

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 14, 2024



With His left hand pointing forward, suggesting an open-ended invitation, Jesus asks Peter and Andrew to "Come and see." Christ chooses the disciples, they do not choose Him. The response to the invitation is the work of the Spirit.

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Weekday Mass: (Monday-Friday at 12 noon)
Weekend Masses: Saturday: 4:00pm - Sunday: 7:30am & 4:00pm
Holyday 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, January 13 *Vigil of the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4:00pm +Allen Cutty

Sunday, January 14 *Second Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am +Sue Bee Go Osorio-remembering her birthday

4:00pm +Jose Martins Coelho

Monday, January 15 Martin Luther King Day

12:00nn For the intentions of Daniel & Paul

Tuesday, January 16

12:00nn For the souls in purgatory

Wednesday, January 17 *Saint Anthony, abbot*¹

12:00nn Seeking wisdom & knowledge for Ciara, Julia, Cheryl, John & Brigid

Thursday, January 18 *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Begins*

12:00nn For the intentions of Daniel & Paul

Friday, January 19

12:00nn +Helen M. Sacchi

Saturday, January 20 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4:00pm For the intentions of Daniel & Paul

Sunday, January 21 *Third Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am +Linda Granger by her family

4:00pm +Derek Janeczak by his parents

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 the Gospels

Regardless of which of the three-year cycle of Gospels it happens to be, on the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, the passage is not taken from the Synoptic Gospels, but from the Fourth Gospel according to Saint John. While all four evangelists confirm the fact that the Lord's public preaching began after the Baptist had prepared the way, Saint John highlights the Baptist's testimony in regard to who Jesus really is. In addition, the Fourth Gospel is the only evangelist to state that the earliest disciples of Jesus had once been disciples of the Baptist. Parenthetical comments or details are common in the Johannine style, but they are too often easily dismissed as providing inconsequential information. However, the seemingly bland statement that "it was about four o'clock in the afternoon" draws attention to what had already taken place that had been decisive. After the Johannine Prologue (Jn 1:2-28), the subsequent section (Jn 1:29 -Jn 2:12) constitutes the true introduction to that Gospel. So, during this first public appearance of Jesus—while His actual baptism is not mentioned—the pericope embodies crucial information in regard to who Jesus is and the faith required to be a disciple. Earlier, 'in Bethany across the Jordan,' the Baptist had encountered a delegation of priests and Levites, seeking to find out who John really was. He categorically said, "I am not the Messiah" (Jn 1:20) nor was he Elijah or one of the prophets. The following day, after that incident, while in that same place, accompanied by two of his disciples, seeing Jesus and watching Him come closer and closer, the Baptist finally said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." Found nearly thirty times in the Book of Revelation, the title Lamb of God (Lat. *Agnus Dei*) is used as a proper name that designates the Lord Jesus as exalted at the Father's right hand because He is the lamb that has been sacrificed. *Agnus Dei* arises through a Christian understanding of the prophetic oracles wherein the paschal sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross constitutes the Lord's pasch or His exodus or passing over from death to life. The title Lamb of God must be viewed from the perspective of paschal faith and Saint John affirms that fact from the first moment of Christ's public life. During the current year of the three-year cycle (Year B), while Saint Mark's Gospel is the primary source, due to its brevity, for five weeks, Mark will be supplemented by passages from Chapter 6 of Saint John's Gospel – the Bread of Life Discourse. Chapter 16 of Saint Mark's Gospel has two different endings – the end point of the Second Gospel is the discovery that the tomb in which they had laid the body of Jesus was empty. Those who hear that good news are then faced with an either-or choice: either believe that Jesus is the Lamb of God or remain baffled by the mystery of who Jesus really is. As the last of the prophets of Israel, the Baptist bridges the two testaments and, so, the Old Testament points forward to Jesus as God's Lamb—the Victim of the new Pasch. In addition, though John noted that while Jesus came after him, since He pre-existed John, Jesus out-ranked the Baptist in importance. Like the best man (Heb. *Shōshbēn* or "friend of the bridegroom" responsible for arrang-

Saint John Chrysostom - Homily 17 on John

...when you hear John again uttering the same words as before you will not rate them as nonsense or consider them vain and boring. Of course, when he spoke the first time he wished to be heard, but since many, because of their deep apathy, did not pay attention to his words from the beginning, he roused them from sleep by repeating his message again. Now, consider; he had said, "After me there comes one who has been set above me;" and "I am not worthy to loose the strap of his sandal;" and "he will baptize [you] with the Holy Spirit and with fire," and that the Spirit was seen descending as a dove and abiding on Him, and he bore witness that "this is the Son of God." No one paid attention or asked a question or said, "Why do you say these things, and about whom, and for what reason?" Again, he had said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Not even thus did he penetrate their sensibility. For this reason, finally, he was forced to say the same words again, as if softening some hard and unyielding soil by cultivating it. By his word, as if were by a plow, he stirred up the hard-packed mind so that the seeds might settle down deeply...it is for that reason that he did not make his speech long...

ing the wedding), John could withdraw from the scene because Jesus "must increase; [John] must decrease" (Jn 3:30). The Baptist not only points toward Jesus, he realizes that since the precursor's role is complete, John releases "two of his disciples" and sends them off to follow the Lamb of God. To the two disciples of John who were following Him, Jesus says to them, "What are you looking for?" It is a strange question – Jesus does not say "Who are you looking for?" nor did He ask, "Who are you?" He calls those two to His side and, thereby, ignites a desire within them to become His disciples. Despite it not being the expected question, the two disciples understand what Jesus was asking because after noting Jesus to be the Teacher or rabbi, they ask Him, "where are you staying?" They wanted to go where He was staying and learn more about or from Him. In the final part of the exchange, Jesus says to them, "Come, and you will see." Implicitly, Jesus is ready to accept their desire to become His disciples, but the transfer of their discipleship from John to Jesus had to be freely undertaken and sealed with some concrete display of that desire. Going to stay with Jesus served to express their willingness to accompany Him wherever He went. The Johannine vocabulary tends to use common words in an uncommon manner. Thus, *to see* and *to stay* have to be examined in that light. Those verbs imply faith in Jesus and signify the relationship between Master and disciple. Apostolic faith in Christ is manifested by hearing, seeing, looking upon, and touching (1 Jn 1:1)—the apostles are witnesses to the Incarnation by virtue of their experience with Jesus during His earthly life. Faith that is based upon apostolic witness, then, can become ours in turn. Another element of John's vocabulary is *to remain* or *to abide*. Jesus said, "Remain in me and I will remain in you" (Jn 15:4). Thus, the invitation to come and see is not simply addressed to those two disciples; no, that invitation is universal and perennial in its scope. What transpired between The Teacher and those two disciples, one of them being Andrew, is not recounted. Instead, through a series of action words – watch, see, follow, come and see, and stay, John sketches out the way to discipleship from its initial exchange through a commitment that leads up to intimacy with the Lord Jesus. Having been directed to the Lamb of God by the Baptist, having spent one day "where Jesus was staying," Andrew sought out his brother Simon and could not wait to say, "We have found the Messiah..." Andrew brought Simon Peter to Jesus, who said, "...Simon, son of John; you will be called Cephas." Jesus does something remarkable, and uses Simon's full name: "You are Simon the son of John." In that moment, Jesus summed up everything that Peter had been, was, and would be: Simon, the son of John, but Jesus made him even more. You will be called Peter or Cephas. Peter did not cease being the son of John, but Jesus made him someone who was more, someone who was more than just himself. From early on in John's Gospel we see that this man named Peter was very specifically named. Wrapped up in that very name Peter or Cephas is his God-given mission. And every time we hear the word "Peter" used in the Gospel, we are reminded that Christ had made him into that.

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage — Pilgrimage Planned for the Eastern Route: May 17—July 16, 2024

Pope Benedict XVI, in Santiago de Compostela described pilgrimage this way, "To go on pilgrimage is not simply to visit a place to admire its treasures of nature, art or history. To go on pilgrimage really means to step out of ourselves in order to encounter God where he has revealed himself, where his grace has shone with particular splendor and produced rich fruits of conversion and holiness among those who believe" (6 November 2010). The word pilgrim comes from the Latin word *peregrinus*, meaning a foreigner, a stranger, someone on a journey, or a temporary resident. It can describe a traveler making a brief journey to a particular place or someone settling for a short or long period in a foreign land. Its derivative is *peregrinatio* which implies a state of being or living abroad. Pilgrimage often describes life's journey, sometimes as a general description of personal growth and exploration, at other times, as in Catholicism, outlining a particular spiritual focus or pathway that is believed to lead to an encounter with God. Fourth century accounts by pilgrims show how attitudes were changing. The anonymous pilgrim of Bordeaux who arrived in 333 AD to explore the land of the Bible left a terse collection of notes listing sites connected with biblical events. Egeria who visited the Holy Land some fifty years later, between 381 and 384 AD, takes on a much more devotional approach. Keen to learn about the biblical sites, Egeria also spends time in worship at various places, listening to appropriate readings from the Bible and praying. Egeria's narrative illustrates the new elements that had emerged: the veneration of relics, a stress on worship at holy sites, and devotional experience heightened by reflecting on the scriptures in places where events such as the Crucifixion had actually taken place. Even now, whether going to the Holy Land to discover how near God is to us, or traveling to Rome to appreciate the fullness of life of Saints Peter and Paul, or walking the Camino in Spain to discover God within us, pilgrims set out on spiritual discovery, just as the Eucharistic Pilgrimage promises to see, be transformed, and testify to faith in Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist. To recover a sense of awe and reverence, we first need to restore a balance between the two-fold character of the person of Jesus as Lion and as Lamb. On one hand, Jesus is the untamed Lion of Judah, whereas on the other, He is the tender, merciful Lamb of God. For the ongoing Eucharistic revival to take hold, we must let the Lion of Judah out of his cage. When we worship with fear and awe, our faith in Christ's real Presence will rebound.

Jesus as the Lamb of God & the Lion of Judah

Jesus is both the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God. Those two titles seem to contradict one another, yet, in fact, they express the harmony within the dichotomy of the nature of God. According to a sermon by Saint Augustine, the lion stands for Christ resurrected, the lamb for Christ's sacrifice: "He endured death as a lamb; he devoured it as a lion" (Augustine, *Sermo* 375A). The lion was the symbol of the tribe of Judah and, yet, the lion is also the king of beasts, made by God to be the top animal predator. Ruling families or kings often took the lion as a symbol, e.g. the Winged Lion of Venice became a symbol of the Venetian republic and appeared on its flag. So, the image of a lion came to symbolize dominance, power, and authority. The kings of Israel, too, always had the lion from the tribe of Judah on their flag, as well. While Jesus is the King of kings, He is also a child of Judah or Israel. As the lion of Judah that title belongs to Jesus as a symbol because it reveals Christ's power. In His divine nature as the Word-made-flesh, Jesus rules over all creation and, as God, He is all-powerful. Yet, even in His human nature, Jesus is superior to all humanity because His humanity is superior to all others. Thus, Jesus is the King of kings, the ruling One, and the Lion is His name. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The Lord wants us to think of a lion whenever we hear His name. He wants us to be intimidated. We have a natural fear of the power and the danger when being confronted by a lion, even if we have never seen one in the wild. The Scriptures are full of instances in which we are taught to fear God. In fact, fear of God is destined to be the beginning of wisdom (Prov 10:27). Holy fear is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's gift of divine fear brings to perfection the virtue of hope. Disciples are meant to respect God *qua* God, to trust in His will, and, then, to anchor their lives in Him alone. In fearing the Lord, then, cultivate a fear in His kingliness and power. You absolutely should, which is why Jesus is the Lion of Judah. Equally true, though, Jesus is also the Lamb. We have to try and resolve this seeming contradiction, because lions devour lambs, not the other way around. So how can Christ be both? In being both, the Lord is trying to reveal the deeper mystery of who He really is. Most human beings have never had a problem believing that God is all-powerful. Yet, many people often struggle to recognize how gentle God is or how loving and merciful is the Lord our God. For that reason, God the Father sent His Son into the world. As God's Lamb or Agnus Dei, that is why Jesus suffered and died sacrificially in the way that He did. Yet, even though Jesus is the Lion of Judah, He came to earth as the Lamb of God—ever so gently, in weakness and born as a Child. The Lord Jesus is both of those things and that dichotomy is illustrated most

beautifully in the Eucharist. The Lord has made Himself heavenly food for us, which is how close He wants to be to His disciples - to dwell within us. To facilitate that, through the action of the Spirit, bread and wine are substantially transformed into His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity so that the Risen Christ dwells within us. This wonderful exchange is not just spiritual - He can do that through Baptism - but it is even physical, where those who receive become one flesh with Him—what you could call a holy marriage. The Risen Lord knows He has to do this very gently, because human beings are skittish, like lambs. People scare very easily; so, in order to mitigate those fears, Christ approaches us like a lamb. The Church focuses upon the sacrifice of Jesus, His self-offering, His identity as the Lamb of God, the unblemished sacrificial offering. While all true, of the same import is His identity as the Lion of Judah. Those two identities of Jesus do not change places. Jesus is not the Lamb of God today and the Lion of Judah tomorrow. Instead, these two identities operate in complete harmony within Him at every moment. Perhaps, in a comfortable, materialistic, self-serving, post-modern culture, the Lion of Judah has a few special things to teach us. While we seem only too eager to embrace the lamb, it might do us some good to "grab the lion's tail." Let's make a personal commitment to "grabbing the lion's tail". Let's commit to the unrelenting pursuit of identifying evil in our own lives. And, then, hunt that evil down and shove it into the light. Let's have the courage of the Lion of Judah. Let us be without fear in the face of our own personal demons and enemies. When you do that, you walk with Christ. Let us make the dark and hopeless areas of life, now exposed to the light, an offering to Jesus. Let us kill the sin that is within everyone and, then, offer the life that God has given us to live according to the goodness and providence of God. Then, through grace, you become capable of surrendering everything that is broken within you to the mercy of God. Everyone is called to crucify those sinful tendencies, to let them die. Jesus as the Lion of Judah, Just Judge and Commander of angel armies and the Lamb of God — endured death and devoured sin by His sacrifice. The first time Jesus came to earth, He came as a sacrificial lamb. When He comes again, He will come as a Lion of conquest. Once the sacrificial servant, when the Son of Man returns He will come as the conquering King. The Lamb becomes the Lion. This epithet of the Lion and the Lamb represents the Messianic Age. The Lamb symbolizes Christ's sacrificial death. The Lion, His resurrection and the final judgment. Excerpted from Ken Kniepmann. "Grabbing the Lion of Judah's Tail." www.catholicstand.com. 16 April 2017.