

# THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

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

[WWW.SJBRIDGEPORT.ORG](http://WWW.SJBRIDGEPORT.ORG)

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Advent focuses on our Lord's three-fold *coming*. He comes in humility in His incarnation, when He takes flesh of the Blessed Virgin and is born in Bethlehem. He comes in power and glory at the end of the age when He returns to judge the world. And he comes to be born in our hearts, both day by day, and in a special way in our Christmas Communion.

If the external focus of Advent is Jesus' coming, the interior focus is our preparation for His coming. "And let each heart prepare a home where such a mighty guest may come." Advent is a time for us to look at our hearts: are they a fit dwelling-place for our beloved Lord? Were Jesus coming to stay with us at home, we would certainly clean the house, perhaps also a little painting and new furnishings. We would want it tidy and welcoming, nothing out of place, nothing but our best put forward, nothing which might in any way offend. The reality is that He is coming to dwell within us. Is your heart ready? Is it as clean and well-furnished (with faith, hope, charity – and penitence) as it might be? If there is room for improvement, the immediacy of Christ's coming at Christmas is a good incentive to make a new start.

We do well to begin with a thorough self-examination and sacramental confession. This will also show us whether there are particular bad habits that we should be addressing. Have we sought help for those which we cannot seem to overcome on our own? Have we learned humility from our failures? Then we should also look at our prayer life. Is our daily prayer (including the Daily Office and quiet) what it should be? Should I be at weekday Mass regularly? Or perhaps visiting our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament? Are there works of mercy which I am neglecting (especially the poor and lonely)? Advent is the beginning of the new Church year: may it also be a time for new beginnings for each of us spiritually.

## Christmas

I'm sure I don't need to remind you that Christmas is one of the greatest feasts of the year: in it we celebrate our Lord's incarnation, one of the central facts of our faith.

### Christmas Eve

Mass with Carols, 5 p.m.

Carols, 10 p.m.

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

### Christmas Day

Sung Mass, 10 a.m.

I will be available for confessions on Christmas Eve 5:15-5:45 and 9-9:45 p.m., as well as the usual Sunday time of 9-9:45 a.m. If those times do not work for you, I am always available by appointment (215-247-1092; [dao@anglicanphiladelphia.org](mailto:dao@anglicanphiladelphia.org)).

### **Bishop Lopes' Visit**

Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church is now officially a parish of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter. Bishop Lopes signed the decree merging the Newman Community with St Michael's and establishing St John the Baptist at the service here on November 18<sup>th</sup>. It was wonderful to have the Bishop with us, as well as many visitors and friends. And becoming a canonical parish – which assumes stability and permanence – is a milestone in the life of St John's. While this represents the fruit of much labor and prayer over many years, it is far more a beginning than an end. We have our work cut out for us. We are now established in a permanent location, which makes it easier to proceed with our mission. This includes becoming a vital part of Catholic faith and practice in Bridgeport, along with Sacred Heart and Saints Peter & Paul. It means continuing our efforts to respond to others' needs by bring-



Cleaning Day

ing them into full communion with the Catholic Church. It means passing the faith on to the next generation. It means our own growth in the knowledge and practice of the faith. It means nurturing and supporting one another in Christ.

The Mass on the 18<sup>th</sup> was a splendid event, and there are many people I want to thank for making the Bishop's visit such a wonderful occasion:

- ◆ Bill Gatens and the choir: in addition to the usual great music, Bill composed two pieces for the occasion.
- ◆ Bell Anderson for organizing the reception, and Leslie Altena, Raynor & Doug Sherlock, Sue & Ray Biswanger, Charles Dickenson-Marks, Elizabeth Dornberger, Angela Johnson, Charmaine Forden, Vanessa & Delbert Franklin, Anne Hummel, Chris Jordan, Gina Royce, Cristina Shiffman, Julia Magee and the Suttons (Joann, Elena & Felicity) for contributing.
- ◆ The altar servers: Steve Lybrand, Mike Ewing, Matt Hummel, Bruno & Elio Shiffman, Trevor Livezey, Robert Curry-Bey, Bruno Dantas, Mitchell Johnson.
- ◆ Fr O'Sullivan for the loan of the Gospel Book (required for the Institution of a Pastor), and for his presence at the service.
- ◆ For the other clergy who came from far and near, including Frs Lewis, Scharbach, Bergman and Perkins from the Ordinariate, and Frs Carbonaro and DiMaria and Msgr Majoros, from the Latin Rite, and my brother Doug from the Episcopal Church. Fr Perkins, the Ordinariate Vicar General deserves special mention: he got up *very* early on Friday morning to travel here from Houston.
- ◆ Julia Magee and Beth for the flowers on the altar and at the reception.
- ◆ Jenny Faber of the Ordinariate media office for generating PR, which resulted in articles in the *Times Herald* and *Inquirer*.
- ◆ Mark, Angela and Mitchell Johnson who spent the best part of a day trimming hedges and getting the grounds in shape for the event.
- ◆ Nick Kiriakidi for providing wonder photos of the event – without being at all disruptive of the devotion of the service (kudos to Mark Johnson for arranging this).
- ◆ Doug Sherlock, Chris Jordan, William Livezey and Gina Royce, for serving as ushers and organizers of visiting clergy.
- ◆ Leslie Altena, Carol Desandro, Chris Jordan, Pat Lincoln, Raynor Sherlock, Frances Walters, and Joann, Elena & Felicity Sutton for the church and parish hall cleaning before the event.
- ◆ John Covert, who does the Ordinariate ordo calendars as a labor of love, who came from Boston to celebrate with us, and delivered our 2017 calendars at the same time.
- ◆ All those who contributed to the new, white cope, which will be a valuable addition to our vestments, and a memorial of the parish establishment, and Leslie Altena who spread the word about it.
- ◆ Dan Elliott and Eileen Dantas for getting the holy cards produced for the event (and James Griffin for finding the image of St John the Baptist which is on them).
- ◆ Chris Jordan, for my wonderful “card” – and all who signed it.



The Artist on her Knees

It is highly likely that I have forgotten someone – if so, please accept my apologies! Thanks to one and all! I would also point out that this shows how much such an event constitutes a joint effort by everyone in the congregation. It is most gratifying to see everyone pitching in.

### Sacred Property

We are moving towards closing the sale of our property, and becoming owners rather than renters. This is a big step (like being established as a canonical parish). It affects how we think about – and care for – our buildings and grounds. Both Newman and St Michael's functioned for some years without their own property, and before that, both had long-owned lovely properties, with the long-standing habits of how they were cared for. How we understand our responsibility for the physical plant is reflected in how we look at the menial tasks of daily parish life. When we were at Good Shepherd and St James, we had sextons, who did much of the regular work on the buildings. I was grateful to have a sexton, and there is nothing inherently wrong with such. But now, St John's does not have the money to hire someone, and this gives us an opportunity. By doing the work with our own hands, we cultivate a deep love for what God has given into our hands. Jesus washed feet as an example of how we should live, so we know that menial tasks are not beneath any of us.

The larger point is how we look at the work that needs to be done – cleaning, putting up greens for Christmas, the small maintenance tasks: is this *our* responsibility, or is it someone else's? And if it is ours, then what should I be doing to contribute to getting things done?

While some parishioners are clearly on board with this, and regard SJB as a place for them to care for lovingly, I also have the sense that many are not there yet. No doubt part of it is that we now have more people, so it is easier to think, “Someone else will take care of it.” And our history

of hiring other people to do the work forms our habits and expectations. As you are able, sign up to help with cleaning. If you see something that needs doing, pitch in. I would also ask you to examine how you think about our relation to the property, especially as we are soon to take ownership, and thus full responsibility for it. Let's cultivate a sense of loving responsibility, rooted in the gratitude that God has made it possible for us to have our own place.

## December

We have an outreach project this month and need your help. We are planning to distribute Christmas cards with the service times for the three Bridgeport Catholic parishes to every household in Bridgeport and Swedesburg. The cards, suitable for hanging on a Christmas tree, will have a ribbon hanger, and we will hang them on people's outside doorknobs. This is an unobtrusive way of letting everyone know we are here and inviting them to join us for Christmas Mass. On the Third Sunday of Advent, December 11<sup>th</sup>, we will be putting the ribbons on the cards at coffee hour, and hope everyone at coffee will help out. Then we will need volunteers to give us an hour or two to go around (teams of two) hanging them on doorknobs. Steve Lybrand is heading up the effort, and mapping out the area and dividing up the blocks for the teams. I know some people plan to do it after Mass on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, though it can be done at other times if that is more convenient. We are being joined in the effort by parishioners from Sacred Heart, and the local Legion of Mary. Contact Steve if you have questions, and to volunteer.

Other coming events: during coffee hour on the Third Sunday of Advent, the Sunday School will present the *Play of the Patriarchs*, which they have been working on during the fall. I know we will enjoy their production. Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> is the day when we will put up the *greens in the church* in preparation for Christmas (later dates didn't seem to work for people). This is also the day for the December cleaning, and all are welcome to come and help out! Work begins after the 9 o'clock Mass. On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we will sing *the Advent Prose* at the beginning of Mass, as provided in our Missal. This will be familiar to former Newman folk, though not to former St Michael's parishioners. I will not be having an adult class on the 18<sup>th</sup>, since some people will be leaving from coffee hour to *distribute doorknob hangers*. There will be no coffee hour on Christmas Day (a Sunday). There are four Feasts in the week after Christmas: St Stephen (the first martyr), St John the apostle and evangelist, Holy Innocents, and the Holy Family (Monday-Wednesday and Friday). If you are off work, come to Mass! Mass are at the usual weekday times, with a 6 p.m. Mass on St Stephen's. Looking ahead, *January 1<sup>st</sup>* is observed as the Octave of the Nativity and Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. *Epiphany* is observed on the Sunday after January 6<sup>th</sup> – January 8<sup>th</sup> this year – as determined by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, to which we in the Ordinariate are subject in this matter.

The 2017 ordo calendars are here. If you (in our wider parish family) cannot get here to pick one up, I can mail you one. Please ask.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley



The "Office Staff" preparing the POP mailing after Bible Study