

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL

**SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER**

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 1, 2023



Sinners and the righteous, in different ways, had rejected God's service; yet tax collectors and prostitutes after receiving from John the baptism of repentance changed; though the Pharisees who made a show of righteousness and boasted that they did the law of God, despising John's baptism, did not follow his dictates.

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

Chapel Website: www.ourladyofprovidence.net

MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, September 30 *Vigil of the 26th Sunday of the Liturgical Year*

4:00pm +Lucille Cunic on her anniversary by the family

Sunday, October 1 *Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Respect Life Sunday*

7:30am For a special intention requested by CB

4:00pm +Dr. Anne Brown by the alumnae of former SVH School of Nursing

Monday, October 2 Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels ¹

12:00nn For success in nursing entrance exams

Tuesday, October 3

12:00nn For Sandy, Ed, & John and their families

Wednesday, October 4 *Saint Francis of Assisi, holy man* ¹

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

Thursday, October 5 *Ss. Faustina Kowalska, virgin (USA) & Bl. Francis Xavier Seelos, priest* ²

12:00nn Asking God for Kathy's health

Friday, October 6 *Ss. Bruno, priest & Bl. Marie Rose Durocher, virgin* ² — *First Friday Devotion*

12:00nn Seeking divine help for Eleanor McCullen

Saturday, October 7 *Vigil of the 27th Sunday of the Liturgical Year*

4:00pm +Henry & Helen Alexander and +Robert Jarvis — 8th anniversary

Sunday, October 8 *Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am +Mary McAuliffe Crimmins by the alumnae of former SVH School of Nursing

4:00pm For God's blessings upon a beloved son

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 This Sunday's Gospel

This week's Gospel, the Parable of the Willing and Unwilling Sons, begins with the father unequivocally asking them both to do the same thing, namely to "go out and work in the vineyard today." The first asked initially refuses but then changes his mind and does go to work. The other son immediately agrees, yet never does. Jesus asks "the chief priests and elders of the people" a question with an obvious answer, "Which of the two did his father's will?" It goes without saying that it was the first son who did the father's will. This initial exchange makes what Jesus said afterwards even more poignant, when He speaks about tax collectors, prostitutes and John the Baptist. The expression "they say but don't do" is a charge often leveled as a reproach to people of faith. There will always be a gap between words and deeds or never fully putting into practice what we profess to believe. The Lord's behavior confronts us, though, because God alone perfectly reconciled words and deeds. God is both reliable and constant, so, those attributes should be reflected in all who profess to believe in that divine reliability. Saint Paul did just that when he said, "...the Son of God, Jesus Christ...was not 'yes' or 'no,' but 'yes' has been in him" (2 Cor 1:19). This is not an enjoinder to withdraw from the public square nor to become paralyzed by the multiple times we fall short of acting in consort with our beliefs; no, the Lord is saying don't concentrate on the past because the work required in the vineyard needs to be taken care of now—our actions will display the repentance necessary. The first part of the parable is straightforward, though Jesus was not focused on the obvious. So, He invokes the solemn formula, "Amen, I say to you..." followed by this declaration "...tax collectors (or publicans) and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you." The pairing of those two categories requires an understanding of tax collecting in the first-century Roman Empire. Then, the collecting of taxes could be described as a form of prostitution because those collecting taxes sold themselves out to the imperial system. Having promised a certain amount of taxes to the Roman procurator, they could take more than that from their fellow-Jews in order to enrich themselves. Despite those men being notorious sinners, Jesus declares that such sinners will precede the self-righteous and gain admittance into the kingdom of God before those who prided themselves on being pure. John the Baptist had upbraided the Pharisees and Sadducees when they came out from Jerusalem seeking John's baptism of repentance. After calling those holy men a "brood of vipers," the Baptist chided them to produce good fruit as an indication of metanoia (Gk. μετάνοια) or that they were truly repentant (Mt 3:7-9). Honest deeds done out of a faith

Fr. Yves de Montcheuil, SJ - *Le Royaume et ses exigences*

Life in the kingdom does not consist of in an inscription. Entrance into the kingdom requires a living and continual will, a constant and present acceptance of God's will for us. It is a *yes* constantly repeated. On the contrary, what is constant with us is our unfaithfulness. In particular, there is a way of escaping God's will while believing one is doing it. This is a frequent defect among intellectuals. It consists in confusing the reality of a thing with the plan, the thought, the idea of this thing. It is possible to think very profoundly of something, to taste this thing and make much of it in one's mind, and yet live in a wholly different manner. A certain deformation of our intellectual attitude prevents us from measuring the gap. However, there is no definitive settling in the kingdom of God. If we do not seek to enter it at every instant, we leave it without even noticing we have done so.

