

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Transfiguration of the Lord
August 6, 2023



Domine—Bonum est nos hic esse

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Weekday Mass: (Monday-Friday at 12 noon)

Weekend Masses: Saturday: 4:00pm - Sunday: 7:30am & 4:00pm

Holiday Mass Schedule: afternoon prior at 4:00pm

Holy day proper at 12 noon and 4:00pm

Confessions: First Saturday of every month at 3:30pm

Department Telephone: 508.363.6246

Chapel Website: www.ourladyofprovidence.net

MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, August 5 *Vigil of the Lord's Transfiguration*

4:00pm +Debra Bonneau

Sunday, August 6 *Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord*

7:30am Healing and reconciliation for family friends

4:00pm For divine grace to guide right judgment

Monday, August 7 *Saint Sixtus II, pope & companion martyrs & Saint Cajetan, priest*²

12:00nn +Hedwig Kozlowski by her daughter

Tuesday, August 8 *Saint Dominic de Guzman, priest*¹

12:00nn For perseverance amid sickness

Wednesday, August 9 *Saint Theresa Benedicta of the Cross, virgin & martyr*²

12:00nn +Maureen Murphy

Thursday, August 10 *Feast of Saint Lawrence, deacon & martyr*

12:00nn For John Russo in honor of his birthday

Friday, August 11 *Saint Clare of Assisi, virgin*¹

12:00nn +Joan Malark

Saturday, August 12 *Vigil of the 19th Sunday of the Liturgical Year*

4:00pm +Mary Buchyn—50th anniversary

Sunday, August 13 *Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am Intentions of Paul, Michael and family

4:00pm +Lois Sheeran and Marion White

The Key to Understanding the Day's Liturgical Significance: **Sunday** is the day that the Church celebrates the Paschal mystery—the Lord's Day—which, according to apostolic tradition, is the day of Christ's Resurrection. The Sundays of Advent, Lent, and during the Easter Season take precedence over other celebrations. **Solemnities** honor significant religious events, beliefs or saints of the greatest importance and universal in their observance that begin at Vespers (or Evening Prayer) the day before. **Feasts** must be observed, though, less important than solemnities, hence, feasts are only observed on the natural day. **Memorials** are of two types: Either the observance is an **obligatory memorial**¹ or an **optional memorial**².

Toward a Better Understanding of This Sunday's Gospel

The Transfiguration of the Lord depicts Jesus enveloped in glory and, thus, it is an anticipation of the glory that will accompany Christ's return at the end of time. Best described in terms of a theophany (Gk. θεοφάνεια), it occurs on "a high mountain" which allows God to descend from heaven and requires that Jesus and the three privileged apostles ascend in order to encounter God. According to the classical prophets, both the site's location and God's divine condescension accentuate that end-time (or eschatological) trajectory. Once they reach the summit, Jesus "was transfigured...his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light." In a passage of the Book of Daniel, dealing with an underdeveloped account of the Resurrection, one group will rise "to everlasting life" and the second "to reproach and everlasting disgrace," but "those with insight shall shine brightly" (Dan 12: 2b-3). The just, judged to be so in God's eyes, will also be transfigured on the last day. In the last verse of the previous chapter, Jesus announced the return of the Son of Man (Mt 16:27-28). Then, later on, the Parousia and final judgment will be described in almost identical terms (Mt 25:31ff). Now, without warning, having reached the mountaintop, Jesus is transformed before Peter, James, and John. He is surrounded by heavenly light and shines forth in eye-blinding whiteness. Describing Jesus in terms of "white(ness) as light" white, portrayed in that manner, is the color of the celestial realities surrounding the end times (or Parousia). The apostles, too, will gaze upon the scourged Jesus, hanging on the Cross, thoroughly disfigured by the Roman soldiers. After Christ rose from the dead, this same threesome will testify to what earlier was Christ's veiled glory. Calvary and the scandal of the Cross must be squarely placed within the perspective of the Lord Jesus as glorified and risen! Amid the theophany, Moses and Elijah appear and most commentators see them as representatives of the Law and the Prophets. Yet, other scholars align them with the two witnesses in the Book of Revelation, wearing sackcloth that symbolizes lamentation and repentance (Rev 11:3). Others focus on Jesus' statement that Elijah had already come and the disciples concluded that the Lord was referring to John the Baptist (Mt 17:11-13). Centuries earlier, Malachi prophesied that Elijah's coming would precede the final Day of the Lord (Mal 3:23). Taking the biblical evidence cumulatively, the appearance of Moses and Elijah affirms that the glory which overshadowed Christ and the mountaintop bathed in light was a preview of the ultimate glory that will surround Christ as the Son of Man. These undertones of ultimate glory and the vision of Jesus enveloped in celestial light places Peter in such a heightened state of ecsta-

Saint John Damascene—Homily on the Transfiguration: PG 96, 572-573

Today is manifested what the eyes of the body cannot see, a terrestrial body shining with divine splendor, a mortal body manifesting the glory of the divinity. For the Word has been made flesh and the flesh Word, although the latter has not gone out of the divine nature. Tabor exults and rejoices, a divine and holy mountain.... There, the chosen apostles see Christ in the glory of his kingdom. There, the resurrection of the dead is manifested to their faith and Christ shows himself as the Lord of the dead and the living. Formerly, Moses entered into the divine cloud, indicating the shadow-character of the law. It is Paul who writes, "The law had only a shadow of the good things to come, and no real image of them." And at that time Israel could not intensely look upon the passing glory of the countenance of Moses; but we, "gazing on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory to glory into his image by the Lord who is the Spirit." That is why a cloud, no longer of darkness but of light, covers them with its shade.

sy that it seemed like the promised end time had finally come. Thus, provoking His call to make three tents as examples of those eternal dwellings which would dawn once the end-times arrive. Even while Peter was speaking, "a bright cloud (Gk. νεφέλη) cast a shadow (Gk. ἐπισκιάζω) over them." Biblically speaking, the contrast between light and shadow manifest God's presence while veiling it too. The Hebrew word *Shēkhīnāh* is used to describe luminous shadow and originally referred to God being made manifest in the dwelling (or meeting) tent and, eventually, in the Temple. Shekinah came to represent the presence of the God of Israel and it came to be the name of God. When the glory of the Lord (Heb. Kavod Adonai) descended on the meeting tent, Moses could not enter (Ex 40:35). Unlike Moses, though, the three disciples are surrounded by that cloud's celestial light. A heavenly voice comes out of the cloud and says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." Thus, in the new covenant, Jesus is the new Moses and, unlike, the Israelites, He is the one that we must listen to. As the Father's beloved Son, Jesus speaks the final word and this authoritative teaching He would subsequently entrust to the Apostles, just prior to His Ascension back to the glory which has always been His from before the beginning of time. This heavenly voice resounds even more so during Lent when the call to conversion is much more urgent than at other seasons of the liturgical year. With the sound of God's voice echoing in their ears, those three disciples prostrate themselves before Jesus whom Peter had earlier called Lord. To fall down before Jesus—or to become prostrate—is the ultimate gesture of adoration before God and, likewise, addressing Jesus as Lord attests to the insight that faith furnishes in regard to who Jesus really is. Due to the fact that this all takes place "up on a high mountain," the posture and title allude to the future time after Jesus has been crucified and raised from the dead. The transfigured Jesus testifies not only to the Risen Lord, but to Jesus as the Son of Man who will return in glory at the end of time. Moreover, after the post-resurrection period, when Christ the Risen Lord calls His eleven disciples to meet Him on a mountain in Galilee, their last earthly image of Christ took place just prior to the great commission that He entrusted to them. As on Mount Tabor, so too on the Mount of the Ascension, the disciples worshipped the Lord Jesus and He told them, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit" (Mt 28:20). Once charged with silence about what they had formerly been privileged to witness, in the interval between the Lord's Ascension and His return in glory, the hour is at hand when the Church must declare that Jesus is both Lord and God. The liturgical itinerary that leads to Easter relentlessly leads toward the mountaintop where heaven and earth mingle in celestial light. By reflecting Christ's light, the holy People of God steadfastly and resolutely move toward the new Jerusalem – the heavenly city that has no need for the sun or moon because God's glory is a beacon and the Lamb, once slain, now alive is the city's lamp.

National Eucharistic Revival - Phase Two: The Diocesan Year

The Eucharistic liturgy fulfills the mystery of the Transfiguration and ties it into the paschal mystery. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Lord's "Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is – all that he did and suffered for all men – participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life" (CCC, n.1085). Just as the gifts of bread and wine are offered up and Christ comes down to dwell in them, so the hearts of all believers are lifted up and transfigured by the grace-filled condescension of the Godhead at Holy Communion, with as much glory as each person can receive. The Transfiguration is a foreshadowing of the Parousia or the Lord's Second Coming, as is the Resurrection. The Transfiguration reveals in what manner Christ shall one day appear again, whereas the Resurrection reveals the way in which the saints will be transformed. The grape is a symbol of transfiguration because it is crushed and fermented into wine, then transformed into the blood of Christ at the Eucharist. *Sanguis Christi, inebria me* – Blood of Christ, inebriate me!



Paschal Mystery: Passion, Death, Resurrection & Ascension of the Lord

Introduction

Around the year 56 AD, during the season of Passover, Saint Paul, in writing to the church in Corinth, said, “Christ, our Passover has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5,7). By those words, Paul sought to interpret Christ’s death on the Cross by means of the Passover metaphor. In subsequent centuries, the term paschal mystery (Lat. *mysterium paschale*) grew in importance and became the preferred way of speaking about what God had done in Christ. The traditional Jewish Passover and its unfolding lasted for fifty days or a week of weeks plus one day (7x7+1), culminating in the Jewish Pentekoste (Gk. πεντηκοστή) or the fiftieth day. This annual Jewish memorial, even to the present day, celebrates their going forth (or exodus) from the land of Egypt and Yahweh’s conferring of the covenant on Mount Sinai. The English words *paschal* and *mystery* are derived from the biblical (or Koine) Greek in which the New Testament was originally written. The adjective paschal (Gk. πάσχα) is derived from the Hebrew word for Passover or pesach. Even the word pascha had to be newly-coined by the Greek translators of the Septuagint (or LXX), which was a third-century BC translation of the Bible from Hebrew into Koine Greek. Creating the word pascha was needed in order to make accessible for Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria the sense of the Hebrew word pesach, since neither classical nor conversational Greek of that period had any word to identify the foundational religious event of the Hebrew Scriptures. Pesach incorporates a journey from bondage in Egypt to eventual freedom in the land of Canaan which began when the angel of death passed over the houses of the Israelites, marked with the blood of those lambs that had been sacrificed for the first Passover. Such blood effectively saved the Israelites from the certain death of their first-born (Ex 12:21-36). Later on, Christians came to see the Blood of Christ, shed on the Cross, as similarly salvific. The noun *mystery* (Gk. μυστήριον) was generally associated with the worldview of Platonism, long before the New Testament writers used the word mystery to describe what God was doing in Christ. For Platonic philosophers, sensible realities were understood as participating in and pointing toward invisible or heavenly realities. So, the created order that is perceptible to the senses requires *contemplatio* in order for the physical world to be understood intellectually. As Platonism further developed that symbolic understanding was extended and, eventually, Platonic thought came to incorporate the spiritual interpretation of historical events. Thus, events that were chronologically prior were perceived to be either a preparation for or seen as a foreshadowing of future events—put succinctly, those events were seen as a promise awaiting fulfillment. In the second century of the Christian era, Saint Melito of Sardis preached an Easter homily entitled in Greek Περὶ Πάσχα or *On the Pascha*, which was only translated in the middle of the twentieth century. While Melito, as Bishop of Sardis, does not explicitly use the

term paschal mystery, he rejoices that Christ is the fulfillment of the earlier redemptive acts of God. His chief concern, though, was interpreting a passage selected from the Book of Exodus, namely, “how the lamb was sacrificed, how the people were saved.” Melito begins with this declaration, “The sacrifice of the Lamb, and the celebration of the Pasch, and the letter of the Law, have been fulfilled in Christ.” This use of the imagery of the Passover yielded a paschal understanding of the events surrounding Christ’s death. As a result, the initiation of new members into Christ through Baptism and the signing of their foreheads with the Cross came to be understood as analogous to the Blood of the Paschal Lamb which marked the doors and lintels of the Israelites. So, as that sign had saved the Chosen People from imminent death in Egypt, the water and the Cross marked out those destined to be saved by Christ from the prospect of unending death through Baptism. The eating of the Passover lamb also foreshadowed the messianic banquet of heaven to which all the baptized are invited and which the Eucharist is its anticipation and the foretaste of the paschal feast of heaven. Then, the further understanding of the Eucharist as a sacrifice drew upon the identification made between Christ and the Passover (or paschal) lamb. There are two images at the heart of the Book of Exodus: In chapter 12 you find the image of the lamb slaughtered and its blood becoming the source of salvation or the second image is found in Exodus chapter 14 which focuses upon the Israelites passing safely through the waters of the Red Sea. While standing amid those waters that were seemingly threatening their own survival, instead whether the wall of water to their right or to their left became the miraculous path of their salvation through the sea and held out eventual death for the Egyptians. These two typologies or the process of uncovering religious meaning by sustained ecclesial exploration of *type* (the Passover event) and *antitype* (the Jesus event) — evoked what came to be known as mystagogical catechesis or the reflective form of teaching offered to those who had been newly-initiated into the mysteries of faith in the weeks following Easter and their having undergone baptism, confirmation and receiving Communion. The most well-known examples of this type of catechesis are from the second-half of the fourth century which are attributed to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (viz. five mystagogical catecheses) and Saint Ambrose of Milan—*De mysteriis* and *De sacramentis*. Mystagogy is defined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* this way, “From the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from sacraments to mysteries” (CCC, n. 1075). This fourth stage of the RCIA is a period of accompaniment for new Catholics as they discover what it means to fully participate in the sacramental mysteries of the Church. The newly baptized are called “neophytes,” from the Greek words meaning “new plant,” because the faith has been newly planted in them. Even though their catechetical preparation has been completed, they still have much to learn about what it means to live as Catholic.