

**OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL**  
**SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL**  
**WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER**  
**Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**July 23, 2023**



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Saint Augustine, *Quaest. septend. in Ev. sec. Matth.*, 12, 4.  
...many are at first weeds and later become wheat. If these persons,  
when they are evil, were not tolerated patiently, they would never  
reach the praiseworthy change in their life

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**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](http://www.ourladyofprovidence.net)

## MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, July 22 *Vigil of the 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4:00pm +James Groccia — remembering his birthday

Sunday, July 23 *Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time — World Day for Grandparents & the Elderly*

7:30am Blessings for Maureen

4:00pm Asking for healing for Patrick J. Walsh

Monday, July 24 *Saint Sharbel Makhlūf*

12:00nn +John & Mary Murray by their family

Tuesday, July 25 *Feast of Saint James, apostle*

12:00nn +Charles Finn

Wednesday, July 26 *Ss. Joachim and Anne, parents of the BVM*<sup>1</sup>

12:00nn +William and Barbara Galvin

Thursday, July 27

12:00nn Healing for Susan Kelly

Friday, July 28

12:00nn +Douglas Phillips

Saturday, July 29 *Vigil of the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4:00pm Seeking divine help in regard to college admission

Sunday, July 30 *Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary time*

7:30am For all those who have recently been married in the Church

4:00pm For those who are terminally ill

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 This Sunday's Gospel

The longer version of today's Gospel incorporates three parables (i.e., the weeds among wheat, the mustard seed, and the yeast), which are followed by a single explanation. While that explanation (vv. 36-43) only concerns the first parable, its placement must also have some relation to the other two as well. The Greek word *parabolē* is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *māshāl* which has a designation covering a wide variety of literary forms such as axioms, proverbs, similitudes, and allegories. As was true last week, this week's Gospel concerns another sower who has sown good seed, but that during the night "an enemy came and sowed weeds (or darnels) all through the wheat" and did so undetected. In the early stages of growth, the poisonous darnels are indistinguishable from the wheat shoots. Yet, as growth continues, it eventually becomes obvious that those poisonous weeds are interspersed with the wheat. Considered part of the Third Discourse in Saint Matthew and constituting its second part, it is often called the Parabolic Discourse which can be subdivided into two parts: Matthew 13:1-43 and, then, after Jesus goes back into the house, three more parables (i.e., buried treasure, pearl of great price, dragnet) are given. While these parables concern the Kingdom of Heaven, they are also parables about the Church. Even at that early period, the faithful were a mixed bag – some good and some bad—as well as having pretentious leaders. Judging by appearances alone, it is impossible to separate one from the other. Only God can read the human heart and, so, only He can harvest the weeds without ruining the crop of wheat. In addition, those two crops must be left in the field in order that they "grow together until harvest..." God is always patient and can wait to sort one from the other until the opportune moment. Speaking about God, then, the parable illustrates that seemingly noxious weeds might disappear before the harvest, wheat seeds germinate at different points—some later or some earlier—or as pre-harvest sprouting when wheat ears appear just prior to the actual harvest. Wheat plants, too, can sprout rapidly and dry out just as rapidly and others will never develop beyond the stem stage and, so, develop no ears. When coupled with last week's parable of the Sower and the Seed, the different places where randomly scattered seed may fall, illustrates that the seed's further development is not simply weather-related, nor attributable to the quality of the seed sown, or accidental error on the part of the sower, but due to deliberate sabotage by an enemy. Responsibility lies deep

### Saint Augustine — The Letters of Petilian

*Petilianus* said: "Yet that you should not call yourselves holy, in the first, place, I declare that no one has holiness who has not led a life of innocence. *Augustine* answered: "Show us the tribunal where you have been enthroned as judge, that the whole world should stand for trial before you, and with what eyes you have inspected and discussed, I do not say the consciences, but even the acts of all men, that you should say that the whole world has lost its innocence. He who has carried up as far as the third heaven says, "Yea, I judge not mine own self;" and do you venture to pronounce sentence on the whole world, throughout which the inheritance of Christ is spread abroad?"

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within every human heart and the attitude that is manifested toward the presence of evil-doers—either a willingness to allow such lives to become fruitful or acting to prevent that from happening. God's immense patience and forbearance results from divine clear-sightedness, the result of the heavenly kind of mercy that never loses hope, and that until the eleventh hour or the time of the harvest that God's grace remains readily available for the contrite and repentant. Juxtaposed with the parable of the wheat and the weeds, Saint Matthew places aside it the parable of the mustard seed which serves to graphically illustrate the potency of the Gospel. The mustard seed is no larger than a pinhead and, yet, it develops into a large bush. Embedded within those verses (vv. 31-32) is an appeal for two of the three theological virtues – faith and hope. The advent of the Kingdom of heaven, here on earth, began in a similar fashion. For three years, Jesus diligently spread the seeds of God's word and did so with a Galilean accent and He "never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled more than two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of those things that usually accompany greatness" (Anon., *A Solitary Life*). Yet, from that infinitesimally small seed, a large bush sprang up – so large, in fact, that the "Birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches." This coming together or gathering is an obtuse reference to the end-time gathering of all peoples and nations, streaming toward Jerusalem and the Kingdom. The contrast is not between small and large as much as the parable emphasizes the disproportion between the easily overlooked meager beginnings of the Kingdom and its eventual full-flowering, when ultimately completed at the end of time. Unlike the contemporary predilection to analyze everything by stages of its development, in the first-century, the focus was on contrasting a beginning with its end. Faith and hope more easily coalesce in that manner of understanding because the almost-invisible mustard seed is meant to be seen in light of the full manifestation of the Kingdom. From a seed being sown until the time when it has spread branches large enough to allow birds to roost in its branches there is obviously a significant delay from one to the other. Such a delay, though, is overshadowed by concentrating on the tiny seed and its full flowering. The third parable imitates the point already made in the previous two: a little yeast quickly compels the proofed flour to rise and those two elements are inseparable, one from the other. The doubling of the mixture is effected by the leaven that is left outside the dough or the glad tidings of salvation as the yeast in the dough of faith that causes it to rise. The disciples are not that good yeast, though they are responsible to impart to the dough the good yeast that they are not. Bad yeast must be guarded against or even thrown out! Bad yeast destroys the dough and, thus, constitutes the corruption that must be guarded against. Christ is the revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom, hidden from the learned and the clever. Faith in Jesus is essential to correct our human intuitions and to believe that Jesus alone knows the secrets of God the Father.

### National Eucharistic Revival - Phase Two: The Diocesan Year

A decade ago, in a column in the *Catholic New World*, the paper of the Archdiocese of Chicago, while speaking to a group of priests around that same time and, so, entirely outside of the current political debate, the late Francis Cardinal George said this, in regard to a quote widely attributed to him, "I was trying to express in overly dramatic fashion what the complete secularization of our society could bring, and I was responding to a question and I never wrote down what I said, but the words were captured on somebody's smart phone and have now gone viral on Wikipedia and elsewhere in the electronic communications world. I am (correctly) quoted as saying, 'I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square. His successor will pick up the shards of a ruined society and slowly help rebuild civilization, as the church has done so often in human history.'" The Cardinal went on to say that there is nothing "progressive" about sin, even when it is promoted as "enlightened." The world divorced from the God who created and redeemed it inevitably comes to a bad end.



