

# 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.ORDINARIATEPHILADELPHIA.ORG](http://WWW.ORDINARIATEPHILADELPHIA.ORG)

6611 ARDLEIGH STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19119

215-247-1092

February, 2016

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Lent begins on February 10<sup>th</sup>, Ash Wednesday. Lent is our season of penitence. People have different reactions to Lent. Some people hate it and can't wait for it to be over. They don't like being hungry from the Lenten fast, and resist the emphasis of the season on our sin and its just punishment. Everything seems harder during Lent. Others, while not enjoying the hunger, actually like Lent, because it makes a disciplined Christian life a little easier. Both are understandable! We need to remember that how we feel about it is really beside the point. Rather what is important is that we enter into the spirit and practices of the season with a willing heart, no matter what our feelings.

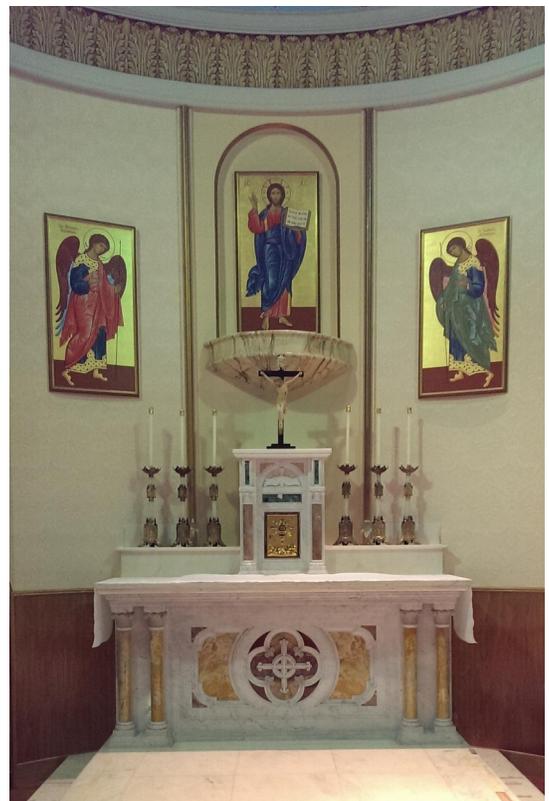
Lent leads to Passiontide, when we focus on Christ's redemptive suffering for us. Since He suffers to atone for our sins, it makes sense for us to pay special attention to our sins during Lent. Too often we ignore our sins, or excuse them, or make light of them ("Everybody does it."). Lent is our chance to be realistic, and with God's grace recognize just how deeply rooted in our hearts and habits our sins are. One of the lessons of Lenten discipline is how little we can manage in the way of Christian practice on our own. We learn this when we take on a discipline only to find ourselves failing in keeping it, in spite of our best intentions. This is an extremely useful though humiliating lesson. The reality (which we tend to deny) is that on our own we are helpless and hopeless. We are not meant to be independent contract agents of God, but His dependent children. We learn this by being brought face to face with our weakness.

Self-denial is thus central to a devout Lent. It can take the form of fasting (see below), or added prayer, a weekday Mass, Stations of the Cross (see below), spiritual reading, works of mercy. The aim is to love self less and Jesus more. Remember that: self-denial is not (ultimately) about you at all: it is about Jesus. When you are choosing your Lenten discipline, I would encourage you to be generous, and to make it an offering of love. Be neither minimalist nor legalist.

We should also be clear about the penitence of Lent: it is sorrow for our sin, not because sin offends us or makes life difficult for us (which it does), but because our sin offends our beloved Lord. It is rooted in our care for Him. We love Him and value His love for us, and thus do not want to offend Him. This love is more an act of the will than of emotion. We are (or should be) sorry for His sake. Penitence, in other words, is not self-pity. It is the sorrow that leads us to the confessional frequently: to remove the obstacle that sin is to His love for us.

There will be two Masses on **Ash Wednesday**: 10 a.m. at St Therese Chapel (followed by the Wednesday Bible Study in the rectory), and 7 p.m. at St John the Baptist in Bridgeport. The evening Mass is a Sung Mass.

St Michael's and Newman each has its distinctive traditions. Both have long done **Stations of the Cross and Benediction** during Lent. But St Michael's has done the services on Fridays, and Newman on Wednesdays. I'm tempted to say we'll do it on Thursdays – and thus please no one – but I won't. I am not entirely sure which night would be best. We'll go with Friday, the traditional day for these devotions, being the day of the Crucifixion, at 7:30, beginning February 12<sup>th</sup>. I've made it a half hour later in hopes of easing traffic concerns on Friday night. If you would prefer Wednesdays, then coming on Friday is already an offering of self-denial: you get a twofer.



*The Restored Altar & Tabernacle*

## Fasting

The Church prescribes the minimum requirements for the Lenten fast: everyone fourteen and older is required to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays in Lent. Everyone eighteen and older and under sixty is required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This fast means only one full

meal that day (traditionally taken at 3 p.m. or later). Some food can be taken apart from the meal, so long as it does not constitute another meal. Liquids are permitted. If health or ability to work would be seriously impaired, the law does not oblige.

That's the minimum requirement. Most people can and probably should do more. Traditionally, all the weekdays of Lent are fasts, when one eats less. We are allowed flexibility in how best to fulfill the fast. Some people omit one meal each day. Others cut out snacks, seconds, alcohol and sweets. The reason we fast is the love of Jesus, who fasted forty days for us. Our hunger during Lent serves to remind us of all that He did for us: not pleasing Himself or gratifying His desires, but doing all out of love for us sinners. Its effect is to bring our fleshly desires under the control of our grace-filled will. Fasting teaches us how much we are at the mercy of the flesh: a good lesson, since most of the time we ignore the reality. While sometimes unpleasant, fasting can do us a world of spiritual good. Don't miss out. Again, as you think about what you should do, be neither minimalist nor legalist.

### Bishop Lopes's Ordination

Just a couple of comments on the ordination of our new Bishop, Steven Lopes. I suspect many of you watched it on EWTN:

- It was a glorious service: the Archdiocese Co-Cathedral was full to overflowing, six cardinals, some 30 bishops, several hundred priests, thousands of laity; excellent music; Divine Worship Mass rite (for all the world to see). I'm very glad I could be there.
- As Fr Jack Barker observed, the Mass opened with Cranmer's words of the Collect for Purity on the lips (with German accent) of the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Roman Catholic Church. Think about it: a Protestant prayer now Catholic in the fullest sense. Even more concrete ecumenism than the Holy Father's trip to Sweden to commemorate Luther!
- Having it broadcast and streamed on EWTN raises the profile of the Ordinariate enormously, and in the relatively traditional circles of American Catholicism.
- Bishop Lopes's comments at the end of the service were not included in the EWTN broadcast – they had set aside only (!) 2½ hours for the service and it ran to three. The video of his remarks is available on the Ordinariate web page ([ordinariate.net](http://ordinariate.net)). If you have ten minutes, I commend it to you.
- I know you will be praying for Bishop Lopes as he begins his new ministry. Please also remember Monsignor Steenson as well: it cannot be altogether easy for him to lay aside his responsibilities and see another take them up. We are grateful for his devotion to what was a genuinely impossible task.

### Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras celebration has been a Newman/Good Shepherd tradition, which now carries over to St John the Baptist. Wendy Ewing is organizing. Here is her account of what's coming:

*Dear Friends: As we approach our first Lent together, let's take a little time for a Shrove Tuesday celebration, February 9, following 6 o'clock Mass in Bridgeport. Given that it is a school / work night, we don't plan to make a long evening of it. There will be pancakes and sausage (and the fixings). Bill Gatens will lead us in some rousing songs before we begin our solemn observations, and I will provide a "quiz" – just a little Scriptural (and parish) trivia. And, of course, a grab bag of prizes. Chelsea Nunziato has graciously agreed to be our "emcee" for the evening.*

*We will need a help setting up, including a little decorating, as well as cleaning up. Pedie Hill kindly purchased a supply of beads and crowns and I am asking anyone with white, yellow, green or purple table cloths to make a loan of them for the evening (no one's best, of course). So, I think the cooks are set (Pedie, Lisa, Raynor) as well as the entertainment but more hands are always needed. If you can help set up, please come to the Fellowship Hall at 5:15 on Tuesday. Also, please consider whether you could stay for 15 or 20 minutes afterwards to help clean up.*

*If you can come, please sign the sheet at coffee hour. Please come – it will be lots of fun!*

### Sunday Leaflet

Since we have started putting all of the congregational parts (except for the hymns) in the Sunday leaflet, it is much longer that it used to be, and you may not have noticed the useful information in the back of the leaflet. We include the lessons and collects for Morning and Evening Prayer for the week, so that you can easily join in praying the Office at home. There are also the announcements of parish activities and other things of interest, and the intercessions. The names in the intercessions are printed each week so that we can continue our prayers for them during the week, and not just at the Sunday Mass. Of course, the weekday Mass schedule and list of Holy Days is also included. You are encouraged to take the leaflet home with you to take advantage of these resources during the week.

We post the leaflet on the parish web site each week, so that the information is available even to those who are not able to be at St John's for Mass on a given Sunday. I had a note from one parishioner after the "snow Sunday:"

*Sadly, I was unable to attend Mass anywhere this morning. But I was able to keep the day holy, first off by praying the Morning Hours, but then also by following along with the bulletin that you post on the website - can't remember if I ever thanked you for doing that or not, but it's really awesome. I prayed most of it and even included the hymns -- I found beautiful versions on You Tube, grabbed the hymnal, and quietly sang along to the hymns. It really left this morning feeling very special instead of just a typical, faceless day.*

*Between the leaflet and the mp3 of your homily, I am SO THANKFUL that I can keep in touch this way. Nothing*

*replaces the experience of being there, but these tools you've provided are a blessing.*

### **Moving the Altar**

The marble high altar has now been moved back to the east wall, which will better provide for our liturgical needs. Luigi Bracaliello, who does most of the church marble work in Philadelphia and South Jersey, did a splendid job. Moving it required complete disassembly, and then reassembling and cementing together all the pieces in the original location. Particularly note-worthy is his work on the tabernacle. We found several pieces of the old tabernacle in the church attic. He figured out how these fit together, and supplied new pieces to complete the tabernacle. I think you will agree that it is a splendid addition to the church. Bruno and Eileen Dantas have generously offered to donate the work as a thank-offering for their children. Thanks!

### **Missing Window**

You may have noticed that one of the stained glass windows is missing (over the south door near the Lady altar). This is one of the items which Sacred Heart, the merged parish which includes Our Lady of Mount Carmel, wished to retain as part of the heritage of Mount Carmel. We want to replace it with something similar to the other windows in the church, which were all done in a consistent style by the same studio at the time the upper church was built. We thought we had it solved, when we found a window from a closed church by that maker in that style, same shape, though slightly smaller than the opening – seemed perfect. Then we discovered that it is exactly the same figure (the Holy Savior) which is in the larger window next to it. Back to the drawing board. Joseph Beyer, the artist who so ably repaired the badly damaged window at St James the Less, has now come up with a picture of another window (same studio and style) which has now been lost. He can recreate with window with appropriate adaptations, as a window of our Patron, St John the Baptist. We are proceeding with this plan, and David Rawson has offered to donate the window, so there will be no cost to the parish. Our thanks goes both to David for his generosity, and to Joe Beyer for his diligent research and creative and artistic abilities.

### **The Move**

We seem to be settling well into our new Sunday routine in Bridgeport, except when it snows. The Bridgeport rectory has now been cleaned out and work begun on the few things we want to do before we move. We are on track to move at the beginning of March, if things go as planned. Please be understanding – during the move, the phone may not be connected, weekday Masses will be omitted at least for a few days, the March POP may be late, etc. Notwithstanding, I'm looking forward to being in Bridgeport – and living at our church.

### **Coming Events**

I'm planning to resume adult classes during coffee hour after Easter. During these first few months of the merger, it seems more important to allow "social" time after Mass, so we can get to know one another, and get used to the new routines. This goes for me, perhaps even more than for everyone else.

There will be general congregational meeting on the Third Sunday in Lent, February 28<sup>th</sup>, to go over the parish financial situation. We will present the budget for the combined parish, along with the current state of the Building Fund. All parishioners are encouraged to attend.

The Lenten **Quiet Day** will be in Bridgeport on March 12<sup>th</sup>. It will follow the usual format, and we should be much more comfortable in our own space. More details next month.

I want to thank Dan Elliott for his work in preparing the new parish directory, which is now available. I am also grateful to those who have taken on cleaning week by week, and those who came to the work day in January.

The 2016 offering envelopes have finally arrived. Using these makes it easier for the counters. Please continue to make checks payable to St Michael's. I'll let you know when we have effected the name change.

Bishop Lopes has scheduled his first visit to St John the Baptist for the Third Sunday of Easter, April 10<sup>th</sup>. More details will be forthcoming, but please mark your calendars now. He will be with us for Mass at our usual 10 a.m. time. The Evensong I mentioned last month will, unfortunately, not be possible, due to a conflict in his schedule which requires him to leave Sunday afternoon.

Much of our attention these days is (quite reasonably) focused on our new property, on our new life as St John the Baptist Catholic Church, and on Lent. I would suggest that we also begin thinking about outreach and service. With a settled location, we can now plan for ways in which we can serve the Kingdom of God in this particular place. Please be praying and thinking about this, and as ideas occur to you, please share them. We are never Christians for ourselves alone. We have a mission, and Bishop Lopes reminded us in his comments after his consecration. The Holy Father's words to him are also for us: *Avanti! Go forth!*

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley



*Sanctuary as it is now*