

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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November, 2018

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

A recent Patricians discussion centered on how to proclaim the Gospel in the world we live in. This reminded us of the ways in which our unbelieving world offers some very unsatisfying answers to the question of what fulfills human life.

For example, the world sees the enjoyment of material goods as a prime purpose of life, so we acquire, possess, enjoy. And yet, while this is a desire we all have to some extent, the world's goods cannot bring contentment. Rather, when we try to gratify the desire, we are never satisfied. We always want more. The more we feed the desire, the bigger it gets. And while the things do bring pleasure on some level, they also bring discontent: the fulfillment we hoped for never materializes. The ads we are beset with on every side promise what they cannot fulfill. We end up being ruled by our possessions.

Or (the obvious example): the sins of the flesh. Our age exalts sex, and divorces sexual pleasure from marriage, commitment, procreation, self-discipline. Sexual pleasure is not only sought, it is considered to be a right. Chastity, whether within marriage or outside, is considered impossible, much less desirable. Yet the pleasure is fleeting, yet leaves one seeking it all the more. It quickly becomes addictive in various forms: pornography, for one, is rampant. Moreover, the wreckage that the pursuit of gratification leaves in its wake is enormous, and obvious. Persons, especially women, are treated as things, a means to gratification. Children are killed in the womb. As with materialism, sex promises something it cannot deliver.

Third example: our culture generally denies the existence of objective truth, beauty and goodness: everything is relative. Contemporary art and music are all too often ugly, with no effort at beauty. Why should art be beautiful? Beauty is not something objective but only "in the eye of the beholder," so the artist can determine for himself what he thinks is "beautiful." And it is often ugly. Morals as well as truth are also considered relative: what is true for me may not be true for you. Likewise we no longer share standards of moral behavior. It is not that long ago, for example, that our society regarded sex outside of marriage (or at least, without some commitment of love) to be wrong. Even though the standard was widely violated, there was still a standard. Now, there is no agreement that any sex (with the possible exception of child abuse) is always wrong.

Why is it worthwhile to pay attention to the "world" which Christians leave behind when they put on Christ? There are two reasons. First, understanding the futility of life without Christ, we are moved with compassion for those who do not believe, and we are prepared both to intercede for them and to offer our witness to the better way of living. Understanding their current situation and the emptiness which results from it, we can offer the Christian alternative in ways that address the particular needs of this age.

The second reason is that we, even as Christians, are all infected to some degree with the worldliness of the age. We live here, after all, and can hardly be unaffected by all that is around us: advertising, media, the ethos reflected in politics, news reporting, movies and television, sports, as well as the influence of our non-Christian friends. This cannot but have an effect upon us, even if the effect is subtle. Knowing its character will help us as we seek Christ's mercy to protect us from the pernicious effects on our hearts and lives. And it moves us to undying gratitude that God in His mercy has lifted us out of the dismal (if superficially glitzy) swamp of materialism, hedonism and relativism.

Calendar

November 6, 20 & 27 – adult class (on Skype) on the Fundamentals of the Christian Life.

November 7, 6:30 p.m. – Patricians adult discussion group. This month: Contraception (2018 is the fiftieth anniversary of *Humanae vitae*, Pope Paul VI's encyclical on contraception). This is a *discussion* group, and you are welcome at any or all of the monthly sessions.

November 9 & 30 – High School Youth Group, 7-8:30.

November 11 & 25 – Sunday Adult Forum on the Fundamentals of the Christian Life (covers the same material as the Tuesday Skype class)

November 13-16 – No weekday Masses (while I am on my canonically-required annual retreat)

November 22 – Thanksgiving Day, Mass at 10 a.m. (no 6 p.m. Mass). On November 23, the Friday abstinence may be replaced with some other penance.

December 1 – Advent Quiet Day, 9-2. Mass, addresses, quiet time, opportunity for confessions, Benediction. A time to leave behind the busyness of life as usual, and take time with no other purpose than being with our Lord. Recommended for getting ready for Christmas. Even better than shopping.

December 7-8 – Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation): Mass on the Vigil (Friday night), 6:30 & on the Day (Saturday), 9. Both fulfill the obligation.

December 14 – Advent Evensong & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament (with choir), 7:30 p.m. Reception following.

News from the Ordinariate

The *St Peter Gradual* has now been published and is available from Newman House Publishers. It contains all the music for the minor propers (Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory and Communion) for the Sundays and Solemnities. The music is largely the same as that which we have been using at St John's, so the transition will be an easy one for us. I will be ordering copies for the choir, so if any of you would like one, let me know, and I can add it to the order to take advantage of the bulk discount.

That's the good publishing news. The bad news is that the Daily Office book is not yet out. Perhaps this winter. Meanwhile, we can continue using the offices out of the 1928 BCP, with the lessons and collects as printed in the Sunday leaflet each week.

We have heard that a second miracle attributed to Blessed John Henry Newman has been certified in Rome. This means that his cause for canonization can proceed. There are several additional steps before he can be proclaimed a Saint: it is to be hoped that all will be completed by next fall.

The Papal Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, joined us for Evensong (and a reception afterward) at the clergy assembly in Houston last week. I'm told that this is unusual. He is the Pope's representative in America, and when he visits a diocese it is normally to see the bishop. We cannot but be grateful for his interest, and for taking the time to visit with us.

Next year marks the tenth anniversary of *Anglicanorum coetibus*, Pope Benedict's decree which provides for the establishment of the ordinariates, including ours. A four day program is being planned for members of the three Ordinariates in Rome in November, 2019. A land package has already been put together, and all are welcome to make the trip. November 4-9. Let me know if you are interested: maybe a group from SJB? When the details of the program are finalized, I'll share them.

Pledge Cards, etc.

Pledge cards have been mailed to parishioners. If perchance you did not get one, please accept my apologies, and let me know so that I can send one. In the letter with the pledge card, I explained both the Christian approach to giving (as I do every year), and also our special circumstances this year. I will not repeat it all here, except to note that this year, we have asked for support for the capital expenses associated with the Master Plan for the buildings from any who might be able to make capital contributions. Our parishioners already give generously and sacrificially in support of St John's. We will work away on the capital projects as funds become available. Details and drawings of the proposed work are now available on our web site. Please return the pledge cards before the end of the month, so that we can plan prudently for the year ahead, both with the operating budget and for the building projects. As always, I am grateful for your generous support.

The Saint Cecilia Choir made its debut last Sunday, joining the adult choir in the choir loft and supporting them in the hymns and chants. Kevin Chun has things are moving along nicely with the new choir!

Note that I have a new email address, pastor@sjbbridgeport.org, and will be using this to replace (eventually) dao@anglicanphiladelphia.org. Both work for the present, but it would be helpful if you start using the sjbbridgeport address rather than the anglicanphiladelphia one. No doubt the reason for the shift is obvious (anglicanphiladelphia antedating our entry into the Ordinariate).

Thanks to:

- David Livezey and Bill Finegan for a temporary fix and cleanup of a recent leak in the coffee hour room.
- The Finegan Family Singers for “busking” – the children of the family singing a capella at coffee hour to raise funds to support Delbert and Vanessa Franklin during Delbert's illness.
- John Ewing for his work in getting the exit signs working in the parish house.
- And a very special word of thanks to the people who feed us each Sunday after Mass. “Coffee hour” is really a misnomer, as we enjoy a full meal. The meal gives us the opportunity to visit with one another, which is particularly important in a parish as far-flung as ours – with the thrift shop,

probably our most important ministry. The food is donated, and it takes considerable effort to put together a meal for fifty people (or more). While one Sunday a month is “pot luck” and various people contribute, the primary providers are Lisa Livezey, Angela Johnson, Dawn Lybrand, Raynor Sherlock and my wife. Pat Lincoln and Chris Jordan do the preliminary setup each week. Also thanks to those who bring food for the pot-luck Sundays, and those who wash the tablecloths. Thanks!

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley