

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 22, 2023



What will be "the things which are God's?" Such things as are like Caesar's denarius—that is to say, His image and similitude. That, therefore, which he commands to be "rendered unto God," the Creator, is man, who has been stamped with His image, likeness, name, and substance.

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

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MASS INTENTIONS — LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, October 21 *Vigil of the 29th Sunday of the Liturgical Year*

4:00pm +Edward Jablonski, Jr. recalling his birthday by his sisters

Sunday, October 22 *Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time — World Mission Sunday*

7:30am +Father Edward A. Murphy

4:00pm Asking God to bring about family peace

Monday, October 23 *Saint John of Capistrano, priest*²

12:00nn +Amanda Rodriguez

Tuesday, October 24 *Saint Anthony Mary Claret, bishop*²

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

Wednesday, October 25

12:00nn For increased confidence & perseverance for family members

Thursday, October 26

12:00nn +David Russell Mimande

Friday, October 27

12:00nn Asking God to bless a beloved son's college endeavors

Saturday, October 28 *Vigil of the 30th Sunday of the Liturgical Year*

4:00pm Seeking divine help for diligence in college

Sunday, October 29 *Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am +Herbert Morris, Sr. — 4th anniversary

4:00pm For pro-life prisoner Jean Marshall

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

The Gospel concludes with this well-known adage, "...repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." The situation in which Jesus gave this reply was one in which the Pharisees sent some of their disciples, along with the Herodians to ask Jesus this deceitful question, "Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" The Herodians are barely mentioned in the New Testament and scholars theorize they were a sect of Hellenistic Jews or even a political party and are only mentioned twice along with the Pharisees. It is surmised that the Herodians were supporters of the imperial-backed family who traced their heritage to King Herod the Great. Both groups connived among themselves on how to trip Jesus up, yet, the Pharisees did not go to Jesus themselves because they knew He would be on His guard against them. Though a recognizable and learned religious group, the Pharisees were also a political party that enshrined a way of living out the precepts and minute details of the Mosaic Law, sought political independence and a restoration of the kingdom of David. Their title is derived from an ancient Greek word *Pharisaios* (Gk. Φαρισαῖος) which is linked with a root word that meant "to set apart, to separate or to explain." Their title reflected their penchant for commentary on the Law or their moral rigor and, so, made them distinct (or separated from) the population at large. Jesus differed in His view of the Law since He saw legal observance as internalizing its spirit and putting the law's demands into practice, not to mention Jesus' willingness to mix with sinners or ritually-unclean and despised tax collectors. While the interlocuters wanted to appear innocent and even bereft of ulterior motives, yet the aforementioned question must have been a hotly debated topic and posed a problem of conscience for every faithful Jew. Like any subjugated people what do you do? Obey the dictates of the conqueror, refuse to do so, or do you attempt to find some compromise? While the Zealots (Heb. *kana'im*) violently resisted Roman occupation shouldn't the others at least resist the punitive tax? The question posed to Jesus was meant to put Him on the horns of a dilemma or between Scylla and Charybdis (i.e., a monster and whirlpool), which entails not being able to decide which of those two things to do because either choice would have poor results. The questioners' intent, though, is to fault Jesus regardless of His answer. If He were to say "yes, pay the tax," He would be siding with those collaborating with imperial authorities and going against popular sentiment, while exhibiting contempt for the Law of Moses. However, if Jesus said "no, do not pay the tax," He would be at odds with the Roman procurator and the Empire itself. The trap seemed to be well-set and afforded no avenue of escape for Jesus. The Lord can read the secrets of the human heart. They underestimated His ability to do so. Jesus said, "Show me the coin that pays the census tax." And, then, He asked them,

Saint Augustine of Hippo — Sermo 24

In the same way as Caesar looks for his image on a coin, God looks for his in your soul. "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's," the Savior says. What does Caesar demand from you? His image. But Caesar's image is on a coin, whereas God's is in you. If the loss of a coin causes you to weep because you have lost Caesar's image, would not any damage brought in you to God's image be for you a cause for tears?"

