

THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

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

WWW.ORDINARIATEPHILADELPHIA.ORG

6611 ARDLEIGH STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19119

215-247-1092

December, 2015

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

We all have a natural preference for our way of thinking and doing things. It seems to be wired into us, so that we resist whenever it is challenged. The new husband and wife have to decide whether the dirty dishes go in the sink or next to the sink (or even get washed immediately). The worker resents it when his new boss wants him to do his job differently. Children (and childish adults) have a tantrum or sulk in self-pity when they don't get things their way. From a Christian standpoint, the problem is that our pride gets invested in our preferences. There is no moral difference between the dirty dishes in the sink or next to it. But it can be a major point of contention when pride gets involved. This is especially true when one person reacts to another's pride by asserting his own.

But what is the alternative? We like what we like: we assume this is a given, and unalterable. There is an alternative: to prefer God's way to our own, to always put Him first, to be willing and eager to submit to Him. This is not impossible: lovers delight to please the other, even at some cost to one's self. As the preference for God's will becomes habitual through practice, we gain a proper detachment from our own preferences. We can allow others to have their way without feeling it to be a threat. This creates space for charity. Pride gets out of the way, and we can give the other person room to be a real person and not just a means for gratifying me.

A similar situation often occurs at Christmas, a season (in the secular realm) of giving and receiving. We want what we want, and can feel put out if we don't get it. Of course, this is not just true about Christmas presents, but in many areas of life – and not just for tangible things, but also for affection, friendship, credit for deeds done. God poses the question to us – especially at Christmas – *what do you give to a man for whom God is not enough?* The creche reminds us that God is our all. Nothing else is strictly necessary – or at least we trust Him to know what is necessary for us and provide it. If we have Him, we have all we need. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you. Let us set ourselves this Advent and Christmas to be content with Him, to let Him be born anew in our hearts, and to fill them with Himself.

The Move

Preparations for the move to Bridgeport are proceeding apace. Sunday Mass will move to the former Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 500 Ford Street, for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 20th. The new Sunday Mass time will be 10 a.m., a change for both congregations. After Mass, there will be coffee hour as usual, now in the lower level of the school building next to the church. To get the church and coffee hour room ready, there will be a work day at the church beginning at 9 on Saturday, December 19th. Please plan to come and lend a hand. Having our own place also means that *we* have to take care of it. Between our first Sunday and Christmas, we will also need to decorate for Christmas, set up the creche, etc. Ideas for Christmas greens and flowers in the church are welcome, as the space is new to us and we have not set routine to work from. I know this is a busy time of year for everyone, but I trust you will make the time to help out.

It is now clear that not all of the interior work on the church will be completed before we start services. The altar will be moved back to its original position on the east wall, but this will not be done until January. While it would be nice to have everything done before we arrive, this will give us the chance to see the progress from week to week.

Our Christmas services will be in Bridgeport:

Christmas Eve

Mass with Carols, 5 p.m.

Carols, 10 p.m.

Sung Mass (with choir), 10:30 p.m.

Christmas Day

Mass with Carols, 10 a.m.

Confessions, Christmas Eve, 4:30 & 9-9:45 p.m.

If you need directions or transportation help in getting to Bridgeport, please let me know. It will be further for many St Michael's people, and we don't want to lose anyone for lack of transportation. Until the rectory moves (February?), weekday Masses, youth group, and Bible study will continue in Mount Airy; all Sunday (and Christmas) Masses in Bridgeport.

There will be expenses involved with the move: some work on the church, the moving expenses, and of course, the cost of the church itself. To help with these we have set up a Building Fund, and will be soliciting pledges and contributions for this specific purpose. You will be receiving details shortly. The Fund is set up at St Michael's, though obviously it is for the benefit of the merged congregation.

Our New Bishop

It was announced last week that Pope Francis has appointed Monsignor Steven Lopes to be the first Bishop of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter. This is a major step forward for the Ordinariate. (We had a two-fer this week: we also made news with *Divine Worship: The Missal*, which we began using on Sunday.) The appointment recognizes that we have grown to the point where it is appropriate for our Ordinariate to be a Bishop: a testimony to the stability and long-term viability of the Ordinariate in the United States and Canada. We are the first of the three Ordinariates to have a Bishop.

Msgr Lopes is a priest of the Latin Rite, ordained in San Francisco, working for the last eleven years for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. Among his responsibilities there, he has served as secretary for the commission which is producing the liturgies for the Ordinariates, including the recently published *Missal*. This has given him a crash course in the Anglican liturgical patrimony, and how Anglicans within the Ordinariates think about liturgy. More significant has been his work with the clergy of the Ordinariates. He has been the point man for the CDF in reading and digesting all the material which comes about each man seeking ordination within the Ordinariate. Each man must be approved by the CDF, and he has been the one responsible for the first and most thorough analysis of the suitability for each candidate. I think it is safe to say that he has greater familiarity with us than anyone else in the Latin Rite at this point.

