



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

Today's Prayer

What else is that cross of ours which the Lord commands us to carry if not the mortality of our flesh? It is a source of distress to us until death is swallowed up in victory.

Therefore, it is precisely this cross that we must crucify and pierce with the nails of the fear of God.

March 5th and 6th 2011

The Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

St. Thomas Church

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

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GOSPEL REFLEXION

The Wise Christian

Whom do you consider wise in your life? What makes that person wise?

Is Jesus your personal Lord and Savior?

How many times have you heard that question? In the history of Christian theology, there has always been a tension within the view of salvation. Is the person alone saved? Or, did Christ come to save the community? For today, let's set that tension aside. Instead, let's consider the psychological import of the phrase "my personal Lord and Savior." Pushed to its logical conclusion, the phrase is narcissistic; it treats a relationship with Jesus somehow as a personal possession. He is MY personal Lord and Savior. He died to save ME.

It's tempting to reduce spirituality merely to a personal level. It is even more tempting to place a relationship with Christ at the service of my well being. Of course, we should have a personal relationship with the Lord, but should we be in charge of the relationship? More to the point, shouldn't we be striving to do God's will, and make God the servant of our glory?

St. Paul's letter to the Romans is full of theological insight, since it was his most systematic look at salvation from a Christian perspective. Central to Paul's thought is the salvation of non-Jews; Gentiles could be saved through faith in Christ, just as Paul realized his salvation. Of course, faith in Christ stood outside of the Jewish Law, but Paul took that insight one step further. He maintained the Hebrew Scriptures ("the Law and the Prophets" of 3:21) pointed this fact out because they, according to Paul, refer to Christ. (Paul's assertion was assumed by the early Church Fathers; these Christians interpreted the Old Testament allegorically, a way to see symbols for Jesus in the Hebrew passages.)

If salvation was outside the Law, then everyone sinned and, so, needed God's mercy, even those who follow the Jewish Law. But, what is God's mercy? Paul used the notion of "righteousness" several times in these passages to express his understanding of salvation. God made the relationship between him and humanity "right;" he did this through the death and resurrection of his Son. Righteousness was not a birthright, or based upon bloodline; it was a freely-given gift.

Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "wfaix@yahoo.com" or contact Dias Fernando at "diasfernando04@gmail.com" Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin

Collection Appeal

Please Contribute Generously to the Parish Collection as we are not meeting our required budget to run all of the activities. We thank you greatly for your kindness Our Weekly Budget is 10,000kč/week.

Ongoing Activities

Coffee, Cookies & Conversation follow Sunday Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.**

If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please contact osaprag@augustiniani.cz

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

Prayer & worship

Each Sunday we are beginning with a prayer & worship from 10a.m. till 11a.m. in St. Barbara's Chapel. We will also be seeking people who would be willing to come and play an instrument while we worship and/or pray. We pray that the Lord moves more of our members to take action in prayer and worship, as there is much to pray for.

Painting course, every Friday at 6:00 pm in the summer refectory of the monastery.

Is anyone interesting in a **fish dinner** during lent? A fish meal for people to come and share together. The money we raise from donations will go to charity. Please see Jim Willetts

Marriage Preparation: The next one-day marriage preparation course (for the English speaking community) will be held by Fr. William on Saturday 26th March from 9:15am - 3pm for those who wish to participate.

Religious Education Reminder (First Communion Class):

The first communicants will have their First Reconciliation Retreat and receive the sacrament of First Reconciliation on *Saturday, 12 March 2011* (10 a.m. - 2 p.m.). We ask the congregation to please pray for the class in the coming weeks.

A **parent meeting** regarding preparations for the First Holy Communion (to be held on 29 May 2011) will take place on *20 March 2011* during class time (9.45-10.45). More information will follow from Monika and the teachers shortly.

4 leaders needed for an English summer camp inline. More information www.sadba.org

Saint Augustine's School

"A Comprehensive School with a heart open to wisdom"

Hornokrčská 3, 140 00 Praha 4 – Krč

www.skolasvatehoaugustina.cz

Registrations open!

ASH WEDNESDAY, March 9th marks the beginning of the Lenten season in preparation for the Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord. **Mass in English will be celebrated in Saint Barbara's Chapel at 06:00pm/18:00 with distribution of ashes. After Mass if possible to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation**

For those who cannot come this day ashes will be distributed next Sunday. Remember that Ash Wednesday is a strict day of fast in which one full meat-less meal is allowed.

Lent is here. Ready or not, the Big Question is always: How we are going to "do" Lent this year? May I suggest going on a fast that makes sense in this culture? Let us fast from the various types of clutter in our lives, beginning with the "outer regions" of life—our personal habits and the clutter in our homes. Then we will move to mental and spiritual clutter as the weeks progress toward Easter. We can fast from the confusion and busy-ness that characterize our culture. If we use this period to open our hearts, we will be well prepared to celebrate Easter. I offer the following ways to do that.

ASH WEDNESDAY:

GETTING READY TO CLEAR MY CLUTTER

Jl 2:12-18; 2 Cor 5:20—6:2; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18 Today's readings give me basic instructions for the next 40 days. As a first step to clearing my heart and mind of clutter, I arrange a quiet prayer corner in which to talk to God. I find a suitable place in my home and stock it with a Bible, a notebook, pens (and this *Update!*). Today, and every day this Lent, I will spend time with God, reading over the Scriptures for the day, listening to what God is saying to me, and writing down what I hear.

THURSDAY: WHAT AM I GAINING—AND LOSING?

Dt 30:15-20; Lk 9:22-25 This culture urges me to do so much. In what ways is the rush and busy-ness of my life not truly necessary, but an effort to win the approval of others—in other words, to "gain the whole world"?

FRIDAY: REACH OUT TO OTHERS

Is 58:1-9a; Mt 9:14-15 Before I can reach out to those in need, I must be *able* to reach out. I talk to God today about areas of life where I neglect myself and compromise my health. Am I eating the wrong foods? Not getting enough sleep? Constantly stressed? Any of these habits will make me less able to serve God and God's people.

SATURDAY: BE KIND TO MYSELF

Is 58:9b-14; Lk 5:27-32 The tax collector Levi's change of heart came about because Jesus showed him kindness and friendship. I talk to God about any changes I should make in my self care in order to do as Jesus did. I ask for God's help in making these changes in order to be able to do God's will.