

# TRANSCENDI

## CATHOLIC CEMETERIES & MORTUARIES



### As We Reflect on St. Joseph, Remember Too That Your Work is Sacred

BY DOUGLAS FARRUGGIA, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

In proclaiming the Year of St. Joseph with his “Patris Corde,” Pope Francis expanded on some other topics that are relevant in contemporary society. I want to draw your attention to a passage he devoted to the nature of “work,” and its relationship to the Church.

Work, he said, “is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion.” Pope Francis invites us “to rediscover the value, the importance and the necessity of work for bringing about a new ‘normal’ from which no one is excluded.”

I want to thank you specifically for your labor, and to share my belief that the good people of CC&M will continue to set a remarkable example for this community with our shared ministry.

I know our work isn’t always easy — especially now. You may find that occasionally your labor goes unnoticed, that the support you lend our patrons in their time of need goes unappreciated, but I ask that you understand two things about the nature of such labor.

First, let the life and legacy of St. Joseph prove that there is virtue and grace in this work. And second, your colleagues -- the people who we work alongside every day -- do in fact recognize your effort. Our good work would be impossible without yours.

Without you, there can be no “Excellence Through Service.” And for that, we extend our profound thanks.

May God bless you and yours, always. Thanks for all you do!

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

DOUG FARRUGGIA



Chief Operating Officer  
“Thanks for all you do.”

BOB KEELER



Director of Finance  
“One voice in prayer! One in ministry!”

BRIAN MCMAHON



Director of Community Outreach  
“If God can work through me, He can work through anyone.”

MAURICIO PEREZ



Director of Operations, West Region  
“Treat every family as your own.”

OMAR GALLARZO



Director of Operations, East Region  
“Care for yourself so you can care for others.”

PAULA RATHGABER-GOMEZ



Director of Preplanning  
“Celebrate often, be joyful and honor the uniqueness of each individual.”

OUR LOCATIONS

All Souls Cemetery and Mortuary  
Long Beach

Assumption Cemetery  
Simi Valley

Calvary Cemetery and Mortuary  
Los Angeles

Calvary Cemetery  
Santa Barbara

Good Shepherd Cemetery  
Lancaster

Holy Cross Cemetery and Mortuary  
Culver City

Holy Cross Cemetery  
Pomona

Queen of Heaven Cemetery and Mortuary  
Rowland Heights

Resurrection Cemetery  
Rosemead

San Fernando Mission Cemetery and Mission Hills Mortuary  
Mission Hills

Santa Clara Cemetery and Mortuary  
Oxnard





## In Memory of Rafael Castillo

BY LAURA S. GARCIA

Rafael was a serious, motivated 54-year-old grounds worker at Calvary Los Angeles Cemetery. He had just reached his 15-year anniversary with Catholic Cemeteries & Mortuaries when he passed away in January. He is survived by his wife Jovita Pirul, their three children and four grandchildren.

“He knew every valve at the cemetery,” said Alejandro Lomeli, Grounds Supervisor at Calvary LA.

Rafael wanted to make the cemetery more efficient. He created an inventory of all of the sprinkler systems, then made a plan that showed how upgrading the sections that used manual sprinklers to semi-automatic sprinklers would save the cemetery money. “He had ideas and motivation and presented them to me,” said Cemetery Manager Olga Medina. “He had that motivation.” And he served families with great respect.

Rafael truly enjoyed working. In his “free time” he worked two to three hours in the evening as a delivery driver for Pizza Hut. Then he would pick up his wife when she got off work.



*“He had that motivation.” And he served families with great respect.*

Three months before his passing, he and his wife had just purchased their family a home, and Rafael brought the grounds department pizza to celebrate.

He enjoyed taking trips to Las Vegas and loved to jest with his coworkers. He is greatly missed. Lomeli commented that some days when he has an irrigation question, he thinks to himself, “I’ll go ask Rafael; he’ll know!”

A picture of Rafael sits on a small table in the lobby of the Calvary Cemetery building with a lit candle. Crew members pass by to say hi and place flowers at his grave.

May the Lord bless and keep Rafael and his family in the palm of His hand.

Rafael, may you rest in peace.



## Pope Francis Proclaims ‘Year of St. Joseph’

BY DEACON DAVE LAWRENCE & GERARDO GOMEZ

In his recent Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis commemorated the 150th anniversary of naming St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, and proclaimed this to be a Year of St. Joseph, running from December 2020 to December 2021.

