



Cemeteries, Funeral Planning & Bereavement

By Betsy McDermott

Project Manager and Liaison to Pastoral Associates, Diocese of Rochester

I am a huge fan of cemeteries. We live a ½ block from Mt. Hope Cemetery and often take long walks to greet our quiet neighbors and check on those we have come to love, specifically the children, and the young moms, those killed in war and the grand patriarchs who lived into their late 90's.

A couple of weeks ago, Bernard Grizard, Diocesan Director of Pastoral Services and I were invited to learn more about Holy Sepulchre Cemetery and Ascension Garden, the Catholic cemeteries in Rochester, first envisioned by Bishop McQuaid in 1871. Seeing a need for a large central Catholic burial ground as the growing parishes quickly outgrew their plots with the huge influx of Catholics from all over Europe, the Bishop bought 110 acres of farmland out in the country on both sides of what was then Charlotte Blvd. From the beginning he planned the burial ground to be a garden cemetery. The Bishop hired world renowned master gardeners who designed stone walkways, meditation areas, and sculptured monuments surrounded by over 100 varieties of trees and thousands of plants. So excited were Rochester's Catholics that over 10,000 showed up for the consecration ceremony.

Today Holy Sepulchre has 340 acres and the newer Ascension Garden on the spacious southeast side of the City has another beautifully laid out 130 acres. In addition to the grave sites, both cemeteries have chapels, mausoleums and columbaria. They are gorgeous with stained glass windows, medita-

tion areas, chapels and thousands of above ground burial options.

We asked our guide, Greg Kamp, Marketing Coordinator of the Cemeteries, what kind of information might be helpful for pastoral associates/ministers. He mentioned three main points:

Resources: The staff at Holy Sepulchre offer bereavement events and pre-planning workshops to help people design their own funerals, choosing their method and place of burial as well as planning the funeral liturgy. This saves the family last minute anxiety and possible disagreements. In recent years, as many of you know from your work with funeral planning, there has been a growing gap between what the deceased expects in a proper burial and what actually occurs. Unless parents specify what they want, many children, who are not active Catholics themselves, do not feel comfortable or see the importance of the three part structure of Vigil, Mass of Christian Burial and Rite of Committal. A funeral Mass, so crucial to a proper Catholic burial, is often replaced by a memorial service, and not even necessarily inside a church. The theology of the funeral liturgy is a foreign language to many. In *An Overview of Funeral Rites* on the USCCB website the liturgy is explained:

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Cemeteries, funerals and bereavement	1
Under Extraordinary Circumstances...	2
Notes from the Harvest	3
'God Calls. We Respond.' Fall Workshop coming up!!	4
V Encuentro	4

Welcome

Julie Cohn, St. Rita, Webster
Julie Eisenhut, All Saints, Lansing

Welcome back
Meghan Robinson
 Our Lady Queen of Peace, Brighton

(Cemeteries,...continued from page 1)

At the funeral liturgy, the Church gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and compassion, and to seek strength in the proclamation of the Paschal Mystery. The funeral liturgy, therefore, is an act of worship, and not merely an expression of grief.

Encouraging parishioners to pre-plan their funerals can be a generous gift to themselves and their families.

Burial Methods: Catholics may be surprised at the great variety of acceptable burial choices. People can select full body burial or cremains, in the ground, or above ground, inside or outside, in a granite vault or in a col-

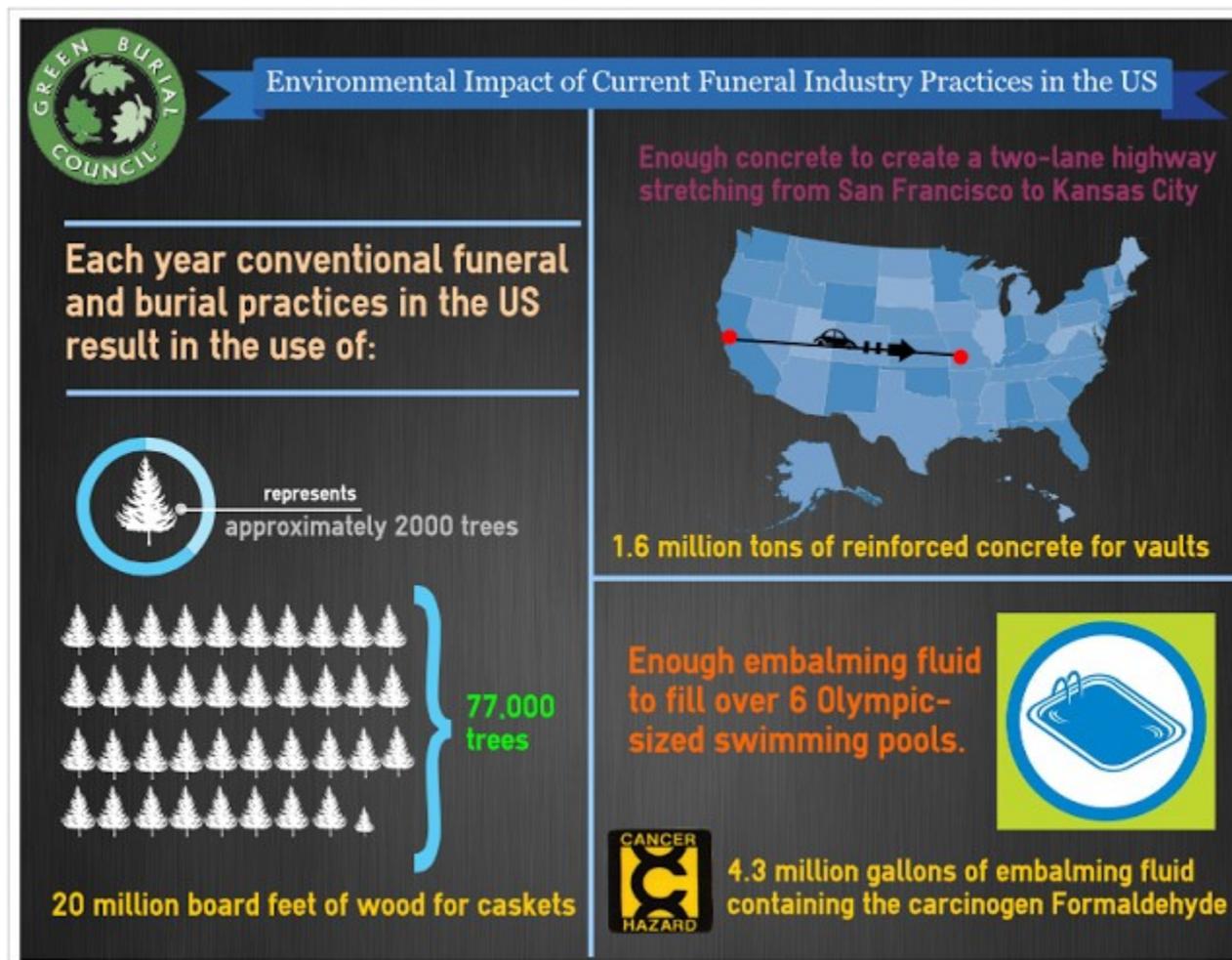
umbarium. There are single and double crypts, or a combination crypt for a full body burial with a special niche for an urn of cremains if a couple have different burial preferences. And to meet the growing desire for green burials, both cemeteries offer natural, ecologically sensitive interment options in special parts of the gardens, known as *The Trinity* section and *St. Francis Meadow*. Both are in beautiful serenely wooded surroundings, which brings us to Greg's final point.

Why a Catholic Cemetery? A Catholic burial ground celebrates the resurrection of the body in a prayerful, tranquil setting. "A Catholic cemetery is a sacred place where rituals take place and where people pray for their deceased loved ones." (Holy Sepulchre Cemetery website). Visitors are encouraged to spend time in the meditation areas, the chapels or the gardens celebrating and praying with those in the faith community who

have gone before them.

At the end of our visit, we learned that the cemeteries are also actively involved with the living Catholic communities in Rochester. They regularly support Catholic Charity events, Catholic schools and other important Catholic enterprises. The cemetery staff said they would like to explore ways to reach out to the pastoral ministers both in sharing resources and in finding ways to recognize and honor those who lovingly minister to families in grief, day in and day out. We welcome a closer relationship and will reflect on how we can better carry out this sacred ministry together in the coming months.

If you have any ideas please let me know! If you have questions about burial procedures or workshops, contact Greg Kamp at greg@holysepulchre.org.



Under Extraordinary Circumstances...

By Sr. Marlene Vigna, RSM, Pastoral Associate at Peace of Christ, Rochester



Sr. Marlene
Vigna

I almost didn't open the e-mail. The sender information was in Chinese. With all that has been communicated about hacking schemes, I hesitated until I saw the subject line: "I would like to join your Small Christian Community. I am not baptized." The cell phone contact information was also in Chinese. So I immediately e-mailed back and asked the sender to seek me out at Mass the next day and we would schedule a time to talk. Easy, I thought, and envisioned enrolling this person in the RCIA and gradually engaging the sender in the life of the community here at Peace of Christ. After Mass the next day, I was greeted by a lovely 28 year old woman and we agreed on a time to meet.

All of my hastily constructed plans came crashing to the ground as our conversation unfolded. "Alicia" was a citizen of Beijing. She is a full time laboratory assistant in a secondary international school there. This was her vacation time and she had signed on with Air B&B and was touring around the United States. She was staying in a local hostel and had found the Peace of Christ website online. She was extremely intelligent and well-read on the subject of Roman Catholicism which she studied for many years. She explained to me

that the Chinese government regulates the "catholic" churches and regularly appoints its own bishops and priests in order that the church will operate according to the dictates of the government. These "catholic" churches are obviously not in communion with Rome. There is, however, a Catholic Cathedral there where Mass is openly celebrated. It is in communion with Rome. However, while it is possible (just recently) for Chinese citizens to attend Mass, in order to register to be a member of that church, or receive faith formation or sacraments, it is mandatory to produce a foreign passport. Chinese citizens are forbidden to become members. This parish is designated for foreign diplomats and their families. It is close to impossible to practice Roman Catholicism under such strictures. The deepest desire of Alicia's heart has been to be a Roman Catholic and the more she has read and studied, the deeper her desire has become. The call to faith that she had long felt was a true gift from God and God would provide a way for that desire to be fulfilled.

The next morning I brought Alicia's situation to our pastoral staff meeting. It was difficult not to be aware of the action of the Holy Spirit engendering Alicia's desire, her long years of private study and searching, her being sent to our neighborhood, her

finding our parish on line and coming to worship with us. It also underscored for all of us, how much we take for granted in our freedom to choose and to practice our faith openly. Because most of us were born into families where faith was carefully passed down from generation to generation, it is easy to forget how precious a gift has been so lavishly bestowed. Yes, of course. She has come to us asking for what she could not otherwise obtain. These were extraordinary circumstances. It was clear that this was no accident, but the design of the Holy Spirit.

Soon, all of the pieces fell together... appropriate catechesis...the selection of Godparents...and arrangements for the ceremony, the selection of a Baptismal Robe (a filmy white (for Baptism) and green (for hope) pashmina wrap... proper documentation, etc. The excitement rippled through our staff and the assembled community. Finally the much anticipated day arrived and Alicia's dream finally became realized. The gathered community had experienced in her story a profound connection and fresh appreciation for their own faith as they gathered around the font and afterwards celebrated Alicia's full initiation with a reception in the Parish Office...all just hours before her return flight to Beijing.

Notes From the Harvest

Immaculate Conception in Ithaca...We have a new pastor at Immaculate Conception in Ithaca, Fr. Augustine Chumo, and the transition has been well-received. His humility, sense of humor, and spirituality have been blessings for the parish. While there is much to which to orient him (the school, parish-owned cemeteries, gift shop, and rental properties) he is adjusting to his new parish well and I look forward to working with him. Also, our gift shop closed permanently on July 31st. The shop has been struggling financially and it has been problematic finding volunteers to staff it. We are still discussing the future of the property. Pat Meyer

Gleanings Newsletter

We are delighted to print articles, meditations, parish stories, prayer requests, book reviews etc. from pastoral associates/ministers of all parishes and ministries in the Rochester Diocese. We also are looking to highlight one pastoral associate/minister per issue so that we can all get to our colleagues in the vineyard. Please submit ideas and contributions often to bmcdermott@dor.org; 328-3228, ext. 1287.

God Calls. We Respond.



Pastoral Associates/Ministers' Fall Workshop

Thursday, October 6, 2016

9:00 am - 3:30 pm

St. Joseph's, 43 Gebhardt Rd.,

\$35 (includes continental breakfast and lunch)

Registration forms to be emailed soon.

A day of *working together* to explore creative ways of carrying out our ministry in the midst of change.

We highly encourage
every

**Pastoral Associate and
Minister to attend.**

Please mark your calendars.

Know of a parishioner who would be a great

Interfaith Liaison?

This person will be the communication of interfaith events between your parish and the Diocese.

Please contact Betsy McDermott at bmcdermott@dor.org

Parishes will be hearing a lot in the coming weeks about V ENCUENTRO, a huge, Diocesan-wide initiative. Please see the information below and keep tuned in for more details and time-tables. This will be an exciting year for encountering our God!



V ENCUENTRO

DISCÍPULOS MISIONEROS: TESTIGOS DEL AMOR DE DIOS
MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: WITNESSES OF GOD'S LOVE

V-EncuentroLogo-bilingual-Horizontal.png

The Fifth National *Encuentro* of Hispanic Ministry is a key initiative of the USCCB's Strategic Plan for 2017-2020. It is a process of ecclesial reflection and evangelization that invites all Catholics in the United States to intense missionary activity, consultation, leadership development, and the identification of best ministerial practices in the spirit of the New Evangelization.

The process starts at the grassroots level and calls for the development of resources and initiatives to create a culture of encounter in dioceses, parishes, ecclesial movements, and other Catholic organizations and institutions in light of its theme: **Missionary Disciples: Witnesses of God's Love.**

More information coming soon!

Pastoral Associates'/Pastoral Ministers' Association Executive Committee



Cathy Kamp

St. Joseph's, Penfield

Mary Jo DiNoto

Holy Cross, Charlotte

Sheryl Zabel

Assumption, Fairport

Tim Smith

Transfiguration, Pittsford

EX-OFFICIO

Bernard Grizard

Diocesan Director
Pastoral Services

Betsy McDermott

Project Manager
Pastoral Services