



Cincinnati's downtown Convention hotel boasts an elegant Hall of Mirrors (left) and a Chandelier Staircase (right). Below is the Orchids at Palm Court Restaurant. "Winter is here, but in Cincinnati, we are warm and happy dining at the only 5-Star Restaurant in Ohio," says President Bittner.





Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum, in North Arlington, New Jersey, a property of Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Newark, is this year's winner of the **American Cemetery Excellence (ACE) Award**. The award, presented by *American Cemetery & Cremation* magazine, a leading publication serving the funeral and cemetery industry, recognizes the most outstanding cemeteries in the United States and abroad.

"It is an honor to be recognized with this prestigious award," said Andrew P. Schafer, CCCE, Executive Director of Catholic Cemeteries. "It recognizes our team's commitment to our mission of faith and to the excellent service provided to bereaved families and our Catholic community. We are very proud of this distinction."

The artwork, headstones and private family mausoleums at Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum are evidence of timeless Catholic traditions that are deeply intertwined in the cemetery's heritage dating back to its start in 1915. However, the cemetery also has moved full-speed ahead with cutting-edge technology and architecture, innovative product choices, excellent customer service and unsurpassed beau-

ty and grandeur. The cemetery is a unique and holy place that allows families to memorialize and remember their departed loved ones in a beautiful, inviting and faith-filled atmosphere. It is a holy place with a museum-like characteristic and is recognized as one of the most magnificent cemeteries in the country.

According to Schafer, it is the commitment to families and attention to detail that has contributed to the cemetery's unique and special qualities. "It's all about finding out what the needs are and filling them," Schafer said. "Over the years we have tried to respond to our families' needs to the best of our ability in a respectful, dignified way."



The Genesis Chapel Mausoleum features soaring rooflines, stained glass, statuary and floor-to-ceiling mosaics.

The Holy Cross Cemetery Mausoleum (*shown above*) spans some 265,000-square-feet on two levels, providing more than 37,000 crypt and niche spaces, making it the largest Catholic mausoleum in the nation. Construction of its seven phases began in 1979. The completion of the seventh and final phase of the mausoleum in 2013 tapped into an evolution in Catholic mausoleum architecture, which echoed the distinctive aesthetic of church buildings with sloping raised roof-lines and soaring steeples, versus the standard "box" design of earlier phases popular with mausoleums nationwide.

Holy Cross Cemetery & Mausoleum *Wins 2018 American Cemetery Excellence* *(ACE) Honors* — by Maria Margiotta



The final mausoleum expansion included 6,100 new crypts along with 920 cremation niche spaces with urns displayed behind glass on green marble shelves. Older sections of the mausoleum also have been retrofitted to accommodate over 3,000 niche spaces.

“A growing number of Catholics are opting to be cremated,” said Joseph Verzi, CCCE, Assistant Executive Director of Catholic Cemeteries for the Archdiocese of Newark. “We don’t look at cremation any differently than full-body burial at Holy Cross. Everyone is sacred.”

The breathtaking mausoleum expansion combines ancient scriptures and contemporary art in an effort to transform the unsettling reputation of cemeteries and mausoleums into a welcoming place filled with beautiful and meaningful symbols that inspire faith and hope.

Ninety major works of art are located throughout the mausoleum including six new enormous mosaics that span from floor-to-ceiling portraying the Genesis story of creation. The intricate mosaics employ thousands of colored stones and tiles hand-cut from glass, marble and ceramic depicting the planets, sea creatures, lush vegetation, dinosaurs, and Adam and Eve.

Specially commissioned life-size bronze statues of Saint Francis of Assisi with a wolf and Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, both framed with an 18-foot-high flight of bronze doves and stone wall, stand vigil in outside gardens. Lindenwood carved statues of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Saint Teresa of Calcutta, Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini and Saint Marianne (of Molak’i) Cope repose in bright alcoves at the ends of four corridors.

One-hundred-year-old stained glass art, including an 85-year-old, 10-foot Rose Window depicting Jesus with children, and various Altars and statues reclaimed from now-closed churches in Newark are on display throughout the mausoleum. These beloved and treasured art works flank the main chapel where a colossal cross of Lindenwood hangs above the marble Altar with an intricate, marble-carved base depicting Adam and Eve’s fall from grace. The inspiring art reminds visitors of the Catholic faith and tells the stories of the Bible from creation to the resurrection.

A Rondanini Pietà statue depicting the body of Jesus in the arms of his Mother, Mary, after the Crucifixion, imagines what Michelangelo would have completed had he not died before finishing the magnificent work (*see cover*). The 15-foot Carrara-marble statue with wooden cross imported from Italy sits atop a hill overlooking all the faithful departed. A similar marble statue of Saint Helena, the Emperor Constantine’s mother, who found the True

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According to *American Cemetery* magazine’s December issue, in which the winner was announced, “far more than just a final resting place, Holy Cross Cemetery & Mausoleum offers a park-like setting, exquisite artwork, modern technology and a faith-inspired atmosphere. It’s easy to understand why Holy Cross Cemetery & Mausoleum has been selected as our seventh annual American Cemetery Excellence award winner.”

An Update on Natural/Green Burials from the Modern Interment Practices Committee

Saint Kateri Preserve, Dayton, OH

Since our last report in the March 2017 issue of *Catholic Cemetery* magazine, our natural burial offering in an urban Catholic cemetery is continuing to meet market demand in our region. We have now served customers over an hour travel time from Calvary Cemetery Dayton as well as out-of-state customers.

Over 11% of our overall ground burial easement sales were in the Kateri Preserve in 2017. We made two shroud burials this past year, one in linen and another in bamboo cloth. Wicker casket is still the natural container of choice. It still can't be overstated that we are serving an extended group of people beyond our traditional customer marketplace.

— Rick Meade, Executive Director, Calvary Cemetery Association

All Saints Cemetery/The Preserve, Detroit, MI

Russ Burns of the Mount Elliott Association in Detroit, MI, and Director of All Saints Cemetery/The Preserve reports a continued increase in interest in their green burial options. The Mount Elliott Association provides many educational seminars around the Detroit Metro area. According to Russ, the top two most popular questions asked at these meetings are concerning cremation and green burial.

Catholic Cemeteries Archdiocese of Newark

Joseph Heckel, CCCE, Sales Manager for Catholic Cemeteries Archdiocese of Newark, states that after eight years of opening the Saint Francis Natural/Green Burial Section in Mary Rest Cemetery in Mahwah, NJ, they are now looking to expand. According to Joe, theirs was the first natural burial offering in the state. They still have green burial customers traveling long distances for their service.

Our Lady of the Rosary Cemetery and Prayer Gardens

Carolyn King and the staff of Our Lady of the Rosary and Prayer Gardens in Georgetown, TX, share that their location offers a variety of burial rites including traditional burial, green burial and cremation burial. King describes that they work directly with families and funeral homes in Austin and surrounding areas to ensure that the burial service is handled in the most caring and compassionate way. On April 8 they host a Field of Flowers Day, celebrating the flowers as a sign of Life and the Resurrection to come. Attendees are given packets of seeds to distribute among wildflowers along the nature trails. Their Holy Family Garden opened in November across from the Garden of Precious Love and located across from the Hope and Love sections of the St. Francis Garden.



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