

# THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

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

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

The Synod of Bishops on Youth is currently meeting in Rome. The preliminaries of the Synod have been an occasion for some to suggest that youth may want the Church to change her teachings, to be more comfortable for “today’s youth.” In particular, the Church’s teaching on sexuality has been highlighted. Archbishop Chaput is a member of the Synod, having been elected by the bishops in the United States. In one of his contributions to the discussions, he criticizes the language of the draft document:

*What the Church holds to be true about human sexuality is not a stumbling block [for youth]. It is the only real path to joy and wholeness. There is no such thing as an “LGBTQ Catholic” or a “transgender Catholic” or a “heterosexual Catholic,” as if our sexual appetites defined who we are; as if these designations described discrete communities of differing but equal integrity within the real ecclesial community, the body of Jesus Christ. This has never been true in the life of the Church, and is not true now. It follows that “LGBTQ” and similar language should not be used in Church documents, because using it suggests that these are real, autonomous groups, and the Church simply doesn’t categorize people that way.*

There are two important points here for us. First, it is important for us to think of persons as persons: God created them in His image. We should not identify people with their sexual desires, as we do when we say, “He is gay;” or “She is lesbian;” or “I am a heterosexual.” Doing that diminishes the person, who is far greater than someone defined by sexual (or any other) desires. As persons, we have desires, just as we have wills and intellects. But being a person is more than any of them. This becomes a particular danger when we think that a particular wayward desire makes someone less than human. We need to always respect the human person.

Second, language matters. Words communicate, so we want to choose our words so that we communicate to others the essential respect due to persons. In addition, our words help to form our thinking. If we are not careful in our language, we can unwittingly skew our thinking, as when we label someone “gay.” We need always to regard people as people, and not diminish them by identifying them with something less than full humanity. Obviously the culture around us does this all the time: in this, to be faithful, we need to be counter-cultural.

## **Being Catholic**

Being Catholic is not always comfortable, and we probably have friends who thought we were nuts for becoming Catholic. So it is worth recalling some of the benefits we have, being in Communion with the Catholic Church. One of them is fidelity to our Lord’s teaching about marriage and divorce, something recorded in all four Gospels. He is so clear about the evil – indeed, impossibility – of divorce that his disciples can’t believe He is serious: “If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” (Mat 19:10) Saint Paul fleshes out the reality that the relation of husband and wife is the relation between Christ and the Church: a marital relation, which has obviously implications for how we look at our earthly marriages. The Catholic Church is pretty much alone in refusing to recognize divorce – a position which our Lord’s plain words seem to require. [Click here to view the print version.](#)

While this can be challenging pastorally, sinful human nature being what it is, the Church does not want to lead her children into adultery – which, according to Jesus, is what remarriage after divorce entails. The pastoral challenges of ministering in a culture where divorce is rampant are more than offset by the witness to the Gospel made by the Church’s teaching on divorce. There are couples with divorce and remarriage in their history who have come to the Catholic Church precisely because it was the only place where they could get an authentic judgment about their marital situation. Any church that tolerates divorce is already compromised and could not give an honest and objective answer. One more reason we can be grateful to be where we are.

## **The Race**

When I warned of possible traffic issues on the way to church because of the Bridgeport 5k race last Sunday, Doug Sherlock saw not an inconvenience, but an opportunity – to spread the word about St John’s. He ran in the race himself, and attempted (ultimately without success) to form a team from the parish. He also had t-shirts made for the “team.” Wearing one gave him the opportunity to talk about the parish with a number of people, and let them know of our Mass times. We owe him our thanks for his efforts! Also, since the team did not materialize, there are a few t-

shirts remaining. You can be the proud owner of one in return for a donation (at least \$20) to the Building Fund. What better way to show your colors, and invite discussion of St John the Baptist. These are limited edition, and this is the only place you can get one. See me at coffee hour to get yours – while they last.

### **Congregational Meeting**

We have had several meetings about the Master Plan for our buildings, and I want to keep everyone up to speed on the project. Having generally concluded that the Plan is a good one and supportive of our mission, we are now to the point of dealing with the funding. We will discuss this at our next congregational meeting this Sunday, the Twentieth after Trinity, October 14<sup>th</sup>, during coffee hour. I hope all parishioners will make the effort to be present and participate in the discussion. This is something that involves all of us. Following the discussion, we will be soliciting pledges for the Building Fund as well as for the 2019 operating fund, as we usually do this time of year. A separate pledge mailing will be coming.

### **All Saints & All Souls**

The Solemnity of All Saints, November 1<sup>st</sup>, is a Holy Day of Obligation when all Catholics are obligated to assist at the offering of the Mass. The evening Mass will be a Sung Mass at 6:30, in place of the usual 6 p.m. Thursday Mass. There will also be a morning Mass at 10. On All Souls Day, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, there will be Sung Requiem at 6:30 p.m. as well as the usual Mass at noon. While not a Day of Obligation, All Souls is our time to pray for the faithful departed who were and remain dear to us. Assisting at Mass on their behalf is an act of charity.

These two days remind us vividly of the unity of the Church. Only part (the church militant) is now on earth. The church triumphant, the saints, now enjoy the beatific vision in the nearer presence of God. The church expectant, the souls in purgatory, complete their purification so that they can join the saints. They are assured of heaven, but were not quite ready for it at the hour of death. God in His mercy provides for them. We assist them by our prayers and the offering of the Holy Sacrifice, and the saints assist us by their prayers, in a wonderful ecclesial unity and harmony. The Church is far greater than the institution which we see on earth.

### **Ordinariate**

Annually, the clergy of the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter gather with Bishop Lopes for a week. This year, the meeting is in Houston October 22-26. Since we are stationed all over the United States and Canada, this is an important time for us. We don't see each other very often! There is some time for retreat, as well as opportunity to discuss matters important to our mission, and to hear from the Bishop. Your prayers, for safe travel as well as edifying meetings, are appreciated. Since I will be in Houston, there will be no weekday Masses at Saint John's Tuesday through Friday that week.

### **Goings-On**

The round of fall activities is now in full swing. The St Cecilia Choir is off to a good start with ten young people rehearsing on Thursday evenings. We look forward to their first Sunday morning offering. The adult choir is (obviously) back after the summer break, and also rehearses Thursday evenings.

The high school youth group is meeting on Friday nights twice a month. In October, the meetings are on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. 7-8:30 p.m. in the parish house. The group is open to new kids.

The catechesis and Fundamentals of Christian Life on-line classes continue on Thursdays and Tuesdays, respectively.

The ever-faithful Knights of Columbus continue their monthly Bingo nights at Saint John's on the last Friday of the month. Advance reduced price tickets are available in the Thrift Shop.

The Thrift Shop continues its ministry, Tuesday and Saturday, 10-3. The faithful crew who keep the shop open have our thanks. Its mission helps to support the less well off, and introduces people to St John's. Other volunteers are welcome!

A reminder: the regular confession times are Thursday 5:30 p.m. and Sunday 9-9:45 a.m. If these do not suit, I am available at your convenience. While a sacramental confession is only *required* once a year and in case of a mortal sin, regular and frequent confession can be a tremendous help to progress in the Christian life, and an act of love for our Lord whom we offend by our sin.

### **Thanks to:**

- Doug Sherlock for the 5k run on behalf of the parish, and for the t-shirts.
- everyone (too numerous to mention) who helped with the Mass at the Basilica, especially Frs Bergman and Scharbach, who travelled from afar with their families to be with us.
- Roger Converse, Mark Johnson, and David Rawson for a productive property work day, improving the insulation in the rectory, and making some roof and other repairs.
- David Livezey, the Knights of Columbus, and many others, who helped make the Community Cookout a success. By our Lady's intercession, the morning rain stopped in time for the cookout.
- Bill Finegan, who has taken on cleaning the men's room in the parish hall, joining Pat Lincoln and Joann & Elena Sutton in keeping the bathrooms clean.
- the Finegans for managing the monthly mailing last month.

Yours faithfully,  
Fr David Ousley