"Whose image is this and whose inscription? They replied, 'Caesar's.' He solemnly declares, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." The tax had to be paid in Roman coinage; thus, doing so supported Roman occupation, such as soldiers' pay and salaries for imperial law courts and functions. As subjugated, the Israelies supported the costs associated with their occupation by pagans, while the exchange of Temple currency for Roman coins incurred an added fee that enriched the Empire even more. Though avoiding entrapment and having embarrassed both the Pharisees and Herodians, the Lord's already-strained relationship with those parties was pushed further toward the breaking point. The axiom that Jesus articulated to the Pharisee's delegates and the supporters of the Herodian dynasty has continued to be cited even to the present day. It is considered a principle that distinguishes between duties to God and civic obligations to legal authorities. During the Middle Ages, the theory of the two swords evolved in regard to the relationship between Church and State – the Church held God's power while respecting the authority of legitimate civil authorities. Yet, those two swords are both held by the Church with one sword wielded by the Church and while the second is in the hands of kings and soldiers, it, too, is wielded on behalf of the Church (*Unam sanctam*, Denzinger 873). Divine power was understood as superior whereas royal (or civic) power was subordinate. The declaration by Jesus, though, was not issued as a principle of compromise. In the modern era, the separation of Church and state has brought about a radicalization of the Lord's axiom. Political power is now autonomous and it is often wielded against the Church. Moreover, faith and its practice (what is rendered to God) is juxtaposed to political, social, and professional life (what is rendered to Caesar) such that faith is confined to private practices in Church or at home. The Gospel acknowledges the duties owed to various legitimate forms of government. Yet, Jesus does not equivocate that the duties owed to God are binding on everyone, everywhere, and always. Everything we have received is a gift from on high and, so, it was meant to be given back to God in a more fruitful manner than the same condition it was when first given. Yet, the civic duties do not come before or after what is owed to God; no, those duties come simultaneously. Disputes over inheritances or the multiple political and civic problems are not meant to be adjudicated by Christ; no, they are human responsibilities meant to be solved in light of what has been revealed – judge everything, assume personal responsibilities in light of that insight – give to God what is His and to Caesar what belongs to civic authority and render those differing obligations in an uncompromising manner. Though not included in the selected Gospel, in the subsequent verse (Mt 22:22), the Pharisees and Herodians were amazed or stunned (Gk. ἐθαύμασαν) meaning overwhelmed or they experienced intense surprise by what Jesus said and simply went away.

National Eucharistic Revival - Phase Two: The Diocesan Year

The antiphon *O sacrum convivium*, which is partly etched under the chapel tabernacle, was written by Saint Thomas Aquinas. It is a wonderful summary of Eucharistic theology: *O sacred Banquet/In which Christ is received/The memory of his Passion is recalled/The Mind is filled with grace/And Pledge of future Glory is given to us*. Today's overemphasis on the meal aspect of the Mass must be balanced by referring to its sacrificial aspect. Nevertheless, the Mass is both: emphasis on the Mass as making present the Sacrifice of the Cross, but that should not lead us to forget the Mass is also a holy banquet, a sacred meal with the Lord. The Eucharist is not merely a sign or symbol, but it is, in fact, the heavenly food of Christ's true Body, true Blood, Soul and Divinity. The Eucharist, is also a foretaste, a *praegustatum* of the great banquet in heaven. So, yes, the Holy Eucharist is a meal, but no mere meal, it is Life, it is a convivial celebration of that life; it is a banquet which gives Christ or Life Himself. The memory of His passion is recalled (Lat. *recolitur memoria passionis*) – The Eucharist is not only a meal, it is the making present of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, we are brought to the foot of the Cross and the fruits of that Cross are applied to us. Yet, too, we are at the resurrection because in Communion we receive Christ who is living, present, and active.

ALL SAINTS EVE & DAY (October 31 & November 1)— ALL SOULS DAY (November 2)

In the Apostles' Creed, we profess to believe in the Communion of Saints or the Church in all her fullness as the assembly of all believers — those presently in the world, the saintly people who preceded us and are now in heaven, and the souls in purgatory awaiting entrance into the kingdom. Before his death, Saint Dominic said, "Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death, and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life." All Saints and All Souls comprise the two-day celebration of the Communion of Saints – those who are with God in heaven and those who are on their way to heaven being purged of sin's vestiges. These two days constitute the festival of the *Communio sanctorum* in association with praying for the dead and meditating on the reality of heaven, hell and purgatory.

MASS SCHEDULE—All Saints Day

Tuesday, October 31 at 4:00pm

Wednesday, November 1 at 12nn & 4:00pm

All Souls Day: Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed

Thursday, November 2 at 12nn

PREVENIENT GRACE - ATONEMENT

The term prevenient grace re-appeared with the third typical edition of the Roman Missal. The liturgical reference to that type of grace is found in the Prayer over the Offerings for December 8th: "Graciously accept the saving sacrifice which we offer you, O Lord, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and grant that, as we profess her, on account of your *prevenient grace*, to be untouched by any stain of sin, so, through her intercession, we may be delivered from all our faults." Thus, the Virgin Mary was untouched by sin or immaculately conceived because of prevenient grace. Though reintroduced in that oration, this form of grace is an old concept being rehabilitated. Such grace is a "species of actual grace which, as an illumination or inspiration of the Holy Spirit, precedes the free determination of the will. It is held to mark the beginning of all activity leading to justification, which cannot be achieved without it, but its acceptance or rejection depends on man's free choice" (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. prevenient grace.) This is freely-bestowed divine grace that precedes any human decision or action. Prevenient grace exists, then, prior to and without reference to anything human beings may have done. It is believed that the phrase "prevenient grace" which is previous to salvation was coined or at least popularized by Saint Augustine, when he said, "God anticipates us...that we may be healed...anticipates us that we may be called...that we may lead godly lives." Prevenient grace comes to us without any effort or "earning" on our part. This means that God takes the initiative to save us through Christ, and that we do not earn God's grace. We can only cooperate with it. As pre-existing or prevenient, it is a divine grace that precedes human decision. It existed prior to and without reference to any human endeavor. This type of grace permits humans to come to Christ in faith but does not guarantee that the sinner will actually do so. Consequently, the effectiveness of this enabling grace is determined by human acceptance of its blessing. Prevenient grace is the human known awareness of the first stirrings of our good will or the inclination towards God.

Conciliar Declarations in Regard to Prevenient Grace

The Second Council of Orange (529 AD) stated that faith, though a free act, resulted even in its beginnings from the grace of God, enlightening the human mind and enabling belief. In the Council's canon 23 it is said that God prepares our wills that they may desire the good. Canon 25 states, "In every good work, it is not we who begin... but He (God) first inspires us with faith and love of Him, through no preceding merit on our part." Without using the explicit term, they are describing prevenient grace. Prevenient grace (from the Latin "to come before") was discussed in the fifth chapter of the sixth session of the Council of Trent (1545-63) which used the phrase: "a Dei per dominum Christum Iesum praeveniente gratia" (Eng. a predisposing grace of God through Jesus Christ). Those who turned from God by sins are predisposed by God's grace to turn back and become justified by freely assenting to that proffered grace. It is divine grace that precedes human decision. In the evolution of the Protestant Reformation and its following Reform movement (16th century and following), what was then the centuries old idea of prevenient grace was brought to the fore

to address two great problems in Christianity: the belief of original sin and the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. John Wesley, leader of the revival movement now known as Methodism, insisted on prevenient grace as a solution. Wesley thought that prevenient grace enabled the doctrines of original sin and salvation by grace to co-exist while still maintaining God's sovereignty and holy character as well as human freedom. While the term prevenient grace is not biblical, the entire gamut of speaking about different kinds of "graces"—"prevenient grace," "saving grace," "sanctifying grace"—is not the way the biblical writers described grace. Where then did this language and phraseology come from? The answer historically is that it was Saint Augustine who was most influential in promoting this way of thinking about grace in general. In turn, he was influenced by Platonism. The great Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus (ca. 204/5-270 AD) was a pantheist who thought of grace as a kind of force or influence that flowed down from God and spread throughout the universe, whose thinking influenced Augustine. The Bishop of Hippo seemed to think of grace as a kind of force or influence or medicine. It flowed particularly into the human soul from God and it was *gratia praeveniens* ("prevenient grace"), the grace that "goes before," ensuring that the human soul would respond in faith. In medieval Catholicism, theologians developed the thought of many different kinds of grace infused into the Christian soul through seven sacraments. Baptism infused regenerating grace. The Eucharist or Mass infused sanctifying grace. Confirmation strengthened baptismal grace. Penance was a sacrament that infused the grace of absolution for sin. They thought of ordination as a sacrament that resulted in infused grace for the priest to enable him to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. The sacrament of marriage infused grace into the husband and the wife. Extreme unction infused grace into the Christian soul to persevere through sickness and death.

Grace & Atonement

The word atonement or *at-one-ment* was coined by William Tyndale (d. 1536) when he first translated the Latin Vulgate into English. Atonement's first and basic meaning is to make two into one—to unite or to reconcile. God the Father took the initiative to do that when divinity and humanity were united in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Word-made-flesh. The word flesh is vitally important here. In the Old Testament, that word refers to the human race understood as a corporate body: "All flesh is grass" (Is 40:6), implying that humanity, as corporately understood, is mortal and perishing. So, at the Incarnation, when the Word became flesh, Jesus, the Son of God, united Himself irrevocably to this perishing corporate body of the human race. Was that not the supreme act of prevenient grace? The supreme act of the prevenient grace of God, therefore, was not just to come in the Person of the Son to unite Himself to our sinful corporate humanity by becoming one of us. Instead, His coming was also to sanctify that human nature in His own sinless body and soul throughout His life of compassionate service. It was also to offer Himself as the representative human being in the supreme act of love to the Father, thus completing the at-one-ment between God and corporate humanity.