

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

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Why do we fast? There are various ways of answering that question. It is a question which is probably on our minds as we fast during Lent.

We might answer that we fast because Jesus did. His was forty days, no less. It was His ascetic preparation for His public ministry. It also prepared Him to be tempted. He was human, remember, and as a man, He grew through His trials: the trials of fasting as well as the temptations from Satan.

We might say we fast because Jesus told us to. In the Sermon on the Mount, He tells us “*When ye fast ... “ not “If ye fast ... “* He then goes on to tell us how: secretly and not for the worldly payoff. The worldly payoff these days is less likely to consist in the admiration of others. But it is still possible that we are proud of ourselves for our fasting. If we indulge such vain-glory, we risk losing our heavenly and spiritual reward from our Father.

Or we might answer that fasting is logical, given that we are made up of bodies as well as souls. If the will, inspired and guided by grace, is to rule in us, the body must be subdued to the spirit – and the body can be pretty unruly at times. Fasting helps subject the flesh to the spirit, and allows us to do what we really want (to be pleasing to Jesus). It helps bring discipline to our being.

The Church, and Tradition, teach us to fast. The obligatory fasts are quite modest: no food for at least an hour before Communion, a single meal on Good Friday and Ash Wednesday, and abstinence from meat on Fridays (except in Paschaltide). But some sort of fasting (eating less, eliminating sweets or snacks) on the weekdays of Lent is strongly encouraged and has been universally practiced since the early days of the Church. It puts us in good company.

The hunger we feel from the Eucharistic fast should remind us of our spiritual hunger for Christ, and make us that much more grateful for the spiritual sustenance we receive in Communion. (If you’re never hungry before Communion, perhaps you are not taking the Eucharistic fast seriously enough!)

Finally, fasting is good for our humility. It turns out to be much harder than we expected. When we are sorely tempted to break the fast, we learn how much we need God. Not just for the grand spiritual things, but even for little things we think we ought to be able to do by ourselves. To fall, and have to humble ourselves and start over is good for our humility. God often allows this in various areas of our lives, since pride is for most of us the biggest threat to our salvation.

Holy Week

Holy Week is **March 25th-April 1st**. The liturgies of Holy Week are demanding of our time and energy. This is only reasonable, since in Holy Week we commemorate, and make present, the events of Jesus’ life and death by which we are saved. Given what it cost Him, we expect it to be of some cost to us – vastly less than His of course. But if it cost us nothing, we would not be entering into the realities which we celebrate.

In addition to Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, the principal services are Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil on Saturday night. Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper, with the institution of the Eucharist and the washing of the disciples’ feet, and the prediction of the betrayal and Peter’s denial. At the end of Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is taken in procession to the Altar of Repose, adorned with flowers and greens like the Garden of Gethsemane. You are invited to come and spend an hour watching with Jesus at the Altar of Repose, in response to Jesus’ invitation to Peter, James and John to watch with Him an hour. The Watch is kept until the Liturgy on Good Friday. A sign up sheet is posted so that we may keep the Watch unbroken.

Good Friday: Jesus dies on the Cross. In the Liturgy, there is no celebration of the Mass: we hear the Passion, venerate the Cross, and receive Communion from the Sacrament consecrated on Maundy Thursday. The service continues with preaching on the Seven Last Words from the Cross. We spend the three hours in church that Jesus spent dying on the cross.

The Vigil and First Mass of Easter is at 8:30 on Holy Saturday night. The Vigil begins in darkness with the lighting of the New Fire and blessing of the Paschal Candle. The Prophecies take us from creation through the Old Testament intimations of Christ. The Font is blessed for the new year’s baptisms, and the Litany of the Saints reminds us that we are one with the company of heaven. The celebration of the Mass returns with Paschal joy.

Palm Sunday

Blessing & Distribution of Palms, Procession & Sung Mass, 10 a.m.

Confessions, 9-9:45 a.m.

Monday in Holy Week: Mass, 6 p.m.

Tuesday in Holy Week: Mass, 6 p.m.

Wednesday in Holy Week: Mass, 10 a.m.

Confessions after the Mass each day

Maundy Thursday

Sung Mass, Procession to the Altar of Repose 7:30 p.m.

The Watch follows, until noon on Good Friday

Good Friday

Good Friday Liturgy, noon-3

Veneration of the Cross, Mass of the Presanctified, Preaching on the Seven Last Words

Confessions after the service

Holy Saturday

The Altar Service, 10 a.m.

Vigil & First Mass of Easter, 8:30 p.m.

Easter Day

Procession & Sung Mass, 10 a.m.

Confessions, 9-9:45 a.m.

Evangelization

In order to invite our Bridgeport neighbors to join us for the observance of Holy Week, we plan to put **door hangers** around the neighborhood. Eileen Dantas has designed them for us, and they should be on hand by the Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 11th. I would ask those of you who are mobile to take a block or two (sign up at coffee hour), and hang the hangers on the doors on your block. You can do this on Sunday (the 11th or the 18th) after coffee or during the week at your convenience. If we all pitch in, we can cover the borough without it being a burden on anyone.

I think you will also be interested in something Bill & Clare Finegan are doing to spread the Good News. They use Facebook to share the ups and downs of their life in Christ, especially in terms of family life. While much of Facebook is rather less than constructive, this is a wonderful thing to use it for. I am grateful for their willingness not only to take the time, but to open their lives for the sake of helping others. If you do Facebook (I admit that I do not), go find them, <https://www.facebook.com/bill.finegan>. Perhaps there are others who can follow their example.

Coming Events

On the remaining Fridays in Lent, through March 23rd: the Lenten devotions of Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament continue at 7:30 p.m.; Soup Supper at 6:30.

This Saturday, March 3rd, is the Lenten Quiet Day, 9-2. The day begins with Mass and breakfast, then no talking for the rest of the day. I will give some addresses, and there will be opportunity for confession. It ends with a period of adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Lunch provided as well as breakfast. Bring friends.

Our own Dr Mary Hirschfeld will be delivering a lecture in the Archbishop's Lecture Series at St Charles Borromeo Seminary on Monday, March 19th at 7 p.m. Her topic is "Creation and Transcendence: *Laudato Si's* Challenge to the Technocratic Paradigm". It is open to the public without charge.

You have a convenient opportunity to assist at the annual Ordinariate Chrism Mass this year, since it will be celebrated at St Thomas More in Scranton. This is the annual Mass where the Bishop consecrates the oils for use in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and holy unction during the year, and the priests of the Ordinariate renew their ordination vows. The Mass is on Thursday, March 22, at 7 p.m. St Thomas More is conveniently located at 116 Theodore Street in Scranton. I hope for a good representation from St John's. There will be no Mass that night at St John's.

Right after Easter, April 4-6, there will be a major symposium at the Catholic University of America in Washington, marking the 50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul's encyclical on human life and artificial contraception. Archbishop Chaput will be speaking, along with other notable scholars. Details can be found here: www.cuatoday.com/hv2018. Recommended, if you can take the time.

On Saturday, April 21st, there will be a conference on *Matrimony: Rediscovering Its Truth* at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. The keynote speaker is Raymond Cardinal Burke, well-known through his writings and steadfast defense of the faith. The conference is 10 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. (including the Sunday Vigil Mass at 5:15). Registration is required: 215-247-2585 or sain-tjohnneumannchapter.org.

Special thanks goes this month to:

- John Ewing, for some plumbing repairs in the parish house
- David Livezey and Mark Johnson for crawling around in the crawl space of the parish house to locate the source of the water that was coming in, and fixing it. And to Bill Finegan for mopping.
- our regular breakfast providers: Angela Johnson, Lisa Livezey, Dawn Lybrand, Beth Ousley, Anne Hummel, Wendy Ewing, Bell Anderson, Raynor Sherlock.
- Raynor Sherlock, for coordinating the Lenten Friday night suppers.
- Thrift Shop workers: Raynor Sherlock, Charles Dickenson-Marks, Donna Era, Thomas O'Donnell, Joy Converse, Beth Ousley.; an to all who have brought donations.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley