

Another

By Sister Linda Wiggins and Sister Margaret James Laughlin

Photos from Monastery Archives

Located west of the Monastery, at the top of the hill, Gethsemane Cemetery reigns on high, providing a splendid view of Lake Superior. More than just a “place,” Gethsemane is a world in itself. Slightly tilted on its axis, the “Sisters’ cemetery” is circled by a roadway, marked at intervals with large wooden crosses representing the Stations of the Cross.

Rows of pristine gray stone markers identify the deceased Sisters. No extensive adornment will be found here—one lovely statue of the *Pieta*; an occasional modest bouquet will signify a friend or family member recently visited. Yet rarely will anyone come upon a more beautiful world than this one. Rows of fir trees whisper messages while wild flowers bask in pied sunlight along the road. Deer amble across the green in the early morning and evening. A mother fox might bring her young ones for a romp on a warm summer evening. In the fall the pungent scent of apples delights walkers, while the crackle of snow and tiny footprints indicate frequent visitors in winter.

Gethsemane is a world of paradox: perpetual activity amid quiet rest—the abundance of life blooming amid this simple pastoral setting. Nothing illustrates more the Benedictine ideal than this world where the assurances of Christ radiate in natural wonder: a crossroad of heaven and earth.



Gethsemane Cemetery occupies the very top of the hill behind the St. Scholastica Monastery buildings. But it hasn't always looked this way!

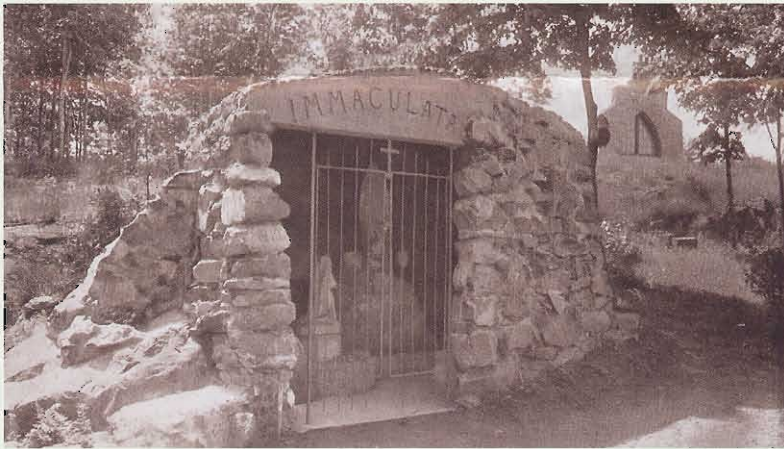
The same view of Gethsemane Cemetery in the fall of 1912 shows a road “wide enough for two buggies to pass,” several of the Stations of the Cross, and, in front of the statue of the *Pieta*, each marked with a small white cross, a row of fourteen burial boxes containing the bodies of Sisters who had died between 1892 and 1909 and who had been buried in the Diocesan Calvary Cemetery. The cost of “bringing our Sisters home” was donated by the firm of Flood and Horgan, forerunners of Dougherty Funeral Home.



World



These gates were installed in 1912; a handwritten, undated, unsigned note on the back of this archival photo says "Iron gates given to scrap iron drive in WWI." However, 1930s-era pictures show the small side gates still in place.



This replica of the Lourdes Grotto shrine, located along part of the original road that has been sodded over, is dated 1910. By the mid-1930s weather and erosion had taken a toll, so it was removed.



At the same time (1912) a traditional set of fourteen Stations of the Cross was installed along the road, beginning just inside the main gate and ending near the cemetery crucifix. They were the gift of Mrs. Peter Kerst, mother of Mother Scholastica and Mother Alexia, who is buried in front of the crucifix. These stations were replaced in 1998 by simple wooden crosses (see first photo) with the title of each station (Scriptural Stations approved by Pope John Paul II in 1991) carved into the wood.



On some special occasions Mass was celebrated in the Ascension Chapel, which abutted the huge mound of the water reservoir required before city water reached the area. The building was torn down and the mound removed in the 1980s to provide additional burial space.

This current view, looking south, shows the original graves in the row to the far right; Farther south, the crucifix marks the graves of the former prioresses of the Community. The area behind the *Pieta* is currently being used for burials.