

**OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL**  
**SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL**  
**WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER**  
**Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**February 11, 2024**



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**Leper said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." The Lord answered, I do will it! Be made clean."**

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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](http://www.ourladyofprovidence.net)

## **MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

Saturday, February 10 *Vigil of the 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4:00pm +Marie M. Hagar by her family

Sunday, February 11 *Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time - World Day of the Sick & World Marriage Day*

7:30am +Rosa Gonsalves da Silva

4:00pm +John & Mary Murray by their family

Monday, February 12

12:00nn +Carol Rose Premo by alumnae of former SVH School of Nursing

Tuesday, February 13 *Last Day in Ordinary Time—Shorter Period*

12:00nn +William McKiernan, Jr.

Wednesday, February 14 *Ash Wednesday—Beginning of Lent*

7:30am +Jose Martins Coelho

12:00nn +Michael Cariglia — 10th anniversary

4:00pm +David Mimanando

Thursday, February 15 *Thursday after Ash Wednesday*

12:00nn +Linda Granger

Friday, February 16 *Friday after Ash Wednesday — Day of Abstinence*

12:00nn +Mary Sacchi

Saturday, February 17 *Vigil of the 1st Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm +Robert Bek

Sunday, February 18 *First Sunday of Lent*

7:30am +Maria R. Senra

4:00pm +Manny Correira

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**<sup>1</sup> or an **optional memorial**<sup>2</sup>.

### **Toward a Better Understanding of the Gospels**

Leaving Capernaum, as the first day in His public life concludes, Saint Mark's account of that day reaches its climax with the ultimate healing – the cure of a leper. While all disease is fearful, like the prospect of being diagnosed with Covid-19, leprosy added isolation to fear. Lepers were excluded from social life and even forbidden from participating in worship. Jesus, though, allows this leper to come near to Him. In a simple declaration, as He touched the man's hand, He cleansed the leper of that dreaded disease. Yet, He warned him not to tell anyone about what happened except for the priests. Blatantly ignoring what Jesus said, the man tells everyone what happened. The notoriety of that news meant that Jesus could no longer enter towns openly, though that reluctance did not stop the crowds from finding Him. Each element of this Gospel enshrines crucial information that Saint Mark wanted to convey. Placing the incident at the end of a long day, doing so without any explicit details, by its very abruptness, the occurrence is highlighted and its importance is underlined. Even the simple descriptive statement that a leper came to Jesus goes against the grain, since lepers lived on the fringes of society. So, if even one of them dared to approach anyone who was free of the disease, the leper would have been driven away. The Gospel avoids that entirely and the disciples who accompanied Jesus are not mentioned either. The leper stands alone with Jesus. Every barrier between the sick and the healthy is overcome. Thus, whether healthy or sick, either one can realize that Jesus can purify them. Each group can rely upon the Lord's kindness and power to heal. He brings people who formerly were at odds closer together. From the outset of this Gospel, it has been graphically illustrated that what Jesus teaches, along with His mastery over the evil spirits and disease, all testify to His authority. Teaching and acting authoritatively is what draws the crowds. Such an emphasis convinces those who hear or listen to Jesus to remain with Him, following behind as He announces the glad tidings of salvation. During His stay in Capernaum, whether curing the man with an unclean spirit or Simon's mother-in-law of her fever, little was said about how Jesus reacted to those marvelous deeds (Lat. *magnalia Dei*). The evangelist notes that, in this specific instance that Jesus was "moved with pity" The Greek word *splanchnistheis* (Gk. *σπλαγχνίζομαι*) literally means "to be moved in the inward parts" that entails to ache with compassion. Its English translation as *pity*, while implying sympathy at someone else's grief, has acquired a twinge of condescension. Biblically-speaking, whether understood as pity or mercy, either notion incorporates powerful feelings, born out of tender-

Saint Augustine - *De perfectione iustitiae hominis*

I see that it is necessary for me to make here an additional remark, that we are saved by hope. "But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then, do we with patience wait for it." Full righteousness, therefore, will only then be reached when fullness of health is attained; and this fullness of health shall be when there is fullness of love, for "love is the fulfilling of the law and then shall come fullness of love when 'we shall see Him even as He is.'" Nor will any addition to love be possible more, when faith shall have reached the fruition of sight.

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ness and love. So, as truly gut-wrenching, true compassion results from those inner reactions that prompt concrete acts meant to relieve or heal those whose predicament has evoked that reaction in the first place. This is an accurate description of what happens whenever Jesus sees someone and is moved with pity for them. The words and deeds of Jesus have been entrusted to the Church as Sacraments. At the request of the leper to be cleansed, Jesus replied, "I do will it. Be made clean." Later, when the Roman centurion sought out Jesus to heal a servant, the soldier professed faith in Jesus by saying, "...only say the word and my servant will be healed" (Mt 8:8). The same also occurred in the synagogue when Jesus freed the man from that unclean spirit. He rebuked the demon saying, "Quiet! Come out of him!" Here, not only does Jesus speak, but He also acts because "he stretched out his hand" and touched the leper. Those words and its accompanying gesture illustrate the kind of pity Jesus had and such compassion not only moved Him inwardly, but prompted Jesus into doing something to alleviate the man's suffering and alienation. In laying His hands on the leper, like the various sacramental anointing with holy oils, coupled together with words and prayers, because Jesus is the primordial sacrament, when that happens true healing in all its aspects takes place: whether physical, emotional, or spiritual in nature. The exchange between Jesus and the leper is akin to a sacramental encounter – faith in Jesus compels the leper to ask the Lord to cleanse him of the disease and to heal him by saying, "If you wish, you can make me clean." The action that follows constitutes the answer to the leper's expectation that Jesus has the power to heal as well as the fact that such a cure is the divine seal (Gk. σφραγίς) authenticating the leper's faith. Since Jesus affirms and verifies what the leper said, He has to do something more than simply say, "yes, I will make you clean." By doing what He did, Jesus validates what the leper had only glimpsed to be true, namely, that Jesus has the power to cure. Puzzling, though, is this warning issued to the cleansed leper, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." The command to go to the priest in accord with the dictates of the Law seems obvious and verifying that the leper was cleansed was the prelude to his reintroduction into social and religious life. In sternly warning the leper, its threatening nature is downplayed in translation. In the *Bible de Jerusalem*, you would read that "Jesus shook him and immediately chased him away," while in the Latin Vulgate (Lat. *comminatus es ei*), the Latin expression literally says that Jesus "menaced him as with the point of a sword." Obviously, Jesus wants the leper to leave immediately, but the reason for His doing so is not discussed. Scholars believe the warning is likely due to the Messianic secret — the tendency to keep the Lord's true identity silent. By the time the oral tradition of Saint Mark's Gospel was written down, there was nothing secret about Jesus as the Christ; yet, the Marcan style is to gradually reveal who Jesus really is. Despite the miraculous healings and exorcisms, Jesus has to be more than simply a wonder-worker since He is the Savior who voluntarily died on the Cross to save all humanity from the deadly disease of sin. The healed leper cannot contain himself and, despite the warnings and threats, tells anyone who will listen what Jesus had done for him.

**National Eucharistic Revival — Lent & the Real Presence**

Lent is a solemn religious observance in the Church's liturgical calendar commemorating the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert before He began His public ministry, according to the Synoptic Gospels. In addition to being a season in which we grow closer to the Lord through prayer almsgiving and fasting, Lent is also a season in which we pray for those who will receive the fullness of the sacraments at the font of baptism, sealed with the Spirit in Confirmation and, then, receive the Holy Eucharist for the first time. The whole Church prays for the catechumens and candidates for full communion in a more deliberate way during this season, though life-long Catholics should renew their faith in Christ present in Communion and the tabernacles, too. Receiving ashes on the forehead, made in the sign of the Cross, should burn deep within our minds by becoming a beacon of hope that calls forth a renewed devotion to Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist. Consider this Lent to be an opportunity to move beyond mere observation and become active participants in this transformative movement, allowing the burnt embers of last year's palms to implant in your mind an aching desire to reignite the fire of your love for Christ in the Eucharist. Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday (February 14) and end approximately six weeks later on the evening of Holy Thursday (March 28) with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, followed by Christ's passion and death on Good Friday (March 29); then, culminating in the great Vigil of Easter on Holy Saturday (March 30) and continuing through Easter Sunday (March 31). Since her founding nearly 2,000 years ago, the Church has believed that the bread and wine offered at Mass, through transubstantiation are changed into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ as the priest solemnly pronounces the words of consecration, derived from the Lord Himself, when at the Last Supper, He gave His disciples bread and wine as His Body and Blood, during the Passover meal, on the night before He was crucified. At that same time, He commanded the Apostles to do what He had done until that final day, when Christ will come again.

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## Lent & the Meaning of Repentance

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Lent is an ideal time for everyone to draw closer to God. When John the Baptist preached in the desert, he cried out, "Repent!" (Mt 3:1). Then, when Jesus began to preach in Galilee He said exactly the same thing, "Repent!" (Mk 1:15). In fact, the very first words Jesus spoke are the same words used on Ash Wednesday, when the forehead is marked with ashes: "Turn away from sin (i.e., repent) and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1:15). Sorrow for sin, the honest confession of it, and deliberate or firm purpose amendment against sinning again in our lives is the basic drama of everyday Christian life, lying at the intersection of sin and grace. Repentance goes beyond a feeling and must reach to becoming an expression of the distinct purpose of turning from sin to righteousness. Most often the original Hebrew or Greek word that is translated as repentance means a change of mental and spiritual attitude toward sin. According to the early Fathers of the Church, all true repentance must begin with humility. To take our eyes off others' sins and instead to admit our own sinfulness is an act of humility. In our faults we come to know more profoundly the love of God. Repentance then is to live within the dialogue of salvation.

### Etymology of Repentance

The Greek word is μετανοέω [metanoēō] that does mean to repent, but it does not mean turning away or around. Yet, repentance and turning around are often associated with one another. Thus, when we repent, we are turning to God and turning away from sin. But the Greek word μετανοέω does not carry with it any connotations of turning around. The implications of this Greek term are more mental or incorporating what goes on in the mind of the person repenting. Etymologically speaking, μετανοέω is a compound of two words νοέω [noēō], which means "to understand, to ponder, to think about," and μετα [meta], which means "with". So, μετανοέω means "to understand with or to use the mind with." Thus, when we repent, we use our minds in order to realize what we have done wrong, to hate/regret our sin, and, then, to change our mind for the better. The Greek word μετανοέω greatly resembles the English word conscience: both terms imply "with knowledge." The Greek word for repentance that is used in the Gospel is metanoia (Gk. μετάνοια), which literally means "to change one's mind." This change of mind necessarily entails a profound interior conversion in which we firmly turn from worldly darkness, and embrace a new way of life as Christ's disciples. Thus, repentance is not merely to know facts about Christ, nor is it a matter of picking and choosing—with an intellectual arrogance—some aspects of the Lord's teaching while coldly rejecting others; rather, true metanoia is the union of mind, heart and soul to the Person of Christ. To repent, then, is to die to Christ, discarding our former way of life in favor of the Way, Truth, and Life that is Christ Himself. So, that

original Greek word in the Bible carries with it a very different meaning from its Latin translation that followed centuries later. To take on a new and life-changing mindset was the Greek word's original intent. Today, the word repent is shaded with guilt and penance. How did that happen? In the second century, the scriptures were translated from Greek to Latin. At that time, the expression *paenitentiam agite* or doing penance replaced the heart stirring sense of metanoia. Modern words like penitentiary, penitent, and pain share roots in the Latin word paenitentiam. Its Latin translation focused on regret and payback instead of the awakening of hope contained in the Greek word metanoia.

### Repentance & the Our Father

The ideal way to understand repentance is to look, anew, at the Our Father. Jesus begins this perfect prayer by first teaching us to praise the Father's name and work for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth through doing the Father's will in all things. Then, after entrusting to the Church her mission, Jesus proceeds to equip His disciples for that mission by instructing them to ask the Father for mercy, forgiveness and a willingness to forgive others, coupled with protection from temptation and the influence of evil (CCC, nn. 2761-2766). The Catechism refers to the *Summa Theologica*. The Our Father, as St. Thomas Aquinas said, is "the most perfect of prayers. ... In it we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired. This prayer not only teaches us to ask for things, but also in what order we should desire them, so that this prayer not only teaches us to ask, but also directs all our affections" (ST II-II, q.83, a.9). Here, St. Thomas Aquinas touches on an aspect of the spiritual life that can be easily neglected. True repentance involves not just expressing sorrow for the sins committed, but repentance also means allowing those sinful affections and desires to be exposed to the light and, thus, lead to conversion. While this can be uncomfortable, it is ultimately freeing. In regard to conversion, St. Francis de Sales speaks about the depth of conversion that repentance requires by using the analogy of a sick man whose doctor has told him that he must refrain from sweets or he might die. He refrains from eating them, St. Francis notes, "but most unwillingly, he talks about them, and measures how far he may transgress ... and envies those who can indulge in what is forbidden..." (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, Ch. 7). Lent is a time to delve deeply into our lives during this season of repentance and to give a thorough look at what our values are and how we live them out each day. The call to a change of heart and a change of life was a hallmark of the preaching of Jesus, of the Baptist, His forerunner and, subsequently, of the Apostles. And the Lenten season, which has been part of the liturgical year from the earliest days of the Church, has always made repentance its centerpiece and it is still!

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