



Dialogue

Newsletter of the Fabrique de la paroisse Notre-Dame de Montréal

Vol. 4 No. 14 December 2002

The second part of our land-use plan

This second part focuses on our plan's specific objectives, which are grouped into three categories.

A. Spatial organization and orientation objectives

1. Development of landmarks
2. Differentiation of zones
3. Information at access points
4. Redevelopment of the roadway network
5. Reorganization of the parking area
6. Restructuring of road signs

B. Heritage objectives

1. Recognition of the site's high heritage value
2. Determination of the extent of intervention
3. Conservation, enhancement and development of the natural heritage
4. Conservation, restoration and development of the man-made heritage
5. Reception areas, support of compatible discovery and walking activities
6. Development of the "loop road" and of the "North-South axis" as per the City of Montreal's Mount Royal development plan

C. Funerary operations objectives

1. Perpetual and respectful preservation of mortal remains
2. Continuation and enhancement of the institution's cultural functions
3. Suitability for the state of mind of

the cemetery's privileged visitors (family members and friends of the deceased)

4. Explanation of the site's sacred nature
5. Optimization of the cemetery's functional capacity and harmonious integration of the necessary equipment

At the organization and orientation stages, a series of landmarks will be developed and included on the map of the cemetery grounds. These landmarks will include large-scale monuments that are also imposing given the famous people buried there. Furthermore, certain landmarks surrounding our site—such as the Université de Montréal and St. Joseph's Oratory—will be identified.

Also, we plan to use the topographic areas (plain, plateau, summit), vegetation areas (central and eastern wooded areas), ethnic zones (Chinese, Korean, Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Ukrainian and Vietnamese sections) as well as other easily recognizable locations (military section) as further aids to orientation both on the maps handed out to visitors and on the road signs.

To alleviate traffic problems, and make it easier to find one's way around, we plan to set up a reception area at



**Thanks to all our readers
who contribute comments
and suggestions.
Please keep writing.**

both main entrances. Visitors will be able to pick up a map of the site and learn which route to take to reach their destination easily. Displays will be installed containing relevant documents informing visitors of our full range of activities.

To facilitate movement on the site,

main and secondary “streets” will be emphasized through the use of different road surfaces on either side. These “streets” will be given names to make it easier to describe the routes recommended to visitors. We will also create a few temporary parking spaces around the administrative pavilion as well as at the main entrances.

The existing signs will be completely modified, and a decision has already been made to include the following items on the new signage:

- A. Site and “street” identification symbols
- B. Symbols indicating the direction to a location
- C. Information and warning symbols

The third part of our land-use plan will deal with the “heritage objectives.” ♦

Yolande Tremblay, General Manager



CENTRE FUNÉRAIRE
CÔTE-DES-NEIGES

There is life beyond grief. . .

Grieving is one of the most painful experiences we go through in our lives. It makes us brutally realize the fact that we have lost a relationship that had its share of joys and sorrows. It forces us to understand that we will never again have the opportunity to speak with or touch the departed. We suddenly find ourselves plunged into a physical and psychological state that confronts us to our vulnerability and fragility.

The difficult passage through the various stages of grief often has us call upon others to help us overcome our pain. We must not hesitate to seek comfort from our friends, our surroundings, self-help groups or even psychologists. In her book entitled *De l'autre côté des larmes*, Suzanne Pinard places a lot of importance on finding channels to express our feelings of sorrow, sadness, anger and guilt. She even goes so far as to suggest using cushions or pillows as punching bags to better express our pain.

The holiday season

The holiday season is a great source of anxiety. It's one of the most dreaded and painful periods of the year we must go through. Rituals then become a very good means to clear emotions and get

through these difficult periods in greater serenity. For example, we can hold a family vigil by lighting a candle and placing a picture of the deceased next to it such as to create an atmosphere conducive to meditation in expression of our sorrow. It will then be easier to move on with the reunion and joyful celebrations. People who live alone may want to turn to their loved ones for support.

Death is a process of life

Suzanne Pinard writes: “There is a force in death that pushes us to live. It calls upon us to conjure up the courage within us [...]” Death forces us to face our own mortality and reminds us of the fragility of life and the importance of living every one of life's moments to the fullest.

It is difficult to overcome grief when struggling against our memories. We need rather reflect upon their meaning to convert this distress into something positive. Disruption is a part of the grieving process. We must accept it and take the time to care for ourselves and spoil ourselves as we would do for an injured child. We had significant emotional ties with the departed, and we must now learn how to live dif-



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By Johanne de Montigny, psychologist, McGill University Health Centre, Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal

Le voyage inachevé...