Monsignor Steenson, who is ineligible for the episcopate because he is married, becomes Administrator of the Ordinariate until Msgr Lopes is consecrated on February 2nd. He then becomes Ordinary Emeritus, and continues his teaching at St Mary's Seminary in Houston. He "retires" with our profound thanks for all he has done to get the Ordinariate up and running these last four years. It has been a herculean task, and the appointment of a Bishop is evidence that he has accomplished much. Personally, I am grateful for his un-failing kindness and pastoral care to me and my family, as well as to St Michael's and Newman.

Msgr Lopes is to be consecrated at the Co-Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in Houston on February 2nd, with four cardinals committed to participating. You are invited. Details for accommodations will be posted soon on the Ordinariate web site. You can also find more biographical information about Msgr Lopes, and a video of his first press conference on ordinariate.net. I have known Msgr Lopes through his participation in Ordinariate events, and can attest that he is well-suited to his new responsibilities. At one of our clergy conferences he gave several wonderful retreat addresses. At other times, he has given more scholarly presentations, and always shows a ready wit as well as directness. I'm sure you will like him when you have the chance to get to know him.

In a related development, on January 3rd, we will take up a special collection for the burse for Monsignor Lopes. This is the traditional gift given to the new Bishop. This is a way all can contribute to the celebration of the consecration, even if you cannot be present in Houston for the event.

Merger Matters

Since there are a few liturgical differences between Newman and St Michael's, some adjustments will be necessary when we begin worshiping together on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. I will be going over the details with each congregation before the merger. Anglicans in general, and Anglo-Catholics in particular, can be passionate about liturgy. I hope that passions will not be aroused in this instance! None of the variant practices have anything to do with dogma, or even ascetics, and are variations permitted by the *Missal*. My hope is that all will be ruled by charity. We should all be more concerned not to put a stumbling-block in our brother's path than for our own preferences and edification. C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape* (a devil) writes to a younger tempter (Wormwood) – from a devil's perspective:

We have quite removed from men's minds what that pestilent fellow Paul used to teach about food and other un-essentials – namely, that the human without scruples should always give in to the human with scruples. You would think they could not fail to see the application. You would expect to find the "low" churchman genuflecting and crossing himself lest the weak conscience of his "high" brother should be moved to irreverence, and the "high" one refraining from these exercises lest he should betray his "low" brother into idolatry. And so it would have been but for our ceaseless labour. Without that, the variety of usage within the Church of England might have become a positive hotbed of charity and humility.

I look forward to our merged parish being a veritable hotbed of charity. This will assure a happy and smooth combination, with all the strengths of each congregation being carried over into the new.

The Newman choir comes along to the merged congregation. Bill Gatens would be happy for additional voices from St Michael's after the merger. There are four professional section leaders, but the rest of

the choir is volunteer. Please speak with Bill to volunteer. Don't wait to be asked.

In connection with the merger, a new Pastoral Council has been formed: Susan Biswanger, Wendy Ewing, Bill Gatens, Joshua Nunziato, David Rawson, Leslie Altena, Bruno Dantas, Anne Hummel, Chris Jordan, and Gina Paladinetti. My thanks for your willingness to serve! A merged Finance Council will be formed in January.

Advent

The **Advent Quiet Day** is scheduled for this Saturday, December 5th, at St Therese. Mass at 9:30, followed by breakfast before the silence begins. During the day, there are the usual addresses, quiet, and opportunity for confession. We'll end around 2 with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Plan to bring something for lunch. Breakfast provided.

The **Youth Group** at St Michael's (for teenagers) will next meet on Friday, December 11th at 6:30 at the rectory. Let me know if you need information or know youth whom we should invite.

At St Michael's, the coffee hour on the Third Sunday of Advent will host a briefing on the liturgical changes which will come the following Sunday with the merger and move to Bridgeport. The same briefing will be given at Newman the Sunday before. On the 13th at Newman, our friends from Our Lady of the Assumption wish to give us a send-off on our last Sunday there. We look forward to welcoming them and our friends from Holy Cross for a special event in Bridgeport once we are settled.

The *Missal* contains a revised calendar. Our Ordo Calendars for 2016 were prepared before its publication, so there are a few things that need revision. Courtesy of the editor, you can find a complete list at <http://ordo.covert.org/errata/>. He has even included replacements for all the erroneous days, so that you can print them out and paste them on your calendar. The most immediate one is the Ember Days, which have been moved to the first week in Advent, to avoid conflict with the Late Advent Ferias, which are the last days before Christmas, and have special treatment in the Latin Rite.

I want to thank all those who have been so faithful at providing coffee hour at St Michael's and the suppers at Newman – and hope you will all continue helping out. Also to those who have already begun helping with the logistics and arrangements for the move.

Faithfully,

Fr David Ousley