



St. Thomas Church: established July 1, 1285 by King Vaclav II

**Today's Prayer**

Say this Prayer Today:

**The more we call on the Lord  
the more we can feel His Presence.  
Day by day He draws us closer  
to His loving heart.**

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January 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> 2018

The Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time B

# St. Thomas Church

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**The Reflection of the Gospel**

Today's gospel reading from Mark describes a "typical day" in the life of Jesus. Such a day was filled, according to the evangelist, with preaching and healing of various maladies including demonic obsession and possession. Difficult as it is for us to ascertain precisely the nature of such "demonic infestations," it is a fact that ancient peoples often discerned in unrestrained, bizarre or even anti-social behavioral patterns, an evident presence of unfriendly spirits thought to inhabit the visible and invisible world. But, why does Mark relate these rather unsettling incidents?

First, the evangelist Mark was a product of his time and cultural upbringing. Writing during the mayhem of the great Jewish rebellion (A.D. 66-72), he naturally interpreted the traumatic destruction of the temple and the loss of Israel's homeland to the Romans, as a prelude to the end time. From the very beginning of his gospel, he demonstrates that the pivotal point ushering in this dramatic finale was the mission cum message of Jesus of Nazareth. Although other contemporary prophets and wonder workers abounded on the religious-political scene, it was the word of God announced uniquely through Jesus that would effectively break the yolk of Satan. The healing of the obsessed and possessed, therefore, with simple commands without the accustomed elaborate rituals of exorcism (in Greek this means "a casting out") or magic meant that a new, definitively final era was now breaking into and redirecting the course of human events. Satan's days were numbered for the kingdom of God was near, in fact, it was now present through the person of Jesus. Mark relates that in their very moment of defeat the powers of evil were forced to confess that this Jesus was the "holy one of God."

Whatever Jesus did or said was meant not to startle or entertain: his message was and still is a challenge to believe so that "we may have life more abundantly."

**Study of the First Reading**

The book of Deuteronomy was "discovered" during the reign of King Josiah. Even before King Josiah was on the throne, the nation of Judah was reduced to the city-state of Jerusalem; the great powers of the time (Egypt and Babylon) treated Judah as a vassal state or as a no-man's land. With Jerusalem endangered of being conquered, there was a push to put the Law and the traditions of the Temple priests on paper. The book not only preserved the Law and traditions; the religious ethic of compassion and the collective wisdom of the nation's rulers were presented. [15] While the book saw a great prophet arising; the caveats below actually discouraged the prophetic tradition. Prophets were usually lower class, self-appointed critics of the religious hierarchy. Prophets always gain the wrath of the ruling bureaucracy. As Jesus commented, religious leaders erect monuments to prophets whom the ancestors of the leaders killed. Deuteronomy recognizes the power of the prophetic tradition, but raises the stakes by justifying the murder of the unpopular prophet (see 18:20) [16 & 18] Who is the great leader foretold? If the authors of Deuteronomy were bureaucrats, their vote would be for the king, a leader appointed by God to speak for God. The prophet king was a tradition that started with King David as the inspiration for the psalms. Even Jesus referred to King David as a prophet. During the Babylonian exile and afterwards, people desired the charismatic leader who had aspects of king and prophet. [19-20] There are two caveats: one against the revolutionary and one against the false prophet. The disobedient person who did not listen to God's words, also did not obey his Word found in the Law. This person was an outlaw, an anarchist. By definition, he should die. The second warning was against the false prophet who spoke in God's name or in the name of idols. This person set himself against the religious leaders. If the religious leaders spoke for the Law, then the prophet critical of the leaders stood outside the religious institution. He was no better than the anarchist; he, too, should die. But, what happened when there was no religious institution (as in the Babylonian exile)?

**Coffee, Cookies & Conversation** follows Sunday's Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.** Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "[wfaix@yahoo.com](mailto:wfaix@yahoo.com)" or contact [juan@augustiniani.cz](mailto:juan@augustiniani.cz). Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin

## **Presentation of the Lord. February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

The feast was first observed in the Eastern Church as "The Encounter." In the sixth century, it began to be observed in the West: in Rome with a more penitential character and in Gaul (France) with solemn blessings and processions of candles, popularly known as "Candlemas." The Presentation of the Lord concludes the celebration of the Nativity and with the offerings of the Virgin Mother and the prophecy of Simeon, the events now point toward Easter.

"In obedience to the Old Law, the Lord Jesus, the first-born, was presented in the Temple by his Blessed Mother and his foster father. This is another 'epiphany' celebration insofar as the Christ Child is revealed as the Messiah through the canticle and words of Simeon and the testimony of Anna the prophetess. Christ is the light of the nations, hence the blessing and procession of candles on this day. In the Middle Ages this feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or 'Candlemas,' was of great importance.

"The specific liturgy of this Candlemas feast, the blessing of candles, is not as widely celebrated as it should be, except of course whenever February 2 falls on a Sunday and thus takes precedence. There are two ways of celebrating the ceremony, either the *Procession*, which begins at a 'gathering place' outside the church, or the *Solemn Entrance*, celebrated within the church."

### **Things to Do:**

\*Ask your parish priest to bless the candles that you will be using on your home altar this year.

\*Have a family Candlemas procession.

\*Read Luke 2:22-35, the account of the presentation including the Canticle of Simeon.

\*Meditate on the constant *fiat* of Our Lady of Sorrows, who embraced the will of God even as Simeon predicted that a sword would pierce her heart.

## **Parish Pilgrimage to Holy Land.**

April 30<sup>th</sup> –May 9<sup>th</sup>. If you are interesting please contact Fr. Juan at: [juan@augustiniani.cz](mailto:juan@augustiniani.cz).  
More information: [www.augustiniani.cz](http://www.augustiniani.cz)

## **Announcements and Ongoing Activities**

\*Every Saturday at 9:00am feeding of the homeless, as a social service

\***Bible Study** sessions are held each Tuesday evening at 6:30pm/18:00 in Tagaste room. All are welcome to join and reflect on the Word of God.

\***Religious education for adults** sessions are held each Wednesday evening at 6:00pm/18:00 in Tagaste room.

\*Fr. William, the pastor will be away for January 23<sup>rd</sup> till March 2<sup>nd</sup> month. Fr. Imann, OSA will be the ordinary pastor in his absence. In cases of emergency I can be reached either through Fr. Imann at 730817348

\*If you would like to receive a copy of the **bulletin** by email, please contact [osaprag@augustiniani.cz](mailto:osaprag@augustiniani.cz)

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## **Help for Philippines!**

The youth organization in our Augustinian Parish of Sto. Niño de Cebu in Philippines are asking for help.

They are planning to go to Naval, Biliran Leyte the area where typhoon "Urduha" devastated the region, this area is closer to Cebu. They started to gather school supplies and they are planning to share to almost 500 hundred school children as part of their apostolate this coming summer, 2nd week of May 2018, before school year opening.

These are the school supplies they needed; (Grades 1 to 6)

1. Notebooks
2. Elementary papers
3. Pencils/ball pens for grades 4 to 6
4. Crayons
5. Erasers

Thank you very much for your help.

The school supplies you can bring anytime to the monastery reception or on Sundays you can leave in Tagaste room.

May Señor Sto Nino blessed you through these little ones in need. *More information with Fr. Juan*