Continuity and creativity are the watchwords for the residents of the village of Saint-Bernard, in mourning for the 43 people killed in the worst highway accident in Canadian history. More than 2% of the village's population died in the ravine at the bottom of Côte des Éboulements on that bus trip to l'Île-aux-Coudres. Do you remember it? It was October 13, 1997. In one stroke, family and friends lost one or several people who were close to them. Close-knit people, instantly torn apart. Father and mother, brother and sister, aunt and uncle, cousins vanished at the same time. "It can't be true," were the first words uttered by the grief-stricken.

Jean-Thomas Bédard has created an extraordinary document by (re)turning to the site of the tragedy, and moving his camera among beings who carry images and memories for the generations to come. These Quebeckers are proud of their ancestry, and want to honour the predecessors who gave them such strong values before departing: brotherhood, gratitude, and generosity.

A few days before the anniversary of the terrible event, I saw the completed version of the film *Le voyage inachevé* (Unfinished voyage) at the National Film Board of Canada. The producer was present at the discussion that followed the screening, and I had the opportunity to lead a discussion on mourning with guest participants. The producer's work received warm applause, the producer's talent having shone through his ability to bring out

the essence of human relationships thanks to the natural support provided by the many people affected by the ordeal of loss.

In fact, recovery, ritual, and mutual support still create enduring bonds between the people of Saint-Bernard. Their attitude acts as an effective and authentic remedy to the suffering caused by the sudden, brutal death of family and friends. In response to absence, one person started to sing (again), one kept a journal, while others went on with building a barn, hanging a

Photo : Lina B. Moreco - © 2002 National Film Board of Canada. All rights reserved.



star at the top of the silo, followed a family recipe for making donuts to the letter, gathered one and all for a meal, took care of the farm as their predecessors had done, decorated the church for midnight mass, and opened their hearts to those who were feeling melancholic. These were the kinds of actions taken by the village's bereaved to cope with their loss.

Several scenes from their lives move us, as distant witnesses. First, these untiring labourers till the soil that has been handed down for generations, and sow seeds for that hoped-for harvest.

But when their spades were turned to the unexpected task of gravedigging, because of the large number of dead and limited resources, they used the same sacred gestures to sow a very symbolic crop, one that is indispensable to collective remembrance.

Among the villagers is a religious woman who, with extraordinary profundity, shares the fragility that overtook her shortly after her mother's death. She reenacted her mother's rituals by stretching out on her bed and, holding her mother's empty nightgown

to her body, she felt a sense of security by inhaling her mother's smell. Sleeping in her bed, she released her sorrow at being single late in life. To recapture the pace of earlier times, she swam every day so as to immerse herself in the memory of the mother's womb, at the heart of a limpid, clear, refreshing place, and strengthen herself for daily life. This woman, whom I could easily christen

goodness, took an extraordinary initiative to keep the village children from postponing their mourning process. She brought them together at the scene of the accident, read the names of their loved ones out loud, explained why it helped to bring flowers, drawings or treasures. In short, she recounted the lives of those lost, and instilled them in their grandchildren's memories.

Other scenes were equally powerful, such as the retracing by loved ones or the family of a couple who died in the accident of the trip that the dearly departed had never been able to finish,

When we reflect upon the question, "Is there life after death?", a psychological approach to it cannot really satisfy us. Such an approach can be very useful, but it is never truly sufficient.

Recently, Reginald Bibby, professor of the sociology of religion at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, published a report on the state of religion in Canada, on which he had worked for many years. His book, entitled *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*, is published by Stoddart in Toronto. Below, I have summarized his thinking on the question of life after death.

Our daily lives are always shaken up when we learn of the death of a friend or a parent, particularly when that person is close to us. Family and friends gather to recall moments shared with the departed person. We often end up asking ourselves the question, is there life after death? And perhaps also, will we be reunited when our turn comes?

In his memoirs, Pierre Elliott Trudeau describes his feelings at the age of fifteen when his father died: "*In the middle of the year I was fifteen, a winter night was interrupted by the terrible blow that left its mark on my adolescence and my life... I froze on the landing when I heard the awful words: "Your father is dead Pierre "How can I describe what I felt at that moment? In a split second, I felt the whole world go empty. His death truly felt like the end of the world. That's the only way I can put it. My father had been a loving presence in my life, a reassuring force but also a stimulus, a constant challenge. He was the focal point of my life, and his death created an enormous void.*" (Bibby, p. 114).

