

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 19, 2023



**To love without measure — without judging—
to love even your enemies**

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Weekday Mass: (Monday-Friday at 12 noon)

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

Holy day 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

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MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 18 *Vigil of the 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4:00pm +Walter Granger by VG

Sunday, February 19 *Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am Healing for the family of Mary Mattock

4:00pm +Evariato Esteirio

Monday, February 20 *Presidents' Day*

12:00nn Healing for the family of Bob & Brenda Clark

Tuesday, February 21 *Saint Peter Damian, bishop & doctor*²

12:00nn Asking God for healing for Julia Chase & Rebecca Horrigan

Wednesday, February 22 *Ash Wednesday - Day of Fast and Abstinence*

12:00nn +Stanley Mendys—1st anniversary—by DGR

4:00pm For the intentions of Mr. & Dr. Aleude -Abu and their family

Thursday, February 23 *Thursday after Ash Wednesday — Saint Polycarp, bishop & martyr*²

12:00nn +Richard Gagnon by his wife

Friday, February 24 *Friday after Ash Wednesday — Day of Abstinence*

12:00nn For Al Tournas by the family

Saturday, February 25 *Vigil of the 1st Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm +Carroll Morrill

Sunday, February 26 *First Sunday of Lent*

7:30am For the intentions of Ed & Sandy Duggan and their family

4:00pm For the intentions of Alana Francis

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 This Week's Gospel

The Sermon on the Mount, especially its sections following the Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12), addresses various elements: the fact that Jesus came to perfect the Mosaic Law and that righteousness includes more than the act itself because the intention for acting needs to be accounted for. Then, in this week's Gospel, Jesus illustrates the demands that charity entails. The illustration begins with citing what is classically called the *lex talionis* or the law of retaliation such that the punishment inflicted should resemble the offense in terms of kind and degree. While, by today's standards, it seems that exacting an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth would appear to be outrageous, at that time, such a restriction mitigated escalation and avoided an earlier imitation of the nineteenth century Hatfield-McCoy feud (1863-1891). The context in which Jesus used this moral caveat was not criminal justice, but it was directed at individuals who are told not to return violence for violent acts. Jesus illustrates that overriding principle with four examples: (1) turn the other cheek when struck; (2) instead of a suit over your belongings give what others need and more than that; (3) go beyond what is asked of you; and (4) give to those who ask for your help. The demands that those examples imply can seem to endorse unlimited agreement to the help that others request, which seems counterintuitive or even could undermine the ability of those who give by earnestly fulfilling them threatening personal survival. Yet, the central message is that we should forego retaliation against those who have wronged us. Ironically, pre-determining that to be the proper course of action will, on occasion, lead to the extreme behavior highlighted by those four statements. Such an internal foreswearing against tit-for-tat action was a way of dealing with insults which can only be considered habitual when the other cheek is offered. Moreover, what seems essential to our self-protection should be surrendered to someone in greater need. Like the Beatitudes, this is not something reserved for the better or more faithful disciples because it is command given by the Lord to all who dare to follow Him. Do not conclude that disciples are meant to be doormats or naïve; instead, the demand is to make a commitment to promote peace amid discord. The second half of the Gospel (vv.43-48) serves to interpret those prior illustrations and so, provides the ultimate rationale for its concrete demands. Nowhere in the Mosaic Law is there a commandment demanding hatred of anyone's enemies, but the scope of applicability for neighbor in the commandment was restricted to fellow Israelites. In Ps

Fr. Romano Guardini — *The Lord*

The Old Law used justice as its norm of human behavior. As others treat you, so shall you treat them. Violence may be returned for violence, evil for evil. The justice of the day consisted in not returning more evil than the amount received, and naturally one was allowed to protect oneself from anything that seemed threatening. Christ says: That is not enough. As long as you cling to *justice* you will never be guiltless of injustice. As long as you are entangled in wrong and revenge, blow and counterblow, aggression and defense, you will be constantly drawn into fresh wrong. Passion, by its very definition, surpasses measure—quite aside from the fact that the claim to vengeance in itself is wrong because it lies outside our given rôle of creature. He who takes it upon himself to avenge trampled justice never restores justice. The moment discussion of wrong begins, wrong stirs in one's own heart, and the result is new injustice. If you really want to get anywhere, you must extricate yourself from the whole embodiment and seek a position far removed from all pro's and con's. You must introduce a new force, not that of self-assertion, but of selflessness; not so-called justice, but creative freedom. Man is really just only when he seeks more than mere justice. More not merely quantitatively, but qualitatively. He must find a power capable of breaking the ban of injustice, something strong enough and big enough to intercept aggression and disarm it: love.

139:19–22, hatred of an evil man or woman is assumed to be morally right. Aramaic was the common language used by Jesus and His contemporaries and the verb to hate (Arm. *sne'*) does not have the negative implications that it has in English. In fact, *sêne'* likely implies to love less more than to hate. Jesus broadened the scope of the commandment of love to include even enemies and persecutors. His disciples, as children of God, must poorly imitate the example of God the Father, who grants His gifts of sun and rain to both the good and the bad. Jesus rejected the *us versus them* distinction in which the love of neighbor was restricted to fellow Jews. Not content with broadening the scope of the commandment, Jesus endorsed both love for our enemies and the need to pray for those who persecute us—doing so more closely matches our personal behavior to what Jesus did on the Cross. These divine additions served to make the Law more perfect. These demands, which Jesus makes, avoid comparisons to pagans or sinners or even to exemplary behavior on the part of others. Earthly comparisons are unwarranted because the ultimate goal of the Christian life is a transcendent perfection. By how He lived and what He did, Jesus lived and embodied what could be described as the concrete norms of any perfect human being. The goal of the faithful way of life is not simply a higher, more perfect form of human living because life's ultimate end is that kind of holiness which God alone possesses. Such a divine form of perfection is mystical in nature. While spiritual righteousness (Gk. *δικαιοσύνη*) is the result of abiding by the commandments and, when doing so, without exception, such moral rectitude (or blamelessness) becomes concrete in exercising the duty predicated on neighborly love, enshrined in acts of mercy. Regardless of whether or not someone believes in God, those who act in a comparable manner to the evangelical ideal will find a place in the bosom of Abraham—conversely, even those who believe in God and act contrary to those divinely-endorsed ways of acting will unlikely be admitted to the kingdom. When framed in this-worldly terms, actively living in a charitable and merciful manner becomes the leaven that increases the reign of God on earth and creates a better world founded on justice, peace, and interpersonal harmony.

Eucharistic Revival Began on 19 June 2022 & Concludes with the National Eucharistic Congress: Indianapolis 17-21 July 2024

O sacrum convivium in quo Christus sumitur - How holy the feast in which Christ is our food

Try and seek an understanding of the logic of Lent amid the Eucharist. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, the Eucharist is “the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the people of God by which the church is kept in being” (CCC n. 1325). In his *Confessions*, Saint Augustine said, “Those trifles of all trifles, those vanities of vanities ... held me back, plucking at the garment of my flesh, softly murmuring, ‘Are you sending us away? From this moment, shall we not be with you, now or ever?’” Such long-cherished demons – hardly even recognizable as demonic – will not be easily dismissed because they can only be cast out with much prayer and fasting. There is the meaning of the disciplines of Lent. Lent is about conflict and suffering, about death and resurrection. It is about Jesus’ dying and rising, but also about our own rising, as we follow His road, through conflict and temptation, to Jerusalem. As the foretaste of the perfect heavenly banquet to come, the Eucharist is still the same coming and presence, the same joy and “burning of heart,” the same trans-rational yet absolute knowledge that the Risen Lord makes Himself known “in the breaking of bread.”

Ash Wednesday—February 22

The distribution of ashes comes from a ceremony of ages past, when Christians who had committed one of the capital sins were required to do public penance. At that time, on Ash Wednesday, the Bishop blessed the sack cloth which the sinners were to wear during the forty days of penance, and sprinkled over them ashes made from the palms of the previous year. While the faithful recited the Seven Penitential Psalms, those penitents were turned out of the Church because of their sins — just as Adam, the first man, was turned out of Paradise because of his disobedience. The penitents did not get readmitted to the church until Maundy Thursday after having won reconciliation by the toil of forty days’ penance and receiving sacramental absolution.

