

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Second Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy Sunday
April 7, 2024



By his wounds we have been healed!

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 6 *Vigil of the 2nd Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm For blessings and peace upon Julie

Sunday, April 7 *Second Sunday of Easter—Divine Mercy Sunday*

7:30am +Mary Gray recalling her birth by her daughter

4:00pm +Ronald & Mae Lareau by their daughter

Monday, April 8 *Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord*

12:00nn For the health of a beloved sister

Tuesday, April 9

12:00nn For the health of Maria Brophy

Wednesday, April 10

12:00nn For the health of Kathy

Thursday, April 11 *Saint Stanislaus, bishop & martyr*¹

12:00nn For the intentions of Irene Kozlowski

Friday, April 12

12:00nn +Joan Malark

Saturday, April 13 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm +Edward Jablonski, Sr. — 14th anniversary — by his daughters

Sunday, April 14 *Third Sunday of Easter*

7:30am For the special intention of a devout Catholic

4:00pm +Julia & Gilbert Burke

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 Gospel of Eastertide

This week's Gospel passage recounts two appearances of the Risen Christ – the first took place “on the evening of that first day of the week” or the Sunday on which the empty tomb was discovered whereas the second occurred “a week later.” On the first Easter night, though Thomas was absent, the Lord's appearance to the disciples was similar to His encounter with Mary Magdalene “on the first day of the week...early in the morning while it was still dark” (Jn 20:1). She mistook Christ for the gardener, but after He called her by name, Mary was awakened from her semi-conscious state and likely went to embrace Him. Yet, in correcting her, Jesus said, “Stop holding on to me.” In that cryptic saying, Jesus attested to the fact that His death and resurrection were totally real facts, though only the initial steps toward their ultimate fulfillment – His Ascension back to the Father (Jn 20:17). On the same evening, as His disciples covered out of fear in the Upper Room, the Lord unexpectedly appeared among them and, almost immediately, said to them, “Peace be with you.” Having been raised from the dead, Christ was no longer bound to the earthly constraints of time and space and, despite the fact that “the doors were locked,” He stood among them. He bore the marks of His suffering and death – the marks in His hands and the lance wound in His side (Jn 19:34). Despite those signs of death, the Risen Christ manifested an entirely new state of living which He possessed on that first Easter night and, then, forevermore – as the Risen and glorified Lord. Completely transfigured, no longer constrained by mortality, Christ can appear anywhere, at any time. His return to the Father's right hand, though, does not mean He has abandoned us; now Risen, Christ brings the perfect peace that He had promised, which is what every subsequent generation of believers must proclaim until the Lord comes again. While the Risen Christ entrusts the fearful with the same mission given to Him by the Father, having been resurrected, Christ breathed on them saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” In contrast with the Pentecost account found in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-13), what some scholars like to imaginatively label as the Johannine Pentecost, this account is much less dramatic. John's account of the giving of the Spirit does not include wind or tongues of fire, nor glossolalia, namely, speaking in a language understandable to multi-lingual listeners (Acts 2:4-8). In this pericope, only the Risen Christ does anything while all that His disciples do is rejoice, while being speechless. Once Christ was squarely among them, the scene in that Upper Room becomes solemn and serene. His mere presence has re-

Doubting Thomas & Divine Mercy Sunday

Thomas stubbornly protests believing in Jesus' resurrection unless he could see and touch the wounds from the Crucifixion. In that intervening week, he wrestled with his own heart and the testimonies of the other apostles. Such turmoil, likely wore down his lack of faith so that he remained with the other Apostles. Somewhere in his heart, Thomas was still hopeful. The same is true for most of us when faced with the crosses of life. Suffering can be downplayed or dismissed, but there is nothing simple, easy, or glamorous about it, no matter what it might be. We all have come face to face with the ugliness in the world, in one way or another, but even in those moments of deepest agony or turmoil, there is something in people of faith that still engenders hope. Therein in that state, Thomas encounters the Risen Lord. Jesus could have berated him for his unbelief, possibly sending him away from the apostles due to his hardness of heart. Yet, instead of exercising Divine Justice—which as God Jesus had the right to do—instead, He abundantly pours Divine Mercy upon Thomas.

ignited the faith of the disciples who, earlier, had barricaded themselves in that room out of fear for their own safety at the hands of those who had crucified Jesus. Not long before, distraught over His death and ignorant of the prophecy that “he had to rise from the dead (Jn 20:9), these first two of the Lord’s post-resurrection appearances dispels those fears and the requisite eyes of faith that are needed to believe were opened. On Easter morning, when Simon Peter and John the Beloved Disciple saw that the tomb was empty and the linens that wrapped His body and the shroud place on His head were “rolled up in a separate place” (Jn 20:7), the two returned perplexed by what they had seen. Now, on the evening of that same day, alive forevermore, Christ pointed to the future and gave the disciples a mission that would be accomplished in the power of the Spirit by forgiving some sins and retaining (Gk. κρατέω) or withholding forgiveness for other sins committed. While the Ten were stunned into silence and adoration, Thomas was inexplicably absent that first Easter evening. Also known as Didymus, when he appeared among them, the others blurted out, “We have seen the Lord,” but he refused to believe without evidence – the evidence being the nail marks and the wounded side where Jesus was pierced by the soldier’s lance. Thomas was no more doubtful than the others because they too had seen the stigmata of Christ’s passion. Those marks of His suffering and death are proof that the Risen Lord standing in their midst was, in fact, Jesus the Crucified. Then, “a week later,” Christ appears again on the octave day of Easter and, as before, the locked doors do not deter Him from doing so. The Lord greets them as He had done the week before by saying, “Peace be with you.” As was true then, now, He offers Thomas the same evidence that He gave to the other disciples – His glorious wounds to prove that though risen and glorified Christ is also the Jesus of Nazareth whom they had known. The identity of Jesus the Crucified with Christ the Risen Lord is unambiguously linked and solemnly declared to be true. The combination of faith and grace, then, gives supernatural keenness to the human senses God had endowed humanity with. So, such heightened awareness gives spiritual insight to mortal eyes and a deepened sense of touch to those who have the ability to sense Christ’s resurrected body. Thomas stands astride two different generations of believers – he is counted among the apostolic witnesses and, yet, like those, such as us, who will be born in the post-apostolic age, he passed from doubt to belief in Christ as truly Risen. The Doubting Apostle’s response must become ours – “My Lord and my God!” As the passage concludes, three terse statements punctuate that conclusion – “do not be unbelieving, but believe,” which is linked with the beatitude “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed,” followed by the declaration that there are “many other signs...that are not written in this book.” Seeing is not the equivalent of believing – it is essential to go beyond what has been experienced in order to believe that Christ is risen! The faith of the apostles incorporates the evidence necessary for us to do so – their privileged witness undergirds our quest for the paschal faith that sees Jesus not only as crucified and having died, but now at the Father’s right hand and alive, never to die again. Faith like that requires a personal acknowledgement that Christ, indeed, is alive.

National Eucharistic Revival — Easter as the Supreme Eucharistic Feast and More

The central message of the Devotion to Divine Mercy is to trust in the Lord and to be merciful toward others. To a certain degree, those twin attributes constitute an extension of the Communion Rite. At the heart and the reality of the word “communion” is union, which is where the Eucharist leads those who receive. Personal union with Christ at the time of Communion is pivotal. Yet, the goal is not just union *with* Christ, but union *in* Christ. The Communion Rite is about shared life. It is about sharing life with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and with each other in Christ and through Christ. It is also about a unity that is made possible and brought about by the Holy Spirit. This rite within the Eucharist begins with the Lord’s Prayer. Then, the priest asks God for a blessing of peace for all present. Heavenly peace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, a peace and mercy that will keep you free from sin, protect you from all anxiety, as the whole Church waits in joyful hope, for the glorious return of Jesus. In the celebration of the Eucharist, the priest prays the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper, “my peace I give you,” which is the peace that Christ leaves with us. On this Second Sunday of Easter, Jesus also says, in a greeting that only a bishop can say, “Peace be with you.”



Easter 7 Weeks x 7 Days + 1 = Fifty Days of Rejoicing

Introduction

Nearly twenty-five years ago, the late Pope Saint John Paul II canonized Sister Faustina Kowalska. Moreover, at that time, the Holy Father declared that the Second Sunday after Easter would 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 today’s feast began on Good Friday with the observance of the Divine Mercy novena. Faustina 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, Poland. Then, for the next 13 years, she carried out a variety of humble tasks as cook, gardener and porter. She died in Krakow on October 5, 1938. During her seemingly mundane life, she had a variety of mystical experiences—visions, revelations, and hidden stigmata. She wrote those 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), a divine request that was fulfilled in 1935. So, trust in the Lord is the origin of mercy and among the devotional practices are these: venerating the image of the merciful Christ, praying 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*, especially in footnote 52, Pope John Paul II sought to deepen the Church’s understanding of misericordia. The English word mercy, translating misericordia, inadequately conveys the true biblical depth of that notion. In the Old Testament, the two Hebrew words *hesed* (or steadfast love) and *rahamim* constitute mercy’s biblical foundations. *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. When the term steadfast love or *hesed* is used to refer to God, it is only used in reference to God’s original covenant with Israel, which is the supreme sign of Yahweh’s overflowing generosity and grace. However, *hesed* acquired a juridical quality, when Israel broke the covenant and God’s legal obligation to the Chosen People technically ceased with those infidelities. Yet, therein, the divine form of *hesed* revealed its deeper qualities—a generous love that always remains so, as a divine love that is more powerful than repeated infidelity, and as an unearned grace that is stronger than sin. The second Hebrew word used for mercy is *rahamim* (or womb-love) that serves to illustrate the love of a mother and also describes the unique bond (*viz.* the particular, maternal love) between the woman who is with child and the child in her womb. Such maternal love exists without

merit and, as truly heart-felt, *rahamim* gives rise to both moral goodness and maternal tenderness, not to mention

it also creates patience and understanding. These are all the prerequisites that 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 what is necessary to help relieve the cause of their pain or suffering. The contemporary understanding of mercy or pity differs sharply with its divine or biblical version. In modern usage, unfortunately, mercy has acquired an air of condescension, whereas the divine, biblical form implies that mercy should elicit a powerful feeling, welling up from inner attitudes of tenderness and love, such that mercy is akin to a wretched heart that 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

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines an indulgence as “a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions... (CCC, n. 1471). To properly understand indulgences, remember that sin has a double consequence: grave or mortal sin deprives the sinner of communion with God and liable to eternal punishment, whereas “every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures...purification from what is called the temporal punishment of sin—either on earth or after death in purgatory” (CCC, n. 1472). 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. For 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, accompanied by a complete detachment from all sin, including even venial sin. Then, either at Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament or during prayer before the Tabernacle, to recite the Our Father, the Creed and a devout prayer to the merciful Christ Jesus—e.g., Jesus I trust in