



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



**THE AUGUSTINIANS IN THE CZECH LANDS: 750 YEARS IN SERVICE OF THE GOSPEL.
With Hope and Joy!**

August 4th and August 5th 2012

The 18th Ordinary Sunday -B

St. Thomas Church

The Reflection of the Gospel

John wrote his gospel as a written guide to Jesus' teachings. For that purpose he first utilized those traditions passed down by members of the community who had personally known him or one of his close disciples. Such recorded teachings soon became a necessity for an expanding Christian community now confronting a skeptical cosmopolitan Greco-Roman world. The four gospels (Anglo Saxon= *good news*), not so much historical or biographical accounts as we would identify those literary genres, were gradually joined with other writings (such as the Acts, the 21 epistles and Revelation) to the original Hebrew scriptures into the accepted "Bible of the Church." On the authority of such teachers as Athanasius of Alexandria (+373) and Augustine of Hippo Regius (+430) a series of Catholic councils would finally decide which writings were to be on the official canon (Greek= *an approved list*) of scripture binding all believers in one profession of faith. Today's gospel reading is a case in point. The community of John was embroiled in controversy with a fringe group (*Docetists*) which taught that Jesus only "appeared or seemed" to have a human body. A position roughly equivalent to what is held by contemporary Jehovah Witnesses. Jesus' words and actions were very important for this mission church. If Jesus were a phantasm why did he feed the hungry multitudes? Would a "ghost" care for such a material need? When the restless crowd clamored to know what they "had to do" to gain God's favor and so be fed again Jesus' response was simple: this is the only action required *have faith in the one God has sent*. The Israelites ate **manna** in the desert and died but this bread that Jesus gives endows the faithfilled believer with life. And this life is Jesus himself. He is the bread of life that has come down from heaven; he nourishes and gives eternal life to those who believe. The *Docetists* could hardly believe their ears and no less put their faith in such a rank action.

St. Augustine's Values

Pursuit of Knowledge and Wisdom

"Believe so that you may understand. Understand that you may believe."

In the Augustinian model of education, both faculty and students are "servants of the truth," who place instruction and learning in the disciplines at the service of development of intellect. Learning, "cultivation of the mind," in the Augustinian context, is to be understood as more than the pursuit of "academic excellence" or of knowledge for its own sake, but more appropriately as the pursuit of wisdom, the capacity to understand one's self, others and the world in light of the Ultimate reality. This pursuit of wisdom coincides with the search for Truth for which every person longs.

Honesty and humility characterize "disciplined conversation" between faculty and student, during which students develop confidence in their abilities to reason and to assert for themselves discovered truth. The intended outcome is less dependence on the teacher's "authority" but greater appreciation for "truth," both discovered and revealed during principled and collaborative inquiry.

The academic community acknowledges belief in God as reasonable, places each discipline in conversation with the Catholic intellectual tradition, and creates an environment "where being a faithful Catholic is taken seriously as an intelligent and morally responsible option for contemporary people."

In the Augustinian model, faculty and students form an egalitarian learning community, pursuing goals as "friends, brothers, sisters, sharing with others what they have or gain, and receiving what God has given or will give" to each.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

Feasts

- 04 *John Marie Vianney (+1859)*, the *cure d'Ars*, the patron of parish priests and pastors was not an intellectual light. But his simple piety and heroic devotion to duty earned him the love of thousands who flocked to his confessional for moral and ethical guidance.
-World War I began in 1914.
- 05 The *Dedication of St. Mary Major Basilica*, the oldest Church so named in Europe, took place in AD 352.
- 06 *The Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord* commemorates the glorification of Jesus in the presence of his disciples (*Mark 9*).
-Hiroshima is bombed in 1945. Bolivia and Jamaica celebrate their independence this day.
- 07 *Cajetan (+1547)* was an Italian priest so zealous that he was called the "hunter of souls." Cajetan is the patron of our filial church on Nerudova where Mass will be offered this day at 06:30pm/18:30.
-Colombia celebrates its national day; Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet died in 1941.
- 08 *Dominic Guzman (+1221)*, the founder of the *Order of Preachers*, died;
Thomas a Kempis, the Dutch Augustinian canon and author of the *Imitation of Christ*, died near Zwolle, the Netherlands in 1471. *Mary MacKillop (+1909)*, the first canonized native-born Australian and educator died. This is also the commemoration of the *Fourteen Holy Helpers* invoked against various ills.
- 09 *Edith Stein, OCD (+1942)*, a Carmelite nun and convert from Judaism, was arrested by the Gestapo and murdered in Auschwitz. She has been named one of the six patrons of Europe.
-*Franz Jagerstatter (+1943)* a young Austrian Catholic who for his denunciation of Nazi atrocities was himself summarily executed by the Gestapo.
-The second atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki in 1945.

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- * We are looking for an **English teacher** to teach children in our school in Prague. If you are interested, please contact Fr. Juan at 602684538. Experience in teaching children is required!
- The requirements to be teacher in our school:
- *To have an academic requires title according with the Czech education system
- *To be a good person, with a good reputation
- *To be Christian.
- *Always see the good in our students and praise them
- *To have enthusiasm for his/her work.

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

- *If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please contact osaprag@augustiniani.cz
- *Our regular **organist** and pianist for the last few years will be leaving us at the end of June. If you can play the keyboard or guitar, even if only on an occasional basis, we would like to hear from you! Please contact the director of the choir Tim Young: tim@young.co.cz
- *We wish all our families a wonderful, restful summer and look forward to welcoming you back at our Sunday School in September
- *If you wish to sign up your child for the 2012-2013 religious education program for children and youth or if you are interested in helping with the program as a teacher or an assistant, please contact Mary Beth Webster at marybethwebster@hotmail.com.

About St. Augustine

The Politics

When Augustine was born in the middle of the fourth century, the western Roman Empire was still a force to be reckoned with. Though rebellion of border tribes in Northern Europe were a continuing aggravation, Rome could still claim control over most of the civilized world in Europe and North Africa. When Augustine died seventy-six years later, all this had changed. The western Empire was under siege from the barbarians from the north. They had invaded France and Spain. In 410 they captured the city of Rome itself. They moved on into North Africa and by 430 were laying siege to Hippo where Augustine lay dying. They were to rule in North Africa for a hundred years thereafter.

During most of Augustine's life, Rome held uneasy control of its North African Provinces. Its influence was quite strong in the cities and larger towns, but lost its vigor the further one moved out into the country. There the native North African people held sway, suspicious of any foreign challenge to their historic practices and filled with hatred for the "aliens" from across the sea who took their crops and imposed impossible levies on their possessions. Symptomatic of the power of this native spirit was the success of Donatism, a vigorous faction within North African Christianity. Part of its strength, it would seem, came from its identification as a "North African" thing ... an ultra-conservative interpretation of salvation doctrine that struck a resonant chord in the rigid native mind.

The life of Augustine thus spanned a tumultuous time in the history of the western Empire and the western Church. In the late fourth century it seemed that the North African Church would be torn apart by religious civil war. In the early fifth century it seemed possible that western civilization itself would come to an end. It is no wonder that in 398 Augustine would observe to a friend that on every border and in every province peace depended on the sworn oaths of barbarians. (*Letter 47, 2*) As he lay dying listening to the Vandals attacking his beloved Hippo, he looked back over the violence of his times and ruefully observed that one could not be called particularly wise if they were overcome with amazement when things of wood and stone fell apart and people who are mortal eventually died. (*Possidius, Life of the Bishop Saint Augustine, 28*)

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