The loss of his father affected Trudeau throughout his life, to the point that he was unable to control his tears when he attended funerals.

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or an old man who, standing at the middle of his sugar bush, talks to his neighbour and friend who died in the accident. He looks up, above the treetops, speaking with a delicious Québécois accent: "*Do you have any maple trees where you are? Can you see me working? If you can see me, and you see I'm having trouble, give me hand, will you, since you're not in a hurry now? Are you taking dance classes? There probably aren't any in heaven. Don't give up, maybe we'll see you again one day. Are you just lying in the earth? But that wouldn't make any sense. You have a father in heaven, just like on earth, right?*"

Life After Death

When he lost his son Michel in an avalanche in British Columbia, nothing could console him during the two years that followed, before his own death in 2000.

The relationships we form here on Earth are so strong and significant, how can we not wonder about when

and where they will continue? Also, for those who die young, as children, death seems so premature that we cannot avoid the question of the meaning of their time here, of a truly incomplete life. There is an intense need for them to have the opportunity to live out their lives, even after their death. As for those who have lived a long and fruitful life, wouldn't they want to continue the adventure, to live life to the fullest?

My older sister died at the age of seven when I was four years old. Afterward, my mother talked about her so much that I have a kind of yearning to see her again, with mature eyes: her, my parents, and all those who I knew and loved.

I encourage you to read Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3:

"A time to be born, and a time to die; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance" and so on. To the biblical text, the author adds, "a time to live again," appealing to the hope that we all carry deep inside. Those who believe in God (in all religions) cannot help but express their belief that "what they hope for will one day be realized." This is another indication that bolsters our belief that God and a spiritual vocation are always present in every heart. ♦

Msgr. Yvon Bigras, p.s.s., C.S.S.
Priest of Notre-Dame Basilica of Montreal

People of Saint-Bernard, you've made us a gift of something very personal, you've shown us the importance of ritual, support, and action after a loss. What you have entrusted to the camera, our hearts can capture from this day forward: the importance of paying tribute to those who die before we do, and the importance of accepting the different ways that the survivors express their grief. Thanksgiving will always be a blessed opportunity to say thank you. ♦

Note: You can screen the film at the NFB, or obtain a videotape from them.

by Joseph Berchoud, *Pompes Funèbres Générales, France*

Rites for the deceased?

Are the rites surrounding the deceased and farewell ceremonies handed down from generation to generation out of respect for the deceased and their memory, or for those who remain behind?
The answer will not be found among these pages.

Rituals in life

Depending on the culture and tradition, rituals mark life's major passages: birth, baptism, marriage, as well as the ceasing of work... and death.

Once, soldiers in the same contingent, when they left families and work to serve France for a period that has changed over time, would march noisily through the streets of their city or town to prove their bravery. Soldiers are no longer drafted in 2002, but the "ritual" parade endures.

In some pastoral traditions, rituals sometimes mark the change of seasons. In livestock farming areas, the passage from summer to fall was marked by large fairs at which animals passed from one hand to another.

Friends who belong to the Lions or Rotary Club mark their gatherings and work meetings with rituals. In brief, rituals are alive and well, time to share and talk, marked by food and drink, and, lastly, by hope.

At the time of death: acts and rituals

The regions of France are rich in diversity, and have a range of acts and practices in which everything is blended. The sacred and the profane, the simplicity of home life and the honours of history, silence with speech and song... Vanished or alive, lost from memory or in the process of revival.

Just think about the glasses of wine that clink together around a coffin. Their ring is particularly authentic when the wine is from the vines of the departed.

This religious upsurge, beginning with the sounds of the bells that used to toll life and death with a ringing code . . . not to overlook incense, holy water, and prayers, some of which are still reserved for the funeral liturgy.

Sometimes, animals like the horse, the bee, or the dog wore mourning too when they shared in daily life, its animation and knowledge.



Military honours rendered, tempered by protocol. Authentic ceremonies of remembrance constructed around the procellas when sailors from the island of Onessant, near Brest, were lost at sea.

And, often, silence. As if noise was incompatible with the rest of the deceased. Chant, as well, such as the chants in the Basque tradition that bring tears to the eyes of the unsuspecting newcomer.

