

# 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

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

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June, 2017

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

The purchase of the church, rectory, school and parking from Sacred Heart Parish is obviously a milestone in the life of the parish. This was completed on June 7<sup>th</sup>. It means that we are *settled*, for the long term. We have been here in Bridgeport for a year and a half, and have already seen some of the practical benefits of having our own place. SJB is more readily identifiable, being situated concretely. When we were wanderers, it was hard to explain to people who we were and what we were about. Having property makes this easier.



It also furthers our mission. The people we invite to join us now have a clearer idea of what they are looking at. They know that we are going to be *here* for the foreseeable future. And there is a sense in which all mission is local, rooted in place as well as in time. Our permanence allows us to plan for our mission more effectively, since the uncertainty entailed in homelessness is removed. Thus we could do the Christmas doorknob hangers in Bridgeport, and begin the thrift shop.

Third, we have the delight of being free to adapt the property to our needs. We have already taken some major steps in that direction – moving the altar back to the wall, the “new” side altar-pieces, and countless other more minor changes. Much remains of course, including accessibility for the parish house, expansion of the pipe organ, reconfiguring the grounds to be more usable (and I hope, greener), new interior lighting in the church, and exterior improvements to the church (improving the side door “shelters,” and adding a steeple). This is all exciting, if also requiring money. We expect such major improvements to be funded from the Building Fund.

Money. That is the fourth factor in the milestone. With the purchase, we become responsible financially for the buildings. None of the buildings is new. While they are generally in good shape, we now bear the burden for repairs – a burden we have not had for the last ten years. We have every reason to trust that God will take care of us in this, as He has in everything else. We have very favorable terms in the purchase. The (interest-free) mortgage payments will be the same as our rent. Utilities will continue as they have up to now (parish hall utilities are shared with Sacred Heart when they are using the building). The significant changes will be an increased property insurance cost, and major repairs. This means, of course, that we continue to be dependent on the generosity of the faithful, not only for the support of the property and for our necessary operations, but also for the expansion of our mission.

Our new responsibility for the property is not just financial: it is also material and spiritual, which is to say, incarnational. Materially, we need to mow the grass, take out the trash, clean the bathrooms, lock the doors at night, replace the votive candles, prepare altar flowers, wash the linens. That is not a complete list! This now falls entirely on us. Since we are not (yet!) a large congregation, it is vital that we all take a part, according to our abilities. Doing so will make the property *ours* in a way nothing else will. Others built it: now it is ours to care for, lovingly and generously. The June cleaning day for the church and coffee hour room is Ember Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. It begins after the 9 o'clock Mass, and usually ends by noon. Consider yourself invited!

We have also the spiritual responsibility to cultivate the sanctity of the church. It is set apart for the purpose of worshiping the Triune God. It is not “common” – like a classroom or lecture hall, or for that matter, the parish hall where we have coffee. It is sacred space. We need to be sure that we respect this character, not just during Mass but at all times. Praying in the church is important. Please do so whenever you can. Visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. I hope soon to be able to have the church open during the day so that all can come to pray. It is also important to practice respect for Jesus’ Sacramental Presence whenever we are in the church – genuflecting to Him when coming or leaving and keeping conversations to a low voice when such are necessary, for example. This spiritual responsibility also extends to keeping the church clean – a very material task. Cleaning the church is an opportunity for prayer, for drawing close to the One we wish to honor with the labor. The House belongs to the Beloved: for His sake, and out of love for Him, we dust and vacuum.

All our thinking about our new property should be formed by gratitude. God has been wonderfully generous to us in making this possible. Even two years ago, buying a church (and one in good shape and in a good neighborhood) seemed utterly beyond us. And yet, here we are.



*History in the Making: Fr O'Sullivan & Fr Ousley signing off on the purchase*

In large part, this is possible because of the generosity of Fr O'Sullivan and Sacred Heart Parish, with the support of the Archdiocese. The terms of the purchase help us enormously. Fr O'Sullivan will be leaving Sacred Heart later this month, to become Pastor of Saint John the Evangelist in Morrisville. He has been unfailingly supportive of me, and of us, and is a good friend of the Ordinariate. We will miss him, and bid him God-speed. I should also mention that Fr Carbonaro, who kindly hosted the Newman Fellowship at Our Lady of the Assumption in Strafford, will be leaving OLA to return to St Charles Seminary, where he will look after the spiritual needs and formation of the seminarians. I hope and trust that we will see both Fr O'Sullivan and Fr Carbonaro at SJB from time to time, even if they are not quite so close by.

