

## **ST. MICHAEL'S CEMETERY**

The 10 acre plot of land was sold to St. Michael's Church by Austin Gibbon and the deed is dated 9/6/1911. Currently 3.3 acres have been used for burial grounds and the remaining 6.7 acres are in crop land.

St. Michael's Cemetery is a sacred place and is canonically established by the diocesan bishop. St. Michael's Cemetery is administered with the same diligence as the balance of the parish, mission or station to which the pastor is assigned. The cemetery is incorporated under/within St. Michael's Church Corporation.

Canon Law establishes lines of responsibility to the Pastor, who is responsible for the local administration of the parish cemetery. The Pastor has delegated local administration of the parish cemetery to the Cemetery Board.

To ensure that the cemetery ministry is integrated into the overall ministry of the parish in the same way as other parish-based programs a board, accountable to the Pastor, is established to develop policies and procedures and to oversee the operation and maintenance of the parish cemetery.

## **PARISH CEMETERY BOARD**

The Cemetery Board shall be established to develop procedures for the operation of the parish cemetery. The board consists of the following:

Pastor Dennis Thompson, Conrad Adelman, chairperson, Duane Eich, secretary/treasurer, Erwin Hagen, David Kamen, Jerry Sauber, and Helen Riegger, appointed by the Pastor.

The main work of the board shall be:

1. The development of policies and procedures for implementation in the parish cemetery.
2. The ongoing development and support of outreach ministries.
3. The facilitation of collaboration with other ministries of the parish.
4. The interpretation of policies and procedures should there be a question or situation that arises which is not able to be resolved by parish cemetery administration.

## **COLLABORATION WITH ALLIED MEMBERS OF THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY**

The parish cemetery board is in charge of what takes place within the parish cemetery. The parish cemetery is part of the parish plant and in that sense is a private facility with rules and regulations which control the conduct of both those who utilize the facility or who may be contracted to perform work/services within the property.

For outside vendors, whether these are funeral directors, memorial installers or contractors, the Cemetery Board has both the right and the obligation to administer and control all activities in the cemetery property.

## **PARISH CEMETERY RECORDS**

The Pastor is responsible for ensuring that records of the parish cemetery are prepared and maintained at the parish site. Cemeteries must be treated as a separate entity. Such records shall consist of, but not be limited to:

1. an unencumbered deed
2. an overall plat of the developed areas of the cemetery
3. a record of lot/easement holders
4. a chronological and alphabetical listing of all internments, entombments or inurnments in the cemetery
5. cemetery revenues and expenses are recorded separately from other parish financial records.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF GRAVESITE**

In the matter of the conveyance of the right to bury in a parochial cemetery, the laws that govern the public/non-sectarian cemeteries also equally apply to Catholic or religious cemeteries. Fundamental elements of the law are cited within this policy.

1. Cemeteries are allowed to grant to gravesite purchasers only the right to burial and that is the only title which a gravesite owner acquires when the lot is conveyed to him, no matter what form or deed is used. (Minnesota Statutes [306.09] )
2. The law expressly forbids the burial of anyone on a gravesite who was not at the time of death the owners of the gravesite, or a relative of the owner by blood or marriage, except by written consent of the cemetery. (Minnesota Statutes [306.29] )
3. Gravesite owners cannot mortgage their gravesite; neither does the law tax them, nor allow them to be taken away from the owner to pay his debts. (Minnesota Statutes [306.09] )
4. Cemeteries are permitted by law to adopt rules and regulations for their governance and their entitlement of burial gravesite may be made subject to such rules and regulations. (Minnesota Statutes [306.09] )

Every modern cemetery has in force rules and regulations governing, amongst other things, planting and landscaping, monumental work, burials, removals, conduct of visitors, speed of vehicles, etc. Gravesite owners are subject to reasonable control by the cemetery in such matters, both by force of law as well as by terms of the deeds by which their gravesite is conveyed to them. (Minnesota Statutes [306.02] [306.08] ).

## **FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS**

St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery is a separate entity. Cemetery revenues and expenses are recorded separately from other parish financial records.

