

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

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Christ is risen! The tomb is empty. Death has been slain. With the coming of Easter, Jesus' prayers from the Cross are answered, the way is opened for us from death to life, from ignorance to understanding and wisdom, from guilt to forgiveness and peace. As the world was altered forever by Adam's sin, so too it is altered forever by Jesus' death and resurrection. This is true for the world: it is also true for your life and mine. Things have changed between us and God, and that means that we need to change the way we live. We are no longer His enemies, but have become His friends and His adopted children. We should aspire to live up to the calling. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Leave behind the world, the flesh and the devil. Set your heart on the loving (and risen) Lord, and not on the pleasures of the world.

This will not be easy. The world and the flesh (if not the devil) have great and deep attractions for us, even when we know that their pleasures are empty. Those desires must be mortified (i.e., killed off) in order for our better desires for the love of God to grow. This is another way of saying that the Cross is essential to the resurrection. We cannot live without dying, just as Jesus lives *after* death, and not *instead of* death. We take up the Cross daily to follow Jesus – follow Him in the way of the Cross in order to follow Him in the way of the resurrection. It's a package deal.

But lest we become overburdened with the Cross (and the crosses of our lives), we are to set our minds and hearts on things above: on the love of Christ and His Father for us. We are never to forget that our true homeland is in heaven. The Christian virtue of hope gives us the joy of the assured triumph of Christ in our lives. The Cross is central – both to Jesus' saving deeds, and in our lives – but the Cross is not the end of the story. Death does not have the last word – as it appeared to when Adam sinned. Life is the end of the story: even if we have it now only in part. We have God's promise, and the assurance of the empty tomb, that for us life will be the fruition of death.



Bishop Lopes's Visit

I write this just after our Bishop, the Most Reverend Steve J. Lopes, spent the weekend with us at St John the Baptist. The main events were the choral Evensong & Benediction on Friday night, April 8th, and the parish Mass on Sunday, the 10th. He celebrated and preached at both. (You can listen to the Sunday sermon on our web site.) In addition to the main services, he celebrated the weekday Masses while he was here, met with the parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, had lunch with some of the non-Ordinariate Anglican clergy in the area, and met with several men who have offered themselves for ministry in the Ordinariate. He also had the opportunity to tour the property, spend some time with Beth, Dewey and me, and visit with parishioners at the receptions and after Mass.

We had many visitors at Evensong & Benediction. These included the Most Reverend John McIntyre, Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia (he ordained me a priest in 2012), and the Pastors of Holy Cross, Our Lady of the Assumption and Sacred Heart, Fathers William Grogan, Dennis Carbonaro and Timothy O'Sullivan. Monsignor George Majoros from Sacred Heart was also with us. Sisters from Sacred Heart, and from St Charles Borromeo Seminary came, along with Knights and Dames of Malta and several seminarians from St Charles, who helped out in the sanctuary. The choir was in superb form (music of Tallis, Purcell, and Mozart), Bishop Lopes preached well, the acolytes did their job, God was glorified, and the reception afterward was thor-

oughly enjoyed by all.

I think this was something of a milestone for St John the Baptist, a sort of “coming out” or coming of age. We effectively presented ourselves and our worship (that important part of the Anglican Patrimony) to some of our closest friends in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church. It was (I daresay) a creditable presentation. Real church. Neither St Michael's nor the Newman Community could have pulled it off, but only St John's. Bishop Lopes's support and presence were also essential. I trust that this will help us (St John's) to have the confidence and encouragement to press ahead with the work which lies ahead of us – and there is much yet to be done! I hope as well that it will have the effect of letting our brethren at Holy Cross, Our Lady of the Assumption, Sacred Heart, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia know how much we appreciate their support – tangible as well as spiritual – as we have come into the full communion of the Catholic Church, and now take our place in the Church's mission and service in this region. We have been and continue to be blessed by their generosity, without which we would not be in our own property in Bridgeport (to cite only the most obvious example). If the milestone marks the end of one phase, it also marks the beginning of the next.

If Friday was for our friends, Sunday with Bishop Lopes was for the congregation. It is his first visit to us (he was only ordained a Bishop in February after all), so it was a chance for him to begin to get to know us and for us to get to know him. His sermon was exceptional, and his comments to the parish meeting straightforward and personable. I know many of you spoke with him individually and will be interested in your reactions. I don't think he would mind my saying that he was favorably impressed with St John's, and encourages us to keep on along the road we are on with all due speed. Although these things are still getting settled, his hope is to visit us every year or 15 months, so we can anticipate another visit in 2017.

I need to extend a very special word of thanks to Bell Anderson, who organized both receptions, Friday and Sunday, and did a great deal of the food herself. Both were occasions of exceptional hospitality, exceptionally well done. She had a lot of help, I know, but she really deserves a lot of credit herself. Well done!

Through the initiative of Douglas Sherlock (he deserves full credit: it was his idea and he completed the work), we were able to fly the Ordinariate flag on our second flag-pole while the Bishop was visiting. So far as we can tell, this is the first and only Ordinariate flag. Doug had it made with the Ordinariate coat of arms on a white background and it came out very well. Since it was the first ever made, we presented it to Bishop Lopes as a gift before he left. The photo shows Doug raising the flag for the first time. Historic event. There is a photo album of all of the Bishop's visit on the web site.



