



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Burials and Burial Lots

Who actually owns the property at the cemetery?

The purchase of burial space in a Catholic cemetery is not a real estate transaction in the normal sense, but rather an agreement in the form of an easement or license between a family and the Church. The family purchases the right of burial or entombment in a specified location in the cemetery. Ownership of the property remains with the Church and the Church retains the responsibility for respectfully maintaining the gravesite in perpetuity.

My family purchased eight burial spaces and only two actually have someone buried in them. Who is entitled to the remaining four sites?

The Diocese of Lansing Catholic Cemeteries follow the inheritance laws of the State of Michigan. In general (with a few exceptions) the children inherit the remaining burial sites of family lot unless other written arrangements have been made with the cemetery.

Can non-Catholics be buried in a Catholic cemetery?

Catholic cemeteries in the Diocese of Lansing are established to serve the burial needs of the local Catholic community. However, canon law allows non-Catholic family members who are not Catholics to be buried in a Catholic cemetery provided, the non-Catholic family members abide by regulations and traditions that make the cemetery a Catholic place of prayer and remembrance.

Who took the plants/ flowers from the grave?

The burial of deceased loved ones with dignity, and the ongoing care of their graves are the main mission of the Diocese of Lansing Cemeteries. It is quite natural to want to leave tangible evidence of devotion on the lot of a loved one. However, sometimes may be eaten by wildlife such as deer or rabbits. Other times, they are removed by the cemetery staff when they begin to wilt and lose their beauty. Sometimes, there are accidents when decorations become damaged during mowing season. These incidents are not deliberate, nor show a lack of compassion for the deceased.

Artificial flowers are welcome before and after the grass mowing season. During that time, however, the wires in the flower stems pose a safety hazard to the mowers, maintenance staff and cemetery visitors.

We regret that we cannot guarantee to safeguard the grave decorations from damage or disappearance, and we also regret that we cannot accept the responsibility for their damage or loss.

When will the grave be filled and grass growing?

We seek to provide the best service we can in all kinds of weather — rain, cold, snow, sleet, heat, etc. Graves are filled as soon as the funeral is over. Weather and the time of the year also affects the re-seeding of a grave. Grass may sprout and lack of rain may kill the new grass. Be sure to tell the cemetery office so a work order can be created. The cemetery ground crew will re-seed your grave as soon as weather and ground conditions allow.

The same is true during the mowing season which generally starts in mid-April and ends in October. All our cemeteries have regular mowing and trimming schedule. Weather and burials are the two main reasons why sometimes this mowing schedule is not adhered to.

Finances

What if I make cemetery purchases and move out of the area?

The Diocese of Lansing Cemeteries have a 90% refund policy of cemetery services and burial products should you move out of the area. Such refunds are subject the regulations of the State of Michigan governing refunds which we are obligated to adhere to. The same policy applies to cemetery burial rights if the cemetery lot is unused. Some cemetery lots cannot be subdivided if one or more of the grave spaces have been used and a refund is not possible.

The re-selling of burial rights by lot holders of record or their descendants is prohibited in the Diocese of Lansing Cemeteries.

What assurances do I have that the cemetery will be kept up even after it is full and generates no more revenues?

Cemeteries operated by the Diocese of Lansing Cemeteries are “Endowed Care” cemeteries. A Catholic cemetery is a sacred place, whether it is newly blessed or a hundred years old. It must be maintained in honor and dignity. It is not enough that the cemetery is well kept it must be well kept forever. To provide for the future care when all other sources of income have ceased, the Diocese of Lansing requires a percentage of the sale of burial rights to lots, crypts and niches be set aside and invested for this purpose. The amount of revenue generated by the endowed care fund determines the level of care given a particular cemetery

Are payment plans available for the purchase of cemetery products and services?

The Diocese of Lansing Cemeteries have payment plans available for families who are pre-planning for themselves or for family members. The State of Michigan has strict regulations governing pre-planning payments which we are obligated by law to adhere to. For at-need situations, a payment schedule is available for certain services and not for others. For example, burial fees are due and payable the day of the interment. However, it is important to understand, unless all cemetery fees are paid in full, no memorialization or further burials are allowed.

St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery and New Calvary Catholic Cemetery accept Visa and Master Cards for those who so desire.

Memorials

Why can't I have any type of memorial I want?

In a Catholic cemetery, memorials honor the dead and inspire the living. Memorials also serve four purposes: 1) a fitting remembrance of the dead; 2) a historical recording of families; 3) identification of the grave; and 4) a means of beautification of the cemetery.

It is for these reasons, the Diocese of Lansing Cemeteries seeks to regulate the quality, placement and content of monuments and markers to assure that these memorials are reflective of our belief in the Communion of the Saints and of the Resurrection. All monuments and markers are subject to the rules and regulations of the cemetery, and to the Catholic Church Teachings and Beliefs and must be approved by cemetery management. The layout or design of a particular cemetery section dictates the need for height and/ or size restrictions.

When is the memorial going to arrive?

It is normal for families to want a memorial to be placed on the grave of a loved one as soon as possible after the burial. Many factors influence the delivery date. Factors which could influence the delivery date are a) the time of year - deliveries are generally not made during winter months or when cemetery grounds are extremely muddy in the Spring; b) the type and color of the memorial -

monument dealers may not have them in stock or are on back order; c) monument dealer delivery schedule - most monument dealers have fixed delivery schedules for particular cemeteries and lastly; d) payment of fees - the cemetery will not allow a memorial to be placed in the cemetery if the lot holder has an outstanding fee.

Pre-Planning

Cemetery costs are sure to increase, how do I know I will be able to pay for my future cemetery expenses with what I pay today?

The State of Michigan requires funds families pay for future cemetery products and services be placed in an escrow account with financial institution approved by the State in the name of the beneficiary to assure that when the time comes, money will be available for cemetery product and services.

What should I do if I have additional questions?

Please contact our staff at St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery and New Calvary Catholic Cemetery they will be happy to answer your questions.

New Calvary Cemetery

4142 Flushing Road
Flint, MI 48504
FAX: 810-732-6630
Rachel Vance, Manager
Nichelle Morrison, FSA
Phone: 810-732-2620

St. Joseph Cemetery

2520 West Willow Street
Lansing, MI 48917
FAX: 517-484-2022
Rachel Vance, Manager
Joni Guenther, FSA
Pete Fiero, FSA
Phone: 517-484-2500

St. Patrick Cemetery - Contact St. Joseph Cemetery Office

Old Calvary Cemetery - Contact New Calvary Cemetery Office

St. Michael Byzantine Cemetery - Contact New Calvary Cemetery Office