



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

### Today's Prayer

Say this prayer today

I remind myself that I am in  
your presence O Lord.  
I will take refuge in your  
loving heart.  
You are my strength in times  
of weakness.  
You are my comforter in  
times of sorrow.

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

October 21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> 20178

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary  
Time A

# St. Thomas Church

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### Reflection on the Gospel

His adversaries, the Pharisees and the hitherto unmentioned Herodians, confront Jesus. The **Pharisees** (from the Hebrew word "the separated") historically were those Jews committed to the most orthodox and exacting interpretation of the *Torah* (the Law of Moses). Matthew, writing some sixty years after Christ's ministry in the aftermath of the Jewish rebellion against Rome (AD 64-72), grew so hostile to pharisaism that everything a Christian or Christian leader *should not be* was now immortalized by the hypocritical Pharisee, the implacable enemy of Jesus. The **Herodians**, a political party expediently collaborating with the pro-Roman Herodian dynasty, were even enlisted-pharisaic scruples set aside- to act in common cause against Jesus.

The controversial question of Roman tax payments is now used as a clever ruse to trap Jesus on the horns of a classic dilemma. The Romans levied a poll or head tax (called in Greek "*kensos*" and in Latin "*census*") to be paid by every non Roman citizen, whether man, woman or slave, between the ages of 12 and 65. For most Jews, including Jesus and even the Pharisees themselves, it was probably paid as one of those inevitable burdens of empire. At the very heart of the controversy, however, was the *denarius*, or coin of tribute itself. This rather unimpressive piece of currency, worth about a day's wage, featured the imperial visage with the inscription: "Tiberius Caesar, Augustus, Son of the Divine Augustus, High Priest." Pious Jews, like the Pharisees, because of this divine attribution condemned not only its possession but also physical contact with the coin as idolatrous. Jesus' response was as incisive as sharp. His request to see the disputed coin of tribute, now hurriedly produced by the Herodians, came as a backhanded rebuke to the Pharisees for associating with such idolatry. All agree that this coin does, indeed, belong to Caesar: after all, he minted it and expects it back as tax. Jesus delivers his most stinging verdict to "repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar," and, lest there be any doubt, to "give to God what belongs to God." Stunned with embarrassment, both the Pharisees and the Herodians, once allied in pursuit of Jesus, now cannot wait to leave his presence.

### Study of Today's Readings

**FIRST READING:** Many times God enters the lives of people in the most unlikely ways. Some of the faithful expect God to "empower" them, make them the instrument of his justice and salvation. But, God doesn't work that way. He likes to surprise his people. In these brief verses, Second Isaiah spoke to the Jewish exiles in Babylon. How could God save them, when they lived so far from home? The prophet's answer: by means of a power greater than Babylon itself, the great Cyrus and his Persian army. More important than this message was a simple reminder. The God of the Jews was greater than even Cyrus and his gods. God was in control. He would call on the great Persian to do his bidding; He would guide Cyrus in his role. Abraham's God would receive glory through a pagan! Where do we look to see God in our lives? Many times we look in the wrong places. We search for him where we think he should be, doing things we expect him to do. But, we should heed the words of Second Isaiah. God works for our good in the most unlikely ways and from the most unexpected directions. To truly see God working does require faith, for sometimes it tests our preconceived expectations.

**SECOND READING:** Northeast of the Greek landmass in Macedonia, Thessalonica lay along a major trade route and at the mouth of the Thermaic gulf. As a

**Coffee, Cookies & Conversation** follow Sunday 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.

If you would like to receive a copy of the **bulletin** by email, please

contact [osaprag@augustiniani.cz](mailto:osaprag@augustiniani.cz)

**Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers:** If you would like to serve as a lector or Eucharistic minister at the Sunday mass please contact Ann at [dalyaann@hotmail.com](mailto:dalyaann@hotmail.com)

The choir is looking for new members. If you like to sing, we'd like to have you join us!

Please contact Frank Jicha at [frankjicha1@gmail.com](mailto:frankjicha1@gmail.com) or 602.441.201 for more information.

Every Saturday at 9:00am **feeding of the homeless**, as 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.

Please join us as we **pray the Rosary** the first Saturday of each month! We'll gather at 17:30 in the main church, to pray before English Mass begins at 18:00. Please contact Petra Nykodym at +420 602 223 602 with questions.

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** every Thursday at 19:30 in St. Barbara's Chapel.

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Remember our Parish Dinner - **Thanksgiving Dinner**, which is scheduled for Saturday November 25<sup>th</sup> at 19:00/07:00 pm, at Augustine Hotel. Please see Michael Rainey for tickets and details

# Saint John Stone, OSA

October 25

John Stone (died 1539) was martyred for refusing to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be supreme head of the Church in England.

Almost nothing is known of John's early years or of his life and activities as an Augustinian.

The Parliament of England in 1534 approved a law known as the Act of Supremacy. This Act proclaimed King Henry VIII the supreme head of the Church in England.

Four years later, an official of the King arrived in Canterbury to close all the monasteries and to obtain the written assent of every single Friar to the provisions of the Act of Supremacy. The official first went to the monasteries of several other Orders. Then they went to Austin Friars, the Augustinian house where John was a member. All the other Augustinian Friars signed the document, but John refused.

John was arrested and thrown into prison in the Tower of London. He remained firm in his refusal to accept the King as head of the Church. While in jail, he spent many hours in prayer. One day, God spoke to him, encouraging him to be of good heart and to remain steadfast in his belief, even if it meant death. From this point on, John felt great strength.

John was tried and convicted of treason in 1539. Right after Christmas of that year, a slow procession passed through the streets of Canterbury. The prisoner John was being taken through the city to a hill outside the city walls. There he was hanged, drawn and quartered. Because he was considered a traitor, his head and body were put on display at the entrance to the city.

In the account books of Canterbury, there appears an expense of two shillings and six pence "Paid for a half-ton of wood to build the gallows on which Friar Stone was brought to justice."

Pope Leo XIII beatified John Stone in 1886. Pope Paul VI canonized him in 1970, along with 39 other English martyrs of the same period.