

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

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June, 2016

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Now that we as a parish have a new patron, St John the Baptist, we also have a new patronal feast. The Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist is June 24th, a Friday this year. We will transfer the external solemnity to the following Sunday, June 26th, celebrating the occasion at our usual Sunday Mass. This has already been a year of firsts for us: our first Holy Week in Bridgeport, first visit from the Ordinariate's first bishop, the first baptism, the first wedding, and first First Holy Communion at St John the Baptist. And now, our first chance to celebrate and thank our new Patron.

St John the Baptist has two feasts in the Church Year (in addition to his prominence in the Advent season): the Solemnity of his Nativity in June, and the Memorial of his Martyrdom on August 29th. The great majority of the saints are commemorated on the anniversary of their deaths, a custom which began with the first martyrs in the earliest days of the Church. St John is one of the very few of whom we have knowledge of his birth. In the Gospels, our Lord is the only other one whose birth is revealed to us. St John's mother, Elizabeth, and Jesus' mother were cousins, and St Luke tells us that St Gabriel revealed to the Blessed Virgin that Elizabeth had conceived in her old age. St Mary immediately went to see her: the Visitation (observed on May 31st). When she came in to see St Elizabeth, "the babe leaped in her [Elizabeth's] womb." This inspired Elizabeth with the Holy Spirit to acclaim her younger cousin "the mother of my Lord." Even three months before his birth, John was testifying to Christ, pointing Him out, leading his own mother to faith. While such testimony from an unborn child is unquestionably exceptional(!), we can nevertheless aspire to follow John's example in always pointing to Christ and away from ourselves. He did this consistently as an adult: "There cometh after me one whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose;" "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world;" sending his disciples from prison to see Jesus. We, too should point to Christ, not just in word, but in our lives: by our selfless love, by our penitence and joy, by our humility and faith. St John the Baptist: pray for us!

The Eucharist

On the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, Bishop Lopes issued his first Pastoral Letter to the Ordinariate, on the Eucharist. Printed copies are coming, or you can read it online: <http://ordinariate.net/letters-and-state-ments>. It is a wonderful Letter and well worth your time to study it. It is not long (unlike the Holy Father's letters!). We are blessed indeed to have such a theologically-gifted man for our bishop.

Some practical questions about the Eucharist (not addressed in the Bishop's Letter) concern the unexpected (How late can I get to Mass and still receive Communion?): what to do should the Precious Blood spill. Though it is rare, we did have the unfortunate occurrence not long ago, our best efforts notwithstanding. This is something we never want to happen, but being fallible human beings, we do mess up from time to time. Since we believe that Christ is truly present in the consecrated Bread and Wine so long as the Bread and Wine endure, then any spilled consecrated Wine must be dealt with reverently. If It is on your chin (say), and the minister with the chalice does not notice and blot it with the purificator, then you can blot it with a clean cloth (handkerchief). Then soak the cloth in water when you get home, pouring out the water on the ground rather than down the drain, and then wash the cloth as usual. The same procedure holds for a spill on clothing. If the spill should be on a tissue or paper towel, the paper should not be thrown in the trash, but reverently burned. If you are uncomfortable with dealing with it yourself, you can always give the item to me, and I will see that it is properly treated.

A word about the Host is probably also in order. Should (God forbid) a consecrated Host fall during Communion, usually the priest will notice, pick it up and consume it. If he does not, then the communicant must do so. This is true even if It has fallen into a crack. If for any reason you are reluctant to consume It when you have found It, then you should return It to the priest. Remember that It is still Christ's sacramental Body, and deserving of reverence.

The Eucharistic fast which we observe before receiving Communion is also a sign of our reverence. It makes our spiritual food a priority over our material food. And if we should experience hunger during Mass, that can be for us a tangible reminder of our hunger and thirst for righteousness which Jesus tells us is a blessing. After Vatican II, in order to encourage more frequent Communion, the legal requirement for fasting before Communion was greatly reduced. Legally, all that is required is an hour's fast before Mass. Medicines are

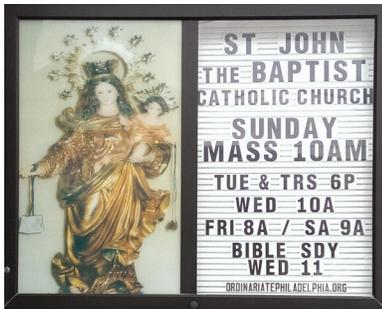
permitted. This is minimal, and I encourage you to do more than the minimum. How this works out will depend in part on the time of Mass. For an evening Mass, fasting from midnight would be difficult for many of us. In that case, one might fast from lunch on. For a morning Mass, the ideal is to abstain from solid food until after Mass – one reason we have breakfast right after Mass on Sunday: this assumes that people will want to receive Communion fasting. The initial post-Vatican II rule was three hours, and that is easily applicable whatever time Mass may be offered. The point is not to be legalistic, but to foster an ever-deepening sense of devotion and gratitude for Jesus' gift of Himself to us in the Holy Communion. Having to structure our eating around Mass is a good way of developing a sense that the Mass is indeed the most important thing we will do in the day. (Should you have any doubt about it being the most important thing – read Bishop Lopes's letter!)

Coming Events

Many of you are aware that last summer our own Patrick Burke did a European lecture tour, giving a paper on Social Justice. I know there is interest at St John's in hearing his insights, and he has agreed to present the paper to us at an adult forum on the Third Sunday after Trinity, June 12th. In addition, Patrick will be teaching a class at Our Lady or Lourdes in Overbrook on the Marian apparitions in Akita, Japan in 1980: Tuesday nights, beginning June 28th. Space is limited: speak with Patrick if you are interested. We are fortunate to have a scholar of his abilities in our midst.

In the course of our consideration of outreach possibilities for St John the Baptist, support for home-school families has come up. We are beginning some modest efforts in this direction. Beginning in the fall, I will be teaching a course on Scripture for high school juniors and seniors. If you know of families with children this age, please spread the word: registration is now open. The day and time have not been set yet; it will meet weekly here in Bridgeport. We will also help host an occasional mothers' tea: an opportunity for home-school mothers to gather informally, for a brief rest & recreation, to share with and support one another. We will provide an hour of Eucharistic Adoration, and then time for tea and companionship. The first one is set for June 13th. If you would like to help with the set-up, or if you know any moms who might like an invitation please speak with Lisa Livezey. In addition, all are welcome to come at 7 for the Adoration, to pray with and for the mothers in their particular vocation as home-schooling mothers.

Also (coincidentally) at the time of our Patronal Feast, relics of St Thomas More and St John Fisher are coming to Philadelphia. On Saturday, June 25th, the relics will be at the Cathedral of Saints Peter & Paul (facing Logan Circle in Philadelphia). At 4, there will be a presentation on the relics in the Cathedral Chapel. Mass is at 5:15, with veneration of the relics following in the Cathedral at 6:15. These two saints were faithful to their Catholic beliefs, withstanding King Henry VIII – at the cost of their lives. They are thus especially dear to us in the Ordinariate, and there are communities in the Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter dedicated to each of them. The relic tour is part of the Fortnight for Freedom observance (June 21st to July 4th), which highlights threats to religious liberty in America today. See fortnight4freedom.org for details.



Before

You have undoubtedly noticed the a sign on the front of the church. It has a lighted image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on one side and a notice board on the other. Chelsea Nunziato has taken the message side in hand, and it now lists the weekday and Sunday Masses, Bible study and confessions. We are now replacing the image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel with one of St John the Baptist. Chris Jordan painted the new image. Eileen Dantas arranged to have the image transferred to clear plastic, so that the light will shine through and illuminate it at night. John and Eliza Ewing are in the process of installing the new painting, and repairing the light. Truly a group effort! Thanks to all who are involved. Keep an eye out for the finished product. John and Eliza are also responsible for the newly focused lights on the high altar.

We are putting together a landscape committee to help with planning for the grounds along Ford Street, especially with the coming removal of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel grotto. It is not a large space, but we want it to look its best. Volunteers welcome!

Some Worldly Matters

It looks like the obstacles are clearing out of the way, and the legal merger of the Blessed John Henry Newman Fellowship and St Michael's Church should be completed this month. (The mechanism, in case you're interested in such things, is this: Newman, which is set up as a charitable trust, will dissolve, and its assets will be transferred to St Michael's. St Michael's, which is a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation, will formally accept the assets from Newman, and then change its name to St John the Baptist.) I will let you know when the legal name change becomes effective, since at that point we should no longer be writing checks to St Michael's. This is an opportune time to say a word of thanks to John Heidengren, who so ably looked after financial matters for the Newman Fellowship. His efforts have meant a lot for getting us to where we are now, even though he did not cross the Tiber with us, and is missed. Thanks!

Speaking of checks: our fiscal year ends the end of June. We have been operating jointly since January 1st, so we'll have six months under our belt. After the end of the fiscal year, we'll have a general congregational meeting to present the financial statements for this period. As you may recall from our presentation of the budget last winter, we projected a modest operating deficit. I'm delighted to report that so far, we are receiving more than we budgeted, and to date, there is no deficit in the operating account. Taking on the additional costs of having our own property seemed (to the Finance Council) a little daunting at the time, but something

that was worth the costs. We now find that we have managed to cover the costs from current giving. This does not take into account the additional sums raised in the Building Fund, which has a substantial balance, nor for the Bishop's Appeal. Well done! Your generosity and faithfulness are impressive. Keep up the good work!

Thanks

I want to express my thanks to the parishioner (who wished to remain anonymous) who provides the tissues in the pews: a kind thought and deed. Also to the significant number of folk who put in extra hours to be sure the church was clean and in top shape for our first wedding (Tom & Gina Royce); to Bell Anderson for organizing and providing the food for the bridal shower for Gina; to David Livezey for the changing tables in the church and parish hall bathrooms.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley



Everyone Helps Clean