

**OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL**  
**SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL**  
**WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER**  
**First Sunday in Lent**  
**February 18, 2024**



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*Midway upon the journey of our life  
I found myself in a darkness wild  
For I had wandered from the straight and right!*

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CHAPEL SCHEDULE

*Weekday Mass:* (Monday-Friday at 12 noon)

*Weekend Masses:* Saturday: 4:00pm - Sunday: 7:30am & 4:00pm

*Holiday 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, February 17 *Vigil of the 1st Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm +Robert Bek

Sunday, February 18 *First Sunday of Lent*

7:30am +Maria R. Senra

4:00pm +Manny Correira

Monday, February 19 Presidents' Day

12:00nn For the health of Sandra Corrado

Tuesday, February 20

12:00nn +Patricia Oakes by alumnae of the former SVH School of Nursing

Wednesday, February 21 *Saint Peter Damian, bishop & doctor*<sup>2</sup>

12:00nn +Karla Kochnemann-Coffelt

Thursday, February 22 *Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter*

12:00nn +Linda Granger

Friday, February 23 *Saint Polycarp, bishop & martyr*<sup>2</sup> - *Day of Abstinence*

11:30am Stations of the Cross

12:00nn +Mary Sacchi

Saturday, February 24 *Vigil of the 2nd Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm +Richard Gagnon by his wife

Sunday, February 25 *Second Sunday of Lent*

7:30am +Helen Brogan by Bill Cotter

4:00pm For the health of a devout Catholic

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**

While the Lord's temptation in the desert by Satan is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, this week's passage from Saint Mark is the briefest. These four verses, though, which describe the initial test that Jesus faced are best understood in relation to the Lord's preaching which immediately follows. Though the lectionary reading does not include it, the temptation begins *at once* or *immediately* (Gk. εὐθὺς) after Jesus had been baptized by John. Then, it is stated that He was driven or banished (Gk. ἐκβάλλω) into the desert by the Spirit. Those descriptive verbs imply haste as well as a certain degree of violence. It is in keeping with Marcan style that Jesus hurries everywhere—from village to village – and seldom is He found regrouping and, thus, always on the move! Unlike the other two Gospel accounts (Lk 4:1-13; Mt 4:1-11), Saint Mark goes not go into great detail in regard to the temptation and, instead, he simply notes that Jesus “remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan.” A unique aspect of this account, though, is the descriptive statement that the Lord “was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.” The reference to wild beasts fires the imagination and the location adds to the insecurity which often accompanies anyone, when they find themselves in strange, unknown places. The terror which the desert naturally entails is magnified and the threat such an environment contains is heightened. However, by noting that angels protected Jesus, a contrast—or even, better yet, a contradiction—has been established. In the parallel passages (Lk 4:10-11; Mt 4:6), these words from Psalm 91 are cited, “For he commands his angels with regard to you, to guard you wherever you go. With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your feet against a stone” (Ps 91:11-12). The various choirs of angels create a heavenly hierarchy and their titles designate various angelic functions. Elsewhere, a victory over Satan is linked with protection from dangerous animals, “...I have given you the power ‘to tread upon serpents’ and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you” (Lk 10: 19). This power over Satan was a gift Jesus received from the Father as a direct result of the Lord resisting the devil's

*Saint Augustine - Discourse on Psalm 60*

We read in the gospel that our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted in the wilderness by the devil. In Christ you were tempted. Because Christ had taken his flesh from you to give you his salvation, his death from you to give you his life, his insults from you to give you his honor, and the temptations from you to give you his victory. If we have been tempted in him, in him also we triumph over the devil. You are perfectly aware that Christ was tempted, but do you not see that he has carried off the victory? Recognize yourself in him in his temptation, recognize yourself in his victory. He could have prevented the devil from coming to him, but had he not been tempted how could he have taught us how to overcome temptation?

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temptations and, so, it illustrates the symbolic fall of Satan. Coming out of the desert, with the kingdom of God being gradually established, evil in all its forms can be defeated and the dominion of Satan over humanity is finally coming to its end. One of the oracles of the prophet Isaiah foretells a future when a new Eden or an idyllic harmony of paradise will dawn, symbolic of the universal peace and justice that will occur under the rule of the Messianic heir to King David. The peace and harmony even among carnivores and their natural prey graphically suggests a return to the harmony that prevailed in the Garden of Eden, a second creation that was foretold to be a hallmark of the reign of the new Messiah King (Is 11:6-8). Though brief in length, when more closely examined, this passage is more significant than at first seems obvious. So, immediately after being baptized and just prior to the beginning of His public life, Jesus wins a decisive victory over Satan in their desert struggle. This victory promises a return to Paradise and the universal peace that once prevailed before the sin of Adam and Eve. Moreover, Christ hands back to humanity the power He displayed—a power that offers the grace needed to overcome the malevolent forces unleashed by sin. The evangelist is revealing something about the true nature of Jesus – led by the Spirit, Jesus is the Son of God. Confronting Satan the tempter, for forty days, Jesus proved to be stronger than the evil one. Taking place in the wilderness, amid wild beasts that constitute that domain as Satan’s realm, yet, even there, Jesus resists temptation and overcomes the devil. The first chapter of Saint Mark’s Gospel begins with the Baptist announcing that Jesus is the Son of God, anointed by the Spirit and the Father’s heavenly voice affirms what was revealed. Having been tested in the desert and resisting, Jesus is able to proclaim this summary of the entire message of salvation, “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.”

**National Eucharistic Revival — Lent & Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist**

Every time the Eucharist is celebrated, the Church rejoices in Christ’s presence because you could legitimately say that everyone who participates in that sacrifice can be considered to be *at home* or *in heaven*. Catholic belief in Christ as truly present is that the Lord Jesus is entirely present – body, blood, soul and divinity. Faith in the True Presence, while the outward appearances of bread and wine and their properties (such as weight and nutritional value) are not an illusion, yet, still remain visible, though substantially changed. As the sacrament of Christ’s coming and presence, the Sacrifice of the Mass is, in a very real sense, a celebration of Christ’s Resurrection. In fact, the reality of the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood is proof of Christ as risen from the dead and glorified by receiving the Father’s seal of divine approval. Every Communion, then, is received as the joy and the burning of hearts experienced by the disciples when on the way to Emmaus Christ revealed Himself to them “in the breaking of bread” (Lk. 24:13-35). Such an internal reaction is the eternal source of the Church’s *experiential* and *existential* knowledge of the Resurrection. No one saw the Lord’s actual Resurrection and yet the disciples believed in it, not because someone taught them to do so, but because they saw the Risen Lord “when the doors were locked” (Jn 20:19), He appeared among them and partook of their meal. The Eucharist is still the same coming and presence, the same joy and *burning of heart*, the same transrational yet absolute knowledge that the Risen Lord makes Himself known to us “in the breaking of bread.” So great was this joy that for the early Church the Day of the Eucharist was not just one day among others but the Lord’s Day—a day already beyond time, for in the Eucharist the Kingdom of God was already “breaking through.” At the Last Supper, Christ Himself told His disciples that He bestowed upon them the Kingdom so that they might “eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom” (Lk 22:30).

Excerpted from Alexander Schmemmann. *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha*

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## The Lord's Temptation in the Desert according to Saint Mark

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Every year, on the first Sunday of Lent, the Gospel always highlights the Temptation of Jesus. Each year, the passage comes from one of the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew (4:1-11), Mark (1:12-13) and Luke (4:1-13). Those three evangelists demonstrate the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in the same way: Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan River, then, He is "led by the Holy Spirit" into the desert to be tempted for 40 days. At the core of this Sunday's readings is the same message lying at the heart of Lent: repentance. In the brief account found in Saint Mark, you hear these first words that Jesus spoke, "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." In such a brief description of the Lord's temptation in the desert, Mark exhibits his characteristic frenetic style. The text notes that at once (Gk. εὐθὺς) or immediately the Spirit acts, continuing the evangelist's earlier reference to the straight path that has been prepared for Jesus—though this is hardly a straight way, if understood as easy or without challenge. There is the typical parataxis or the placing clauses, one after another, without words linking them: "And he remained...and he was there...and he was with...and the angels..." Mark uses this most forceful of images: the Spirit hurls Jesus (Gk. ἐκβάλλε) into the desert. The Spirit is God's dynamic presence and power, sovereignly pushing, pulling, lifting and driving people hither and yon. It becomes clear that the affirmation that Jesus had been given by the heavenly voice at the Jordan River was not for His comfort and ease, but to prepare Jesus for what was to come. Moreover, divine Sonship is much less about privilege and much more about unflinching obedience in the face of trial and challenge. The image of the desert or wilderness, and the time period of forty days, should immediately conjures up thoughts of the Exodus wanderings for that same number of years. In biblical terms, the wilderness was both a time of testing yet also one of God's wooing His people and establishing intimacy with them. Yet, also remember the forty days and nights of the flood in Genesis 8:6 or Elijah's forty day flight to Mount Horeb in 1 Kings 19:8. But each of those events also points beyond to a new epoch in salvation history—the new covenant with Noah (Gen 9:8–17), the giving of the tablets of the Law to Moses or the entry into the Promised Land (Ex 16:35). This will happen once more with the outpouring of the Spirit following Jesus' forty days teaching about the kingdom after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). The wheels of salvation history are turning under the sovereignty of God through the obedience of Jesus to the direction of the Spirit. No details are given here about the nature of the temptation or testing that Jesus experienced; all we need to know is that He triumphed. Mark uses the biblical language of *tou Satana*, the Adversary, the one who tested and opposed God's people in the Old Testament and now the one who attempts to steal

away "the word sown in them" (Mk 4:15) and deflect Jesus from the path that the Father has called Him to follow (Mk 8:33). Mark alone mentions the wild beasts' (Gk. θηρίων), and it is not immediately clear whether this suggests that Jesus was in an Edenic paradise, at peace with nature, or whether those beasts are part of the menacing wilderness. The Greek word *therion* can have both positive and negative connotations. Though Mark does not mention Jesus' fasting, he agrees with Mt 4:11 that angels attended to the Lord's needs. While Jesus is here the solo hero, all really depends on the provision of God the Father. The final verse of this passage is a foretaste of the more detailed content of Jesus' preaching, which will come later in Mark. Yet, the contents most important elements are revealed. Jesus is preaching 'the gospel of God' (Gk. εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ), which is the gospel or good news that Mark introduced his Gospel with in the opening verse (Mk 1:1). Here, you find the only time in the Gospels where that good news is described as the *gospel of God*. Thus, following His desert sojourn Jesus comes out of the wilderness, completely aligned with the purposes of the Father. The language of time is the Greek *kairos* (Gk. Καιρός) meaning season, opportunity or moment, rather than *chronos* referring to a date in the calendar. In modern Greek the term *Kairos* can also mean weather! The long-expected moment has finally come and God is present among His people. The perfect tense of *coming near* or *engiken* (Gk. ἤγγικεν) suggests that the promised reign of God is now close at hand—close enough to reach out and touch for those who will respond to this moment. Jesus suggests that it has come in nothing other than His own teaching, action and presence—He carries with Him this electrifying promise that God has come to rescue His people. The language of Kingdom that is commonly used often feels rather static, instead of the sense of God's dynamic, reigning presence among His people. Though Paul does not use the language of the kingdom very much, the concept is central to the teaching of Jesus in each of the Synoptic gospels. One key point of continuity with John the Baptist's message is that it calls for a two-fold response: the turning from what has gone before, and the grasping of this moment of promise with the hands of faith. Some have suggested that the present tense of the verb *metanoeo* (Gk. μετανοέω) suggests a continual openness to *change our minds*. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, that verb translates the Hebrew term *shuv*, literally a turning to face the opposite direction. It is used both of the (re)turning of God's people to the land, and their turning from sin to live in holiness before the God of Israel. Thus, God the Father, in Jesus, is declaring the end of the people's spiritual exile as they turn back to God and respond to His presence in the person of Jesus, Son of God and Messiah.

Excerpted from Ian Paul. "The baptism, temptation, and preaching of Jesus in Mark 1." 12 February 2024. [www.psephizo.com](http://www.psephizo.com).

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