

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.SJBBRIDGEPORT.ORG

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April, 2017

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Palm Sunday

Blessing & Distribution of Palms, Procession & Sung Mass, 10 a.m.

Confessions, 9-9:45 a.m.

Monday in Holy Week: Mass, 6 p.m.

Tuesday in Holy Week: Mass, 6 p.m.

Wednesday in Holy Week: Mass, 10 a.m.

Confessions after the Mass each day

Maundy Thursday

Sung Mass, Procession to the Altar of Repose 7:30 p.m.

The Watch follows, until noon on Good Friday

Good Friday

Good Friday Liturgy, noon-3

Veneration of the Cross, Mass of the Presanctified, Preaching on the Seven Last Words

Confessions after the service

Holy Saturday

The Altar Service, 10 a.m.

Vigil & First Mass of Easter, 8:30 p.m.

Easter Day

Procession & Sung Mass, 10 a.m.

Confessions, 9-9:45 a.m.

A few comments about Holy Week this year. In the singing of the Passions on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, the congregation will be taking the part of the crowds, so the musical setting of those parts will be plainsong rather than the four-part harmonies that the choir did last year. On Maundy Thursday, which commemorates Jesus' Last Supper with the Twelve, we will include this year the foot-washing. Jesus came among us as one who serves, and by example as well as word, gave us the new commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you."

All should be in church for Palm Sunday and Easter (the Vigil or Easter Day or both), which are obligatory, and on Good Friday. To attempt to celebrate Easter without having observed Good Friday simply does not work. The resurrection only makes sense *after* death. Jesus does not live because He avoided dying, but because He was raised from the grave. Moreover, the Good Friday liturgy is a powerful one, appealing to the heart, the mind, and the spirit. It is demanding, yes, as is the Holy Week schedule generally. It is also fully worth the effort we put into it. The Good Friday service lasts three hours, the time Jesus hung upon the Cross. There is no celebration of the Mass, but Communion is given from the Reserved Sacrament consecrated on Maundy Thursday. We also venerate the Cross: to show our love for our Lord dying for us. The later part of the three hours is the preaching of the Seven Last Words from the Cross. Good Friday is an obligatory day of strict fast.

We plan to keep the Watch before the Altar of Repose from the end of the Maundy Thursday Mass until the Good Friday liturgy at noon. This devotion comes from Jesus' request to the disciples to watch with Him while He prayed in Gethsemane between the Last Supper and His arrest on Friday morning. They fell asleep. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" So we watch for an hour before the Altar of Repose. This is often a time of great intimacy with

our Lord – though it is also often a time of sleepiness. There should be someone there the whole time, so we need your help. A sheet with the times is in the church: please sign up for an hour so that we may keep the Watch unbroken.

Please note the confession times. A sacramental confession is excellent preparation for keeping the Easter feast, and a good conclusion to Lent – especially if Lent has not gone as planned or intended. Catholics are generally obligated to make a sacramental confession once a year, and whenever mortal sin may have been committed. (For sin to be mortal, it must involve grave matter – something objectively very serious – full knowledge, and free consent.) I am always available to hear confessions by appointment if the scheduled times do not suit.

Thrift Shop

I'm delighted to report that we have enough interest to establish a thrift shop at St John the Baptist. We are blessed to have people with experience running the thrift shop at Good Shepherd who are willing to work on one here. Over the next few weeks, we will be preparing space for the shop in the former Mount Carmel thrift shop on the main floor of the school building. This space has the parish offices, and will also provide space for a choir practice room. We expect to be ready to receive donations later this month – I will give you details when they are available. You may start collecting suitable items now. Clothing should be in good condition and clean. Any electronics should be in good working order (no old TV's please: these cannot be sold and become costly to dispose of).

The thrift shop has several purposes. First, it provides a service to those in material need. By providing goods at modest cost, we help those who might not be able to afford things new. Likewise, we will make provision for those who cannot afford even the modest costs. In addition, the shop gives us an opportunity to connect with the community – it is a form of outreach. People coming to shop will naturally ask questions about SJB, which gives us an opportunity to spread the word. The shop will provide income for the parish. It also helps build the community of SJB through the group of workers in the shop – which I hope will include many of you. We will be inviting people to volunteer to work in the shop, as well as soliciting donations!

Veiling of Images

The images we have in church, whether of our Lord or of the saints, are intended to be for us windows to heaven. This is the difference between sacred art and religious art. Sacred art is always an icon: earthly beauty intended to open our hearts to the heavenly reality there represented. (For a fuller treatment, see pp. 115-135 of *The Spirit of the Liturgy* by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI.) From Passion Sunday until Easter, the images in the church are veiled or covered. We deny ourselves both the beauty and the spiritual aid which the images provide. Just as our Lenten fast is self-denial, so too this Passiontide discipline is a spiritual self-denial. We have a special opportunity this year for this self-denial, in that we had only a week to enjoy our “new” altarpieces before Passiontide comes and the doors are closed. We deny (until Easter) our desires to behold the beauty, even as we deny our desires for food in the Lenten fast. In either case, the denial should lead us closer to our Lord, who emptied Himself to take our nature upon Him, fasted for us forty days in the wilderness, and suffered torture and death for our redemption.

Side Altarpieces

The side Altarpieces are now in place, and are a significant enhancement to the church. Dave Murphy of Dave Murphy Contracting did an excellent job with the move and installation. (I am happy to commend him for your contracting needs!) The only downside I can see is that the lovely side altars now make the High Altar look a little spare. We'll have to see what can be done about that in due course.

Dave has also completed the initial reconstruction of the choir loft, which will allow us to move the (temporary) organ and choir from the back of the nave to the loft. That, in turn, allows us to use the confessional for the Sunday confessions (9-9:45, in case you have forgotten), and to have the Altar of Repose in the back of the church this year where the organ has been. Your Building Fund dollars at work!

A special thanks this month to those who came to clean up the plaster dust from the altarpiece installation: Leslie Altena, Cristina Shiffman, Angela, Mark & Mitch Johnson, Pat Lincoln, Chris Jordan, Carol DeSandro, Steve Lybrand, Joann, Elena & Felicity Sutton, Raynor Sherlock, Robert Curry-Bey, and Beth Ousley. There is another cleaning day before Holy Week: Saturday, April 8th, beginning after the 9 o'clock Mass. Many hands make light work. If you are interested there are some recent photos from Passion Sunday on the web site. I wish you all a blessed Holy Week and Easter.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley