Between Cemeteries Catholic Cemeteries ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA

Preparing for Eternity – Fall 2021



New Director of Catholic Cemeteries

Introducing Deacon Steve Hill / Fr. Michael Grewe, Executive Director

I am pleased to introduce Deacon Steve Hill as the new director of Catholic Cemeteries for the Archdiocese of Omaha. Deacon Steve was born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago, and was ordained to the permanent diaconate in 2016 for the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois.

Deacon Steve and his wife Linda moved to Omaha in 2018 to be closer to one of their children and grandchildren. For the last two years, he served as the Finance Director for St. Patrick Parish and Archbishop Bergan Catholic School in Fremont. He and Linda are members of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Gretna, where he is assigned as deacon.

Prior to moving to Nebraska, Deacon Steve had a long and successful career in the financial services industry, advancing to Chief Financial Officer as well as head of Global ETF Administration. Upon moving to Nebraska, he was invited to become a member of the Archdiocesan Investment and Administrative Committee.

During the interview process, Deacon Steve said he was looking for a position where he could apply both his professional expertise and ministry on a day-to-day basis. Having been in the role of Director since August, he said he has happily found what he was being called to. Deacon Steve, we are pleased to have you on board.





Our Lady of Sorrows

Deacon Norm Tierney – Manager of Ministry

I was reflecting on a picture of Michelangelo's Pietà, a sculpture housed in St.



Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. We are fortunate to have one of the few life-size replicas of it at the Cloisters on the Platte retreat center in Gretna. I have medi-

tated on it during my past retreats.

The Pietà is a statue of Mary at the foot of our Lord's cross. She is seated and Jesus' body is draped across her lap. For three hours she stood at the foot of the cross and witnessed his battered, tortured body bearing the weight of our sins. He was innocent of any wrongdoing and yet was murdered basically for loving each one of us and asking us to love each other in the same way.

One reflection I read explained that Michelangelo did not depict Mary mourning and weeping, but rather with a sorrowful look of contemplation and expectation of something about to hap-

Mary certainly heard Jesus talk about his suffering, death and resurrection. She was one of his most ardent disciples. I have to believe they had quiet mother-son talks about it, and while she didn't

want to see him suffer, she understood it was God's will out of love for each of us! He gladly gave himself for our salvation so that we could spend eternity with him.

So as Mary looked intently at her son's body, she knew in her heart it was not the end! There was more to come.

Each of us have or will experience the sorrow of standing at the foot of a loved one's cross. It could be a parent suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's; a child ostracized by insensitive children or adults at school because they are perceived to be different; a spouse or sibling suffering from loss of employment or enduring some other difficulty; anyone we love being ravaged by cancer, COVID or some other disease. In many of these situations we can feel helpless as we watch the situation unfold slowly and painfully. Here is where we find Mary at the foot of the cross.

Go to her in prayer, ask her to intercede for you and your loved one, ask her to send you her strength to endure. Trust that she is your heavenly mother! Then place your loved one and your pain at the foot of Jesus' cross, and give them to him and unite your own suffering to his. Have faith, always knowing what Mary knew: This world is not the end. God has already won! There is more to come!

Catholic Cemeteries



ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

(78th Street south entrance)
Calvary Cemetery
7710 West Center Road
Omaha, NE 68124
402-391-3711

www.catholiccem.com

Office hours: 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday

FIVE CONSECRATED CATHOLIC CEMETERIES

7710 W. Center Road
7800 W. Center Road
4912 Leavenworth St.
5226 S. 46th St.
3353 Q St.

Gates Open: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during Daylight Saving Time)

STAFF MEMBERS

Father Michael Grewe	Executive Director
Deacon Steve Hill	Director
Bill Barnes	Manager, Memorials and Facilities
	Outreach Manager
Deacon Norm Tierney	Manager of Ministry
Denyse Lafferty	Accounting Manager
Lance Zimmerman	Family Service Manager
Sue Buras	Family Service Representative
Maureen Fitzgerald	Family Service Representative
Kathy Dropinski	Memorial Representative
Peggy Sjuts	Memorial Representative
Rachel Meyer	Administrative Assistant
	Manager, Grounds and Facilities
John Czeranko	Caretaker, Holy Sepulchre
Zach UrwinCaretaker	, St. Mary and St. Mary Magdalene
Zach Worthing	Caretaker, Calvary / Resurrection
Greg Boll	Operations Representative
Ron Johnson	Operations Representative
Leonard Kline	Operations Representative
Jerry Shotkoski	Operations Representative
Dave Sparks	Operations Representative
Thomas Vonderfect	Operations Representative
Marygrace Worthing	Operations Representative
	ime Family Service Representative
Lisa Shaw	Part-Time Housekeeping

CATHOLIC CEMETERIES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Archbishop George J. Lucas
Father Michael Grewe
Father Richard Reiser
Deacon Steve Hill
Deacon Randy Grosse
David Delgado
Dr. David Volkman
J. J. Schenkelberg
Andrea McMahon

Seasons Change – Prayer and Presence Are Constants

Deacon Jim Tardy, Outreach Manager

I was sitting in my backyard on an absolutely beautiful evening, watching the birds and squirrels have a grand time



of it. I was particularly fascinated at the business of the hummingbirds and dumbfounded when they would land a few feet away from me and rest. I had not ever seen this before. It made me stop and think: In all of my business, do I really ever stop just

to rest?

We use the euphemism "final resting place" in lieu of cemetery a lot. I have written for some time about how our Catholic Cemeteries are a place for the living, to come and remember the past, to live today and pray for the grace of our tomorrows. We live in a world that seemingly has gotten faster, even in spite of COVID.

Yet death may visit us at any stage of life; it most assuredly has been a part of our lives since we were born. So, why are we not pushing the pause button and resting in the grace of our Lord even if it's just for a few moments each day?

Our Catholic Cemeteries are offering prayer, ritual and solace this fall and winter to assist us in our journeys of sorrow and grief. Even in our business of serving you, the people of God, we pause and reflect on this life God has given us. He has called us to serve all in their time of need.

I invite you to call and inquire about the day-long retreat at St. Patrick Church in Elkhorn, with the theme "He Wept." This retreat is on Nov. 20 and is specifically for parents who have suffered the death of a child.

Our monthly Mass calls us to share sacramentally with you and to walk this path of sorrow with you. Even in death we are not alone! We have prayer gardens and places in our mausoleums to sit, pause and reflect on the change in our lives after the death of a loved one.

We will have our annual prayer walk at St. Mary Magdalene Cemetery Friday, Oct. 29 at dusk to commemorate the Feast of All Souls. We will pray for those we will inter the next day, Saturday, Oct. 30 at 11 a.m. at St. Wenceslaus Mausoleum, also in St. Mary Magdalene Cemetery.

On the Wednesdays of Advent, we are invited to prepare for what might be a very difficult time of year, as we experience the Advent and Christmas seasons without our loved one for the first time. We gather in solemnity and with the beauty of sacred music to hear the Scriptures speak to us around a tree of hope at 6 p.m. in Holy Angels Mausoleum in Resurrection Cemetery. We ask for the intercession of our Lord in the depths of our grief.

We invite you to come, sit in silence and write out your thoughts or petitions and place them on that tree, so they may be blessed and prayed for by all who attend our January Mass. Allow us perhaps to bury a bit of your grief and pain on these sanctified grounds.

My friends, the beauty and warmth of my backyard may give way to a different season. The orioles and the hummingbirds will be gone for a while, only to be replaced with the splendor of autumn and the cold of winter. We have a place to come in these months ahead to experience the wonder, silence and solace of God while we heal and ask for his grace to live in this world while we await the next.

Free Trees from ReTree Nebraska

Bill Barnes, Memorial and Facility Manager

Once again this year we received 10 trees from the ReTree Planting program, an effort of the Nebraska Forest Service and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. These 10 trees have been planted in all five cemeteries. In addition to simply planting more trees, the program goals include increasing appreciation and awareness of the value of community forests in Nebraska. Free Trees for Fall Planting is supported by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum's Trees for Nebraska Towns Initiative funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust and by a U.S. Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration grant received by the Nebraska Forest Service.





Deacon Dan Keller Retires

Father Michael Grewe, Executive Director

I am sad to report that our Director, Deacon Dan Keller, has decided to retire. He was appointed Director of Catholic Cemeteries in February 2015. He retired in early September, after serving six and a half years.

Deacon Keller has accomplished so many things here at the Cemeteries. If you have been around our grounds over the past few years, you have easily noticed the many improvements that he has orchestrated. The latest has been the altar statues at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. We are so grateful for his inspiration and leadership during his time with us. We will miss him, but we wish him all the best in his retirement.



By Dan Gilster - Grounds and Facilities Manager

As most of you know, the Omaha area was hit hard with multiple wind storms this summer. From the big 100 m.p.h. windstorm on July 10 and the 70 m.p.h. wind and intense flooding on Aug. 7 to the storms on Aug. 20 and Aug. 25, Mother Nature has pounded us.

