

Mount Calvary Cemetery Wheeling, WV



General Rules and Regulations

Revised
April 2017

INTRODUCTION:

The Catholic cemetery program is a long-standing ministry of the church. Catholic cemeteries are religious in character and are provided to help people face the hard reality of death within the context of the promise of eternal life.

The Catholic cemeteries in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston must first be places of prayer for the dead. By encouraging frequent visits of families and friends of the deceased, the church seeks to foster an environment where love is remembered, hope rekindled, and faith awakened and strengthened.

This document explains some of the most common Rules & Regulations regarding decorations that the cemeteries have adopted. These policies are to ensure that the cemeteries are respected as sacred space, well-maintained, healing and inviting to bereaved families and friends and to protect the rights and the privileges of all families using the cemeteries and having loved ones buried within them in order to provide an environment that is safe and secure for those who visit the cemeteries as well as those who work within them.

BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

For Catholics, burial or entombment in a Catholic cemetery is a baptismal right; for those who do not possess this right, it is a privilege. Catholic cemeteries are intended for the interment of Catholics, catechumens, and members of their families who have this right to Christian burial according to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church. Questions concerning the burial of a non-Catholic member of an easement-holder's family should first be referred to the pastor of the easement holder's family.

Burial arrangements in a Catholic cemetery are facilitated through the diocesan cemetery office for the diocesan cemetery. The funeral home selected by the family is usually able to provide guidance. When an easement is not already held, selections must be made at the cemetery. It is expected that all Catholic committals in Catholic cemeteries will be celebrated by a priest, deacon, or pastoral minister from the parish of the deceased.

Floral tributes placed at the time of an interment are limited to a number covering only that grave; they will remain in place until the second morning [48 hours] following the committal. The cemetery cannot ensure that items left at graves remain in place.

PLACEMENT OF DECORATIONS:

The church encourages frequent visits and prayers for the dead; we honor the tradition of visitors expressing their love and devotion by decorating graves where loved ones are buried or entombed. Decorating, however, must be done in a way that does not create a safety hazard, infringe on other graves, crypts or niches, impede proper maintenance, diminish the Catholic character of the cemetery, or offend others.

For these reasons, cemeteries adopt regulations for the common good and, for them to be effective, it is sometimes necessary to take steps to see that they are uniformly enforced. The cemetery offices maintain burial records to assist families in locating graves for the placement of floral tributes and cemetery rules stipulate what decorations are acceptable. Most often cemetery officials cannot contact the family if a decoration is not in keeping with cemetery regulations.

Catholic custom is to adorn burial spaces with flowers. Federal and state laws, insurance regulations and safety concerns, impact what is permitted. Cemetery personnel are sensitive to various ethnic customs associated with decoration, especially at the time of death and burial, and will try to accommodate these customs whenever possible.

Because the cemeteries are operated under the auspices of the Catholic Church, it is important that all recognize that the burial of the dead is only one of the Corporal Works of Mercy. Visiting the sick, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry are also works of mercy that must always be encouraged. Performing these other Corporal Works of Mercy on behalf of our deceased loved ones is a wonderful gift that cannot be repaid, and one that truly honors the memory of the deceased in a tangible way.

During the growing and mowing season, only fresh or live flowers may be placed or, in certain circumstances, planted; nothing may be attached to monuments. If live flowers are planted, it needs to be maintained by those who planted them, and in accordance with the regulations listed below. Cemetery personnel will trim close to the flowers, but will not be able to pull weeds from individual sites. Also, live flowers may attract local wildlife that may eat various floral arrangements. Wire in artificial flower stems is a hazard to power mowers and operators and must be placed in urns and vases. If artificial flowers are just stuck in the ground, they will be removed.

Moderation is the norm. Flowers that are placed in urns, vases or pots should be dignified and tasteful. Items taped or wired to the outsides of containers or to monuments will be removed. When families are large, many may wish to express love by decorating. If family members take turns, everyone's needs are accommodated. Honoring the deceased through other Corporal Works of Mercy, identified earlier, is part of the Catholic tradition and encouraged. Safety is important. Items attached to wood or metal stakes are hazardous to visitors and workers. As a general rule, such items will be removed as they are seen. The only exception to this are flags placed during permitted times. Glass is easily broken in the cemetery and becomes a hazard; glass items are removed as soon as they are seen.

SPECIAL MEMORIAL TRIBUTES:

At times such as birthdays, anniversaries of marriage or death, the cemeteries allow potted natural floral tributes to be placed at individual graves for three days prior to the event and will remain in place seven days afterwards. Cemetery office personnel can provide guidance and assistance to meet these special needs throughout the year.

DECORATING FOR HOLIDAYS:

The following special times are observed in the diocesan cemeteries: New Year's Day, Holy Week & Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, Flag Day, Labor Day, Veterans Days, All Souls Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Holiday items may be placed 3 days prior to these holidays and will remain in place 7 days following the holiday. Items that are hazardous or do not comply with regulations will be removed. Items appropriate to the holiday, if not claimed by the end of the 7th day, may be removed by cemetery staff on the 8th day.

CEMETERY DECORATION REGULATIONS:

Monuments / Flush Memorials: During the growing season, annual flowers may be planted in beds [12 inches out from the front of the monument and up to the length of the monument] in front of upright monuments, in urns or holes that are part of monument bases. Potted plants [no

less than 6" diameter] may be placed in front of monuments for identified holidays and family anniversary observances. No fencing, borders or edging allowed only peat moss or mulch is permitted. Shepherds' hooks are NOT permitted. Small garden flag holders are permitted.

Mausoleum: No floral tributes or other decorations may be placed on crypt fronts or inside the mausoleums unless in vases provided specifically for this purpose. No live floral arrangements are permitted. All tributes must comply with seasonal requirements. There are to be no items taped or affixed to the crypt facing. There is to be nothing placed on the floors or patios of the mausoleums. They will be removed immediately.

Additionally, no shrubbery, including roses, may be planted anywhere; nothing may be attached to monuments. Trees throughout the Cemetery are to enhance the beauty of the Cemetery and foster a peaceful environment. It is for this reason that no trees are to be decorated or have anything hanging from them. The only exception is for those trees designated as "Memorial Trees" which may have a small sign stating who the tree was placed there in memory of. As this is a Catholic Cemetery, non-Christian religious items are not permitted and will be removed.

CEMETERY CLEAN-UP SCHEDULES

There are five ways in which decorations are usually removed:

Regular Maintenance: Items that are unsightly are removed weekly during the growing season when grass is being cut.

General Cemetery Clean-up: Each year, during the month of March, all decorations, including grave vases, are removed from the cemetery. This is done to ensure a thorough cleaning of the properties. Due to the volume of decorations being removed, it is impossible to make provision to claim items after they have been removed. Therefore, should families desire to retain items, they must be removed prior to the scheduled clean-up dates.

Seasonal Decorations after Holidays: Eight days after listed holidays, all decorations of a seasonal character may be removed if they have not been claimed by families. A certain amount of leeway is afforded families in decorating for holidays, but items that create safety hazards are removed as soon as observed.

Decorations not complying with Rules: Cemetery employees work in the various sections of the cemeteries on a regular basis. As part of their responsibilities, they maintain the beauty and safety of the cemeteries. As instructed by the Cemetery Rules & Regulations, to ensure their safety, and the safety of all who visit the cemeteries, they are expected to remove decorations which are not in compliance.

Wind and Theft: Decorations may also be removed by either of these causes. As it is impossible for employees to be everywhere at all times, the cemeteries cannot assume liability for decorations. When items are blown about, the grounds crew has no choice but to dispose of them as replacement at specific sites is not possible.

LANDSCAPE ISSUES:

We seek to maintain Catholic cemeteries in a fashion that reflects the church's teachings about the dignity of every human person. Catholic cemeteries, owned by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and operated by the diocese or parishes, maintain endowment trust funds for this purpose.

These endowment funds enable the hired staff to maintain the cemeteries to a uniform standard. Staff responsibilities include the regular mowing of grass, trimming around monuments and memorials, fertilization and weed control.

The fund also enables the cemetery to seed new graves, repair older graves, level flush memorials, and repair monument foundations as required. Employees will water newly seeded areas to encourage growth of grass. For reasons of uniform beauty as well as safety and insurance concerns, only employees or other properly delegated individuals may cut and fertilize the landscape.

Shrubbery: Cemetery management cannot control growth and assure pruning or removal when shrubbery grows too large. For these reasons, no new shrubbery is permitted in the cemeteries. As existing shrubbery overshadows names on monuments, families will be notified. When families cannot be contacted, items will be tagged for removal before Memorial Day each year. Time will be allowed for families to contact the cemetery office; if responsible parties have not responded by October 1st, overgrown items will be documented by photographs and removed before winter.

Water: During all but freezing months, water outlets operate in the cemetery to enable families to tend to the flowers and plants placed at graves.

Trash Containers: Units are typically placed at entrances and along the roadways. Cooperation is asked in using these containers for cemetery refuse only.

American flags fly in the cemeteries to honor those who served in the armed forces of the United States. Small flags may be placed at veterans' graves to recognize their service. Because weather, dirt and grass cutting deteriorate the national flag, the Quartermaster General has issued guidelines for the proper flag display. If displaying a flag, please assure that it is clean and in good condition. Flags that do not comply with the directives of the Quartermaster General will be removed and disposed of according to government protocols.

PLACEMENT, CARE & ALTERATION OF MEMORIALS:

Everyone buried in Catholic cemeteries deserves to be remembered by name. This is typically accomplished through the use of flush markers and upright monuments. Catholic cemeteries accept flush granite or bronze tablets, and granite monuments.

The memorial type is determined by the type of grave selected and its location. In the best interest and for the protection of the lot or grave owner, memorials, even for temporary use, of cement, artificial stone, marble, composition, wood, tin or iron, are not permitted in Mount Calvary Cemetery. For durability, only granite and bronze memorials are permitted.

Only the easement holder has the right to place a memorial.

Monument companies must receive approval from cemetery management for design, size, and inscriptions in writing prior to manufacture of any memorial.

A foundation/installation fee is collected by cemetery management prior to acceptance of the memorial. Foundations are only done by Cemetery Personnel.

No alterations, with the exception of engraving of names and dates as properly authorized, may be made to any monument or memorial once placed in the cemetery.

Holes may be cut into the bases, or granite urns may be attached to the bases of monuments, for planting of floral tributes. Since trees and shrubbery grow larger every year and require perpetual care, neither may be planted in these holes or urns.

Monuments and memorials are the property and responsibility of the purchaser. Foundations are the responsibility of the cemetery. The cemetery needs to be given the current contact name and address. Future services may be required for memorials placed in the cemetery, e.g. resealing granite/marble components. Should a memorial or monument be damaged by a cemetery employee, the cemetery will be responsible for repair or replacement.

FINAL NOTE:

Since Mount Calvary Cemetery was established in 1872, there have been some circumstances at individual grave sites which have warranted “grandfathering” because of past arrangements. Overall, Mount Calvary Cemetery strives to offer a peaceful and prayerful atmosphere for all that visit its sacred grounds.

Monthly Masses are offered for those laid to rest in the cemetery and other special events in November. There are also various Pamphlets on Bereavement in the Main Office for those who feel that may benefit by reading them.