



NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS DAY

I am sure most have heard of or celebrated national appreciation day for teachers, nurses or first responders, but have you ever thought to stop and thank a last responder? Last responders are the people who provide final care to deceased individuals. This includes forensic scientists, medical examiners, religious personnel, cemetery workers and funeral directors. Fortunately, March 11th is a day that we can all stop and thank a funeral director because it is National Funeral Director Appreciation Day.

We, at Holy Sepulchre and Ascension Garden Cemeteries, are incredibly grateful and honored to work alongside the dedicated and professional funeral directors who are part of the local Rochester Genesee Valley Funeral Directors Association. As a way to show our gratitude for those who serve our communities, we will highlight a funeral director in each future addition. This month, we are honored to introduce you to the current President of the RGVFDA, Marika McMeans. Marika was kind enough to share about her education, background and career as a funeral director.

Marika, what is your educational background?

I graduated Magna Cum Laude from Arapahoe College, Colorado, with an A.S. Degree in Mortuary Science in 2012 and became licensed in New York in 2016.

Tell us about your professional experiences:

I am a first-generation Licensed Funeral Director born and raised in Colorado. I began my career in Funeral Service at the age of fifteen and was managing a Funeral Home by age twenty-two. In 2015, I relocated to continue my career in

Rochester, NY, starting at Alvah Halloran and Son's and then joining the Miller team in 2017. I have been a part of Local Chambers and Rotaries, Folks in Aging, GRAPE and Interagency, as well as a volunteer for many other non-profit organizations in both CO and NY. I was a part of The Art of Dying, a 3 part documentary on Death and Dying film by producer Rich Lukon. I am the President of and the Continuing Education Coordinator for the Rochester Genesee Valley Funeral Directors Association. I am a graduate of the New York State Funeral Directors Association Leadership Academy, a NYSFDA Continuing Education & Convention Education Committee Member, a member of the NYSFDA Bridge Commission, and past member of several NYSFDA Task Forces. I currently have a monthly column in the national Funeral Home & Cemetery News - Nomis Publications.

What made you want to pursue funeral directing?

Home sick at the formative age of 13, I caught an interview with a Medical Examiner. She was funny, beautiful and brilliant. She was in this fashionable suit and spoke eloquently about science, death and being a woman in a male driven field. She opened my eyes to possibilities and in that moment, I realized I wanted to be her. I wanted to be that successful, ardent and compassionate scientific Brainiac in a killer outfit. I'm from a small town with only three funeral homes and a community in everyone's business. As a teenager I wandered into the first funeral home with a binder filled with research and questions. The director was happy to speak with me but not willing to let me in to shadow. Determined, I went across the street to his competitor and begged for a volunteer position. This time I got it.

What are you most passionate about at work?

There are probably two parts to this. The first are the families that I help. It's why I exist and it's why I do this job, even on rough days. Being able to support people when they need it the most, and to bear witness to their experience when no one else can, is incredibly important. Maybe eventually, as we all continue this work, the community perception of funeral directors will get better and more accurate. My other passion is for the people coming into this industry and teaching/education. They are the future of the industry, and it is important that they get support as they jump through the flaming hoops to get licensed. I really love helping people discover that this is a profession that they might want to pursue, get into school, support them through school and teach and mentor them through their residency.

What direction do you see things going in the future both positives and negatives?

I really love watching the next generation step into the industry. They are extremely progressive and open-minded. While I am very traditional in my end-of-life practices and preferences, I am excited about some of the more unique changes ahead, like Alkaline hydrolysis and open-air cremation. I don't believe people are uninterested in honoring their dearly departed, I believe they don't realize that there are more options than 2-4 7-9 or cremation and nothing else. I believe cremation will continue to increase, but I believe people will again start to see the value of honoring their loved ones and including Funeral Directors, if we are progressive enough to allow them to have unique experiences. The industry is also being taken over by women which is pretty cool.



SUPPORT AFTER LOSING A LOVED ONE

Losing a loved one can be a very painful and traumatic time. As a grieving individual, you must travel through the journey of the grief process; you should be allowed to move through it at your pace. Know that the grieving process varies per individual, it can take days or even years to get through the process. This happens more often when a person was very close to the deceased.

Everyone mourns in a different way. You may want to avoid from trying to clarify why your loved one has passed on. Stay connected with your family and friends. They are a resource to help you get through the grieving process.

Preferably, a grieving person will be able to work through the process of their grief. With time and support, they will be able to and make sense of the loss, work through the loss, and adjust to life without their loved one being physically present with them.

Remember to allow yourself to feel the emotions and pain that comes along with a loss. Don't be too hard on yourself, don't tell yourself how to feel or let others tell you when or how you should feel about your loss. Be patient with yourself and the process. Don't let your expectations get the worst of you.

Know that you need to acknowledge your pain, your feelings and emotions, and your own way of healing, this will come in your own time. Don't judge individual feelings or associate them to others. Remember no one else has had your experiences, thus they cannot tell you how you should mourn or when the appropriate amount of time is to stop the mourning process. Take a break from your grief, as you do not need to solely focus on your grief all the time. Allow for distractions, make plans to attend a dinner gathering, go to a movie, or enjoy a walk in nature. But remember to allow yourself to cry, that too is part of the healing process.

Get support. Join a bereavement support group. There are online support groups, or an in-person group through your church. Talk about your loss, your memories, and your experience of the life and death of your loved one. In talking with others who have lost a loved one, great support is often found. Other people can reassure, direct, and comfort you. The offering of everyday advice and information may help you feel less alone. Also, do not be afraid to reach out to a mental health professional.

In preparing for special occasions such as holidays, anniversaries and birthdays, plan in advance what and how you would like to spend your days and with whom. Do something special to honor your loved one, start a new tradition.

Remember, take time for yourself and allow the process to take course.

GRIEF DURING THE FIRST YEAR

The first year is the often the hardest. Grief is a journey and takes time. Be kind to yourself. Here are a number of tips on how to cope with grief during the first year:

1. Be prepared. Anniversary reactions are normal.
2. Plan a distraction.
3. Reminisce about your relationship.
4. Start a new tradition.
5. Connect with others.
6. Allow yourself to feel a range of emotions.

It's common for the grief process to take time. A grieving person must resolve the emotional and life changes that come with the death of a loved one. The pain will gradually become less intense, but we encourage you to take your time. Grief is normal and it takes time to navigate through the process.

We encourage loved ones to visit the cemetery. The grave site is often a place for families and friends to mourn and remember the life of the deceased. Visiting the grave site is a tangible way for people to convey honor and respect. Many individuals find peace and comfort when visiting the cemetery, allowing for a time of reflection, introspection and remembrance. Family and friends feel close to their loved ones and find the cemetery a comforting place.



We celebrate the Feast Day of St. Anthony the Great on January 17th. St. Anthony the Great, also known as St. Anthony of Egypt, is the Patron Saint of Cemetery Workers, Gravediggers, and Graveyards. He also been called the founder of Christian monasticism.

St. Anthony the Great was born in Upper Egypt around 251 into a prosperous Christian family. His parents died when Anthony was a late teen, leaving him a large fortune and responsible for the care of his younger sister.

One day Anthony was struck by the Gospel reading of the story of Christ and the rich young man: "Go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Anthony was one of the rare Christians who followed that command to the letter. He placed his sister in the care of religious women, and he began to live as a penniless hermit.

St. Anthony the Great lived in a tomb near his native village for some 15 years in order to overcome many temptations. Then, seeking a more absolute solitude, he withdrew east of the Nile to a mountain where he lived in an abandoned Roman fort. It is said that for some 20 years, he saw no one. His food consisted of bread and salt, and his only drink was water. Around 305 Anthony emerged and devoted himself to the instruction of the disciples who flocked to him. Later in his life he withdrew to the desert near the Red Sea, where he lived to the age of 105, dividing his time between prayer, manual work and the instruction of his ascetic followers.

