

**OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL**  
**SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL**  
**WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER**  
**Fifth Sunday of Lent**  
**April 6, 2025**



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Being the Redemption, He refuses to condemn her, being the Life He restores her, being the Fountain He washes her. And since Jesus, when He stoops down stoops that He may raise up the fallen, He says, as the Absolver of sins, Neither do I condemn thee.

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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, April 5 *Vigil of the 5th Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm +Michael Bernardi

Sunday, April 6 *Fifth Sunday of Lent*

7:30am For the intentions of Sean R. Horrigan

4:00pm +Mariano Osorio, Jr.—recalling his birthday

Monday, April 7 *Saint Jean Baptiste de la Salle, priest*<sup>2</sup>

12:00nn For the priests of the Diocese of Worcester

Tuesday, April 8

12:00nn +Thomas Wasso by Lauren

Wednesday, April 9

12:00nn +Mary Gray by her daughter

Thursday, April 10

12:00nn +Henry Sacchi

Friday, April 11 *Saint Stanislaus, bishop*<sup>2</sup> — *Day of Abstinence*

12:00nn Asking for God's help for Donnie

Saturday, April 12 *Vigil of Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion*

4:00pm For the intentions of Margaret Horrigan

Sunday, April 13 *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord*

7:30am For the intentions of Richard M. Horrigan

4:00pm For the souls in purgatory

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**

This week's Gospel is the only time during Year C of the three-year cycle of Gospel readings that the passage is taken from the Fourth Gospel (Jn 8:1-11). The emphasis in Year C, from the Third to the Fifth Sundays of Lent, is on the season's penitential aspects with a view toward forgiveness of sins. This pericope, *The Woman Caught in Adultery*, though found in Saint John's Gospel, is absent from the early copies of John, written on papyrus, and from every grand 4th and 5th century uncial codices. The earliest transcribed copy of the Gospel of John to include this incident is part of Codex Bezae, a fifth-century Greek-Latin manuscript likely copied in Syria. Codex Bezae treats the account as if it were fully part of the Gospel, suggesting that the passage was placed within John at some earlier point. Widely cited in Latin, the passage can be found in every copy of Saint Jerome's Latin Vulgate. The suffragan dioceses, those jurisdictions around the metropolitan see of Rome, read the passage during Lent, guaranteeing that the faithful would hear it. The incident remained less well-known among Greek-speaking Christians. Yet, when copying their Gospel books, Greek scribes often marked the same passage with asterisks, a custom designed to indicate what may not be original to the text. Byzantine Christian preachers never cited this pericope. Yet, regardless of the textual debate, the tone and perspective of the passage is in harmony with the two prior week's gospels from Luke. Some biblical scholars postulate that the passage was originally written by Saint Luke and later inserted in John's Gospel. Repeatedly, during the Lord's last days in Jerusalem, He would preach in the Temple area during the day and, at night, Jesus would go to the Mount of Olives to pray alone. These withdrawals were more than seeking rest because that time alone constituted the Son's encounters with the Father and gave Jesus strength and insight. The same pattern prevails in today's Johannine passage. In the Temple, once again, with a crowd gathered around Him, Jesus assumed the position of teacher, sitting down among them. At some point, while teaching "all the people," some scribes and Pharisees pushed their way through the crowd bringing with them "a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle" of them. They then challenged Jesus with this accusation, masquerading as a question, "Now in the law (Lev 20:10; Dt 2:22), Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" The question has life or death implications not only for the woman but also for Jesus. The evangelist notes that those holy men were trying to trap Him "so that they could have some charge to bring against him." It appears that those two religious groups had finally cornered Jesus – if He abided by the Law and agreed to stone the adulteress, then, His message of mercy and forgiveness would be a sham. Conversely, if He recommends that she be pardoned, not only would He be flaunting the capital consequences of the Mosaic Law, but if the accusation against her later proved to be true, Jesus would be seen as an accomplice. The trap appears to be perfectly set,

What does this mean, Lord? Do you approve sins? Nothing of the sort. Listen to what follows: "Go, and, from now on, do not sin any more." The Lord has condemned too, but the in, not the person, for if he approved sins, he would say, "I shall not condemn you either, go, live as you see fit, sure of being pardoned, no matter how great your sin..." He did not say this, but "Neither do I condemn you; however, reassured as to the past, be on your guard for the future; I have erased your faults; keep my commandments in order to receive my promises.

regardless of what He replies. To His questioners, Jesus first said nothing and, so, the tension must have increased as to what His response would be. Then, He bent down and began to write on the ground. Like those gathered around Jesus that day, this silent, brief interlude also gives anyone who reads or listens to this Gospel time to mull over their own thoughts or reactions to the impasse. In His reply, Jesus makes a direct appeal to the Law of Moses, where it was prescribed that the individual who denounced a crime must also be the one who gives the signal for the stoning to begin (Dt 13:10; 17:7). He said, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." This rejoinder is not intended to forego meting out justice nor from pronouncing a sentence since it enjoins the woman's accusers to scrutinize their reasons for leveling any legal charge before even doing so. "Mercy without justice," Saint Thomas Aquinas says, "is the mother of dissolution," whereas "justice without mercy is cruelty." Since Jesus was sinless, He could associate with sinners and not be adversely affected by His relationship with them. Equally true, Jesus could show mercy while still acknowledging the gravity of evil. Gradually, the crowd melts away "beginning with the elders." At the end, only the woman and Jesus are left alone, the oldest or the wisest or most burdened, having left first. In one of his *Tractates on Saint John*, Saint Augustine says, "Only two were left, misery and mercy" (Lat. *Relicti sunt duo miseria et misericordia*). Standing up, Jesus says to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" In her only recorded words, she says to Jesus in reply, "No one, sir." He then exonerates her by saying, "Neither do I condemn you. Go...and do not sin any more." Regardless of the personal effort it might require, authentic conversion is a turn away from sin (Gk. *μετάνοια*) and toward God the Father, who is scanning the horizon looking for sinners returning to Him because of His great mercy – such a transformative change of heart is perennially offered and revealed by the words and deeds of Jesus. True righteousness (Gk. *δικαιοσύνη*) does not come from human effort as it derives from faith in Christ because, in His Son, God recognizes those who believe in Jesus to be righteous in His sight implying that they are leading a life pleasing to God.

#### God's Hesed or Loving Kindness & Lent

The word hesed (pronounced kheh-sed) is one of the most difficult Hebrew words to translate. It variously refers to the covenant love of God for His people, steadfastness, and mercy. During Lent, reflecting on God's hesed will broaden the understanding of His unwavering love and faithfulness, encouraging repentance and eliciting a closer relationship with God. In the Book of Exodus, mercy (*rahaim*) and steadfast love (*hesed*) are elements of God's self-description revealed to Moses, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful (*rahaim*) and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (*hesed*) and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6). This divine self-revelation was spoken by God to Moses on Mount Sinai after the Israelites had fashioned the Golden Calf and worshipped before it. Then, when Moses came down the mountain, he broke the first set of tablets of the Ten Commandments (Ex 31:19). Afterwards, in Exodus 34, Moses ascended the mountain again to encounter God on another occasion. This time not only did God give Moses the Ten Commandments, but also spoke the aforementioned divine self-description that echoes throughout the pages of the Old Testament. The word *rahaim* (compassion or mercy) is derived from the Hebrew noun, *rehem*, which means "womb." God's compassion or mercy is tied closely to the concept of "womb love," the love a mother feels for her yet-to-be-born child. Time and again, the psalmists call upon God's compassion or womb-love, "Be mindful of your mercy (*rahaim*), O Lord, and of your steadfast love" (Ps 25:6). With Lent as a season of reflection, by contemplating God's hesed or loving kindness, such meditation will deepen the understanding necessary to experience God's unwavering love and inspire those who do so to live out that divine form of love in actions and relationships. Then, recognize the aching need for forgiveness and mercy, while being reminded of God's boundless love and grace that is engendered by the three penitential disciplines of prayer, almsgiving and fasting. [www.workingpreacher.org](http://www.workingpreacher.org). Nancy deClaisse-Walford. "Commentary on Psalm 25:1-10." 26 02 2012

#### Our Lady of Providence Chapel — Holy Week Liturgical Schedule

<p><i>Holy Thursday - April 17 (No Mass at 12nn)</i> 4:00pm Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper Immediately following, Nightwatch before the Lord until 9pm</p>
<p><i>Good Friday - April 18</i> 12:00nn Stations of the Cross 4:00pm Good Friday Liturgy</p>
<p><i>Holy Saturday - April 19 (No Mass at 4pm)</i> 7:00pm Solemn Vigil of the Lord's Resurrection</p>
<p><i>Easter Sunday - April 20</i> 7:30am &amp; 4pm Mass &amp; Renewal of Baptismal Promises</p>

# Understanding the Mass—Both Memorial & Sacrifice

Prior to the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, after the Collect (or opening prayer), a reading from one of the letters of the Apostles was read at Mass, at the priest's right-hand side of the altar. Therefore, that side of the altar was called the Epistle side. As a rule there was only one reading, but on some days there were several. At solemn High Mass the Epistle was chanted in one tone by the subdeacon. Today, in the revised liturgy, the Epistle has become labeled as a Letter.

## Epistle versus Letter

Epistle refers to a written message or communication, often a formal or elegant one, yet, it can also

be used in the context of biblical epistles or letters from the apostles. The word *epistola* is derived from the Ancient Greek word *epistolē* (Ἐπιστολή), which means "letter."

Among the twenty-seven books that comprise the entire New Testament, while twenty-one are letters, thirteen of those writings are considered to be epistles or letters attributed to Saint Paul. Based on authorship issues, the Pauline corpus can be divided into three groups: the Pastoral epistles (1-2 Timothy and Titus), the Deutero-Pauline epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians), and the undisputed Pauline letters (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon).

Biblical epistles usually followed a format common in ancient Greco-Roman letters: (1) opening salutation containing the writer's name, the recipient's name, and a greeting; (2) a prayer, blessing, or thanksgiving; (3) the body of the letter (what the sender wanted to say that occasioned the letter); and, (4) final greeting and farewell. During Eastertide, the liturgical season lasting for fifty days after Easter, the focus of the second reading shifts. It is typically drawn from the letters of Peter, John, or Revelation, rather than the usual selection from Paul's letters, reflecting the emphasis that Easter exemplified to the early church and the impact of the Lord's resurrection on those earliest

of believers. Scholars have tried to make a distinction between Letter versus Epistle. According to this distinction: A letter represents an actual correspondence written on a particular occasion to address matters of the moment. Most people who write a letter do not imagine that the correspondence will be read by anyone other than those to whom it is addressed. An epistle, on the other hand, is a public treatise using the letter format to present an essay or homily intended for general reading. With regard to the New Testament writings, for example, Saint Paul's brief note to Philemon is said to be a classic example of a letter, whereas the exposition known as The Letter to the Hebrews is said to be an epistle. Most modern scholars, however, do not find this sort of distinction to be very helpful: all twenty-one of the New Testament writings, whether letter or epistle, were targeted for specific contexts (like letters), but none of them was intended to be kept

private or confidential. Today the terms "letter" and "epistle" are often used interchangeably, with a recognition that all twenty-one literary creations are public documents linked to particular situations. An epistle can also be considered to be a formal, often didactic, or instructional letter, typically intended for a wider audience or public reading. Epistles often aim to provide instruction, guidance, or encouragement to a group or community. In the context of the New Testament, the term "epistle" refers to the letters written by the apostles and other early Christian leaders to churches or individuals. Epistles are formal and lengthy, instructional in nature, intended for public reading or wider circulation and often follow a structured format. A letter, on the other hand, is a written message, typically a private and personal communication between two or more individuals. They are used for a variety of purposes, including sharing news, asking questions, expressing emotions, or conveying information. Letters can be personal, business, or official in nature. As written documents, they can be formal or informal and are typically shorter than epistles, while being intended for a specific recipient or a small circle of friends. They may or may not follow a strict format.

Deissman & Strachan

In the early twentieth century, Adolf Deissmann and Lionel Richard Mortimer Strachan, in their work *Light from the Ancient East the New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* delineated between epistle and letter in the following manner:

What is an epistle? An epistle is an artistic literary form, a species of literature, just like the dialogue, the oration, or the drama. It has nothing in common with the letter except its form; apart from that one might venture the paradox that the epistle is the opposite of a real letter. The contents of an epistle are intended for publicity—they aim at interesting "the public." If the letter is a secret, the epistle is cried in the market; every one may read it, and is expected to read it: the more readers it obtains, the better its purpose will be fulfilled. The main feature of the letter, viz. the address and the detail peculiar to the letter, becomes in the epistle mere external ornament, intended to keep up the illusion of "epistolary" form. Most letters are, partly at least, unintelligible unless we know the addressees and the situation of the sender. Most epistles are intelligible even without our knowing the supposed addressee and the author. To attempt to fathom the soul of a letter-writer is always venturesome; to understand what an epistolographer has written is apprentice-work by comparison. The epistle differs from a letter as the dialogue from a conversation, as the historical drama does from history, as the carefully turned funeral oration does from the halting words of consolation spoken by a father to his motherless child—as art differs from nature. The letter is a piece of life, the epistle is a product of literary art. Taken from *Light from the Ancient East*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), 220–221. Summing up, then, the New Testament presents us with a very highly developed form of an epistle. Some recent writers on the subject have found it convenient to follow Professor Deissmann in his distinction between the letter and the epistle. The letter is a private and confidential conversation with the addressee, his anticipated answers shaping the course of the writing; the epistle is general in its aim, addresses all whom it may concern, and tends to publication. The letter is a spontaneous product of the writer, the epistle follows the rules of art. If publication be regarded as an essential condition of literature, the letter may be described as a "pre-literary form of self-expression". In order to apply this distinction more effectively to the written messages contained in, or referred to by, the letters or epistles of the New Testament an be grouped by the relevant data as pre-Pauline, Pauline, and post-Pauline.

## THE MASS

I. Introductory Rites  
Entrance  
Veneration of the Altar  
Greeting  
Penitential Rite  
Kyrie Eleison  
Gloria in excelsis Deo  
Collect

II. Liturgy of the Word  
Scripture Readings  
Homily  
Nicene/Apostles Creed  
Prayers of the Faithful

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist  
Eucharistic Prayer  
1. Preface  
2. Sanctus  
3. Epiclesis  
4. Consecration  
5. Mysterium fidei  
6. Anamnesis  
7. Offering  
8. Intercessions  
9. Doxology and Amen  
Communion Rite  
Lord's Prayer  
Rite of Peace  
Breaking of the Bread  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

IV. Concluding Rites  
Blessing  
Dismissal  
Veneration of the Altar  
Personal Thanksgiving