



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LANSING

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Dear Pastor/Pastoral Coordinator:

The burial of the dead has always been recognized by the Church as a religious rite and a corporal work of mercy. Catholic cemeteries exist because of our belief in the resurrection of the body. They are places which bring together a number of elements of the Church's pastoral mission: the proclamation of the gospel to arouse faith, examination of the reasons for belief, celebration of the Eucharist, integration of the Church community, evangelization and apostolic witness.

Over the past few months, Bishop Boyea, College of Consultors and Presbyteral Council have held dialogue related to our diocesan and parish cemeteries. The question that is in need of an answer is "what is the direction we should take with our cemeteries in the future"? Questions have arisen which relate not only to parishes with cemeteries, but parishes without cemeteries. What pastoral provisions are made related to Catholic rites and burials? Are our cemeteries sufficiently funded? What ceremonies and burial practices exist throughout our parishes?

Our diocesan mission statement for cemeteries reads: the Church is commissioned by Christ to proclaim the Good news. Catholic cemeteries reflect this mission by maintaining and expressing Catholic teaching and tradition in their endeavor to serve the many needs of those requesting Catholic burial.

Our 5 diocesan cemeteries and 34 active and/or inactive parish cemeteries serve the needs of individuals and families by offering healing, hope, and peace in a ministry of liturgy, prayer, counseling and consolation. With the grace of God, we endeavor to help people experience Christian death and burial with faith, hope, dignity, and peace even as they and we suffer the pain and confusion of loss, separation, and grief. This is the vision we Catholics hold each time we experience the death of a loved one.

Out of that framework, a recommendation to review all aspects of our funeral practices and cemeteries, diocesan and parish, was made to Bishop Boyea from the College of Consultors and the Presbyteral Council. In response, Bishop Boyea has commissioned a study of all cemeteries (we have done the parishes and schools in recent years) through which detailed information will be gathered, compiled and presented to his advisory groups. The outcome will provide information for comprehensive dialogue and recommendations related to the future direction of cemeteries in the Diocese of Lansing.

In order to complete this task, it is imperative that this entire survey be completed as detailed and accurately as possible by October 30, 2009. Kindly return the survey to:

Office of Pastoral Planning/Cemetery Survey
300 West Ottawa
Lansing MI 48933
OR

Return the completed form electronically by visiting
http://dioceseoflansing.org/pastoralplanning/cemetery_Survey_10_01_09.pdf