

Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery Archdiocese of Denver Mortuary

*Executive Director Update
May 28, 2018*

Let me start by thanking everyone who has allowed us the privilege of taking care of their loved ones. As a more than 125-year-old Catholic Cemetery and the first ever Mortuary in the Catholic Church in the United States, we have been of enormous impact to the Catholic Church in Colorado. We have struggled through the challenges of changing demographics, a significant growth in population, an aging infrastructure, as well as changes in the way our society values life and the meaning of death. Despite the changes and challenges, I am happy to report that we have addressed our most pressing needs and continue to push forward in many other areas.

IRRIGATION UPDATE

I am excited to report that the massive irrigation update is actually ahead of schedule. We've completely updated our system in more than 50% of the cemetery and are hopeful to have the area south of the railroad tracks completely done by the end of Summer. The area north of the railroad tracks is a bit more complicated as we'll need to build a new pump station. Despite the logistical challenges, we look to have the pump station as well as the new irrigation system completely installed north of the railroad tracks this calendar year (2018). As a result, our entire irrigation system will be done and be in use starting next Spring. This is incredible news and I am extremely thankful for all those who have helped with this project. Please be a bit patient as even with new irrigation, bringing some of the adversely impacted areas back to life will take a little bit of time, but the results of a new system and what the entire cemetery will look like in the near future are on display for all to see around our main entrance area.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Please take some time to visit our new Stations of the Cross area located South of Madonna Lake and North of Section 42. Although a cremation garden, this area is to be enjoyed for all who visit our grounds. It is a beautiful, peaceful and most importantly prayerful walk. There is no other area like this in Denver and we've already heard many stories from people who have been impacted by the serenity that is felt in this beautiful area.

MADONNA MAUSOLEUM NICHE BANK

We have a brand-new niche bank for cremated remains in Madonna Mausoleum. Understanding that many people have loved ones laid to rest in Madonna Mausoleum, who themselves would have loved to be laid to rest in the same area, we worked to identify new options. Our most immediate answer has been the installation of a beautiful niche bank on the first floor near the center-courtyard crucifix. The first phase was installed in late April and includes two beautiful statues, one of the Blessed Mother and another of Saint Joseph.

ASCENSION MAUSOLEUM

We recognize that Ascension Mausoleum too needed some tender loving care. We've consequently improved the lighting throughout the mausoleum and added some beautiful new glass front niches at two of the entrance locations. As well, the new irrigation system will allow us to improve the turf and shrub beds in and around Ascension which will wonderfully impact the area.

CRYPT OF ALL SOULS

Although we have always helped those who could not otherwise afford to place their loved one in sacred space, we have several new programs to assist families in need. One such program is our Crypt of All Souls. Inside Ascension Mausoleum, at no cost to families in need, we have reserved crypt space where we will place the cremated remains of anyone who could not otherwise afford to place those remains in a Catholic Cemetery. Without questioning anyone's financial need, we take those remains into our care and once each month, prayerfully place those remains inside a crypt in Ascension Mausoleum.

PRECIOUS LIVES BURIAL PROGRAM

This year will mark the 25th Anniversary of our Annual Children's Day Mass. Given the significance of this program and the growing popularity of this annual Mass, we will offer both a Spanish and English Mass on October 13th. The Spanish Mass will be at 9AM and the English Mass at 11AM. Archbishop Aquila will preside over the English Mass and Bishop Rodriguez will preside over the Spanish Mass. The Children's Day Mass compliments our Precious Lives Burial Program. Once each month, at no cost to any family, we bury for free, babies who are lost prior to birth. Recently, we had a family who lost a child fly in from Texas to utilize this service, noting they could find no option closer to their home which would allow them to honor their precious baby in such a way.

SECTION 62

Section 62, which sits directly west of Section 61 and north of the railroad tracks is currently under development. We have already installed 800 double depth burial containers and will continue to develop this area toward the end of the Summer at which time we hope to have new irrigation dedicated to that area. This section is beautifully designed and will have various features set against a majestic mountainous backdrop. We recognize that many families are looking to be buried in this area and we are trying to complete Phase 1 of this section as soon as possible.

SOCIAL SERVICES SECTION

For many years, consistent with our desire to provide a final and sacred resting place for all who have left us, regardless of their financial state, we continue to be the primary option in the Denver metropolitan area for those who die and have no means to take care of funeral and cemetery arrangements. As we plan for the future, we have developed a new area at Mount Olivet which will be opening soon and will be exclusively used for such circumstances. If a family has a loved one who qualifies for this benefit and thereafter chooses to exercise the benefit, we will provide a location to bury their loved one and arrange to memorialize the grave. In the coming two years, we plan to place a statue and possibly niche space for the placement of cremated remains at this location.

NEW WEBSITE

Please visit our new website at cfcscolorado.org where you'll find the information you'll need regarding pre-planning, at-need planning as well as our new obituary page. Likewise, you'll find other interesting information related to the Catholic Church's teaching regarding funerals, cemeteries and cremation. As well, we'll be placing various updates which we hope will give an awareness of ongoing projects and upcoming events.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

For about one year now, we've been conducting outreach events at various parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Denver and will continue this effort into the future, trying to visit between 15 and 20 parishes each year. Normally, we'd be present at every Mass on Sunday to give a brief announcement and be available to answer questions after Mass. We try to follow up at those parishes later in the week with an outreach seminar where we explain who we are as well as provide information regarding the Order of Christian Funerals and the Church's teachings on funerals, cemeteries and a frequent topic of discussion: cremation.

In Christ,



Gary B. Schaaf