



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



750 let Augustiniánů v Čechách

1262–2012

S nadějí a radostí

**THE AUGUSTINIANS IN THE CZECH
LANDS: 750 YEARS IN SERVICE OF THE
GOSPEL.**

With Hope and Joy!

November 17th and 18th 2012

Thirty Third Sunday in
Ordinary Time-Year B

St. Thomas Church

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The Reflection of the Gospel

Today's gospel reading has been termed "apocalyptic." Originating some two hundred years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth one of its most outstanding examples is contained in the book of Daniel, the Prophet, which is read as today's first lesson. The word *apocalyptic* (the Greek "uncovering" or "revealing"), a comparatively late literary genre in Scripture, attempts to explain world events within the impending action of a just God whose dramatic "foretold" advent will avenge all injustices and finally restore divine order. It emerged within the context of persecution waged by the Hellenic king Antiochus IV of Syria some 150 years before Christ. Mark the evangelist freely adapted its stern style, terse warnings of impending doom with the conviction that the death of Jesus (ca. AD 27/28) and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem (AD 70) bracketed those "final days" before that "day of judgment." To heighten such expectations Jesus Christ according to Mark would soon return in glory (in Greek *parousia*) and all that he had endured - his passion, death and resurrection - and now repeated in the trials suffered by his own followers, would be at once vindicated. However, the *parousia* or appearance did not occur as expected and the later evangelists, Matthew, Luke and John, would not readily see the Lord's advent in such immediate terms. For Mark, the fig tree, one of the few Palestinian trees that shed its leaves and lay dormant in winter, became not only the harbinger of spring but of the advent of the "new age of Christ's coming in glory." And so it is with us also. We do not need to know the exact time of Christ's return searching Scripture for hidden clues. What is of paramount importance is our own daily preparation to meet our God with the calm assurance of his mercy.

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Study of the First Reading

When the millennium approached, many people were concerned about the corruption of society and the pending end of the world. Such fears are not new; they extend back 2200 years to the book of Daniel. Before Daniel, Jewish prophecy was unambiguous; it could be clearly interpreted. Full of obscure symbols that can be interpreted many different ways, Daniel is one of the first books that includes "apocalyptic" visions as prophecy. And Daniel's concern focused on the "day of the Lord" (i.e., Judgment Day). Even in a time of great stress, Daniel emphasizes God's protection in the person of Michael (the archangel) [1]. But, what of the righteous who died and did not receive protection? Here, Daniel introduces the concepts of the resurrection and the final judgment [2]. Notice, the evil would be shamed as their punishment, while the faithful would have reputations "like the stars in the sky," bright and forever [3]. The just (i.e., the faithful) have a place in the creation ("the firmament") like the stars. Daniel connected moral living with God's creation; at the end of time, everything, including morality, would be set "right." Daniel saw the unity of nature and morality in a way that Western culture easily overlooks. But we should not make connection in terms of karma, the eternal payback. God's judgment is his mercy and his love; these are the divine qualities we believe in, not in moral retribution as a "law of the universe." Daniel saw the connection between creation and morality in God. The only way to live that connection is in a faith relationship.

Study of the Second Reading

In these verses, the author of Hebrews concluded his exposition about sacrifice. As he did before, the author compared the earthly cult of the Temple in Jerusalem with the heavenly worship of Jesus which began on the cross. Both types of sacrifice were continuous. The earthly cult offered the same sacrifices over and over. In this sense, it was impotent, for it could not effect what it asked: reconciliation and intimacy with God. The heavenly cult of Jesus was also continuous, but in a different sense. The death of Jesus on the cross was a one time event. But the reality of that event, found in the risen body of the Lord, would live forever. To truly appreciate the thinking in Hebrews, we must once again see what kept people from a lasting, intimate relationship with God: death. The earthly cult of the Temple could never overcome death. This was why it could not take away the cause of death: sin. But, with the death and resurrection of Jesus, death itself was destroyed and, by extension, its cause. Belief in the Risen Lord connected one to his eternal life. With such life now a reality, the author looked forward to the destruction of those who aligned themselves with sin and death (i.e., non-believers). These would be the enemies "as a stool under his feet." Some might mock us for our trust in someone who died two millennia ago. This was the same skepticism that Jewish-Christians faced when they held onto their faith in the face of the destruction of the Temple. The gloomy outlook of the world, critics claim, is enough to argue against faith. Believers, however, view the outlook AS a reason for faith. We reach out to the One beyond us, because the world is not enough. And he gives us true, everlasting life.

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Announcements and Ongoing Activities

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

*Please, pray for the **Mission** in our Parish!

*We **welcome** all our new parishioners to St. Thomas Church. Please introduce yourselves, if you wish at refreshments after the 11:00 am Mass on Sundays or just call us or visit at your convenience

***Bible Study** sessions are held each Tuesday evening at 6:30pm/18:00 in the Church office. All are welcome to join and reflect on the Word of God.

*St Thomas' English Speaking Community now has a presence on **facebook**. Please 'like' our page and if you want to get more involved with the community, join our group!

***Parishioner's Prayer Intentions:** The English Community will now post prayer requests on the bulletin board designated for their use in the walkway. Anyone who would like prayers said is invited to post their needs and Father Bill will pray for these intentions throughout the week. You needn't identify yourself; your request is sufficient. For those who've had prayers answered we will also have a praise section.

*Please note that on Saturday November 24th the **6:00pm Mass** will be in the Archbishops Palace in Hradčanské náměstí 15. Prague 1

* On Saturday November 24th we will have a Memorial service for **Johanna Elisabeth Westen** who is buried in our Church. The service will start at 10:30 in the Church with a brief song and poetry reading at her tomb stone in the cloister garden, follow by a poetry recitation and song in the summer refectory of the monastery. All are invited!

St. Thomas Parish Dinner of Thanks

Where:

Archbishops Palace
Hradcanske namesti 16
Prague 1

When:

Saturday November 24th
Mass at 18:00

Dinner follows at 19:15

Tickets with Michael Rainey or William Revellese

Minutes for Parish Counsel Meeting: September 16/2012

Welcome and Opening Prayer:

Fr. Bill opened with prayer and welcomed all, especially Sister Edna. Her role in the Parish Counsel will be to assist and advise the Family Ministry.

Fr. Juan Observations:

In Czech Republic the Augustinian community will be celebrating the **Year of Missions**.

The first part will include spiritual exercises, conference and a program; The second: will extend from Christmas to Easter; From Easter to June the mission will include those outside the Czech Community. The group will pray for missions (noted in the bulletin) The last time this was done was 2003, but renewal needs to be done every year.

2013 is the Year of Faith. Pope Benedict XVI has called this to be celebrated in the universal Church. Begins on the 11th of October and finishes with Christ the King Sunday:

Address by Father Bill:

He asked us how this Year of Faith will be celebrated in the English speaking community. Ideas will be presented to Parish Counsel and then to the parish community.

Bear, Mary Beth, Fr. Bill and Jim will be on the committee. A majority vote agreed to this proposition.

Financial Report: Presented by Jose:

Collections are doing well. Questions were raised concerning the purpose of our bank accounts.

It was suggested that once a month we put how money collected is being used in the bulletin;

Financial Report: Bill

Mary Beth and Bill have budgeted for Religious Education classes and will report the figures to the counsel.

Pricing of Windows:

Windows of the Monastery garden: 30,000 kcs for each window and there will be 21 windows; Fundraising will be necessary; Goals for the English community; Organ requires about 3 million crowns; Windows will be installed in about a year; New area for kindergarten, 9 million kcs.

Bill's Report:

Another Parishioner's Day is proposed to introduce ministries to the parish. 14th October is chosen:

Webpage:

will cover the main points of the Parish counsel minutes; place announcements and fundraising activity; Summary will be done by Bill; No objection, motion passed.

Adult Religious Programs;

Marriage prep classes: 2 to 3 couples per session, on third Sat. of designated months;

Inquiry class: Wednesdays

Bible Study: Tuesdays at 6:30

Fr. Juan to offer Sunday morning Bible Study at 9:45;

Fr. Bill wants to share in jobs: reading, finding alternate resources for Fr. Bill; maybe Jim can do this.

Possibilities of additional classes outside of Sunday School; room would be needed; how about fees?

Music:

A Spanish connection from Bear has interest in playing the organ. He will followup.

Hospitality:

older students could be part of this group

Thanksgiving meal:

Kids can decorate; no plastic forks, details will come from Mike and

Language Classes:

English: Teacher required here in Parish and School – materials are available; no response, despite questions, and no special qualifications;

Czech: Monday evening

Spanish classes: begin in September

Family Ministry:

Photo Exhibition turned out well:

Flash Points:

refocus articles so they pertain to Czech Republic meet social needs of family in CR, such as cultural and family integration building awareness of gospel values; Czechs need to be responsible

Next Meeting: January 2013.