



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 22nd – 23rd 2018

30th Sunday of Ordinary
Time A

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St. Thomas Church

Reflection on the Gospel

In the past, this Sunday because of the gospel reading was referred to as “the Sunday of the greatest commandments”. Once again we meet Jesus pitted in debate with the legalistic *Scribes*, or religious lawyers whose duty was to interpret scripture. The Old or First Testament was the area of study and debate. It now appears that the religious lawyers had discovered *613 commandments* divided by importance into *light* and *strict*. Further, these same commandments were divided into *248 positive* (“you will”) and *365 negative* (“you will not”). The average believing Jew was thus confronted with a daunting task: how could one *always* be sure of what is light and strict? How can one avoid the sin of mistaking a “positive” for a “negative” injunction? And, when so bound, what required sacrifices, ritual cleansing and prayers are to be offered? The only “sure way” or *halachah* (‘the rule of right conduct’) was provided by eminent *rabbis* or teachers who “summed up the Law” as a guide to the perplexed and scrupulous. Rabbi Hillel, a contemporary of Jesus and one of the greatest teachers of Israel, once said: “if one does not learn the *Torah* one is guilty of suicide”. His other adage “What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor; that is the *whole Torah* (the Law). Go and learn it” parallels the advice given in *Tobit* 4:15 and Jesus’ own words (known as “the *Golden Rule*” in *Matthew* 7:12). But the revolutionary context of Jesus’ statement is his combining two *positive* laws: *you shall love the Lord your God* (*Deuteronomy* 6:5) and *you shall love your neighbor as yourself* (*Leviticus* 19:18). This deceptively simple *command of love* soon became for the Jewish Christians and their converts the identifying characteristic of their faith. So much so that even in our own day when unpracticed it becomes a biting indictment of Christian hypocrisy. Could anything be more simple or demanding than loving one another? Let us examine ourselves in honest light: are we truly witnesses to Christ and his love in our respect and love for each other? This love grows first in our own hearts and spreads to others as an image and likeness of God himself.

Study of Today's Readings

FIRST READING: These verses are part of the Covenant Code. In the Exodus narrative, God declared his Law to his people through Moses at Mount Sinai. The code regulated both worship and social behavior. The laws on behavior tried to ensure both loyalty to the nation and equitable treatment for the weak in society. In ancient times, patriotism and religious practice were so intertwined that rules governing such behavior could be called “religious nationalism.” Hence, the worship of idols was akin to treason among the Israelites, and was punished accordingly. Warnings against abuse of widows and orphans also carried heavy weight. These were the weakest members of the nation, for they were homeless in a social system based upon extended families. It would be easy to take advantage of them. But the caveat of divine judgment tried to check such behavior. The shame of such acts would carry on to one's descendants. For God Himself would punish this crime by making wives widows and children orphans. Exodus painted love of God and love of neighbor in stark terms.

SECOND READING: Last week, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians began with a blessing and praise. The community at Thessalonika had adopted the faith against great opposition. In contrast to the internal strife in the Corinthian assembly, this church had a cohesive faith with a sense of unity and purpose. The

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.

