

STELLA MARIS PARISH CEMETERY POLICY & PROCEDURES

"I am not dying; I am entering life." -- St. Therese of Lisieux

A Roman Catholic cemetery reflects our religious beliefs concerning the faithful departed. Burial in consecrated ground is a sign of our baptismal commitment and gives witness, even in death, to our faith in Christ's resurrection. "The dead are in the hands of God; no torment can touch them" (Wisdom 3.1). The mortal remains of our loved ones await the resurrection of the body on the last day. We assist the dead spiritually through our prayers; most especially through assisting at Mass where we link all of our concerns and cares to the life giving Passion of Jesus Christ. For the dead the worries and problems of this world are over. Our departed family members no longer require any physical items to give them comfort or assurances of our love.

In Church Law a Catholic cemetery is a *sacred place*. "In a sacred place only those things are to be permitted which serve to exercise or promote worship, piety, and religion. Anything out of harmony with the holiness of the place is forbidden" (Canon 1210). Accordingly, the outward appearance of the cemetery should reflect simplicity and restraint.

Our objective is to maintain a cemetery that reflects Catholic teaching. This Cemetery Policy Manual is presented to inform both Parishioners and non-parishioners of the operation and maintenance of our Parish Cemetery. It contains clear, concise and helpful information to aid everyone in understanding our policy. If you require further information, please contact the Cemetery Caretaker.

RECORDS

- All graves and plots are recorded. You are welcome to contact the Cemetery Caretaker if you require further assistance.
- Specific information on those buried in the Cemetery is available at the Parish Office. Please contact the Office for further information.

RESERVED PLOTS

- Limited to spouses and those individuals willing to purchase and install a headstone foundation at the time of reservation.
- Special consideration will be given to handicapped children when requested by parents.
- Plot selection determined by Caretaker.

OPENING / CLOSING GRAVESITE

Contact the Cemetery Caretaker through Parish Office or Funeral Home to confirm procedure.

VAULT

The Vault is available at the request of the family.

BURIAL COSTS

Parishioners of Stella Maris Parish will not be charged a fee for burial; however, non-parishioners will be charged \$500.00 for burial in our Cemetery. This fee is due when the plot is reserved.

A "Parishioner" is defined by the following:

1) Someone residing within the Stella Maris Parish boundaries.

OR

2) Someone supporting Stella Maris Parish on a 12-month basis through any one of the following:

- volunteer service to the Parish OR
- regular monetary donation to the Parish OR
- weekly church attendance

OR

3) Former residents who have supported the Parish for 20 years or more and have left the Parish for personal reasons (e.g. Health reasons) - as itemized in #2 above.

You must answer "YES" to either #1, #2, or #3 (stated above) or you will be considered a "Non-Parishioner" for this purpose and, therefore, you are required to forward a burial fee to the Treasurer of the Property & Finance Council of Stella Maris Parish at the Parish Office.

HEADSTONE / MONUMENTS

- one marker per grave - or one per plot, when desired.
- each marker must be placed at the head of the grave.
- quality made, privately constructed markers/crosses are permitted.
- The Cemetery Caretaker will oversee the installation of all markers at Stella Maris Parish. (See below for procedures)
- all costs associated with installation, maintenance and repair of the marker is the responsibility of plot holder.
- families will be informed by letter when markers or personal items have fallen into poor repair.
- markers not maintained in satisfactory condition will be dealt with by the Caretaker - on the advice of the Property & Finance Council.

Installation Procedure:

- Families are asked to inform Cemetery Caretaker of intention to install grave marker.
- Confirm placement of marker with Caretaker.
- Caretaker will be responsible for having a proper foundation / cement base prepared for the headstone / marker. (Gravel + cement base)
- Pay installation fee to company when ordering headstone, (but indicate installation is overseen by the Parish.) The Parish is reimbursed by the headstone company.
- Installation fee can be confirmed by Caretaker - determined by the size of the stone.

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

General

The general upkeep of the Cemetery is the responsibility of the Stella Maris Parish Property & Finance Council - not the individual families of loved ones interred in the cemetery or individuals who have reserved plots. All Parishioners are asked to participate in Spring Clean Up by cleaning the cemetery and removing debris.

Individual Graves / Plots

The upkeep of individual graves (tending to the flowers, watering the plants, cleaning the headstones etc) is the responsibility of the family - unless no family members remain in the community, whereby the onus then falls to the Parish Property & Finance Council.

To facilitate maintenance and to protect headstones, grass cutting personnel and machinery, we ask you adhere to the following:

- Funeral arrangements will be removed from graves within two weeks.
- small shrubs are to be maintained at **maximum** limits of 3 feet in height, 18" in width, and placed in front of and/or beside the headstone.
- An area the width of the tombstone extending 12 inches in front of the stone, and no higher than 12 inches, is allocated for personal use.

Restrictions:

- Artificial flowers are not permitted (they weather rapidly, are torn apart by birds and quickly become waste and are a hazard to the environment)
- Luminaries: 1 stationary light per grave may be placed in front of headstone. Must be no higher than 12 inches and white in color.
- Burial plot corner markers (of any type) are not permitted
- Fences (of any type) around grave sites or headstones are not permitted

- Crushed rock, sea shells and other such materials on the grave or around the headstone are not permitted
- Area behind headstone is not to be used
- Remembrance Day Wreaths are permitted but will be removed after 10 days.

Any other articles, which are contrary to public Catholic worship and piety, impede the general maintenance of the graveyard, obstruct grass cutting, detract from an aesthetic atmosphere or invite vandalism, **ARE PROHIBITED**. It is advisable to check with the Cemetery Caretaker before placing anything in the Cemetery.

CEMETERY FUND

The Cemetery Fund is a fund that we have for donations to our Parish Cemetery. This account is required in our chart of accounts by the Diocese and is controlled by the Property & Finance Council. The Cemetery Fund to be used (specifically) to receive Cemetery Fund Donations and pay for incurred Cemetery Expenses.

Deposits to this fund include:

- 1) Cemetery Fund contributions received at Wakes.
- 2) Private donations to Cemetery Fund.
- 3) Payments from non-parishioners.
- 4) Any additional deposits as deemed appropriate by the Property & Finance Council.

The allocation of these funds is at the discretion of the Property & Finance Council with the stipulation that any money debited from this fund is used **for incurred Cemetery Expenses Only**. 'Incurred Expenses' include any cost associated with maintenance required to keep our Cemetery serviceable, aesthetically pleasing and in a state of good repair in consideration for those who are buried there.

Grandfather Clause: The existing statues and the one candle that are currently in place in the cemetery are allowed to remain as long as they are maintained.