

# 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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September, 2018

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

These are interesting times to be Catholic. Much evil within the church that was hidden has come to light, and no doubt there is more still hidden. It is now clear that some bishops have not been truthful: when one bishop contradicts another, they cannot both be telling the truth. Many of us suspected this: now it is out in the open. Reform is obviously needed, far beyond what has already occurred. It is not clear how this can be accomplished, since not only the bishops have been implicated but also the Vatican. It is not clear who has the moral authority to effect the reform.

Yet we should not be unduly distressed by all this. We need to remember that the Church is the Body of Christ. Of *Christ*. This is her essence. The institutional form is necessary for her earthly existence, but is not her essence. In other words, we should not confuse the institution of the Church with her substance. Christ established the Church to abide on earth until His return, and we can trust Him to accomplish this. When the institution needs reform, as it has frequently in the course of history, He manages to accomplish that, one way or another. Looking at the history of the Church, one might almost say that reform usually comes from someplace other than the top levels of the hierarchy. I don't know how He will manage it this time, but I'm sure that He will.

In one sense, this is a teaching opportunity: an opportunity for the Church to manifest her true nature as the means of redemption. George Weigel tells this story (Wall Street Journal, September 1-2, 2018).

*Fifteen years ago, during another shattering crisis of Catholic credibility, I was signing copies of my new book after giving a lecture in rural Indiana when a young couple approached me. There were much less dour than the figures in Grant Wood's "American Gothic" but were remarkably similar otherwise: honest, hard-working, uncomplicated farm folk. They said, quite casually, that reading the book's candid description of ecclesiastical corruption and fecklessness, and my proposals for reform, had finally convinced them, after years of indecision, to enter the Catholic Church during what was then the worst crisis in U.S. Catholic history. Why, I asked? Because, they said, any Church that could be this honest about what's wrong with it had to be based on the truth and on Jesus Christ.*

We cannot deny that the Church is full of sinners (and don't want to). Sin is real. So is redemption. Her purpose is to effect the redemption of sinners by the blood of Christ. Evangelically, she is to introduce sinners to the Redeemer. As the Church deals with the sins which have been committed by her priests and bishops, she can manifest her redemptive mission. This requires honesty about sin: that it is evil, that it always has consequences, that it deserves punishment. Without such honesty, talking about forgiveness and redemption is cheap and unrealistic. It forgets the horror of the Cross, the price paid by our Lord for our redemption. But likewise to talk only about the sin misses the point of being Christian. We may not know what good God plans to bring from these evils, but we may always be confident that He does not permit any evil unless He is going to bring good from it.

To help us with our prayers for the Church, there will be a **Holy Hour** on Holy Cross Day, Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 p.m. This time of adoration of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament will focus on prayer for the Church in her current need, and thus on penitence and reparation. That same day, there is also a Vigil at the Cathedral basilica in Philadelphia, 5 p.m. to midnight.

## Community Cookout

The Bridgeport Community Cookout is this Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 11-1. The purpose is to welcome our neighbors, give them some food and fellowship, let us get to know them, and them get to know us. It is also an opportunity for us to introduce some of what St John's has to offer: Sunday School (which will be starting the next day); the St Cecelia's Choir; Wednesday Bible study; the high school youth group; the Thrift Shop (which will be open during the cookout). Set-up begins at 8:30 (with a break at 9 for Mass), and help is appreciated, especially for set-up and clean up. David Livezey (our able organizer) also notes that in past years people baked cookies and other treats for the event, and hopes that people will do so again this year. Home-baked goods are a nice touch for this occasion. In any case, please be here if you possibly can to help show warm Christian hospitality.

## Mass at the Basilica

It's coming up soon: our second Ordinariate Form Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul on Logan Circle in Philadelphia. This year's Mass will be on the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham, Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. As it was last year, this is an opportunity for us to share the liturgical riches of our Patrimony with a wider audience – in addition to the joy of offering worship to God in that glorious and holy space. Fr Eric Bergman, Pastor of St Thomas More in Scranton, has agreed to give us a sermon reflective of our Patrimony. Mr Gatens is preparing music of Oldroyd, Arcadelt, Stainer and Elgar. Bell Anderson has agreed to coordinate a simple reception in the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center next door after the Mass (feel free to offer your assistance). Please put it on your calendars if it isn't already there, and remember to mention it to your Latin Rite (or Eastern Rite, for that matter) friends. I am grateful to the Rector of the Cathedral, Fr Dennis Gill, for his kind invitation.

### Classes, etc.

This fall I will be offering an eight week **adult class** on the fundamentals of the Christian life: prayer, sacramental life, rule of life, Eucharistic and other devotions, virtue, fasting, works of mercy, etc. My approach to the spiritual life is formed, as you might imagine, by the Anglican patrimony, now in the communion of the Catholic Church. I have taught these subjects from time to time, but have not had a systematic discussion in the parish for some years. The old-timers are welcome to hear it again, and everyone else is welcome to come along as well. Given our geographical dispersion, I will be offering the class on-line, on Skype. You will need a computer, tablet or internet-connected cell phone, with Skype installed. Skype is freely available. I will need the Skype names of those who want to participate. The class meets on Tuesday nights, 7:30-8:30, with the first class on October 9<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested, please let me know, and be sure I have your Skype name before the 9<sup>th</sup>.

The **Wednesday Bible study** continues at 11:05 in the parish hall or on the conference call. We are beginning a series on the Psalms, having completed our series on Peter, his letters, and the Petrine Office. This class meets after the ten o'clock Mass & Healing Service. We have a good time. Come join us.

The high school **youth group** begins its fall discussions on Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30 p.m. The meeting originally scheduled for September 14<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled to allow for the Holy Hour. High school age youth and recent graduates are welcome. It's helpful if you can let me know that you are coming, since we provide supper and want to be sure we have enough food.

**Sunday School** starts September 9<sup>th</sup>, 11:45-12:30 (12:15 for the younger classes). We have four classes this year. Parents are asked to help their children with food at the beginning of coffee hour so that they will be ready for class at 11:45. I am grateful to Leslie Altena, Angela Johnson, Pedie Hill and Roger Converse for their generous offering of their time and talent to teach. The Christian formation of children should be a priority for all of us.

The **Saint Cecilia Choir** for young people begins its rehearsals on Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, under the direction of Kevin Chun. We have eight registered so far. We look forward both to their musical development, and to their contributions to our Sunday liturgy (in due course). Registration is still open. Rehearsals are Thursdays 5:30-7, with supper provided.

Volunteers are also welcome for the **adult choir**, which rehearses on Thursdays at 7:15, and Sunday mornings before Mass. Speak with Bill Gatens if you are interested.

**Patricians**, the monthly discussion group sponsored by the Legion of Mary, meets on Wednesday, the 12<sup>th</sup>, this month, 6:30-8:30 in the parish hall. This month's topic is "Is Satan real?". Contact Steve or Edel Lukens for further information.

The **Thrift Shop** has reopened after the summer break. (The thrift shop room gets very hot in the summer!) Tuesdays and Saturdays, 10-3. The Thrift Shop is an important part of our mission, as a way to introduce the parish to people, and in the service it provides, as well as the income it produces for the parish. Tom O'Connell has joined Raynor Sherlock as co-overseers of the shop. Thanks, Tom! (And Raynor!)

The seminarian from the Australian Ordinariate, **Bradley Le Guier**, arrives this week and will be with us until the end of September. If you're interested in the church in Australia, invite him to supper, and I'm sure he'll fill you in. He is here to get some experience of the American Ordinariate congregations, which are a little further down the road in terms of growth and maturity than those in Australia.

### Calendar

- Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, Community Cookout (11-1), Thrift Shop reopens (10-3)
- Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, adult choir rehearsals begin, 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 6:30, Patricians
- Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 5:30, first rehearsal for the Saint Cecilia Choir
- Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:30, Holy Hour
- Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 7, Ordinariate Mass at the Cathedral Basilica in Philadelphia
- Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 7, High School Youth Group
- Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:30, first class of the adult series on the Christian Life.

Yours faithfully,  
Fr David Ousley