

# THE PHILADELPHIA ORDINARIATE POST

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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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April, 2018

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

The Gospel accounts of the resurrection appearances impress upon us the profound change that come over people who encounter the Risen Lord. The two disciples who walk with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, when they have recognized Him in the breaking of bread, immediately get up and return to Jerusalem – even though they had planned to stay in Emmaus and it is late in the day. They change their plans. Mary Magdalene recognizes Jesus when He calls her by name, but He says to her, Touch me not, ... but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” And she goes! When Thomas sees Jesus on Low Sunday, he confesses, “My Lord and my God!” His doubt is swallowed up in profound and unshakable faith.

Most often, this transformation takes the character of mission. The angels at the tomb send the women back to tell the disciples that Jesus is risen. Mary Magdalene is sent to the disciples. The apostles are sent to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Peter is told three times to feed Jesus’ sheep. Transformation leads to mission.

The same pattern holds for all of us. We are to be transformed by our encounter with the crucified and risen Lord. (He is risen only because He first died: His life now is not the avoidance of death but its defeat by His willingness to embrace it on behalf of sinners who deserved to die.) To be Christian is to encounter the Lord – who died and is alive. That encounter must of its very character lead to a change of life, to conversion. Why? Because it tells us that death does not have the final word, and thus that there is more to life than avoiding death (with all the materialism, pleasure-seeking, pain-avoidance that goes along with that). Love, sacrifice, God all matter more than my self-gratification. The risen Lord is the key to the meaning of life.

With the transformation comes mission. This is principally introducing others to the wonder of the risen Lord. This is a reality we cannot and do not want to keep to ourselves. If He is the key to life, then our lives should show it, in humility and penitence as well as joy.

## **Deacon-to-be**

I am delighted to report that Roger Converse has been accepted for formation in the Ordinariate for the permanent diaconate. Many of you know Roger from his time as a deacon at the Blessed John Henry Newman Fellowship. He was a deacon in the Reformed Episcopal Church until his reception into the Catholic Church. Since he already holds a Master of Divinity degree, he will be able to go ahead with his formation without waiting for the next class of deacons (which begins its formation in 2020) and if things go according to plan, we can look forward to having him ordained for service at St John’s in the fall of 2019.

Permanent deacons, as the name implies, are not generally ordained priests later. They normally serve a particular parish, and derive their main livelihood outside the parish. Roger’s main work is with international students at Penn, and his missionary spirit will serve well at SJB. I look forward to his helping in various ways around the parish, as well as with his liturgical duties at Mass.

## **Parish Dinner**

The first (annual?) St John the Baptist Parish Dinner is scheduled for Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at Pepper’s in King of Prussia. For the parish dinner, we did not want anyone from SJB to have to cook or clean up (for once) – thus the restaurant. It will be an opportunity for me to say thank you to so many people who have done so much for the parish, as well as a chance for us to socialize. An anonymous parishioner has made a very generous contribution to help cover costs, so no one should feel excluded for that reason. If you care to contribute to the cost, please do. But come in any case. We need to have reservations in hand by April 29<sup>th</sup>. Forms are available at church, or on the web site.

## **Evensong & Benediction**

We continue our celebration of Easter with another of our occasional services of Evensong & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30. The choir will be with us, with music of Henry Purcell, John Reading and Michael Wise. Evensong is one of the glories of the Anglican Patrimony, which we want to preserve for the Catholic Church – and share! So invite your friends (they don’t have to be Catholic!). Evensong is part of our worship of Almighty God: it is also outreach, an opportunity to introduce SJB to others. Be thinking about whom you can bring with you this time.

Benediction is also a wonderful opportunity for us to draw close to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Because it is less “active” than the Mass, it can give us a greater intimacy with Jesus, as we are more focused on adoration. Benediction, and adoration generally, including visits to the Blessed Sacrament on our own, help us to receive Communion more devoutly and with greater attention. Communion and adoration go together.

### Coming Events

Also coming up is the monthly Patricians adult discussion group. I'm grateful to Edel Lukens and the Legion of Mary for organizing this worthy effort. Here's the official announcement: *You didn't miss it! The Patricians discussion on St. Joseph was postponed from 3/7 due to snow!* Please plan to join us on Wednesday, April 11th from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. We will be discussing St. Joseph, “the Silent Saint”. You are invited to come and find out more about this wonderful saint who is known by many titles including ‘Husband of Mary,’ ‘Foster Father of Jesus,’ ‘Patron of Workers,’ ‘Protector of the Holy Church,’ and ‘Head of the Holy Family.’ For more information: 610-256-7125 or [r.edel.lukens@villanova.edu](mailto:r.edel.lukens@villanova.edu). The society of the Patricians is an informal group of adult Catholics who meet monthly under the direction of Fr Ousley to learn more about the Catholic Faith so that they can better share it with others. It is sponsored by the Legion of Mary. Please come, and bring a friend! Refreshments will be served and free literature will be available.

Our Bishop, the Most Reverend Steven J. Lopes, will be making a visit to the parish on Corpus Christi, Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is one of his regular visits to the parish, and he will also be confirming a couple of our young people. Be sure it is on your calendar.

### Mission Statement

Last fall, the parish Pastoral Council adopted a succinct statement for our parish mission: “*Our mission is to know Christ; to spread His Gospel; to serve Him in His people; to pray with Him and labor with Him that His Church may be One; and to worship God in the Anglican Tradition in the communion of the Catholic Church.*” My apologies for not sharing this with you earlier! It is intended to help us understand and remain focused on our particular mission as an Ordinariate parish. We are not a territorial parish, with responsibility for all the souls in a given geographical area. Our mission is rather one of realized ecumenism, of bringing folk into the communion of the Catholic Church, as well as sharing the riches of the Anglican Patrimony with the Catholic Church. The mission statement also gives us a touchstone as we consider various initiatives to do the work God has given us to do: since we are finite and limited, we cannot do everything. I trust it will help all of us to fulfill the good works God looks for from us. I encourage you to spend a little time thinking about the statement, and about how SJB can fulfill it.

### Events outside the Parish

Ross Douthat, a columnist for the *New York Times*, will be speaking at Villanova on "To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism" on Tuesday, April 10, at 4 p.m. Mr Douthat, who came into the Catholic Church as a teenager, is one of the more perceptive commentators on things Roman and Pope Francis, and the public lecture should be interesting. It is also free, and takes place at the Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law Arthur M. Goldberg '66 Commons.

On Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, there will be a conference on *Matrimony: Rediscovering Its Truth* at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. The keynote speaker is Raymond Cardinal Burke, well-known through his writings and steadfast defense of the faith. The conference is 10 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. (including the Sunday Vigil Mass at 5:15). Registration is required: 215-247-2585 or [saintjohn-neumannchapter.org](http://saintjohn-neumannchapter.org).

The Bridgeport Knights of Columbus will be hosting a Bingo Night in the parish house on Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, to which you are all invited. The Knights' aim is a fun night, even more than gambling. Food and prizes, with the grand prize of \$100. Entry is \$25, or a discounted \$20 if you register at the Thrift Shop ahead of time. Doors open at 6; Bingo is 7-9.

### Thanks

Holy Week does not happen without the combined efforts of many people. The considerable efforts of Bill Gatens and the choir, the ushers, and the acolytes are obvious.

Among the less obvious efforts:

- the Easter flowers were arranged by my wife, with the window and side altars done in a group session led by Sue Cannon, with Gina Royce, Joanna Falini, Rita Moyer, Raynor Sherlock, Pat Lincoln, Elena & Felicity Sutton. We also owe Beth and Sue thanks for their watering in the Easter Octave, without which all would be gone in a couple of days.
- our regular cleaner was laid up, and Felicity Sutton put in a full day on Holy Saturday, getting things in order for Easter. Also (earlier in the week) Teresa Creciun, Pat Lincoln, Robert Curry-Bey and Beth Ousley.
- Pedie Hill (with egg-dyeing help from Wendy Ewing, Mike Pongracz, Felicity Sutton, Robert Curry-Bey, Denise Smith-Rafi, Angela & Mitch Johnson, and the Finegans) organized the Easter Egg Hunt after Mass on Easter Sunday this year.
- James Griffin prepared the service leaflets – which is a considerable task for Holy Week.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley