

Cemeteries are a place only visited reluctantly for some — for a family funeral or the annual Cemetery Mass, with mini gardening work beforehand. However, back in the era of Covid restrictions, with limited distances possible for everyone, we noted the local cemeteries had a serious uptick in numbers visiting. Some would visit particular graves, of course. Others simply walked the boundary path. Rather than being ghoulish in the time of pandemic, it turns out that they were on to something. In the past few years there have been some psychological studies on what are called ‘cemetery walkers’. The research worldwide concurs that these peaceful places provide emotional restitution as cemeteries foster relaxation, reflection and contemplation. In a way, our last resting places are our final statement in life. The recent burial of Pope Francis last April used stone from his ancestral homeland in Italy for his grave. The head of the quarry described it as ‘not a noble stone’ but as the people’s stone. Despite peoples attempts to outdo one another in funerals and in the type and variety of monument, in the cemetery all are ultimately equal. In life and in death, we are all ultimately kin to one another — we all share a common mortality.

After the Consecration

The mystery of faith.

Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour’s command ...
Our Father, who art in heaven, ...
Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...

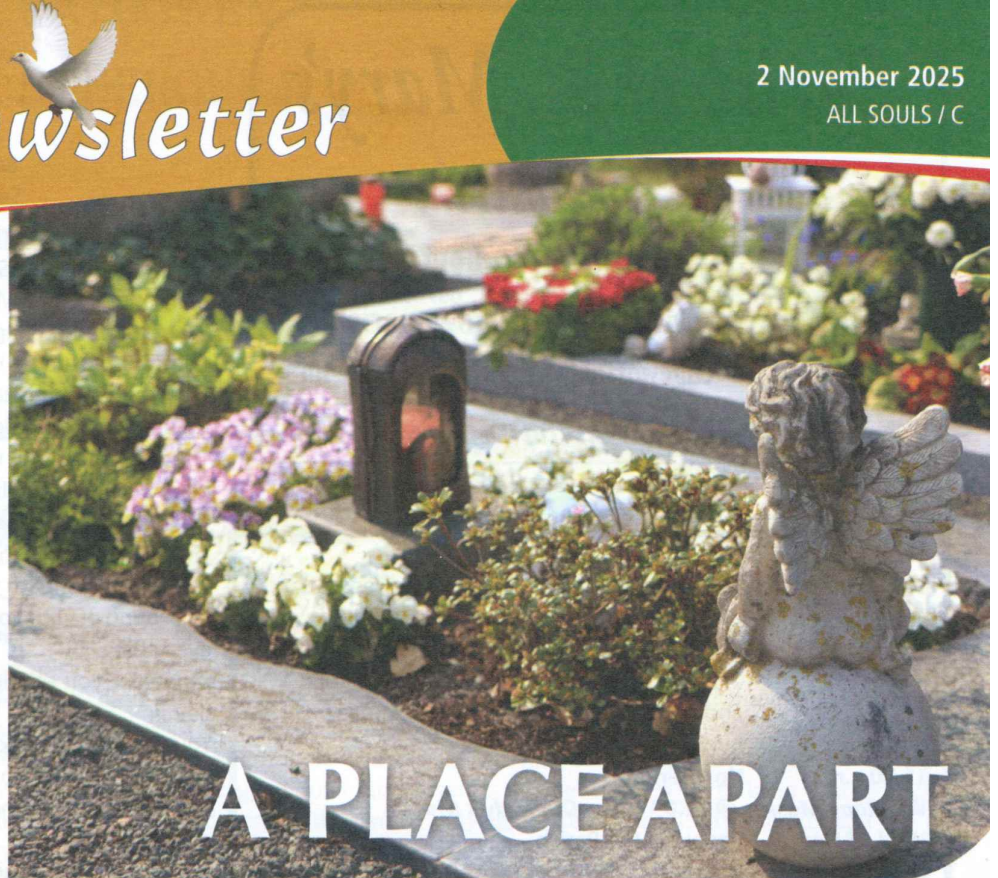
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, ...

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.



A PLACE APART

But life is not a morbid march to the grave. They are very central places in our communities. There is victory and life in such places. It always strikes me that people who quarrelled noisily in life — over the most extraordinary things — will at long last know peace side-by-side in the cemetery. Simple or ornate, all graves are — like Our Lord’s — borrowed. One short sleep over, we shall be a risen people.

We have reminders. Two of our three high windows in my parish feature Calvary in stained glass, with some having a small skull at the bottom — a ‘memento mori’, or reminder of our

mortality and the ancient sin of Adam.

November 2nd every year marks the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed, a time to pause, to reflect, to ponder as we wander. Cemeteries have boundaries and I’m never sure if it is to keep people out or to keep memories in. Maybe they are places that are apart so that the rushing world outside, which is so heedless, has this silent place of witness. We know that the world has to go on, but we want to remember. That’s what our cemeteries are for.

— Tom Cox



Reflection

How well are you prepared to meet the Lord?



Lesson

Everything eventually passes, including us, just as it has for countless generations.



Prayer

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”