As well as proclamations. After the bells, announcements. For over a century, in some towns, there are locations that have become places for posting announcements. Near the Italian border, the printer creates true announcements with portraits that are pasted onto the church doors, among other places, to announce the death of a villager.

Why rituals?

Rituals form part of the routine of daily life, as well as marking changes, passages, and ruptures. What role do they play?

- > Affirm the deceased's membership in a human group, referring back to the group's origins in time.
- > Carry out a double purification, for the deceased as well as the living.
- > Settle accounts: "We did all that was necessary for him."
- > Complete a stage in mourning.
- > Give room to feelings. Rituals provide a time and bond to channel powerful emotions.
- > Locate death. "Grandmother is dead; her body has been laid in the cemetery."
- > Letting go. These rituals emphasize the work of mourning, helping people to learn how to let go of the person they would like to hold onto.

For this alone: Let us keep these rituals, for they are signs of life and hope. ♦

- Extracted from the work of Christian Biot, priest at the Diocese of Lyon

PROJECTS AND MORE PROJECTS!

Because we are always responsive to the needs of the different communities that now make up our society, and because we wish to remain leaders in the field of funerary services, since July we have begun to develop two new sections for in-ground burials. Work is progressing at a good pace, and the first phase should be complete before the winter.

The first development project is a cremation garden, located close to the veterans' section. The garden is designed to be a place of peace, imbued with respect, under the blessed watch of our war heroes and the Seamen's Mission, whose monument is topped by a ship tossed by wind and sea. An excellent location!

"Candlemas," our new cremation garden.

This year, cinerary urn burials will account for 55% of all burials. Clearly, in the years to come we will have to meet a growing demand for this type of burial. When it is completed in the summer of 2003, the new garden, named Candlemas, will contain over five hundred plots. Splendid floral arrangements are of course planned for the spring of 2003, as well as the addition of decorative trees and bushes, making this site worthy of the name cremation garden. Note that each plot holder in this site may erect a monument which can hold four to six



inscriptions, whereas a granite or bronze ground plaques allows only one or sometimes two inscriptions.

What are the origins of Candlemas? For Christians, this day marks Jesus' presentation at the temple. During this service, many candles were blessed and lit in churches. The candles then had the power, when relit during a storm, to keep away lightning, to bring good fortune, and—throughout the winter—to watch over the seeds that would produce good harvests the following summer. Candlemas is related to light and is celebrated on February 2, forty days after Christmas. Three solemn blessings of candles are held each year, on Candlemas, Ash Wednesday, and Palm Sunday. Today, candles are blessed to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world.

Next February 2, we will celebrate Candlemas at the Chapel of the Resurrection. We invite all cemetery clients who have experienced a recent loss to participate in this new event and celebrate the festival of light with us, because light also signifies hope.

Our second development project is a traditional burial site. We will create more than 800 30-square foot plots (for two coffins) and 60-square foot plots (for four coffins). Very special landscaping has been planned for this section, which has not yet been given a name. Sited close to the Camilien Houde gate and Section V, this section offers visitors a superb view of the mountain.

Our cemetery will soon be 150 years old. Many more projects are planned for many years to come. We are young at heart and resolutely focused on the future.

For more information about purchasing a plot in one of the new sites, please contact one of our counsellors who will be pleased to meet with you at our offices or in your home.

Have you noticed the benches that have been installed here and there throughout the cemetery! ... A brief moment of rest in a peaceful environment. ♦

Johanne Duchesne
Director, Marketing

*The journey
through Grief*

When I have a commitment and longing to find my changed self, I have alternative to the constant, blinding pain of the loss. Discovering my changed me clears a space to discover new life.

I have something to turn toward instead of away from.

I have something that is authentic, real :

It is the life that breaks through my loneliness, with a direction and power of its own. Welcome home.



The end-of-year holiday season is not always easy for those who have lost a loved one during the year.

The management and staff of the cemetery wish you a warm and tender Christmas, and a happy New Year for 2003

Deacons and Funeral Rites

By virtue of its role as a catholic cemetery, the cemetery is a place of meditation and prayer for the families who come to visit their loved ones. It is important to remember that to pray for the deceased is also to pray for everyone who believes in the religious dimension of faith in Christ. With this in mind, a year ago we created a pastoral service in the heart of the cemetery that provides religious support, free of charge, to families during the interment of their loved one's ashes, a liturgy of the word as a final prayer recited at the Chapel of the Resurrection, and, very recently, a special accompaniment for placements in niches or funerary

vaults. Attending our special pastoral services helps grieving families to find the psychological and spiritual support that is often needed while mourning the loss of a loved one, and to go on with life. A brief explanation of each of the pastoral elements is provided below.

