

Dear saints at Historic Trinity,

I just wanted to write to you as an update to how I am doing.

First, I was able to visit my parents for about a week after Christmas. It was lovely to see them and a few family members from Michigan even came down to visit us as well. It was nice to be around some family after being away from my folks for about four months, and the family that visited for even longer. I returned to Philly thereafter and ended up being sick the first full day back! That was a bummer because I technically had one day of vacation time left, but I spent it on the couch sleeping. Anyway, I believe I mentioned that I was able to preach Christmas Day. Well, my vicarage supervisor said that it was the best sermon I've written and preached so far. That was encouraging, because it truly felt like a sermon of my own, not a sermon that had to check the boxes, or conform to a certain standard. It was just a sermon that I wrote from the heart. I'd be lying if I said that I didn't get a little choked up preaching it. The central theme or idea was comparing the first cries of our Lord from the manger to His cries from the cross. I hope that with more time I can start really finding my own voice when I preach, but that sermon was a step in the right direction.

However, with the Christmas season behind us, as well as Epiphany, we are beginning to get ready to enter into the season of Lent. I know that those 40 days, along with Holy Week are going to be pretty demanding and draining. Yet, I know that the Lord will sustain me throughout that period. I am excited for Lent to arrive because I get to preach Ash Wednesday and the first Sunday in Lent. I am particularly excited because those are two services, I've been thinking about how to preach for a while now. And I'm very anxiously excited to take my first swing at both Ash Wednesday and the Gospel text (the Temptation of Jesus) for Lent 1.

To move onto the day to day of vicarage, I've still been visiting the local college campuses here in Philly. However, I have had very little success in talking to anyone. Occasionally, I'll get double takes of people looking at me in my collar, but seldom does anyone ever stop to chat. I hope and ask that you would pray that I can be used as a vessel for Christ to reach out to the college students here in the area. Because, at this

point, I've become very discouraged in my efforts as I have not seen any progress yet, just a general indifference to my presence on these college campuses. I know that the Lord will reach and touch the hearts of those who He chooses, but it is easy for someone in my position to feel discouraged. I pray in this as well that the Lord will give me encouragement and the strength to keep at it.

Finally, I want to thank you for your support and prayers. It is greatly appreciated and encourages me to keep working and trying my hardest. Which is especially needed because I had a bout of melancholy during the end of December. So, knowing that you all are praying and thinking about me is a great consolation. I hope all is well at Historic Trinity, God's blessings.

Sincerely,

Alexander Ogden