

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Fifth Sunday of Lent
March 26, 2023



Jesus saying, "I am the resurrection" differs from "I will raise your brother from the dead." The second statement turns an existential matter into a simple fact. Though facts may be true, often, they are simply inaccessible. The resurrection is more than fact, it is a person. As such, it may be known and existentially encountered. It is not the risen Lord of history, lost to us among the many facts that we proclaim and celebrate. It is the Christ, Who is the Resurrection, present in our midst, united with us, daily trampling down death by death, the Jesus Whom we know that we greet with joy.

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
Chapel Website: www.ourladyofprovidence.net

MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, March 25 *Vigil of the 5th Sunday of Lent*

4:00pm +Joan Malark

Sunday, March 26 *Fifth Sunday of Lent*

7:30am For the intentions of various members of the Slawek family

4:00pm +Mary Bradshaw by the SVHSN alumnae

Monday, March 27

12:00nn +Rosemary Perrin by the SVHSN alumnae

Tuesday, March 28

12:00nn For a surgical patient and birthday blessings

Wednesday, March 29

12:00nn +Stephen L'Esperance by his family

Thursday, March 30

12:00nn +Edwin "Ed" Lopes by his friends

Friday, March 31 *Friday of Lent — Day of Abstinence*

12:00nn +Siu Bee Go Osorio — 3rd anniversary

Saturday, April 1 *Vigil of Palm Sunday the Passion of the Lord*

4:00pm +Michael Bernardi — 11th anniversary — by his family

Sunday, April 2 *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord*

7:30am +Names enrolled in OLP Purgatorial Society All Souls Day 2022

4:00pm +Jose Martins Coelho

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 memorial¹ or an optional memorial².*

Toward a Better Understanding of The Gospels of Lent

In the early centuries of the Church, undergoing scrutiny entailed the examination of catechumens before those candidates were baptized. The number of scrutinies varied at different periods from three to seven. Now, those who have exited the catechumenate, since the First Sunday of Lent are known as the Elect, and who have now entered the period of Purification and Enlightenment with its "stronger emphasis on the spiritual and mystical life." Up until, now, the Elect have been taught the Apostles (or Nicene) Creed and the Lord's Prayer, examined thereupon, and exorcized prior to Easter. This is the third and final "Scrutiny" that the Church proposes for catechumens and candidates, which finds its focus in the Gospel of The Raising of Lazarus from the dead. Thus, by bringing Lazarus back to life, Jesus wants to raise each one of us from the dead and to give us a share in his divine life. This is precisely what the Lord wants to accomplish in every human soul through the grace of the sacraments. By His death on the Cross, Jesus will break the chains of sin and death and give to those who believe in Him the gift of eternal life. The Gospel begins by stating that "...a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany" and, due to that illness, his two sisters were so concerned about the possibility of his dying that they sent word to Jesus saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." Upon hearing of this life-threatening illness, Jesus proclaims, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Then, for some unknown reason, Jesus stays where he was for two days, so that by the time He arrives in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days. Some scholars have pointed out that the Jewish understanding of the bodily condition post-mortem was that the first three days of death were an intermediate state, in which the soul stayed close to the body. According to the popular belief, the life-giving spirit hovered around the body for three days after death, hoping to reenter the body. But after the third day, when the soul "sees that the color of its face has changed," the soul leaves the body for good (Gen. Rab. 100). Before finally setting out for Bethany, the disciples caution Jesus when He announces, "Let us go back to Judea" and remind Him that earlier He had almost been stoned to death by His enemies. Jesus cryptically replies by saying that there are only "twelve hours in a day" and highlights the difference between walking during the day versus doing so at night. The sun enlightens the path, whereas without sunlight it is easier to stumble. The parable or analogy serves to explain why those disciples have nothing to fear in going to Judea or eventually Jerusalem because Jesus, the Light of the World, was with them. Jesus would protect them from stumbling

Basil Cardinal Hume OSB — *Searching for God*

It is a twofold death which the Lord has conquered. For there are two kinds of death. There is death which is separation of body and soul—physical death. But there is also a death which is a separation between man and God. This is spiritual death. Spiritual death befalls a person who deliberately chooses to live as if God did not exist, who deliberately chooses to disobey God in a matter of grave importance. Now these two deaths are intimately connected. It was because of our first parents deliberately chose to disobey their Creator that they died spiritually; and the punishment for their rebellion was physical death. The tragedy is, hard though it is to understand, that we, their descendants are involved. You and I were born *dead*, separated from God, destined to be deprived of that vision which alone can satisfy our deepest aspirations. Our Lord overcame both kinds of death. How did he do this? By himself dying and rising again from the dead. He died in very truth. He died a physical death, enduring thereby the punishment for sin which is the lot of all mankind. But in him there was no separation from God as in spiritual death. This is a great mystery.

because, without Him, their stumbling was inevitable. Then, He announces, “Our friend Lazarus is asleep and I am going to awaken him.” The disciples fail to understand, so Jesus categorically states, “Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe.” It is noteworthy that of those two sisters, Martha is the one who greets Jesus, whereas “Mary sat at home.” Earlier, Mary was the one who sat at the feet of the Lord and anointed his feet with perfumed oil while Martha was busy and worried. Now, Martha seems to have pondered the Lord’s gentle rebuke to her. Martha, apparently perturbed because of Jesus’ overly-long delay, berates Him for the delay; yet, after expressing her frustration, she states, “I know [Lazarus] will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus, then, makes this solemn *ego eimi* (Gk. ἐγώ εἰμι) declaration, “I am the resurrection and the life.... Do you believe this?” Astoundingly, on Martha’s lips, there comes this profound declaration of faith, “Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.” Then, she called her sister Mary to join them and those who were in the house comforting Mary also went with her, too. Mary upbraids Jesus, as well, for His delay and she believes that is why Lazarus is dead. Likely as a reaction to Mary’s wailing and that of the other mourners, Jesus becomes perturbed (Gk. ἐνεβριμήσατο) which is the strong Greek word *enebrimēsato* meaning that Jesus became angry within himself. Then, they take Jesus to where Lazarus had been entombed and we are told that “Jesus wept.” While the Fourth Gospel portrays Jesus as most clearly divine among all the others, like here, Saint John also recounts Jesus in some of the most deeply human moments of His public life. Perturbed again, Jesus says, “Take away the stone.” Even during His earthly life, Jesus was never alone. As the Son of God, Jesus is always in union with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. He speaks to the God of Israel, “Father, I thank you for hearing me... I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me.” In a loud voice, He cries out, “Lazarus, come out!” Lazarus’ body had earlier been prepared for burial by wrapping it with spices in linen strips surrounding his whole body. Then, after he came out of the tomb Jesus tells them, “Untie him and let him go.” This passage about Jesus raising of Lazarus from the dead has been looked upon as a testimony of how the early Church looked upon how we are restored and made new at baptism as well as how we are brought back if we have destroyed the free gift of sanctifying grace by committing mortal sin after baptism. The confessional has been referred to as a tomb, where every dead Lazarus goes in repentant, confessing his sins and willing to make amends, and, by the power and grace of Jesus Christ, shows how we are restored to life by absolution.

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

How holy this feast in which Christ is our food.

The Raising of Lazarus is the greatest miracle of all and Jesus used that moment to define His saving mission as an eternal undertaking designed to free humanity from death. Ironically, this miracle is also what causes the Jewish authorities to plot His death. The very act of life-giving ends in death-dealing. By manifesting that He alone is “the resurrection and the life,” Jesus precipitates his own death. The same act that causes Mary, Martha, and many of the Jews who had come to console them causes others to have faith in Jesus. Yet, it causes the opposite reaction in the Jewish authorities. There’s no halfway point in John’s Gospel. You can walk in darkness or light, You are either blind or sighted, someone is alive or dead because no middle ground exists. The Lord’s Ascension makes Jesus the true sanctuary, a place of refuge, and the eternal High Priest. Through the *admirabile commercium* or the marvelous exchange between divinity and humanity, Christ can forever offer Himself and, in doing so, give Himself to us as sacred food. This bread of angels works in our souls as both food and medicine, feeding us with God’s life, healing our souls from the effects of venial sin and making us, day by day, into holier men and women, more perfectly conformed to Jesus the Christ, who is the resurrection and life.

The RCIA: the Period of Purification and Enlightenment & Cradle Catholics

The renewal of the baptismal promises once made for us is the goal of Lent. All Lenten activities should move toward that goal. For example, when we go to Confession during Lent, it has an added significance. Our Lenten Confessions should prepare us 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. In prayer, almsgiving or fasting, we should engage in those practices so as to put ourselves in a position where we need help, when no one but God, our heavenly Father, knows what we need. Then, when God provides for that lack, we will know that He did it, for He was the only One Who knew our need. Thus we will have a greater faith in God our Father.

Lent - Quadragesima - Purification & Enlightenment

Introduction

The raising of Lazarus is the last of the seven signs (or miracles) and, after which, the Sanhedrin is convened wherein the Lord's fate was decided. From that point on, Jesus avoided appearing in public (Jn 11:54). The last Passover was about to begin and Mary anointed Him in Bethany (Jn 11:55-12:11). Then, the Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem takes place and Jesus observed the Last Supper with His disciples (Ch. 13-17), followed by the account of Christ's passion and resurrection (Ch. 18-20). In the Fourth Gospel, not only the miracles but all Jesus' works in general considered to be signs. Those visible acts manifest the glory of God the Father and testify to the Lord's personal glorification. Cumulatively, they point toward His true identity and, as such, their goal is to enkindle faith. Thus, these are true theophanies (Gk. θεοφάνεια) or the manifestation of God who the divinity of God to mere mortals. Those earlier signs all point to the last and greatest of the signs, which is the Cross and the Resurrection. After dying on the Cross, one of the soldiers used a lance that penetrated Christ's side from which blood and water came forth. These are signs of the fruitfulness of His death and become life-giving torrents for those who, with the eyes of faith, see the Son of Man lifted up (or elevated), by doing so, they acknowledge their belief that Jesus is the Christ.

Analysis of the Text of the Gospel

The Raising of Lazarus is the longest narrative in all four of the Gospels. The reason for its length is because this passage serves as an introduction to the meaning of the Lord's passion. In the previous chapter, after Jesus declared that He and the Father were one, the crowd tried to stone Him, but He escaped. Then, He withdrew beyond the Jordan where John first baptized. Upon hearing about Lazarus, by setting out for Bethany which was near Jerusalem, Jesus returned to Judea. The hour (Gk. ώρα) of Jesus is a recurring statement in the Fourth Gospel. The term hour (or hōra) can refer to its literal meaning, such as a short period of chronological time. Yet, more often than not, it is a reference to Jesus' hour, which is a broader and more metaphorical reference to the climactic event of Jesus' death and resurrection, which Saint John also refers to as the Lord's glorification. Thus, in the passage, that hour has finally come for the Son of Man to be glorified. After the news reached Jesus that Lazarus was ill, though He delayed leaving, it was two days later when He told the disciples that they had to "go back to Judea" in order to awaken (Gk. ἐξπνίξω or to wake out of sleep) Lazarus who had died. Upon getting there, Martha meets Jesus and tells Him that though Jesus' presence would have prevented her brother's death that she knew that whatever He asked of the Father, God would grant it. Jesus assures Martha that Lazarus will come back to life. Twice, Jesus became perturbed (Gk. ἐμβριμόμαι; lit. indignant and moved to anger) such that He was deeply troubled (Gk. ἐτάραξεν; lit. too stirred up inside). When finally reaching where the body of Lazarus had been laid, the Lord's emotion again surges and we were told simply that "Jesus wept" (Gk. δακρύω; lit. shed tears silently). Some witnesses in the crowd note how much love Jesus had to have had for Lazarus, whereas others among them wondered why the Man from Nazareth who gave sight to the man born without the ability to see could not have prevented this

young man's death. Often commentators note how these verses attest to how human Jesus was and how close He was to Lazarus and his sisters; however, it is equally true that on several other occasions John the Evangelist notes that Jesus was troubled (Jn 12: 27; 13:21; 14:27). Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, in the account of the Lord's Passion, Saint John does not mention Christ's agony in the garden, though this passage incorporates God the Father's mastery over death and the glory that the resurrection would soon express on Easter morning. Subtle similarities exist between Lazarus' being raised from the dead and Easter, such as obstacles like how the stone was removed and Lazarus needing to be untied after coming out. Both instances contain burial linens, too. Not to be overlooked, though, is that Lazarus came back to life or was revived, but he would eventually die again. The Risen Christ came out of the tomb and lived forever – never to die again! This miracle or sign must be considered decisive in terms of the succession of signs mentioned and, moreover, Lazarus' return to the living must be situated with the ultimate hōra (or hour) when Jesus will be glorified, which reflects the Father's glory. Proclaimed one week before Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion and as the third of the catechumenal Gospels, the Raising of Lazarus is an event, a sign, but ultimately a revelation. The statement Jesus made to Martha that He is "the resurrection and the life...Do you believe this?" is not only addressed to her, but to all disciples in every age. In the previous two signs recorded by Saint John, a discourse on their meaning serves to explain the miracle that had just occurred. However, the raising of Lazarus does not follow that pattern. Instead, a series of declarations take place as the event-sign unfolds. Upon first hearing that Lazarus was ill, Jesus declares that His friend's illness would not end in death because it is destined to testify "that the Son of God may be glorified in it." Then, too, in an exchange with His disciples, before leaving for Bethany, Jesus uses an allegory comparing walking in the light of day which He contrasted with walking at night—seeing the light prevents stumbling whereas without that internal light tripping and falling are inevitable. After that exchange, while the disciples misunderstood what Jesus said by claiming that Lazarus was asleep and that He was going to awake His friend, Jesus categorically tells them what should have been obvious, saying, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe." This series of statements by Jesus and the reactions that they provoke arouse the listener's attention, seem quizzical and stimulate curiosity, a reaction that elicits reflection on those who pay attention to what happened. This all leads to the ultimate goal of the revelation, which is the exchange between Jesus and Martha that bestows supernatural meaning on the miraculous raising of her brother Lazarus: "Jesus told her, 'I am the resurrection and the life...Do you believe this?'" Since death entered the world through sin which is its cause, only God who is Lord of the living can deliver those lying in their graves from death if they had turned away from sin before dying. Baptism began the process of being reborn to life eternal and, yet, still haunted by death's dominion, the Spirit of Jesus keeps alive the hope of freedom from sin and will aid the living in order for them to engage in a successful struggle that as embodied spirits those washed clean and anointed will share in Christ's resurrection.