Mass Schedule & Distribution of Ashes **12nn and 4pm**

WHY WAS JESUS TEMPTED IN THE DESERT

Introduction

Ask most Catholics and they would say that Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (Lat. *feria IV cinerum*); yet, in fact, the forty days of Lent actually begins in earnest on the First Sunday of Lent. Also, the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday was once known as Shrove Tuesday – the word shrove is derived from the verb *to shrive* which refers to confessing sins to a priest before Lent begins. Eventually, the introspective nature of that day before Ash Wednesday acquired the character of a carnival or festival such as Mardi Gras so that in places throughout the world instead of being shriven, the day is often celebrated with parades and unique foods. The weekdays following Ash Wednesday are blandly described as the fifth, sixth days after or the Saturday after Ash Wednesday. You could honestly say that those initial Lenten days are the *porch of Lent* – other commentators describe Ash Wednesday through Saturday as the narthex or antechamber to the First Sunday of Lent which is then understood as the door that opens onto Lent properly understood. Originally, the term narthex (Gk. *νάρθηξ*) meant a giant fennel whose stalk was a schoolmaster’s cane. Eventually, the term became an architectural element or an entrance to the church building, but was not considered to be actually part of the sacred precincts itself. The narthex was the place for non-believers, catechumens and penitents to gather. So, on the first Sunday of Lent, the Church crosses that narthex or threshold and the great door to Lent opens with the Gospel of the Lord’s Temptation (Mt 4:1-11). Immediately prior, Jesus had been baptized by John the Baptist (Mt 3:13-17). The passage is a theophany (Gk. *Θεοφάνεια*) or a revelation of God because the Trinity was present – the Spirit of God descended on Jesus like a dove and the Father’s voice was heard declaring, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” Then, in the first verse of the Gospel opening Lent, the evangelist states, “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted (Gk. *πειρασθῆναι*) by the devil.” The morphology of the verb *peirazó* (Gk. *πειράζω*) literally means to make proof of, to attempt, test, or tempt; yet its tense, in the Koine Greek, implies having something done to someone else. The Lord’s encounter with the devil, then, was not an accident – it was a monumental struggle between good and evil. So, Jesus went into the desert and “fasted for forty days and forty nights.” The number forty calls to mind the time of the flood, after which the Noachic covenant was made between God and Noah. There are times, when the reference to forty days and forty nights only implies a period of long duration. However, the number forty also conjures up the time that Moses remained on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:18) and the eventual Mosaic Covenant or, more often than not, when the Jews were empt-

ed in the wilderness for that similar length of years (Dt 8:2) before entering the Promised Land.

Christ as the New Moses.

After Jesus had endured such a prolonged fast, long-deprived of food, it goes without saying that Jesus must have been ravenous, so, the Tempter (Gk. *ὁ πειράζων*) or *ho peirázon* saw an opportunity. The reason Jesus went into the wilderness was in order for “‘a time of solitude...At the end of this time Satan tempts him three times, seeking to compromise his filial attitude toward God. Jesus rebuffs these attacks which recapitulate the temptations of Adam in Paradise and of Israel in the desert...’ The evangelists indicate the salvific meaning of this mysterious event: Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation” (CCC, nn. 538-539).

Jesus as the New Adam

In one of his Letters to the Church in Corinth, Saint Paul declares, “So, too, it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living being’ the last Adam a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). Paul’s analogy to the first man, Adam, is introduced by a citation from Genesis 2:7. He alters the text slightly, adding the adjective *first*, and translating the Hebrew word *’ādām* twice, which accomplishes these two things: (1) *’ādām* having its value as a common noun (man) and (2) *’ādām* as a proper name. Then, Saint Paul goes on to specify the similarities and differences between those two Adams. The last (or new) Adam, Christ has become a...spirit (Gk. *πνεῦμα*), a transcendent life-principle with respect to the natural soul (Gk. *ψυχή*) of the first Adam. Further, Jesus is not just alive, but He is life-giving—a source of life for others. Created as perfect and sin-free, dwelling in a prelapsarian Eden of astonishing plenitude, Adam eventually fell into sin by disobeying God, accepting the lies of the devil in regard to not dying and being God-like, by eating the forbidden fruit from a forbidden tree. In doing so, the first Adam allowed sin and damnation to enter the world. Then, Jesus, as the New Adam, in the Bread of Life discourse in Saint John’s Gospel, the Lord said that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have eternal life. This reference to eating is the antidote that overcomes what Adam had done. He, who died on the Tree of Life known as the Cross, commands us to eat the fruit from that tree known as the Eucharist—His flesh and blood—which gives to those who receive that bread from heaven worthily eternal life. What is needed to overcome the two lies of the devil to Adam is assured, too. As Adam threw away his sinless status through disobedience to God, Jesus kept His sinless status through obedience to the Father. Just as Adam’s disobedience to God allowed sin and damnation to enter the world, the obedience of Jesus, the new Adam, to God, his loving Father, allowed salvation to enter the world.