The cemetery trees have taken a huge beating. We have lost 30 to 40 very mature trees. We have also lost many young trees that were only planted in the past five years. After the July 10 storm, over 10 staff members spent two full weeks cutting down trees, cutting up the branches and hauling away the debris. We are so grateful the City of Omaha opened up the tree debris dump sites. We hauled over 80 oversized loads to them.

The brute force of these storms shredded many treetops and broke off leads in maple trees over a half century old. Cedar trees looked as if they were twisted off at the ground level. Locust trees have seen many of

their branches snapped in two. We even experienced trees ripped from the ground, roots and all – including one that ripped up a water line in the process. It has really been difficult to keep up with the continued tree, fence, waterline and tent damage caused by each storm. The losses have been significant.

If "your" tree is no longer there, please contact us. We have attempted to reach out to the memorial tree donors, but we may have missed you. Catholic Cemeteries has committed to planting 20 to 30 new trees each year. This goal has been met through the memorial tree donation program, state grants of 10 free trees, and replacing mature trees that have served us well.

We are dedicated to preserving this living oasis where our consecrated cemeteries have been established. Please let us know if you have any concerns with your loved one's grave or any other matter. We love meeting families, friends and guests of loved ones interred here.

What's with All the Weeds?

That's what many have been asking these past weeks. We agree that the weeds have gotten the better of us this summer. Well, hope is on the way. We began our fall weed spray Sept. 20. This will give us plenty of time to get all 180 acres treated before our first freeze, historically in the middle of October.

Last fall we did spray for weeds, but due to staff miscommunication, we now realize that many areas were either missed or not treated with sufficient product. The Creeping Charlie has completely taken over the markers! We cannot seem to eat the weeds fast enough.

I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding as we get the weeds back under control. In the past 15-plus years, we have annually fertilized and used pre-emergent on our grounds to establish a thicker stand of grass. We overseed thin areas in the spring also. The better the grass, the more it chokes the weeds out.



Preplanning Cemetery Arrangements

Lance Zimmerman – Family Services Manager

Preplanning cemetery arrangements can be a tough subject to bring up, and it can be difficult to know where to start. Here are some good starter questions to ask yourself:

- Do I want to be interred in a casket or in a cremation urn?
- Do I want to be interred near family or in a particular area?
- Am I planning for only my cemetery arrangements, or should I also make arrangements with a spouse and/or family member(s)?
- Do I want to be interred as a burial or above ground in a cremation niche or a casket-sized mausoleum crypt?
- Do I want a particular kind of memorial (flat marker, upright monument, veteran designation, flower vase, etc.)?
- · What's my budget?

Getting these questions answered will help narrow down the available cemetery options, and we can send you the respective maps and pricing to review. I recommend visiting our five Catholic Cemeteries at your leisure to help determine which options you like the best. The grounds and mausoleums are open every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (the closing time goes to 5 p.m. during the winter months when we "fall back" an hour). When you are ready, we can schedule a time to physically select your location, memorial, payment plan, etc. Doing this now will reduce the emotional and financial burden on your family during a difficult time. Please let us know how we can help.

Seasonal Decorations Now Available

Catholic Cemeteries • 7710 W. Center Rd. • Omaha, NE 68124 Orders can also be placed online or by calling 402-391-3711 Complete the form below and mail to:

Flower Program **Items Purchased Through Our**

reserve the right to substias quantities are limited. We Nov. 26, 2021. Order early, ies will be placed beginning through Catholic Cemeter-Decorations purchased

For All Items Placed Winter Decoration On Gravesites Guidelines

moved by March 1. grave blankets that cover March 31. Items such as artificial decorations may **Gravesites:** Appropriate the ground must be rebe placed Nov. 1 through

> to avoid damage from daily during the winter months down in the cemeteries that vases be left turned Vases: It is recommended

at 402-391-3711. contact the cemetery office about these policies, please If you have any questions

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Circle is the final resting place for many priests, primarily Jesuit, but also Columban, Redemptorist, Franciscan and archdiocesan The restoration of the Priest Circle in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery is now complete! The Priest

the bronze sculptures. the concrete walk from the road. We also want to thank John Lajba, a local artist, who restored their efforts tearing down the old altar and rebuilding it with granite materials, as well as adding We want to thank Big Muddy Workshop, the general contractor, and CBJ Construction for all

years after the original installation, the statues have been cleaned, repaired and have received a coming from Italy. In 1969 the structure was disassembled, and new granite installed. Now 90 something to behold. The altar was originally constructed in the 1930s, with the bronze statuary These friends of Catholic Cemeteries performed phenomenal work with the end product