**St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery**

The parish of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Union City, Oklahoma

**Rules and Regulations**

Revised April 26th, 2022

**Preamble**

These Rules and Regulations are based upon the premise of our recognition of the importance of the Corporal Works of Mercy involving the burial of the dead and reverence of the deceased, and the Spiritual Works of Mercy in comforting the sorrowful and praying for the living and the dead. The Catholic Cemetery of St. Joseph was founded in 1910 for the purpose of burial of members of the parish and their immediate family.

**Definitions**

* **Burial:** refers to the two types of burial of remains of a deceased person in this cemetery: *interment-* burial of the deceased in the ground, *inurnment-* the burial of the deceased’s cremains in the ground.
* **Burial Plot:** also known as a grave, is defined as an area of ground intended for the burial of one individual person, or up to 2 cremains.
* **Lot:** a space in the cemetery used or intended to be used for burial containing a specified number of adjoining graves (usually 6).
* **Cremains:** the term used for cremated remains of a human person.
* **Liner:** also known as a vault, an outer burial container designed for the placement in the grave which surrounds the casket.
* **Monument:** an upright memorial on a grave which must be made of stone or other non-perishable material, such as granite.
* **Marker:** a memorial made of stone or bronze used on graves which is level with the ground.

**General Rules**

Eligibility for interment in St. Joseph Cemetery shall be determined by the norms of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church, and the laws and discipline of the Catholic Faith. St. Joseph Cemetery is intended for use by parishioners of St. Joseph Church and their family members, including non-Catholic spouses, children, parents or other relatives. All other interments will be at the discretion of the cemetery committee and pastor of St. Joseph Church.

* Before the initiation of any burial plot preparation, or setting of a headstone, the parish office must be contacted so that the proper placement can be marked by members of the cemetery committee.
* Full body interment requires the use of a liner, usually a concrete vault.
* Inurnment of cremains does not require the use of a vault.
* Cremains are to be buried in the ground and treated with the same respect as a full body interment.
* The cemetery shall be open from sunrise to sunset. Funerals on Sundays and national holidays are prohibited.
* The cemetery committee, with approval of the pastor, reserves the right to amend any of these rules and regulations.

**Plot Rules**

Acquiring a plot means the right to be buried, but the individual or family members of the person being buried do not own the ground; the ground is the property of St. Joseph parish and the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

* The right to burial in each plot belongs to the individual who purchased it. It may be transferred to immediate heirs or decedents, but may otherwise not be resold. Purchased plots may be donated back to St. Joseph Parish if it is determined they will not be used.
* Plots are purchased with the intent of being used. Purchasing multiple plots or lots with the intention of blocking off areas is not encouraged. This is not the intent of our cemetery and is contrary to the small parish cemetery concept.
* All burial plots in St. Joseph Cemetery are 5 feet wide and 12 or 14 feet long facing in an east-west orientation.
* A full body grave has a standard width of 36 inches, and is designed to accommodate a vault not greater than 34.75 inches in width and 90 inches in length. Full body graves shall be dug to a depth of 72 inches.
* Burial of cremains requires that the depth of the urn be such as the top of the container be a minimum of 24 inches below ground level.
* If burial of cremains is not handled by a licensed funeral home, the family of the deceased are permitted to dig the hole for the urn at no cost. If cemetery personnel are to be hired to dig the hole, see cost table below.

**Burial plot costs**

* Single full body plot- $500
* Single cremains burial plot- $250
* Cemetery personnel digging cremains hole- $100

**Burial Plot Monument Rules**

This is a Roman Catholic Cemetery and grave monuments should reflect and honor this. Memorials should be respectful and mindful of Catholic teaching relating to death, burial and devotion to departed souls. Headstones are encouraged to be in the traditional shape and style. Wording of inscriptions should be dignified and reflect the reverence of the cemetery.

* A permanent memorial (headstone or marker) is required for each burial plot. Plot owners are responsible for purchase of said memorials.
* Footstones are no longer allowed.
* Bronze grave markers for veterans of US armed forces are permitted (head or foot of grave).
* Grave memorials shall be installed within the burial plot at the head of the grave and not extend onto another plot, with the exception of jointly held side by side plots. The west edge of the concrete foundation of the memorial will be placed on the west edge of the plot.
* Monument size is limited to a maximum length of 60 inches, and maximum height of 36 inches. If the monument incorporates a cross or approved religious figure, the overall height up to 72 inches tall is permitted.
* All epitaphs must be from sacred scripture or from approved liturgy, approved hymns, or approved common book of prayer of the Roman Catholic Church. Any other sayings or emblems that are construed as offensive to the Catholic Faith are strictly prohibited.
* Stone borders, concrete edging, curbing, surrounds, or fences around a plot of any kind are not permitted. Benches and footstools are not permitted unless approved by the cemetery committee.

**Decoration Rules**

St. Joseph Cemetery property is considered a sacred place in the tradition of the Catholic Church and as such must be maintained in a manner respectful to all those who have entrusted their loved ones with us. Therefore, to maintain this condition, it is necessary to limit the nature and type of decorations permitted throughout the cemetery.

* Any item or object other than the stone on the grave is considered a “decoration” and is to be placed in compliance with these rules and regulations.
* Fresh flowers are always permitted and will remain until they become unsightly. Exception: flowers placed for Memorial Day may remain until 10 days after the holiday.
* Immediately following an interment, flowers from the funeral may be placed on or near the grave. They will be removed and discarded after 5 days or until they become unsightly.
* Artificial flowers and other decorations are permitted outside of the usual mowing season from November 1st until March 31st. Beginning April 1st, these items are subject to removal, and will be discarded.
* No flowers, bushes, or trees of any kind may be planted on or around a grave. All unauthorized plantings will be removed by cemetery groundskeepers and mowing staff without liability.

**Use of Cemetery and Visitation Rules**

* Transferal of the deceased to the cemetery after the funeral has been traditionally by procession on foot. If not practical due to bad weather or other concerns, use of the cemetery roadway is permitted by all vehicles attending the interment.
* Funeral parking on either side of the drive north of the paved parking lot of the church and parish hall is discouraged in times of wet weather due to soft ground.
* At all other times, vehicles in the cemetery are to always remain on the roadway and drive at a speed no greater than 5 mph. Parking on the cemetery roadway is authorized only during times of visitation, or mowing and other maintenance is being performed.
* Loafing, loitering, playing or any boisterous demonstrations within the cemetery are prohibited.
* No signs, notices or advertising of any kind shall be allowed inside the cemetery or on cemetery property except those placed by the cemetery committee.

**Care**

* The term *care* or *annual care* shall be understood as the care and maintenance of lots and burial plots of the cemetery provided by the cemetery committee. This includes mowing, trimming, road maintenance, and any other beautification of the cemetery as deemed by the committee.
* The term *care* shall not be understood to mean maintenance, repair or replacement of memorials placed on burial plots**. Such maintenance and repairs of memorials or headstones shall be the responsibility of the plot holder.**
* The terms *perpetual care* or *endowed care* are not applicable in the St. Joseph Cemetery since this definition has come to mean the providing of funds for care of cemetery grounds from the income of an established endowment or perpetual trust. Currently, no such endowment exists.

**Loss or Damage**

* St. Joseph Cemetery disclaims all responsibility for loss or damage beyond its reasonable control. The cemetery is neither liable nor responsible for any personal injury from causes beyond its reasonable control.