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Halloween tombstones don't frighten Catholics

Traditional season to honour the dead approaches for many Christians

VANCOUVER (Oct. 28, 2013) -- As Lower Mainlanders prepare to celebrate the feast of ghouls and goblins at Halloween, many Catholics will head off to the cemetery for a number of events to honour the dead.

Cemeteries, often seen as creepy scenes for horror movies, are nothing of the sort, says Peter Nobes, of Catholic Cemeteries. Even the word Halloween comes from the word "hallow," meaning holy because it is the night before the Feast of All Holies, or All Saints Day, Nov. 1. It is followed by All Souls Day, Nov. 2, a solemn feast commemorating those who have died and are in Purgatory.

During October and November, Catholics of all ages will be visiting cemeteries for candlelight processions, tomb festivals, cemetery tours, and even some lessons on when and when not to cremate. (Contrary to popular belief, Catholics are allowed to be cremated under certain conditions.)

The Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Vancouver are even using the season to introduce the Eternal Life Series, sharing biographies of faithfully departed buried in historic St. Peter's Cemetery in New Westminster or the archdiocesan cemetery Gardens of Gethsemani in Surrey. In Catholic tradition, they are awaiting resurrection and everlasting life.

For instance there is Sally Gribble, pioneer and builder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving in Canada. There is also Lt. Col. Charles Edward Doherty, former superintendent of B.C.'s Provincial Mental Hospitals who went on to a distinguished military career and working to improve care for the mentally ill and veterans. See biographies attached.

Below is a schedule of upcoming events at the Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Vancouver. Check the website at www.rccav.org for full details.

Sun., Oct. 27 – Mass at Gardens of Gethsemani Chapel 2:30 pm (last Sunday of every month at 2:30 pm)

Fri., Nov. 2 – Mass at Gardens of Gethsemani Chapel 10:00 am

Sun., Nov 3 – Free Cemeteries Tour at St. Peter's Cemetery in New Westminster

Mon., Nov. 11 – Remembrance Day ceremony with Knights of Columbus

Sun., Nov 24 – Mass at Gardens of Gethsemani chapel, 2:30 p.m.

Mon., Dec. 9 – Tree of Light and Life lighting

TBA – Unveiling of new statue of St. Andrew Kim for Korean section at Gardens of Gethsemani



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Charles Edward Doherty: A Man of Faith, a Man of Strength, a Man of Caring

It was 100 years ago, 1913, and Dr. Charles Edward Doherty was living a full and influential career in psychiatric medicine as superintendent of the Provincial Hospital for the Insane in New Westminster.

He would soon go on to serve a distinguished career in the Canadian Forces before returning to Canada to work tirelessly on behalf of mentally ill and shell-shocked soldiers.

The irony is that since then we have come far in terms of caring for the mentally ill, and yet the issues that Dr. Doherty focused his life on remain with us today in the treatment of the mentally ill, as well as soldiers suffering post-traumatic stress disorder.

The military career of Lt. Col. C.E. Doherty did not span many years, but it spanned several continents and affected the lives and the health of thousands of soldiers, helping to set a standard of care for which today's patients owe a debt of gratitude.

It was under Dr. Doherty that B.C.'s Provincial Hospital would see the full development of the principles of the "moral treatment of insanity".

Rest, work, and amusement "judiciously selected" were basic treatment, work was departmentalized, the "hospital" atmosphere was enhanced by using the term 'nurses' rather than 'keepers' or 'attendants', and an attitude of kindness towards the patient was enforced, by dismissal if necessary.

With regard to therapy, all received access to exercise and fresh air. "Patients", Doherty wrote, "...walk the grounds by the hundreds". Medical treatment - work of all kinds in the shop or on the farm, and recreation - was individualized, with the result that in 1907, Doherty could make the claim that mechanical restraints of all kinds had been abolished.

Dr. Doherty's short career in medicine began when he earned his medical degree with honours from Toronto University and, immediately following graduation in 1898, joined the staff of Kootenay Lake General Hospital in Nelson, B.C. In 1901 he was appointed assistant superintendent of the Provincial Hospital for the Insane, New Westminster. In 1905 he became superintendent.

But in 1913 he joined the militia as a major in the 104th Regiment, and when World War I broke out the following year, Doherty enlisted immediately in the Canadian Army Medical Corps. He went overseas with the first contingent and after serving one year in France, returned to England as Assistant Director of Medical Services of the Canadian Forces.



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In the latter part of 1917 Lt. Col. Doherty returned to Canada and undertook the organization and equipment of the Newmarket Hospital in Ontario. After the war he was active on the executive of the Great War Veterans' Association of Canada.

When he died at the premature age of 48, his funeral received an extensive write up and photos in the British Columbian newspaper, which described his full military honours, including an RCMP detachment and the 47th Battalion band playing the "Dead March in Saul" wending its way down Sixth Street to St. Peter's Catholic Church where combined choirs from New Westminster, Vancouver and Maillardville gave a beautiful rendition of "Ave Maria".

"Preceding the gun carriage was the 47th Battalion band, together with a firing party of fifty returned veterans. Included in the firing party were some eight Imperial army veterans who volunteered their services with their Canadian comrades.

"Following the gun carriage was the late Colonel's charger with full accoutrements including the riding boots of the deceased reversed in the stirrups. Then came a party of officers....following them were veterans in mufti including representatives of the returned soldier organizations of the province. The impressive service was concluded at the graveside by the firing of three volleys by a party of the Westminster unit, followed by the sounding of the "Last Post" by buglers under Drum-Major Leslie.

"Practically every district of the Lower Mainland was represented at the funeral, officers of various overseas units, together with the officers who had been associated with the deceased colonel in the pre-war days, joining forces to pay their last respects to a brother officer and to one who has taken a prominent part in the upbuilding of the city during the time he has been superintendent of the provincial government institution."

Today Charles Edward Doherty (Charlie to his friends) is buried at St. Peter's Catholic Cemetery, high on a hill in New Westminster at 150 Richmond Street, looking east up the Fraser River toward the Coast mountain range.

The view is breathtakingly beautiful. Consecrated in 1883, the cemetery includes graves of the faithful departed from all over the Lower Mainland of BC, some with large imposing markers, some with a simple cross, others unmarked.

One of the most striking is marked "DOHERTY" on the middle tier of a large granite marker. On the top tier is the inscription:

Erected in memory of
Lieut Col Charles E. Doherty C.A.M.C.
Medical Superintendent
Provincial Mental Hospitals 1905 - 1920



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By His Fellow Workers

Died August 4th, 1920 Aged 48 years

This story is published by Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Vancouver as part of its Celebrating Life series. For more information visit www.rccav.org.

Sally Gribble: Founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Canada

Grief and anger are two of the most powerful emotions known to mankind. Parents are supposed to die before their children, and when that sequence is reversed, a parent can be engulfed by a torrent of emotion that leaves only a bitter, lonely shell of the person they were before.

On June 15, 1981, Fred Gribble, a Douglas College student, was driving his motorcycle on the Lougheed Highway when it was hit by a car driven by a drunk driver. Fred died of his injuries the next day at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster – he was 21 years old.

The driver of the car that killed Fred Gribble was charged with impaired driving and failing to submit to a breath analysis test. He received a 30-day jail term (which was later reduced to 20 days). His licence was suspended for nine months. It was not his first impaired driving offence – he had been fined \$400 in November 1979 on a similar charge.

Most would have understood if Fred's parents, Fred Sr. and Sally, had spent the rest of their lives in a state of depression and anger, but that's not what happened.

Because of the light sentence and knowing that 850 other people were killed in alcohol-related accidents the same year, Sally made it her mission to eliminate impaired driving while providing support to victims of the crime.

Starting small in her living room on Chestnut Street in New Westminster, her plan grew quickly, attracting more people. Eventually she sold the family home and used the money to lease and equip an office – the first Canadian chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD). By the end of its first year, the chapter had recruited 300 members.

For the next 15 years, until her death in 1996, Sally Gribble devoted every waking hour to her cause. But while looking to a better future, she could not help but also look sadly to the past.

A story about MADD in 1982 says, 'Sally Gribble's Sunday morning ritual never changes. She pulls out the record albums that belonged to her son Fred and listens to them while reading some of his favourite books. "It keeps me going," said Gribble, the Canadian president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

But she remained so busy that she did not have time to dwell on the heartache of the past.



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In 1984, she addressed students in Pender Harbour Secondary School on the Sunshine Coast about the dangers of drinking and driving. She told the students that a sentence such as the one handed to the driver who killed her son was totally inadequate given the driver's previous record and that an innocent person had been killed.

A newspaper article about her presentation quoted her: "It is my view," said Mrs. Gribble, "that such a sentence has neither a deterrent value for other drinking drivers nor does it have a rehabilitative value for the driver involved."

"I have personally had enough," said Mrs. Gribble, "of the bleeding heart attitude for the drunken driver who is 'sorry.' Sorry is no longer good enough. These drivers will go out and drive under the influence again. We must stand up for the victims and stop being terrorized by the drinking driver."

By then, only three years after she founded it in Canada, MADD had 20 chapters and 5,000 members in B.C. alone.

One of the obituaries published in 1996, after Sally Gribble's sudden and unexpected death from a heart attack, was subtitled, "City mourns loss of a crusader who helped change a nation's mind about drunk driving."

Another described Sally's life: "With the help of other parents who'd lost their children under similarly devastating circumstances, she successfully campaigned for changes to the Criminal Code and for zero-tolerance drinking-driving restrictions for new drivers in B.C. The organization also counselled hundreds of families whose lives were affected by such tragedies."

Her older sister, Kitty Campbell, said "She accomplished so much with MADD, I cannot believe it. She put her whole life into it."

So important was Gribble's work with MADD that a plaque presented to her by the Attorney General was placed on her casket during the service at St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Burnaby. Both Sally and her son Fred were interred at St. Peter's Cemetery in New Westminster.

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