

**OUR MISSION**

*To perform the Corporal Work of Mercy of burying the dead and to care for their resting places; to preserve, promote and protect the Church's teachings on death and resurrection; and to console the bereaved.*

**WITNESS**  
**To Eternal Life**

by Most Rev. Donald W. Wuerl

**Christ is Risen And So Shall We**

Some time ago I visited a funeral home to pray with a family I had long known. As I entered the viewing parlor, the mother of the young man in the coffin who had died in a tragic accident was speaking to his two young children, her grandchildren. This is the conversation or rather the catechesis that I overheard. The grandmother looked at the two youngsters, 3 and 4 years old, and told them that one day they would be with their father again because he was in heaven with God. They looked from her as she spoke to him as he lie there so still. She then asked them did they know why he was with God. Both of them shook their heads slightly indicating they were not sure of the answer.

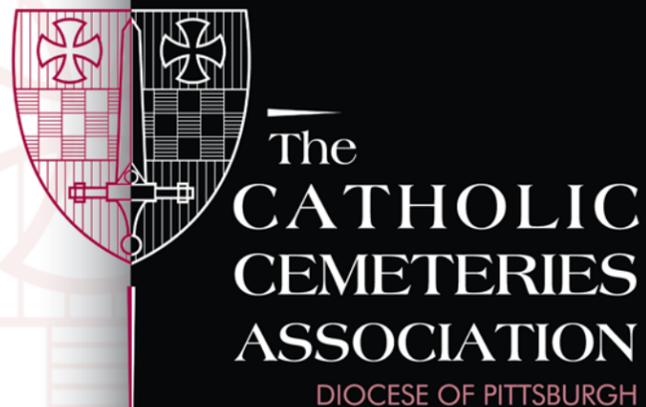
With tender affection the grandmother told them that because their father had been baptized he received the gift of God's life and that he was now able to live that life fully with God. She then continued her questioning. "Do you know why you someday will be with your daddy in heaven?" This however was more of a rhetorical question. She quickly followed it with "because you were baptized and you have God's life within you." The two youngsters drank in her words with the confidence that children that age place only in their mothers and grandmothers.



It was a beautiful and powerful moment of passing on the faith. I have since seen both the grandmother and the children who are not so little anymore. They still walk in the light of faith and in the hope of the resurrection.

Passing on the good news that Christ has died and that Christ is risen and that so someday shall we is the responsibility of the Church in all of her members. Already in just one generation after the resurrection of Jesus, Saint Paul could write to the Corinthians that he was passing on to them "what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures..." (1. Cor. 15.3-4). Paul is calling the attention of the Church to the living tradition passed on from those who saw the Risen Lord. He is speaking of an established, verifiable tradition within the lifetime of people who could vouch for what they had seen and what they had preached. We are dealing with a real person, and there is continuity between the person who was taken down from the cross, wrapped in the shroud, and placed in the tomb and the one who is now risen from the dead and who appeared to numerous people.

Saint Paul continues to point to the number of witnesses. He is reminding his readers that there is an unbroken line, and not a very long one

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Witness to Eternal Life (continued)

at that, from those who could bear witness to the Lord's resurrection because they had seen him alive to Saint Paul's own day.

Twenty centuries later the Church continues in direct continuity with the apostles the proclamation that Christ is risen and so shall we. She also uses the tomb, the cemetery, the mausoleum, and the sacred ground as a witness to our hope in the resurrection of the body. Each cemetery is a silent but vivid witness to the faith of the Catholic people in the resurrection of the body and the life to come. It is for that reason that for centuries ground has been set aside blessed and hallowed and mausolea have been constructed and dedicated so that there is not only a final resting place for the earthly remains of the beloved departed but a permanent testimony in the midst of life and the community of our hope in the life to come.

The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the resurrection. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that "The burial of the dead is a Corporal Work of Mercy; it honors the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit" (CCC 2300).

At the conclusion of the funeral Mass the priest sprinkles the body with holy water and incenses it precisely because it has been a temple of the Holy Spirit and will be called to bodily resurrection on the last day.

The Church's farewell to the deceased is his final "commendation to God." The Order of Christian Funerals reminds us that it is "the last farewell by which the Christian community greets one of its members before his body is brought to the tomb" (57). The Byzantine tradition expresses this by the kiss of farewell to the deceased: "by this final greeting 'we sing for his departure from this life and separation from us, but also because there is a communion and a reunion.'"

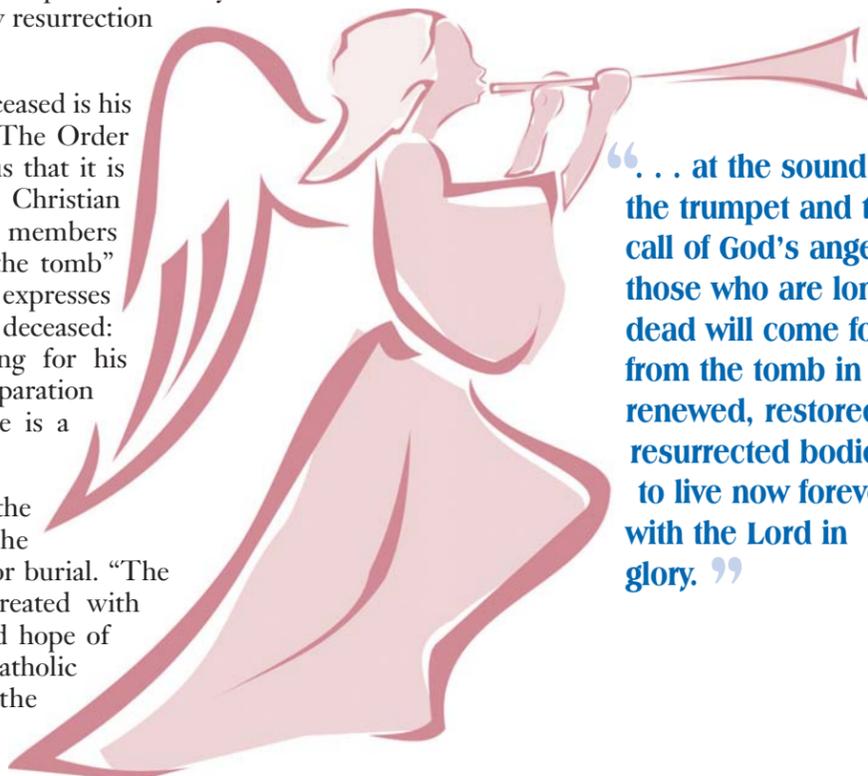
Finally, the body is taken to the gravesite for interment. The Church's preference is always for burial. "The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the resurrection" (CCC 2300). Catholic cemeteries exist to receive the remains for burial either interment (in the ground) or in a

mausoleum to await the resurrection of the body on the last day.

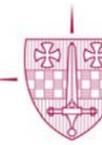
Catholic Cemeteries continue to provide a ministry in the Church that recognizes the uniquely Christian understanding of death. They also provide us with holy ground where we can with some regularity, such as Memorial Day or All Souls Day, remember our dead, recall their goodness to us and ask God's blessing on them. We pray for the dead with the full awareness that we too shall follow in their steps.

A visit to the cemetery is not only a pious practice that provides us an opportunity to pray for the dead but it can itself be a silent, beautiful and powerful proclamation that just as Christ is risen from the grave, so too shall we. Someday, as Paul tells us in another letter, at the sound of the trumpet and the call of God's angels those who are long dead will come forth from the tomb in renewed, restored, resurrected bodies to live now forever with the Lord in glory.

Cemeteries are not just burial places. They are sacred spaces set aside in the Church as both a resting place for the dead and a place of privileged witness to Jesus' return in glory and the resurrection of our bodies.



“ . . . at the sound of the trumpet and the call of God's angels those who are long dead will come forth from the tomb in renewed, restored, resurrected bodies to live now forever with the Lord in glory. ”



# THE CATHOLIC FUNERAL PLAN™ High Level of Customer Satisfaction

Independent Market Research Reflects Extremely High Level of Customer Satisfaction

A recent study conducted by an independent research group found that the Catholic Funeral Plan™ helped Catholics prepare for their funeral in keeping with their religious beliefs. 89% specified a Funeral Mass and 87% specified burial in a Catholic cemetery as required components of their funeral arrangements.

The Catholic Funeral Plan™ is a faith-based funeral planning alternative that has been available in the Diocese of Pittsburgh for over seven years. Since its introduction thousands of people have enrolled in the plan and more than 500 families have received its benefits when their loved ones who were covered by the plan have died. The plan promotes the importance of Catholic funeral and burial traditions, and provides Catholic families with a practical and affordable way to insure that these traditions are incorporated into their final arrangements. The Plan is funded by a life insurance product designed to cover future funeral expenses.

The plan provides much more, however, than just a way to pay future funeral expenses. The funeral preferences of those who are enrolled in the plan are recorded for future reference and at the time of their death someone from the plan is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist their families in carrying out these plans. Catholic Funeral Plan™ personnel assist these families prior to their meeting with the funeral director to make the final funeral arrangements. The family is fully informed of all the funeral and burial wishes of the deceased and of the funds available through the plan. Any funds in the plan which exceed the cost of the funeral are paid to the family.

Recently the Catholic Funeral Plan™ had Campos Inc., a Pittsburgh based marketing research firm, conduct an independent study of the Catholic Funeral Plan™. The purpose of the study was to determine if the Catholic Funeral Plan™ was accomplishing the objectives for which it was started, and to determine if the plan was providing a meaningful benefit to Catholic families at the time of a death.

Overall, the research firm reported that the Catholic Funeral Plan™ received "exceptionally high experience-satisfaction scores" from those interviewed. Catholics who had personal experience with the Plan at the time of a death were asked to participate in this quantitative study to determine their level of

satisfaction and the practical value of the Plan. The research firm talked to over a third of the families who had a personal experience with the Plan.

The most gratifying part of the report is validation that we are accomplishing our mission of preserving and protecting our Catholic burial and liturgical tradition.

Those who received the benefits of the plan strongly agreed that the information received from the Catholic Funeral Plan™ prior to meeting with the funeral director was helpful and that having the plan made the funeral arrangement process easier. They also strongly agreed that it was easy to

submit a claim for benefits and that the benefits were paid quickly. They stated that Catholic funeral and burial traditions are important to them and that the plan had helped them prepare for a funeral that incorporated their religious beliefs.

Matthew Cahalan is President of the Catholic Family Security Association, the organization that administers the Catholic Funeral Plan™. When Matt was asked about the results of the recent study he said: "I'm not surprised by these results. In our interaction with Catholic families on a daily basis we knew that there was a high level of customer satisfaction. The Campos report provides independent verification of this fact. The most gratifying part of the report is validation that we are accomplishing our mission of preserving and protecting our Catholic burial and liturgical traditions. We are making an impact."





## DEVELOPMENT Projects

This past year was a busy one for new development at The Catholic Cemeteries Association. Many new projects were in various stages of development within the diocesan cemetery properties, some of which are listed below.

- A beautiful granite columbarium was installed in Calvary Cemetery for the inurnment of cremated remains. A stunning feature portraying Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane being supported by an angel adorns the top of the columbarium. (See article on page 8).
- A stained glass window depicting Christ in majesty surrounded by the four evangelists and choirs of angels was installed in Holy Angels Chapel Mausoleum at Resurrection Cemetery.
- A new section for the burial of Veterans and their families was opened at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Peters Township. This new section provides more than 2000 gravesites for those who served in the armed forces.
- Phase one of Holy Savior Chapel Mausoleum, in Holy Savior Catholic Cemetery, located in Richland Township was completed and dedicated this past November.
- Site development for the new Mary, Mother of the Church Chapel Mausoleum at Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery, Peters Township, was completed and the permit for construction of the mausoleum has just been granted.

Following is an update on our current mausoleum projects.



Holy Angels Chapel Mausoleum

Located in Resurrection Cemetery, Moon Township, Holy Angels Chapel Mausoleum was completed in 2002 and dedicated by Bishop Donald W. Wuerl on August 20, 2002. There are 2,607 spaces, including indoor chapel crypts and outdoor patio crypts. A stained glass window has just been installed.



Holy Family Chapel Mausoleum

Holy Family Chapel mausoleum, located in St. Stanislaus Cemetery, Shaler Township, consists of 690 crypts. It was dedicated in March of 2003. A stained glass window has been installed depicting the life of the holy family. This beautiful space provides a fitting environment for committal services at the cemetery.



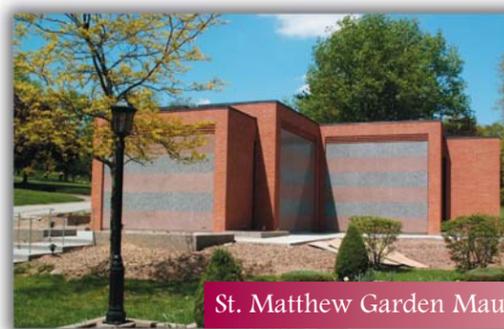
Blessed Virgin Mary Garden Mausoleum

The Blessed Virgin Mary Garden Mausoleum in All Saints Cemetery, Braddock Hills, was blessed on April 6, 2003. Together with a twin building dedicated to the Sacred Heart, these projects provided 796 new crypts at this cemetery. A new mausoleum building is on the drawing board.



Mary, Mother of Christ Chapel Mausoleum

Mary, Mother of Christ Chapel Mausoleum, St. Joseph Cemetery, North Versailles, is currently being offered to Catholic families on a pre-construction basis. It will include a beautiful chapel and a total of 1,944 crypts.



St. Matthew Garden Mausoleum

Construction on the St. Matthew Garden Mausoleum, Good Shepherd Cemetery, Monroeville, is now complete. Bishop William Winter blessed this newest mausoleum on October 2, 2004. The mausoleum includes 384 garden crypts and 96 niches for cremated remains.



Mary, Mother of the Church Chapel Mausoleum

Construction has begun on the new Mary, Mother of the Church Chapel Mausoleum to be built at Queen of Heaven Diocesan Cemetery in Peters Township. The chapel mausoleum will consist of two phases providing 3,548 interior chapel crypts, exterior garden spaces and niches for cremated remains.



Our Lady of Hope Chapel Mausoleum

Our Lady of Hope Chapel Mausoleum will be located in Our Lady of Hope Cemetery, Tarentum. Currently in the pre-construction phase, the proposed design will contain an impressive chapel and 679 crypt spaces when completed.



Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel Mausoleum

Construction on this beautiful mausoleum building located in Calvary Cemetery, Hazelwood is quickly nearing completion. Dedication is scheduled for the spring of 2007. There are 6,300 crypts in the three story building. A two story chapel with a soaring atrium is the centerpiece of this building



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Chapel Mausoleum

This chapel mausoleum is located in Mount Carmel Cemetery in Penn Hills. Completed only a few years ago, this mausoleum has been so well received by Catholic families that sales in Phase II will begin shortly. The chapel promotes prayer and meditation for the deceased entombed there.



Sacred Heart Chapel Mausoleum

This chapel mausoleum, is located just inside the entrance to Sacred Heart Diocesan Cemetery, Monongahela, and consists of a total of 684 chapel and garden crypts. Much of the inventory in this mausoleum has been selected. Phase II is scheduled to open for sale in the near future.



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT Building a Tradition of Service

In this article we want to recognize the past service and the extraordinary accomplishments of the first executive director of The Catholic Cemeteries Association of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Mr. Michael Wesner, Sr.



Mr. Michael Wesner, Sr.

Mr. Wesner worked almost his entire career under the diocesan director of cemeteries, Monsignor Daniel Gearing. Mike met Monsignor Gearing in late 1952 and was recruited by Monsignor to help him with a recent assignment from then Bishop John Deardon—to establish a new diocesan corporation that would own and operate the diocesan cemeteries—The Catholic Cemeteries Association (CCA).

