

# **OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL**

**SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL  
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER**

**Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
November 17, 2024**



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**One like a son of man is presented before God  
and given an everlasting kingdom**

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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 November 16 *Vigil of the 33rd Sunday of the Liturgical Year*

4:00pm +Deceased members of the Brennan family

Sunday, November 17 *Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am For the names enrolled in the OLP Purgatorial Society 2024

4:00pm +John Sheeran—36th anniversary

Monday, November 18 *Dedication of the Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul—St Rose Philippine Duchesne*

12:00nn For Catholic physicians to practice medicine in accord with human dignity

Tuesday, November 19

12:00nn +Faye Cozzolino

Wednesday, November 20

12:00nn In gratitude to God for a favor requested and granted

Thursday, November 21 *The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*<sup>1</sup>

12:00nn For the living & deceased members of the Sisters of the Presentation

Friday, November 22 *Saint Cecilia, virgin & martyr*<sup>1</sup>

12:00nn +Repose of the soul of Most Rev. George Rueger

Saturday, November 23 *Vigil of the Solemnity of Christ the King*

4:00pm +Mary O'Malley — 10th anniversary

Sunday, November 24 *Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe*

7:30am For the conversion of a beloved sister

4:00pm +Deceased members of the McCorry family

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 the Gospels during Ordinary Time

In several prophetic passages from Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah and Malachi, what is known as the coming *Day of the Lord* is announced and that fateful day is comparable with the Parousia (Gk. Παρουσία). The Hebrew expression is *Yom Adonai*. It is used to refer to temporal events such as the capture of a city or the invasion of a foreign army, though it can also refer to the end of the world or the day of Yahweh's great wrath. The expression points to an indeterminate date in the future when God will decisively intervene in the course of human history and salvation. When that fateful day comes, extraordinary events will take place, accompanied by natural catastrophes. At the end of that terrifying period, the dawn of salvation will rise and, so, the Yom Adonai must be awaited with trust. When understood as an apocalypse (Gk. ἀποκάλυψις), a word that literally means *unveiling* or *revelation*, this Day of the Lord is destined to be the end or the fulfillment of God's plan for the world's salvation. Whether the last book of the New Testament is called the Book of Revelation or the Apocalypse, it is set amid a series of crises wherein the sacred author urges its readers to remain steadfast in the face of persecution. Jesus was obviously aware of these prophetic announcements concerning the Day of the Lord, yet He was particularly aware of the proclamation of the coming Son of Man found in Daniel (Dan 7:13-14). Earlier in that same Old Testament chapter, the author recalls a vision given to Daniel in which four beasts oppress Israel until judged by God. Verses 13-14 describe how the Ancient of Days gives dominion over the earth to "one like the Son of Man." Jesus appropriates this mysterious title for Himself. All three of the Synoptic Gospels (Mt, Mk, Lk) record a discourse on the end times just prior to the account of Christ's passion. This week's Gospel (Mk 13:24-32) involves the appearance of the Son of Man toward the conclusion of a troubling period. The opening verses are framed in classic apocalyptic language. Instead of catastrophizing, this description should be juxtaposed with the story of creation. On the first day of creation, God created light and did so by separating it from the darkness; then, on the fourth day, He made the sun, moon, and stars whose waxing and waning, rising and setting marks time and its passage. On the Day of the Lord, while those traditional points of denoting regularity will no longer be trustworthy, such a development does not imply utter destruction

Saint John Henry Cardinal Newman — Sermon 17

*I observe....that though Christians might be mistaken in what they took to be signs of Christ's coming, yet they were not wrong in their state of mind, they were not mistaken in look out, and that for Christ.*

*Whether credulous or not, they only acted as one acts toward some person beloved, or revered, or admired on earth...I had rather be he, who, from love of Christ and want of science, thinks some strange sight in the sky, comet or meteor, to be the sign of his coming, than the man, who from more knowledge and from lack of love, laughs at the mistake.*

