

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Second Sunday in Lent
February 25, 2024



“For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.” And
“tongues shall cease,” when that which we now hope for and believe
shall come. When they fell to the earth, they signified that we die.

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, 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

Monday, February 26

12:00nn +Barbara Lemanski Perry by the alumnae of the former SVH School of Nursing

Tuesday, February 27 *Saint Gregory of Narek, abbot & doctor*²

12:00nn For the health of Joseph Walsh

Wednesday, February 28

12:00nn For the conversion of heart of legislators

Thursday, February 29

12:00nn +Linda Granger

Friday, March 1 Ecumenical World Day of Prayer - *Day of Abstinence*

11:30am Stations of the Cross

12:00nn For today's holy innocents

Saturday, March 2 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm For the health of a beloved son

Sunday, March 3 *Third Sunday of Lent*

7:30am +Patricia Oakes by the alumnae of former SVHSN

4:00pm For the gifts of faith, hope & love for a beloved son on his birthday

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 of Lent

Primarily in the three Synoptic Gospels, the sacred authors parallel one another in recording the various events in the life of Christ. Yet, while the same facts and incidents were eventually written down, the variations among them reveal their originality and warrant comparison that offers us what Matthew, Mark, and Luke meant to say from their particular viewpoint. The Sunday gospels vary according to a three-year cycle, labeled A, B, C. During Year A, the gospels are primarily taken from Saint Matthew. The current cycle is Year B from which the passages are taken from Saint Mark; yet, due to its brevity, Mark's writings are supplemented with pericopes from Chapter Six of Saint John's Gospel. Year C takes its Gospel selections from Saint Luke. In all three years, the Gospel of John is read during the Easter season. Saint Mark's recounting of the Lord's Transfiguration is sparse when compared with the parallels in Matthew and Luke and, so, it displays an austere solemnity. There is no mention of the color or the attributes of face of Jesus. Instead, Mark states that "his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller (Gk. γναφεύς – fuller or cloth-dresser) on earth could bleach them." Then, Elijah and Moses appear and speak with Jesus, but nothing in their conversation was written down. Amid this theophany, though spellbound and frightened, Peter takes the initiative and declares how privileged they were to be with Jesus glorified and, then, proposes the apostles set up three tents for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. The combination of terror and extreme joy can be ascribed to the belief that the time for the long-delayed *manifestatio* of God's glory was finally at hand. Peter's proposal sought to make this transitory event into a permanent situation. The Gospel notes that Peter "hardly knew what to say" and, before anything else could happen, the vision faded away. A cloud covered the mountaintop and cast its shadow on them. From amid the cloud came a voice which said, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." As a response to Peter's proposal, the heavenly voice brings everything back to where it had begun, "they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them." Jesus and the three apostles go back down the mountain, while descending He tells them "not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead." Unlike the Sadducees, among first-century Jews, there was the belief that the God of Israel would one day give life to the dead (Heb. *Tehiyyat ha-*

St. Anastasius of Sinai—Liturgy of the Hours: Office of Readings for August 6

Saint Anastasius sees the vision of the cloud of glory as a foreshadowing of the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus, says Peter, it is good for us to be here. "Therefore, since each of us possesses God in his heart and is being transformed into his divine image, we also should cry out with joy: It is good for us to be here – here where all things shine with divine radiance, where there is joy and gladness and exultation; where there is nothing in our hearts but peace, serenity and stillness; where God is seen. For here, in our hearts, Christ takes up his abode together with the Father, saying as he enters: Today salvation has come to this house. With Christ, our hearts receive all the wealth of his eternal blessings, and there where they are stored up for us in him, we see reflected as in a mirror both the first fruits and the whole of the world to come.

metim) or a *second death* which is usually identical with the judgment, following resurrection, in Gehinnom (or Gehenna) on the Last Day. The term "second death" occurs four times in the last book of the New Testament (Rev 2:11; 20:6; 20:14; 21:8). In the first two references, anyone who overcame the devil's temptations are saved; thus, taking part in the first resurrection, considered holy, they are not subject to the second death. Only the unsaved experience two deaths: earthly death and after the resurrection the second death or eternal punishment. What is the link between the vision the three Apostles had of Jesus being "transfigured before them" and the resurrection? Did Jesus, then, have to pass through death as all human beings do? While Jesus had his pass-over or exodus from death to life, this vision of Him as glorified was meant to be the means by which the scandal of His death by crucifixion might be overcome. Moreover, it also constituted an inseparable link between the reality of death, along with the promise of rising from the dead, and ultimate Ascension to heavenly glory. Saint Mark's account of the Lord's Transfiguration causes the disciples to reflect on their faith in Jesus, how they understand the paschal mystery, and what is meant by the Christian passover -- Jesus passing over from death to life. Among the four Gospels, the disciples in this Second Gospel are particularly oblivious and are often depicted as having little faith, incapable of following Jesus' teachings, or seeking seats of glory as displayed in the ambition of James and John (Mk 10:38). Paschal faith—belief that Christ has died, was raised from the dead and is now alive at the Father's right hand—dawned on the Lord's closest disciples only very slowly and that mystery was often misunderstood, despite the Transfiguration. True faith must be an ongoing endeavor because progress in it is painfully slow. The closing statement of the Gospel that, while Peter, James and John kept the Transfiguration to themselves, they also wrestled with this question, "what rising from the dead meant." The scandal of the cross or Christ's crucifixion is the stumbling block to faith. The Sacred Triduum unites His cross and death on Good Friday, with Christ lying in the tomb and descending into hell on Holy Saturday with Easter its high point. Ignoring the first two days robs Easter of any content and real meaning; yet, failing to believe in Easter Sunday that the tomb was empty, then, the gift of eternal life is forfeited. Deepening our understanding of the meaning of what rising from the dead truly entails is the annual Lenten task.

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

Literally understood, transfiguration necessarily involves a change in appearance or in aesthetic properties. Yet, in regard to the change of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, the Church describes that in terms of transubstantiation or an ontological change that excludes a priori any perceptible difference to the naked eye. Transfiguration is also related to Eucharist in that it is a dramatic manifestation of the mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God effected a hitherto impossible union: that of Creator with creation, of God with that which is not-God. In one sense, Transfiguration and Transubstantiation have a commonality. In both Jesus appears in all His glory to human beings. In the case of the Transfiguration, the Lord revealed Himself as He truly is without the visibility of His human form. In Transubstantiation, the Lord not only reveals Himself, but also makes Himself available to us in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in Communion. In both instances, those who have not seen are called to believe. You do not see the actual Transubstantiation take place in terms of any change of physical appearance. Instead, you experience it spiritually and know that the bread and wine that are on the altar have become the Body and Blood of Christ because this is what Jesus promised. Transfiguration provides a unique perspective on the Eucharist, reinforcing the divine relationship between Jesus' identity, His teachings, and the sacred act of partaking in His body and blood. The Transfiguration and the Holy Eucharist converge in their revelation of Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises. The Old Testament foreshadowing of God's glory in Daniel's vision ultimately finds its realization in Christ's luminous transformation. Similarly, the Eucharist, established during the Last Supper, bridges the Old and New Testaments, encapsulating the culmination of God's salvific plan. The Transfiguration is also a foreshadowing of the second coming, as is the Resurrection. The Transfiguration reveals in what manner Christ shall again appear while the Resurrection reveals the way in which the saints will be transformed.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises—the Goal of Lenten Practices

The word Lent comes from an old English word *lencten* which means springtime. In turn, *lencten* is derived from the older Germanic word *Lengen-tinza* that literally means long days. So Lent refers to the lengthening of days or to the light that is defeating the darkness. The season of Lent is also known as *Tesserakoste* in Greek or *Quadragesima* in Latin. The season incorporates the two-fold theme of repentance and baptism, and its aim is to celebrate the Paschal Mystery. This part of the liturgical year is concerned both with anticipating the renewal of baptismal promises by the faithful who have been fully-initiated into Christ or aims at the various stages of preparation that mark Lent as a time for immediate preparation for baptism. Those who were once known as catechumens, after the First Sunday of Lent and acceptance by the bishop, are now known as the Elect. Through scrutinies and catechesis, the Elect prepare for eventually being baptized and confirmed at the Easter Vigil. For those already-baptized Catholics, Lent requires greater devotion to the word of God, the penitential practices of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting so that by a spirit of repentance, the whole Church will be ready to renew the promises of baptism that were once made for us when Easter arrives.

Concerning Baptism

Among its myriad effects, baptism can be understood as an engagement in repentance—dying to sin in the waters of baptism and rising to new life in Christ. What theologians often characterized as the wonderful exchange between heaven and earth begins in the waters of baptism. Death exchanged for eternal life. Sin displaced by sanctifying grace (or spiritual wholeness). Despair supplanted by hope. Yet, the new life that Christ gives to the baptized—as occurred with Him—drives us into the wilderness where temptation abounds. From those forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, the Church derives the forty days of Lent. His triumph over temptation can be ours, too. Like the Israelites, the desert is more than a place of temptation – it is a place that we annually visit, but not where we must always live. The discipline of Lent is a blessed burden because, unlike Jesus, we are not living that experience alone – there are others alongside us, engaging in the same practices. By acknowledging our sins and enduring temptation, with the grace of God, we emerge from the desert renewed, refreshed and ever more capable of serving God and neighbor.

A Better Understanding of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Like the Elect, who will undergo the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil, those who have already been baptized experience anew the joy and gratitude of their baptism. On that most solemn night, as “the mother of all vigils,” the Christian faithful, with a burning candle in their hands, solemnly renew the promises that were made when we, too, were freed from sin and clothed with Christ. It is important to think about what it means to renounce Satan and sin—the simple response *I do* implies that you do repudiate the devil and evil. And, then, what it means to declare that same *I do* is to affirm that you truly believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as well as all the other basic elements of faith that are part and parcel of belief in the Holy Trinity. Whatever penitential practices we adopt during Lent should serve to move us toward the singular act of Easter which is renewing the promises once made on our behalf by our godparents, when we were brought to the font. Lent is a time to reject Satan, all his works, and all his empty promises. And, then, to make an act of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three-fold practices of Lent, namely, prayer, almsgiving, and fasting should be done without fanfare and sacrifici-

ally! Those penitential acts should be done so that we find ourselves in such straights that we can easily recognize that God alone has helped us in our self-imposed need. Thus, when help does come, we will know it is truly divine in its nature because God alone knows what we need. Greater faith in God will be the result of penance and sacrifice. Lenten practices are meant to simplify or subtract from life those things that yield earthly pleasure and in such a context, the renewing of baptismal promises will prove to be more fulfilling. In reading God’s word or praying more intentionally, the spiritual aim is not merely informational; no, the goal is growth in faith. As faith deepens and matures, the rejection of Satan and evil coupled with the declarations of faith in the Trinity become more than an external exercise. Confessing our sins and receiving absolution, along with the faithful practice of other Lenten disciplines are all preludes to something more that is embedded in Lent: Repentance for sinfulness, past, present, and a pledge to avoid sin in the future. It is a recommitment to obedience in living life by God’s commands. And, also, the earnest seeking after God’s grace—His divine life at work in our lives. Persistent and fervent acts of prayer, almsgiving and fasting, when they have been done to such a degree, create within the heart an aching need for God’s presence. When divine help arrives, its heavenly source is easily recognizable. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the searing nature of God’s word is fanned into flame within! The renewal of the promises once made for us in baptism are destined to become the greatest act of Easter faith, when prepared for in the proper way. This annual public act is not meant to be a re-run as much as it is intended to be the culminating point where we recall all that God has done for us from the previous Easter. In profound gratitude, those renewed promises should bear fruit, since they are the embodiment of the deepest expression of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The renewal of our baptismal promises, then, is the ultimate goal of Lenten discipline. All our Lenten activities should move toward that goal. For example, when you go to Confession during Lent, it has an added significance. Every Lenten Confession should prepare the penitent to reject Satan, all his works, and all his empty promises and to make a deep act of faith in the Father, Son, and Spirit. When you give alms, pray, or fast during Lent, you should do so secretly and sacrificially (see Mt 6:1-18). Allow the Lord to put you in a position where you are in need of help and where no one but God the Father knows what you really need. Then, when the Father provides, you will know that it is God who did it, for He was the only One Who knew what you needed. Thus, as a by-product, you will have a greater faith in God. This will encourage you to simplify our life-style or forgo usual, legitimate pleasures, which will give God more opportunities to be a father to you. You will then find yourself to be in a life-style of ever-increasing faith. This kind of life-style is the best context for renewing baptismal promises. When you read, pray, and study God’s word during Lent, you are not merely doing those things for information or inspiration. You are reading to grow in faith, for faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word of God (Rm 10:17). With your faith deepening during these forty days, you are preparing yourself to make the greatest act of faith: the renewal of your baptismal promises: to reject Satan, sin and empty promises, while professing your belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, the Church, bodily resurrection and eternal life.