St. Athanasius wrote a book, "The Life of Anthony", written around 360 AD capturing the life of St. Anthony the Great. It is one of the most influential works of literature in the development of the monastic tradition, particularly in Western Europe, due to its Latin translation. "The Life of Anthony" is full of St. Anthony's battles with the devil and his demons. St. Anthony the Great found great strength and power in making the sign of the cross with faith. He also believed in the power of speaking the name of Jesus in times of trial and used Scripture and prayer to send away evil forces.



Ash Wednesday

FEBRUARY 22, 2023

Ash Wednesday is February 22, 2023 and is a solemn reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God and marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten season. It is commonly observed with ashes and fasting.

Lent is 40 days long, not including Sundays; according to the calendar, that means the season is 46 days long overall. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday or at the start of the East Triduum on the evening of Maundy Thursday in the Catholic Church. Ash Wednesday is always 46 days before Easter, and Easter is determined as the Sunday following the first full moon that happens on or after the March equinox, which is always March 21 in the Christian Church calendars.

The origins of Ash Wednesday are traced back to ancient Rome. There, sinners and penitents dressed in sackcloth, sprinkled with ashes to start their period of public penance on the first day of Lent. The ashes symbolize both death and

repentance. During this period, Christians show repentance and mourning for their sins, because they believe Christ died for them.

In the Roman Catholic Church, Ash Wednesday is observed by fasting from meat and repentance. Roman Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 (whose health enables them to fast) are permitted to consume one full meal, along with two smaller meals, which together should not equal the full meal. Some Catholics will go beyond the minimum obligations put forth by the Church and undertake a complete fast or a bread and water fast until sunset. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are also days of abstinence from meat, as are all Fridays during Lent.

Ashes are ceremonially placed on the heads of Christians on Ash Wednesday, either by being sprinkled over their heads or, in English-speaking countries, more often by being marked on their foreheads as a visible cross.

EPIPHANY & BAPTISM OF THE LORD

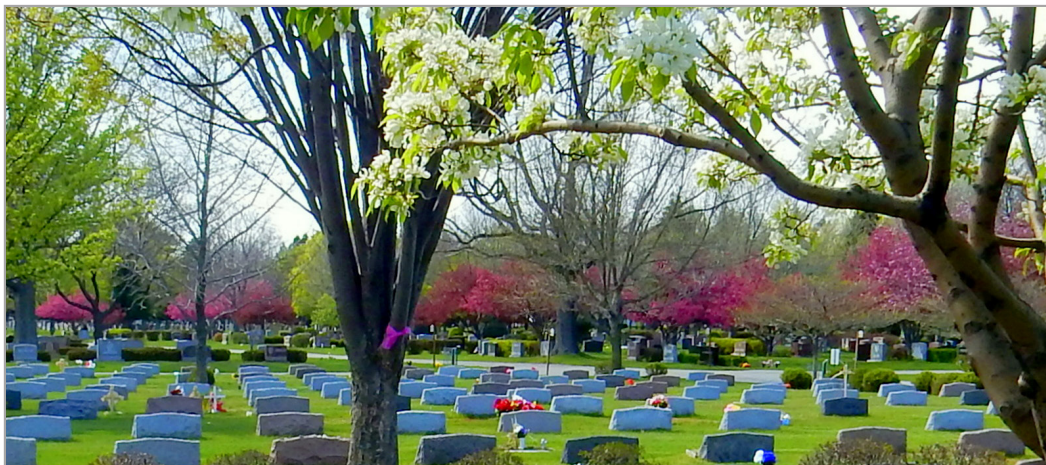
In western Christian tradition, the Sunday between January 2 and January 8 is celebrated as the Epiphany. It goes by other names in various church traditions. In the Hispanic and Latin cultures, as well as in some places in Europe, it is known as Three Kings' Day.

Christmas celebrates a family that could not get a place to stay; a family that was homeless, with no place at the Inn. Mary had to give birth in a stable. The angels came and glorified God. Then the people of the East came and found the Wonder Child that King Herod had sought to eliminate because he felt Jesus was a threat to his sense of kingdom.

Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of Christ to the world. This is the day when the young Messiah is revealed as the light of the nations.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (January 8, 2023), is the feast day commemorating the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist; this marks officially the end of the celebration of the Christmas season. The Church recalls Our Lord's second manifestation or epiphany which occurred on the occasion of His baptism in the Jordan. Jesus descended into the River to sanctify its waters and to give them

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PREPARING FOR SPRING CLEAN UP

Beginning in March, we start the annual clean-up time at our cemeteries. With nearly 450 acres of land, the safety of the Rochester community and our employees is our primary focus. Therefore, we must take the utmost care in maintaining the safety on our grounds. If you have decorations that you would like to save, we highly encourage you to pick up these items before the clean-up time begins.

Our team takes the time to carefully remove each item and if it is intact and unbroken, these items are placed in the pick-up area (located next to our main office). If you were unable to pick up your items before clean-up began, you may visit the pick-up area to locate your items. We cannot guarantee your items to be locatable, but we hope this added step assists those who were unable to pick up their items prior.

We are committed to maintaining the utmost respect and reverence at every place of burial. A full list of regulations is provided with every

purchase and can be found at each of our cemeteries or on our website. These specific brochures govern decorations for graves, mausoleums and columbaria. Please refer to these brochures when planning your annual decorations and if you have any questions, please contact the Cemeteries' offices at (585) 458-4110. We are always here to help.

Since 1871, more than 250,000 burials have taken place on consecrated ground at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery and Ascension Garden. The cemeteries provide families a place for prayerful reflection and meditation, to remember their loved ones and to celebrate God's promise of life everlasting. Our purpose is to care for those interred in our cemeteries while maintaining the beauty and safety that families have trusted for generations.

Thank you for your support in maintaining a safe place for all to visit!

EPIPHANY & BAPTISM OF THE LORD CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

the power to beget sons of God. The event takes on the importance of a second creation in which the entire Trinity intervenes. Many of the incidents which accompanied Christ's baptism are symbolical of what happened at our Baptism. At Christ's baptism the Holy

Spirit descended upon Him; at our Baptism the Trinity took its abode in our souls. At His baptism Christ was proclaimed the "Beloved Son" of the Father; at our Baptism we become adopted sons of God. At Christ's baptism the heavens were opened; at our Baptism heaven was opened to us.

EVENTS & HOLIDAYS

MONDAY, JANUARY 2:

Offices closed in observance of New Year's Day. Our offices will reopen on Tuesday, January 3rd at 9:00 am.

MONDAY, JANUARY 16:

Offices closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Our offices will reopen on Tuesday, January 17th at 9:00 am.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21: January Mass of Remembrance (8:30 am). *Join us!*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18: February Mass of Remembrance (8:30 am). *Join us!*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20:

Offices closed in observance of President's Day. Our offices will reopen on Tuesday, February 21st at 9:00 am.

SATURDAY, MARCH 18:

March Mass of Remembrance (8:30 am). *Join us!*

For the most up-to-date information, please visit our calendar of events on our website, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram.

FEAST & HOLY DAYS

JANUARY 17: St. Anthony the Great - *Patron Saint of Grave Diggers*

JANUARY 21: St. Agnes - *Patron Saint of Girls, Betrothed Women and Gardeners*

FEBRUARY 22: Ash Wednesday- *Day of Repentance*

MARCH 17: St. Patrick - *Patron Saint of Ireland*

MARCH 19: St. Joseph - *Protector of Fathers, Artisans, Workingmen, among others.*

We offer locations dedicated to the Saints at both our locations. For more information, please email events@holysepulchre.org. We would be happy to help you locate a specific area dedicated to a Saint.

Join Us for Mass

Every 3rd Saturday 8:30 am



HOLY SEPULCHRE CEMETERY

2461 Lake Avenue, Rochester NY 14612

P 585-458-4110 F 585-458-3059

HOLY
SEPULCHRE
CEMETERY

ASCENSION
GARDEN

ASCENSION GARDEN

1900 Pinnacle Road, Henrietta NY 14467

P 585-697-1122 F 585-444-5841

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