



NOTRE-DAME-DES-NEIGES
CEMETERY

Where life is a garden of memories

Dialogue

Notre-Dame-Des-Neiges Cemetery Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 2 September 1999



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«L'AUTOMNE MAGIQUE» LAURENT LAFLEUR

MOTHER'S DAY REUNION

To say that Mother's Day at the cemetery was "a large gathering" would not be an exaggeration. In fact, more than 20,000 people gathered to pay tribute to the mothers they had lost, who lived on in the memories of husbands, children and grandchildren.

People of all ages joined together on the cemetery grounds to meditate, take part in the outdoor Mass celebrated by Msgr. Bigras, participate in blessing the new sculpture entitled Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, partake of refreshments and browse in our greenhouses.

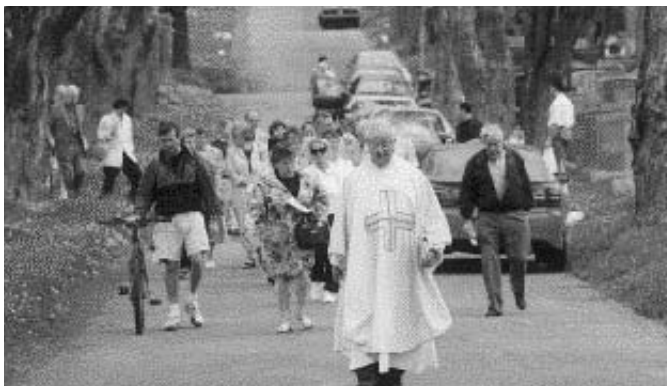
For many, this family outing was a day of discovery, not only of the cemetery, but also of an enriching collective experience. The abundance of nature, the respect imparted through prayer, the appreciation for works of art, and the simple joy of sharing are just some of the cemetery's features that were shown off to their fullest potential during this great gathering. Those who found their way to the greenhouses can testify to the rich variety of flowers and shrubs available on site.

The distribution of 10,000 packets of seeds of our new floral emblem, Dame

des Neiges, was meant to be, first and foremost, a symbolic gesture, but ended up eliciting a very positive reaction from everyone. Giving out the seeds signified the importance that the cemetery places on its ties with the community, with an emphasis on the close link between the peace of death and the serenity of nature. These messages were well-received! ♦



▲ Floral emblem
The Dame des Neiges daisy:
Pure and delicate.



Starting up a quarterly newsletter could be viewed by some as an "ambitious enterprise." For this reason, before even considering going to print, we thought long and hard about all of the issues and ideas that would interest our readers: selecting pertinent topics, choosing contribu-

tors, deciding on the graphic presentation, and so forth.

This advance deliberation proved to be fruitful. The mass 10,000-copy distribution of the first edition of *Dialogue* during Mother's Day celebrations generated an avalanche of comments and requests for information.

Please call or write to us with any questions or comments you may have—we would love to hear from you.

We also hope that you share the opinion of one reader who commented that "your articles, each one more interesting than the last, make us realize and encourage us to

reflect on the fact that there is a lot of life in the fact of death." This opinion reflects the philosophy behind our main objective: to publish a newsletter that conveys our wish to promote awareness through relevant articles and the exchange of ideas, a true dialogue. ♦

Yolande Tremblay
General Manager

By Johanne de Montigny, psychologist

The bridge between life and death

It is the important events in our lives that transform us and bring us closer together physically, spiritually and emotionally. Between the day we arrive in this world until the final voyage, a myriad of experiences shape us, the deepest and most human of which undoubtedly come from avatars and intergenerational legacies.

The heritage of the past and the power of living in the present are essential precepts in the discovery of our future. The meeting of the generations, from the youngest cradled

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in the arms of the elders to the grown ones following in their parents' footsteps, ensures that manifold memories are passed on for tomorrow.

Strolling along the cemetery's paths and exploring this living place where the dead rest in peace provide an opportunity to pay

homage to these children, these men and women, young and old who, now in the arms of the Invisible, lying beneath Heaven's limitless horizon, bequeath to us the energy to live in their memory, indeed, to live for them, these beings who forever live in our hearts.

