

# OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL

SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL  
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph — Mary Mother of God

December 31, 2023 - January 1, 2024



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THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH — AN ICON OF CATHOLIC LIFE

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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, December 30 *Vigil of the Feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth*  
4:00pm +Carroll Gray by his daughter
- Sunday, December 31 *The Holy Family of Nazareth: Jesus, Mary & Joseph*  
7:30am In thanksgiving for OLP chapel-friends by Janet  
*New Year's Eve—Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God*  
4:00pm +Deceased members of the Sheeran, White, and Foley families
- Monday, January 1 *New Year's Day: Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God*  
12:00nn +John and Mary Murray by their family  
4:00pm Asking God to safeguard Joliana and those suffering from cancer
- Tuesday, January 2 *Saints Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen, bishops & doctors*<sup>2</sup>  
12:00nn Asking divine healing for Patrick, James, John, Michael, Barbara & Bob
- Wednesday, January 3 *The Most Holy Name of Jesus*<sup>2</sup>  
12:00nn For the souls in purgatory
- Thursday, January 4 *Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious*<sup>1</sup>  
12:00nn For peace, forgiveness, and family reconciliation
- Friday, January 5 *Saint John Neumann, bishop*<sup>2</sup>  
12:00nn For peace and safety in a new home
- Saturday, January 6 *Vigil of the Epiphany of the Lord*  
4:00pm For chapel-friends by Janet
- Sunday, January 7 *Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord*  
7:30am +Dr. Neil Scannell by one of his colleagues  
4:00pm +Barbara Robitaille by alumnae of former SVH School of Nursing

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**

After being circumcised on the eighth day after His birth, at some time during the month following His circumcision, Jesus was brought to the Temple by Mary and Joseph. As recorded in the Book of Leviticus, God said this to Moses, "Tell the Israelites: When a woman has a child, giving birth to a boy, she shall be unclean for seven days, with the same uncleanness as during her menstrual period. On the eighth day, the flesh of the boy's foreskin shall be circumcised and then she shall spend thirty-three days more in a state of blood purity; she shall not touch anything sacred nor enter the sanctuary till the days of her purification are fulfilled" (Lev 12:1-4). After Mary's forty-day purification, they took Jesus to Jerusalem to offer the prescribed sacrifice in the Temple: a year-old lamb as a burnt offering and a turtledove or young pigeon as an expiation for sin. The poorer women who could not afford a lamb offered two turtledoves or two young pigeons, as Mary did. In the Gospel of Saint Luke, Jesus begins and ends His manifestation as Messiah in the Temple. The Holy Child's destiny is acknowledged by Simeon and Anna who have lived their lives "awaiting the consolation of Israel." This exchange is interwoven with biblical memories which harken back to Isaiah's Book of Consolation (Is 40:1-55:13). Looking at the Child in his arms, Simeon makes an astonishing declaration, a prayer known by its Latin title *Nunc Dimittis* or the *Canticle of Simeon*, proclaiming that God's promise of salvation was now fulfilled. The Canticle begins by acknowledging that the God of Israel is faithful and has kept the promise that was made to Simeon that he would not die "before he had seen the Christ of the Lord." The time that was needed in order to prepare for the world's salvation was now complete and saving grace was at hand and soon would be universally available. The Child is revealed to be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles." Mary and Joseph were astounded (Gk. θαυμάζοντες) by what Simeon said in regard to Jesus. In either of the two testaments, amazement is the typical human reaction to God's revelation and the lack thereof either signifies blindness to the divine or abject indifference. Such broadening of the scope of salvation to incorporate the Gentiles proved challenging even to someone like Saint Peter. This incident legitimizes that future expansion by the fact that Simeon, who was "righteous and devout" had already prophesied that it would happen when Jesus was presented in the Temple. After extolling the Child and the pivotal nature embodied in Him, Simeon declares Mary and Joseph to

Saint Justin Martyr - Dialogue with Trypho

He is the Son of God, and since we call Him by that same title, we have understood that this is really He and that He proceeded before all creatures from the Father by His power and will (for in the prophetic writings He is called Wisdom, the Day, the East, Sword, Stone, Rod, Jacob, and Israel, always in a different way); and that He is born of the Virgin, in order that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed in the same manner by which it had originated. For Eve, an undefiled virgin, conceived the word of the serpent, and brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary, filled with faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced to her the good tidings that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Highest would overshadow her, and therefore the Holy One born of her would be the Son of God, answered: "Be it done unto me according to Thy word." And, indeed, she gave birth to Him, concerning whom we have shown so many passages of Scripture were written, and by whom God destroys both the serpent and those angels and men who have become like the serpent, but frees from death those who repent of their sins and believe in Christ.

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be uniquely blessed. Then, in an ominous statement, this devout man declares that the Child will become a sign of contradiction, who will cause others to rise and fall and, thus, He will become a stumbling block. Addressing Mary, Simeon predicts that "a sword will pierce" her heart—Mary will be the Sorrowful Mother who will endure the sufferings of her Son. The sword that will divide neighbor from neighbor will strike Mary, too, because she is the Daughter of Zion or the personification of the people of God. This incident in the Temple ends with the appearance of the prophetess Anna. Approaching the Holy Family, she gave thanks to God (Gk. ἀνθομολογείτο) or sang the praises of God which resounded in the Temple, just as the angelic hymn filled the night skies when the Child was born. In a certain sense, Anna takes up where the shepherds left off in Bethlehem and she directly addresses the Child Jesus, testifying before "all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem." Enlightened by the Spirit, both Anna and Simeon recognize the Child as the Messiah of Israel. Two elderly and devout members of the Chosen People, enriched by untold years of intense longing, are singularly blessed – their eyes see the advent or the coming of the Messiah and the fulfillment of their lifelong hope. In the Eastern Church, what is called Candlemas among Western Christians, is identified as the feast of Encounter (Gk. ὑπαπαντή or hypapante) derived from the meeting of the Christ Child and his Mother with the holy Simeon and Anna in the Temple. After having fulfilled the prescriptions of the Law, the Holy Family "returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth." Jesus, Mary, and Joseph lived there for more than a decade in humility and obscurity, until they went up to Jerusalem with Jesus when He was around twelve-years old. The final verse of the Gospel notes that Jesus grew strong, was filled with wisdom and highly favored by God. After being lost in the Temple at the age of twelve, the same statement will be made, "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man" (Lk 2:52). It presents Jesus in the role of the faithful Jewish boy, raised in the traditions of Israel, and fulfilling all that the Law required.

**National Eucharistic Pilgrimage — Eastern Route: May 17—July 16, 2024**

At the Incarnation, Christ entered directly into our human experience, allowing Him to accompany us through life in a more intimate way. But physically walking with Jesus is not a privilege restricted to Christians from the first century! When Jesus gave us the gift of the Eucharist, He gave us a new way to walk alongside Him. Catholicism, then and now, has a vibrant history of Eucharistic processions! In that traditional practice, the Eucharist is carried through the streets, accompanied by the faithful. The faithful walk publicly with the Lord so that others may encounter Him personally, just as they did 2,000 years ago. The upcoming *National Eucharistic Pilgrimage* is a truly unique initiative. This is something that has never before been attempted—a beautiful fusion of the journey *TO* Jesus and the journey *WITH* Jesus. What's more, it is an adventure that all Catholics can do together, either by interior disposition or by actual physical accompaniment. This is the birth of something remarkable. Join fellow Catholics as they accompany Jesus in the Eucharist from the north, south, east, and western edges of our country, stopping at many holy sites and churches along the way. Together the whole Church is invited to journey with Christ on His way to the *10th National Eucharistic Congress*, where the Lord will be ready to encounter His people anew. Leaving from New Haven, Connecticut, the *eastern arm* of the Pilgrimage will begin near the Atlantic coast, journey through our nation's oldest diocese, and cross the Appalachian Mountains. Known as the *Seton Route*, it will be punctuated by many meaningful stops along the way. Pilgrims will visit holy sites, embrace the sacraments daily, and publicly proclaim Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist as they accompany Him on His way to the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. The *Seton Route* begins May 17 in New Haven and ends in Indianapolis Indiana on July 16, 2024. Stops will take place in New York (May 24-26), Philadelphia (May 31-June 2), Baltimore/Washington (June 7-9), Pittsburgh (June 14-16), Steubenville (June 21-23), Columbus (June 28-30), Cincinnati (July 5-7) and outside Indianapolis (July 12-14), concluding in Indianapolis on July 16.

**Chapel Mass Schedule for New Year's Day**  
*Not a mandatory holy day of obligation*  
Sunday, December 31 at 4:00pm  
Monday, January 1, 2024 at 12nn & 4pm

# Christ, the light of all lights, follows the Baptist, the lamp that goes before him

## Introduction

The Epiphany of the Lord was the original feast of Christ's birth in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Traditionally, this event in the life of Jesus has been observed on the twelfth day after Christmas or January sixth. However, in countries like the United States, "where [Epiphany] is not observed as a Holy Day of obligation, it has been assigned to the Sunday occurring between January 2 and 8" (*GNYLC*, n. 37). Today, while being overshadowed by Christmas, without a proper understanding of Epiphany, only half of the theological implications of the Lord's Incarnation can be properly understood. Once having realized that the Word-became-flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary and, so, God the Eternal Word was born as the Christ Child, the feast of the Epiphany (Gk. Ἐπιφάνεια) requires us to look at the mystery of the Incarnation from the opposite angle—this Child is King of the Universe and, so, Epiphany highlights the Child's divinity while Christmas rejoices in the humanity of Jesus.

## Feast of Epiphany Goes West – Christmas Goes East

The Greek word *epiphaneia* (Gk. ἐπιφάνεια) literally means *conspicuous appearing* and, thus, the title of this feast emphasizes the impact that Christ's visible appearance as the Child of Bethlehem would have on the entire world. Originating in the eastern part of the Empire, too often, its spirituality and liturgical practices seem impenetrable to Roman Catholics in the West because Epiphany has a profound mystical foundation. There are three interwoven events in this feast as celebrated among Eastern Orthodoxy: the adoration of the Magi, the Lord's baptism, and the Wedding Feast of Cana which are all conjoined because those three incidents manifest Christ's divinity. In the West, this observance is also known as *Three Kings Day* or *Twelfth Night*. For Western Christians, the emphasis is upon the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem, when Christ was revealed as the Son of God to the Gentiles. Among eastern Christianity, though, the focus is upon the Lord's Baptism by John and the resultant theophany (Gk. θεοφάνεια) or revelation to all the world that Jesus is the Son of God, which is linked with the miracle of the Wedding Feast of Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine — a miracle that manifested His divinity, too. The Divine Light that shone upon the Child Jesus at His birth was not external to Him, but it was the Child's internal light that was manifested - "Begotten of the Father before the daystar shone or time began, the Lord our Savior has appeared on earth today" (*Liturgia Horarum* EP I). Thus, the Son of God was born as a helpless Child, in fact, that Son of Mary is God incarnate, who is both Sovereign Lord and Universal King. The glad tidings of Christmas were the privileged revelation first made to the shepherds, while the angelic hosts declared the inauguration of the dawn of the world's true Light in their hymn of praise of the Light which the shepherds were singularly allowed to behold. Yet, the fullness of the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah is only completed on Epiphany with the appearance of the mysterious Star that led the Magi from the East to the town of Bethlehem. There, the Wise Men paid homage to the infant King as Isaiah had once foretold, "Nations shall walk by your light, kings by the radiance of your dawning" (Is 60:3). This divine light will bring blessings to Zion – the glory of the Lord, the return of the dispersed children of Israel, and the wealth of the nations, all will walk by that Light, which can

never be extinguished.

## The Magi from the East

These mysterious visitors from the East still remain just as unfathomable today – their number and country of origin still remain shrouded in mystery. Their royal nature is predicated upon Psalm 72, "May the kings of Tarshish and the islands bring tribute, the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. May all nations bow before him, all nations serve him" (Ps 72:10-11). Mid-sixth century mosaics of these kings, found in the Basilica of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna depict them wearing the Phrygian cap and breeches and capes that were typical for Persian nobility. So, if the Magi were from Persia, more than likely, they were members of one of the castes of astrologer priests likely Zoroastrianism—a religion that had Messianic expectations, too. Their explicit number is not mentioned in the Gospel of Saint Matthew (Mt 2:1-12), though the tradition that there were three Wise Men prevailed (e.g., among Syriac churches there are twelve wise men), likely because of the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Their names are only attested to in a ninth-century manuscript as Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar. The textual evidence for their names begins earlier in a 6<sup>th</sup> century Greek manuscript that was translated into Latin entitled *Excerptia Latina Barbari* ("At that time in the reign of Augustus, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, the Magi brought him gifts and worshipped him. The names of the Magi were Bithisarea, Melichior, and Gathaspa") and from a later Greek document. two centuries afterward, that is known under the Latin name *Collectanea et Flores* (PL XCIV: 541D).

## Gold, Frankincense, & Myrrh

Tradition has it that the Venerable Bede, who died in 735 AD, wrote this description of the Magi, "The Magi were the ones who gave gifts to the Lord. The first is said to have been Melchior, an old man with white hair and a long beard ... who offered gold to the Lord as to a king. The second, Caspar by name, young and beardless and ruddy complexioned ... honored Him as God by his gift of incense, an oblation worthy of divinity. The third, black-skinned and heavily bearded, named Balthasar ... by his gift of myrrh testified to the Son of Man who was to die" (H. Kehrer. *Die Heiligen Drei Könige in Literatur und Kunst*). Then, Saint Irenaeus of Smyrna (ca. 130-202 AD) wrote that the gifts of the Magi were given to Christ due to the fact those gifts embodied the various offices associated with redemption: "Myrrh signified that he, for our mortal human race, would die and be buried; gold, that he was the King whose reign would be without end; incense, that he was God who would come to make himself known in Judea, and to show himself to those who had never sought him" (*Adversus haereses*, 3:9:2). The gold was for Christ as King, the frankincense as a symbol of His Deity and the myrrh was the burial ointment as a symbol of death for the Suffering Redeemer. On another level, St. Irenaeus said the gold signifies virtue; the frankincense, prayer; and the myrrh, suffering. Finally, Jesus holds the triple office of priest, prophet, and king (Lat. *munus triplex*). As priest, Christ sanctifies and fosters holiness, that is to say, the Lord re-establishes the lost link between divinity and humanity; as prophet, He speaks and embodies the divine truth; and as king, Jesus leads us on the right path, giving guidance to the human project. You might say that, as priest, Christ is the life; as prophet, He is the truth; and as king He is the way (cf Jn 14:16).