

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
First Sunday of Advent
December 1, 2024



Vigilance requires awareness not only of the enemies and threats
that surround us, but also of the weaknesses within us.

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 November 30 *Vigil of the 1st Sunday of Advent*

4:00pm +Francis “Frank” Carroll by Joyce O’Connor

Sunday, December 1 *First Sunday of Advent*

7:30am For a faithful Advent

4:00pm Names enrolled in OLP Purgatorial Society 2024

Monday, December 2

12:00nn For a special intention

Tuesday, December 3 *Saint Francis Xavier, priest*¹

12:00nn In gratitude for the charitable work done under his patronage

Wednesday, December 4 *Saint John Damascene, priest & doctor*²

12:00nn +Emily Moysello & those left behind: her brother, son and caregiver Mary

Thursday, December 5

12:00nn Asking God to grant a heart-felt prayerful intention

Friday, December 6 *Saint Nicholas of Myra, bishop*²

12:00nn +Repose of the soul of Bishop Rueger

Saturday, December 7 *Vigil of the 2nd Sunday of Advent*

4:00pm +Armand Barrette

Sunday, December 8 *Second Sunday of Advent*

7:30am In gratitude to God for a favor requested & obtained

4:00pm +Eugene & Evelyn Foley by their daughter

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 Gospels during Ordinary Time

In the first Gospel of the season of Advent, Jesus speaks about what will happen on the day of His coming or the Day of the Lord (Gk. ἡμέρα κυρίου). To do so, He used a literary genre that was familiar to the crowd, tracing its development back to the Book of Daniel and certain chapters of Isaiah (Is 24-27). In the period between the 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD, what is known as the intertestamental period, a vast amount of Jewish literature was written (e.g., the Books of Enoch and various Apocalypses, etc.). The apocalyptic style and its earliest material can be roughly outlined in some of the writings of the last prophets (e.g., Ez 40-48; Is 24-27; Joel; and Zech 9-14), though as true prophets, they took individual responsibility for what they prophesied and only spoke sporadically about the judgment of God. Apocalyptic writings adhere to a conventional literary style and, so, its true authors hide behind the names of famous figures of the past. Their interest is not like the prophetic endeavors that are fixed in the present and urge conversion because the apocalypses focus on the future and, with excruciating detail, describe the events accompanying the end of the world. While Jesus often spoke in apocalyptic terms, He did so more akin to the prophetic tradition than to purely apocalyptic thinking. Because the Lord spoke authoritatively, His primary concern was how a disciple should behave while patiently waiting for His *adventus* or *parousia* (Gk. παρουσία). Cosmic implications that affect seemingly unchangeable natural elements such as “the sun, the moon, and the stars,” are essential to such end-time literature. Moreover, Christ’s return as the mysterious Son of Man demands that such an advent has to occur with a dramatic display of heavenly power and might. By invoking apocalyptic expectations as a background, Saint Luke turns his attention to the attitude of believers when those signs are finally manifested. The reaction to such a display in the heavens is paralyzing fear “in anticipation of what is coming upon the world.” Ironically, the response to those omens and the accompanying fright which provokes it is to “stand erect and raise your heads...” This does not imply extraordinary courage or even a denial of the danger that is at hand, but such posture results from the fact that those signs in the firmament vividly testify that “redemption is at hand.” Those signs constitute the object of hope that the Day of the Lord has finally arrived. While others may “die of fright,” authentic disciples of the Lord Jesus have nothing to fear because those occurrences promise the ultimate victory of the cause of Christ and will mark the dawn of the universal Kingship of Je-

St. Cyril of Jerusalem – Catechetical Instructions

We do not preach only one coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of a divine kingdom. In general, what relates to our Lord Jesus Christ has two aspects. There is a birth from God before the ages, and a birth from a virgin in the fullness of time. There is a hidden coming, like that of rain on fleece, and a coming before all eyes, still in the future. At the first coming he was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At his second coming he will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming he endured the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming he will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels. We look then beyond the first coming and await the second.

sus Christ. With dulled and darkened eyes being made clear by the rays of divine glory, the faithful straighten up their backs, lift their eyes heavenward because their final vindication is at hand. Yet, the suddenness of its occurrence and the unknown time when the Lord will return requires a sense of vigilance and perpetual readiness. Earthly distractions are to be recognized as objects that numb the needed sense of urgency and deflect attention away from what is really necessary. When the final net is cast, drawing in all earthly men and women, the true disciples of the Lord will pass through that catch-all because they were standing erect, at full attention to what was going on—only doing what their Master had enjoined them to do. One aspect of vigilance is constant prayer or prayer “at all times.” The Jewish day begins with the sunset on the day before and so it expects a dark phase at the beginning of this age and then the sunrise with the Morning Star (Rev 22:16) bathed in the plenteous light (Mal 4:2) of that eternal or eighth day. Keeping vigil (Lat. *vigilia* or awake) implies not only being alert and awake, but also active watchfulness. A properly kept vigilance anticipates what is due to occur the next day or the coming of the Day of the Lord. Thus, in keeping vigil, while the Kingdom of God is not yet fully manifested, by remaining ever-vigilant for Christ’s return, Advent celebrates what is already here with the hope of the fullness of redemption which is yet to come. Vigilant, prayerful, and living uprightly before the Lord demands readiness to receive the Son of Man, to do so without fear because while Christ is already here, supremely in the Eucharist, when He comes again, “in a cloud with power and great glory,” if we are ready to greet the Lord, there will be nothing to fear.

Advent - Hope - Jubilee of Hope

This year, on Christmas Eve 2024, Pope Francis will usher in the Jubilee Year by ceremoniously unsealing the great Holy Year Door of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. The Jubilee of Hope will take place from Dec. 24, 2024 — Christmas Eve — to January 6, 2026, the feast of the Epiphany. Advent is a season of hope, a sacred time when we learn that only God is the basis of hope. Then, by building on that hope, an increase in our love for this life rises. With its twofold emphasis on the two comings of Christ, Advent serves as a spiritual reminder that one aspect cannot exist without the other. We often reduce hope to wishful thinking: “I hope I win the lottery” or “I hope this job works out,” and so on. Such an unfortunate reduction of hope removes the virtue’s central character from consciousness. Hope without a guarantee is just wishful thinking. In order for anything to be truly hopeful, some guaranteed outcome is needed. The belief that Christ will come again offers that missing element to worldly hope. Christmas is the account of the eternal God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, leaving Heaven’s glory, coming to Earth, taking on human flesh, and living among us, and one day to become our sacrifice for sin by His death on the cross. The most glorious fact of both the past or future is that Jesus came before and He is coming again. The one sure hope for this broken world is the Lord’s Second Coming. Christian hope says life is not fleeting, but rather is enduring because it is united to Christ’s own life. In a certain way, Advent is the training ground of hope, geared to recognizing God’s presence as salvific and eternal, in the face of whatever is fleeting and passing. The Advent cry to awake or wake up is a clarion call to commit to a new beginning so as to renew ourselves in the faith, with total acceptance of God’s laws for how to live well. In the school of Advent learning, it is necessary to accept from the Lord the challenges that life brings, the sacrifices as well as gifts. Though often overlooked, Advent’s goal is also to create in us a healthy fear of sin so that we will not miss the coming of the Lord and not close ourselves off from Him. Saint Augustine said, “I fear that Jesus will pass me by” (*Sermo* 88). The Bishop of Hippo feared that he would not invite Christ to come close, and, so if that happened the Lord might never pass by him again. Despite such fears, Jesus comes to all of us filled with respect for human freedom. “Here I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come to him and eat with him and he with Me” (Rev 3:20). Advent is not only a season of preparation; it is also a season of repentance, penance, and renewal. It is a call to have a conversion of heart that happens only through the complete acknowledgement of sins, dedication to overcoming the temptations through sincere and fervent penance, as well as with the gift of God’s grace, that we can hope to be renewed once again in Christ. Besides confession and absolution, as a season of true repentance, Advent is taking a long, hard look at ourselves and finding all the places in which we fail. It is admitting that we have not put God at the center of our lives and that we have disrespected Christ through our thoughts, actions, and by the good we have left undone. Preparing for Christmas, then, this sacred time requires admitting that we have not loved God or our neighbor in the way Jesus calls us to love. Excerpted from www.simplycatholic.com, Fr. Harrison Ayre. “Advent: A Season of Hope”

Advent & Eschatology - A Time of Waiting & Arrival

According to the *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year*, "Advent has a twofold character..." (*UNLYC*, n. 39) or two parts. The first part or early Advent begins with the season's first Sunday and continues until December 16th. It is a time of preparation for the second coming of Christ or parousia. The second portion or late Advent begins on December 17th and concludes on December 24th and aims at direct or immediate preparation for the commemoration of the first coming of Christ.

Part 1 – 1st Sunday until December 16th

Most other liturgical seasons have the gospel as their main focus, during the first week of Advent (except for Marian feasts), the daily readings for Mass come from the prophet Isaiah. With the eyes of faith, these passages foretell the coming of the Messiah. Rather than a continuous gospel narrative familiar to us for most of the year, this part of Advent offers a wide variety of gospel readings that support the first reading of the day. Then, in the second week, we hear the foretelling of a Messiah from other prophets taken from the Hebrew Scriptures: Numbers, Jeremiah, Judges, Song of Songs, Malachi and with that initial part ending with 2 Samuel. With each passing week, the prophets speak more clearly of the coming of a Savior. Atypically, then, for the first part of Advent, we listen more to the prophets exhorting us to anticipation, expectation, hope and promise. In listening to the prophetic reading, attend to its fulfillment & connection with the gospel.

Part 2 – December 17-24

In these last eight days before Christmas, the relationship between the readings changes. Now the gospel brings us to our celebration of Christmas. The gospels are taken from the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke. Each of these days, the initial reading is taken from the Hebrew scriptures and chosen to match the gospel. So, we can read the gospel first and then read the prophetic text. The sense of anticipation and fulfillment builds as we read the accounts of the preparation for Jesus' first coming into this world. Late Advent also is dedicated to the O antiphons that accompany the Magnificat canticle of Evening Prayer until the last evening before December 24. They are a magnificent theology that use ancient biblical imagery drawn from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament to proclaim the coming Christ as the fulfillment not only of Old Testament longing, but present hopes as well. Their repeated use of the imperative "Come!" embodies the sense of longing that all must cultivate for the Divine Messiah: O Sapientia (wisdom), O Adonai (Ruler of Israel), O Radix Jesse (Root of Jesse), O Clavis David (Key of David), O Oriens (Radiant Dawn), O Rex Gentium (King of All Nations), and O Emmanuel (God-with-us).

Messianic Prophecy

Messianic prophecy may be broadly defined as any or all prophecy that refers, whether more or less distinctly, to the coming of Christ, to His work of salvation, or to the growth and consummation of His kingdom. Such a foretelling is a product of the prophetic spirit of Israel. The promise of the Messiah was first revealed after Adam and

Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. God said to the serpent: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen 3:15). Those words of Genesis have been considered as the protoevangelium, that is, as the first announcement of the Messiah the Redeemer. Indeed, that one verse allows for a glimpse of God's salvific plan for the human race, which after original sin found itself in the state of decline that known as state of fallen nature (Lat. *status naturae lapsae*). God promised to deal a mortal blow to the serpent (Satan) through the seed (offspring) of the woman (Eve). In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, you read, "After his fall, man was not abandoned by God. On the contrary, God calls him and in a mysterious way heralds the coming victory over evil and his restoration from his fall" (*CCC*, n. 410). The concept of the Messiah is central to both Judaism and Christianity, yet it is understood and interpreted in profoundly different ways within each tradition. In Judaism, the Messiah is anticipated as a future human leader from the line of David who will restore Israel, rebuild the Temple, gather the Jewish exiles, and establish an era of global peace and justice. Conversely, Christianity believes that Jesus Christ is the Messiah who has already come and will return in the Second Coming to fulfill the remaining prophecies, including the final judgment, resurrection of the dead, and the renewal of creation. The Old Testament makes a number of predictions about the Messiah: (1) born in Bethlehem; (2) his mother would be a parthenos (Gk. παρθένης) or virgin; (3) a miracle worker; (4) killed for the sins of others; and (5) raised from the dead. A careful look at Old Testament prophecies shows the underlying assumption of two advents. Micah 5:2 and Isaiah 7:14 predict the first advent. Separately, Isaiah 53:8-9 predicts a suffering and dying Messiah, who will be given life and greatness according to Isaiah 53:11-12. Daniel 9:26 describes the Messiah being killed after His appearance. At the same time, prophets such as Zechariah (Zechariah 12:10) say this same "pierced" Messiah will be seen again by His enemies.

Conclusion

Advent is one complex event, beginning with His incarnation as a baby in Bethlehem and culminating with His eventual triumphal appearing. When encountering messianic prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures, the anticipation of Messiah is expressed in a way that gives the impression that upon His arrival He would complete His entire mission at once. The Advent themes of hope, peace, love, and joy are more than holiday niceties, geared to prepare our hearts to welcome the Christ Child. They are reflections of the essence of messianic triumph. Hope is the positive expectation we have as a result of Jesus' coming. Peace is the restoration of all things united under Messiah's rule. Love is the bursting forth of God's generosity through the gift of His Son who has promised to be with us forever. Joy is the effervescence of vitality bubbling forth due to Messiah's victory along with our intimate relationship with Him through faith.