conviction are better than mere lip service. Noble external religious acts done without inner transformation are not spiritually fruitful unless those pious actions accomplish what they signify. The Baptist's preaching had prepared the hearts and minds of tax collectors and prostitutes to see that to be true in what Jesus did and said and, so, the Lord was the fulfillment of what John had foretold. The warning, enshrined in this passage, is to heed what the Pharisees and Sadducees failed to do – that when seeing sinners unexpectedly turn away from sin and toward the Lord, such a divine sign should serve as a graphic reminder for the faithful to repent and believe anew. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “The intention is a movement of the will toward the end: it is concerned with the goal of the activity. It aims at the good anticipated from the action undertaken” (CCC, n. 1752). A proverb declares that intention is as good as action, but that's not entirely true and it would only be true if the intention were thwarted by an obstacle independent of the agent's will. Actions do, however, often illustrate the seriousness of someone's intention. Simply the intention to convert does not, in and of itself, constitute conversion. Merely stating intentions and, then, stopping there without putting what was intended into practice closes off entry into the kingdom for those whose intentions were never actualized. Even non-believers, who act unknowingly in conjunction with the Lord's demands and unwittingly put into practice what is sacredly believed, like the tax collectors and prostitutes, they will precede the righteous into glory. Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21). The Lord God did not simply promise salvation, but the Father accomplished it by sending His Son to earth. Jesus totally emptied Himself of any divine prerogatives and willingly died on the cross, in accord with the Father's will. Obedient faith, divine faith made manifest in action, is the sure and certain way to salvation. Human reason pales in any attempt to understand the saving nature of obedient faith and, so, gazing on the Crucifix and remaining in communion with Christ through the Eucharist as the perpetual memorial of His passion, death, and resurrection is the way to heaven.

National Eucharistic Revival - Phase Two: The Diocesan Year



At the time of Jesus, there was the sacrifice of the lambs in the Temple, but also the Passover (pasch) meal. The Passover Seder or “order” featured in the meal four cups of wine with an optional Fifth Cup (the Elijah cup). Within the Passover meal, there were two regulations that had to be followed – first, before the lamb was to be eaten, several hours of fasting were required, beginning around 3:00pm. The second regulation was that the drinking of the four cups of wine was deemed mandatory: (1) the Cup of Sanctification (Kiddish); (2) the Cup of Proclamation (Haggadah); (3) the Cup of Blessing (Berakah); and (4) the Cup of Praise (Hallel). The fourth cup, in relation to Jesus' death on the cross, is also known as the Cup of Consummation. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we read that Jesus drinks the final cup on the way to the cross. Yet when you look at the final moments of the life of Christ on Calvary, you notice that He does drink of “the fruit of the vine.” Earlier in the Seder, some of the other Hallel psalms (Pss 113-114) were used and as the Seder comes to an end, the remainder of the Hallel Psalms (115-118) were sung. These are collectively known as the Great Hallel. It is important to appreciate the significance of these psalms since Jesus would sing them each year for Passover. The Hallel Psalms constitute an inspiration or spiritual description for the one offering the “sacrifice of thanksgiving” (Psalm 116). Then, once Psalm 118 was sung, the fourth cup was usually drunk. Given the fact that Jesus and the Apostles, after the third cup, “sang a hymn” more than likely a Hallel Psalm and then “went out,” nothing was drank. All of them made their way to the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:36-46). There, Jesus prays three times for the cup that He must drink. The cup (or chalice in some translations) is the fourth cup, the final cup of the Passover meal. Between the giving of His Body at the Last Supper as the sacrifice and one of the cups as His own blood, Jesus classifies His body as the New Passover. Once the meal is over, His blood will be poured out, and Jesus will give over His spirit. He does not finish the Passover meal in the Upper Room because it will be finished with His death on the cross. The most overt explanation of this comes from the Gospel of John (Jn 19:28), which states that Jesus requests a drink and says, “I thirst.” After drinking of the vinegar given to Him, two verses later (Jn 19:30), Jesus says, “It is finished” (Gk. Τετέλεσται). When the Lord spoke these words, He was not referring to His life or His mission, but He was likely referencing the conclusion to the meal started at the Last Supper. Here on the cross, Jesus finishes the Passover meal, and drinks the fourth cup. (excerpted from Brant Pitre. *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*).

The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts Is the House of Israel

Introduction - Israel as the Vineyard

What we now identify as the Old Testament, in the time of Jesus, you could say that those sacred writings were the equivalent of the Bible for Him, His disciples, and even the early Church. The inspired writings that became the New Testament were first transmitted orally and, then, written down over the course of the first century. As a result, the language and imagery of the Old Testament could be considered as the lens through which early Christians viewed the world. Since it was so important and familiar to them, the New Testament authors frequently quoted from and alluded to the Jewish Scriptures.

Throughout the biblical period the vineyard was part of everyday life for many in Israel. So it should not be surprising that the vineyard became a biblical symbol for the people of God. The most famous use of the vineyard symbolism in the Old Testament appears in chapter five of Isaiah (Is 5:1-7): "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel." In his "song" of the vineyard, Isaiah recalls the careful and loving treatment that the owner (God) gave to that vineyard (Israel). Yet the vineyard yielded only wild grapes (sin and rebellion). Out of frustration, the owner threatens to destroy the vineyard (by means of the Assyrian army) and make it into a ruin. The vineyard image also appears in Psalm 80 (Ps 80:9-20). The psalmist describes Israel's origin as God's people in terms of a vine ("you brought a vine out of Egypt"), comments on the sorry state of God's vine and asks God once more to care for and protect his beloved vine. The psalmist very likely had in mind Judah's experience of defeat and exile in the early sixth century B.C. Even though Isaiah's warning had been fulfilled, as the vine, Israel remained the object of God's care. This psalm recalls the exodus and conquest narratives by portraying the people of God as a vine brought out from Egypt and planted in the land of Israel. It is described as growing and completely filling the land. Then, the psalmist laments, "Why have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?" (v. 13) The psalmist's concern for the fruit develops into an overriding concern for the entire vine: "Those who would burn or cut it down—may they perish at your rebuke" (v. 17). In one of the Gospels (Mt 21:33-46) you will discover that Jesus is drawing on the messianic language in Psalm 80 to convey His true identity as Son of God. Psalm 80:15-16 states, "Visit this vine, the stock your right hand has planted, and the son whom you made strong for yourself. Those who would burn or cut it down—may they perish at your rebuke. May your hand be with the man on your right, with the son of man whom you made strong for yourself." The vine is identified with the *son*, the *man on your right*, and the *son of man*. In other words, it is a prayer for the Davidic king who will bring salvation to Israel. The vine metaphor is also used throughout chapters 15-19 in the Book of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 17, the vine represents two different kings of Judah. For example, the chapter's seventh verse (Ez 17:7) says, "Then another great eagle appeared, with wide wingspan, rich in plum-

age, And see! This vine bent its roots to him, sent out branches for him to water." Later in the chapter, this is explained as a reference to when the king of the Babylonian empire removed Jehoiachin as king of Judah and replaced him with his uncle Zedekiah. When he did this, he was "binding [Zedekiah] under oath, to be a humble kingdom, without high aspirations" (vv. 13-14). During Zedekiah's reign, the king of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and exiled the people so that he was the last king of Judah.

Remain in Jesus as the True Vine

Then, in the hours after the start of Passover, when Jesus and His disciples had shared their evening meal and Judas had gone off in betrayal, the Lord was comforting the disciples with many revelations about the mysterious things that were to come. Jesus tells them He is going to prepare a place for them and that soon they will receive the Holy Spirit as their Advocate. Then, to reinforce His ultimate point that He is indeed the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6). Jesus uses a metaphor that would have been crystal-clear to any Israelite saying, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener," He tells the disciples in John 15:1. As if His meaning was not already understood, Jesus elaborates further, noting that the disciples are His branches and that as long as they remain in Him, nourished and sustained, they will bear fruit and thrive. But, Jesus warns, "Apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (Jn 15:5b-7). A vine, as defined by the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, is a plant whose stem requires support and which climbs by tendrils or twining or creeps along the ground. A grapevine, for example, has a main vine that sends nutrients from the root of the plant to the branches, which then thrive and bear fruit. Vines were used throughout the Old Testament as a symbol of Israel, an old and holy image. As the psalmist writes, "You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land" (Psalm 80:8-9). Yet, along the way, the vine grew wild, off-path; it stopped bearing good fruit, withered, and was consumed by fire (Jer 2:21, Ez 19:10-14, Is 5:1-7). On most occasions, the vine was used as an illustration of how Israel had strayed from the Lord. But when Jesus said He was the "true vine" and that the disciples were to remain in Him, this was an illustration of how the disciples and anyone else who followed Him could get back on track. By nourishing themselves only through Jesus, they were getting their strength from the true source of life, God Himself, Word-made flesh and born a man. They could bear fruit and live and thrive—indeed, have eternal life and be saved—through their connection with Jesus. As Jesus says in John 15:4, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."