

**OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL**  
**SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL**  
**WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER**  
**Third Sunday in Lent**  
**March 3, 2024**



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**Zeal for your house consumes me**

*Zeal is divine charity in action – Jesus is consumed with zeal to conquer every heart and free it from any sinful infection that destroys the heart from being a worthy dwelling place. Allow your heart to be cleansed and filled with His life-giving Spirit*

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

## **MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

Saturday, March 2 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm For the health of a beloved son by his mother

Sunday, March 3 *Third Sunday of Lent*

7:30am +Patricia Oakes by the alumnae of former SVH School of Nursing

4:00pm For the gifts of faith, hope & love for a beloved son on his birthday

Monday, March 4 *Saint Casimir, holy man*<sup>2</sup>

12:00nn +Father Walter Riley

Tuesday, March 5

12:00nn For the safety and protection of priests in the Diocese of Worcester

Wednesday, March 6

12:00nn For the conversion of heart of federal agencies

Thursday, March 7 *Saint Perpetua & Saint Felicity*<sup>2</sup>

12:00nn For a special intention

Friday, March 8 *Saint John of God, religious*<sup>2</sup> — *Day of Abstinence*

11:30am Stations of the Cross

12:00nn For Danielle

Saturday, March 9 *Vigil of the 4th Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm For a personal intention

Sunday, March 10 *Fourth Sunday of Lent*

7:30am For the health of a devout Catholic

4:00pm +Marylynn Beal

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 of Lent**

All four Gospels recount that there was a day when Jesus chased the merchants and money-changers out of the Temple. According to Saint John's account, the cleansing must be seen through the lens of faith. Today's Gospel passage embodies a collection of biblical information concerning the Temple in regard to its significance and future, the Messiah, Israel's salvation and the fate of the nations, as well as the end times. However, the focus is on the person of Jesus and the mystery that He embodies. At the conclusion to the Fourth Gospel, John reveals his purpose, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:30-31). The Temple is both the sign of God's presence among the Israelites and also the structure witnesses to the maturing of salvation. God's light and glory shine forth from its Holy of Holies and life-giving water springs up from within the Temple, too (Ez 47:1-12). The building's destruction and its reconstruction are linked with the dispersion of God's people and their reunification, coupled with the salvation of those nations that ascend to Mount Zion in pilgrimage. Various psalms reveal the crucial role of the Temple in the religious vision: Ps 79:1; Ps 48:10; Ps 65:5; Ps 68:30. Yet, there was also the promise of a new temple, coming down from heaven and, when that would come to pass, then, God would definitively reside among His people. This oracle will be fulfilled when the Messiah comes, cleansing the Temple. During the Exile, under the aegis of the prophets and their oracles, the physical Temple assumed a deeper role and acquired a future horizon. During the Babylonian exile, though without the Temple and its sacrifices, the people sensed God's presence. Sacred buildings, while essential, such structures came to be seen as merely signs while the important issue is worship accomplished "in Spirit and truth" (Jn 4:24). Scholars describe the cleansing as a *parable in action*. Despite casting out merchants and money-changers, along with their sheep, oxen and scattering the temple coins, Jesus assiduously avoids harming people or damaging property. There is no follow up as to what happened after this was all over. The prophecy of Zechariah foretold what would happen – "No longer will there be merchants in the house of the LORD of hosts on that

## Saint Augustine—Catena Aurea Jn 2

Our Lord intended a meaning to be seen in His making a scourge (flagellum) of small cords, and then He scourged (flagellavit) those who were carrying on the merchandise in the temple. Every one by his sins twists for himself a cord, in that he goes on adding sin to sin.

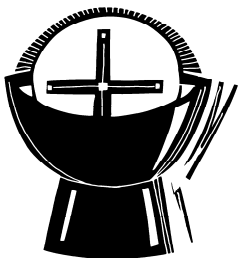
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day” (Zech 14:21). Further along, the Gospel records some mysterious words by Jesus that only can be understood later on in the text. By driving out those profane influences, Jesus assumes the role of a prophet, endowed with the authority to act as He did. The eyewitnesses, while understanding the significance of what was happening, ask Him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” While to the Jews, the following answer might seem like avoiding the question, Jesus replied, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” It is important to figure out the reference Jesus intended by such a declaration. If it referred to the cleansed Temple, the counterclaim that it took “forty-six years” to construct it would mock His claim. The sought-after sign that legitimizes His authority to purge the Temple is enshrined in what is typical in Saint John’s Gospel – a kind of side comment by the evangelist, “...he was speaking about the temple of his body.” Adding to that explanatory comment, the evangelist adds that “his disciples remembered that he had said this” and only understood what was said and had happened after Jesus “was raised from the dead.” The Greek word *to raise* (Gk. ἐγείρω), while literally meaning *to get up* again, when used in Saint John’s technical vocabulary that verb means *to bring to life again*. The significance of what Jesus said is deepened when, after noting that He had risen, bear in mind that only at that point did the disciples remember what He had said. Saint John adds “they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.” The various signs or miracles that the Lord worked manifested “the glory [which was His] as...the Father’s only Son” (Jn 1:14). The ultimate sign, validating all that Jesus said and did, was the Resurrection. Signs reveal Jesus as the Messiah. The Greek noun sign (Gk. σημεῖον-sēmeion) is John’s symbolic term for the Lord’s wondrous deeds, whose Old Testament antecedents lie in the Exodus story. John is interested primarily in what the signs or sēmeia signify: God’s intervention in human history in a new way through Jesus. Regardless of the consequences of any given sign, those miracles demand a response – a total commitment to believing that Jesus is the Son of God. On several occasions, in regard to signs, the fourth evangelist inserts statements about their value, “While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing” (Jn 2:23). After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, some of those who had witnessed the miracle told the Pharisees, after convening a session of the Sanhedrin, found those holy men saying, “What are we going to do? This man is performing many signs. If we leave him alone, all will believe in him...” (Jn 11:48). These signs are ambivalent in that those same miracles or signs produce faith in some people and hostility in others. With the Passover near, Jesus cleansed the Temple and along with that prophetic action and, by means of other subsequent signs, caused large numbers to believe He was the Messiah of Israel. Out in the very near future, there was another Passover where Jesus was destined to suffer because of the faith He had aroused. Signs create the prospect of faith in Jesus, but they do not force it. It is necessary to go beyond a given sign to the ultimate sign of Christ’s paschal mystery – His suffering, death, Resurrection, and Ascension back to the right hand of the Father.

### National Eucharistic Revival — Lent & Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist

In parishes with prospective candidates for full initiation into the Church, the Gospel of the Samaritan woman at the well plants the Elect deeply into the mystery of salvation—God’s great love for sinners. Jesus wants to give her the “living water” that comes from faith in Him. He repeatedly directs her attention away from the water in the well to the thirst He knows she has in her soul. This “living water” Jesus wants to give her is the water of life that comes from faith in Him. Natural desires such as hunger and thirst are often substitute expressions for the Eucharist that provides the baptized with daily food that slakes the aching desire for life without end — eternal life, despite earthly temptations to the contrary. During the holy season of Lent, the Church encourages those seeking Baptism and, also, all the baptized to take special notice of ourselves as sinners, spending the time and effort needed to recognize the seriousness of sin and to rejoice in Christ’s victory over it. In John 6:35, which is a Eucharistic quote, Jesus explains that He is the Bread of Life. While He is talking in symbolism regarding spiritual hunger and thirst, Jesus is also making a direct connection between His Body and the heavenly Bread of the Eucharist, which when understood as the *fractio panis* (or breaking of the bread), the Eucharist is the Body of the Lord that literally broken on the Cross and manna from heaven for those who believe in Christ’s Real Presence.



