



Franciscan Cemetery Group

- Assumption Cemetery
2401 Court Street, Syracuse, New York 13208
- St. Joseph's Cemetery
1427 Champlain Avenue, Utica, New York 13502
- Our Lady of Lourdes Cemetery
400 Woolsey Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08610

Memorandum

Date: May 9, 2018

From: Franciscan Friars Conventual

Regarding: Assumption Cemetery, Syracuse, NY

Assumption Cemetery in Syracuse, NY, does NOT belong to Assumption Parish. It is a separate corporation under the care and control of the Franciscan Order. Thus, all enquiries about the Assumption Cemetery should be addressed directly to the Province Cemeteries Office, (P.O. Box 750, Rensselaer, NY 12144; Sandy Miller, Director of Province Cemeteries, Phone: 518-472-1000; Email: Sandy.Miller@olaprovince.org) or to the Franciscan Provincial Office (12300 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042).

The Franciscan Friars apologize profoundly to everyone who has been hurt or offended by the recent incidences associated with Assumption Cemetery. Our love and care for the beloved deceased who repose in Assumption Cemetery remains positively committed. Every complaint is being taken with high seriousness. No complaint will be left uninvestigated. Unresolved issues will be addressed properly and effective remedies sought.

Specifically now, we should like to address some of the issues and grievances that have recently been brought to our attention.

1. During the cemetery's early spring cleanup, a photograph was taken of our refuse pile and posted on social media. The photo depicted a number of tattered and torn flags in with the trash. The photograph caused a great deal of distress within the community and rightfully so, since the flag of our great nation should never be discarded in such a manner. We sincerely apologize for any offense that we have caused and assure you that those flags were immediately separated from the rubbish pile and brought to the Mattydale VFW to be properly disposed.
2. Regarding the fence which bordered the front of the cemetery property on Court Street, and which was removed, the concerns of our neighbors and patrons are understandable. Fears of vandalism and trespassing obtain. We assure you that, despite erroneous information incorrectly reported, the cemetery has every intention of replacing the fence as soon as possible. It was taken down because it was in disrepair and a safety risk. Moreover, it was not a deterrent to crime or vandalism in its current state. As with any corporation in the State of New York, there are procedures which we are obligated to follow order to gain approval for expenditures of this magnitude. Hence, we are now in the process of garnering estimates and gathering bids for a new upgraded version of the cemetery fencing. We share everyone's concern about crime and vandalism and assure you of our overriding concern to do everything within our control to ensure a safe and peaceful environment on the cemetery grounds.

3. Assumption Cemetery comprises approximately 100 acres. It has burials going back to 1894. The Franciscan Friars have worked diligently to address any and all maintenance issues which are brought to our attention in a timely manner. Unfortunately, many such matters go unreported, and are not directed to the cemetery office. Even so, each day our employees, while working out in the field, address numerous issues that arise. However, there are times when things get overlooked. We apologize for that. We encourage anyone who has complaints or concerns to address those in a respectful manner to our staff immediately. Our dedicated staff is committed to help the families we serve.
4. Moreover, it is our responsibility to ensure that we are providing a safe, reverential atmosphere of peace and serenity for all visitors to our cemetery. For this reason, there are rules and regulations in place regarding proper decorum. It is also our duty to administer those norms. These regulations have been established to ensure a uniform and appealing appearance at the cemetery for all of our families and visitors. We ask for your cooperation in complying to them.
5. Finally, the Assumption Cemetery wants you to know that it will always strive to provide the best possible service to our patrons. The daily realities, however, are not unlike the challenging exigencies faced daily by many of the families we serve. Each year we must make choices regarding how our limited amounts of funding will be budgeted and spent, within economic restraints. In recent years we have responsibly purchased new equipment, paved sections of road, built a new office, computerized our cemetery records, updated planters and grounds, removed dead trees, and more. The Franciscans sincerely believe that, for the most part Assumption Cemetery is achieving the same high standards rightfully expected of all Catholic Cemeteries. We assure our patrons that we shall do everything in our power to make Assumption Cemetery a source of pride to the neighborhood, consolation to its patrons, and a place of genuine peace and tranquility for all who visit the sacred ground.