Rule of St. Augustine

Chapter Four

19. There should be nothing about your behavior to attract attention. Besides, you should not seek to please by your apparel, but by a good life.
20. Whenever you go out, walk together, and when you reach your destination, stay together.
21. In your walking, standing, and every movement, let nothing occur to give offense to anyone who sees you, but only what becomes your holy state of life.
22. Although your eyes may chance to rest upon persons of the other sex, you must not fix your gaze on them. Seeing them when you go out is not forbidden, but it is sinful to desire them or to wish them to desire you, for it is not by touch or passionate feeling alone but by one's gaze as well that lustful desires mutually arise. And do not say that your hearts are pure if there is immodesty of the eye, because the unchaste eye carries the message of an impure heart. And when such hearts disclose their unchaste desires in a mutual gaze, even without saying a word, then it is that chastity itself suddenly goes out of their life, even though their bodies remain unsullied by unchaste acts.
23. And whoever fix their gaze upon a person of the other sex and like to have that person's gaze fixed upon them, must not suppose that others do not see what they are doing. They are very much seen, even by those they think do not see them. But suppose that all this escapes the notice of human beings -- what will they do about God who sees from on high and from whom nothing is hidden? Or are you to imagine that he does not see because he sees with a patience as great as his wisdom? Let religious, then, have such fear of God that they will not want to be an occasion of sinful pleasure to those of the other sex. Ever mindful that God sees all things, let them not desire to look at such persons lustfully. For it is on this point that fear of the Lord is recommended, where it is written: An abomination to the Lord is he who fixes his gaze (Proverbs 27:20).
24. So when you are together in church and anywhere else where persons of the other sex are present, exercise a mutual care over purity of life. Thus, by mutual vigilance over one another will God, who dwells in you, grant you his protection.
25. If you notice in any of your brothers or sisters this wantonness of the eye, of which I am speaking, admonish them at once so that the beginning of evil will not grow more serious, but will be promptly corrected.
26. But if you see them doing the same thing again on some other day, even after admonition, then whoever had occasion to discover this must report them as they would a wounded person in need of treatment. But let the offense first be pointed out to two or three so that the persons can be proven guilty on the testimony of these two or three and be punished with due severity. And do not charge yourselves with ill-will when you bring this offense to light. Indeed, yours is the greater blame if you allow your brothers or sisters to be lost through your silence when you are able to bring about their correction by your disclosure. If your brothers or sisters, for example, were suffering a bodily wound that they wanted to hide for fear of undergoing treatment, would it not be cruel of you to remain silent and a mercy on your part to make this known? How much greater then is your obligation to make their condition known lest they continue to suffer a more deadly wound of the soul.
27. But if they fail to correct the fault despite this admonition, they should first be brought to the attention of the superior before the offense is made known to the others who will have to prove their guilt, in the event that they deny the charge. Thus, corrected in private, their fault can perhaps be kept from the others. But should they feign ignorance, the others are to be summoned so that in the presence of all they can be proven guilty, rather than stand accused on the word of one alone. Once proven guilty, they must undergo salutary punishment according to the judgment of the superior or priest having the proper authority. If they refuse to submit to punishment, they shall be expelled from your brotherhood or sisterhood even if they do not withdraw of their own accord. For this too is not done out of cruelty, but from a sense of compassion, so that many others may not be lost through their bad example.
28. And let everything I have said about not fixing one's gaze be also observed carefully and faithfully with regard to other offenses: to find them out, to ward them off, to make them known, to prove and punish them -- all out of love for our fellows and a hatred of sin.
29. But if any should go so far in wrongdoing as to receive letters in secret from a person of the other sex, or small gifts of any kind, you ought to show mercy and pray for them if they confess this of their own accord. But if the offense is detected and they are found guilty, they must be more severely chastised according to the judgment of the priest or superior.

Announcements

- *Every Saturday at 9:00 am **feeding of the homeless**, as social service
- ***Second Collection today is for the Missions**. Thank you for your generosity.
- *Please note that Catechetical instruction recommences next Sunday morning at 09:45 am
- *Remember our Parish Dinner -**Thanksgiving Dinner**, which is scheduled for Sunday at 18:00/06:00 pm, 19 November. Help will be needed for setting up/clean up. Please see Michael Rainey for details

CALLING ALL YOUNG CATHOLIC ADULTS!

If you are interested in joining a group of young Catholic adults to meet monthly for friendly conversation, faith sharing, group outings, and more, please contact Carrie Brown at carolynbrown402@gmail.com. Carrie is new to St. Thomas parish and has previous experience leading young Catholic adult groups. If you ever feel alone in your faith as a young adult, this group is for you! "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." 1 Timothy 4:12

40 days for life!

In an effort to end abortion in the Czech Republic I will be present at U Apolinarska Hospital on Apolinarska ulice near Karlovo Nam. each Wednesday morning , from 8 to 9, for the next 6 weeks, to witness to abortion's two victims, the wounded woman and the death of her unborn child.

I encourage others to join me!
Suzanne Formanek, Family Ministry

World Mission Sunday

World Mission Sunday, organized by the Propagation of the Faith, is a day set aside for Catholics worldwide to recommit themselves to the Church's missionary activity through prayer and sacrifice. In 2011, World Mission Sunday is celebrated on October 23.

In a message delivered on a recent World Mission Sunday, the Pope said: "The offerings that will be collected [on World Mission Sunday] are destined for a common fund of solidarity distributed, in the Pope's name, by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith among the missions and missionaries of the entire world."

Every year the needs of the Catholic Church in the Missions grow - as new dioceses are formed, as new seminaries are opened because of the growing number of young men hearing Christ's call to follow Him as priests, as areas devastated by war or natural disaster are rebuilt, and as other areas, long suppressed, are opening up to hear the message of Christ and His Church. That is why the involvement and commitment of Catholics from around the world is so urgently needed. Offerings from Catholics in the United States, on World Mission Sunday and throughout the year, are combined with offerings to the Propagation of the Faith worldwide.