

OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL
SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL
WORCESTER MEDICAL CENTER
Second Sunday of Easter—Divine Mercy Sunday
April 11, 2010



CHAPEL

SCHEDULE

Thomas has received from the Lord, and has in turn transmitted to the Church, the gift of a faith put to the test by the passion and death of Jesus and confirmed by meeting him risen.

Weekday Masses: (Monday-Friday) at 12 noon

Weekend Masses: Saturday, 4:00pm - Sunday: 7:30am & 4:00pm

Holyday Mass Schedule: afternoon prior at 4:00pm

Holyday proper at 12 noon and 4:00pm

Confessions: First Saturday of every month at 3:30pm

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MASS INTENTIONS — WEEKLY LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 10 *Vigil of the 2nd Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm For a deeper realization of God's divine mercy

Sunday, April 11 *Easter Octave Ends—Second Sunday of Easter—Divine Mercy Sunday*

7:30am In gratitude for the gift of eternal life

4:00pm For the patients and staff of SVH@WMC and the Vernon Hill campus

Monday, April 12

12:00nn For the intentions of the celebrant

Tuesday, April 13 *Saint Martin I, pope & martyr* ²

12:00nn +For the deceased members of the Minardi family

Wednesday, April 14

12:00nn For perseverance in faith of those believers suffering for their faith

Thursday, April 15

12:00pm +For the souls in purgatory

Friday, April 16

12:00nn For the inner transformation of rigid fundamentalism and extremism

Saturday, April 17 *Vigil of the 3rd Sunday of Easter*

4:00pm For this month's intentions of the Holy Father

Sunday, April 18 *Third Sunday of Easter*

7:30am For a greater appreciation of paschal faith

2:00pm In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Guild of Our Lady of Providence

4:00pm For the patients and staff of SVH@WMC and the Vernon Hill campus

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, are less important than solemnities, hence, feasts are only observed on the natural day. Memorials are of two types: Either the observance is an obligatory memorial¹ or an optional memorial².*

Toward a Better Understanding of the Paschal Mystery

The Easter season, unlike other liturgical seasons, is not meant as a preparation for a solemn feast, but the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost serve as a prolongation of Easter, "The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one 'great Sunday'...The period of fifty sacred days ends on Pentecost Sunday: (*GNLYC*, nn. 22-23). Another distinct feature of the Easter season is that during the next seven weeks, more than at any other time of the year, the third reading or gospel is predominantly taken from the Gospel according to Saint John. In writing the final chapters of that Gospel, Saint John had a specific goal in mind, namely, *paschal faith*. In order to perceive such hidden truths, however, the eyes of faith are needed to deepen the usual perception of merely human eyes. This week's pericope or passage from John's Gospel takes place "on the evening of the first day of the week." In the twelve verses, there are two appearances of the Risen Christ—the first took place on the night of His resurrection and the second occurred "a week later." Yet those two accounts are united by the absence and presence of Saint Thomas. The evening of that first Easter, having discovered that the Lord's tomb was empty, the disciples huddled in a locked room, with the doors bolted "for fear of the Jews." Without any hesitation or allowance for the disciples to react to the nature of His unexpected appearance, the Risen Lord says to them, "Peace be with you." Now risen from the dead, Jesus is not bound by the physical laws of time and place. No one could enter a locked room whose doors were bolted except by breaking down those barriers; yet, Jesus was just there, "in their midst." While the marks of His suffering were visible, now risen, Christ appeared to them in an entirely new state. This new manner of living belongs to Him alone and forever. With His humanity transfigured, having returned to the right hand of God, the Risen Christ is freed from all earthly constraints that mortality entails. The gift, though, that

Fray Luis de León, OSA—*De los nombres de Cristo*

Christ destroyed the old man in us by His death, but when He rose from the dead, our life was born again in Him. I speak of the life of justice and the spirit, which embraces not only the beginning of justice when a sinner begins to live righteously, but also its growth and increase and ultimate perfection, until man receives immortality of the body and complete freedom from sin. When Christ rose from the dead, all this began in those who were in Him as in our principle.

Christ brings to His own is the promised gift of peace or, better yet, shalom. Following this stunning development, Christ commissions His disciples to go forth and declare this good news to everyone and anyone. Calmed by His presence and reassured by the heavenly peace that casts out all fear, the Lord breathes upon the disciples and, in His breath, they receive the Holy Spirit. The disciples say nothing and, amid great solemnity, Jesus the Christ bestows upon them the power to bind and to loose—to forgive sins or to withhold forgiveness. All fear and trepidation were gone, their faith in Christ restored and an intense joy welled up from deep within hearts that had been broken and crippled. There was some unfinished business, however; Thomas or Didymus was not among the others when all this occurred. Upon his return, despite their declaration that they had seen Christ and their immense joy, Thomas was not convinced. Yet, it's unfair to classify him as a skeptic or even a positivist—someone who would only believe if proof were available! The stigmata of the passion, instead of being classified as proof, in fact serve as the signs that Jesus who was crucified is the Victor who stands before them. The second post-resurrection appearance occurs one week later and coincides with what happened “on the evening of the first day of the week.” Barricaded within, doors barred, Christ appears in their midst and bestows His gift of peace upon them. Unlike what happened before, the Lord invites Thomas to probe the five marks of His passion—all the apostles must witness the same signs of the Savior's death and see Him resurrected. Thomas, though, straddles two generations—he is an eyewitness of Christ the Risen Lord and, in addition, he receives the apostolic faith from the other apostles, which becomes his own. Then, Jesus declares that those who have not seen and yet believe to be more blessed than even those who saw Him. Seeing is believing; however, in John's gospel, believing is also seeing in a deeper, more profound manner. Experience is one thing, but faith in Christ as risen requires something more. In order to believe, the natural demand for clear and convincing evidence must be put aside and the faith of the apostles must be sufficient. They were privileged witnesses and the first to receive the paschal faith—seeing in Jesus crucified, the Son of God and Risen Lord!

EASTERTIDE—FIFTY DAYS OF REJOICING—Via Lucis

The Stations (or Way) of the Cross (Lat. *Via Crucis*) commemorate the Passion of Christ and culminate with the burial of Jesus. Yet the paschal mystery reaches its conclusion with Christ's resurrection and glorification. In 1988, Salesian Father Sabino Palumbieri proposed to develop another set of stations focused upon the resurrection of Christ and the events which flow from it—eventually called the *Via Lucis* or Way of Light. In the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, the *Via Lucis* is described in this manner, “A pious exercise called the *Via Lucis* has developed and spread to many regions in recent years. Following the model of the *Via Crucis*, the faithful process while meditating on the various appearances of Jesus – from his Resurrection to his Ascension – in which he showed his glory to the disciples who awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14, 26; 16, 13-15; Lk 24, 49), strengthened their faith, brought to completion his teaching on the Kingdom and more closely defined the sacramental and hierarchical structure of the Church. Through the *Via Lucis*, the faithful recall the central event of the faith—the resurrection of Christ—and their discipleship, in virtue of Baptism, the paschal sacrament by which they have passed from the darkness of sin to the bright radiance of the grace of God...the *Via Lucis* moves from the experience of suffering, which in God's plan is part of life, to the hope of arriving at man's true end: liberation, joy and peace which are essentially paschal values” (Directory, n. 153). There is no settled agreement on the incidents that would constitute the *Via Lucis*; however, these fourteen Stations of the Resurrection include: the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene's encounter with Christ, the road to Emmaus, Christ being known in the breaking of the bread, the Lord's appearance to the Jerusalem disciples, strengthening Thomas' faith, along with the gifts of peace and power to forgive sins, the Lord's appearance by the Sea of Tiberias, His forgiveness of Peter and the command to feed the sheep, the great commission on the mountain, the Lord's ascension back to the Father, the Virgin Mary and the disciples wait in the Upper Room, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

FOR THE SAKE OF HIS SORROWFUL PASSION

Have mercy on us and on the whole world

Introduction

About a decade ago, the late Pope John Paul II canonized Sr. Faustina Kowalska and, moreover, the Holy Father declared that the Second Sunday after Easter will be universally observed as *Divine Mercy Sunday*. Among the Five Wounds of Christ—those signs of His passion—the wound in the Lord’s heart is the source of His merciful love. The preparation for this feast began on Good Friday with the observance of the Divine Mercy novena. Faustina was born in the rural village of Glogowiec and, at the age of 20, she was admitted to the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Warsaw. Then, for the next 13 years, she carried out humble tasks as cook, gardener and porter. She died in Krakow on October 5, 1938. During her seemingly mundane life, she had a variety of mystical experiences—visions, revelations, and hidden stigmata. She wrote these down in her diary—*Divine Mercy in My Soul*. Inspired by a vision of the Lord Himself, wherein Jesus asked her that a portrait be painted of him with the inscription *Jesus I Trust in You*, this command was fulfilled in 1935. So, trust in the Lord is the origin of mercy and among its devotional practices are venerating the image of the merciful Christ, praying the Chaplet of divine mercy, observing the 3 o’clock hour of great mercy or receiving the sacraments on Divine Mercy Sunday.

Toward A Biblical Understanding of Mercy

In the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, especially in appendix A, Pope John Paul II sought to deepen the Church’s understanding of *misericordia*. The English word mercy (Lat. *misericordia*) inadequately conveys the true biblical depth of that notion. In the Old Testament, the two Hebrew words *hesed* (or steadfast love) and *rahamim* constitute mercy’s biblical foundations. *Hesed* entails that a profound attitude of goodness must prevail in a given situation, so, that if such an attitude exists between two people, they become faithful to one another. When the term steadfast love or *hesed* has God as its object, it is only used in reference to God’s original covenant with Israel—the supreme sign of Yahweh’s overflowing generosity and grace. *Hesed* acquired a juridical quality, when Israel broke the covenant and God’s legal obligation to the Chosen People technically ceased with those infidelities; therein, the divine form of *hesed* revealed its deeper qualities—a generous love that always remains so, as a divine love that is more powerful than repeated infidelity, and as an unearned grace that is stronger than sin. The second Hebrew word used for mercy is *rahamim* (or womb-love) that serves to illustrate the love of a mother and also de-

scribes the unique bond (viz. the particular love) between the woman who is with child and the child in her womb. Such maternal love exists without merit and, as truly heart-felt, *rahamim* gives rise to both moral goodness and maternal tenderness, not to mention it also creates patience and understanding. These are all the prerequisites which are essential for someone or, in fact, anyone to become eager to forgive. Within the writings of the New Testament, the Greek word *eleos* is the term that those sacred authors used for mercy and, as a result, *eleos* (lit. “oil that is poured out”) can be understood as implying loving kindness or divine compassion. One form of the Penitential Rite is the use of the Greek *Kyrie eleison* and *Christe eleison*. In preparation for offering God true worship, the Church begs the Lord to pour out His merciful love, like holy oil from above, on those assembled before the altar of sacrifice. Within the Catholic liturgical tradition, the key word for mercy is *misericordia*, which literally means a “wretched heart.” As a true virtue, *misericordia* entails a heart-felt reaction to another individual’s suffering and a willingness to do what is necessary to help relieve the cause of their pain or suffering. The contemporary understanding of mercy or pity differs sharply with the divine or biblical version. In modern usage, mercy has an air of condescension, whereas the divine form that we should have is a powerful feeling, welling up from inner attitudes of tenderness and love, such that mercy is akin to a wretched heart that aches for the suffering which prompts such a reaction. This gut-wrenching sensation is the impetus for any action to relieve and heal whatever has precipitated another’s suffering—the Lord’s mercy is like that and, of course, even deeper and much more profound.

Plenary Indulgence for Divine Mercy Sunday

An indulgence is the remission “of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven” (can. 1471). There are two types of indulgences—partial and plenary (or full). The plenary indulgence requires sacramental confession, reception of Holy Communion, and prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father. For Divine Mercy Sunday, the faithful must take part in the prayers and/or devotions in honor of Christ’s Divine Mercy in a church or chapel, accompanied by a complete detachment from all sin, including venial sin. Then, either at Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament or prayer before the Tabernacle, recite the Our Father, the Creed and a devout prayer to the merciful Christ Jesus—e.g., Jesus I trust in you! Works of mercy should be the hallmark of the Christian life, in obedience to the command of Christ.