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or a return to the chaos before God created the natural order. No, those graphic portents can be seen as a prelude to the coming of the Son of Man who will come on “the clouds with great power and glory...” This glorious return would be almost a farce if all that the Lord returned to claim was destined to be in ruins and the world desolate. Instead, these signs foretell the dawn of a new creation where such natural phenomena will grow dim and pale when confronted with the grandeur and splendor of Christ returning in glory. Unlike other accounts, Saint Mark focuses his attention not on the prior tribulation that ushers in the end, but on the light-filled angelic glory which corresponds with the goal of the Son of Man’s return and the gathering to Himself of the elect of every nation. This declaration of impending glory constitutes the fulfillment of what was first announced as good news or gospel. The prophesied tribulation had already been experienced and rampant persecution marked the early Christian period – culminating in Christian expulsion from Rome in the middle of the first century of the Christian era. A decade or so later, following the fire that destroyed Rome in July 68 AD, Nero unleashed a fiercer persecution, accusing the Christians of setting the fire. Saint Peter was crucified and Saint Paul beheaded around that time. The situation in Jerusalem itself was bleak and imperial toleration of Judaism was beginning to unravel. Pessimism and foreboding, then, were rampant. Into that toxic atmosphere, the four evangelists injected hope and promise, be stout-hearted, wait for the Lord, because as the Son of Man, Jesus the Christ will return and inaugurate a “new heaven and a new earth.” The nagging question, though, refuses to go away – when will all this happen and what sign will be given that the end is about to begin? Satisfying human curiosity about when or how this will happen—whether the day or the hour—is unimportant. The crucial matter is how to act now when confronted with the inevitable prospect that the Son of Man will return at an unknown time. What is known as the Parable of the [Budding] Fig Tree is germane – when the buds appear you realize summer is at hand; so, false prophets, natural calamities, wars and persecutions are harbingers of the coming of the Son of Man. Yet, properly interpreting those signs is neither easy nor obvious. The first generation of Christians wrongly concluded that the Lord’s return would take place within their lifetime. By scrutinizing those signs pointing toward the fulfillment of salvation history you have the hallmark of the kind of faith that is awake and watchful. The Son of Man stands outside the door, knocking on our hearts to gain entrance. Cardinal Newman wrote, “It is better to be wrong in our watching, than not to watch at all” (*Parochial Sermons*, vi. Sermon xvii). Now, seated at the Father’s right hand, Christ the High Priest waits for all things on earth to reach their inevitable conclusion, then and only then, will the time be ripe for Him to come again. When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels and saints with Him, He will sit upon His glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before Him. And He will separate them one from the other, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Mt 25:31-32).

**Pilgrimage: End of the Beginning or Beginning of the End**

The English term *pilgrim* originally comes from the Latin word *peregrinus* (*per*=through + *ager*=field, country, land), which means a foreigner, a stranger, someone on a journey, or a temporary resident. The theme of pilgrimage is woven into the Bible and is associated with the Hebrew phrase *ben-’ādhām*, or the Son of Man. In ancient literature, there are two senses in which the title Son of Man is employed: in a generic sense with the meaning *human being* and in a more formal sense, employed largely in later Jewish literature, referring to the one who is to come on the clouds of heaven to deliver the righteous from their oppressors, and to judge the inhabitants of the earth. In the Old Testament, it is almost without exception that the phrase represents the less formal of those two meanings. To most people inclined, in the early twenty-first century, to think terms, such as the notion of pilgrimage easily becomes a metaphor for the Christian life that seems natural and almost perfect — to the extent that it is often assumed to have been the metaphor for such a life from the beginning of the Church. Such is not the case. Although the image of pilgrimage — *peregrinatio* — can be found occasionally in early Church Fathers, it did not receive a full theological exposition until Augustine’s *City of God* in the early fifth century. There, *peregrinatio* is linked directly to the theme of the two cities: The City of Man, founded on self-love, is where pride, ambition, greed, and expediency reign supreme. In contrast, the City of God is founded on selflessness and love of God, and in it humility, sacrifice, and obedience are paramount-truly sacrificial!

