

# 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

---

---

February, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Ash Wednesday is February 26<sup>th</sup> this year. You know what that means: Lent! Lent is a (*the*) penitential season. Some people (a minority, I think) actually like Lent, the fasting and penitence notwithstanding. There seem to be two reasons for this. First, the season nudges us into taking the Christian life seriously. We pray a little more, the fast keeps us more aware of God (and our weakness), the additional church services focus us on who we are and who God is. All of this reflects the truth about our identity; it fosters a rightly ordered relation with God. We learn to be dependent, grateful, trusting. The truth is always good for us, and as we live out the truth, we experience contentment and joy. It is the way we are created to be.

The second reason people like Lent is penitence: godly sorrow for our sin. While it is not pleasant to look our sin in the face, this too is the truth about who we are: sinners. We have messed up. We have not done those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. Lent helps us to see ourselves truly, and to relate our sin to the passion of Christ who died for us. As Christians, we are *redeemed sinners*, no more and no less. We will never appreciate the redemption unless we first face the sin which needs redemption.

Of course, we need to get the penitence right. There is an ungodly sorrow for sin, just as there is godly sorrow. The ungodly is self-centered: sin wounds our self-image. We want to be righteous so that we don't have to apologize, and can think well of ourselves. The tip-off that our sorrow is off track is that we get defensive about our sins. This is a self-centered sorrow. If we offend someone on earth whom we love, we are concerned for his hurt that we have caused more than our wounded self-image. So too with God. If we care about His love, we will be sorry to have offended Him. Penitence is more about *Him* than it is about *me*. Because we trust in His love, we want to confess our sins. We want to throw ourselves on His mercy. We want Him to give us what we cannot have on our own: forgiveness and restoration in His love.

The fruit of penitence is joy. We can have some pleasure in those times when we resist temptation. But such pleasure in our own righteousness is always limited and tenuous: we are never more than a hair's breadth from falling into sin, especially when we lapse into depending on ourselves rather than on Him. God's gift of forgiveness, however, is sure and reliable. It is a true and solid foundation for joy. Trust in His mercy and hope in His redemption give us real cause for joy. May this joy be yours this Lent!

## Lent

Practically speaking, here's what's coming. On **Shrove Tuesday**, there will be an additional confession time, 5-5:45 p.m. A confession is a good way to start Lent. (The regular weekly times are Sunday 9-9:45 and Thursday 5:30-5:45.) Then Mass at 6, the usual Tuesday time, followed by pancake supper in the parish hall. After supper, you are invited to join an informal hymn sing in the rectory. Bill Gatens will accompany: you choose hymns to sing. Last year, this was a delightful way to launch into Lent.

**Ash Wednesday** (February 26<sup>th</sup>) Masses are at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. The evening Mass is a Sung Mass. Ashes imposed at both Masses. Like Good Friday, Ash Wednesday is a strict fast of a single meal, normally taken after 2 p.m. This fast is obligatory for those between 18 and 59, and strongly recommended for all others whose health permits. All the Fridays in Lent are days of obligatory abstinence from meat. (In the Ordinariate, all the Fridays of the year except those after Christmas and Easter require abstinence or some other act of self-denial.)

**Stations of the Cross** and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament will be at 7:30 p.m. each Friday in Lent (except Good Friday), beginning February 28<sup>th</sup>. Before Stations, everyone is invited to a soup supper in the parish hall, which begins at 6. The Lenten **Quiet Day** will be on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 9-2, with Fr Albert Scharbach. Put it on your calendar now. It is a great opportunity to take some time to be quiet with Jesus.

## Lenten Rule

We are all encouraged to undertake some sort of special devotion in Lent. This can take the form of a Lenten rule, where we commit ourselves to certain disciplines during the season. One area appropriate for the rule is *self-denial*. This can include fasting on the weekdays of Lent (e.g.,

eating less, no snacks, junk food, desserts, seconds, alcohol); less or no TV or video games; volunteering time for service at church or a charity; taking what you would have spent on some innocent pleasure and giving it instead to the church or charity; devoting time to spiritual reading (taking a “Lenten book” for spiritual reading is a common practice). Self-denial can thus involve our time, our flesh, our material resources.

Another area for Lent is *prayer*. Daily prayer is a good place to start, whether with setting aside time for quiet or for Matins or Evensong. This is something many people feel is lacking but never quite manage to get established. So Lent is a good time to seek the grace of God to begin (or expand). Lenten prayer can also include an additional weekday Mass, the Friday Stations of the Cross, and more frequent confession. It could also include a more intentional preparation before Mass (getting to church early) and thanksgiving after.

In forming a Lenten rule, one wants to undertake something genuinely sacrificial, yet not overwhelming. And the doing of it needs always to depend upon grace rather than our own effort. Indeed, it is not uncommon for things to all fall apart at some point in Lent – and then we humiliate. Start thinking about it now, and be ready when Ash Wednesday rolls around, all too soon. I am happy to consult about details if that would be helpful.

### **Night at the Races**

The Bridgeport Holy Family Council of the Knights of Columbus has taken it upon themselves to host a fund-raiser for our Steeple Fund. As you recall, there are some issues with the tower on the church which need to be addressed, and, after we have done that, we’d like to add a steeple, since the tower is pretty squat. This is the purpose of the Building Fund, now called the Steeple Fund. We are close to halfway towards what we need to do the repairs. Knowing this, the Knights asked if they could put on a fund-raiser for us. So on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Night at the Races in the hall at St Peter and St Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, up the hill on Union Avenue. (They have a much larger hall than we do.) You, and your friends are invited! Please support this very generous effort of the Knights on our behalf.

At the center of the entertainment is a series of “horse races.” We “buy” horses which then run in the races. If your horse wins the computer-controlled race, you win \$50. You can also bet on other people’s horses, and there will be a 50-50 and some other opportunities to gamble if you want to. Your admission also gets you food – beef and beer, pizza, wine, etc. It should be a fun night. March 7<sup>th</sup>, 6-10. Admission is \$25, which includes one horse – and you get to name your horse. Extra horses are \$10. Some of the Knights will be with us at coffee hour next Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup> to sell us horses. I have forms in case you miss them. They have also been soliciting ads and sponsorships from area businesses. They are putting in a lot of work on this, and I trust there will be strong support from St John’s, since we are the beneficiary of their efforts.

The Holy Family Council of the Knights covers the Catholic churches in Bridgeport, including St John’s (they meet in our parish house). It is a venerable Catholic organization for men, which does many good works. I would encourage all the men of St John’s to consider joining.

### **The “Gesimas”**

Perhaps a word is in order about the Pre-Lenten Season. Those coming to St John’s from the modern Roman or Episcopal Church calendars will be unfamiliar with Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima, the three Sundays before Ash Wednesday. They take their names from being approximately 70, 60 and 50 days before Easter. Septuagesima marks the turning point of the Church Year: until now, everything was dated from Christmas, from now on, it is all figured from the date of Easter. Pre-Lent warns us that Lent is at hand, so that we can be prepared – with our Lenten rule decided and ready to go, and with the spiritual preparation of a sacramental confession. Liturgically, the color of the season is a penitential purple, and Gloria in excelsis is omitted on Sundays. All the Alleluias are omitted at all Masses until the return of the Great Alleluia at the Easter Vigil.

### **Pilgrimage**

We have some 15 people already planning to go on the Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Walsingham on Houston in June, which I wrote about last month. Plenty of room for more! It is June 28-29, and includes services at the Cathedral, devotions at the Shrine, and (in all likelihood) Matt Hummel’s ordination to the priesthood. Please let me know if you are considering going – that will help in arrangements.

### **Solemnity of the Chair of Saint Peter**

Quinquagesima is pre-empted this year by our celebration of the titular Solemnity of the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter. So on Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will observe the Chair of Saint Peter at the 10 o’clock Mass, praising God for all the blessings we have received in the Ordinariate with a Solemn Te Deum at the end of Mass.

### **Calendar**

February 16, Knights of Columbus visit coffee hour to “sell” horses and sign people up for the Night at the Races

February 19, Patricians adult discussion group. This month: taking a closer look at Prayer before Lent begins

February 21, Youth Group, 7 p.m.

February 25, Shrove Tuesday: confessions at 5, Mass at 6, Pancake Supper following, with hymn sing  
February 26, Ash Wednesday, Mass at 10 & 6:30 (fast & abstinence)  
February 28 & the other Fridays in Lent: Stations of the Cross & Benediction, 7:30 p.m. Soup Sup-  
per at 6. (abstinence)  
March 7, 6-10 p.m., Knights of Columbus Night at the Races fund-raiser for the Steeple Fund  
March 8, Sunday Adult Forum on the National Catholic Bioethics Center with Dr John Haas, Presi-  
dent Emeritus  
March 28, Lenten Quiet Day with Fr Albert Scharbach  
May 30, Evangelization Day in Bridgeport  
June 28-29, Parish Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Houston

#### **Thanks**

Thanks goes this month to Mark Johnson and his crew for taking down the Christmas decorations and the creche, storing everything away for next Christmas, and cleaning up.  
Also to James Griffin for organizing and directly the wonderful service of Sarum Vespers at St Patrick's earlier this month, and to Fr Catania for preaching for us on Candlemas.

Yours faithfully,  
Fr David Ousley