

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,

We have been talking about the advantages of getting St Michael's and Newman together. The biggest practical obstacle has been finding a location which will work for everyone. The Newman folk are largely centered on the Main Line (so we want something convenient to the Main Line), while St Michael's people come from all over as well as from the city (so we need something close to major highways and Septa). We now have a possible site to consider, and the first question is whether it will work for everyone. It is the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Bridgeport. This is currently a worship site of Sacred Heart Parish in Swedesburg, and we are grateful to the Pastor of Sacred Heart, Fr Timothy O'Sullivan, for inviting to us to consider the possibility of using that facility.

I would ask everyone at St Michael's and Newman to think seriously about whether this location is possible for you. While there would be many advantages to getting the congregations together, we do not want to lose anyone. So if you don't already know where Bridgeport it, you'll need to figure it out (across the river from Norristown, up 202 from King of Prussia, five minutes from Conshohocken on route 23), and then make the calculations. I haven't studied the Septa options in detail: the church is three blocks from the Norristown High Speed Line (aka P&W), and not too far from the Norristown Transportation Center (if that is too long a walk, I'm sure we could provide rides from there on Sundays). There is ample parking for those coming by car.

The property has three buildings (church, school, rectory) and parking. We have set up a tour of the church and school for Sunday, July 26th, following the Mass at St Michael's. There will be no coffee hour that day, and we'll head out after Mass. It is about a half-hour drive, so we have set the tour for 11 at Mount Carmel, 500 Ford Road in Bridgeport. You are also welcome to join in a special Mass at Mount Carmel on July 19th, part of their celebration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which is followed by a procession to Sacred Heart.

Until last summer, Our Lady of Mount Carmel was the Italian parish in Bridgeport. At that time it merged with St Augustine's and Sacred Heart, with Sacred Heart designated as the parish church. It is an attractive possibility for us for a variety of reasons. The buildings are in good condition. The church is relatively small (seats 300). Also air-conditioned. The neighborhood is good. The church is handicapped accessible, and has an accessible bathroom. The school does not have a school operating at present, but is used by Sacred Heart for their PREP program (catechesis for children not in Catholic schools), a thrift shop, and some meetings. It has ample space for our needs without compromising the current use by Sacred Heart. If you would like to see pictures, go to www.olmcchurch.net/gallery.

The process, as we try to discern what God has in mind for us, goes something like this. First, I would like to get a sense from everyone if the location will work. We will discuss it in both congregations after the Masses on August 2nd. If it is deemed acceptable, then I will discuss with Fr O'Sullivan what kind of arrangements we might make that would work for them as well as for us. When we reach an agreement, both Fr O'Sullivan and I will need the approval of our superiors, and our finance and pastoral councils will need to weigh in. And then we can start thinking about all the details which would be involved. There are many of those! From what time we should have the Sunday Mass to who is going to clean the church, and whether we can afford it. Meanwhile, please think seriously about the location and your Sunday travel.

I think there is a general consensus among us that merging the congregations has much to recommend it. It would enable Newman to return to a morning service. It would get us much closer to "critical mass." It would increase our resources available for mission and service, and make us more attractive to visitors. And having "our own" property would help us to be settled, and clarify the direction of our mission. At the same time, having a property comes with costs and burdens, as we recall from St James and Good Shepherd (where we also had endowments to help with the costs). Part of the discernment of whether God is calling us to move there is a realistic assessment of whether we can manage the property. It is an exciting prospect, and one which would have profound consequences for our common life in Christ. So it is okay to be excited. At the same time, in the midst of our excitement, we should abide steadfast in our prayers and rational thinking, always seeking God's will for us.

Vacation

Summer is the time when many of us (including me) take time off. If you are on vacation, let me encourage you to make it a vacation *with* God rather than *from* God. God provided for our need for "time off" from work in the provision of the weekly day of rest (and in the Law, the seventh-year Sabbath rest for the land, and the 49th year jubilee). That rest of course includes worship – whether the Sunday of the New Covenant or the Sabbath of

the Old. We have time off in order to spend at least some of it with God. Vacations can thus provide us with time for meditation, for spiritual reading, and for leisurely prayer, opportunities which may not be so readily available during work time. It is necessary that we think of vacation as leisure given us by God, and to be used as He would wish. Our temptation is to think of it as “me time:” time to do as I please and to gratify my desires. Of course, this sets us up to be disappointed – the world does not conform to my desires – and it is pride, wrong-headed for a Christian. If instead we set out to enjoy the time for relaxation which God has given us and make Him a part of it, our vacation will be much more joyful and fruitful.

One other temptation which we are apt to encounter on vacation is the lapse of prayer. The regular routine is often changed on vacation, whether we are traveling or not. It is all too easy to lose the regularity of our daily prayer when we lose the structure of set time and place. Forewarned here is forearmed: knowing that it may be coming, we can anticipate the challenge and be ready to make time for prayer, which we need for the good of our souls as well as for God's honor. Likewise if we are vacationing with family or friends, we should be sure to support others in taking time for prayer and quiet.

For my part, I am planning to be on vacation the first part of July. Fr Matthew Phelan O. de M. will be taking the Sunday Masses at St Michael's and Newman on July 12th. I'm grateful for his willingness to help out, and to “do” Divine Worship (aka Anglican Use). As listed in the weekly leaflet, there will be no weekday Masses when I am on holiday.

Events

We decided that we would take the summer off for the adult classes at Newman. So our plan of reading together Pope Benedict's *The Apostles* will be deferred until September. Also during the summer, there will be light refreshments after Mass rather than a full supper. This does not mean that the fellowship time is any less important!

That said, at Newman after Mass on July 26th, we will discuss the day's earlier visit to Mount Carmel. Be prepared by then to indicate whether the location will work for you. We will also have at least a brief discussion the following Sunday, when I will be able to share with you the comparable discussion from St Michael's.

There will be no Mass at Newman 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 continue on the 16th). All are welcome to worship with OLA at 1:30 that afternoon, and join in the celebrations which follow.

Due to various conflicts, there will be no adult forums at St Michael's during July. For example, on July 5th, the Pastoral Council meets. There will be no coffee hour on the 26th, since we will be leaving after Mass for the Bridgeport visit. On August 2nd, the congregation will meet to discuss the visit to Mount Carmel, and whether that location is possible. The next meeting of the Youth Group at St Michael's is July 22nd.

Thanks

Beth and I are deeply grateful for all the prayers and support you have given at the time of my mother's death. We have been well cared for. Several special gifts come to mind. Fr Carbonaro very generously agreed at the last minute to say the Mass at Newman so that I could stay with my Mom as she lay dying, and be with her when she breathed her last. Fr Grogan helped with the funeral at Holy Cross, and concelebrated. We were blessed to have Jemimah Mbugua as our principal aide to look after my mother during her illness. The hospice nurses helped us to know the timing of things at the end, so that my brother could be here when she died. I am grateful to him for preaching so ably at the funeral. I am also grateful to Bell Anderson, Chris Jordan, Pat Lincoln, Anne Hummel, and others for helping with the reception at the rectory after the funeral, an inevitably last-minute affair. It was touching to see so many of you at the funeral. Thanks.

St Paul bids us not to sorrow as those without hope. No doubt there is always sorrow in death – as death was not part of creation as God originally made it. In this case, my sorrow is mitigated by our assurance of the resurrection, and by the time we had with her in her last years. She lived with us more than seven years, most of that, suffering the decline which comes with Alzheimer's. She never complained, and seemed even at the end to accept her limitations with good grace and Yankee fortitude. To have had her with us was a great blessing. Beth bore the greatest part of the burden of her care, which will accrue to her heavenly glory.

I regret in all of this that we could not have the going-away picnic which we had planned at the rectory for Janis Wilson, who has now moved to Iowa. It was scheduled for the day Mom died. We did have a little observance of the occasion at coffee hour after Mass. But I regret that the picnic was pre-empted.

Kudos

This month, I want to thank:
– Jemimah Mbugua for the folding and stuffing of last month's mailing.
– Terri Smith for providing Father Day mementos to the fathers at Mass on Fathers Day.

Faithfully,

Fr David Ousley

(Sorry – no pictures this month)