

Newsletter

St. Mary's Cemetery, Dunkirk, N.Y.
Number 25

May 5, 2016

Dear Friend of St. Mary's Cemetery,

With the arrival of spring we look forward to the annual Memorial Day Mass at St. Mary's Cemetery on Monday, May 30, at 9 am. PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR OWN LAWN CHAIR. The mass will be celebrated on the north side of Williams St. as in the past few years. If the weather should be inclement, we will gather in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church. Whether outside or in the church, there will be a special remembrance of all who have served our nation in the armed forces as well as the thousands buried in the cemetery during its 162 years existence.

We ask that you consider a \$50 gift to the annual Cemetery Maintenance Fund. If you cannot afford a fifty dollar donation, give whatever you can. Your donation will help to ensure that the final resting places of your loved ones are maintained as well as possible. The task is daunting since the graves date as far back as pre- Civil War days.

Have you ever visited our parish website (www.seasdunkirkny.org); and in particular, the cemetery tab? It has photos, history and an opportunity for on-line giving via credit card or on-line debit.

We have enclosed a return envelope for your convenience. **You may make your donation online** or through the website. Keep in mind that a donation, or even a legacy gift in your last Will and Testament, will assist in the present and future care of these sacred grounds.

Sincerely,



Fr Dennis Riter

Pastor, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church

P.S. For information about purchasing a grave, crypt or niche for cremains, please contact Dan Hillman at the parish office 366-1750.

*Please turn to the **other side***

St. Mary's Cemetery

Our History:

St. Mary's Cemetery is one of the oldest and largest cemeteries in Chautauqua County dating back to the early 1800's. This Cemetery includes the former Town of Dunkirk Cemetery and Potter's Field. The Passionist Order Cemetery and the Pioneer Cemetery remains were moved to St. Mary's Cemetery.

Our Mission: At St. Mary's Cemetery, we provide a sacred place of faith, hope and comfort; to extend comfort and service to people at the time of death, burial, bereavement and visitation. We are here to meet the needs of individuals and families before, at the time of death and burial, bereavement and beyond. We offer the sacred rite of burial to the Catholic community and all of God's people. We commit ourselves to the Gospel and Catholic tradition; we affirm the sacredness of human life and profess the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. We believe in Jesus' promise that He has prepared a place for each of us; He welcomes our loved ones home while we await His final coming. To perform the Church's sacred mission to bury the dead with dignity and reverence; to maintain the cemetery as a holy place of honor and respect for the deceased; to serve as a resource on cemetery and funeral related issues to our families and our community.

2015 Status Report

- Burials: 50-60 burials during year
- Electronic Database: Processed over two thousand records, bringing the total to ten thousand one hundred records as of end of 2015. Due to the age of the written records, this is a very difficult and time consuming process; know that we are committed to completing this important project. Data includes name, dates, specific location within cemetery and photo of headstone.
- Implemented process to uncover headstones: approximately 30 headstones unearthed from oldest section in cemetery.
- Memorial Day Mass: honoring those who served our Country, this Mass was well attended.

2016 Initiatives

- Equipment: most equipment will reach the end of their life cycle this year. The most valuable is our truck that we depend on to plow snow at the Cemetery and our Parish. It is also needed to remove excess dirt for ground burials. With the age of this vehicle comes frequent repairs and time out of service.
- Cemetery Roads: Very poor condition, last time repaired was 5-6 years ago. Unless we apply seal there will be further damage and very costly repairs.
- Repairs and Reconstruction of Foundation Bases for Monuments: Approximately 20% of our foundations/monuments are in various levels of repair. Many monuments have fallen due to their age, weather conditions such as frost or soil conditions and the poor quality of foundations from many years ago. The age of foundations for the monuments increases the number that requires repair and reconstruction; most do not have any surviving family members, family members have moved away or cannot afford to pay for repairs.
- Chapel Roof: We have three buildings on our site. The Chapel Roof requires repair or replacement.
- Grounds: Presently we have fourteen acres of burial land plus an additional nine acres for future burials, which also must be maintained. Three very large and old trees should be removed this year before they damage headstones during severe weather.

We are asking for your consideration to assist us this year.

Sincerely,

Zenon M. Olow, Trustee
Chairperson Buildings & Grounds