## Third thru Fifth Sundays of Lent: Catechumenal Gospels & the Scrutinies

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, described Lent this way, “The season of Lent has a twofold character: primarily by recalling or preparing for baptism and by penance, it disposes the faithful, who more diligently hear the word of God and devote themselves to prayer, to celebrate the paschal mystery. This twofold character is to be brought into greater prominence both in the liturgy and by liturgical catechesis. Hence: a) More use is to be made of the baptismal features proper to the Lenten liturgy; some of them, which used to flourish in bygone days, are to be restored as may seem good. b) The same is to apply to the penitential elements. As regards instruction it is important to impress on the minds of the faithful not only a social consequence of sin but also that essence of the virtue of penance which leads to the detestation of sin as an offense against God; the role of the Church in penitential practices is not to be passed over, and the people must be exhorted to pray for sinners. The baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment as others prepare to be baptized through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a period of learning and discernment for individuals who have declared their desire to become Catholics (SC, n.109). According to George Weigel, the five weeks of Lent can be divided into two distinct periods: the first two weeks have a penitential character and assume the form of an extended examination of conscience. The tone shifts, though, with the third Sunday in Lent, as the Church begins three weeks of reflection on the meaning of baptism and the liturgy asks all the baptized to consider how well they are living in imitation of Christ. The Third to the Fifth Sundays of Lent, in parishes with candidates preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation during the Easter Vigil, you hear the three catechumenal Gospels and also witness the scrutinies. Those are three unique rites that help prepare the Elect to enter the Church and take place during the third period of RCIA known as Purification and Enlightenment, near the end of their formation. For cradle Catholics, the scrutinies can help those who were baptized as infants to seek to live a life of continuous conversion. The purpose of the Scrutinies is “to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful” in the hearts of the Elect and to “strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good” (RCIA, n. 141). Scrutinies are accompanied by an exorcism—not the exaggerated version promoted by Hollywood, but exorcism’s liturgical role in asking God to strengthen and protect the Elect from temptation and deceit—so, an exorcism is God’s way of taking a close, loving look at the Elect. The Lord does not scrutinize those seeking membership in the Church in order to find what’s wrong with them but to primarily rejoice that freed from disordered

passions, then, all that remains in them is what is beautiful, good, and true. Jesus “scrutinizes” everyone with Divine Light, revealing all that is valuable within each of us. Thus, those Scrutinies are about seeing sin in its rightful aspect and attempting to come to understand the way sinners so easily fall victim to it. Those rituals are also about the transformative healing possible for us through Christ, as He offers Himself to us. In order to inspire in the Elect the desire for purification and redemption by Christ, there is the reason those three scrutinies are celebrated. Through undergoing such divine scrutiny, first of all, the Elect are gradually instructed about the mystery of sin, from which the whole world and every person longs to be delivered and saved from sin’s present and future consequences. Second, with their spirit exorcised, the soul is filled with (1) Christ the Redeemer, who is the living water (the Gospel of the Samaritan woman in the first scrutiny), (2) the light of the world (the Gospel of the man born blind in the second scrutiny), and (3) the Resurrection and eternal life (the Gospel of Lazarus in the third scrutiny). Consequently, from the first to the final scrutiny the Elect should progress in their perception of sin and increase their desire for salvation (RCIA, n. 143). Since the Scrutinies are associated with three specific Gospel passages taken from the Gospel according to Saint John, on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent: Jesus encountering the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:5-42), where He offers Himself as Living Water, followed by Jesus healing the man born blind (Jn 9:1-41), where He gives Himself as Light of the World, and the ultimate revelation when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, and He reveals Himself as the Resurrection and the Life (Jn 11:1-45). In the early Church, the explanation of those Gospels completed the catechumens’ preparation for baptism,” wrote George Weigel in his book entitled *Roman Pilgrimage*. Weigel’s questions pertain to all the faithful: “How am I responding to Christ’s thirst for my friendship in prayer, in light of Jesus’s invitation to the Samaritan woman, whom he asked for a drink of water? How are my eyes being opened to the demands of my mission, by the Christ who gave sight to the man born blind? Do I, like Martha, truly believe that Jesus is the Son of the living God, with power to raise me, like Lazarus, from the bonds of sin and death?” As rituals that invite the Elect to pray in an open way for healing and deliverance from sin, the same should be true for those of us who are fully initiated. Open yourself to scrutiny and pray for restoration and release from the demons who haunt us all. Pray: “Pin my heart to you in faith, I confess my faults and lay bare my hidden wounds. In your love free me from my infirmities, heal my sickness, quench my thirst, and give me peace.”