# Symbolum: Understanding the Athanasian Creed

## Introduction

There are two well-known creeds—the Apostles’ Creed and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan—that are in liturgical use. Any approved creed is a clear and concise summary of the Catholic faith and the Church’s fundamental beliefs. A much lesser known creed is the Athanasian Creed. Creeds are described by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* this way, “Through the centuries many professions or symbols of faith have been articulated in response to the needs of the different eras: the creeds of the different apostolic and ancient Churches, e.g., the *Quicumque*, also called the Athanasian Creed; the professions of faith of certain Councils, such as Toledo, Lateran, Lyons, Trent; or the symbols of certain popes, e.g., the *Fides Damasi* or the *Credo of the People of God* of Paul VI” (CCC, n. 192). Liturgically, the Athanasian Creed, while a recognized creed, is seldom if ever used today, though at one time, it was required on Trinity Sunday. However, its use is maintained in the Rite of Exorcism. This creed has never been used in the Eastern (Orthodox) Church. St. Teresa of Avila recounts a meditation on this creed: “Once, when I was reciting the *Quicumque* vult, I was shown so clearly how it was possible for there to be One God alone and Three Persons, that it caused me both amazement and much comfort. It was of the greatest help in teaching me to know more of the greatness of God and of his marvels.” Members of the Prelature of the Holy Cross or Opus Dei, inspired by the example of Father Jose Maria Escriva, recite and meditate on the *Quicumque* on the third Sunday of each month. Contrary to what seems obvious, the attribution of authorship of the creed that bears the name of Saint Athanasius is not verifiable. In fact, while the true author remains unknown, the creed apparently originated in southern Gaul in the late 5th century. This places its writing a century and a half after Saint Athanasius died and on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea. The earliest documentation of the Athanasian Creed comes from the sermons of Saint Caesarius of Arles who preached the basics of Christianity using the creed as a foundation. The mid-twentieth century discovery of a lost work by Saint Vincent of Lérins bears a striking similarity to much of the language of the Athanasian Creed, which has led some scholars to conclude that the creed likely originated with him or one of his students.

## Brief Analysis of the Athanasian Creed

On its own terms, the Creed of Athanasius is a reaffirmation and clarification of all the early Church councils and the Nicene Creed which fought relent-

lessly to preserve the orthodox faith against heretics, principally Nestorius and Arius. Arius could easily be considered the godfather of all heretics with most heresies traceable back to him. He is known for denying Christ’s divinity in order to maintain the oneness of God over and against the threeness of God. Contrary to Scripture, Arius claimed that Christ was a creature of God and not God Himself. While Jesus shared in god-like qualities, the Father and the Son did not share the same “substance” to use creedal language. This ecumenical Creed, much longer than either of the other two, can be divided into two sections: the first twenty-four or so lines address the doctrine of the Trinity. It guides the worshiper through the key aspects of divinity, qualities or attributes of God, that are shared by all three persons of the Trinity — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit— and ascribes the divine attributes to each individually. Thus, each Person of the Trinity is declared to be uncreated, boundless, eternal, and omnipotent. By ascribing the divine attributes and divinity to each person of the Trinity, the Creed avoids the heresy known as subordinationism. The first half of the creed also stresses the unity of the three persons in the one Godhead, thus avoiding a theology of tritheism. The last half of the Athanasian Creed is squarely aimed at Nestorius who denied that the second person of the Trinity is true God and true man united in the person of Jesus. Nestorius wanted to keep Christ’s divinity as far away from His humanity as possible because of the scandal that divinity would have anything to do with humanity. Even today, it is widely held that the finite cannot contain the infinite. The Old Testament emphasis on the separation of clean and unclean, the sacred and the profane also presented a problem for Nestorius when it came to Jesus’ divine and human natures. But as the creed says, it is not that divinity was transformed into humanity, but that God took up humanity into Himself. Even Church history has a way of repeating itself or, as theologians have often said, every heresy was thought up in the first 300 years of Christendom. Since the early days of the church, we have simply been recycling, rebranding, and repeating the same old errors. Like any authorized creed, the Athanasian Creed continues to combat the false doctrine that remains rampant even in the twenty-first century, such as Modalism. The closing statement of the Athanasian Creed also speaks volumes as to why we ought to hold fast to this confession of faith: “This is the catholic faith; a person cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully.” Amen.