Thrift Shop

The Dollar and More Store operates out of the school building for the benefit of Sacred Heart as it did for Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Currently it is open most Saturdays. The folk who manage it could use some help. If there are volunteers from St John's, we could operate the store as a joint effort with Sacred Heart, and for the benefit of the folk of Bridgeport. Good for us, good for the store, good for Sacred Heart, good for our neighbors. If you are interested, let me know, and we'll set up a meeting with the current workers to talk through how this might work. Note that “interest” at this point does not mean “commitment.”

Mass Intentions

No doubt you have noticed that the Mass is often offered for a particular intention. For example, canon law requires that a Mass on Sunday be offered for the faithful of the parish. Since we have only one Sunday Mass, then it is always offered for the people of St John's. Mass intentions at weekday Masses can be for individuals (especially those with particular needs such as sickness or sorrow) or families, or for the faithful departed. You can request to have a Mass said for a particular intention. To do so, you would make arrangements with me, giving me the details of the intention, and (if you want) arranging a date when you can be present to assist with the offering of the Mass. It is customary, though not required, to make an offering (not to exceed \$10) when requesting a Mass intention. Likewise, I can send a Mass card indicating that a Mass is being said for the intention – as, for example, to the widow of a man for whom the Mass is said.

Coming Events

I expect things to settle down a little, after Holy Week and the Bishop's visit. That is not a bad thing: 85-90% of our sanctification is “routine”: the good habits of virtue and devotion. I encourage you, especially those closer to Bridgeport, to consider making weekday Mass a part of your routine. I realize that we may want to adjust the current schedule (Tuesday & Thursday at 6 p.m., Wednesday with healing at 10 a.m., Friday 8 a.m., Saturday 9 a.m.) to accommodate the new location. If you have thoughts about that, please share them.

We will be resuming the adult forums during coffee hour. On the Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 17th,

Bill Gatens will conduct a music practice focused on the congregational Mass settings much may be unfamiliar, especially to the St Michael's folk. The settings of Schubert, Bach and Harris which we sing regularly are "congregational," though not in the Hymnal, and the congregation is expected to sing along. This is your chance to get to know the music.

As an on-going custom at St John's, I would like to observe the feasts of our secondary patrons, St Michael, St James the Less and Blessed John Henry Newman, and Good Shepherd Sunday. All are part of our history, and all have given us many blessings. Good Shepherd Sunday (in our current calendar) is the Fourth of Easter. We plan to sing a Te Deum at the end of Mass to mark the occasion. St James is now observed on May 3rd. Mass is at 6 p.m. If there is interest (I hope there is), we'll have a pot luck supper after Mass.

Rogation Sunday falls on May 1st, and is the traditional time for beating the bounds of the parish, with a liturgical procession, asking God's blessing on the crops. Since we are a non-territorial parish, we do not have bounds, but would still like to sing the litany in an outdoor procession around the bounds of our property. We will want to do a spring clean-up outside before Rogation.

Thanks

Quite a number of people deserve thanks this month, in addition to those already mentioned:

- Bill Gatens, the choir and the acolytes for their service during Holy Week and the Bishop's visit. Much time and effort goes into the preparations as well as the services themselves.
- my wife, who did the altar flowers for Easter and the Bishop's visit, and the Altar of Repose, with help from Dan Elliott, Dawn Lybrand, and Joanna Falini who did the flowers outside under our sign.
- David & Lisa Livezey, who came forward at the last minute to make the all-night Watch on Maundy Thursday possible. On Palm Sunday, it did not appear that we had the volunteers to sustain the Watch all night (in part, this was due to my defective planning), and had planned to cut it back to midnight, when they offered to be sure someone was there the whole time. Next year, we'll try to plan better; this year the Livezeys have our thanks.
- Fr Grogan of Holy Cross, for his kind indulgence in letting the Ousleys move gradually from the St Therese Rectory. We moved to Bridgeport late in Lent, and then turned our attention to Holy Week and the Bishop's visit, and still have stuff at St Therese (which is a much larger house). He has not pressured us to get it cleaned out, and this has made life immeasurably easier for us.
- We are also grateful to Fr Grogan for providing a safe for the sacred vessels in the sacristy (from St Therese) and the baptismal font and holy water vat from St Madeleine Sophie. The font, which is fairly small and lovely, will serve at least until the temporary organ is no longer needed and a baptistry can be set up in the back of the nave. Meanwhile, it will live in front of the St Joseph Altar. The vat is on the other side of the church, and is for the convenience of the faithful: help yourself to holy water for use at home. Many of the faithful have a small stoop near the outside door so that they can bless themselves with holy water as they leave or return home.
- Thanks also goes to the faithful who have been working to keep the church and parish hall and bathrooms clean for us. Everything was in good shape for Holy Week and the Bishop's visit. We don't see the people doing this – such is the nature of the work – but we see the results, and would certainly notice if the work were not done. This is an essential if humble work. I hope all will take a turn. Sign-up is on the web site or at coffee hour.
- The Easter Egg hunt was set up by the high school youth of the parish, with Angela Johnson, Lisa Livezey and Beth helping with the eggs.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley

