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POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

SACRED HEART CEMETERY
ASSUMPTION B.V.M. CEMETERY
SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST CEMETERY

July 17, 2026

Introduction

The Handbook for Parish Cemeteries, issued by the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown and effective January 1, 2002, is the normative document for all cemeteries in the Diocese. That Handbook is available at the Diocesan website (www.dioceseaj.org), from the parish office and on the parish website (www.holyfamilyportage.org).

This document serves as a summary of important points and provides guidelines specific to the three Roman Catholic cemeteries in Portage. It does not replace the Handbook. The three named cemeteries for this summary are operated and maintained by Holy Family Parish, Portage, PA. They are subject to Pennsylvania State law, the code of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church, and the directives of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

A Catholic Cemetery is for the interment of those entitled to Christian Burial according to the guidelines of the Church. When there is a question about the right to Christian Burial, the Diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown will make the final decision. When one purchases Burial Privileges, he or she and heirs bind themselves to the laws of the above-mentioned institutions and the By-Laws and Regulations of the Cemetery at present, or as amended in the future, or forfeit one's right to use of the burial plot or grave.

The purchaser of Burial Privileges in ground or a crypt vault does not acquire property ownership, but he/she and heirs are entitled to: **a.)** a place of burial and **b.)** the right to the placement of a memorial approved by Management of the Cemetery.

Any perceived violation of the following will be reviewed by the Pastor and the Parish Cemetery Commission. Appropriate action will be taken with or without notice.

Points of Particular Consideration for Holy Family Parish, Portage, PA:

- 1.** Pennsylvania State Law states that a cemetery is always closed from dusk to dawn.
- 2.** Absolutely no one including Monument companies can place or remove or change any stone or monument in the cemeteries without approval of the Pastor of Holy Family Parish. All proper paperwork will be required regarding monuments.
- 3.** All planting of shrubs and trees is reserved to Cemetery personnel. No digging is allowed in the Cemetery except by the Cemetery personnel or bonded approved persons with permission.
- 4.** The foundations for all stones will be installed by qualified bonded persons under the supervision of Cemetery personnel as directed by the management.
- 5.** All memorials are to be approved by the Management by providing a printed diagram of specifications and image design in advance. Only Christian symbols are permitted on memorials in a Catholic cemetery. Outdoor scenes, trains, hunting scenes, and so on are not appropriate. The inclusion of any animals will be determined by the sighting of a Sacred Scripture passage to Management when approval is sought.

- 6.** Management is not responsible for defects in memorials or foundations caused by the monument dealer, nor can management be held responsible for the acts of vandals or natural disasters.
- 7.** There is to be no loitering or unlawful assembly in the Cemetery.
- 8.** Children under the age of 15 must be accompanied by a parent or other adult. Domestic animals are prohibited on the Cemetery grounds.
- 9.** Transfers of Easements are to be made by Management. Plots or graves may not be sold for profit by holders of easements. Management may, at its discretion, repurchase plots or graves at original cost minus any outstanding debt.
- 10.** Management may refuse to open a grave or permit the placement of a memorial:
a.) when debts are not paid (e.g. unpaid balance on a plot) or b.) when there is a question of ownership in the family.
- 11.** In the event of the death of a plot holder, all privileges in the plot shall pass to survivors as follows: a.) to the legal spouse; b.) to those named or designated in the will; or c.) to those chosen by a joint decision of the legal heirs. A new Easement certificate is to be issued in all instances by Management. Plot holders are required to show ownership.
- 12.** 25% of the "purchase" of a grave or mausoleum vault is placed into an endowment fund toward Perpetual Care. Perpetual Care includes filling in sunken graves, seeding, cutting of grass, and trimming around memorials, subject to weather conditions. Perpetual Care does not include maintenance, repair, or replacement of any gravestones or monuments, nor the planting of flowers or ornamental plants.
- 13.** Those who purchase the right to use a Plot are to keep Management informed of their address.
- 14.** The Cemeteries are consecrated as Catholic Cemeteries. All interments must be in accord with Church Law. No symbols or ceremonies, religious or otherwise, may be used or performed that would be against Christian principles.
- 15.** The Cemeteries are private property. Anyone entering cemetery property is subject to Cemetery rules.
- 16.** It is preferred that graves and crypts be paid in full at the time of perpetual rental. If that is not possible, Management may allow payments of \$50 per month.
- 17.** The use of one grave space shall be limited to one of the following and appropriate fees will apply:
 - (1) One Full Body Burial or
 - (2) One Full Body Burial of a parent and the Burial of an infant child or
 - (3) One full body plus one Urn (cremains) or

(4) Two Urns (2 cremains).

Additional Regulations:

1. In the interest of safety of employees and visitors, no glass or ceramic objects are permitted in the Cemetery. No decorative stone around the monument is permitted.
2. Artificial flowers will be allowed during the cold season only beginning November 1st and ending March 15th. By March 15th all artificial flowers and other decorations must be removed from each cemetery gravesite. During the warm season artificial flowers are allowed only if they are off the ground, not in the way of mowers, and not in contact with the grass.
3. Live flowers may be planted up to six inches from the stone base of a monument. They are to be cared for by the plot owner or one designated. In the event that they are not cared for, Cemetery personnel will remove them. Flowers are to be planted in the ground. Boxes of flowers and potted flowers are to be removed within one week. There are to be no metal edgings, fences, or wire guards put around flowers.
4. Statues, flowerpots, and plastic vigil lights are permitted only if they are placed on the foundation of the monument. Flowerpots are permitted beside the stone only with permission of Management.
5. No fences, corner posts, or other border arrangements are permitted. Foot stones are not permitted. No raised mounds are permitted on Cemetery lots. Graves must be level with the contour of the Cemetery ground.
6. When multiple burials are permitted for one plot, the monument type and size will be determined by the size of the plot.
7. MAUSOLEUM RULES: All cemetery rules apply to the Mausoleum! Plus:

Flowers or arrangements of any kind may be placed on the Crypt front in the specifically designated holders/vases. Unsightly decorations or arrangements will be removed by Management. Absolutely no wire or command strips attached to the granite! Free standing vases, statues, stones or any decoration are not allowed.

All inscriptions shall be uniform in size, style and placement. Only one emblem per casket space of an approved style and size shall be allowed on a Crypt front.