

THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

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

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

One of the biggest obstacles to our active evangelism – speaking about Christ with a friend or acquaintance – is fear. We fear doing something socially unacceptable. We fear disrupting a friendship. We fear rejection. We know that once we have broached the subject explicitly, things will never be the same between us. These are all reasonable concerns, especially the last: things won't be the same.

On the other hand, we know that we ought to speak as we have the opportunity. It is only charitable to want others to be saved, and avoid hell. If we care about someone, we must perforce care about his soul, and his eternal destiny. We also know that Jesus commanded, “Go, and make disciples of all nations.” Not: “When you have time and feel like it, it might be a good idea if you said something about Me to other people.” It is a command and we want to be obedient.

To overcome our fear, we need to remember that the One who said to us, “Go!” is the Lord of heaven and earth. Just before Jesus gave His disciples this Great Commission, He said to them, “All power [or authority] in heaven and in earth has been given to me.” If He has the authority to command, He has the power to provide all we need to fulfill the command. We can trust Him. He does not command the impossible, but gives us the strength to do what we ought. Remembering this will help us keep fear in check.

More, He follows the Great Commission with the promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” He did not send the Eleven off on their own. Nor does He send us off alone. He is with us. It is His presence that makes evangelization possible. The point of evangelism is to make the introduction to Jesus, and His abiding presence with us assures us that this is possible. This supports us in two ways. First, we are assured that if we go out on a limb and try to introduce someone to Him, He will be there. He will not leave us hanging. Second, He is present with us to back us up, should the other reject the introduction and things get awkward.

In most cases, our witness to Christ begins with sacrificial love, with action before words. If we put into practice the New Commandment, to love others as Christ loves us, then a sound foundation is laid for the time when we come to speak of Jesus. This means putting the other's interest before our own. As the other person senses this love, they learn that we can be trusted and we become credible. In any case, Christ's assured presence will bless our attempts at obedience to the Great Commission. Even if what we do does not seem to bear immediate fruit in bringing conversions, it will draw us closer to our Lord, and may well be sowing seeds which will bring forth fruit later. Both charity and obedience require us to take evangelism seriously. We need to let Christ overcome our fears.

The Differences

From time to time people ask me whether life is different in the Ordinariate. There is much continuity with our pre-Ordinariate Anglican life, but there are (blessedly) differences as well. One of them involves how we look at the liturgy. In our Anglo-Catholic days, the ideal (mine, at least) was traditional Anglo-Catholic: Missal, old Prayer Book for the other services, supplemented by the *Priest's Manual* and occasionally from the English 1662 or 1549 Prayer Books. Anglicans of other stripes – low church, liberal, revisionist, somewhat renewed – had their own comparable ideals. The parish priest generally tried to implement his ideal, so far as he could manage it within the constraints of the parish. His (or my) goal was to make the liturgy conform so far as possible to his (my) particular ideal. I admit to having been greatly blessed, in that St James the Less was already Anglo-Catholic when I arrived.

Things are different on this side of the Tiber: there is something called liturgical law, and we are expected to obey it. Our Mass rite, for example, has flexibility in various areas, which has been provided for the variety of expressions within the Anglican patrimony. But it also has a definite structure and texts which are prescribed, and are not subject to the discretion of the priest. These are not optional.

The fact that the liturgy is a given rather than (essentially) at the discretion of the priest means that our attitude towards it changes. (This change takes some time: we may or may not like what has been given to us, and some of the things which differ from what we were used to take time to get used to.) When someone else – the commission which is producing liturgies for the Ordinariates, or the Congregation for Divine Worship, or the Holy Father, all of whom are involved – makes the liturgical decisions, he may or may not do

it the way I would. (Indeed, it is almost certain that he will not do everything my way!) But when we accept the liturgical law as a given, then we can give up the expectation that the liturgy should be done a certain way – my way. It is there, and I may as well accept it and get on with the worship of God. More, my accepting it as it is given is an act of obedience. I accept the authority of the rite as provided. As with all obedience, this involves putting self aside, which is essential training for a Christian. No one will accept the offer of heaven unless he is willing to submit to the authority of Christ, whose Kingdom it is. We need practice in this life, practice in obeying the earthly authorities which may be placed over us (parents, employers, the state, liturgical law, the Ordinary).

The downside of having liturgical law is that I don't get to do it my way. The upside is also that I don't get to do it my way. There are two great blessings here. First, it gives me the opportunity for a wee bit of humility, willingly accepting what I have been given, and entering into it without worrying too much about whether I like it, or would wish it to be different (i.e., my way). Second, it gives me the opportunity to enter into something greater than I am. When I do my own thing, I limit what is going on. But when all of us in the Ordinariate accept the given rites, we become part of a greater whole, which is itself a part of the wholeness of the Catholic Church.

So for me as a parish priest, the ideal is no longer to do the liturgy my way, but (first) to conform faithfully to the liturgical law, and (second) to select among the options provided in the way that is pastorally best for the faithful of the congregations. While it is not always easy, it is better for my soul, and for the church, to be under authority. In accepting the Church's authority, I obey for Christ's sake, even as I recognize that His authority may be imperfectly implemented by the sinners who wield authority in the church. This is also true for the authority I have as priest and pastor: I do not always get it right! But we still grow in Christ as we accept authority for His sake.

Transitions

A special word of thanks goes to Mark Shiffman and John Heidengren, who have been looking after the bookkeeping needs of St Michael's and the Newman Community – and making my life vastly more pleasant. This is an essential ministry, which requires time and careful attention to detail. Paying bills, keeping track of donations and keeping accounts in order is essential to the ministry of the congregations. Both have come to the point where they need to hand over the responsibilities to someone else. I am enormously grateful to them both. I am also grateful to the two who have volunteered to step in and take over: Mark Jakubik for St Michael's and Dan Elliott for Newman. It will be more of a challenge than usual, since the Ordinariate is moving to a common accounting system on July 1. So Mark and Dan need not only learn what goes on locally, but also need to learn a different accounting system. Their work, while essential, takes place out of sight. Do pray for them, and when you have the chance, say thank you.

Coming Events

Those of you who have been around for a while know that advance planning is not my strong point. With a little gentle prodding, I will try to do better. First, at St Michael's, on the Third Sunday after Trinity, June 21st, in place of our usual coffee hour after Mass, there will be picnic at the rectory on Ardleigh Street, for Janis Wilson, a long-time parishioner who is moving back to Iowa the end of June. This will be her last Sunday at St Michael's. Janis and her husband Rick found their way to St James not too long after I did, and have helped in many ways in the years since. Janis is currently on the Pastoral Council, is a regular at weekday Masses, and helps with the food pantry collection, among many other things. Over the years she has been willing to put her energies into our outreach with the kids, teaching at Homework Club and Sunday School, and supporting other activities with the kids. She will be missed. Leslie Altena is coordinating food for the picnic, so if you would like to volunteer to help in that department, please contact her. Otherwise, plan to be here, and help bid Janis Godspeed!

The choir at Newman is off for the summer; their last Sunday was Corpus Christi. They have our thanks for their faithful service. Their weekly offering greatly enhances our worship to the glory of God. We look forward to their return in September. During the summer, the congregation will be singing the Mass (Merbecke or Willan).

Also at Newman, there will be no Mass on August 16th. There is a conflict that day with the OLA Patronal celebration (the Assumption of the BVM is the 15th, and the festivities which continue on the 16th). All are welcome to worship with OLA at 1:30 that afternoon, and join in the celebrations which follow. Also at Newman, there will be no Mass on September 27th: the Holy Father will be celebrating Mass on the Parkway in Philadelphia at 4 p.m. that day (see below). I assume that many of our folk will want to participate in that event.

The Newman adult forum will begin discussions of Pope Benedict's *The Apostles* on June 21st. Please obtain a copy and begin reading. After supper on June 14th, there will be a general congregational meeting to discuss some matters of common interest.

Meanwhile at St Michael's, on June 14th at coffee hour, we will have a parish meeting to talk about how we might get the word out about St Michael's. We have discussed this in the Pastoral Council, and would like to involve everyone in the congregation in the discussion. On June 21st, there will be no adult forum because of the picnic. The forum on the 28th will focus on chapter IX of the World Meeting of Families catechism *Love is our Mission*. This short volume contains a wealth of helpful teaching, and our discussions have been very useful. There will be no adult forums on July 5th (Pastoral Council) or 12th.

The Youth Group at St Michael's meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month during the summer. We meet at the rectory at 6. Other teens are welcome. If you give me contact information, I will send an invitation.

Holy Cross is putting together a pilgrimage to two local shrines – Our Lady of Czechochwa in Doyelstown and St Gianni Molla in Warrington. The group leaves (car pooling) from Holy Cross on Sunday, June 14th at 12:15, returning around 5. St Michael's and Newman folk are welcome to join in. Details: 215-438-2921.

World Meeting of Families

I hope you are praying for the World Meeting of Families and Papal visit (September 22nd – 27th in Philadelphia). Pope Francis' schedule has now been announced. He will be celebrating a Mass on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway on Sunday, September 27th at 4 p.m. All are welcome, and a large crowd is expected. He will also be appearing at the Festival of Families on the Parkway the night before. The web site (world-meeting2015.org) continues to post more details about speakers and the program. In addition, on the web site you can now volunteer to help out during the meeting, and offer space to those in need of a place to stay. Of course, you can also register to attend the meeting on the web site. There is also a transportation survey (how you intend to get there), which will help the planners.

Kudos

This month, I want to thank:

- Jemimah Mbugua for the folding and stuffing of last month's mailing.
- Terri Smith for providing Mothers Day mementos to all the mothers who were at Mass that Sunday.
- the girls of the parish (Cheryl, Timisha, Octavia, Teela, & Denise) for participating in the May Procession and crowning of Our Lady.

Faithfully,

Fr David Ousley



The Ordinariate Pilgrimage to Rome in 2014