

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Second Sunday of Easter
April 16, 2023



The Mercy of God worked wonderfully, for when that doubting disciple touched his Master's wounded flesh he cured the wound of our disbelief. So this doubting disciple, who actually touched, became a witness to the reality of the resurrection.

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, April 15 *Vigil of the 2nd Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm +Edward Jablonski — 12th anniversary — by his children

Sunday, April 16 *Second Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy Sunday*

7:30am +Lucjan, Stanislaw, & Edward Janeczak

4:00pm In gratitude for the outpouring of God's divine mercy by JL

Monday, April 17

12:00nn For the future of a nursing student

Tuesday, April 18

12:00nn For success in nursing entrance exams

Wednesday, April 19

12:00nn For success in NCLX exams

Thursday, April 20

4:00nn +Edwin "Ed" Lopes by his friends

Friday, April 21 *Saint Anselm of Canterbury, bishop & doctor*²

12:00nn +Dorothy O'Connor

Saturday, April 22 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm +Raymond & Jacqueline Gemme

Sunday, April 23 *Third Sunday of Easter*

7:30am Seeking divine help for someone suffering from substance abuse

4:00pm Seeking God's guidance in regard to an important decision

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 memorial¹ or an optional memorial².*

Toward a Better Understanding the Gospel of Eastertide

On Easter Sunday, the passage was the opening verses to chapter twenty of the Gospel according to Saint John (Jn 20:1-9). The closing chapters of that Fourth Gospel are directed toward defining paschal faith and aims at illustrating how the eyes of faith allow what is merely human vision to penetrate hidden truths. This week's passage (Jn 20:19-31), on the octave or eighth day of Easter, adds another insight into the Johannine definition of paschal faith which is that "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed" (Jn 20:29). The appearance of the Risen Christ to the disciples took place "on the evening of the first day of the week," just as had happened earlier to Mary Magdalene on that first Easter morning, "while it was still dark," but with significant differences. In the intervening verses between those two passages (Jn 20:11-18), after the disciples had left she stayed by the empty tomb. When asked why she was weeping, she did not realize it was Christ and, at first, Mary mistook the Risen Lord for a gardener. Only after Christ called her by name did she recognize Him and called Him *Rabbouni* (Gk. ῥαββουνι) or *my teacher*. Apparently, Mary thought the tragic events of the past few days had only been a nightmare from which she had just awoken. The Risen Jesus immediately corrected her and, after telling her not to hold on to Him, those two interventions served to not only confirm that His death and resurrection were real, but that at that moment, they were only steps toward ultimate fulfillment when the Risen Lord would ascend back to heaven. In this week's Gospel, with the disciples cowering in fear and believing they were protected behind locked doors, without warning the Risen Lord Jesus appeared in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." Now risen, Christ was no longer bound by the laws governing time and space; thus, appearing in a locked room illustrates the qualities of Christ glorified. Nonetheless, He also bears the wounds which marked His human suffering. Transfigured, as He had once revealed Himself to Peter, James, and John, now alive forevermore, He is not constrained by earthly limits of mortality. And resurrected, Christ brings heavenly peace to those who believe He is alive. Then, the Lord breathed upon the Ten apostles the gift of the Spirit which is frequently identified as the Johannine Pentecost. Saint John Paul II, in discussing this incident said, "The Spirit's presence in the Church is intended for the forgiveness of sins, for remembering and carrying out the Gospel in life, for the ever deeper achievement of unity in love" (General Audience Address 31 May 2000). Unlike the reference to the actual Pentecost, found in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-11), in this passage, the gift of the Spirit is more restrained. In the Fourth Gospel account, only Christ does anything and simply breathes (Gk. ἐμφυσᾶω) on them and, having endowed the apostles with the Spirit, the power to forgive or to withhold forgiveness (Gk. κρατέω lit. to place

Saint Gregory the Great - Hom. 26, 7-9: PL 76, 12010-1202

The disbelief of Thomas has done more for our faith than the faith of the other disciples. As he touches Christ and is won over to belief, every doubt is cast aside and our faith is strengthened. So the disciple who doubted, then felt Christ's wounds, becomes a witness to the reality of the resurrection. Touching Christ, he cried out: My Lord and my God. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed. There is here a particular reference to ourselves; we hold in our hearts one we have not seen in the flesh. We are included in these words, but only if we follow up our faith with good works. The true believer practices what he believes. But of those who pay only lip service to faith, Paul has this to say: They profess to know God, but they deny him in their works. Therefore James says: Faith without works is dead.

under one's grasp) is given to them. Merely by Christ's presence, the guilt-ridden and fearful disciples are freed from their paralyzing fears and comforted by knowing that Jesus is not dead but alive and that realization is the cause of unheard of joy! Those barricaded in that Upper Room saw and believed—the vision that their earthly eyes saw was deepened by the rediscovered faith that Jesus had conquered death. Though nothing is said about the apostles' reaction to all that had transpired, the need for witnessing is relegated to the apostle who for some inexplicable reason was not with the others. When Thomas or Didymus finally appears, his fellow apostles blurt out, "We have seen the Lord." Thomas refused to believe their testimony and told them that he will remain skeptical until he can touch the wounds which the crucifixion inflicted on the body of Jesus. All of the apostles believed Jesus was dead, whereas none of them accepted the fact that Christ had been raised immediately or without any doubt as to whether or not it was true. The five sacred wounds or stigmata are what served as proof that the Risen Lord before them was, in fact, Jesus who had been crucified. A week later, despite locked doors, Christ unexpectedly appears in the midst of the apostles and, again, extends the peace that exceeds all understanding to them. On the first Easter evening, the Lord took the initiative to show them His glorious wounds; now, He invites Thomas to do so in order for him to believe that though now glorified that the Risen Savior before him is, in fact, the Jesus he had seen die on the cross. The Resurrected Christ and the Crucified Jesus are the same and by the grace the Lord gave them, their earthly senses of sight and touch are so deepened that they can see with the eyes of faith and touch with their own hands the body of Christ, raised from the dead – doubt yields to belief. After Thomas declares Christ to be his Lord and God, the Lord Jesus exhorts him to "not be unbelieving but to believe." Seemingly as an appendage, the evangelist notes that there are other signs that have not been written down, but those that he has recorded where presented so that those who see and hear "may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God..." Seeing versus believing are in constant contention with one another; seeing is direct evidence, but we often accept someone else's testimony that something is true which we have not seen. Yet, having seen Jesus suffer and die, the physical evidence has to be situated within the realm of paschal faith. The apostles had to discount what they had seen in order to believe Christ was risen; on our part, we must take their apostolic witness and believe without having seen – this statement, on the part of Jesus to Thomas, is the beatitude of faith.

Easter tide: The Fifty Days of Easter to Pentecost

The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are meant to be observed as one great feast. Just as the recently completed Sacred Triduum consists of one liturgy that spans three days, so too the Easter season is one great Sunday—one feast that spans fifty days. You find that understanding expressed in the *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year*, "The fifty days from the Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday are celebrated in joy and exultation (Lat. *in laetitia et exultatione*) as one feast day, indeed as one 'great Sunday'" (*UNLYC*, n. 22). Thus, Easter is not over on Easter Monday, nor even after the Octave of Easter because it takes fifty days to celebrate Easter. A special consideration for the sick and homebound during the Octave of Easter comes from the instruction *Paschale Solemnitatis*: The Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts: "It is highly recommended that Communion be brought to the sick also, especially during the Easter octave" (*PS*, n. 104) so they may share with the whole Church in the paschal celebration. One New Testament book is reserved for Easter and the following fifty days until Pentecost, which is seldom if ever otherwise read publicly during Sunday or weekday liturgies. This book is The Acts of the Apostles. This sequel to the Gospel of Luke is the chronicle of the emerging Church whose mission was to spread the glad tidings that Christ had risen from the dead. The various accounts of Christ's post-resurrection appearances to the Apostles is also highlighted. Finally, the fifty days of Easter is significant for those fully-initiated in the faith during the Easter Vigil. It is the fourth stage of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) or the period of mystagogia or "uncovering the mysteries." This 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 now known as "neophytes," from the Greek words meaning "new plant," because the faith has been newly planted in them. The sacramental rites of initiation and the symbols of the Easter Vigil manifest and make present the crucified and risen Lord. Bodies plunged into water, foreheads anointed with sacred Chrism and the newly-baptized dressed in white garments evoke memories of Christ's Paschal Mystery. Saint Cyril, a great mystagogue or teacher of the mysteries told the neophytes, "It has long been my wish to discourse to you on these spiritual, heavenly mysteries. On the principle, however, that seeing is believing, I delayed until the present occasion, calculating that, after what you saw that night, I should find you a readier audience when I am to be your guide to the brighter and more fragrant meadows of this second Eden."

Second Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy Sunday

Introduction

On April 30, 2000, during the *Jubilaeum 2000*, Saint John Paul II canonized Sr. Faustina Kowalska, who had entered the convent of Zgromadzenie Sióstr Matki Bożej Miłosierdzia. Moreover, the Holy Father declared that the Second Sunday after Easter should be universally observed as Divine Mercy Sunday. Among the Five Wounds of Christ—those signs of His passion—the wound in the Lord’s heart is the source of His merciful love. The preparation for this feast begins on Good Friday with the observance of the Divine Mercy novena. On 25 August 1905, the future saint was born in the rural village of Glogowiec and, at the age of 20, she was admitted to the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Warsaw. Then, for the next 13 years, she carried out humble tasks as cook, gardener and porter. She died in Krakow, Poland on October 5, 1938. During her seemingly mundane life, she had a variety of mystical experiences—visions, revelations, and hidden stigmata. She wrote these down in her diary—*Divine Mercy in My Soul*. Inspired by a vision of the Lord Himself, wherein Jesus asked her that a portrait be painted of Him with the inscription *Jezu, ufam Tobie* (Eng. *Jesus I Trust in You*) that divine request was fulfilled in 1935. So, trust in the Lord is the origin of mercy and among the devotional practices associated with that devotion you find the command to venerate the image of the merciful Christ, to pray the Chaplet of divine mercy, observing the 3 o’clock hour of great mercy or receiving the sacraments on Divine Mercy Sunday.

Toward A Biblical Understanding of Mercy

In the encyclical *Dives in misericordia* (Eng. Rich in mercy) especially in Appendix A, Saint Pope John Paul II sought to deepen the Church’s understanding of misericordia. The English word mercy (Lat. misericordia) inadequately conveys the true biblical depth of that notion. In the Old Testament, two Hebrew words sustain that image: *hesed* (or steadfast love) and *rahamim* which is the same as the word for womb in Hebrew or *rehem*. Those words constitute mercy’s biblical foundation. *Hesed* entails that a profound attitude of goodness must prevail in a given situation, so, that when such an attitude exists between two people, they become faithful to one another. However, when steadfast love or *hesed* is used to refer God, it is only found in reference to God’s original covenant with Israel—the supreme sign of Yahweh’s overflowing generosity and grace. *Hesed* acquired a juridical quality, when Israel broke the covenant and God’s legal obligation to the Chosen People technically ceased with those infidelities. Therein, the divine form of *hesed* revealed its deeper qualities—a generous love that always remains so, which is a divine love more powerful than repeated infidelity or understood as unearned grace that is stronger than sin. The second Hebrew word used for mercy is *rahamim* (or womb-love) that serves to il-

lustrate the love of a mother and also describes the unique bond (viz. the particular love) between the woman who is with child and the child in her womb. Such maternal love exists without merit and, as truly heartfelt. *Rahamim* gives rise to both moral goodness and maternal tenderness, not to mention that it also creates patience and understanding. These are all the prerequisites which are essential for someone or anyone to become eager to forgive. Within the writings of the New Testament, the Greek word *eleos* is the term that those sacred authors used for mercy and, as a result, *eleos* (lit. oil that is poured out) can be understood as implying loving kindness or divine compassion. One form of the Penitential Rite is the use of the Greek *Kyrie eleison* and *Christe eleison*. In preparation for offering God true worship, the Church begs the Lord to pour out His merciful love, like holy oil from above, on those assembled before the altar of sacrifice. Within the Catholic liturgical tradition, the key word for mercy is *misericordia*, which literally means a “wretched heart.” As a true virtue, *misericordia* entails a heart-felt reaction to another individual’s suffering coupled with a willingness to do whatever is necessary to help relieve the cause of their pain or suffering. The popular understanding of mercy as pity differs sharply with its divine or biblical version. In modern usage, mercy as pity has an air of condescension, whereas its divine form requires that we should have a powerful feeling, welling up from inner attitudes of tenderness and love, such that mercy is akin to a wretched heart, which aches for the suffering that has prompted such a reaction. This gut-wrenching sensation is the impetus for concrete action to relieve and heal whatever has precipitated another’s suffering—the Lord’s mercy is like that and, of course, even deeper and much more profound.

Plenary Indulgence for Divine Mercy Sunday

An indulgence is the remission “of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven” (*CIC*, can. 1471). There are two types of indulgences—partial and plenary (or full). The plenary indulgence requires sacramental confession, reception of Holy Communion, and prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father. In order to comply with the requirements of obtaining an indulgence on Divine Mercy Sunday, the faithful must take part in the prayers and/or devotions in honor of Christ’s Divine Mercy in a church or chapel, accompany that indulgenced act with a complete detachment from all sin, including venial sin. Then, either at Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament or by praying before the Tabernacle or image of Divine Mercy, the individual must recite the Our Father, the Creed and some devout prayer to the merciful Christ Jesus—e.g., *Jesus I trust in you!* Works of mercy should be the hallmark of the Christian life and, then, they should be done in humility and in obedience to the command of Christ.