The Interment of Cinerary Urns

The brief celebration held on the site before the cinerary urn is interred is often the only celebration in memory of the deceased. The deacons thus gather some pertinent information about the deceased in order to personalize this final

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Attending our special pastoral services helps grieving families to find the psychological and spiritual support.



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ferently all over again. "Grieving is not a process of forgetting but rather of learning." (Suzanne Pinard)

The Côte-des-Neiges Funeral Centre is a member of the Dignity network and provides grieving families with a host of services—from the library to the viewing centre—including a compassion phone line, free child and grandchild care, a 100% satisfaction guarantee on all funeral services as well as the transfer

of the remains to one of 1400 funeral homes throughout the continent. The Centre is also organizing a Christmas Concert that will be presented on Tuesday December 3 during the early evening hours. ♦

Robert Leblanc

Director, Côte-des-Neiges Funeral Centre



The Arrival of Marguerite Bourgeoys

Next year Montreal will celebrate the three-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of one of the most important events in its early history, the arrival of the "Grande recrue" in the autumn of 1653.

Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve had left for France two years before convinced that if he could not enrol a significant number of new recruits, the attempt to establish a French settlement on the island of Montreal, begun ten years before, would have to be abandoned. His return with about one hundred men and fifteen women marked, in fact, a second founding of Montreal.

Marguerite Bourgeoys is the best known of the new "Montrealistes" who arrived in 1653. Because she had come to teach the children not yet born, her presence was a great act of hope in the future of Ville Marie, established to carry the Christian faith to the Native Peoples of North America. Like Maisonneuve and Jeanne Mance, Marguerite Bourgeoys was born in the province of Champagne. At the

age of thirty-three, she already had considerable experience of working among the poor of her native city of Troyes and training in the most advanced teaching methods of her time. By the end of that first difficult and dangerous voyage she had established the close relationship with the people of Montreal that would continue until her death in 1700.

At Montreal, Marguerite founded the first unclioistered community of religious women in North America. Under her leadership they went out to teach in the other small communities coming into existence along the Saint Lawrence and on the Indian missions. Marie-Thérèse Gannensagouas, one of the first Amerindian women to enter a religious community, taught at the Mountain Mission where she died in 1695. She lies buried in the plot of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame in Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. Marguerite Bourgeoys was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1982.

To celebrate this anniversary, activities of various kinds will take place during 2003. You can re-experience this fascinating event in our history by attending a play or visiting an exhibition. ♦

Marguerite and the "Grande Recrue" Theatrical production

15 May – 7 September 2003 - Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum - 400 Saint Paul St. East, Montreal

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homage and give it a more human dimension. Our deacons also give families the opportunity to choose their own prayers and testimonials.

Liturgy of the Word in the Chapel

This is a more religious celebration. The deacon, wearing the alb and the stole, presides over the celebration, which lasts approximately 20 to 30 minutes. The pastoral content consists of the liturgy of the word, the homily, the rite that concludes the celebration, as well as holy water and incense. The deacon and the family confer in planning the celebration's elements. The family's preferences and requests are respected wherever possible.

Ceremonies are also offered to families to mark the placement of a cinerary urn in a niche, or a coffin in a funerary vault. Deacons wear the alb and the stole for this final farewell.

Our deacons are in the service of the Church. They are ordained ministers appointed by the presiding bishop, in this case the Cardinal, Jean-Claude Turcotte. They are at the service of the community in the same way as priests are. ♦

Réjean Leblanc, Pastoral Coordinator

On the School Benches of French America

Temporary Exhibition

7 May – 2- December 2003

Maison Saint-Gabriel

2146 Dublin Place, Pointe-Saint-Charles

Partnership between the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum and the Maison Saint-Gabriel

Come and celebrate the 350th anniversary of the arrival of Marguerite Bourgeoys and the "Grande Recrue" at Ville-Marie. Costumed presentations, music and many other activities for the whole family.

Monthly Masses

Monthly masses will be held Saturdays, on December 7, 2002, January 14, February 1st, March 1st and April 5, 2003.

They will be celebrated at the Chapelle de la Résurrection at 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

FREE PARKING