with them for this special service of remembrance.

Each cemetery also provides a handout, with all the names of those interred since last Cemetery Sunday. Prayers will be offered up for those people. There is something very special in knowing that our loved ones are being specifically prayed for.

Last year, we gave out over 2,000 rosaries to participants at our Cemetery Sunday rosary. A picture of Pope Francis and a reminder of God’s love for us accompanied those rosaries. Deacons are called upon to lead the community in the rosary, with an invitation to pray in any number of languages.

This division is normally divided into decades of the rosary. It is our goal to have as many people as possible feel that this is a special day for them. This has been a consistently beautiful tradition with the rosary being a common prayer that unites ethnically diverse people.

Another way to make the day special is that we invite people to announce their loved one’s name. The deacon, of course, leads

— by Rev. Larry J. Sullivan, CCCE

and ends the Universal Prayer of the Church. As a people united in faith and in suffering, participants can’t help but feel closer to each other by prayer’s end.

We have found this communal prayer to be more important than any hospitality that we could offer, so at the conclusion of the prayer, families often simply go the place of burial to offer silent prayers.

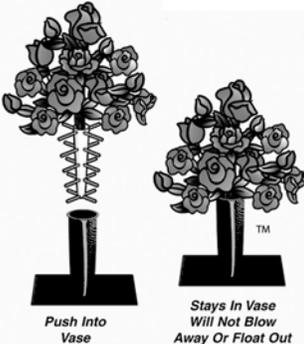
In addition to the 2:00 pm rosary, we ensure that our grounds are befitting the sacred work that we do. Extra staff is also available to help families find specific locations. These extra staff members volunteer their time to meet the needs of our families. It is really incredible to see the great faith and care our staff members display.

The things we do are simple, but powerful. The evidence of how special this day is comes from seeing the same people year after year, and to seeing the sense of comfort on the faces of those coming with fresh pain in their hearts. ✍

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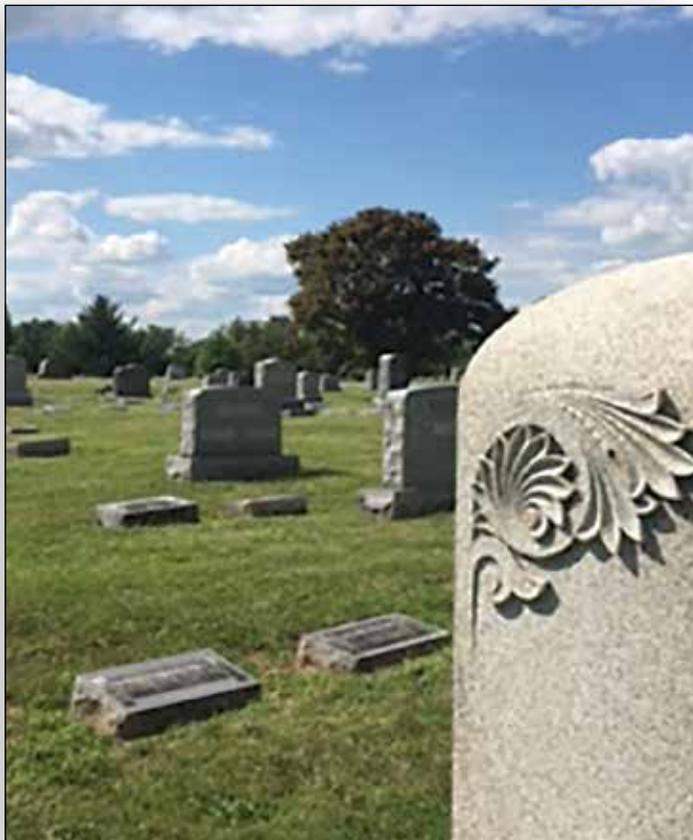
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Calvary Cemetery in Springfield Celebrates 130 Years

— by Douglas Tinsman



Calvary Cemetery is the final resting place of some 7,500 people and also includes a Veteran's mound created during WWI.

Calvary Cemetery, located in Springfield, OH, celebrated 130 years of service to the Catholic community this year. Tucked away from the city of Springfield, this cemetery is in a rural part of this Midwestern city with the only noise being that of birds or the occasional bee visiting a flower. Views include soaring evergreen trees on the grounds and a vast cornfield across the street. What was once a parish cemetery that served the St. Joseph and St. Raphael parishes is now under the guidance and ownership of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Calvary is located on about 50 acres of gently rolling hills with the current number of those laid to rest there at around 7,500. This cemetery boasts some beautiful, traditional upright monuments and grand mausoleums as well as a small chapel that has recently undergone renovation. The cemetery is the final resting place of some of Springfield's notable families and also has a Veteran's mound which was created during WWI.



The chapel was renovated this past spring with a new ceiling, windows and artwork, black and white photos of monuments located within the cemetery.

One of the great treasures of Calvary is that its care and maintenance have been done by the same family for the past 68 years. William Matthews began caring for the grounds in 1949 until 1990, a period of 41 years. His son Patrick then took over and still cares for the cemetery today.

Patrick, who began helping his father when he was only 14 years old, has been caring for Calvary professionally over the past 27 years. Through the Matthews family there has been a seamless transition of service to the families that lay their loved ones to rest at Calvary.

The chapel was updated this past spring with a new ceiling, windows, artwork and other elements to make it more attractive. Artwork inside the chapel includes black and white photographs of monuments within the cemetery. This has added a new dimension to the beauty of what the cemetery boasts. Further, renovations to the chapel will include repair work to the parking area as well as a new coat of paint to the outside of the chapel itself.

Calvary is a hidden jewel and quiet treasure in Springfield, but is worth noting and celebrating for its continued and steadfast commitment to the community. Happy anniversary, Calvary, and thank you for your continued work in the corporal act of mercy of burying the dead. 🐦

Dia de Los Muertos

a day of celebration and remembrance

— by Nicole Lecheler

“Indeed for your faithful, Lord, life is changed, not ended. And when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven.” - Preface 1 in the Mass for the Dead

Dia de Los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is one of Mexico’s traditional holidays reuniting and honoring beloved ancestors, family, and friends. It is an ancient ritual during which the living commune with the dead – a mystical event when the veil is lifted between their two realms, and they may share a day together.

The historical roots of this celebration date back to the pre-Hispanic cultures of Meso-America’s indigenous people of Mexico for more than 3,000 years. When the Spaniards conquered the country, this indigenous custom was rooted so deeply that, after five centuries of colonization, it has continued to survive and remains celebrated to this day. Indigenous people

believed that souls did not die, that they continued living in *Mictla* (Place of Death), a special place for them to finally rest. Tradition holds that on Dia de Los Muertos, the dead return to earth to visit their living relatives.

In the United States, Day of the Dead has been celebrated mostly in public ever since Chicano students in the 1960s adopted the holiday and a relatively minor one - Cinco de Mayo - to reaffirm their cultural identity. That’s why we see so many photos of Che Guevara, Cesar Chavez, Frida Kahlo and other heroes of the Chicano movement on public altars.

Local Catholic churches in the Diocese of San Jose, including St. Joseph Basilica Cathedral in downtown San Jose, have allowed Day of the Dead celebrations for years. That’s no small step for a church that once tried to snuff out the celebration.

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Altar created and displayed by Mi Pueblo Grocery Store, a sponsor at Calvary Catholic Cemetery’s Dia de Los Muertos celebration.

Dia de Los Muertos

Diocese of San Jose



A young dancer from a local group, Folklorico Nacional, participates in Calvary Cemetery's Dia de Los Muertos event.

Manuel Romero, rt., performs a traditional Spanish ballad, the eighth year he had participated at Calvary's Dia de Los Muertos. His music encourages listeners that through hard work and dedication they may very well attain their dreams. Far rt., Folklorico dancers from Xochitl Cultural, a student group at Willow Glen High School, perform.

Dia de Los Muertos, continued

“It represents the cycle of life and death. We see that as part and parcel in the teachings of the Church,” explained Rev. Jon Pedigo, Diocese of San Jose.

Throughout each period in Mexican culture, death seems to hold no terror. In Mexican art, legends and religion, death has not been a mysterious and fearful presence, but a realistic recognizable character in life itself. Dia de Los Muertos expresses this perspective: it is not a mournful commemoration, but a happy and colorful celebration of life where Death takes a lively, friendly expression, and is not frightening or strange.

This special day is a time when family members share memorable stories recalling the lives of their ancestors. Offerings and altars (*ofrendas*), which include photos, mementos and other favorite items of the deceased, are created to welcome and remember the dead and to express love. *Ofrendas* typically include the four main elements of nature: Earth, Wind, Water and Fire. Creating *ofrendas* and recalling stories is a wonderful opportunity to teach children about those who came before them.

Dia de Los Muertos is a time of celebration and a time to remember our deceased family and friends. Rather than to deny and fear death, this day teaches us to accept and contemplate the meaning of mortality and to celebrate life, and that life has changed not ended.

Calvary Catholic Cemetery has been celebrating Dia de Los Muertos for the past eight years, becoming the premier Day of the Dead celebration in San Jose. This event typically draws more than 1,500 people to the Cemetery.

Opened in 1882, Calvary features exquisitely carved, tall tombstones and magnificent family mausoleums housing above ground. The 26-acre cemetery is full of history and is the sacred ground of about 25,000 burials. Predominantly serving the Hispanic community in San Jose, this traditional celebration honors and remembers those who have gone before us, and who are laid to rest at Calvary Cemetery.

We invite the local community to our annual premier (free) event at Calvary Catholic Cemetery on Saturday, October 28 from 11am – 4pm. We invite them to come with photos and memorabilia to place on the community altar which includes the unique altar display created by Catholic school and parish children to honor their loved ones. The opening prayer service begins at 11 am followed by a day of wonderful ritual, music and dance. There is a free children’s craft area and bounce house, plus sale items from food and art vendors.

The free daytime event will feature ritual, music and dance involving many members of the community. Parishioners and children from two local parishes process from the parishes to the Cemetery for an opening ceremony which includes prayers and blessings offered by a local priest, and some songs performed by the children from those parishes.

Entertainment for the rest of the day includes traditional and spiritual Aztec dance performances, dance performances by two local folklorico groups, mariachi bands, and Manuel Romero, a well-known pop and Christian singer.

Local artists have Dia de Los Muertos arts, crafts and figurines available to sell. In addition, local businesses, schools, parishes and artists also display altars at the cemetery, in tribute to their deceased loved ones.

The Cemetery has been working with the Silicon Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, local Parishes, Catholic Schools and Latino organizations and artists to keep the observation as authentic as possible given the different approaches the special day receives in each country. ✎



Volunteers Help With Lafayette Cemetery Project

Cemeteries aren't dead, they are very much alive

— by Jessica E. Hollinger



Both photos are of St. Joseph Cemetery, Lafayette, IN, before renovation started.

Just ask Tim Tully, the sexton of St. Boniface and St. Joseph cemeteries in Lafayette, IN, who led efforts for a major cleanup and restoration at St. Joseph Cemetery on June 24, 2017.

Mike Mahn, a parishioner of the Church of the Blessed Sacrament in West Lafayette, said he enjoys engaging in activities that support the Church and community. “It’s a place where we are all going to end up eventually,” Mahn said with a smile. “If I had relatives here (though I don’t), I’d want it to be a beautiful, restful place.”

Mahn was one of 40 eager volunteers who rolled up their sleeves to help restore the historic burial grounds that have served as the final resting home for more than 2,600 interments, for nearly 160 years. “It’s a shame to see old cemeteries get run down, because this should be a clean, peaceful place, not a weed patch,” he added.

The once beautiful and sprawling Catholic cemetery located on Greenbush Street fell victim to the ravages of time and neglect, with stately monuments and headstones in disarray — knocked over, displaced, and sunken deeply into the ground.

Volunteers were instructed and taught how to clean the burial stones and restore them to their proper locations. “We already see a transformation taking place,” Tully said. “It’s going to take time to do everything right, but we are committed to ongoing service.”

The original cemetery was designed as part of the community in the Linwood area of Lafayette — one of the oldest settled areas of the city — and often referred to as the Old German Graveyard.

Tully said Franciscan Health Alliance also helps to maintain the cemetery, honoring the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration who are buried there, who were instrumental in the first St. Elizabeth Hospital.

“We are grateful for Ed Carlson’s ongoing assistance, who helps us maintain the area where the sisters are buried and also removes snow and ice in the wintertime,” he said.

The cemetery was commissioned to St. Boniface in 1858, Tully said. Years ago, a section was designated for non-Catholic gravesites, as well as an area of burial for spouses married to non-Catholics.

Cody Hines, a former resident of the area and landscaper, said he was driving by the cemetery with his friend and noticed how neglected the grounds had become. He called Tully and asked how he could help.

“It’s important to care for all of our city,” Hines said. “For me, this place is history. I drive by it all the time on the way to work, and when I was younger I would cut through here (the cemetery) on the way to and from church.”

“I’ve been working out here for about a month and I can’t tell you the number of people who have dropped by to say how much better the cemetery looks already,” he added.

Touched by Hines’ hard work and devotion, Tully said that it is impressive that Hines volunteers because he understands the importance and sanctity of the Catholic cemetery, even though he is not a Catholic.

“It’s a testimony of people believing what we say when we refer to the communion of saints,” Tully said. “We hope to restore St. Joseph to a place where loved ones are proud to come and visit their loved ones.”

“My wife, Jodie, and I drove by the cemetery this Sunday evening (the day after the event) and already saw new flowers and crosses placed on the gravesites. I was touched ... I couldn’t believe it.”

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