

St. Mary Cemetery History

Fr. Thomas Kenney was appointed the first pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Biddeford, Maine in 1855. He purchased an allotment of land to form a cemetery off Elm Street in an area on the outskirts of Biddeford. He died in 1857 but was buried in the Cathedral Cemetery in Portland because he had been the first priest ordained in the new diocese. (This land was left in his estate to the diocese) Parishioners of the time erected a memorial gravestone for him in the new St. Mary's Cemetery. A number of further purchases in 1891, 1892, 1900, 1913 and 1931 have seen this small cemetery expand to cover an area of 25 acres.

The Cemetery is open all year for visitors from 7:30 am to dusk. We have an annual prayer service on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend.

In 1999, a small shrine was formed in the All Souls section of the cemetery. The central feature is a statue of Mary that was relocated after being at the St. Mary's convent for about 100 years. (The statue was restored by Rita Souvigney, a local artist and parishioner.) The shrine was blessed on November 2, 1999.

In November 2002, Pastor, Fr. Brendan Harnett consecrated a section of the cemetery where unbaptized and others were buried. This event is important because it shows that all our graves are sacred, and each person buried there is precious to us.

Thanks to a memorial donation received in 2005, a statue of St. Patrick stands as a focal point of the St. Patrick's section at the rear of new section across from the gazebo.

A columbarium has been erected in the oldest section to form the 14 Stations of the Cross, and people may choose to inter the cremated ashes of their loved ones at one of the Stations.

For more information, please contact Sandy Labelle at the Good Shepherd Parish cemetery office at (207) 282-8946.