The departed are like those flowers in our gardens that bloom and scatter at the slightest breath of wind, reminding us that love seeds itself, that fellowship takes care of itself, forever engraved like words on a tombstone. And so who is left to

beseech us? "Shed crocodile tears, for the poets feign death."

Holidays that evoke powerful memories, such as Mother's Day and Father's Day, the "ceremony of the angels," memorials for loved ones, as many songs of praise as the ones left behind to celebrate the lives

of the deceased, to give thanks for the joy of living, to acknowledge the sorrow of the bereaved and to sing, together and thunderous, the hymn to love and to hope. Yes, together, on the same ground, with the strength of reunion, in the bosom of a chapel, within the realm of eternal rest, to the rhythm of each one, crossing through the pain of loss, anchored by the cemetery, standing on the mountain slope; they, sleeping in their earth-garden bed, in the memorial cradle, unchanging, unceasing. How can we forget these beings from the past, sole proof of the present, and above all, how can we never forget them?

By coming together, as much for the rituals of life as for rituals of death. By praying, singing, creating, commemorating those who had the courage to "die for us, afore us and before us," to show us the road we will all have to travel someday, after taking so many detours, before reaching the

cosmos. Where are they, those who sleep in the arms of God, if not at the gateway to our most cherished memories?

Death is a terrible thing, a reaper of loved ones; and only love can survive it for, if death kills life, it does not kill Love—that eternal love, delivered in every "Go(o)d b(y)e (with you)," in every message in which the sacred is heard, in a flock of birds taking flight, soaring toward the heavens, at the very moment when we depart this life, when we break through the water of our second birth, slipping out of the cloak of life, to be enveloped by death.

"Life is beautiful," when seen through the eyes of death: a time-honoured reminder that gives meaning to everyday living. ♦

The Catholic cemetery: an integral part of the Church

According to Most Rev. G. Patrick Ziemann, D.D., Bishop of Santa Rosa in California, "a Catholic cemetery must be the Church."

"A Catholic cemetery is a sacred, consecrated place, set apart by the Bishop of the Diocese. It is a holy place, the final resting place of those who have been baptized into the faith and members of their families who celebrated and integrated the Christian commitment into their lives and, upon their death, completed their baptismal covenant and rest among their companions in faith (like the disciples on the road to Emma'us)."

"A Catholic cemetery is a place of prayer, meditation, respect and hope for the families of the departed and for the entire Catholic community. A Catholic cemetery contains the familiar symbols of faith and bears witness to the faith to all who enter."

Because of what it is, a Catholic cemetery is different from a private funerary enterprise. Its way of doing things cannot be dictated by the sec-

ular world that surrounds us; its main concern is its unique commercial aspect, always keeping in mind that it must adapt to the modern world in which it finds itself.

Father James Fritzen, diocesan director of the Diocese of Syracuse cemetery explains: "The Catholic cemetery ministry cares for the deceased and their families, and is a completely integrated component of the Catholic Church." While it too has to have a balanced budget, it is

not just a place of business, a purely commercial institution, although the latter may offer reputable funerary services as well.

Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery, wishing to fulfil the Church's mission, offers spiritual Christian services during burial, as well as at other times of the year. A Mass for the departed is held at 10 A.M. on the first Saturday of every month and special Mother's Day and Father's Day Masses are celebrated.

On September 12, an annual High Mass is held outdoors under a tent and, during the month of November, many Masses are held in memory of everyone buried in the cemetery. The Chapel of the Resurrection is open every day for personal prayer and meditation, and the Stations of the Cross will hopefully be reinstated in the near future. This is but one part of our mission to the faithful. ♦

Mgr Yvon Bigras, p.s.s., C.S.S.

A COLLECTIVE TRIBUTE

Since its beginnings in 1855, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery has welcomed 870,000 people to their resting place. And on September 12, 1999, we will continue our annual tradition of paying homage to all those buried in the cemetery.

This tribute, strongly established during the past five years, is in celebration of those who left behind many great legacies: family, professional, artistic or social. These are people

from all walks of life, from the discreetly private to the openly public. If you are interested in taking a historical journey on this very special day, you may obtain a free copy of our brochure, *Famous People Buried in Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery*, which contains more than 250 names.

The September 12 commemoration is our way of showing how we are intrinsically woven into the social fabric, and your chance to show that your

loved ones live on in your memories. High Mass will be held outdoors under a tent to mark the occasion, with a special choir concert and musical trio performance heightening the atmosphere of respect and dignity.

Everyone is welcome!

"Upon the
ashes of
the dead are
countries built"
*Alphonse de
Lamartine*

by Christian DeCacqueray, editor-in-chief, *Le Passage*

Cremation *in France*

Virtually unknown in France only 20 years ago, cremation has since become a popular funeral rite and requests for it have risen to 15%. This is not an isolated phenomenon, as other western countries are also seeing an increase in the popularity of cremation; however, in France, the issue is now what becomes of the ashes. French legislation on this subject currently specifies no restrictions except for the scattering of ashes on public property. It is very difficult to accurately follow the trail of these urns after mourning relatives have taken them away from the crematorium.

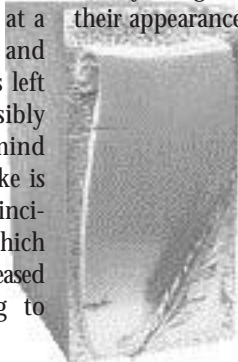
Looking at the symbolism of it, this behaviour is astonishing. Having arrived in procession behind the body of the deceased, the family leaves an hour and a half later with a slightly warm urn. Only 90 short minutes separate the recently expired being—whose body was a temple that housed a life—and this object that can be handled like so much hardware! After this symbolic violence

comes uncertainty about the fate of the ashes.

A study revealed that a large number of people take the urn right to a cemetery. Indeed, requests for cinerary plots and niches have multiplied over the past few years. However, there are also many people who prefer to take the urn home with them. What do they do with it? How long do they keep it? Some people choose to live with the urn of a loved one in their home. Others share the contents among the living relatives or mix the ashes of several departed family members; still others carry all or part of the ashes with them when they leave the house each day. There is a long and infinitely varied list of how mortal remains are personally handled and manipulated. In these cases, the deceased is no longer out of sight at a distant cemetery and the living, the ones left behind, may possibly find peace of mind therein. Also at stake is the basic social principle, according to which the remains of a deceased person can belong to no one.

Then there is the question of time. How can a family who chooses to take an urn home manage to keep it over a long period of time? **Once the first few months of mourning have passed, the urn often becomes an invasive presence, sometimes even an object of obsession.** Not knowing exactly what to do, people often turn to funeral homes and finally decide, well after the fact, on a final resting place.

Considering these alarming facts, it is up to society to provide guidelines and set standards for funerary procedures. If, on the other hand, society chooses not to regulate the system, it will not be long before unrestricted attitudes and behaviour—increasingly harmful to individuals as well as society—begin to make their appearance. ♦



QUESTION: Is it normal not to cry when a loved one dies?

ANSWER: The “absence of reaction” is just one of the many different ways of dealing with grief. For some people, sorrow is manifested spontaneously, most often through tears but also through lamentation, silence and withdrawal, verbal expression of suffering, guilt, anger toward the deceased (why did they leave me?), questioning without wanting to hear answers, or physical agony. For others, the grieving process is suspended, postponed until later, until something new and unexpected shocks the emotional system.

Sorrow can be dry, without voice, without tears, controlled by stoicism or by the fear of hurtling down an unknown path. Frightened of discovering a side of oneself hitherto hidden, impenetrable, unfamiliar, emotions are suppressed, ignored, frozen, rejected. In other cases, the absence of tears hides reasons we are afraid to confide, for fear of being judged, misinterpreted, abandoned.

Some people cry, others do not. Sorrow cannot be measured. It can be felt and expressed, or absent. Sometimes it is smothered to protect a family secret, or to protect the other mourners’ memories of the departed, or even to make things easier for the family during their time of grief. It is a time when courage and strength become confused with tears and vulnerability, a time when crying could be seen as a defeat, a weakness, rather than an emotional liberation. In similar cases, the lack of tears becomes a survival mechanism.

The absence of tears or the inability to cry when a loved one dies depends on an individual’s personal history: people react in ways that are considered perfectly normal by some and strangely different by others. Remember, grief opens the floodgates of creativity; from death the artist’s masterpiece is born, the musician’s sonata evolves, the writer’s words take wing. And so tears fall from the most unique, exceptional and extraordinary sources—not always from the eyes!

Dear readers, please send your questions to the following address:

Readers’ Forum
Bulletin Dialogue
Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery
4601 chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges
Montréal, (Québec) H3V 1E7

Nearly half of Quebec families *prefer cremation over a traditional burial*

COLUMBARIUMS: A CONTEMPORARY SOLUTION THAT HONOURS THE TRADITION OF RESPECT.

Cremation, which has been popular in Europe for a number of years, was officially authorized by the Vatican in 1967 and is becoming increasingly popular in Quebec.

Whether seen as an act of purification signifying great respect or as a method of storage more suited to present environmental concerns, cremation is the choice of today's society.

Ashes in a cinerary urn may be buried in the earth or placed in a niche in one of our 11 indoor columbariums or in our brand new outdoor columbarium, christened the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, under the watchful eye of an extraordinary sculpture.

Let us advise you

Taking into account your preferences and budget, our customer service professionals will be glad to guide you in selecting a columbarium, a decorative urn and commemorative shrines.

Most of our columbariums are located in magnificent mausoleums whose exquisite architecture is in perfect harmony with the natural beauty of the cemetery. Niches designed for two to four urns not only provide a functional environment, they also offer a particularly serene and contemplative atmosphere. Each niche is sealed with an engraved marble or granite plaque, with engraved or bronze lettering, or an engraved bronze plate. Glassed-in niches are also available. We offer an impressive selection of urns and shrines

guaranteed to suit every taste and budget.

In addition, we have published two additional brochures that may be useful if you are considering opting for cremation and a columbarium niche. To receive a free copy of our *Services Guide* and the brochure entitled "*Our Mausoleums: Enduring Memories*", simply return the reply card on the back cover page of this newsletter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us by telephone.

Our priority remains unchanged: to listen carefully to your needs and to help you personalize your tribute and honour your departed loved one with dignity. ♦

Johanne Duchesne

Director,
Customer Service





► Photographers... *to your cameras!*

Everyone is invited to **participate** in a photography contest organized by Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. The theme of the contest, which begins September 12, 1999 and ends August 1, 2000, is **"THE CHANGING SEASONS."**

A wide variety of subjects are waiting to be captured on film: flora, fauna, sculptures, monuments, cemetery grounds, visitors, and many more. Take the opportunity to put your talents to work and discover this jewel of nature that is the cemetery. Under the unique light of each season, this remarkable site is a kaleidoscope of ever-changing subtleties to the eye of the photographer.

CONDITIONS

This contest is open to **amateur photographers of all ages**, with the exception of staff of the Fabrique. Photographs may be in colour or black and white, but

must be submitted in 8" by 10" format.

All photographs must be sent before August 1, 2000, to: "The Changing Seasons" contest, c/o Ms. Francine McDuff, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, 4601 chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges, Montréal, Québec H3V 1E7. They must be accompanied by a letter outlining the following information: your name, address and telephone number (including area code), as well as the date the photo was taken and its title. More than one entry may be submitted, but each must be sent separately, along with the required information.

The winning photos along with a selection of other interesting entries will be unveiled September 10, 1999 at an exhibition open to the general public at the Sainte-Marguerite d'Youville mausoleum. The winning pictures become the property of the cemetery.

PRIZES

Three prizes will be awarded :

- 1st prize : a gift certificate worth \$500;
 - 2nd prize : a gift certificate worth \$250;
 - 3rd prize : a gift certificate worth \$150.
- for photographic equipment, accessories or supplies.

Winners will be notified by mail. Prizes will be presented September 10, 2000 at the opening of the photo exhibition.

Sponsors of the contest



*This column occasionally replaces the column, "Reading between the lines" in order to bring you up to date on special events or initiatives.

A GARDEN of memories

The concept of a "garden cemetery" and our planning and maintenance service

Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery features nearly 10,000 trees, mostly silver maples, Norway maples and horse chestnuts that play a unifying role in the landscape. Other noble species such as red oak, red ash, Colorado blue spruce, butternut, white pine and even a black

maple can be found. About 100 trees date from before the establishment of the cemetery and approximately 500, with trunks measuring 60 cm or more, are considered "remarkable."

To this exceptional legacy have been added flowers and decorative plants, in flower beds or floral displays of rich colour. This is why the grounds are considered an authentic "garden cemetery," to enjoy and to preserve our collective natural heritage.

Our horticulture experts offer a complete service that includes landscape designs for a plot or site, planting and maintenance for the first year, all at a very reasonable cost. The computer-generated design allows you complete freedom of expression in choosing plants and flowers from our greenhouses, which are open to the public from Monday to Saturday, 7:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M., and 1 P.M. to 4 P.M.

There, not only will you find an unrivalled selection of plants and flowers but also bags of soil and fertilizer. And that's not counting the help of our skilled horticulturists who can offer valuable.

Yvon Pagé
Superintendent
Notre-Dame-des-Neiges
Greenhouses
(514) 735-1361

A LITTLE SEASONAL ADVICE
Autumn is the time of year to give plenty of water to your evergreens and to protect your fragile trees and shrubs before winter. Take the time as well to clean out your flower beds and get them ready for spring.

DON'T MISS

IN SEPTEMBER

2000 CALENDAR

"TRIBUTE TO OUR PEOPLE"



This practical **WALL CALENDAR** features a magnificent collection of colour photographs that you will want to keep.

On sale at the cemetery and at Notre-Dame Basilica.

HURRY! QUANTITIES ARE LIMITED.



Annual High Mass

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

This is a very special mass, featuring a choir and celebrated in several languages, held in memory of everyone buried in the cemetery. Mass to take place outside under a tent at 11 A.M.

GREETING CARDS
(BLANK INSIDE)
AVAILABLE IN THE
FRONT OFFICE



Monthly masses

These masses are celebrated on the first Saturday of every month—October 2, November 6, and December 4—and take place at 10 A.M. at the Chapel of the Resurrection.

**FREE
PARKING**

Information booth

18 TO 24 OF OCTOBER
at Place Alexis Nihon

15 TO 31 OF OCTOBER
at Galeries d'Anjou

"Monumental" Gate

Since January 1999, the main entrance to the cemetery, on Chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges, has become the cemetery's latest **ARCHITECTURAL JEWEL**, in keeping with the long-term plan to improve the aesthetic character of the premises.

The design, developed by consulting architects Blouin Faucher Aubertin, creates a harmonious ensemble. Classically inspired, the arch, gates and faceted stone columns gently integrate the two adjoining lodges. Although greatly changed over the years, these lodges formed part of the original entrance, considered "monumental" when it was first designed in 1887-88 by two eminent 19th century Quebec architects, Victor Bourgeau and Henri-Maurice Perrault.

This project has achieved the objective of establishing a common denominator in the design of the three gates that provide access to the grounds. All three, imbued with a solemn majesty, enhance the **SACRED NATURE** of the cemetery and its vocation: to protect those who have died and preserve the heritage found. ♦

For more information...



Would you like to receive a free information folder about

- our services
- our book of remembrance
- our mausoleums and columbariums
- our flower arrangements
- our monuments

Also available **free of charge**

- folders about the grieving process
- our quarterly newsletter, *Dialogue*

PLEASE PRINT:

Your name: _____

Your address: _____
(NUMBER) (STREET) (APT.)

(CITY) (POSTAL CODE)

Your telephone: _____
(INCLUDING AREA CODE)

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Web site: www.cimetierenddn.org