



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



"Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in you."

August 5th and August 6st
2017

18th Sunday in Ordinary time
A.
Transfiguration of the Lord

St. Thomas Church

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How we long to be with Christ and, along with St. Peter, exclaim, "Master, it is good that we are here!" Yet this ardent longing which God has placed in the depths of our hearts can often be hampered by our contemporary culture's various deleterious influences. Consider a few effects of living in the twenty-first century West: we live in an age replete with technological "noise" and constant demands; a place where the drive for efficiency and productivity frequently undermine the true meaning and value of human labor; a culture in which there is a nearly constant pressure to discard the sacred with indifference, and follow a path which leads into parched and infertile lands.

It is therefore easy to be affected in a negative way, and become, for example, so immersed in the various daily activities and demands of life that we fail to notice the sacred Light which calls us. As a result, we might find ourselves bent by the weight of modern-day disorders, gazing downward rather than heavenward, oblivious to the Son who has risen in glorious light, transfiguring what was once a dark sky into brilliance beyond words.

Perhaps the most tragic example of unnoticed beauty is the failure to recognize the Mass for what it is. It is quite normal for us to look around at nature and notice beauty, whether it be wintery sunlit slopes or the blue-grey expanse of the sea, but there is a beauty far surpassing all these things which, beyond any strictly material creation, is sometimes slighted as if it were just one mundane event among others. But the Mass is not simply *some thing*, rather it is a supreme event of incomparable sacredness, one in which our Lord beckons us toward a unitive communion with himself, an intimate "joining" in which we are not only bathed in the light of his Transfiguration, as were Peter, James and John, but transformed through receiving his most precious body and blood.

Trust in Times of Stress

When do you find trust in God the most difficult?

In these times, the pace of life escalates. Multiple responsibilities and conflicting schedules frazzle most of us. No wonder cell phone and pocket computer organizer sales have sky rocketed. We need any kind help to organize our increasingly fragmented lives!

Stress, stress, stress. Modern life runs thick with stress. Add just one disaster to our stressed lives and we fall apart. Imagine, then, the stress Jesus' followers endured as they sailed during an all night storm on the Sea of Galilee.

Let us praise God for his love and guidance through times of stress. For, he truly controls that which we cannot, and is present to us in ways we will never understand.

Take a moment and reflect on the moments of stress you endured this week. How was God in control of the situation? How was God present to you in those moments? How did you respond to him? Thank him for the opportunity to say "yes" to him, even when the situation made him seem so distant.

P. Antonio Francisco Rivas González, OSA

(6.5.1968-1.8.2017)



"I am most thankful to Almighty God that He brought me here to Prague that I am able to live here among you. I ask for your prayers because there is much lacking, more to learn and so much to improve."

(P. Antonio, "An Interview," Tolle Lege, May, 2017)

ABIDE WITH ME!

When I needlessly brood over my
concerns,

Help me, Lord!

When I moan and am in anguish,
Lift me, Lord!

When I do not know where to go,
Lead me, Lord!

When I traverse the wide paths of the
world,
Abide with me, Lord!

*(Saint Augustine,
Confesions VI, 5)*

Fr. Antonio Francisco José Rivas González was born on May 6th 1968 in Barsinghausen, Germany, where his parents were working.

In 1974 his family returned to Palencia, Spain. At the age of 14 he attended and successfully completed his course work and graduated from San Agustin school staffed by the Augustinian friars. Entering the Augustinian novitiate, he pronounced first vows on September 6th 1986 and was sent on to study philosophy and theology. On July 12th, 1992 he was ordained priest in the Augustinian church at La Vid, Burgos, Spain. His first assignment was to the Colegio San Agustin, Madrid, in 1992 where he taught Religion and Spanish to 1995. Actively engaged in youth ministry, he was Scout leader for *Grupo Scout 151 San Agustin*. In 1995 he began his studies in the German language in the Complutense University where he obtained his Masters in 1998. During this same period he was assistant pastor in Santa Ana-la Esperanza parish, Madrid.

In 1997 he was sent to St. Thomas parish in Prague where he worked to 1998 when he was sent to the Abbey of Our Lady's Assumption, Brno. Returning to St. Thomas in 2001, he served successively as assistant pastor, prior of the community and pastor. Fr. Antonio was highly gifted as a linguist, translator, author of several books and teacher in the Archdiocesan seminary. Much sought after as a confessor, counselor and lecturer, he managed to pastor a Czech and vibrant hispanic communities while revitalising the Augustinian Seculars (the Augustinian Third Order). At the time of his death he was in weeks of completing his Doctorate in translation. To the very end Fr. Antonio enjoyed sports, scouting, reading, translating and conversation. His wit, joy and priestly dedication will always be remembered.

Passing unexpectedly to the Lord, Tuesday, August 1st, 2017, at Santander, Spain, he was buried with an outpouring of grief in the Augustinian cemetery, Palencia, on August 3rd, 2017. Dear Fr. Antonio, rest in the peace of Jesus Christ in the company of Our Lady and all the saints.