

Newsletter

St. Mary's Cemetery, Dunkirk, N.Y.

May 8, 2017

Number 26

Dear Friend of St. Mary's Cemetery,

Each spring we assemble at the cemetery on Memorial Day to pray for our deceased veterans and all interred there. This year, weather permitting, the cemetery mass will be on Monday, May 29, at 9am. **PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR OWN LAWN CHAIR.** The mass will be celebrated on the north side of Williams St. In the case of bad weather, we will gather in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church. This mass on is our way of keeping faith with those who have served our nation in the armed forces and in remembrance of so many others buried in the cemetery.

We ask that you consider a \$50 gift to the annual Cemetery Maintenance Fund. If you cannot afford a fifty dollar donation, kindly give whatever you can. Your donation will help to ensure that the final resting places of your loved ones are maintained as well as possible. Keep in mind that portions of the cemetery have served the area since the early 1800's, even before it became known as St. Mary's Cemetery in 1851. The upkeep can sometimes be overwhelming.

You may prefer to donate online through the parish website www.seasdunkirkny.org. Go to the 'cemetery' tab for more information.

We have enclosed a return envelope for your convenience. Your gift to the cemetery or a mention in your last Will and Testament will assist in the present and future care of these sacred grounds.

Sincerely,



Fr Dennis Riter Pastor, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church

P.S. For information about purchasing a grave, crypt or niche for cremains, please contact Dan Hillman at the parish office 366-1750 x 5.

Please turn to the other side

St. Mary's Cemetery

Committee Members: Rrichard Anson, Andrew Dzduduch, Ronald Drozdziel, Leonard Schrantz, Zenon Olow, Frank Valone.
Superintendent: Kenneth Drozdziel

Our History:

St. Mary's Cemetery is one of the oldest and largest cemeteries in Chautauqua County dating back to the early 1800's. This Cemetery includes the former Town of Dunkirk Cemetery and Potter's Field. The Passionist Order Cemetery and the Pioneer Cemetery remains were moved to St. Mary's Cemetery.

Our Mission: At St. Mary's Cemetery, we provide a sacred place of faith, hope and comfort; to extend comfort and service to people at the time of death, burial, bereavement and visitation. We are here to meet the needs of individuals and families before, at the time of death and burial, bereavement and beyond. We offer the sacred rite of burial to the Catholic community and all of God's people. We commit ourselves to the Gospel and Catholic tradition; we affirm the sacredness of human life and profess the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. We believe in Jesus' promise that He has prepared a place for each of us; He welcomes our loved ones home while we await His final coming. To perform the Church's sacred mission to bury the dead with dignity and reverence; to maintain the cemetery as a holy place of honor and respect for the deceased; to serve as a resource on cemetery and funeral related issues to our families and our community.

2016 Status Report

- Burials: 50-60 burials during year. Approximately 60% are "in-ground" burials.
- Electronic Database: All written burial records after 1900's have been processed into our Database. In 2016, we made a decision to take digital photos of monuments and flat markers to ensure accuracy of written records. We are in process of trying to locate records prior to 1900 and will keep you informed on our progress. Data includes name, dates, specific location within Cemetery and photo of headstone.
- Process to uncover and protect headstones implemented in 2016: approximately 100 headstones have been unearthed and are now visible at their burial sites.
- We have had serious issues with standing water on the southeast side of Williams Street that involved over one hundred graves. With the assistance from the Town of Dunkirk and Add Lumber, we were successful in correcting this issue. I want to recognize and thank the Town of Dunkirk, Add Lumber and our Cemetery Staff that all contributed to correcting this serious issue.
- Repairs and Reconstruction of Foundation Bases for Monuments: Approximately 20% of our foundations/monuments are in various levels of repair. Many monuments have fallen due to their age, weather conditions such as frost or soil conditions and the poor quality of foundations from many years ago. The age of foundations for the monuments increases the number that requires repair and reconstruction. Many our our deceased do not have surviving family members or family that live within our area, and many cannot afford to pay for repairs. Out of respect for our loved ones, we try our best to repair the existing foundations or in most cases pour a new foundation for the monument with a cost of materials and labor between \$200 - \$800 per grave site.
- Three very large and old trees were removed and replaced in 2016 before they damaged headstones during severe weather and more importantly as a safety hazard to all who come onto our Cemetery grounds.

2017 Initiatives

- Chapel Roof: We have three buildings on our site. The Chapel Roof requires repair or replacement.

On behalf of our Cemetery Committee, we are asking for your financial assistance this year.

Sincerely,

Zenon M. Olow, Trustee
Chairperson Buildings & Grounds