### **Ordinariate Mass at the Cathedral**

Advance notice: we have been invited to celebrate a Mass according to the Ordinariate form at the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul on Logan Square (the Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia) on the Feast of Blessed John Henry Newman, Monday, October 9th. Please put this on your calendars now. This is a wonderful opportunity to give witness to the larger Catholic community for the Ordinariate, and I am grateful to Fr Gill, the Rector of the Cathedral, for being willing to host us (and to James Griffin for suggesting it). We will want to be sure that the Mass is well attended, so do plan to be there. And be ready to spread the word, and invite your friends. Further details will come along as our planning develops.

### **June**

With Easter being late this year, Pentecost, Trinity, and Corpus Christi all fall in June. While we will not attempt a procession on Corpus Christi, June 18<sup>th</sup>, we will have Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at the end of the Sunday Mass. There can be some confusion about when Corpus Christi is celebrated. Until the revision of the calendar after Vatican II, it was observed on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. It was then moved to the first Sunday after Trinity, as determined by the national Conference of Catholic Bishops. Since the Ordinariate is under the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, we follow their determination, and observe Corpus Christi on Sunday.

There are always exceptions, right? The Extraordinary Form (Mass in Latin) follows the older calendar, and thus observes the Feast on the Thursday. There will be an Extraordinary Form Mass at the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul at 7 p.m. on June 15<sup>th</sup>: all are welcome.

Our Feast of Title (the Nativity of St John the Baptist) is June 24<sup>th</sup>, and we will observe it on the last Sunday in June, the 25<sup>th</sup>. I had invited Fr O'Sullivan to preach, but since it is his first Sunday in his new parish, he had to decline. We will have some special food after Mass (potluck Sunday: that means you are welcome to bring something). Invite your friends to help us celebrate. The choir will be with us through the end of June.

As I mentioned last month, a catechesis class (RCIA) will be starting shortly – on Skype (computer video conference). It looks like it will be on Thursday night at 7. Let me know if you are interested, and we'll include you. If you lack computer or internet, you can always join me here on site.

Our neighbor, Sacred Heart, celebrates its Feast of Title, on Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, with Mass at 7 p.m. We are welcome to join them to help them celebrate with their new pastor, Fr Thomas Nasta. Just to warn you: I have been asked to preach.

I am also happy to report that the remediation of the leaking underground oil tank is reaching completion. We have cleared the last hurdles for soil, water and air contamination, and the unsightly hole in the ground is being filled as I write this. All that remains is for the contractor to draft and file the final reports. This will give us – and our descendants at SJB – assurance that there are no underground environmental hazards. It is good that we have gotten this resolved now, when we first acquire the property, rather than leaving it to our successors. We have taken the opportunity to remove the flagstones, and will allow us to bring some green to the area with new plantings.

### **Community Cookout**

You may recall that last summer we invited our new neighbors to join us for a cookout, so we could begin to get to know them and they us. It went very well (we served over 100 people), and we would like to do it again. We haven't set the date yet (presumably July or August), but it is not too early to be thinking about it. In particular, be thinking about activities we might have, whether for adults or children: we want people to have a good time. We are grateful to the Bridgeport Knights of Columbus, who have again offered to underwrite the event.

### **Thrift Shop**

The new Thrift Shop is nearly ready to open. Our volunteers have been hard at work, most Wednesdays and Saturdays. The plan is for the shop to be open Wednesday 11-3, and Saturday, 10-3. I'm grateful for the ten (or so) volunteers who have come forward and begun working. We will need some more, so that no one is burdened. I think the shop will be an important part of our service and outreach to the community. If you can give a few hours each week (or every other week), let me know. As soon as there is a confirmed date for the grand opening, I'll let you know.

Yours faithfully,

Fr David Ousley