

The Cemeteries of St. Mary's and the Missions
2023 Spring Newsletter

Our 4 parish cemeteries have been very busy this year as a record number of individuals have worked with Lynn, our manager, to complete pre-need arrangements for interment in ground or in our columbarium. It is always a prudent choice to plan on a pre-need basis as this allows our families to grieve without the burden of making difficult decisions in a stressful situation. Lynn is prepared to meet with you and plan for interment or arrange to place a marker on an existing grave.

We are pleased that the main roadway and circle at St. Mary's Cemetery in Georgian Bluffs will be paved this spring. This major improvement is the first phase of a long-term project to pave the roadways in this cemetery. This \$27,000 expenditure has been budgeted this year and further improvements will be scheduled as funds allow.

Our costs for grass cutting and other maintenance activities have risen sharply this year as the price of fuel, labour and other inflationary pressures combine to strain our budget. Moreover, the return on investments in the Care and Maintenance Fund has been lower due to the poor economic climate. Fortunately, our parish collections have been well supported and this allowed us to strike a balanced budget. The Board is relying on your financial support for our cemeteries through the upcoming collection.

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.

It's spring clean-up time for all St. Mary's and the Missions' cemeteries. Last fall, signs were posted in the cemeteries providing decoration direction to rights holders. A special thank you to those who have removed decorations and now place only a decorative saddle on upright markers or a single well drained cone in front of each marker. Spring bulbs such as tulips and daffodils planted close to your marker are a great option. We receive many compliments on the tidy appearance of the cemeteries. Thank you for doing your part to keep our cemeteries safe and dignified.

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, dedicate a bench, or donate to the Cemetery Fund in memory of a departed loved one.

The Spring Cemetery Collection will take place Mother's Day weekend – May 13/14 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.

Parishioners who use the weekly envelope box can make their donation by using the beige colored "Cemeteries Collection" envelope provided. Others may do so by using a plain envelope or one of 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 time during the month of May.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Cemeteries' Board.
Michael Donovan, Current Chairperson.