St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery maintains separate bookkeeping records, a separate checking account and one capital improvement fund through the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

These accounts are to be in the name of the parish cemetery. To the extent possible, the Chart of Accounts for the parish cemetery shall be utilized. The Pastor, or a designated staff person, has check signing privileges.

The annual parish cemetery report is to be completed and submitted to the Archdiocesan Office of the Director of the Catholic Cemeteries for entry into the cemetery database. Database reports for parish cemetery activities will be prepared annually. Archdiocesan officials concerned with various aspects of parish cemeteries will be advised of any and all significant trends observed in the database reports.

### **PERPETUAL CARE FUND**

St. Michael's Cemetery shall have a Perpetual Care Fund.

1. The Perpetual Care Fund shall consist of a 25% portion of the sale of each gravesite or niche in the cemetery.
2. The Perpetual Care Fund for St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery is invested through the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis in the Catholic Community Endowment Foundation in a pooled account to yield the highest return. If utilized, contributions and withdrawals from the pooled fund will be made quarterly.
3. No more than 80% of the interest earned from the fund each year may be withdrawn by the parish cemetery to provide for cemetery maintenance.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery is to be operated and maintained to reflect the Church's concern and care for her deceased members and their families.

St. Michael's Cemetery requires the use of a vault and casket for all burials.

Cremated remains of an individual person are to be treated with the same respect and buried or entombed with the same dignity as any human body which has not been cremated. No cremation burials are permitted without proper arrangements with the Cemetery Board approval.

In order to accommodate those who elected cremation, and to ensure that respectful committal of cremated remains takes place, the parish cemetery shall make provision for the inurnment of cremated remains, either in a special section of the cemetery, existing grave spaces or the columbarium.

From the time of acceptance of cremated remains, through the actual committal, those involved in handling cremated remains are to never lose sight of the reality of this person once having been a Temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Catholic cemetery is the place where the best Catholic funeral and burial liturgy should be celebrated. Whenever possible, the Committal Service shall take place at the actual place of

burial, entombment or inurnment. The actual committal of the body should take place during the ritual celebration.

The policy of St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery is to offer services in a non-discriminatory fashion to all Catholics and members of their families regardless of their ability to pay for them.

St. Michael's Cemetery administrators will make every effort to accommodate the needs of families upon death of infants, young children, fetuses and stillborn infants. Special concern will be expressed by providing minimally priced grave spaces. When families are without funds to bury children, every effort will be made by the parish cemetery to donate goods and services.

The care of the bodies of the deceased, given to the Church in Her cemeteries, is viewed as a sacred trust. Any acts of vandalism involving the Church's blessed burial grounds or bodies buried, entombed, or inurned therein is viewed as a most serious matter. Prosecution of those involved will be sought to the fullest extent of the law. Should St. Michael's Cemetery experience such instances of vandalism, reports are to be filed with the police and to the extent possible families are to be notified.

Monuments, markers and memorials, even though placed within the cemetery, remain the property of the gravesite holder or his/her heirs. It is customary for homeowner insurance policies to have provisions to cover damage to these items. Acts of vandalism on these items are generally covered by such policies and families should be instructed about possible recourse.

When memorials are damaged by cemetery personnel, families are to be notified and the Cemetery Board is to initiate the process of repair or replacement at a cost to the parish cemetery. The parish insurance carrier should be contacted to determine what coverage may be applicable in such instances.

St. Michael's Cemetery shall have an officially adopted set of Rules and Regulations. The full text of these Rules and Regulations will be available for inspection at the parish office. An abbreviated version of these Rules and Regulations will be published in pamphlet form for easy distribution to all who visit the cemetery. St. Michael's Cemetery will be identified with a sign that indicates the name of the cemetery, the name of the parish served by the cemetery and the location of the cemetery burial records. A second sign communicating decoration regulations will be posted in a prominent position within the cemetery.

## **REFERENCE**

Handbook for Parish Cemeteries Volume 1 & 2

Revised:  
November 4, 2009