

Dear Friends of St. Augustine Cemetery:

In 1897 our forefathers in faith saw the need to create a final resting place not only for their beloved dead but also for their descendants. From a small, quiet, and rural 19th century graveyard, St. Augustine has grown into the large 21st century cemetery it presently is containing the earthly remains of approximately ten thousand souls.

Catholic cemeteries exist as an affirmation of many sacred beliefs, including:

- The sanctity of all human life
- The dignity of the human person
- The resurrection of Christ
- The resurrection of all the dead at the end of time
- The importance of remembering the dead and offering prayers for them

More than a place to bury the dead, a Catholic cemetery is holy ground, consecrated by the Bishop, for worship and prayer, similar to churches. Because of our beliefs, we seek to maintain the beauty and dignity of our grounds. To better assure our goal of cemetery maintenance, a landscaping company was hired last August, and they have done a magnificent job of caring for and maintaining our lawn. Additionally, our two-member maintenance team continually is at work to make sure that the property is kept orderly and clean as is fitting for consecrated ground.

Last fall a cemetery committee comprised of several parishioners was created to review the policies of the cemetery and to make recommendations on how to improve the property. Among the items discussed was the fact that throughout its long history, the parish cemetery rules always mirrored the rules of the Archdiocesan cemeteries. The committee agreed that the rules were necessary but also acknowledged that for quite some time cemetery regulations have been more honored in the breach than in the observance. As a result, there are some families who simply disregard all cemetery rules and decorate graves in ways which detract from the sacred nature of the cemetery, and which would not be tolerated in any other Catholic cemetery.

We are writing to inform you that in the following weeks the rules of the cemetery will be strictly enforced once more. Within two weeks of the publication of this letter, families are requested to remove from their family plot any items which are not in conformity with cemetery regulations. Those regulations are included with this letter and will also be found on the new cemetery signs which have been installed.

It also seems opportune to remind all that the cemetery is the property of the parish which is responsible for its operation. Certificate holders do not own the ground in which their beloved dead are buried. Rather, certificate holders are given burial privileges for their deceased loved ones. Therefore, much like a homeowner's association which regulates how the members of the association decorate the exterior of their homes and lawns, individual families are not free to decorate the graves of their deceased as they wish but must observe all the rules which are meant for the safety of our employees and the dignity of these sacred grounds.

The parish is presently working on the creation of a new parish website which will also include a link to information on St. Augustine Cemetery and which will contain the revised cemetery regulation book.

We thank you for your understanding and cooperation in these matters.

Sincerely in our Lord,

Saint Augustine Cemetery Committee

Large permanent signs have been installed in the cemetery which contain the following regulations:

Please help us maintain the beauty and dignity of these sacred grounds by observing the following regulations:

- Floral decorations (fresh flowers and artificial flowers) are permitted at all times.
- All holyday and holiday floral decorations will be removed for immediate disposal two weeks after all holydays and holidays.
- With the exception of Section E (flat markers section), all other graves with upright monuments are permitted to have a small flower garden extending no more than 13 inches beyond the front of the monument.
- For those families wishing to maintain a garden you must obtain a yearly FREE PERMIT for your garden. Permits are obtainable outside the cemetery building entrance and on the parish's website.
- For the sake of aesthetic uniformity, the garden must have a border comprised of grey bricks purchased from the cemetery. You may indicate on your permit your desire for bricks.
- Fencing or borders consisting of shells, stones, pebbles, plastic, metal, or other materials are prohibited and subject to immediate removal.
- Flower gardens may not circle the monument or extend beyond the sides of the monument.
- Mulch is strictly prohibited.
- Flowers must be low growing and not block the inscription on the monument.
- All non-floral decorations such as planter boxes (concrete, metal, wood, or plastic), containers or vases made of glass, plastic or crockery, toys, balloons, any type of sports pennants, flags of any type (except an American flag) ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED and will be removed immediately.
- American flags may be displayed between April 1 and November 15 at which time they will be removed in order to prepare for winter.
- The following are also STRICTLY PROHIBITED and will be removed immediately:
 - Articles of clothing or hats, beverage cans, bottles, cups, drawings, photographs or pictures, iron furniture, ornaments, flowerpots, fencing and barriers, religious articles including crosses, crucifixes, holy cards and rosaries, shells, stones, pebbles, shepherd hooks, solar energy lights, Styrofoam, votive or vigil candles, statues of a religious or secular nature, food, or vegetables of any type.
- In essence, the only permissible decorations for any grave are fresh or artificial flowers.
- The cemetery reserves the right to remove any artificial flowers which have become unsightly.
- The planting of shrubs and trees, etc. on individual graves or lots is prohibited and subject to immediate removal and disposal.
- No dogs (with the exception of guide dogs) or other pets are allowed in the cemetery.
- This cemetery is owned and operated by Sacred Heart Church, Bridgeport. All questions may be directed to the cemetery office at 610-275-1750.

**Saint Augustine Cemetery
Gravesite Decoration Permit***

Certificate Holder

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email: _____

Gravesite Location: _____

In accordance with the Handbook of Rules and Regulations of the St. Augustine Catholic Cemetery Mausoleum and Columbarium this permit authorizes the Certificate Holder to place decorations at their assigned grave site location(s) in accordance with the rules and regulations. The Certificate Holder agrees to abide by all rules and regulations set forth in the handbook including sections 10.6 (Plantings), 10.7 (Installations) and 10.8 (Flowers and Temporary Decorations).

Certificate Holder also acknowledges responsibility for maintaining the gravesite decorations and understands that the permit may be revoked by the Cemetery Superintendent for failure to abide by said rules and regulations. Certificate Holder further agrees to update all contact information with the cemetery office when said information changes.

NB: All permit holders will be required to purchase bricks for their gravesite from the cemetery. When the permit is filed cemetery personnel will measure the monument and leave at the gravesite the appropriate number of bricks for the family to install. Bricks will cost \$1.00 a piece.

Certificate Holder (Signature)

_____ Date ____/____/____

Cemetery Office (Authorized Signature)

_____ Date ____/____/____

*It is necessary to file a gravesite decoration permit each year so that the cemetery office has updated contact information.

Please attach a picture of the monument to the permit.