

THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

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

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502 FORD STREET, BRIDGEPORT, PENNSYLVANIA 19405

215-247-1092

January, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

We commonly speak differently of someone when he is present than when he is absent. When he is absent, we are apt to be more free, sometimes even offensive, saying things we would never say were he present. When the person is before us, we are careful not to offend, having consideration for his feelings as well as for truth. Even if we are speaking about someone rather than to him, we speak differently when we know he might hear (directly or otherwise) what we say.

What about God? He is always present. Does our speech always reflect our awareness of His presence? Probably not. We are forgetful. We forget that God is always present. We get distracted with the things of the world and the flesh, and we lapse into self-centeredness. But God is *God*, and as such we are never out of His presence. To live in the truth, we need to cultivate a sense of His presence, even when we are not actually praying.

Besides forgetfulness, we may not have a well-formed fear of God – the fear which properly under girds love. Unless we fear God aright – knowing that He is God and we're not – even if we love Him, we will treat Him badly by failing to respect Him. We will fail in gratitude for His willingness to descend to our level in order to love us and save us from sin and for Himself. Whether consciously or not, we will presume upon His love by assuming that we are somehow on the same level that He is, forgetting the essential disparity between Creator and creature, between the All-Holy and sinners.

God is ever present, but He is not “Big Brother,” always ready to punish the least infraction of His law. This, too, misconstrues God's nature. He is present rather as our beloved Husband and Savior, wanting to draw us to Himself and to love us into heaven. Thus He comes to us in special ways: in the Blessed Sacrament, in prayer, in His Word written, so that these may cultivate in us the general and abiding sense of His presence. If Christ is our Beloved, it cannot but be a joy and comfort to know He is present.

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage is an ancient devotional practice of the Church. Probably the earliest Christian pilgrimages were to the holy sites associated with our Lord's earthly life: Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Cana, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River. Pilgrimage has Old Testament roots. Think of Abraham's journey from his homeland to the land God promises to give him and his descendants. Or Israel's journey from Egypt through the wilderness to the Promised Land, and the later return of the exiles from Babylon. In each case there is a journey, undertaken in obedience, where the physical journey reflects the spiritual journey from evil and oppression to the presence of God.

The same connection holds for a Christian pilgrimage. It involves a physical journey to a holy site – a shrine, the Holy Land, Rome, Walsingham, Lourdes. The aim of the physical journey is spiritual: to draw closer to God and to serve Him with greater devotion. While it entails a material journey, the essential purpose is spiritual. We are, after all, physical as well as spiritual creatures. So things like fasting, self-denial, a pilgrimage, matter.

As I mentioned earlier, the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter has organized a series of pilgrimages to the Shrine and Cathedral of Our Lady of Walsingham in observance of the Jubilee Year of *Anglicanorum coetibus*, the 2009 apostolic constitution which allowed the Ordinariates to be established. Because the Cathedral cannot accommodate everyone at once, there are four pilgrimage weekends scheduled between now and September, each for a quarter of the Ordinariate congregations.. The one for St John the Baptist and some ten other communities is June 28-29. It begins with Evensong on Sunday, and concludes with the ordination to the Priesthood on Monday night. (One could also go to Houston on Saturday, and enjoy Sunday morning at the Cathedral.) In all likelihood,

Matthew Hummel will be among those ordained at that service. There will be a variety of devotions and activities during the day on Monday. For those who are interested in such things, a plenary indulgence (on the usual conditions of confession, Communion and prayer for the Pope's intentions) is available each day of the pilgrimage.

The practice of making this kind of pilgrimage is new to most of us. This is a good opportunity to try it out. I hope that there will be a group going from St John's, not just to support Matt, but for the pilgrimage itself. The Shrine is a holy place in its own right as well as an extension of the Shrine in Walsingham in England. That it is at the Cathedral will strengthen the devotional life and unity of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter. If you are thinking about going, please let Pat Lincoln know. Then we can look into coordinating arrangements (travel, lodging, transfers, etc.).

March for Life

This year's March for Life in Washington is Friday, January 24th. This on-going witness for the sanctity of life, and thus the evil of legal abortion, is important for the life of our country. Most years, it is the largest demonstration in Washington, normally drawing several hundred thousand from all over the country. As in the past, there will be an Ordinariate form Mass, organized by St Luke's, the Ordinariate parish in DC. Although St Luke's has moved to Fort Washington outside the city, the March for Life Mass will be at their old location at Immaculate Conception Parish, 8th & N Streets, NW. The Mass is at 10. If you would like to coordinate with others going to the March, please check with Deacon Hummel, the parish Pro-Life Coordinator.

Miscellany

The **Christmas caroling** in Bridgeport went very well this year, nice mild weather, some twenty voices, good leadership from Georgia LaRue, and support at home from the Knights of Columbus. People came outside to listen most of the places we stopped, and we had several appreciative comments on the Bridgeport Facebook page.

In **St Aelred's** January newsletter, Fr Tipton reports that to cope with their overflow they are going to two Masses on Sunday.

Epiphany Evensong & Benediction with the choir is upon us – this Friday, January 10, 7:30 p.m. While this is primarily worship, and done for the glory of God alone, it is also an opportunity to share the riches of our worship with others, especially those of other parishes who are otherwise occupied on Sunday mornings. We are blessed with a particularly wonderful musical tradition, and a fine choir. This is something worth sharing! So share: invite people to come with you. As is our custom, a reception follows the service.

Priests in the Latin Rite are required to take an annual retreat, and I will be away on mine January 13-17. There will be **no weekday Masses** Tuesday to Friday that week.

On Saturday, January 18, St John's will host a Mass for those suffering from **addiction** and its effects. This is all too common these days, whether from drugs or alcohol or pornography. It is frighteningly easy to become addicted, and there are those ready to exploit others' addictions. Jesus cares for those who suffer, and seeks to help the addicted and those who care for them. If you know those who struggle, and families who have suffered the effects of addiction, or those who have a heart for such sufferers, invite them to join us. I will offer the laying on of hands for healing at the end of the Mass. The Mass is at 11 (there will still be the usual Saturday parish Mass at 9).

On Saturday, February 1, there will be a service of Vespers according to **Sarum Use**. Sarum was the most common liturgical form in England before the Reformation. It died out after the Reformation, though elements of Sarum Use were incorporated into the Book of Common Prayer, and abide with us to this day. This Vesper service is thus a reconstruction, and our own James Griffin has been instrumental in putting it together. The service will be at 7 p.m. at St Patrick's Catholic Church, 242 S. 20th Street in Philadelphia.

Candlemas, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (and Purification of the Blessed Virgin) falls on a Sunday this year, February 2. When Jesus was presented in the Temple, Simeon recognized Him as the Messiah, the Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. It is thus the traditional day to bless candles. We will bless the altar candles for the year, and the faithful may bring candles of their own to be blessed as well. Please be sure your candles are clearly marked with your name so that you can retrieve them after Mass, and give them to an usher when you come for Mass.

Coffee Hour Update, a note from Lisa Livezey: "Many thanks to our regular coffee hour hosts and those who contribute to the monthly Pot Luck meal! Hosting is usually a team effort. All Sundays for spring 2020 have hosts except for February 2nd. Volunteers? To participate in a coffee hour team on February 2nd, use the sign-up sheet posted by the

kitchen, or find out more from me. One of our regular hosts will be available to help organize beforehand and on February 2. You'll find that the fellowship is extra sweet in the kitchen. Remember the words of St. Teresa of Avila: "*God walks among the pots and pans.*"

Calendar

January 10, Epiphany Evensong & Benediction with the choir, 7:30 p.m.

January 14-17, No weekday Masses (Fr Ousley will be on retreat); no Bible study on the 15th

January 15, 6:45 p.m., Patricians adult discussion group. This month's topic: the Second Vatican Council

January 18, Mass for those suffering from the effects of addiction, 11 a.m.

January 31, Youth Group, 7 p.m.

February 1, 7 p.m. Sarum Vespers at St Patrick's Catholic Church, 242 S. 20th Street, Philadelphia

February 26, Ash Wednesday, Mass at 10 & 6:30

March 7, 6-10 p.m., Knights of Columbus Night at the Races fund-raiser for the Steeple Fund

June 28-29, Parish Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Houston

Thanks

Thanks goes this month to:

- all who helped prepare the church for Christmas – greens, flowers, cleaning, watering.
- Bill Gatens and the choir for their special efforts at Christmas
- Bell Anderson for the Christmas Eve party in the rectory after the late Mass

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley