

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 21, 2024



CALL & RESPONSE

In order to understand yourself thoroughly, with your unrest, uncertainty,
and even weakness and sinfulness, you must draw near to Christ.

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

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MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, January 20 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4:00pm For the intentions of Daniel & Paul

Sunday, January 21 *Third Sunday in Ordinary Time — Ecumenical Sunday*

7:30am +Linda Granger

4:00pm +Derek Janeczak by his parents

Monday, January 22 *Day of Prayer & Penance*

12:00nn Healing for Eileen, Marie, Bridget, Paul & Patrice

Tuesday, January 23 *St. Vincent of Saragossa, deacon & martyr; St. Marianne Cope, virgin*²

12:00nn In gratitude for the mysteries of the Rosary of the BVM

Wednesday, January 24 *Saint Francis de Sales, bishop, founder & doctor*¹

12:00nn Blessings on Peggy and her family

Thursday, January 25 *Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, apostle*

12:00nn +Gordon Morrill

Friday, January 26 *Saint Timothy & Saint Titus, bishops*¹

12:00nn +Rita Sullivan

Saturday, January 27 *Vigil of the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4:00pm Edward Jablonski, Sr. remembering his birthday by his daughters

Sunday, January 28 *Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am +Joseph McGrath — 45th anniversary

4:00pm +Robert Bek

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

The longest part of the Liturgical Year is labeled Ordinary Time (Lat. *Tempus per annum*) whose thirty-three or thirty-four weeks are separated by Lent-Easter and so there is a shorter and longer part to Ordinary Time. From this Sunday until the 6th Sunday in Ordinary time, before Lent begins on February 14, there is an uninterrupted reading from the first chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Mark. This week's Gospel concerns the call of the first four apostles as the first of those passages and the series will conclude with the cure of a leper (Mk 1:40-45). In the opening verse of his first chapter, Mark the evangelist says, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." After that titular verse, the prologue to Mark's Gospel includes three events prior to the inauguration of the Lord's preaching: the Baptist's mission in the desert, the theophany of Jesus' baptism, and His temptation in the desert. Following John's arrest, Jesus returns to Galilee and this coming and going exhibits the hurried nature of His movement throughout that region. Galilee had a mixed religious population due to its location and as a crossroads for trade. Subtly, the universal scope of Christ's saving mission is hinted at almost from the outset. After those details, Jesus' inaugural address is recorded, "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15). This declaration of the dawn of salvation first resounds in Galilee "the District of the Gentiles" (Is 8:23), but echoes far beyond to be heard by all people of goodwill. To that inaugural declaration, Jesus adds, "Repent (Gk. μετανοεῖτε), and believe in the gospel." Jesus is issuing the call to change our inner moral compass and turn toward belief in Him. All that He does, whether it be His ordinary activity as teacher or the extraordinary miracles and the expelling of demons—those ordinary and the extraordinary acts display God's power working in and through Christ and they foretell the tottering reign of Satan. The ultimate question is this one, "Who really are you, Jesus of Nazareth?" This crucial question will only be answered when Peter later on states, "You are the Messiah" (Mk 8:29). From that point on, Jesus begins to speak about His death and resurrection and that His disciples will eventually suffer a similar fate like His. The call of Simon and Andrew and Zebedee's sons, James and John, and their response to the Lord's invitation finalizes Mark's preliminary presentation of Jesus as the Son of God. These four are busy fishermen when the Lord passes by them. Simon and Andrew are casting their nets while James and John were readying their nets to do the same. When Jesus said to them, "Come after me....they abandoned their nets and followed him....[or] they left their father Zebedee...and followed him."

Father Bernard Lonergan, SJ - *Method in Theology*

Conversion is existential, intensely personal, utterly intimate. But it is not so private as to be solitary. It can happen to many, and they can form a community to sustain one another in their self-transformation and to help one another in working out the implications and fulfilling the promise of their new life. Finally, what can become communal, can become historical. It can pass from generation to generation. It can spread from one cultural milieu to another. It can adapt to changing circumstances, confront new situations, survive into a different age, flourish in another period or epoch. Conversion, as lived, affects all of man's conscious and intentional operations. It directs his gaze, pervades his imagination, releases the symbols that penetrate to the depths of his psyche. It enriches his understanding, guides his judgments, reinforces his decisions. But as communal and historical, as a movement with its own cultural, institutional, and doctrinal dimensions, conversion calls forth a reflection that makes the movement thematic, that explicitly explores its origins, developments, purposes, achievements, and failures.

The immediacy with which these four fishermen respond to the Lord's invitation to follow Him graphically illustrates the extraordinary authority that Jesus possesses that even demons are subject to Him. Acknowledging that authority and responding to it without hesitation constitutes the decisive attributes of every true disciple. This terse incident illustrates the evangelist's style – Jesus hastily invites others to follow Him and, after saying yes, they have to drop everything and do so quickly, all done without any hesitation. Unlike the first four of the apostles, though, the call He issues today is not as direct as theirs once was and today's invitation is often tested or evaluated by others. Practical wisdom (or *phronesis*) is needed because no one is free from illusions. Even the conversion of Saul required the future Saint to go into the city and receive further instruction. Real conversion (Gk. *μετάνοια*), when understood as a transformative change of heart, is a free response to God, but the initiative is always God's. Customarily, the Lord makes the offer to follow Him wherever we normally happen to be and He does so amid the usual conditions in which we live. The four were called while they were going about their ordinary business of fishing. Then, while speaking to the two pairs of brothers about their work, Jesus tells them what He knows to be their future, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Though they were either mending or casting their nets, the colloquial understanding of a net is closer to a snare set for someone else, as well as for birds or fish. Preaching conversion or urging those who listen to change their way of living is not meant to imply ensnaring unsuspecting disciples because *metanoia* or conversion implies an internal change that demands those who listen to the Lord's call re-examine what they are doing and to take responsibility for where those actions have led them in life. While the sea is often seen as idyllic and the crashing of the waves on the shore can be soothing, because the Israelites were not a seafaring nation, the sea was a fearful element that fired the imagination and traveling by sea was foreboding – the domain of Leviathan, a sea monster! Thus, pulling people out of the sea, as fishers of men, the Apostles were not dragging their nets to capture scores of people against their will, as they were rescuing them from a horrible situation and freeing them from demonic power. Designating Peter and Andrew and the sons of Zebedee to be *fishers of men*, the title entails that Jesus will remain with them and they with Him. They will preach about how Jesus lived and what He did, and also have authority over evil (Mk 3:14-15). The Apostles will become the extension of Christ's messianic mission or the mission of the Church, coupled with its discreet allusion to the Petrine role — "you are Peter and upon that rock I will build my Church."

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage — The Jewish Todah Sacrifice

Belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist carries with it this act of faith that what we receive in Communion is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Since the Second Vatican Council, there has been an increased emphasis on the Eucharist as uniting the faithful into communion with one another as members of the Mystical Body of Christ. The downside of that truth is that many have lost sight of the fact that it is Christ's real Body and real Blood as well as His Soul and Divinity that comes to every altar at the moment of consecration. One of the most important rituals of the ancient Jews was the special ritual meal called the *todah* that, in Hebrew, *todah* means thanks, but it is also confession of praise in addition to expressing gratitude. This special ritual sacrifice was offered by someone whose life had been delivered from clear and present danger, often mortal danger from disease or the sword. The saved person would express gratitude to God by gathering his closest friends and family for the *todah* sacrificial meal. The lamb needed would be sacrificed in the Temple and the bread for the meal would be consecrated the moment the lamb was slain. The bread and meat, along with wine, would constitute the elements of the sacred *todah* meal, which would be accompanied by prayers and songs of thanksgiving, such as Psalm 116. Jonah, while in the belly of the whale, for instance, vows to offer up a *todah* sacrifice in the Temple if he is delivered (Jon 2:3-10). The *todah* sacrifice is what links and underlies the Passover and the Mass. Introduced in the Old Testament, the *todah*—in contrast to the yearly celebration of Passover—was a continual sacrifice of thanks and praise to God for His saving actions: "A *todah* sacrifice would be offered by someone whose life had been delivered from great peril." Just as the Passover was a sacrifice in memory of when the Jewish people had been saved from death during their exile in Egypt, so too, the Mass is a continual sacrifice of thanksgiving for our salvation. Excerpted from Tim Gray, "From Jewish Passover to Christian Eucharist: The Story of the *Todah*." Originally published in *Lay Witness* (Nov/Dec. 2002).

This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent & believe in the gospel

*“This is the time of fulfillment.
The kingdom of God is at hand.
Repent, and believe in the gospel.”*

As soon as John’s arrest was reported to Jesus, He knew it was time for Him to leave behind the hidden life of Nazareth and to proclaim the Kingdom of God. The announcement of the kingdom of God is immediately preceded by the phrase “this is the time of fulfillment,” which would have held a particularly strong resonance for the Israelites awaiting the coming of the Messiah as foretold by the prophets. This week’s entire Gospel passage constitutes the beginning of the Lord’s public life and its first part is a summary of Jesus’ teaching and the first response to it. As the passage begins, you hear that the Baptist had been arrested. The Greek word for ‘arrest’ would literally be rendered as to be handed over (Gk παραδοθῆναι), which is a key word that will be used later in regard to Jesus Himself, His disciples, and indeed of many others down the centuries. The verb *paradidomi* (Gk παραδίδωμι) is also used at Mass when the celebrant at the consecration says, “This is my Body which will be given up (Lat. *tradetur*) for you.” The English version of *given up* translates the Latin word *tradetur*¹, which is a word that literally means ‘handed over’. Jesus is daily handed over to us, or rather, He hands Himself over to us and expects us to do likewise with His self-gift what we have received. Jesus begins His public life, then, by proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, summed up in these words, “This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” It is a deceptively simple statement of faith, though, in fact, it is replete with profound meaning. You could even say that the whole of the Gospel message is contained in those two verses. The ancient Greeks had two words for time with *kairos* being the second of the two. The first was *chronos* (Gk χρόνος), which we still use in words like chronological and anachronism. It refers to clock time — time that can be measured — seconds, minutes, hours, years. Where *chronos* is quantitative, the Greek word *kairos* is qualitative. *Kairos* measures moments pregnant with meaning, waiting to burst forth at the opportune time. Thus, *kairos* refers to the right moment, the moment for God to act. So, the reference to time (Gk καιρός) in verse 15 refers to the propitious moment when, in God’s plan, something is ripe to happen or a serendipitous moment. The Ancient Greek equivalent of that English word time or *kairos* exactly describes the appearance of Jesus, an appearance that the whole of the Old Covenant had been preparing for and incorporates all those events that previously led up to His birth. The expression the Kingdom of God is the focal point of Christ’s message. The coming of that King-

dom was what He proclaimed and that declaration constituted the core of all of His subsequent teaching. Unlike Saint Mark, Matthew’s Gospel uses the term *Kingdom of heaven* and, too easily, the conclusion is that any reference to the Kingdom belongs only to life after death, which restricts the scope of that expression. The English word Kingdom translates the Greek word *basiléia* (Gk. βασιλεία), an abstract noun that is often better rendered as kingship or reign. So, Kingdom does not refer to a geographical place; instead, it points to the ruling power of God, a power based above all else on the Father’s divine love. Wherever the love of God prevails in the world, you can say that the Kingdom is there. Love essentially involves other people, so the Kingdom is not a place or an action, but a complex of harmonious and interacting relationships. Jesus came to call every single one of us to belong to such a world. Repent constitutes the first of the basic steps needed to fully become a member of God’s Kingdom. An important textual feature in the call to *repent* and *believe* is the use of the Greek present tense which conveys the idea of a continuous action rather than a single endeavor. Thus, it could be rendered as *keep on repenting* and *keep on believing* to emphasize the sense of continuing with this response. While repentance is the most common translation of the Greek verb for the noun *metanoia* (Gk. μετάνοια) that is not a very fortunate rendering. Repent, for most of us, means being sorry for something done in the past. While the past is not excluded here, the Greek word *metanoia* looks much more to the future. *Metanoia* really means a radical change in how you think; primarily, in regard to how you think about the meaning and purpose of life, and how our redeemed lives are meant to be lived out. Jesus is calling here for a radical conversion, and for us to take to heart His vision of life. How is such a radical change in thinking to be achieved? By believing in the Gospel. For many of us, ‘belief’ means the total acceptance of the teachings of Christ as interpreted by the Church. While that is eminently true, something more than that is being asked in this expression. We are asked not just to believe, but to BELIEVE IN. It is one thing to believe that something is true, but that belief may not affect your life very much. In calling on us to believe in the message that the Gospel brings, we are being asked for a total investment of ourselves, and not just in accepting doctrine as true. We are being called on to live our lives and pattern them on the model of Jesus himself.

¹ trādo, dīdi, dītum, ere -- give up, hand over, deliver, transmit, surrender, consign; entrust, confide for shelter, protection, imprisonment, etc.