

# THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

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A NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL  
AND THE BLESSED JOHN HENRY NEWMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

On Epiphany, we celebrate the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, in the person of the Magi, who followed the star (and the instruction of Herod's Scripture experts) to Bethlehem and the Christ Child. As you well know, they offered gifts with their worship: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The gifts are taken to signify His identity as a King, as a God, and as a Sacrifice, which He was to accomplish on the Cross. In our worship at Mass, we worship Christ, as did the Magi at the manger. We also join in their mystic offerings. We offer our alms (coins, paper money and checks rather than gold, admittedly), for the service of our King's kingdom. We offer incense (at Sung Mass at least) to our Divine Redeemer. That much is pretty easy to figure out. But what about the myrrh? That offering comes, I think, when we offer our lives in sacrificial service to Him. We are to die to self, to mortify our wayward passions, in union with His self-offering on the Cross. Our daily dying and rising with Him in the little (and big) things of the Christian life are the myrrh which we offer Him. Having the intimate union with Him established in baptism and nourished in the Holy Communion, we no longer need to follow a star. We have only to offer worship, along with the mystic gifts which acknowledge His identity and our desire to give generously to Him.

## Evangelization

The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter and its congregations are and must be evangelical and growth-oriented. In fact, we devoted our annual clergy gathering last fall to the subject. The imperative is clear simply by the reality of our being new and small. We are just getting off the ground. Few of our congregations are large enough to be self-sustaining from the children of parishioners growing up to repopulate the churches. We have an incentive that many Catholic churches do not: we must grow or fold.

There are some decided advantages to being in this situation. Given that most of our congregations have gone through significant trials and tribulations in getting out of the Episcopal Church and into the Catholic Church, we can be tempted to think that we deserve a time to rest and recoup. We may feel as though it's time for someone else to step up and do the work for a while. Likewise, it is always a temptation for Christians to think that the spiritual life is basically about me, and forget that the faith is kept only by being given away. Christianity is inherently evangelical. It is God's will that all people come to know His saving love. And that is to be accomplished by His Body on earth: by us. Our personal spiritual lives are indeed vital: but not for our own sanctification alone. Our individual (and parochial) holiness is for the salvation of others' souls as well as our own.

Since the days of Pope John Paul II, the Catholic Church has been emphasizing the new evangelization, recognizing the essential imperative of spreading the Christian faith, and seeking to do a better job of it. This has had two basic thrusts: first, the full formation and instruction of Catholics, so that they are able and willing to share the faith, and then the evangelization of those outside the Church – all the nations. The first recognizes that in many places Catholics have not been well instructed in the faith, and those who do not know or practice the faith are not in a position to share it effectively with unbelievers. The second sees the world as a mission field, and Christians as the missionaries. Evangelization is principally the work of the laity, with the support of the clergy, especially in the preparatory formation of Catholics.

So the mission of the Ordinariate is timely. While we share the mission of bringing people to Christ, we have a particular mission to those who are seeking the full communion of the Catholic Church. We are uniquely placed to help such folk, having been there ourselves.

One element of the mission is welcoming visitors when they find their way to St Michael's or Newman. Those who are greeting before Mass not only provide the leaflets and hymnals, but communicate a sense of welcome as well. Likewise all the faithful can be sure to greet visitors even before going downstairs. And at St Michael's coffee or Newman's supper, if you see someone you don't know alone, please go and speak with him – even if you are shy and this is hard for you. God will provide the grace. There may be theological questions which need to be referred to me, but the basic job of welcoming visitors is a lay responsibility.



*The new St Michael's  
processional cross by  
Chris Jordan*

ity. I know many of you take this seriously: if there are others, I'd encourage you to make it part of your routine and not assume that others will do it so you do not have to. It can be intimidating to come to a new church, especially if the liturgy is different. We need to be sure to ease this as much as possible.

One of our biggest challenges at St Michael's has been how to get the word out effectively to those who need the blessings of full communion with the Catholic Church. The same challenge now faces the Newman Community, since it has come into full communion. This is one of the things necessary for our growth, and with limited resources, it is not always clear how best to proceed. To help us with this, we have arranged for a visit from Fr Eric Bergman, the Pastor of the Ordinariate parish in Scranton, St Thomas More. Fr Bergman will be visiting both St Michael's and Newman on **Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>**. He will preach, and then meet with the congregations after Mass. The plan is for him to share with us their saga of coming into the Catholic Church as an Anglican Use congregation several years before the Ordinariate was erected. He can tell us what worked for them in church growth, and what didn't. While not everything may transfer to our situations, I think it will still be useful to hear their experience. This is also something that Fr Bergman has thought a lot about, and his reflections will be of value to us. I hope all our members will make every effort to be present.

In preparation for his visit, I asked everyone to complete a brief survey, ranking some of the important foundational elements of evangelization. I hope this will get us thinking about where our priorities lie for church growth (which is not identical to evangelization, but closely related). I am tabulating the results and will share them with each congregation. After Fr Bergman's visit, we will discuss the priorities in the light of his comments. I'm planning congregational discussions in both parishes on January 18<sup>th</sup>, the Sunday after he is with us. (This means that our monthly classes on the World Meeting of Families catechism will be put off to later in January.) Our aim is to reach a consensus on where we should put our energies first, in pursuing the particular evangelization which God has given us.

### New Year of Grace

The Book of Common Prayer (by which we are no longer bound, to be sure), orders the Minister “from time to time, to advise the People, whilst they are in health, to make Wills arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, and, when of ability, to leave Bequests for religious and charitable uses.” Since this was commonly done in the Middle Ages, we cannot conclude that the BCP has any Protestant bias here. Having a will is, if nothing else, an act of charity towards your family or those who will be dealing with things after your death. It is also something we tend to put off, assuming (hoping?) that it will not be needed any time soon. Let this be a gentle nudge to be sure yours is in order. Likewise, a bequest can be a chance to make a significant contribution to the church (including your parish), which may not be possible otherwise. (Newman folk, please note: we are in the midst of setting up the Fellowship as a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation, rather than a charitable trust. So if you are naming the Fellowship in your will, you will want to verify that the language in your will is correct, after we have completed the restructuring. Details from Wendy Ewing.)

The beginning of the year is also a natural time to remember those who make our lives a little better. Most of what happens in the congregations (except for writing POP – which is often late) is done by laymen – for which I am enormously grateful. I'm thinking of those who give of their time and energy to serve as lecturers or altar servers, to sing in the choir (at Newman), provide for coffee hour or supper. (I have to say that the suppers at Newman are truly impressive! If the word gets out, church growth should not be an issue.) Others help set up for Mass and put things away afterward, which I find very helpful in our current situation of using other parishes' buildings. Even though we leave some things at Holy Cross and OLA, we are still largely “church in a box.” Mark Shiffman (SMA) and John Heidengren (Newman) keep the accounts in order and oversee the counting of the collections: not glamorous, but necessary. The greeters in both congregations perform an essential service. Less visibly but no less essentially, Pat Lincoln launders all the small altar linens for both congregations. Bill Gatens is a tremendous blessing to us in our worship. Eileen Dantas and her sister (SMA) and Pam Hitchcock (Newman) have designed new signs for Holy Cross, St Therese and OLA. Mention must also be made in this context of Joanna Fallini, who took the initiative to post a sign on her front yard advertising the Newman Christmas Eve Mass.



They are not laymen, but Fr Grogan at Holy Cross and Fr Carbonaro at OLA have been so generous to us, sharing their splendid worship spaces with us in our need. They have also been wonderfully gracious in not treating us as the beggars we are but as companions on the way.

Of course, there are always needs, and since our numbers are small, we all need to pitch in as we are able. It is inspiring the way our people do – in both communities. I'd like to mention one need. The flower arrangers at Holy Cross (which include Beth) have responsibility for keeping the bathroom clean, and it would be great for us to help out with this. They normally do it on Saturday morning. Anyone able to help with the humble but necessary task once in a while? Even once a year would be a help. Likewise, if you see something that needs doing, offer to help out!

Thanks goes to the intrepid souls who braved the snow to come and sing hymns (and the Halleluiah Chorus) at the rectory on Epiphany. Also to those who provided the feast, which Beth organized, and to Bill Gatens and Kevin Chun. Eight or ten different parishes were represented, both Anglican and Catholic. We had fun!

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley