
Public Invited to Blessing of Expanded Cathedral Memorial Gardens Cemetery

Description

Garden Grove, Calif., (Oct. 29, 2021) – The Diocese of Orange invites members of the community to attend the blessing of the newly expanded Cathedral Memorial Gardens cemetery at Christ Cathedral on **All Souls' Day, Tuesday, Nov. 2.**

All attendees are asked to RSVP online by visiting blessing-cmg.eventbrite.com.

The afternoon will begin inside Christ Cathedral with a 2 p.m. Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Kevin W. Vann, Bishop of Orange. A procession to the memorial gardens immediately follows around 3 p.m., with the blessing soon thereafter.

The event will include live music, the playing of the Crean Tower carillon bells, and holy water sprinkled throughout the cemetery grounds by Bishop Vann and others.

"It is with love and affection we remember those who have gone before us marked with the Sign of Faith," said Bishop Vann, who celebrates his 40th anniversary of priesthood this year. "Praying and caring for the remains of deceased is a spiritual work of mercy. On these blessed grounds, we safeguard, protect and preserve the departed by entrusting their mortal remains and memories to God's everlasting love. I have been blessed to experience this personally in Italy and Mexico over all of these years."

The Cathedral Memorial Gardens has welcomed families since its creation in 1991, when the grounds were part of the Rev. Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral campus.

The ecumenical cemetery's \$18.5-million expansion was completed this summer and symbolizes the growth of the Diocese of Orange. It allows the grounds — which are now double in size to 69,150 square feet, or 1.58 acres — to continue serving future generations. The expansion also includes the construction of a new mausoleum, called the Sanctuary of Eternal Life, and sales office.

"The vision for the cemetery is for it to be a place of refuge and hope for those grieving, with each detail of the expansion thoroughly planned to make that vision a reality," said Mike Wesner, director of cemeteries for the Diocese of Orange.

Memorial Gardens now features sections named after the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which equip believers during their journey of faith: Understanding, Wisdom, Courage, Counsel, Knowledge, Wonder and Reverence. The expansion design promotes reflection and prayer, according to Barry Boudreaux, lead architect of McCleskey Mausoleum Co., one of the contractors used in the expansion.

New artwork has also been installed, including a dramatic stained-glass depiction of Jesus by Elizabeth Devereaux for the Sanctuary of Eternal Life. There are also three bronze statues of archangels: St. Michael, who carries the souls of the deceased to Heaven; St. Rafael, the angel of healing for the mind, body and spirit; and St. Gabriel, God's messenger who will trumpet His return.

Chosen landscaping selections, ideal in the Southern California climate, have connections to the Catholic faith. For example, there are plants chosen mentioned in Bible verses, such as olive trees.

For more information, please visit occem.org.

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