The Holy Father wrote his letter amid some of the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in it he took special note of ordinary people and the key role they play in everyday life. Though far from the limelight, these individuals exercise patience and offer hope each day. We at Catholic Cemeteries & Mortuaries exemplify St. Joseph – a man who often went unnoticed, yet ultimately played an incomparable role in the history of salvation.

Even now, despite recent improvements, the pall of COVID-19 remains a nightmare, as we, the “last responders,” are so deeply aware. Our mortuary and cemetery workers have shown true heart – serving as courageous, though involuntary soldiers in the battle against the virus.

It is as if Jesus were repeating his commandment to us through St. Joseph: “Do not be afraid!” And as Francis also wrote in his letter, life prevails in the end. “God can make even wildflowers spring up from the cracks in the concrete on our freeways, which tells us that life is more powerful than death, because life belongs to God and death was conquered long ago in Calvary.”

At the conclusion of the Holy Father’s letter, he added this prayer to St. Joseph, which he encourages all of us to pray together:

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,  
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.  
To you God entrusted his only Son;  
in you Mary placed her trust:  
with you Christ became man.*

*Blessed Joseph, to us too,  
show yourself a father  
and guide us in the path of life.  
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,  
and defend us from every evil.*

*Amen*



# Meet Cornelio Colmenares: Groundskeepers’ Supervisor Assistant, All Souls Cemetery

BY DAVID BRACKNEY

Cornelio Colmenares has earned his living outdoors ever since he came to California from Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1979. He worked at a number of nursery and landscaping jobs before joining the grounds crew at All Souls Cemetery in 1990. He’s been there ever since, and in 2018 he was promoted to Groundskeepers Supervisor Assistant, a position where he oversees 10 employees. Cornelio lives with his wife in southeastern Los Angeles, where together they raised three daughters.

Cornelio recently spoke with *Transcendi* about his career at All Souls.

**Tell us about your early days at All Souls.**  
The cemetery was a lot smaller back then, and there were more workers than we have now! I did mostly gardening in the beginning, but after six months I started driving a backhoe.

**What is your typical workday like these days?**  
I work on graveside services. I set up the graveside ahead of time and try to make things good for families. I supervise more than I used to, so if anything happens, the workers come to me. We try to make the families happy at a very difficult time.

**What do you like most about your job?**  
I see a lot of people from different countries and cultures, speaking different languages. I like seeing different types of people.

**Is there something you’d like to change about the job?**  
Just that we need more workers! Right now, we’re short about five guys.

**How has all this outdoor work suited you?**  
Ever since I came from Mexico I’ve worked outside. I Put it in my mind that this is an outdoor park where people leave their loved ones. I’m happy with my job. If I weren’t, I wouldn’t be here.



Cornelio Colmenares, All Souls Cemetery  
(David Brackney, Community Outreach Dept.)

*“We try to make families happy at a very difficult time.”*

## We are hiring!

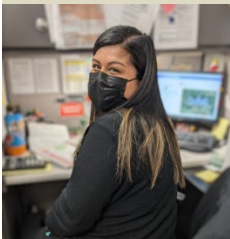
By joining our team, you are joining a dynamic group of diverse individuals committed to the Corporal Work of Mercy: the Burial of the Dead and the Spiritual Work of Mercy: Praying for the Living and the Dead.

For us, what we do is much more than a job or a career, it is our path to holiness. We are called to live our life with love and by bearing witness in everything we do.

We are hiring Assistant Cemetery Manager, Community Outreach Specialist, Data Entry Temp, Embalmers, Grounds Workers, Senior Mechanic and many more.

## Apply now!

Visit our careers page at <https://catholiccm.org/careers> or at <https://lacatholics.org/open-jobs>





THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO  
*‘Excellence Through Service’*



EMPLOYEE AWARDS



Be the Light Award

This monthly award focuses on safety, patron satisfaction and sales.

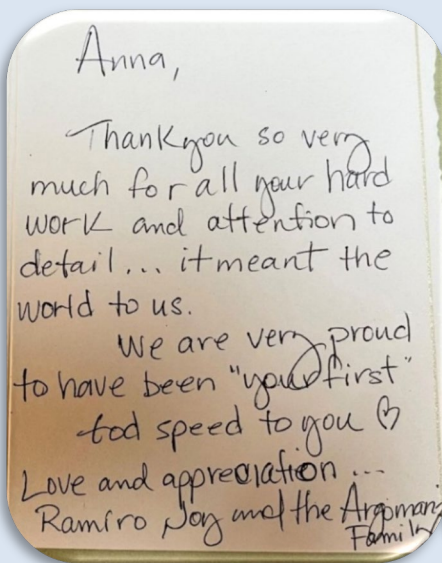
January	Santa Clara
February	Good Shepherd
March	Santa Clara
April	Calvary, SB
May	Holy Cross, Pomona

