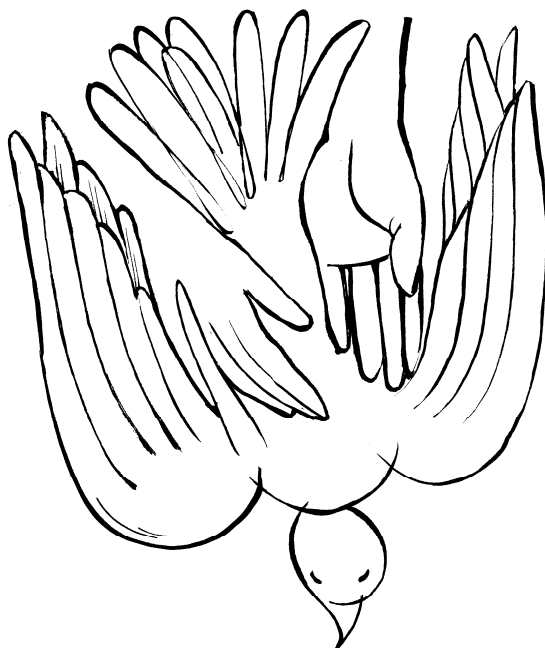


OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL

**SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER**

Sixth Sunday of Easter - Mother's Day

May 14, 2023



**Paraclete, normally associated with the Holy Spirit,
also refers to Jesus as Advocate, Comforter, and Counselor**

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, May 13 *Vigil of the 6th Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm +John & Mary Murray by their family

Sunday, May 14 *Sixth Sunday of Easter - Mother's Day*

7:30am Healing for Paul M & Mary A

4:00pm +Lois Sheeran, Marion White, Evelyn Foley by their families

Monday, May 15

12:00nn +Allen Cutty

Tuesday, May 16

12:00nn For the safety and well-being of Brittany Tee by a family friend

Wednesday, May 17

12:00nn Healing for Barbara & Bob Doves and family

Vigil of the Ascension of the Lord

4:00pm +Helen Thomas

Thursday, May 18 *Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension*

12:00nn +Raymond & Jacqueline Gemme

4:00pm For a recently-married couple

Friday, May 19

12:00nn Healing for Janice, Jack, and their family

Saturday, May 20 *Vigil of the 7th Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm +Sophia Groccia—22nd anniversary

Sunday, May 21 *Seventh Sunday of Easter*

7:30am + C. Marie Walsh

4:00pm +Joseph Walsh, Sr.

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 the Gospels of Eastertide

While the last conversation between Jesus and His disciples that is recorded in the Gospel according to Saint John is called the Farewell Discourse (Jn 14-17), yet those chapters are not strictly logical as most discourses usually are. Instead, within those chapters are units of various length that are brought together. Chapter fourteen is focused on departure and return; thus, Jesus tells them He is going to the Father, but that He will send "another Advocate... the Spirit of Truth." These two parallel declarations Jesus likely made separately, but are joined together, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments (v.14)... Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me" (v.21). Thus, that juxtaposition reveals the link between fidelity to the Lord's commands and the fact that such an act of the will flows from the love a disciple has for Jesus. This constitutes the decisive criterion, which identifies those who truly love the Lord. It is such a decisive statement that Jesus repeats it six times (Jn 14:15, 21, 23; Jn 15:10, 12, 17). Yet, what are those commands that He enjoins on us to keep? While Jesus often said "do this" or "don't do that," merely compiling those statements would not yield a list of prescriptive behaviors that would allow the obligations that the series of do's and don'ts entails. Since Jesus Himself declared that He is "the way and the truth and the life," Christ alone becomes the rule by which actions are judged. The Lord's aching desire is to lead those who love Him to the true good and that divine desire is born out of His love for us. Such a unique form of divine love, so unselfish and sacrificial, comes from the fact that Jesus willingly gave up His life to achieve it. Love like that is the only law existing in heaven, while also love being the strongest, most intimate bond on earth. The commands Christ illustrated by His way of life are the footprints that His earthly life left behind. Born out of mutual love of Master for disciple and disciple for Master, those bonds guide "the friends of Jesus" so that we may go with Him on the way to the Father who awaits the faithful disciples of His Son at the end of the road. Gone from our sight, though, Christ does not leave us alone or orphaned. He asked the Father to send "another Advocate (Gk. παράκλητος) to be with [us] always, the Spirit of truth (Gk. Πνεύμα τῆς ἀληθείας)..." Though invisible to human eyes, the Advocate (or Paraclete) becomes visible with the eyes of faith and, so recog-

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux—Sermon on the Song of Songs

You will ask me how I could know his presence. Because he is living and active; scarcely had he entered me than he awakened by slumbering soul. My heart was as hard as a rock and stricken; he shook it, softened it, and wounded it. He it is who uproots, builds up, plants, waters the dry earth, lightens the dark places, opens locked rooms, and heats what was cold; even better, he straightens the crooked paths and levels the rough places, so much and so well that my soul blesses the Lord and all my being sings praises to his holy name.

nizes that the Lord Jesus is in the Father and we in Christ and He in us. The Spirit as Advocate is made manifest in what occurs within a particular disciple, in the Church or the world. From the dawn of creation, God has continually revealed Himself through the created order and, so, His marvelous deeds (Lat. *magnalia Dei* or *mighty acts of God*) testify to the reality of God. These divine acts occur throughout human history and in the hearts of those who believe, while serving as the catalyst driving people and nature towards the ultimate fulfillment of the Father's plan of salvation. In other words, the principle of the Incarnation by which the Second Person of the Trinity took flesh did not just happen once; no, salvation itself continues to unfold as it takes flesh. The prophets of Israel, up to and including John the Baptist, never tired of declaring that principle to be true, while urging God's Chosen People to allow themselves to be enveloped into the dynamic of salvation. Such a surrender to providence was essential in order for the Israelites to be ready to welcome the Messiah who would come and fulfill what had long ago been prophesied. The birth of the Savior and the consequent life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ fulfilled the hopes and longings that the Spirit had instilled in the people. With two natures—human and divine—though one Person, the Son of God made man not only reconciled fallen humanity with the Father, yet in the birth and death of the Messiah, salvation history reached its pinnacle. From then until now, having been baptized into Christ, an entirely redeemed humanity is born. Human history is refashioned by the Christ-event and salvation has been attained once-for-all (Gk. ἐφάπαξ). Now and until the end of human history, the faithful await the Lord's return in glory or the Parousia. At some unknown point in the future, the Son of Man will come in glory and, then, the dead will be raised and the sheep will be separated from the goats – the sheep will “inherit the kingdom prepared for [them] from the foundation of the world,” whereas the goats “will go off to eternal punishment” (Mt 25:34, 46). In acknowledging Jesus as Lord and God, those baptized into His death and resurrection, pass over from death to life with Christ and then, receive the fullness of the Spirit when their new life in Christ is confirmed or sealed with the Advocate or Paraclete which completes what was begun in baptism. Obeying the commands and demands that Christ taught and illustrated by His life, modern-day disciples testify to the transforming power of the Spirit by living a life of charity and forgiveness. In every celebration of the Eucharist, wherein past, present and future come together, the new life begun in baptism and sealed in Confirmation testifies to the fact that Christ remains on earth, nourishing those who believe in this sure and certain hope: Christ once came, He comes in heavenly food, and He will come again!

Easter to Pentecost—Fifty Days Yet One Great Feast

In the early decades of the Church, there was likely only one great feast, known as Easter or Pascha. Eventually, the constitutive elements of that great mystery of faith became individual liturgical celebrations. It remains crucial to be aware of the interrelationships of those feasts, not simply as isolated events in the life of Christ. Easter to Pentecost is one great feast and an underappreciated element of those fifty days is the Lord's Ascension. The day that saw Christ ascend ought to be a great day of rejoicing. Coming from heaven and taking flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, that divine condescension was the ultimate element in the world's salvation whereas the Risen Christ's ascent back to heaven, on the fortieth day after His Resurrection, marks His exaltation. By ascending back to heaven, not only marks Christ's return, but now His humanity is glorified. Ascension is the eternal solidifying of the Incarnation—becoming flesh, God entered into our humanity and by rising back to heaven, Christ raised humanity up to His divinity. Occurring between Easter and Pentecost, Ascension is a transitional feast. In one sense, it is the necessary complement or completion of resurrection. Christ's transition to the higher life of glory, begun in rising, was perfected in the ascension. From another perspective, the Lord's ascending back to glory is the prerequisite to Pentecost. This feast marks the crowning act of Jesus' work. Christ went to heaven to be crowned with honor; hence, when He had successfully completed the work which His Father had given Him, God highly exalted Him, giving Him a name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9). Christ ascended and exalted, then, is the priestly Advocate before the Father. Moreover, after being seated at the Father's right hand, Christ is the Sender of the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit as a pledge, or earnest. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is said to be an "earnest (Gk. ἀρραβών)—that is, a pledge or deposit—on the ultimate fulfillment of a magnificent promise from God that the full amount will be paid later. Part of the work of the Spirit as *arrabón* or *earnest* is to fashion believers into partakers of Christ and enable them to live for Him. By the Spirit's power, we learn to deny ourselves, hate sin and flee from it, and to persevere. If the guiding presence of God, through the Holy Spirit, is merely seen as an earnest payment, then, the fulfillment must be glorious beyond comprehension.

FIFTY DAYS FROM EASTER TO PENTECOST

Introduction

In the Gospels, the term “Son of Man” is used numerous times. What does “Son of Man” mean? The Greek expression *ho huios tou anthropou* can mean either the *son of man or the man’s son*. After identifying Himself as such, Jesus then began to teach them about his approaching arrest, Passion, death, and Resurrection, while using the title of the Son of Man (Mk 8:31). This title was one that was frequently used by Jesus about Himself. It appears about eighty times in the New Testament, especially as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew where thirty or more of those instances are found. The term Son of Man is often used in conjunction with the prediction of the Lord’s Passion. At first glance, the expression appears to highlight Jesus’ human nature, just as Son of God emphasizes His divinity. However, the accurate meaning of that self-description is more complicated. Son of Man brings together the Lord’s identity as Messiah and as someone destined to suffer for others, drawing from the Old Testament background of that term. The expression would have been recognized by many in the crowds following Jesus, since it is found dozens of times in the Old Testament, especially the Books of Ezekiel and Daniel. The Book of Ezekiel is an important source where the prophet uses ‘son of man’ nearly a hundred times as a cryptic, indirect reference to Ezekiel and as a means of God addressing the prophet (Ezek 2:1). Its use in either testament is not always consistent, yet, it does indicate a role in redemption. On one hand, it emphasizes the humanity of Jesus, yet it also refers to the prophet Daniel’s vision of final judgment, “...I saw coming with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man. When he reached the Ancient of Days and was presented before him, he received dominion, splendor, and kingship” (Dan 7:13-14). The reference to “One like a son of man” serves to indicate a class of people to which the speaker belongs. Elsewhere, those words are a more generic reference to the triumph of the people of Israel over their enemies. This mysterious Son of Man figure is also royal, a king who suffers for the sake of the people and who is then vindicated by God at the end of time and history, a dramatic event described by Jesus (Mt. 25:31-34) and John the Revelator (Rev. 1:12-18). Earlier scholars thought that on some occasions, when Jesus used that title, it was not self-referential but aimed at an apocalyptic figure or an angel, who would appear at the end of time and judge all people, in order to complete salvation. At other times, the term Son of Man appears to relate to Jesus’ self-designation and His understanding of being the Messiah (though sometimes in a hidden or “secret” way). In the Gospel of John, a bystander asks Jesus this very question, “... how can you say the Son of Man must be lifted up?

Who is this Son of Man?” (Jn 12:34). Jesus, however, does not give a clear answer; instead, He refers to Himself differently in the next verse as the light. In Matthew 16, however, He is more explicit. There, He asks His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” Peter responds, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16) and, then, Jesus affirms Peter’s response as divine in its origin. Paradoxically, the Son of Man refers to both the lowliness of humanity and the dazzling power of the Messiah. Then, when used by Jesus, that descriptive statement signifies a divine initiative with its focus on fallen human nature, which God the Father seeks to rehabilitate for good through a divine agent (Jesus) who must suffer and die. So, reference to the Son of Man incorporates several elements: a recognition of human weakness, along with the divine aim to rehabilitate fallen human nature, coupled with a future component—the Son’s anticipated return to judge humanity at the end of time or the Parousia (Gk. *παρουσία*). As the Son of Man, Jesus prefigures His mission by becoming the epitome of God’s heavenly initiative to rescue humanity from its fallen state and to transform human nature by grace for the good of all.

Doing the Good in Light of the Son of Man

Recreating human beings requires they become capable of appreciating what is good and to pursue doing the good in order to achieve it. The good is first and foremost the Supreme Good (Lat. *sumum bonum*) or God Himself, especially because of His generosity and the on-going initiative of salvation which consists primarily in advancing the common good. This common form of the good incorporates openness to others and mankind’s true nature and destiny. Hence pursuit of the good or, better yet, pursuing the common good surpasses selfishness, egoism, and foregoes the temptation to sacrifice the good of others in order to achieve personal advancement. In His mission to save, Jesus represents Himself on earth as the Son of Man with the authority to forgive sins and, hence, identifies Himself with human weakness. Then, in His mission to save, Jesus will die and be raised. Now, having accomplished His mission to save and, subsequently, being glorified as Lord, Christ will return as Judge at the end of time, though that return is preceded by His suffering, which is linked with His human nature. Then, His exaltation and return as Lord of the living and the dead is ascribed to His divine nature. The Lord’s mission is a combination of both—the first leads to the second and His mission is sacrificial love or unselfish service. The title Son of Man denotes three things: suffering and glorification, return at the end of time and judgment all incorporated into that one messianic title.