

Newsletter

St. Mary's Cemetery, Dunkirk, New York

May 8, 2018

Number 27

Dear Friends and Family of St. Mary's Cemetery,

There is something that impels us to visit and linger at the resting place of our loved ones. We sense that a grave or crypt provides a tangible link between their lives and our memories. Beyond that, a Catholic Cemetery reminds us that the grave is not the end, for we believe that those who belong to Christ will rise to live with Him forever.

Our Parish burial grounds have served the community for about 160 years. In those years, countless family members have visited this important place of memories and connections seeking solace.

I know that you want to be part of our yearly effort to provide for the final resting places of family members and friends. Please consider making a \$50 gift to our Annual Cemetery Maintenance Fund. If you cannot afford this, please give what you are able to. We have enclosed an envelope.

Our Annual Memorial Day Mass will be celebrated at 9 a.m. on Monday, May 28, 2018 in our Cemetery on the north side of Williams Street, near the Cemetery garage. Please bring a lawn chair if you are able to, we will have chairs available for those in need. If we cannot celebrate this Mass due to weather conditions, we will celebrate Mass at our Parish.

On behalf of our Cemetery and Parish Family, thank you.

May God Bless,

Rev. Richard DiGiulio, Administrator

* Please read the Annual Cemetery Report on the reverse side

ST. MARY'S CEMETERY

Committee Members: Richard Anson, Andrew Dziduch, Ronald Drozdziel, Leonard Schrantz, Zenon Olow, Frank Valone

Superintendent: Kenneth Drozdziel

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.

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.

2017 Status Report

- Burials: 55-70 burials during year. Approximately 60% are "in-ground" burials.
- Electronic Database: All written burial records after 1900's have been processed into our Database. In 2016, we made a decision to take digital photos of monuments and flat markers to ensure accuracy of written records. We are in process of trying to locate records prior to 1900 and will keep you informed on our progress. Data includes name, dates, specific location within Cemetery and photo of headstone.
- Process to uncover and protect headstones: over 100 headstones have been unearthed and are now visible at their burial sites.
- 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. Many of our deceased do not have surviving family members or family that live within our area, and many cannot afford to pay for repairs. Out of respect for our loved ones, we try our best to repair the existing foundations or in most cases pour a new foundation for the monument with a cost of materials and labor between \$200 - \$800 per grave site. Many large headstones/foundations requiring repair or replacement exceed our equipment limits. We therefore must utilize outside contractors to make these repairs/replacements. This will be a very large expense to our Cemetery.

2018 Initiatives

- Chapel: Chapel Roof requires extensive repair/replacement. We cannot utilize the Chapel until it is repaired.
- Dump Truck needs to be replaced. Present truck is over 15 years old and is in constant need of repairs. This vehicle is necessary for not only the Cemetery but also for plowing snow at our Parish.
- Multi purpose lawn tractor to assist us in maintaining grounds to replace current riding lawn mower.
- Cemetery roads need to be repaired

On behalf of our Cemetery Committee, we are asking for your financial assistance this year.

Sincerely, 

Zenon M. Olow, Trustee
Chairperson Buildings & Grounds