The Shepherd Award

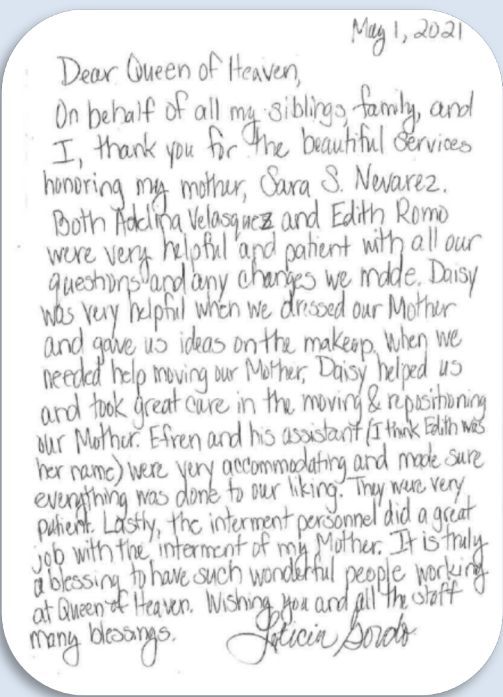
This quarterly award recognizes our supporting departments nominated by location managers.

FY 2021-Q2	Development
FY 2021-Q3	Operations Support

PATRON GRATITUDE



Anna Olvera, Funeral Arranger with card and gifts from patron family.  
Calvary Mortuary, Los Angeles



PATRON TESTIMONIALS

“Frances was wonderful to work with. She was very helpful, supportive, caring and understanding. She answered our questions and was patient.”  
**Dionatta Family**

“It was a difficult time, yet everyone was so wonderful and patient and understanding – thank you!”  
**Torres Family**

“Deacon Ramon, all his help in this unexpected event. He was hope for us. Very helpful.”  
**Rivas Family**

“Cordial, compassionate, well prepared, a beautiful setting.”  
**LaVelle Family**



# OUR MINISTRY IS FOR US AS WELL, AND NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO SAVE

BY LAURA S. GARCIA & SAMMY VILLANUEVA

For Catholics, the human body is united to Jesus Christ through our baptism and is a temple of the Holy Spirit. This unity with Christ and the holiness of the human body sets us on our path for future glory at the resurrection of the dead. This is a critical reason as to why when we pass away, we are meant to have a church funeral and burial in consecrated ground.

We want to encourage you as Catholics to give one of the greatest gifts that you can to your family, and at the same time, proclaim your faith, through pre-planning. All Archdiocese employees are eligible for discounts on cemetery space, funeral services, and associated merchandise.

Here are some of the new developments we have at our Catholic Cemeteries:



**ALL SOULS CEMETERY,  
LONG BEACH**

The Our Holy Redeemer section offers a garden of premium granite resting places for cremated remains, accessed via a stepping-stone pathway.

In addition to the garden, there is a large lawn-crypt section for in-ground burial that features a columbarium with a “Christ the Redeemer” statue atop it, much like the famed statue overlooking Rio de Janeiro.



**SAN FERNANDO CEMETERY,  
MISSION HILLS**

The Pieta of the Mission Garden offers lawn crypts, cremation garden options, and a selection of private, semi-private and bench family estates.

A private estate is like your own private garden with a gated pilaster wall, lawn crypts with space for up to eight people, an upright family monument, and a granite visiting bench.



**HOLY CROSS CEMETERY,  
CULVER CITY**

The just-completed Our Lady of Guadalupe development gives a great hilltop view for patrons who want lawn crypt ground burial.

For those who prefer cremation, coming soon here are a black-granite and mahogany-trimmed niche wall and columbarium. As an inspiring centerpiece to this hilltop area, there will be a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe appearing to Juan Diego.

## And Finally...Discounts by the Numbers

Full-time Archdiocesan employees receive discounts of 25% on cemetery space, funeral services and associated burial items, while part-timers get 10% off. Religious community members qualify for 50% discounts, while priests receive all these offerings for free. Family members of employees receive discounts as well. Some restrictions apply.

For more information, contact any of our cemetery or mortuary locations, or call Sales Support at (888) 912-6516. Remember, we offer these discounts so we can take care of those we love when we will no longer be there to help.

God bless you!



COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS

Mother’s Day Rosary Prayer Service

May 8, 2021, at Santa Clara Cemetery and Mortuary, Oxnard



Fr. Vicente Gutierrez lead the Mother’s Day Prayer Service at Santa Clara Cemetery.  
(Alice Takamiyashiro, Community Outreach Dept.)

Memorial Day Mass

May 31, 2021, at Holy Cross Cemetery and Mortuary, Culver City



A military honor guard presents the colors at the beginning of Memorial Day Mass.  
(David Brackney, Community Outreach Dept.)

Archbishop Jose Gomez presides over Mass on Memorial Day at Holy Cross Cemetery.  
(David Brackney, Community Outreach Dept.)

Father’s Day Rosary Prayer Service

Saturday, June 19, 2021, at Holy Cross Cemetery, Pomona



Deacon Ray Gallego and Gerardo Gomez, Preplanning Dept. lead the Father’s Day Prayer Service.  
(David Brackney, Community Outreach Dept.)

Calendar

Memorial Masses

Every Second Tuesday of the month at 11 a.m.  
San Fernando Mission Chapel

July 13

August 10

September 14

October 12

November 9

December 14

Join our livestream at [www.ccm.org](http://www.ccm.org)  
or [www.LACatholics.org](http://www.LACatholics.org)

Free Webinars

**My Father’s House:** What to Expect  
When a Loved One Dies,  
How to Prepare for Your Own Needs  
from a Catholic Perspective.

English

Wednesday, July 14, at 7 p.m.

Saturday, July 17, at 10 a.m.

Spanish

Thursday, July 15, at 7 p.m.

Saturday, July 17, at 10 a.m.

Please register at: [catholiccm.org/webinars](http://catholiccm.org/webinars)

For more information, please contact  
[outreach@catholiccm.org](mailto:outreach@catholiccm.org)  
or call 213-637-7810.

St. John Vianney  
Priest Section Dedication

Wednesday, Aug. 4, at 10 a.m.  
Queen of Heaven Cemetery, Rowland Heights

Friday, Aug. 6, at 10 a.m.  
Santa Clara Cemetery, Oxnard



EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

Catholic Charities

Telephone: (213) 251-3400

Email: [Info@CatholicCharitiesLa.org](mailto:Info@CatholicCharitiesLa.org)

Assistance with loss of job, food or housing or getting out of a dangerous situation. They can also assist with challenges such as depression, a physical ailment or disability, or other mental- or physical-health crises.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Through Optum

[www.liveandworkwel.com](http://www.liveandworkwel.com)

Access Code:11040

Free employee-counseling services available for depression, anxiety, stress, substance abuse, parenting, family issues, etc.

The Cardinal McIntyre Fund

Contact Gerri Spray

Telephone: (213) 637-7470

Email [GSpray@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:GSpray@la-archdiocese.org)

For food and financial assistance.

Hearts to Serve

Hotline: (855) 423-6780

For assistance with food, basic household items and with delivery of medication, especially to the elderly, homebound or pregnant women.

Human Resources

Annabelle Baltierra, SD HR

[abaltierra@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:abaltierra@la-archdiocese.org)

(213) 673-7596

East Region

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[dmignacio@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:dmignacio@la-archdiocese.org)

(213) 637-7583

West Region

Maria “Mary” E. Perez, HR Generalist

[meperez@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:meperez@la-archdiocese.org)

(213) 637-7237

East & West Regions

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[rambriz@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:rambriz@la-archdiocese.org)

(213) 637-7625

East & West Regions

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Gerardo Gomez, Contributing Editor/Translator

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Lizbeth Dumas, Contributing Editor/Translator

Sammy Villanueva, Contributing Editor

FEMA COVID-19 FUNERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FEMA is accepting applications for funeral and burial expenses through their dedicated call center.

COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Helpline  
844-684-633 | TTY: 800-462-7585

Hours of Operation  
Monday – Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 8.p.m

<https://www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>

LOOKING FOR A CAREER THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE’S LIVES?



By joining our team, you are joining a dynamic group of diverse individuals committed to the **Corporal Work of Mercy:** The Burial of the Dead and the **Spiritual Work of Mercy:** Praying for the Living and the Dead.

For us, what we do is much more than a job or a career, it is our path to holiness. We are called to live our life with love and by bearing witness in everything we do.

We Are Hiring!

ASSISTANT CEMETERY MANAGER  
Holy Cross Cemetery, Pomona

DATA ENTRY TEMP  
Cemeteries Development, Los Angeles

FUNERAL ARRANGER  
Several Locations

GROUNDS WORKER  
Several Locations

SENIOR SUPPORT STAFF  
Resurrection Cemetery

AND MANY MORE....



Apply now!

Visit our careers page at <https://catholiccm.org/careers> or at <https://lacatholics.org/open-jobs> for more opportunities.