Mike's career began in January of 1953 and ended with his retirement in 1984. His first responsibility was to legally establish the new corporation including drafting of the mission, the bylaws, corporate structure, rules and regulations and operating procedures. This required Mike to spend many weeks on the road visiting other well established Catholic cemetery organizations including the Archdioceses of Chicago and New York and the dioceses of Cleveland and Omaha, Nebraska.

During his thirty one years at the CCA he was also responsible for developing the properties already held by the diocese for cemetery use, and for acquiring new properties to expand the diocesan cemetery system. In 1954 Resurrection Cemetery in Moon Township, Sacred Heart Cemetery in Monongahela and Our Lady of Hope Cemetery in Frazier Township were already owned by the diocese but were undeveloped as cemetery properties. These properties had to be developed, staffed and brought "on line" as active diocesan cemetery properties under Mike's guidance. In that same year he negotiated a land swap with the diocese that enabled the association to establish our Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Peter's Township, Washington County. Today, these four cemeteries are some of the associations most beautiful and successful cemetery properties.

In 1955 Mike acquired property in Monroeville, PA which would eventually be established as Good Shepherd Diocesan Cemetery. He also acquired additional property adjacent to both Resurrection Cemetery and Sacred Heart Cemetery. Mike would oversee the zoning, design and eventual development of these new properties.

In 1960 Mr. Wesner initiated the first pre-need program designed to give Catholic families the opportunity to take care of their cemetery arrangements in advance. This program was exceptionally well received and continues to grow to this day. In 1964 he oversaw the construction of our first community mausoleum, which was built at Resurrection Cemetery in Moon Township.

In 1965 he purchased additional property in Peters Township, which added significant acreage to Queen of Heaven Cemetery. In 1968 he built the new office building at Calvary Cemetery and established the central offices of The Catholic Cemeteries Association there.

In 1974 he oversaw the construction of the first community mausoleum in Calvary Cemetery, Hazelwood, consisting of 6000 indoor crypts, and in 1979, after extensive legal maneuvering, received approval to build the community mausoleum at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Peters Township. Mike also supervised its construction.

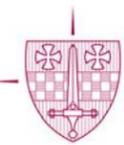
In 1980 Mike coordinated the absorption of Holy Souls Cemetery, Robinson Township, into the Catholic Cemeteries Association.

As is evident from this list of major accomplishments, Mr. Michael Wesner, Sr. was instrumental in the initiation and development of The Catholic Cemeteries Association and the diocesan cemetery system as we know it. Today, it is one of the premier Catholic cemetery operations in the country. It has thrived on the solid foundation built, in large part, by Mr. Wesner.

Today, Mike lives in Chambersburg, PA with his daughter Patricia and has many interests, the most important of which is spending time with his 4 children, 10 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

*WE ALL wish Mr. Wesner the very best and we thank him for his extraordinary vision for this corporation, which has faithfully served the needs of hundreds of thousands of Catholic families over the past 53 years, and which is positioned to continue the tradition of service for generations to come.*

*We are forever in your debt, Mr. Wesner!*



## SACRED HEART CEMETERY OPERATIONS The Serving Team

Sacred Heart Cemetery, located in the heart of the Mon-Valley area, was consecrated by Bishop John J. Wright in 1960. The cemetery has 30 developed acres and a chapel/mausoleum that was dedicated in August, 2000. Since the cemetery opened more than 4100 funerals have been received for their final committals.

Two men staff the operations side of Sacred Heart—Dave Egnosak and Dan Kudlac.



Sacred Heart Cemetery Operations Staff; Dave Egnosak and Dan Kudlac

Dave has been the foreman for more than half of the years since he began working with Catholic Cemeteries in 1979. Over the years many compliments have been received attesting to the appearance of the cemetery, saying it looks like a golf course. This is not that surprising given Dave's prior work experience performing the duties as a groundskeeper and general maintenance man for a prominent country club. In that capacity he had responsibility for maintaining the golf course, surrounding grounds, and installation and maintenance of the watering system. He also gained pertinent experience in equipment maintenance and backhoe operation.

Dave's work ethic became ingrained during his childhood years working as a farm boy with his Dad in Scenery Hill. There they maintained a herd of more than 50 Black Angus cattle on 200 acres, where they also grew the feed corn for the animals. He has vivid memories of driving a tractor when he was only 5 years old.

Dave's responsibility in driving a fire truck required him to obtain a Commercial Driver License with accompanying Hazardous Material certification. This qualification was enhanced when he acquired a Blaster License, enabling him to meet other special needs for Catholic Cemeteries.

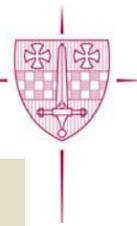
His community and church service include: volunteer fireman with the Richeyville Volunteer Fire Department (where he drove a fire truck and ambulance), volunteer and Eucharistic Minister at Ave Maria Parish in Bentleyville, and a trustee in the Lithuanian Club.

Dan Kudlac's career includes working on the maintenance crew for Ellsworth Borough for 10 years. During this period he was also a part-time paramedic (6 years), part-time police officer (2 years), deputy constable (12 years), volunteer fireman (1978-present), and Fire Chief (3 years). In 2001 Dan was elected Mayor of Ellsworth Borough and is still serving in that office. Later employment saw him obtain a safety inspection license when working as an automobile mechanic. In 1994 Dan began working as a seasonal employee at Queen of Heaven Cemetery, and full-time late that same year. Dan worked at Queen of Heaven until he was assigned to Sacred Heart Cemetery in 1999. He subsequently obtained his Commercial Driver License and Blaster License as a CCA employee.

Dave and Dan's blend of skills, conscientiousness, service orientation and teamwork presents a valuable asset to the Association. It is especially gratifying to learn how their involvement and commitment to the workplace and the community is manifested by the gestures of appreciation extended by the families they serve.

Their reputation for service within CCA extends beyond the many needs of Sacred Heart Cemetery. In addition to producing concrete backings for flush bronze memorials, they readily accepted the duties of manufacturing cremation vaults for the needs of all the diocesan cemeteries. In this capacity Dave and Dan continually seek to improve the efficiency of the process and the quality of the product.

*Thanks to both men for a job consistently above and beyond the call of duty!*



## 9 in 10 CATHOLIC FAMILIES AGREE— The Catholic Funeral Plan™ MADE A DIFFERENCE!

A recent study conducted by an independent research group found that the Catholic Funeral Plan™ helped Catholics prepare for their funeral in keeping with their religious beliefs. 89% specified a Funeral Mass and 87% specified burial in a Catholic cemetery as required components of their funeral arrangements.

- If you want to ensure your funeral plan contains all the essential elements of a Catholic Funeral...
- If you treasure the rich liturgical traditions of the church related to death and burial...
- If you want to protect yourself from higher future costs...
- If you could do all this and provide peace of mind for those you leave behind...

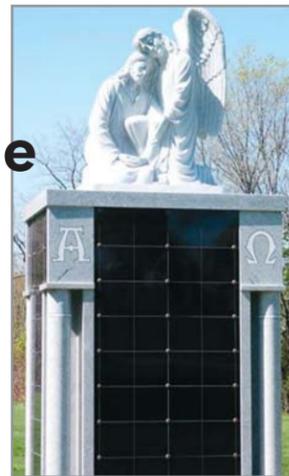
**WHY WOULDN'T YOU?**

Isn't it time you found out more about the unique advantages and benefits of the Catholic Funeral Plan?  
**Call us today for important information at: 1.877.866.7526**

## NEW FEATURE INSTALLED Garden of Gethsemane

A beautiful new religious feature has recently been installed in the new Garden of Gethsemane Section at Calvary Cemetery, Hazelwood. The feature is displayed on the top of a classic columbarium consisting of 168 spaces for the inurnment of cremated remains, which stands in the center of the newly opened section for in-ground burial.

This unique and inspiring feature depicts Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, while He is comforted and supported by an angel. Cut from a block of solid granite, this religious feature will inspire all who see it for generations to come.



**Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane,  
Calvary Cemetery, Hazelwood**



**CATHOLIC CEMETERIES ASSOCIATION**

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