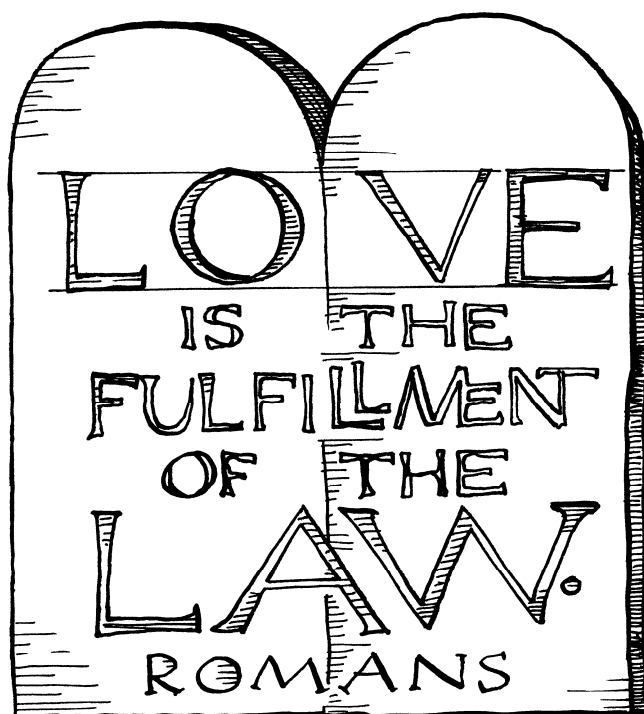


OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 3, 2023



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 2 *Vigil of the 22nd Sunday of the Liturgical Year*

4:00pm For the beginning of college life to be healthy and fruitful

Sunday, September 3 *Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am For trust in God, in all aspects

4:00pm Seeking divine help in a series of personal issues

Monday, September 4 *Labor Day (USA)*

12:00nn For safety and success in college

Tuesday, September 5

12:00nn For divine help in keeping closer to God

Wednesday, September 6

12:00nn Seeking divine help for Lorraine

Thursday, September 7

12:00nn Asking for God's help in regard to inventiveness

Friday, September 8 *Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

12:00nn For a successful immigration application

Saturday, September 9 *Vigil of the 23rd Sunday of the Liturgical Year*

4:00pm Asking for a child's diligence in college

Sunday, September 10 *Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am +Derek Janeczak—remembering his birthday

4:00pm +Helen Napoli

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

At Caesarea Philippi, speaking in the name of the disciples and in answer Jesus' question, Peter said what many of them could not fathom, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God...flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father...I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven." This marks a turning point in the Gospel. After Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah, the Lord makes the first prediction of His passion, "that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly...be killed and on the third day be raised." The Cross, now, looms ever larger. Today, due to its familiarity, we are almost immune to the barbaric nature of crucifixion and its earliest implications. Originally the Cross was shocking, revolting and offensive, a disgusting irreligious symbol if there ever was one! In that first century, it was the crossbeam of punishment serving two aims: punishment for a capital crime and as a deterrent because those crucified were left hanging on the cross as a graphic reminder of justice. While crucifixion entailed agonizing physical pain, despite such unbearable physical agony, people in Roman times dreaded the shame associated with crucifixion even more than its accompanying suffering. Since crucifixion was reserved for the dregs of society—outcasts, slaves and common criminals—the fact that a man was crucified defined him as a miserable, wretched being that did not deserve to exist. Given its implications, then, Peter's violent reaction to Jesus saying that the Messiah and Son of God must suffer and be crucified was to be expected, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." While his reaction is altogether understandable and too human, Jesus vehemently reacts to it because He must have seen it as a temptation, which He had earlier thwarted when Satan, in the desert, tried to tempt Him to go His own way and to avoid the Father's plan: "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me." Peter had earlier received the privileged revelation from God that Jesus was "the Christ (or Messiah), the Son of the living God," now Jesus cannot believe what He is hearing from Peter's mouth. Eventually Peter's faith in Jesus as the Christ would know the humiliation of denial in the courtyard of the high priest. Apparently, Peter and many of the disciples did not understand what the Lord meant when He prophesied about His resurrection taking place "on the third day." On that first Easter morning, when the women went to the tomb to embalm His body, the empty tomb stunned them and, eventually, both Peter and the disciple Jesus loved, too. When the Risen Lord appeared to the Apostles on the evening of His Resurrection, at first they thought He was a ghost. Only following the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, did they finally understand that suffering, death, and resurrection were the mystery of salva-

Saint John Chrysostom — Homily 55 on St. Matthew

Though Christ seem to have spoken but one single thing, yet His sayings are three. Let him renounce himself, *and*, Let him bear his cross, and Let him follow Me; and two of them are joined together, but the one I put by itself. But let us see first what it can be to deny one's self. Let us learn first what it is to deny another, and then we shall know what it may be to deny one's self. What then is it to deny another? He that is denying another,—for example, either brother, or servant, or whom you will,—should he see him either beaten, or bound, or led to execution, or whatever he may suffer, stand not by him, doth not help him, is not moved, feels nothing for him, as being once for all alienated from him. Thus then He will have us disregard our own body, so that whether men scourge, or banish, or burn, or whatever they do, we may not spare it. For this is to spare it. Since fathers too then spare their offspring, when committing them to teachers, they command not to spare them. So also Christ; He said not, "Let him not spare himself," but very strictly, Let him renounce himself; that is, let him have nothing to do with himself, but give himself up to all dangers and conflicts; and let him so feel, as though another were suffering it all. And He said not, "Let him deny," but Let him renounce, even by this small addition intimating again, how very far it goes. For this latter is more than the former.

tion when Peter declared, "...let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). From this confrontational exchange with Peter, Jesus turns His attention to the larger group of disciples where He delineates the cost which will be associated with being one of His disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Bearing the crosses that life entails implies doing so with courage and faith. The Cross and discipleship go hand in hand. Regardless of individual, mitigating circumstances, any true disciple must lose his life in order to save it. By surrendering the temptation to be self-possessed and self-satisfied, such a seeming loss is registered as a gain by increasing the share in divine life that Christ has won for those who follow Him. However, the gain accrues in regard to heavenly (not earthly) realities. The perennial question is two-fold: For whom do we live and what do we live for? The answer is revealed in what we do or whether or not we follow Christ by not remaining an obstacle? In earthly relationships, there are usually several reasons for being together that explain, to a certain degree, why specific people are together. However, even when all reasons are taken into account, true love and unshakeable fidelity must remain, even when other explanations have disappeared. Such is even truer in regard to the faith we profess in God, which was graphically exemplified in the life of Jeremiah, who prophesied from around 626 BC to 587 BC. Known as the weeping prophet, he was fully aware of his inability to be the hero and incapable of confronting what was contrary to his nature. Yet, even daring to reproach God, Jeremiah was overwhelmed by God acting within him. The prophet wrote, "You seduced me, Lord, and I let myself be seduced; you were too strong for me, and you prevailed" (Jer 20:7). The Lord God's tenderness is irresistible and, like Jeremiah, when divine tenderness touches the human heart, the only response is to place our lives at God's disposal and enter into a lifelong commitment of adoration. The way to that more perfect union has been laid out by Christ – it goes through suffering and death which requires us to lose a life of selfishness and embracing self-sacrifice in order to be saved by Him.

National Eucharistic Revival - Phase Two: The Diocesan Year

The retired professor David Fagerberg, PhD gave an address in regard to the Eucharistic revival that was published in *The Catholic World Report*. March 4, 2023 under the title "Eucharistic Revival and the Passions." Here is an excerpt from that article, "The Catechism has noticed the size of the Eucharist when it says 'the inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of it' (CCC. n.1328). Here is the list of names the Catechism gives: Eucharist, Lord's Supper, Breaking of Bread, Synaxis (assembly), Memorial, Holy Sacrifice, Holy and Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion, and Holy Mass (CCC. nn.1328-1332). These are not to be treated as items on a menu to choose from, as if conservatives will be more given to holy sacrifice and progressives to assembly; as if one parish will celebrate the synaxis, another the breaking of bread, and another the holy Mass. The objective is for these different parts to be duly proportioned so they can operate together (co-operate). I am going to shorten the list to five, and compare them to five facets of a diamond, five pilings of a high rise, five ingredients in a stew. They are Thanksgiving, Fellowship, Memorial, Sacrifice, and Mystery.... The Eucharist is a memorial, an anamnesis. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said "Do this for the anamnesis of me" (1 Corinthians 11). Gregory Dix defines anamnesis "re-presenting before God an event in the past, so that it becomes here and now operative by its effects." That has lodged in my memory in a shorthand version: anamnesis is the past made present by its effects. The Catechism explains that "In the sense of Sacred Scripture, the memorial is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men. In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real" (CCC. n.1363). Jesus wasn't telling the disciples to keep getting together for a recollection dinner because he feared they would forget about him in the years to come. He was telling them to make memorial of him in the Eucharist, as if to say, "Tomorrow, in my death on the cross, a new covenant will be established. You gather at the Passover to make memorial of the Exodus and the Mosaic covenant; now be gathered together (ekklesia) to make memorial of my new covenant."



FIRST PREDICTION OF CHRIST'S PASSION

First of Three Passion Predictions

The word passion is derived from the Latin word *pator*, which means to suffer or endure. The compound expression the Passion of Christ refers to the sufferings that the Lord endured for the world's salvation beginning with the agony in the garden until Christ's death on Calvary. That more extensive portion of the Gospels, known collectively as the Passion Narratives, all four agree on these major events in the life of Christ: His arrest in Gethsemane, His arraignment before officials of the Sanhedrin on Thursday evening, the trial before Pilate on Friday morning, and the Lord's horrific suffering and death. The initial words of this week's Gospel that "Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffering greatly... be killed and on the third day be raised," is the first prediction of His passion and, as many scholars believe, it also introduces the third and final segment of Matthew's narrative. Then, the references to the journey to Jerusalem and its consequent sufferings illustrate the major themes that the first Evangelist will elaborate in his Gospel's remaining chapters. Saint Matthew incorporates four discussions about the passion that Jesus had with all or some of the disciples. Initially, this prediction of His impending passion must have come as quite a shock to the disciples. At this point, after finally beginning to have a better understanding that Jesus was the Messiah, the last thing they expected was that the Messiah would suffer greatly and be killed. In Israel's prophetic tradition, though, this had been the predicted fate of the Messiah, foretold by the prophet Isaiah (Is 53:3-12). The Messiah (Heb. *ebed Yahweh*) or Servant of the Lord was destined to die and, then, after His death would be raised. Secondly, the suffering and death of Jesus was inevitable because of two great facts: the reality of sin and God's love for humanity, which the Father had originally created to be all good. While Christ's death was the ultimate example of humanity's sinfulness and rebellion against God, it was also the supreme expression of God's immense love for His creatures. The inevitable nature of the Lord's suffering lies in His willing submission to always do the Father's will. It is important to realize that by referring to the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes that, when taken together, those three groups make up the Sanhedrin, which was the supreme council and tribunal of Israel during post-exilic times. The reference that the Messiah would be raised on the third day, the disciples were so stunned by hearing what seemed incomprehensible to their messianic expectations that the promise that the Messiah would be raised three days after dying must have never registered with them. Later on, at the empty tomb, an angel reminded them of what Jesus had once said, "He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and crucified, and rise on the third day. And they remembered his words." (Lk 24:6-8). Matthew begins the passion prediction by noting that "Jesus began

to show (Gk. *δεικνύειν*)" or to point out what was going to happen. This act of making known or showing is not a philosophical or moral teaching, but rather is a revealing by the Son of God how His mission would unfold. Since it is necessary for this to happen in that manner, the future events that Jesus revealed to them constitute a required part of the Father's plan for the world's salvation. So, the impending Kingdom of God cannot come about in any other possible manner. The holy city of Jerusalem will be the geographical site for the denouement of God's plan to save the world. Inexplicably, Jesus remains within Galilee, until finally, several chapters later, He declares to the disciples, "...we are going up to Jerusalem" (Mt 20:18). Within the geographical context of Jerusalem, it is there that the Messiah will "suffer greatly... be killed, and... be raised". The agents who will initiate these events are "the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes" or the Sanhedrin. Peter's response is both emphatic and stunning. He grabs hold of Jesus and rebukes Him! Perhaps those rebuking words of Peter might be paraphrased this way, "May God have mercy on you for suggesting such a thing! This shall never happen to you!" Peter's reaction reveals how shocking and utterly contrary to expectations that those notions of a suffering Messiah were to the first century Jewish mindset. If Jesus' most intimate disciples could scarcely grasp the reality that the Messiah had to suffer and die, no wonder the Jewish religious leaders rejected Him. Jesus uses equally strong language to deflect Peter's rebukes. Those comments represent Satan's words and ideas, a trap for the Messiah, and in no way reflect God's thinking. They reflect his purely human speculation. Instead of being the stone on which Jesus would build the Church, Peter is now functioning as an obstacle (Gk. *σκάνδαλον*) or "a trap or snare," preventing the Messiah from accomplishing the very thing that was essential for the formation of the messianic community. Such perversity could only originate with Satan and Jesus turns His back on those suggestions. Having 'shown' how the Messiah's mission would be accomplished, then, Jesus explains the implications for those who follow him (vv. 24-28). He states the essential principle of discipleship in v. 24 and follows it up with three explanations (vv. 25-27). He concludes with an 'amen' saying. In Mt 10:38 Jesus stated negatively what He now expresses positively in v. 24. In chapter ten, the setting was the costliness of discipleship in terms of family and other social relationships. Here, however, He explains what "taking up a cross" means by adding the idea of self-denial. He then proceeds to explain what self-denial requires. The word *aparneisthai* (Gk. *ἀπαρνεῖσθαι*) signifies "to renounce, refuse or deny knowledge of, commitment to or acquaintance with something or someone." Given the other metaphor used here of taking up the cross bar, i.e., being willing to accept a criminal's death by execution, the emphasis would seem to be on renouncing any commitment to self and giving full and total allegiance to Jesus, no matter what the cost-no cheap grace!