

# Cemetery Irrigation Systems

Catholic Cemeteries of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre, Inc.



## OVERVIEW OF CEMETERY IRRIGATION

Unlike other cemeteries, Catholic Cemeteries maintains an irrigation system for our burial lawn grounds. This ensures a healthy lawn throughout most seasons of the year. It is important to note the following:

- Irrigation is **not** part of **Permanent Maintenance**, but rather an added benefit at the discretion of management to enhance the appearance of our cemeteries.
- We follow **smart watering practices** provided to us by the local water departments. Currently, our sprinklers run from early evening until early morning each day during the watering season (this is one significant reason for us limiting visitation hours at the cemetery grounds). During drought conditions, we may need to adjust or cease our watering activities to comply with local water department directives.
- Given the vast amount of property in our cemeteries, it is impossible for each sprinkler head to reach every portion of the entire property.

On-site wells provide almost 99% of the water used. This promotes growth and beautiful lawns at our cemeteries, since no chlorine or chemicals are added to the well water.



It is a requirement that underground sprinkler systems contain a backflow device. Backflow is the reverse flow of water into the water supply and can occur if there is an unexpected decrease in water pressure. Our backflow device prevents fertilizer and chemicals from seeping into the main pipe and water supply. The device undergoes a yearly test by licensed inspectors. The results are reported to and recorded by local water authorities.

Maintaining the irrigation systems is an ongoing process. There are miles of underground piping and numerous sprinkler zones at each cemetery (as an example, Cemetery of the Holy Rood has over 80 sprinkler zones). It is extremely labor intensive to keep the system running well. Cemetery grounds are in a constant state of change as gravesites are opened and closed on a daily basis. Special attention needs to be given not to damage pipes during burial excavation work. As we continue to update our system, more energy efficient means are implemented.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *Why are my plants dry in front of the monument?*

The sprinkler heads are designed to place the maximum water in the lawn areas of the cemetery. **They are not intended to water the area in front of the family monument at the gravesite.** As a reminder, any planting done within the allowable space in front of the monument needs to be maintained (watered and cared for) by you.

### *Why is the grass brown? I don't think there is enough water.*

There could be numerous reasons that attribute to brown grass. **Brown grass is not dead, it is merely dormant.** Excessive sun, shade, fertilization, rain and heat are all factors that influence the lawn area appearance. Often the appearance of brown grass is a direct factor of summer heat and following periods of deficient natural rain fall. **The lawn sprinkler is designed to establish new grass growth and maintain a lawn's appearance during normal weather conditions. It is not designed to replace nature's watering.**



### *Why was the lawn sprinkler on during the day at my last gravesite visit?*

The lawn sprinkler is tested weekly during the irrigation season. The staff isolates a particular zone or zones and tests the system components. An inspection is completed for many reasons.