

THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
THE PERSONAL ORDINARIATE OF THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER IN THE PHILADELPHIA AREA

WWW.SJBRIDGEPORT.ORG

502 FORD STREET, BRIDGEPORT, PENNSYLVANIA 19405

215-247-1092

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

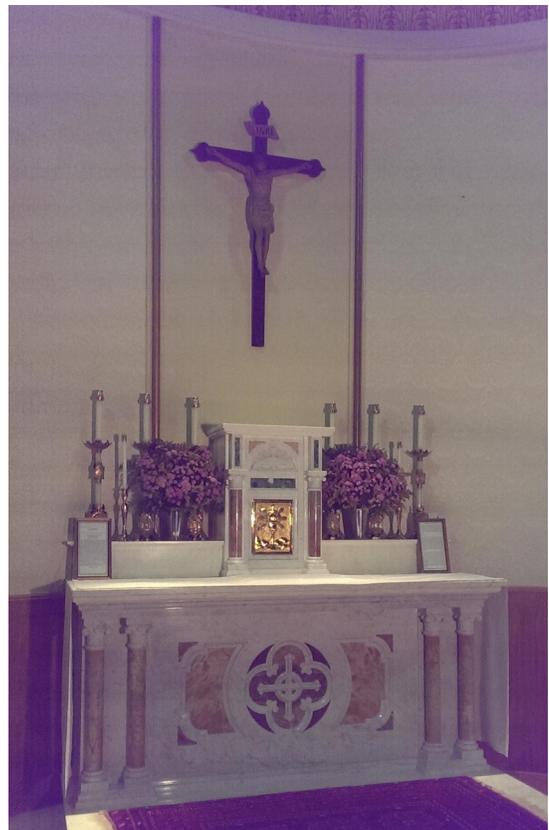
The Anglican Patrimony, which the Holy Father, Pope Emeritus Benedict, entrusted to us in the Catholic Church, entails many things (and you'll be relieved to know that I do not intend to cover them all in this letter!). For one, the Anglican way of being Christian and Catholic is rooted in the threefold discipline of prayer: the Mass, the Daily Office, and quiet or meditation. Balance is generally more important than quantity, and a full Christian life will include all three elements.

I trust we all know that we ought to pray. Even if we sometimes forget the obligations of fasting and almsgiving, we have a deep sense that to be Christian is to pray. When Jesus speaks of these three in the Sermon on the Mount, it is "*When* ye pray ... " not *if*. He says the same for fasting and almsgiving. Prayer is one of the obligations of Christian life. Being a Christian comes with obligations, duties, and not just privileges, which is only to be expected. At the same time, prayer is the practice of a relation with God: it is an act of love, and of receiving the love which God wishes to shower upon us. That duty and love can overlap should not surprise us: it is often the case in marriage, and between children and parents. So it is with us and God – a relation which is both filial and marital.

Mass is at the heart of our identity and practice, and thus of our prayer life. Just as God provided for liturgical worship in the Old Covenant (the liturgical laws were given the same time as the moral laws of the Ten Commandments: three main feasts in the year; a system of sacrifices and tithes; priesthood; design of the sanctuary), so too, our Lord instituted the Eucharist for the New Covenant. God has told us in some detail how He should be worshiped. In the Mass, we encounter Him, and are united to His saving sacrifice for us. Our obligation is to assist at Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. Our love and devotion to our generous Lord will move us to be present more often. Likewise, we will want to come to Mass prepared and on time. Regular frequenting of the Confessional helps us to be well-prepared. The fast before Communion (at the very least, one hour) is also part of our preparation, as is a penitent and recollected heart. Recollection is much easier to come by if we arrive well before the start of the Mass. Even if we are not prepared to receive Communion on a given Sunday, we are still obligated to assist at the offering of the Mass: for our souls' health, we need to be there.

We must not receive Communion if we are aware of a mortal sin and have not been absolved of it in Confession. A mortal sin, remember, requires (a) grave matter (it is a serious sin), (b) full knowledge (that it is sinful), and (c) complete consent (the sin is freely committed without external compulsion). At the same time, it is not necessary to commit a mortal sin to come to confession! That sacrament helps even for venial sins. Our love for our Lord gives us the desire to please Him in everything, and to be sorry for all we do which offends Him, even the little things.

Jesus comes to us in the Mass. It is on our part thanksgiving for His coming, and offering – of our selves to the Father along with Jesus self-offering in the Mass. He is our High Priest, and invites us to join with Him. The intimacy which He offers us is astounding and wonderful. When we come to Mass, let us never take it for granted. More on the Daily Office and meditation another time.



Celebration of Parish Establishment

As I mentioned last month, Bishop Lopes will be visiting St John the Baptist on Friday, November 18th, to establish St John the Baptist as a canonical parish in the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter. At the service he will also institute me as Pastor of the newly erected parish. This

is obviously a major event in our parish life. This is also a significant event for the Ordinariate, since it is something that does not happen very often in the Ordinariate (yet). Bishop Lopes wishes for a celebration suitable to the occasion, and has invited the Ordinariate clergy to come for the event. Several have already told me that they are planning to join us. Liturgical planning is under way. This will be our first opportunity for a high Mass with Deacon and Subdeacon. Bruno Dantas and James Griffin have been instituted to the office of Acolyte, which allows them to function as Subdeacon at Mass. (The Minor Order of Subdeacon was suppressed after Vatican II, and its functions transferred to an Instituted Acolyte, another of the minor orders, now conferred on laymen and not just on men preparing to be ordained priests. Bruno and James spent a weekend in Houston last month being trained for the office, and were instituted as Acolytes. Acolytes are instituted and not ordained.) We look forward to the days when we will have a deacon or second priest in the parish, so that we can celebrate a high Mass regularly on Sundays.

Planning is also in progress for a reception after the Mass. Leslie Altena and Bell Anderson have graciously agreed to head up the effort. Please offer them your help. They can tell you what is needed in the way of food, setting up, clean up, etc. And of course, mark your calendars, and help spread the word. The Mass will be at 7 p.m. on Friday, November 18th.

Web Site

We have a new web address: www.sjbbridgeport.org. For the time being, the old addresses, ordinariatephiladelphia.org and anglicanphiladelphia.org will still get you to our web site. But with our settling permanently in Bridgeport, and with our new identity as St John's, it seemed a good idea to use something more closely reflecting our identity. Until we get to the point of establishing mission congregations in the region, we will still be the Ordinariate in Philadelphia – but more concretely, St John the Baptist Catholic Church. As always, I am grateful to Bruno Dantas for managing the web site. He is remarkably gifted as a web master – especially for a pathologist.

From the Director of Music: On Our Choral Tradition

Mr Gatens writes: *It occurs to me that some history about the choir might be useful, especially for the members of St. John the Baptist who did not come to us by way of the Church of the Good Shepherd. When I was appointed to the Good Shepherd in 1991 (long before coming to St Michael's in 2014), the decision had been taken not very long before to disband the choir of men and boys, which had become impractical, in favor of an all-volunteer mixed adult choir. This ensemble was devoted and hard working, but still struggling, not so much with numbers, but with the goal of rendering the traditional Anglican repertoire at a worthy standard. At my suggestion, the parish engaged four professional section leaders, one for each voice part. While they were expected to sing solos as needed, their primary purpose was to provide a lead to the volunteer singers, enabling them to sing anthems and motets with greater confidence and assurance. The plan worked remarkably well. The choir plus section leaders numbered between 16 and 20 voices. At one point we had 23 singers in the choir, and we were proficient enough to make summer tours to various English cathedrals in 2001 and 2004.*

When we were constrained to leave the Good Shepherd, the choral picture inevitably changed. I was highly gratified that the leaders of the Newman Fellowship (as we then called ourselves) wanted to retain my services and those of the section leaders with the objective of preserving as much as possible of our accustomed musical tradition. Most of the volunteer singers fell away at that time. Some wished to remain at the Good Shepherd. Others, who were not willing to move towards communion with the Catholic Church, began to attend other churches. The present composition of the choir reflects these developments. That St Michael's didn't have a choir is also a factor in the present situation.

My goal for choral music at St. John the Baptist is not to remain as we now are, but to build up a larger choir of volunteers with the paid section leaders. In last month's message, I asked you to consider prayerfully whether God may be calling you to take an active part in the choral ministry of the parish. I renew that request now, bearing in mind that the choir is not a ministry for which everyone is equally suited. At the same time, I would not wish to discourage any of those who feel inclined to test their choral vocation, so to speak. In the choir of the Good Shepherd, we had a wide range of experience and proficiency among the members. Many who started out feeling somewhat tentative and overwhelmed soon gained confidence as they became valued members of the choir. I urge those of you who are inclined toward participation in the choir to give it a try.

Coming Events

November 1st is **All Saints Day**, an Holy Day of Obligation. It falls on a Tuesday this year, and there will be a Mass at 10 a.m., as well as a Sung Mass at 6:30 p.m. If neither of these is possible, I trust you will find a Mass locally. **All Souls Day**, the Commemoration of All Faithful Departed is the next day, November 2nd. While this is not a Day of Obligation, it is a day when we will want to be at Mass to offer special prayers for those of our family and friends who have departed this life in God's faith and fear. It is a privilege to pray for them, and to assist in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice on their behalf. In addition to the usual 10 a.m. Wednesday Mass, there will be a Mass at 6 30 p.m. Forms for giving me the names of the faithful departed who should be remembered on All Souls will be available in church and at coffee hour. I will remember all the names at each Mass, so you can come to either and have your loved ones remembered, as you join your prayers to mine.

The Bridgeport Knights of Columbus will be offering **scholarship** support for an elementary student attending a Catholic school for the 2017-18 school year. I have details and applications, which are due by the end of November. So if you are interested, you need to move on it now. Let me know.



Following up on the presentation last month from Sacred Heart on **Aid for Friends**: we are going to be organizing participation in the ministry by preparing the “breakfast bags.” (You’ll know about that if you were at the presentation.) Gina Royce has agreed to organize the effort, so speak with her for more information or to volunteer. One of the special things about this Philadelphia effort is that the person delivering the food stays for a while to visit with the person in need. It is thus much more personal than volunteer food delivery feeding programs to shut-ins.

If you have been to St John’s since the first of the month, you will have seen that the work on the East wall behind the altar has been completed: the large shelf has been removed and the wall restored to a plain curve. A **crucifix** has been hung. It is, unfortunately, a little small for the space, but otherwise a beautiful 100 year old image of our Lord. We plan to keep it for the present, pending the possible replacement of the statues on the side altars with other altarpieces, and new lighting in the sanctuary. Timing on these two projects is uncertain, as are costs, which will determine whether we proceed with them anytime soon. I am particularly grateful to the Pastoral Council for their help in selecting the crucifix, and considering whether it meets our spiritual and aesthetic needs.

The annual assembly of the Ordinariate clergy is October 10th-14th this year in Ontario. Since I will be there, there will be **no weekday Masses** at St John’s those days. These times together are part retreat, part business, part fraternal charity, part fellowship. Since we are so spread out, getting together with our Bishop and with each other is specially important. Of your charity, say a prayer for us. I’m planning to give a report on the meeting at the adult forum during coffee hour on the 16th.

I’m also planning to restart the high school **youth group**, which was meeting in Mount Airy until we moved the rectory to Bridgeport last winter. The consensus appears to favor Friday night, twice a month. I would like to hear from all our high school age youth (we’ll include those a year or two older as well), or else from their parents, about whether there is interest. The same format is planned as before: supper, discussion of some topic of interest (we had some spirited discussions in the past), and a brief time for games and recreation and prayer.

A brief **healing service** follows the 10 o’clock Mass every Wednesday. Since not everyone can make it on Wednesday morning, I’d like to make the laying on of hands available one Sunday a month, after our regular Mass. Those who wish to receive the laying on of hands for healing of body or soul should come and kneel at the communion rail during the organ voluntary after Mass. Since this means that I will not be at the back of the church to greet visitors, you will need to be especially aware of visitors on these Sundays, and be sure that they are welcomed and invited to join you at coffee. We’ll plan for the first Sunday of each month, and start in November.

We have a couple of volunteers who are willing to learn how to launder and iron the long **altar linens**. (The small linens are ably done by Pat Lincoln.) We are arranging a demonstration and instructional session: anyone else willing to help out with this? We are willing to train. If we have several people, it would mean each having the responsibility perhaps every other month.

Thanks

In addition to those already mentioned, I’d like to thank:

- Doug Sherlock for replacing the Ordinariate flag (fading prematurely), and Mark Johnson for replacing the American flag (which was fraying).
- Bennet Hill & Therese Rawson, for taking on flower arranging duties.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley