

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Second Sunday of Advent
December 4, 2022



Preparing the way for redemption involves both reversal and renewal.
John's message is radical and the Baptist calls both the strong and the weak,
both the oppressors and the oppressed to repentance.

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

Holyday 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, December 3 *Vigil of the 2nd Sunday of Advent*

4:00pm For an increase in health for C W

Sunday, December 4 *Second Sunday of Advent*

7:30am Names enrolled in OLP Purgatorial Society 2022

4:00pm For the intentions & well-being of Craig Halleran

Monday, December 5

12:00nn +Ted Granger

Tuesday, December 6 *Saint Nicholas, bishop*²

12:00nn +Russell Cournoyer, Sr. by his son

Wednesday, December 7 *Saint Ambrose of Milan, bishop & doctor*¹

12:00nn For a restoration of the ability to drive

Vigil of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary

4:00pm Asking God's help for preferred college acceptance

Thursday, December 8 *Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

12:00nn During Advent asking God to increase gratitude in the world

4:00pm For parents of priests, living and deceased

Friday, December 9 *Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin, holy man*²

12:00nn +Stephen L'Esperance

Saturday, December 10 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday of Advent*

4:00pm For priests whether secular or religious

Sunday, December 11 *Third Sunday of Advent - Gaudete (Joy) Sunday*

7:30am For God's help in advancing a nursing career

4:00pm May joy increase as Christmas draws near

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 memorial¹ or an optional memorial².*

Toward a Better Understanding of the Gospels of Advent

Each year, during the middle two weeks of Advent, John the Baptist becomes the Scriptural focus. The Baptist adopts some of the characteristics of the prophet Elijah and wears "clothing made of camel's hair and...a leather belt around his waist" while his diet "was locusts and wild honey" (2 Kgs 1:8). The expectation of the return of Elijah from heaven to prepare Israel for the final manifestation of God's kingdom was widespread as foretold by the prophet Malachi (Mal 4:5). Then, according to Matthew, this expectation was fulfilled in the Baptist's public life and actions. John had only one sermon which he preached again and again, "Repent, for the Kingdom is at hand!" Neither the word baptism nor any of the words derived from that sacred action are found in the Old Testament. While rituals of purification existed, baptism was not an official part of post-Exilic Judaism as it adapted itself to life after the Exile in Babylon. Apparently, seen as a sign of general repentance, it could be repeated. At Qumran on the western shore of the Dead Sea, a group known as the Essenes practiced a baptism of repentance during Jesus' lifetime. Around the same time, ritual baths for purification (Heb. mikveh) became more common among city-dwelling Jews. John practiced a baptism of repentance which differs from the baptism that Jesus instituted or a baptism in the Holy Spirit. Yet, the baptism Jesus established not only imposes the Spirit, but it is also a baptism in fire. While those two forms of baptism are seen as distinct rites, the reference to the Spirit and fire constitutes purification or destruction or it underlines the fact that baptism with water leads to the repentant being immersed in the cleansing power of the Spirit whereas the unrepentant are subjected to God's judgment. Regardless of which interpretation is favored, the winnowing fan and the fact that the "one mightier than John" will clear his threshing floor are undeniable actions of the coming Messiah. Judgment is not meant to instill fear as its inevitability is intended to be a mental stimulus to always keep the prospect of judgment uppermost in the mind. When the Baptist saw that Pharisees and Sadducees were seeking his baptism of repentance, the Precursor reacts violently and calls them a "brood of vipers." This is the same title with which Jesus will challenge the Pharisees (Mt 12:34). Yet, do not be too quick to believe that Saint Matthew only had those two religious groups in mind because

Fr. William J. Freburger — *On-going Conversion*

True conversion occurs in the subject as subject, not as object of reflection. The person is conscious and aware of the conversion, but he cannot possess the experience in its totality by analytical reflection. In addition, the dialogic nature of conversion means that, in a sense, the person is possessed by the experience. The use of the passive voice is a sign of the divine operation of grace. It is not susceptible to immediate perception, but it is inscribed at the heart of the structure of conversion. The nature of conversion as personal makes talking about conversion somewhat difficult. "Personal" does not mean "private," but indicates that conversion can only be known through personal experience of it. Indeed, it is absolutely imperative that those who would speak of conversion must have already experienced it themselves. Although the Catholic mistrust of "programmatically conversion" (e.g., the revival) often centers on the emotional manifestations associated with such techniques, the mistrust is healthy, because conversion cannot be manipulated...it can be prepared, assisted, favored.

one characteristic of the Third Gospel is that it was not only composed as a proclamation, but also the evangelist intends to instruct those who are disciples in regard to the demands that faith in Christ entails. While we tend to idolize the first-century Church, there were both saints and opportunists among them. Even some of those chosen to exercise episcopal oversight used their position to further personal advantage. Thus, the warnings that John hurled against the religious men of his day served as a reminder to the Church for which Matthew wrote that they, too, would be judged. Those Jewish-Christians could not claim any special status or invoke Abraham as their father. What alone counts, according to Jesus, is a transformed life that produces good fruit which is nourished by doing the will of the Father. The Baptist's role as Precursor is assured because John issues the same call as Jesus eventually will, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17). John, too, demands that faith be made concrete by putting beliefs into practice. The Lord's cousin is receptive to all who come to him, but John baptized only those who with sincerity of heart who acknowledged their sins. By doing so, they warranted God's mercy.

Eucharistic Revival - 19 June 2022 to the National Eucharistic Congress, Indianapolis 17-21 July 2024

Advent's dual focus involves looking back to Christ's first coming while looking to the future so as to be ready for the second coming of Christ through retracing the steps by which God prepared the Chosen People for His first coming. The season's future-oriented aspect has also taken on the dimension of stoking a more immediate longing: Christ's daily advent in prayer, in the sacraments and in providential daily occurrences. A pithy summary is that Advent gets the Church ready to hasten to meet Christ in "history, mystery and majesty," meaning in Bethlehem, the Mass, and the general judgment. The basic Advent virtue is loving vigilance. By pondering the overly-long wait of the Jewish people for the Messiah to come, longing for the freedom and peace Christ's birth would bring and for the kingdom that His coming would embody, looking ahead to His return, we satiate our hunger for His coming again on the clouds of heaven or at the end of our life, whichever comes first. This longing is meant to characterize our approach to Jesus really, substantially, and truly present in the Eucharist. Never forget that God has been longing for us, too. Such an aching love led to the Incarnation, to the Passion and, ultimately, to the altar, which is a foretaste of God's desire for an eternal communion. Come, Lord Jesus! Yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

THE HOLY SEASON OF ADVENT—WEEK TWO

You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

The second candle on the Advent Wreath signifies peace. On the first Christmas, the Father sent His Son, born of the Virgin Mary, as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Even the angels cried out, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." The angels knew God's purpose. They still know the gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love that Christmas holds. They recognized that the fullness of God that was wrapped in the tiny flesh of an Infant as God humbled Himself and dwelt among us. Emmanuel. God with us as the Child Jesus. The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*, whose root word is *shalam* (Ex 21-22). Moses was instructing the people on elements of restitution – when something was stolen or lost the rightful owner was seen as being lacking or incomplete. Thus, *shalam* meant to make something whole again or to make things right. Not just restoring what had been lost, but the term incorporates overall fullness – body, mind, and personal estate. Wholeness, then, was incorporated into *shalom* – as total well-being.

Prayer for Advent Peace

We give you thanks, O God, for the biting words of John the Baptist, spoken to the Pharisees and Sadducees, and let us hear those words as directed at today's believers. Give us the grace to receive them with humility and rejoicing, and allow the Baptist's call to repentance to better prepare us to more fully receive your Son deeply within our soul so as to welcome the Prince of Peace into the world. Amen.

Holyday of Obligation - Immaculate Conception of the BVM

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

Chapel Holyday Mass Schedule

Wednesday, December 7: 4:00pm Vigil Mass

Thursday, December 8: Masses at 12nn & 4pm

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Introduction

From her earliest days, the Church has always declared the unique holiness of Mary. Yet, despite the universal acceptance that she was “full of grace” and “blessed among women,” her one-of-a-kind holiness certainly implied that she was sinless, but did that also entail that the Virgin Mother was free of original sin? More than a century-and-a-half ago, in the apostolic constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pope Pius IX determined the answer to that question, when he solemnly proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The dogmatic nature of the proclamation is found near the end of the document: “We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception (*in primo instanti suae conceptionis*), by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin (*ab omni originalis culpae labe praeservatam immunem*), is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.”

Understanding the Dogma

Original sin is an inherited sin or a birth into the world already awash in a state of sinfulness, something to which every human being is heir. Moreover, since this state is transmitted through human reproduction, only Jesus escaped this inheritance, due to the fact that, as the Son of God, He was “conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit” and not in the ordinary manner. The declaration that Mary was never tainted by original sin entails that she was conceived in a state of sanctifying grace. Original sin is a type of sin that is not personal, except for Adam and Eve. Their act of disobedience resulted in the loss of the grace of original holiness and, so, sin and death were its consequences. For all subsequent generations, original sin is an inherited condition that not only describes the fallen state of human nature, but required Christ’s supreme act of redemption as the “new Adam,” for its release. Original sin can be understood as the privation of original justice and of sanctifying grace—the hallmark of life in the Garden of Eden. The Virgin Mary, by a singular privilege, was born “full of grace.” However, like all men and women, even Mary was in need of redemption by the sacrifice of her Son. Yet, what the Son did for His Mother was to free her from original sin *before* she ever inherited the stain of Adam’s sin. Pope Pius IX affirmed that Mary, too, needed a Savior; however, the redemption she received was much more sublime—rather than being cleansed after or from sin,

she was prevented from contracting the sin of Adam by *prevenient grace*, which is grace in view of the foreseen merits that would come from what her Son’s life-giving death on Calvary would eventually obtain before God.

Implications of Mary’s Immaculate Conception

The declaration that Mary was free from Original sin from the moment of her conception in the womb of Elizabeth also implies God’s divine affirmation of the salvation of the most favored woman and the Mother of the Savior. Thus, she was predisposed for the unique and unrepeatable role that was hers in the history of salvation. The fruits of redemption were hers, more fully than for anyone before or after. Since there never was a point in her life, from its microscopic beginning to her Assumption, in body and soul, into heaven, Mary was never lacking in grace. Mary, and her alone, came to the faultless unity which put her in total accord with her Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, while completely dependent on the salvation wrought by Christ, Mary is legitimately called the Mother of Divine Grace. So, Blessed Mary is the first member of the human race to be redeemed and because her role as the Mother of God required more than anyone could give, she escaped “the bite of the ancient serpent, the instigator of original sin.” Holy and blameless because she was without the blemish of any sin, Mary is Mother of God and the Mother of the living.

Advent & the Virgin Mary

Despite its Latin name Adventus, which means arrival, the season of Advent is about waiting. No one personifies patient waiting than Mary, the Virgin Mother of the Child Jesus. Pope Saint Paul VI, in his apostolic exhortation *Marialis Cultus* wrote, “[T]he Advent liturgy, by linking the awaiting of the Messiah and the awaiting of the glorious return of Christ with the admirable commemoration of his Mother, presents a happy balance in worship. ... It also ensures that this season ... should be considered as a time particularly suited to devotion to the Mother of the Lord” (*MC*, n. 4)

Prayer to the Immaculate Virgin Mary

Rejoice O God-bearing Virgin, Mary full of grace!
The Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Fruit of your womb: For you have given birth to the Savior of our souls! Truly it is right to bless you, O God-bearer, for you are most blessed, most pure, and the Mother of our God. O higher than the cherubim! More glorious than the seraphim! Without corruption, you gave birth to God the Word: True God-bearer, we magnify you! + Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: both now and ever and to ages of ages. Amen.