## Eschatology - What is hell like?

Death, judgment, heaven and hell are the Four Last Things (Lat. *quattuor novissima*). When taken together, each of them is both awe-inspiring and fear-inducing, yet countless saints testify to the profound spiritual benefit of contemplating the awesome mysteries that await us in the afterlife. The fourth and last in that series deals with hell. According to Pew research, 62% of American Christians believe in hell and, ironically, it is one of those four last things that such a large percentage of Christians actually agree upon. However, that being said, beliefs about hell differ by a great degree: from hell being a place of eternal torment to it being the loneliness of eternal separation from God. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines hell as "the state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed..." (CCC, n.1033). Furthermore, the Catechism adds, "The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity" (CCC, n. 1035).

### Biblical Words Describing Hell

The words translated as hell, whether the Hebrew word sheol or the Greek words Hades or Tartarus, as well as Gehenna, another Greek word of Hebrew original, have various meanings and usages in biblical and extra-biblical sources. *Sheol* generally represents "the place of the dead" in the Old Testament. Both the righteous and the unrighteous go there. In ancient Hebrew thought, this "place of the dead" was divided into two sections: a place of suffering and a holding place for the righteous. The word *Hades* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew sheol, whereas the poor man, Lazarus, goes to paradise. Yet, both Lazarus and the rich man are in the same "place of the dead," but separated by a "great chasm" (Lk 16:26). The place of the righteous is called "*the bosom of Abraham*," while the place of torment is called "*Hades*." The word *Gehenna* is always used for eternal hell, in that word's dogmatic sense. Less known than the other terms, *Tartarus* (2 Peter 2:4) is another word for hell, in Catholic dogma. It is important to note that both the joy of heaven and the pains of hell are indescribable on this side of eternity. In regard to both heaven and hell, the Church warns against seeing heaven as a "worldly" sort of extension of life on earth and the same holds true with envisioning hell. The two punishments of the afterlife, hell or purgatory, must not be conceived of as a

kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. "Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the 'eternal punishment of sin...'" (CCC, n.1472). Hell is absolute emptiness and isolation beyond anything anyone could fathom. The pains of hell are quite real, quite literal, and consist of both the pain of loss and the pain of sense—i.e., they involve the body after the resurrection of the body. They "follow from the very nature of sin," or they arise from the inside out, not from the outside in. Modern people tend to use the word hell to refer to the place where the damned will suffer for all time. But that's not quite right. In fact, as the *Catechism* spells out, hell (Gk. Hades; Heb. Sheol), although a description of where the souls judged unrighteous dwell now, it is not where they will spend eternity. After all, the righteous dead used to dwell in Hades, too, before Jesus freed them (CCC, n. 633). So hell, when precisely understood, is just the place of the dead, once where both the righteous and unrighteous, although now only the unrighteous happen to dwell there.

### Hell as the Lake of Fire

Where, ultimately, will the unrighteous end up? That would be Gehenna or the "lake (or pool) of fire" (CCC, n. 1034)—not the same as Hades, though both places, Hades and Gehenna, are described nowadays with the perhaps imprecise term hell. Scripture sums it up this way that, in the end, hell (or Hades, depending on your translation) is for those who will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). A few verses earlier, you would read, "The Devil who had led them astray was thrown into the pool of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev 20:10) and "those whose names are not written in the book of life will also spend eternity in the lake of fire." Are the "flames of fire" to be taken physically, as we on earth know fire? It is likely that the inspired authors used the most painful things imaginable to describe what is ultimately indescribable — the absence of God and the presence of eternal torment, self-exclusion from God and eternal in its nature.

Excerpted from [www.catholic.com](http://www.catholic.com). Michael Lofton "Get Ready for an Empty Hell" July 28 2022.