

# THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

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A NEWSLETTER OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH  
THE PERSONAL ORDINARIATE OF THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER IN THE PHILADELPHIA AREA

[WWW.SJBBRIDGEPORT.ORG](http://WWW.SJBBRIDGEPORT.ORG)

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September, 2019

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

“Jesus is Lord” is perhaps the earliest Christian confession. If He is our Lord and we are His servants as well as His adopted sons and daughters, then we owe Him obedience. In our fallenness, obedience is not always easy, whether to Him or to an earthly “master” (parent, boss at work, the Bishop, et al.). It often goes against the grain: I want to do what I want to do, not what someone else tells me. Our pride, self, gets in the way.

Christ wills for us only what is good for us, so obedience to Him is in our best interest. When we disobey, we hurt ourselves, as well as displeasing Him. When Eve, and then Adam, disobeyed, they hurt themselves – they brought death upon themselves as well as tribulations in earthly life. Moreover, we need to learn to obey if we are to be in heaven. In heaven, all things joyfully and willingly conform to God’s will. It is the place where everyone delights in God’s will rather than his own.

This means that we need to learn to delight in obedience to God’s will during this life on earth so that we will be ready for heaven. It is not hard to imagine a Christian who indulged having his own way (disobedience to God), coming to the gates of heaven at his death, looking in and seeing that he cannot be there unless he conforms wholly to God’s will. This does not seem good to him, and he decides that he can’t live without at least some say of his own. In other words, he chooses hell over heaven, just as Satan did. A frightening prospect! Perhaps we should call this to mind when we are thinking, “This is all too hard! I can’t manage to do what Christ wants me to.” We all need practice in obedience to get us ready for heaven.

When we think of submitting to Christ’s will, we think of the Law: the dos and don’ts. This is what makes obedience seem so hard, because our desires and passions pull us in other directions. And it often *is* hard. Yet the Law is good; it tells us how to be pleasing to God, and what we need to do to flourish as human beings.

But our relation with Christ is not primarily legal: it is personal. When we treat it as legal, we inevitably focus more on the commands more than on the One for whom we do what we ought. Even if we do not become Pharisees and proud of our following the rules, we still lose personal contact with our Lord. It helps to remember that our relation with Christ is one of love, and we should surrender to His love, as children to a loving Father, and as a wife to her loving husband. Surrender to love is deeper and more personal than obedience to law. Love, like obedience, is rooted in the will and is not just a matter of feelings. Love impels us to obey: “If you love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15) Our Lord is also our Beloved. Our obedience and our desire to conform to His will are expressions of our love, which is itself a response to His love for us. On the other hand, the law tells us how to express our love for Him.

Our submission to Christ is, as He tells us, an easy yoke. It is such because He knows our capabilities and does not require of us anything that is beyond us (with the grace He offers). It is easy also because it is a yoke of love. We love Him because He loves us, and that love leads us to do whatever we can for Him. It is that love which led the martyrs to die for Him. So when obedience seems hard, remember His love, and make our obedience an expression of the love we have (and want to have) for Him. God does all things for love. We should too.

## Instituted Acolytes

Those of you from Good Shepherd and St James the Less will remember High Mass with deacon and subdeacon. We have done this only rarely at St John’s, since we have not had a deacon with us on a regular basis. That will change in November when Matthew Hummel and Roger Converse are ordained as deacons. At that time, I expect that Solemn Mass with deacon and subdeacon will become the norm on Sundays at SJB.

In Anglican days, the subdeacon was a layman trained for the liturgical role. As one would expect, the Catholic Church is more careful (and has rules) about who may serve at the altar and in what capacity. Within the Ordinariate, the men who serve as subdeacons must be trained, and then instituted by the Bishop as Instituted Acolytes. We currently have one Instituted Acolyte in the parish, James Griffin. So that the whole burden does not fall on him, we will need a few more. There is a training session, and I am grateful to Mark Jakubik, Steve Lukens and David Rawson for their willingness to travel to Houston to be trained and instituted.

My expectation is that until Matt is ordained a priest, he and Roger will function as deacon and subdeacon (or two deacons) at Sunday Mass, so the Instituted Acolytes will probably not get much work until Matt's ordination as a priest, probably in 2020. Since the acolyte training does not occur every year, we wanted to get them trained now. Roger will be a permanent deacon, so he will continue as our regular deacon after Matt is priested, with one of the Instituted Acolytes serving as subdeacon.

### **Choirs**

Last month, I gave details of the St Cecilia Choir for children, which will be starting up again this month. Of course, there is also our splendid adult choir, which is such an asset to our worship week by week. I'm pleased that there will be several new voices in the adult choir this fall. Others are welcome! Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings and Sunday morning before Mass. For more information, please speak with the music director, William Gatens.

### **Blessing of Animals**

The annual St Francis Blessing of Animals is set for Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> (St Francis' feast day is the 4<sup>th</sup>) at 11. As in the past, it will take place outdoors, in front of the church. Bring your pets. Invite others who have pets! I have a special blessing for any pets that may be sick.

### **Altar Flowers**

Altar flowers can be given as memorials or thank-offerings. If you would like to give altar flowers, please enter the information in the Altar Flower Memorial Book in the coffee hour room of the parish house. The customary offering is \$30 (if this is a hardship, give what you can). I am grateful to my wife, as well as Therese Rawson and Susanna and Charlotte Finegan for arranging the flowers. They do a wonderful job, and it would be vastly more expensive if we had a florist do it.

### **Receptions**

Hospitality is an essential part of the Patrimony, and ours is all done by volunteers. In addition to our Sunday coffee hour (speak with Lisa Livezey to offer your help), we will be hosting receptions after our Ordinariate Form Mass in thanksgiving for the canonization of St John Henry Newman at the Cathedral Basilica on October 15, and after the Ordinations at St John's on November 8. Bell Anderson has generously offered to organize both of these receptions. She will need help. Please offer yours! Donations of food are needed, as well as help setting up and cleaning up. Let Bell know what you can do to help.

### **Calendar**

Two events of our "evangelizing mission of the Ordinariate" should be on your calendars: this Saturday's Community Cookout, and our second Evangelization Day on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Both are important for our mission in Bridgeport. Both will also be fun. Don't miss either. Cookout is 11-1 (set up at 9 or after Mass). E-Day is 9-2:30.

Two feasts which normally come our way in September are pre-empted by Sundays – the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (September 8<sup>th</sup>) and St Michael and All Angels on the 29<sup>th</sup>. In our current calendar, the Sundays have priority, so these two feasts are omitted this year. I will plan to celebrate a votive Mass of St Michael on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

The September Ember Days are times of prayer for ordinands and clergy. This year they are September 18, 20 and 21 (the 21<sup>st</sup> is also the Feast of St Matthew). In the Ordinariate, Ember Friday is a day of obligatory abstinence: no meat (like the Fridays in Lent). Prayers for clergy and seminarians (especially Matt and Roger) are also greatly appreciated.

September 4, 11, 18, 25, Bible Study (on the Psalms), 11:05

September 7, Bridgeport Community Cookout, sponsored by SJB & the Knights of Columbus, 11-1

September 7, Thrift Shop reopens, 10-3

September 8, Sunday School resumes, 11:45-12:30

September 12, St Cecilia Choir rehearsals begin, 5:30; adult choir rehearsals begin, 7:15

September 13, Youth Group, 7 p.m.

September 15, Adult choir returns for Sunday Mass

September 20, Ember Day, obligatory fast (September 18 and 21 are also Ember Days, but not obligatory fasts)

September 20, 20's & 30's Group, first (organizational) meeting, 7 p.m. in the parish house

September 25, Patricians adult discussion group, 6:45 p.m. This month: the Trinity.

October 5, Animal Blessing, 11

October 15 (Tuesday), Ordinariate form Mass at the Cathedral Basilica in Philadelphia, celebrating the canonization of St John Henry Newman, 7 p.m. The Vicar General of the Ordinariate, Fr Timothy Perkins has agreed to come and celebrate and preach (Bishop Lopes will be in Rome at the time).

October 19, Evangelization Day (door to door calling in Bridgeport), 9-2:30

November 8 (Friday), Ordination of Matt Hummel and Roger Converse as Deacons at SJB, 6:30 p.m.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley