

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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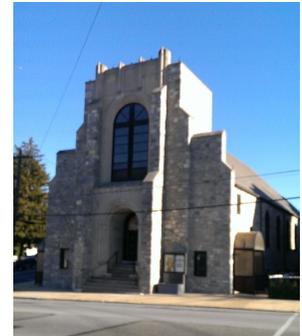
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October, 2017

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

A Christian dies, and before he arrives at the throne of judgment, he has a view into heaven. It is a lovely sight. Everyone there delights in God's will wholly and not at all in his own. No one wants to have things his way, but only God's way. Our Christian, who during his earthly life, regarded it as his right to have certain things his way at home, begins to have doubts about heaven. Will it really be paradise if he has to give up all of his own will, if he really has nothing to say about his life from now on? Will heaven be enjoyable, or rather something of a trial? You see the danger: if we indulge our self-will in this life, we run the risk of rejecting the offer of heaven because it doesn't measure up to our standards. This was the Pharisees' problem: God wasn't the kind of God they wanted.

And Jesus is pretty forthright – harsh perhaps – with them, to get them to see the danger.



Self-will is rooted in pride, and the antidote is humility. Pride runs very deep. "Ye shall be as gods," Satan told Eve. Our pretend divinity – our self-centeredness – is ours from the Fall itself. When St Gregory the Great put the seven capital sins in order, he put pride first, as the root of all the others. It is not overcome easily or quickly. Likewise, we do not have a natural desire for humility, as we do for most of the other virtues. On some level we want to be free from lust and gluttony and anger. These all offend our desire to be a good person, to be worthy of our own respect and that of others. But humility doesn't carry the same incentive. We may want to avoid being obviously overbearing or arrogant, but this is not so much a desire for real humility as it is a limit to its more odious manifestations. We resist humility, since it means giving up getting our own way. We like what we like, especially control of our lives.

God, however, knows this, and helps us. For our benefit, He has made things so that even our failures can help our humility. When we botch what we are doing, especially if it is something where we are proud of our abilities, we can learn humility. Of course, we can also get angry and resentful, which is pride at work. To accept our errors and limitations gracefully cultivates humility.

The same works for moral failures: sin. Suppose gluttony (or lust) is a besetting sin. We seek to limit our eating. We find that it is more difficult than we imagined, especially when we try to do it on our own. We pray. We seek God's grace to eat less. He teaches us to depend upon Him. This dependence also fosters humility, since it makes us less independent and self-directed. So if God gives us this virtue, He is also giving us humility.

But suppose He does not give us the grace we need to reform our eating habits. Even then, He offers us the grace of humility: the humility of failure. Of course, if we double down on our own effort, get defensive about the failure, and try harder on our own effort, then humility will not come our way. But if we accept our failure and our responsibility for it, if we turn to God in sorrow for having failed Him, if in acknowledging our weakness we humble ourselves before Him as sinners in need of forgiveness – then even if we fail in the virtue of moderate eating we can still receive the virtue of humility. To be sure, we may not find this very satisfying. We may prefer defeating gluttony to having humility. But it is wonderful that in His providence, He increases our virtue even when we fail in attaining virtue. To embrace such opportunities, we need to keep in mind (a) that pride can be fatal to our desire for eternal life, and (b) that God may be trying to give the virtue that we need rather than the one we want. God is good. He only has our good – both temporal and eternal – in mind.

Mass at the Cathedral Basilica in Philadelphia

I have mentioned before that on Monday, October 9th (Columbus Day), we will be celebrating an Ordinariate Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter & Paul in Philadelphia on the feast of Blessed John Henry Newman. This will be the first time the Ordinariate Form is celebrated in Philadelphia outside SJB and its predecessor congregations, and thus the first time at the Archdiocese cathedral basilica. It is thus a wonderful opportunity to introduce our liturgy (and our existence!) to a wider Catholic audience. Getting the word out about the Ordinariate and its mission is vitally important, both for Catholics and non-Catholics. For Catholics, we want them to share the

excitement of this “realized ecumenism” which Pope Benedict XVI instituted, providing for unity without uniformity, and the enrichment of the Catholic Church. Our form of Mass, now established as a fully Catholic form, is the first liturgy which developed outside the Catholic Church to be accepted within. For non-Catholics, the Ordinariate offers a pathway into the Catholic Church which affirms all that is good and compatible with the Catholic faith from the Anglican Way. As we know so well, this makes the transition vastly easier.

Bill Gatens will be there with the choir (augmented for the occasion), and we will be using the high altar. The acolytes will be out in force, and other parishioners will be helping as ushers. I am grateful to Frs Al Scharbach and Eric Bergman, our “neighboring” Ordinariate Pastors from Mount Calvary in Baltimore and St Thomas More in Scranton for coming to serve as Deacon and Subdeacon for the Mass. Bishop John McIntyre, one of the Philadelphia Auxiliaries and a great friend of St John’s, has agreed to preach. Fr Gill, the Rector of the cathedral, has been very supportive. I would ask that you make every effort to be there (the cathedral is a large building!) to worship, to show your support, and to welcome others. Also be thinking of others you can invite to join us. The Mass is at 7 p.m. Parking should be available in the lot behind the cathedral: the entrance is on 17th Street.

In October

Thursday, October 5th: First meeting of the **Patricians** Adult Discussion Group, on “Why Go to Confession?” The group, sponsored by the Legion of Mary, is intended to help Catholics better articulate their faith. 7-9 p.m.

Saturday, October 7th, 10 a.m., in front of the church: St Francis **Animal Blessing**

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity, October 8th: **Baptism** of Thomas Winslow Royce, Jr.

Monday, October 9th, Feast of Blessed John Henry Newman: Ordinariate Form **Mass at the Cathedral Basilica** of Ss Peter & Paul, 7 p.m. (details above)

Saturday, October 14th, the monthly **cleaning day**; begins after the 9 o’clock Mass.

Saturday, October 14th, 1 p.m., **Rosary Rally** to pray publicly for our country, outside on the corner of Ford Street and Union Avenue. Organized by members of the local Knights of Columbus.

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, October 15th: Consecration of the Ordinariate and the parish to **Our Lady of Fatima**. In honor of the 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions of Our Lady in Fatima, Portugal, Bishop Lopes will consecrate the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter to Our Lady of Fatima at the cathedral in Houston. He has asked that all the parishes in the Ordinariate make a comparable consecration to Our Lady on that Sunday. In addition, Archbishop Chaput will consecrate the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to Our Lady of Fatima that same Sunday at the 11:00 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral Basilica. Also that Sunday, an **Adult Forum** during coffee hour: beginning a series on the Family. The first session is on the Christian understanding of Marriage. The family is both widely misunderstood and often undermined in our culture these days, which makes it that much more important that we as Christians understand it, and shape our lives accordingly.

October 23rd- 27th: annual Ordinariate clergy assembly in California. No weekday Masses at St John’s.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity, October 29th: second **Adult Forum** on the Family – Contraception. Also Aid for Friends assembling breakfast bags.

November 1st, All Saints’ Day (Holy Day of Obligation): Mass (with healing), 10 a.m.; Sung Mass, 7 p.m.

November 2nd, All Souls’ Day: Requiem Mass, 10 a.m.; Sung Mass of Requiem, 7 p.m.

The **Thrift Shop** continues its mission of service on Tuesdays and Saturdays, 10-3.

Kudos

I want to extend thanks this month to:

- Doug Sherlock, for replacing the faded Ordinariate flag (which he originally had designed and made for us) with one which should be more durable.
- James Griffin for helping in many ways (posters, leaflet, PR, organization) with the Ordinariate Form Mass at the cathedral on the 9th.
- those who generously provide our excellent refreshments at coffee hour on Sunday.
- Cristina Shiffman for joining the altar guild workers.
- David Livezey and everyone who made the community cookout such a success.
- Therese Rawson and Beth Ousley for doing altar flowers.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley