

## **The Cemeteries of St. Mary's and the Missions**

### **2022 Spring Newsletter**

Our 4 parish cemeteries have become administratively stronger. Lynn Curley assumed the role of cemetery manager after thorough training under our retiring manager. Angela Corrigan leaves an indelible mark as she guided us through 6 years of immense growth and improvement. We owe her a great debt of gratitude. Lynn brings new energy and a commitment to build on Angela's legacy of sound management.

The operating agreement with the City of Owen Sound to provide some services at St Mary's Cemetery in Georgian Bluffs ended last year. All activities including sales, maintenance and record keeping at all 4 cemeteries are now handled by Lynn.

The transition to full managerial control of all cemeteries necessitated adopting many by-law changes. This provided an opportunity to update all areas of the by-laws. The new 2022 by-laws are 16 pages and replace the former 66 pages. The result is a simple and straight forward resource for rights holders, monument dealers and the diocese.

The transition to a new manager and a new set of by-laws has been worthwhile but costly. Administrative expenditures don't deliver a shiny new columbarium or a newly paved roadway. However, the benefits are both immediate and long lasting.

All areas of expenditure have seen a rise due to inflation. The cost of fuel has a direct impact on grass cutting costs. Many areas of discretionary spending will be delayed in order to reduce the anticipated deficit in this year's budget. The budget for 2022 will be challenged to include \$21,500. to pave the main entrance road and circle driveway at St. Mary's Georgian Bluffs. The Board is confident that your financial support for our cemeteries through the upcoming collection will allow us to complete this project.

Fortunately, Bishop Crosby has committed to match our donations dollar for dollar again this year. His generous support of your efforts over the past 2 years has added \$22,000. to the Care and Maintenance Fund. The interest earned on the C&M fund generates barely half of the \$35,000 cost of annual maintenance. In essence we need to double the principal in the C&M fund to generate enough interest to meet our

annual maintenance cost. Your support of this spring collection will allow us to maintain the cemetery this year. The bishop's matching dollars assure that funds will be available in perpetuity. This is the nature of our commitment to those buried in our cemeteries. A fully funded C&M is our ultimate goal and we are making steady progress.

The current financial climate is a challenge on many fronts. We ask you to maintain your commitment to Catholic cemeteries as you navigate your personal finances. Together we can honour our promise to provide perpetual care for the graves of our loved ones.

We take this opportunity to encourage each of you to consider purchasing a plot or a niche in the columbarium or place a marker on an existing grave. These decisions are often put off but the appropriate time to plan for the inevitable is sooner rather than later. Make it a priority in the coming months to plan for our own end of life needs. Contact Lynn Curley at 519-379-5537. She is happy to help you plan now to avoid leaving difficult decisions to others in a time of grief.

What can you do to assure that our cemeteries continue to be beautiful resting places for our loved ones? Support the Spring and Fall Cemetery Collections, purchase a lot, plot, niche, or memory wall plaque, or donate to the Cemetery Fund in memory of a departed loved one. There are great tax advantages to making a bequest now or in your last will and testament. Your financial planner can help you with this.

The Spring Cemetery Collection will take place Mother's Day weekend – May 7/8 at all the masses. We depend on your generosity at this time to meet our extraordinary needs and provide for costs associated with ongoing maintenance. We thank you for your generous support in the past and look forward to your continued support of our 4 cemeteries.

Parishioners who use the weekly envelope boxes can make their donation by using the beige colored "Cemeteries Collection" envelope provided. Others may do so by using the purple envelopes marked "All Souls Day" that can be found at the back of the church. Please return your contribution next week or any Sunday during the month of May.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Cemeteries' Board.

Michael Donovan, Current Chairperson