



Sacred spaces

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF CATHOLIC CEMETERIES

DID YOU EVER NOTICE THAT WHEN VISITING A CEMETERY, WE TEND TO SPEAK SOFTLY — OR EVEN WHISPER? That sense of reverence while we move among those who have passed from this life to the next is all-encompassing. We somehow, almost innately, understand that we are walking on sacred ground. In fact, Catholic churches and Catholic cemeteries are the only two places that feature this consecrated ground.

The Catholic faithful have the right to a Christian burial, which includes a vigil (wake), funeral Mass and committal (burial). While the Church prefers full body burial, cremations may be chosen for sufficient reasons and those remains should be buried intact. This is consistent with the belief in the resurrection of the body.

“The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Catholic faith,” explains Very Rev. Patrick N. Gilbert, dean of the Seacoast Deanery and pastor of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish in Rochester and St. Leo Parish in Gonic. “When the sacrifice of the Mass is offered for a departed soul, it brings us consolation — but it is also for them to receive the prayers necessary to be raised from Purgatory to Heaven.”

Local cemeteries statewide

The Diocese of Manchester has 66 Catholic cemeteries managed by local parishes and their pastors. These cemeteries provide spaces for full-body burials and cremains. Two even feature columbaria, which are structures that hold funeral urns within individual niches.

“When I read the history of St. Peter’s burial — who died shortly after Christ — I noted how dutiful the faithful were in burying him and marking his grave, and then burying others near him,” shares Father Gilbert. “The

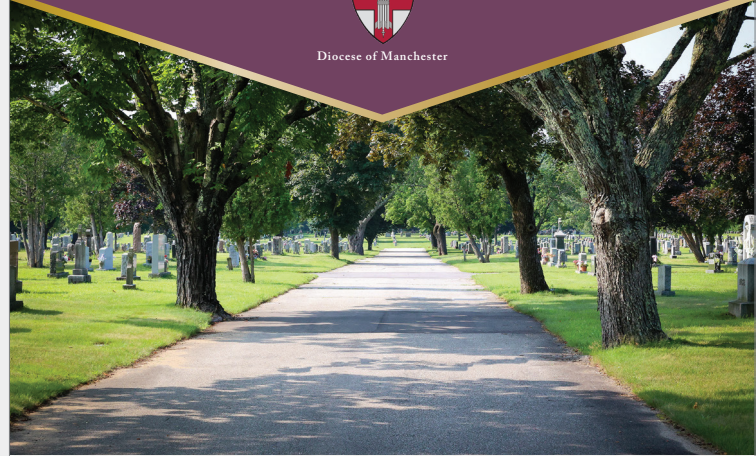
burial tombs of saints have always been venerated, and the faithful have always wanted to be buried in proximity to the saints because they considered the space sacred. The Catholic tradition is to be buried not by ourselves — but in close proximity to our brothers and sisters — as we await the resurrection.”

Father Gilbert is a pastor who also manages parish cemeteries. As such, he feels he has “an obligation to pray for the faithful departed in my area.” He has offered outdoor Masses within cemeteries on All Souls Day at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Sanbornville and Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Cemetery in Rochester and recommends the practice to other pastors. He notes that while not every cemetery has an altar, a temporary one may be erected.

Fulfilling corporal and spiritual works of mercy

While pastors operate their local parish cemeteries, they have support from the Diocese of Manchester, which offers assistance with rules and regulations, legal matters, development, promoting the Catholic identity of the cemetery and training staff on best practices.

“Catholic cemeteries are monuments of hope and peace. They provide parishioners the opportunity to come full circle at their parish — from baptism, to death, to everlasting life and the resurrection of the body,” says David Gabert, director of Cemetery Operations, Diocese of Manchester. “The mission of Catholic cemeteries is to carry out the sacred duty of a Christian burial, provide a prayerful experience for all visitors, assist in comforting the sorrowful and proclaim the sacredness of the human body.”



The Catholic cemetery uniquely fulfills both a corporal and a spiritual work of mercy by providing a proper burial place for the deceased, while also offering the opportunity for the faithful to pray on sacred ground for those who have passed.

Catholic cemetery pastors and staff offer services and comfort to grieving families when a loved one passes but also can assist with pre-need lot purchases. For more information, visit catholicnh.org/catholic-cemeteries. ■



MOUNT CALVARY CEMETERY AND MAUSOLEUM



Call today
for more
information

603-622-3215
mtcalvarycem.org

“The Catholic cemetery is consecrated to mark that history, that presence, the very person God will always know, but others often forget,” said Bishop Peter A. Libasci, D.D. “When we visit, look, read, and pause to pray, one who is beloved of God tells his or her story once again.”

CATHOLIC CEMETERIES - DID YOU KNOW?

- There are **66 Catholic cemeteries** in New Hampshire
- Catholics are entitled to the three-part Funeral Rite: Vigil (Wake), Funeral Mass, and Committal.
- Catholic cemeteries provide locations for both full body burials and burial of cremains.

WITNESSES TO EVERLASTING LIFE

- Death is not the end! Respect for the person necessarily includes respect for the body.
- The Church prefers Catholics be buried and memorialized in a Catholic cemetery or on sacred ground **and recommends that the pious custom of full body burial be retained.**
- Cremation is not forbidden, but out of respect for the dignity of the body, cremains are to be **buried intact**; memorialized, and **without scattering, separating, combining, dividing, or encasing in jewelry.**

MONUMENTS OF HOPE AND PEACE

- Catholic cemeteries represent our shared hope in the resurrection of the body.
- Burying the dead fulfills a **Corporal Work of Mercy**, while Catholic cemeteries provide a place to pray for the dead and fulfill the **Spiritual Work of Mercy.**

RESOURCES: Diocese of Manchester - www.catholicnh.org/catholic-cemeteries
Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decisions – Three Beliefs:
www.catholicnh.org/threebeliefs
Contact David A. Gabert, Director of Cemetery Operations,
dgabert@rcbm.org, (603) 663-0191

For purchasing lots or pre-need planning, volunteering, and other questions, contact a local cemetery. Scan this QR code for a listing by city/town or visit www.catholicnh.org/cemeteries.



Ryann C. Healy & Daniel J. Healy
Walter “Skip” Hebert - Directors
“Locally Owned & Family Operated”

537 UNION STREET, MANCHESTER, NH 03104
(603) 622-8223 | WWW.CONNORHEALY.COM