

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Third Sunday of Easter
April 23 2023



Mane vobiscum, Domine!
Stay with us Lord.

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 22 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm +Raymond & Jacqueline Gemme

Sunday, April 23 *Third Sunday of Easter*

7:30am For successful surgery—asking God to oversee what happens

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

Monday, April 24 *Saint Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest & martyr* ²

12:00nn For pain relief for a beloved mother

Tuesday, April 25 *Feast of Saint Mark, evangelist*

12:00nn +Mariano Osorio, Jr. — 2nd anniversary

Wednesday, April 26

12:00nn +Stephen L’Esperance by his family

Thursday, April 27

4:00nn +Edwin “Ed” Lopes by his friends

Friday, April 28

12:00nn Divine help in safe-guarding family unity and for spiritual protection

Saturday, April 29 *Vigil of the 4th Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm Special intention for spiritual protection

Sunday, April 30 *Fourth Sunday of Easter*

7:30am Special intention for spiritual protection

4:00pm Asking God to keep a job secure and for spiritual protection

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 the Gospels of Eastertide

On the day when Christ rose from the grave, two despondent disciples had left Jerusalem and were returning home to Emmaus which was situated some 60 stades from David’s city. The stadion (Gk. στάδιον) was an ancient Greek unit of length which was based on the length of a typical stadium of that time, rendered as “seven miles from Jerusalem,” which would be about a two-hour walk. While their privileged experience of finally recognizing Christ after His resurrection cannot be duplicated, the path to faith that Christ was alive forevermore, which Cleopas and his companion had to follow, remains the pattern that every disciple must follow in order to reach that same conclusion. The majority of what happens between these fellow-travelers with Christ occurs on the road to the village and, once home, the account reaches its end-point. At the outset, disappointed and disillusioned by what had happened to Jesus, unbeknownst to them, the Lord joins them and asks, “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They recount all the incidents surrounding the Savior’s death and, then, add, “Some women...have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body....Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.” Saint Luke had already divulged that this Stranger was the Lord, but neither of the two disciples knew who their companion was because “...their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.” The horror of the Cross and its scandal remained the only image in their minds and, so, it darkened their sight. The only thing that sinks into their minds is why this Stranger is not despondent as they are and nor does He know the reason for their melancholy. When the veil of their eyes was lifted, after Jesus upbraided them saying, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke,” those disciples do not ask who the Stranger is and, instead, they simply listen to Jesus explaining the Scriptures that pertained to Him. Humanly speaking, in times of heart-breaking grief, those suffering eagerly listen to anyone who can calm the anxiety and soothe the agony they are experiencing. Feigning that He was going farther, the two do not want the healing to end, so, they beg Jesus to stay with them, appealing to the fact it was late in the day. The traditional elements of the Easter message are enshrined in this pericope. The Life that Christ brings shows itself – He had to suffer in order to enter into his glory. Sacred writings are signposts that point toward the end wherein Jesus is

Saint Augustine of Hippo - Sermon 235

...where was it that the Lord wished to be recognized? In the breaking of the bread. We are safe; we break bread, and we recognize the Lord. He did not wish to be recognized except in that act, for the sake of us who were not destined to see Him in the flesh but who, nevertheless, would eat His flesh. Therefore, whoever you are who are faithful, you for whom the title Christian is not an empty name, you who do not enter this church without reason, you who hear the word of God with sentiments of fear and hope, let the breaking of the bread bring consolation to you. The absence of the Lord is not real absence; have faith, and He whom you do not see is with you. When the Lord spoke to the disciples, they did not have faith; because they did not believe that He had risen, they did not hope that they could rise again. They had lost faith; they had lost hope.

recognized as the Christ. Dutifully listening to the Stranger's explanation of the Scriptures, trying to make sense out of the scandal of the cross, only when they sat down with their Companion and saw what He did – took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave the bread to them were “their eyes opened and they recognized him.” Whether it was their recollection of the feeding of the five thousand “as the day was drawing to a close” (Lk 9:12) or the Passover they had just shared with Jesus which He eagerly desired to eat with them before He suffered (Lk 22:15), it is mere speculation in regard to what those disciples were thinking – instead, since the Third Gospel was put into its written form near the close of the first century of Christianity (est. 80-100 AD), by breaking bread in their house-churches and doing so in memory of the Lord Jesus, that first generation of believers was doing what the Lord had commanded His apostles to do “until He comes again.” Those late first-century Christians lived in a similar situation as all subsequent generations – their faith in Christ was built upon the Scriptural evidence and they stood on the shoulders of the apostles who were eye-witnesses to all that had happened. Then, in the breaking of the bread (Lat. *fractio panis*) the Risen Christ remained behind and active in the world, then and now, among those to whom He gives His flesh to eat, the food of eternal life. The itinerary by which faith is born, grows, and matures inexorably leads to recognizing Christ as risen, alive forevermore, and while now at the Father's right hand, He stays with us in sacred food and heavenly drink. After noting their reaction to what took place on the road and in the village of Emmaus, the two go back to Jerusalem and the reason for going back to the city they had just left dispirited and downcast. Upon reaching the Eleven, Cleopas and his companion heard the Easter declaration, “The Lord has been truly raised and has appeared to Simon.” The faith of every and any disciples is built upon apostolic witness; thus, authentic faith is apostolic in nature. The Emmaus disciples, when confronted with the testimony of the other apostles that Christ is alive then tell their companions what had occurred to them heading down to Emmaus. How they had come to believe in Christ as risen by listening to His explanation of all that Moses and the prophets had foretold. Both the Lord's words and His deeds both came visible only “in the breaking of the bread” and they returned to Jerusalem to share what was their good news which was confirmed by the apostolic witness of Saint Peter.

Eastertide: The Fifty Days of Easter to Pentecost

We are observing a great fifty-day feast variously known as Paschaltide or Eastertide. The word tide has an archaic meaning that refers to a festival and its meaning. So, tide is a specific period, time or season that usually surrounds a particular festival. Prior generations found great symbolic meaning in the length of Easter or the fifty days of Easter. Fifty constitutes seven weeks or a week of weeks plus one day ($7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$). The extra day was considered to be the Eighth Day, which is the name that devout Christians ascribe to Sunday, the day of resurrection, since the eighth day symbolized the act of re-creation or eternity. When understood in that manner, the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost are not just the start of a new seven-day week but the extended unfolding of an entirely new creation. Fifty days is also equivalent to about one-seventh of the whole year, so these fifty days of Easter hold the same relationship to the year as Sunday does to the week. For that reason, the fifty days of Easter are known as the Great Sunday of the entire year. Easter has been referred to as the peak (or the acropolis) of all feasts. In the latter part of the fourth century, Saint Gregory of Nazianzen wrote, ‘This highest Feast and greatest celebration so much surpasses not only civic holidays but also the other feast days of the Lord, that it is like the sun among stars.’ These fifty days “are celebrated in joy and exultation (Lat. *in laetitia et exultatione*) as one feast day...” (*UNLYC*, n. 22). Biblical joy is more than feeling happy because it is a lasting emotion that comes from the choice to trust that God will always fulfill His promises. Christian joy, then, is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Jesus causes us to see the beauty of Christ in His word and in the world. Such joy, as a hallmark of Eastertide, is the consequence of possessing God through faith and charity and the fruit of living all the virtues. Hence, not only a dominant attitude from Easter to Pentecost, Easter joy is not the result of an easy life without difficulties, nor the result of someone's current circumstances or state of mind, because it is a deep and constant attitude that is born of faith in Christ: “we have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us (1 Jn 4:16). The Christian way of living has as its ultimate aim to lead us into communion with God “so that our joy may be complete” (1 Jn 1:4).

FIFTY DAYS FROM EASTER TO PENTECOST

Hesed: God's steadfast love

God's self-description is this, "Lord, Lord, a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love and fidelity" (Ex 34:6). Believers can trust in the Lord God Almighty with every fiber of their being, at every moment in time, and in every circumstance because His faithful love never runs out nor does it fail. In the Book of Lamentations, you can read that the Lord's acts of mercy are not exhausted, his compassion is never spent because they are renewed each morning—great is your faithfulness! A representative sufferer remembers and declares this truth. In Lamentations 3:22, the Hebrew word translated as mercy is *hesed*, which means "steadfast or loyal love." It incorporates God's unfailing kindness, inherent goodness, and merciful love, which is directly related to the divine faithfulness expressed in the first covenant. In order to accurately grasp the merciful and gracious nature of God, a better understanding of *hesed* or steadfast love is required. In English translations of the Bible, *hesed* is rendered by a variety of words such as kindness, steadfast love, loyalty, favor and devotion. According to the Catholic biblical scholar John L. McKenzie, the word *hesed* is often used in Hebrew in compound words, which bring out its meaning, such as *hesed-emet* (steadfast, dependable love), *hesed-sedekah* (righteous, holy love) and *hesed-yesua* (rescuing, saving love). In the Septuagint or LXX, the third century BC Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the LXX has influenced the way translators have rendered the biblical Hebrew text into modern languages for centuries. The Septuagint was translated in Alexandria, Egypt around the middle of the third century before Christ. In that text, the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew word *hesed* is primarily rendered as *eleos* or mercy, but other Greek words too were used as its linguistic equivalent such as righteousness, grace, glory, or hope. *Hesed* is not just a feeling, but an action; yet, it is also not a romantic form of love because it is a faithful, reliable love. *Hesed* incorporates one of the most fundamental characteristics of God's divine nature, consistent with what we know about what is exemplified in His covenantal nature. It incorporates all the positive attributes of the God of Israel or, put succinctly, acts of devotion and loving-kindness that go far beyond the demands of sheer duty. *Loving-kindness* is an interesting word in the English language. Built out of two different words, the expression combines the definitions of both those words and, then, even something more. *Hesed* means tenderness and consideration towards others. Those are the key words capturing the essence of lovingkindness when Hebrew yields to English. Lovingkindness is always directed outward and, so, toward others. As an outward expression, it is not an act of self-seeking motivation. If this

sounds familiar, it is easy to understand why. While the expression lovingkindness can be considered somewhat archaic, many English Bible translations use it when *hesed* appears in the Book of Psalms; whereas other translations use *steadfast love*. Try studying the Psalms with translations that use lovingkindness and you will discover a new depth of meaning and understanding to these passages. According to Vine's *Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament*, in general, you can identify three basic meanings for *hesed*, and these three meanings always interact -- strength, steadfastness, and love. Any understanding of *hesed* that fails to suggest all three ideas inevitably loses some of the word's richness and depth. Love by itself easily becomes sentimentalized or universalized apart from the covenant. Yet strength or steadfastness suggests only the fulfillment of a legal (or similar) obligation. *Hesed* refers primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between the parties of a relationship (especially Yahweh and Israel); yet, *hesed* is not only a matter of obligation but it also includes generosity, a gut-wrenching reaction to the suffering of others. Steadfast love is not only a matter of loyalty, but also of mercy. Thus, *hesed* implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law and a call to do something concrete.

Hesed as Mercy

The predominant English translation of *hesed* as mercy, though, presents a semantic problem because in contemporary English mercy has a very restricted meaning. It is usually used to refer to an act of pardon, as "He threw himself on the mercy of the court." In the Catholic tradition of theology, however, mercy means far more than just the cancellation of punishment. The Greek words for "Lord, have mercy," are "Kyrie, eleison" that is to say, "Lord, soothe me, comfort me, take away my pain, show me your steadfast love." Thus, mercy does not refer so much to justice or acquittal, which is its instinctive sense in Western thought, but refers to the infinite loving-kindness of God, and seeking God's compassion for His suffering children! People may remember the trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg who were tried in court for espionage against the United States. They were found guilty and were sentenced to death for selling nuclear secrets to the Russians. They died in the electric chair on June 19, 1953. As the final sentence was about to be pronounced, the lawyer for the Rosenbergs pleaded with the court, "Your Honor, what my clients ask for is justice!" Judge Kaufman replied, "What the court has given them is what they ask, justice! What they really want is mercy. But mercy is something this court has no right to give them." The only One who has the right to give mercy is God.