

From the desk of father brian :)

Well, I either heard from through the grapevine, or musta seen some road sign, but I heard that there was going to be a Summerfest last weekend in Stafford Springs. I looked on the Internet and I found *"Hey Stafford Springs - Come out to the Sun Valley Beach Resort for an incredible time with the Marshall Tucker Band and our friends the Charlie Daniels Band!!!"* So after the Masses - as I greeted people outside, I said to a few: *Are you going to the concert Sunday (or today)?* Well, one woman heard this, and went around the corner and found Joe Comarella, who was going to be covering the event with his fire company, and Joe came back and invited me to join him. I went back to the Somers rectory and debated whether I should work or play. God let me know-I shouldn't work on a Sunday.



I've always enjoyed attending live music, and the beautiful sunny day, and the beautiful Sun Valley resort, and being with the West Stafford fire company, make me feel right at home. It was wonderful observing people having a restful, peaceful day together.

And all the nature and the large NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN gathering of human bodies, hearts and souls - made me see the beauty of God's Creation that I preached about earlier in the day. And the fire company invited me to be their new chaplain, which I accepted of course, and they gave me a big brand-new tanker :) !!! Which I blessed. It only has one drawback. It only gets 1 mile per 4 gallons of fuel ! Invitation, welcoming, friendship, community, service, to name a few things I've observed & experienced in my first 2 wks with you. Thank you.



Now on another hand, I have become quite aware of the sensitivity and difficulty of implementing our Diocesan cemetery guidelines. I have been involved with this in two other parishes. Catholic cemeteries are holy grounds where we reverently place our loved ones bodies and earthly remains until our Lord's second coming. They are a special and Sacred place where we come to visit, and pay our respects. Gravesides are both - an emotional place, and truly - a holy privilege. St. Edward Church has worked diligently to maintain the dignity and beauty of its cemetery, which also serves All Saints and other area Catholic Churches. Our Catholic Cemetery is an expression of our faith and an extension of the St. Francis parish community.

We wish to promote the ideals of Christian Burial and the well-being of plot holders and visitors by making our cemetery grounds a haven of comfort and peace as well as maintain attractive and neat grounds. Ever since the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ was reverently laid in a tomb, cemetery lands have been blessed by Bishops for centuries,

and this is why it's necessary and appropriate that we have certain regulations and rules to maintain this blessed dignity where we come to pray for the souls of our deceased. Cemeteries are not places to bring pets to do their business. And due to the aesthetic interests we hold, and necessary perpetual care of our grounds, especially with the high costs of maintaining the property, essentially landscaping: lawn mowing, spring and fall cleanup, and snowplowing, with continually declining revenues, we cannot have "Shrines" built by everyone as they see fit, but rather need to keep a simple, uniform, consistent order to the property, which permits economical maintenance within St. Edward's cemetery. Moreover, we are following Diocesan guidelines. We belong to a submissive faith. A Holy Church with Holy Grounds.

There have been a number of complaints made to the St. Edward's Parish Office and to our Cemetery Sexton. Someone even wrote a letter to Pope Francis ! Now if this keeps happening, we probably won't have a priest much longer ☺ Having reviewed the comments, spoken to a number of people, (*especially due to the timing of this, people having just planted flowers as has traditionally been done on Memorial Day weekend*), I find it only just to permit this year's plantings to remain in the ground until the Fall. In the meantime I hope to establish a cemetery sensitivity group, that will help implement the cemetery regulations through the coming new year. All of us should work together to be diplomats of our required practices. We don't want this to become a source of division and an excuse for anger and withdrawal.

We are One Body, One Body in Christ.

Your new shepherd in Christ, fr. brian :)