

PARISH COUNCIL

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH and ST. JOHNS MISSION

ELMA, WA

Re: St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery

I have been directly and indirectly involved in the operation of our cemetery for over forty years. I started out mowing the lawn by hand with my Father when I was in my teens. My time and labor over these years has been free of charge. It has been another way of donating to the church.

The time has come for the church to find a replacement for the duties I currently oversee. Here is a general list of the duties:

1. Gas can for riding mower – keep it filled so the person doing the mowing does not have to go get gas before he can mow (We currently hire the mowing, and the person in charge of doing so has a key to the tool shed)
2. Grave sales: assist people wishing to purchase cemetery property and provide locations
3. Keep Cemetery map and records current
4. Keep tool shed clean
5. Stake out graves for burials (full body and cremation spaces)
6. Assist funeral homes with opening and closing of graves (contacts with grave diggers etc.)
7. Stake graves for marker and headstone placements and coordinate with monument dealers for deliveries(make contacts via phone/e-mail etc.)
8. Perform burials of cremated human remains (open and close graves, wrap and tape urns)
9. Holidays and special occasions: see to it that the lawn is mowed, if possible. Don't just assume.
10. Refer people to the cemetery office for making purchases and paying for the same.
11. Keep cremation section markers visible (they get covered with sod)
12. Must be available to accommodate funerals/burials in a timely manner.
13. Perform some routine maintenance of tools and equipment (ex: changing battery in riding mower, flat tire repair)
14. Resolve potential issues due to possible mistakes being made in the past. Also remember that people making grave purchases, past and present, do not own the cemetery property. They are paying for the right to be buried in a particular spot. It is only a "right". The Church always retains ownership of the property and therefore has the right to establish rules and regulations for the care and use of the property. Individuals do not pay property tax on graves.
15. Bring major issues to the attention of the church office (Ex: cemetery fence is in need of repair)

My involvement with the cemetery has been a ministry of love. I got that from my father who performed these duties before me and with me. Thanks Dad!

Respectfully


Dennis A. McPhee