

# 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

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

502 FORD STREET, BRIDGEPORT, PENNSYLVANIA 19405

215-247-1092

---

---

December, 2019

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Advent gives us time to prepare for Christmas. “Prepare” in this instance does not mean Christmas shopping and decorating the tree or even “greening” the church. It means heeding the Baptist’s call (which he took from Isaiah), “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” We want our hearts to be a straight pathway for our Lord to come to us, and to come through us to others. We want to have pure hearts, with nothing to block Him. Sunlight will shine through a clean window, but not so well through one that is dirty, and not at all through the one with the curtains drawn. Advent is the time to open the curtains and clean the window, because Jesus comes to us in a special way at Christmas.

How do we prepare our hearts for Him? The reality is that we need a new heart and cannot perform heart surgery on ourselves. Only God can do what needs to be done. But He needs our cooperation. We will need to lie still during the surgery. We’ll need to do our exercises and take the medications He prescribes before and after the surgery. Our part is to live in trust for Him, in humility, knowing that we cannot manage what needs to be done on our own. That includes being profoundly grateful that He is willing to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves – that is His great gift to us. Along with humility and gratitude, we will need to be penitent for all the things we have done wrong, all the ways we have offended against His ardent love for us. This, in turn, means being regular with our sacramental confessions, especially in preparation for the Christmas Feast.

All of our preparations for the celebration of His First Coming to earth will also prepare us for His Return in glory and judgment at the end of the age. To stand before Him at the judgment requires having sought to live a moral life. But it requires more than that. We will need to rejoice at His appearing. And that requires that we recognize Him, and love Him. In other words, our hearts need to be pure, not just from sin, but also to be full of love for Him who first loves us. Purity of heart is the means to love. And love allows us to welcome Him without shame or fear, today, and every day, and the Last Day.

The service schedule for Christmas is the same as last year:

Christmas Eve (Tuesday, December 24th)

Mass with Carols, 5 p.m.

Carols, 10 p.m.

Sung Mass (with choir), 10:30 p.m.

Christmas Day (December 25th)

Sung Mass, 10 a.m.

Christmas is an Holy Day of Obligation, and the obligation can be satisfied at any of the Masses. Communion is permitted twice if you attend Mass on the day as well as Christmas Eve. To spread the Christmas message, we also plan to go Christmas Caroling in the neighborhood on Friday, December 27<sup>th</sup>. We’ll gather for a little food and warm up at 5:30, go out for an hour or so, and come back for hot chocolate.

### **Mission**

In Advent we rightly focus on our preparation for Christ’s coming at Christmas and at the end of time. Yet we do not leave aside our mission of bringing Christ to others, of helping others to be prepared to welcome Christ the Savior. In this, we follow the example of our Patron, St John the Baptist, who testified to Christ all his life and in his death.

One mission this month is the doorknob hanger project: as we have done in the past, we hang Christmas cards – with invitation to our Christmas Masses – on all the doors in Bridgeport. Fortunately, Bridgeport is not too large! This serves not only to let people know what time the Christmas services are (and that they are welcome), but also reminds them that there is a “new” Catholic Church on Ford Street. Bill Finegan is organizing the effort, which is planned for the Second and Third Sundays in Advent, December 8 and 15, during or after coffee hour. It is also possible for you to take a block or two and do it at another time which may be more convenient for you.

Another part of the mission this Advent is Prayer for a Block. Prayer cards are being prepared with a prayer and identification of a particular block in Bridgeport. I hope everyone in the

parish will agree to make prayer for a block a part of your regular devotions. You can take the same block you're doing for the doorknob hangers. If you are not able to help with the hangers, you can still take a block. Bill Finegan will have the cards for everyone this Sunday, Advent II.

An on-going mission is the Thrift Shop, which serves to introduce people to St John's, and serve the material needs of many people. December is a time when we are apt to see some new faces in the shop. A prayer for the mission of the Thrift Shop and those in need would not be out of order, especially this time of year. We are blessed with a faithful crew of volunteers who keep the shop open. Let me invite you to join their happy band! The shop is open Tuesday & Saturday, 10-3. Some volunteers come for the whole time; others give an hour or two. They all testify that it is a rewarding time. Come visit – and volunteer!

Our caroling in the neighborhood after Christmas is also missionary, as well as fun and edifying for us: bringing the true spirit of the season to those around us, witnessing to the Incarnation, which is our joy and our salvation.

We also have Epiphany Evensong & Benediction with the choir coming up on 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 on the tenth.

### **Saint Aelred's, Etc.**

Please keep our companion community in Athens, Georgia, in your prayers. I saw Fr Tipton at the Ordinariate clergy assembly in October, and he reports that the community continues to grow. They currently meet in a classroom which has been converted into a chapel in the school where Fr Tipton assists. It will hold about forty. They have maxed out in the space – which is good. But it also means that they are looking for a larger space. I understand that there is no obvious solution. There are two Catholic churches in town, but neither has suitable space available when it is needed, and the community is not yet in the financial position to buy something. Meanwhile, they rejoice in the cramped space which God has provided for them for now.

We have had to acquire some additional **vestments**, now that we have deacons in the parish. If anyone would like to contribute towards the cost, it would be appreciated: please let me know. These make great memorials.

Coming in January, 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 who exploit others' addictions, and thus are out to increase it. 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, invite them to join us on Saturday, January 18 at 11 for the Mass. I will offer the laying on of hands for healing at the end of the Mass.

Don't forget the Advent Quiet Day, this Saturday, December 7, 9-2: the ideal way to prepare the heart to receive the Lord as he comes to us at Christmas, and in the Holy Communion, and at the end of time. The day begins with Mass, and includes time for confession, adoration, quiet, and some spiritual instruction. Breakfast and lunch provided; no reservations necessary.

### **Calendar**

December 6, Ember Friday in Advent: Obligatory Abstinence

December 6, Youth Group, 7 p.m.

December 7, Advent Quiet Day, 9-2

December 8 & 15, Hanging Christmas cards on doorknobs in Bridgeport (during and after coffee hour)

December 9, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Sung Mass at 6:30 p.m.

December 14, Greening of the Church, after the 9 a.m. Mass

December 24, Christmas Eve, Mass at 5 p.m.; Carols at 10, Solemn Mass (with choir), 10:30 p.m.

December 25, Christmas Day, Sung Mass, 10 a.m.

December 27, Christmas Caroling in Bridgeport, 5:30 p.m.

January 1, Mary, the Holy Mother of God, (holy day of obligation), Mass at 10 a.m.

January 10, Evensong & Benediction, 7:30 p.m.

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

### **Thanks**

Thanks goes this month to:

Joanna Falini, for helping to acquire and plant a Magnolia by the back parking lot.

David Brothers Landscapers of Norristown, for contributing their time and expertise to a grounds cleanup before the ordinations (Joanna Falini arranged this).

David Rawson, for his donation of the Sarum blue Solemn Mass set of vestments

Bill Finegan for organizing the doorhanger project

Mark Johnson for overseeing the greening of the church

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley