Among his major contributions was the founding of an orphans asylum at St. Paul's in 1894. He organized the Holy Rosary Church for Italians at Schuylkill and Green Streets in 1904. That same year he helped create Nativity B.V.M. for Ukrainian Catholics.

In 1906 Monsignor rebuilt St. Mary's in Hamburg and donated 54 acres in Millmont for an orphanage and convent (now Alvernia University). That same year he earmarked 17 acres on Neversink Mountain and converted a hotel into a Tuberculosis Society.

Monsignor financed St. Anthony's Parish at 8th and Bingaman Streets, for Lithuanians, and assisted in the creation of St. Peter's Elementary School in 1913 at 225 South 5th Street. That school evolved into Reading Catholic High School, which was replaced by Holy Name High School in Reading's 18th Ward in 1964.

During World War I he helped found St. Anthony's, Millmont for Polish citizens.

In 1915, Monsignor laid the groundwork for Sacred Heart Parish, West Reading, on the present site of Vanity Fair. His nephew, the Reverend Charles J. Bornemann, was the first pastor.

Parish records indicate that Monsignor performed 1,668 weddings, 6,774 baptisms, 8,000 first communions, and 5,500 confirmations in 57 years.

The Reverend William Hammeke bought the Luden Mansion (Bon Air) at Hill Road and Clymer Streets and converted it into "The Monsignor Bornemann Memorial-Central Catholic High School". The school opened on January 2, 1940 with 75 students. The 1941 class was the first graduating class, which was comprised of 23 students.

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610.929.2613   info@gethcem.com
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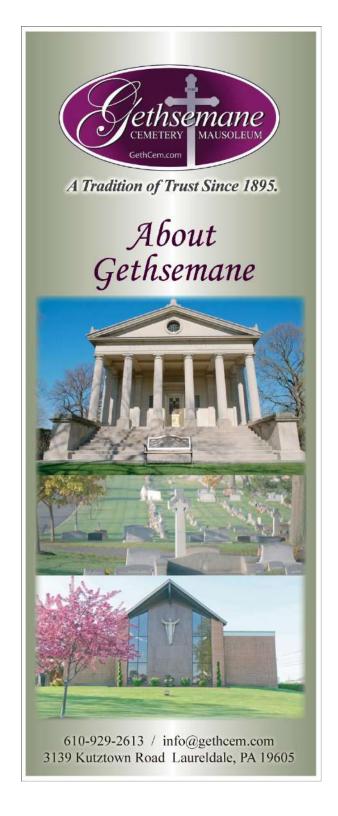
What we are about...

Catholic Cemeteries are places of prayerful remembrance and profound expectation of future glory. They are an important part of our Catholic funeral rites and traditions. For a Catholic, burial in a Catholic cemetery is a final act of faith. An expression of our shared belief, it reflects the spirit of community between the faithful living and deceased, and reaffirms our belief in the final resurrection. It is imperative that we preserve those traditions for future generations.

Our Mission is

To bury the dead, comfort the sorrowful and pray for the living and the dead.

To offer our families choice and flexibility, coupled with unmatched service and care within a well maintained landscape, while preserving the dignity and identity of the Catholic Cemetery.

To deny no person a proper and dignified burial, regardless of their means.

A Tradition of Trust Since 1895.

About Gethsemane

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3139 Kutztown Road Laureldale, PA 19605

*I*t is a time honored tradition in the Church that Catholics be buried in Catholic cemeteries. The Catholic cemeteries are an integral part of the Church's belief and rites. The community of those who share the same faith in life is maintained in death in the Church's cemeteries, which reflect the doctrine and liturgy of Catholic belief. The Catholic cemetery provides the assurance of permanence, reverence, and respect for the remains of the deceased.

Throughout the Church's history the dignified burial of the dead has been ranked as a corporal work of mercy. At Gethsemane Cemetery we continue this time honored and sacred tradition.

A number of our people are being told that sections in non-sectarian cemeteries are being consecrated as and reserved for the burial of Catholics. This is not true. You are encouraged to choose burial in a cemetery consecrated as a Catholic cemetery.

A full service modern cemetery providing mausoleum and ground space choices for interment, Gethsemane is considered one of the most beautiful landscapes in eastern Pennsylvania.

Many of you have already selected Gethsemane Cemetery for your final resting place; some may be considering Gethsemane Cemetery; and there may even be some of you who have not given much thought to cemeteries at all.

We invite you to consider Gethsemane Cemetery and take some time to browse our web site (www.gethcem.com). You can, learn about the many services we provide, look up loved ones, view obituaries and tributes, leave comments, and contact us for questions, pricing or work requests.

*G*ethsemane Cemetery has facilitated the burial of Catholics and their families for over 114 years. Administered by the Church of St. Paul, Reading, the site provides a full-service modern cemetery which includes the Bornemann Memorial Chapel, two community mausoleums, and extensive in-ground, private memorial spaces. Private family mausoleums may also be accommodated.

The third pastor of St. Paul's, Monsignor George Bornemann, purchased 54 acres from the Abraham and Elizabeth Schweitzer Estate in Muhlenberg Township in 1895. This large resting place was named Gethsemane, after the biblical garden east of Jerusalem, the scene of Jesus' agony and betrayal.

Gethsemane is a living memorial, well-maintained and constantly groomed by an efficient and hard-working staff. Additional acreage is being added to meet the needs of the 21st century. The beautifully landscaped gardens burst with color and life, providing an atmosphere of dignity and sacredness. The mausoleums and enclosed chapels are impressive structures of permanence and security which invite visitations at all times and in all seasons. Weather is rarely a factor.

Gethsemane accommodates traditional ground burials, crypt burials, and niches for cremated remains. Every effort is made to ensure the sacred character and decorum of the sacred grounds. In January, 1953 Gethsemane became a member of the National Catholic Cemetery Conference.

*T*hree great Catholic theologians emerged in America, two in the 19th century, and one in the 20th century. Bishop Saint John Neumann (1811-1860), a prolific organizer and 4th bishop of Philadelphia, was known as the founder of the Catholic School System in America. His work included several missions in Berks County.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979), a TV star well-known for his 15-year "Life is Worth Living" program was national director for the Society for Propagation of the Faith. A prolific writer, he authored 66 books and countless articles. He later was the Bishop of Rochester.

Monsignor Bornemann, the last of the trio and Berks County's most famous Catholic theologian, was the pastor of Reading's St. Paul's R.C. church for 57 years (1867-1924). While Neumann and Sheen were famous on a national scale, Bornemann was prolific locally having instituted a local hospital (St. Joseph's) and the largest Catholic cemetery in Berks County (Gethsemane), along with being the driving force in organizing no less than 24 churches and schools. At his funeral service on March 7, 1924, the eulogy intoned "Si momentum quaeris, circumspice" (If you seek his monument, look around).

Born in Lingen, Hanover, Germany on October 5, 1838, he attended St. Vincent's College in Latrobe, Pa.. and was ordained June 22, 1865 after spiritual training at Philadelphia's St. Charles Borromeo Seminary.

During the American Civil War Monsignor ministered to both sides. While in New York, he founded Leo House for German immigrants. Years later he built St. Joseph's Hospital at 12th and Walnut Streets in Reading. He actually helped dig ground for the foundation of the institution that initially housed 12 patients.