



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



YEAR OF FAITH:
OCT. 11, 2012-NOV. 24, 2013
"The 'door of faith' (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church."---Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter Porta Fidei for the Indiction of the Year of Faith.

October 26th and October 27th
2013

The Thirty Sunday in
Ordinary Time – Year C

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St. Thomas Church

GOSPEL STUDY

Comparisons can be odious. In this parable or short story with a moral ending, two figures are presented: a pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisees were the religious authorities in Jesus' day. Characterized by their adherence to a literal interpretation of the Law, they were noted for their ascetical practices that went beyond religious obligations. Jews were required to fast but once a year on Yom Kippur the Pharisees, however, fasted twice a week on Monday and Thursday. Tithing or a self-imposed tax on everything one owned became for the Pharisees a point of pride. The tax collector or publican, on the other hand, was regarded as beyond the pale of salvation if he did not restore what he had stolen plus one fifth in compensation to all whom he had defrauded. Once he did this, he then would be required to change his occupation as proof of his conversion. Such a turn about, however, was regarded as highly unlikely and the tax collector remained in his sin before God. But, Jesus taught differently. Noting the arrogant attitude of the Pharisee's prayer, Jesus commends the humble confession of the tax collector that would have come as a surprise to his listeners. After all, the pharisee for all his pretensions had fulfilled the Law. But, what Jesus teaches here is that it is not through our efforts that we obtain divine pardon, rather it is precisely through a humble recognition of weakness and failure that we encounter God's loving compassion. Jesus ends this parable with the telling words that "the tax collector went home justified." How do we approach God?

St. John Stone, O.S.A. 25th October

Nothing whatsoever is known of John's early life, education, or activities in the Order, though it is conjectured that he joined the Augustinians at Canterbury since this is the place of his death. His story then, is essentially that of his martyrdom.

On 3 November 1534 the English Parliament issued the Act of Supremacy, declaring Henry VIII supreme head of the Church in England. In December 1538, Richard Ingworth, a former Dominican and the official emissary of Thomas Cromwell, appeared at Canterbury to close the houses of the mendicant friars there and obtain the written assent of each community's members to the above-mentioned Act. The friaries of the Franciscans and Dominicans were surrendered without difficulty. When, on 14 December, Richard appeared at the monastery of the Austin Friars, John alone among his brothers refused to sign, and spoke in clear terms of his objections to the king's claims over the Church. John was immediately separated from his confreres in order to forestall his influence over them and was urged eventually with threats to alter his position. When he persisted in his refusal he was brought to London so that Cromwell himself might pressure him to change his view. He was imprisoned for a year in the tower of London where he remained adamant. It was while here that John had a religious experience which was recorded by the Catholic apologist and biographer, Nicholas Harpsfield:

"John Stone was invested with the crown of martyrdom at Canterbury. But before that, having poured forth prayers in prison to God and having fasted continuously for three days, he heard a voice, though he saw no one, which addressed him by name and bade him to be of good heart and not to hesitate to suffer death with constancy for the belief which he had professed. From this afterwards he gained such eagerness and strength as never to allow himself by persuasion or terror to be drawn from his purpose. These facts I learned from a sober and trustworthy man who is still living, to whom Stone himself revealed them."

On October 1539, John was sent to be tried at Canterbury. The sentence was handed down on 6 December and within several weeks, probably two days after Christmas, he was hanged, drawn, and quartered at a place called the Dungeon, now known as Dane John. Because he was a traitor to the king, his head and his quartered body were exhibited at the city gates.

John Stone was beatified on 9 December 1886 by Leo XIII and was canonized, along with thirty-nine other English martyrs of the Reformation, by Paul VI on 25 December 1970.

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

Mission 2013

The Holiness in Halloween (part 2)

In preparation for All Saints Day (1 Nov) and All Souls Day (2 Nov), we make a small stop on 31 October for All Hallow's Eve, or Halloween.

In medieval times, one popular All Souls' Day practice was to make "soul cakes," simple bread desserts with a currant topping. In a custom called "souling," children would go door-to-door begging for the cakes, much like modern trick-or-treaters.

For every cake a child collected, he or she would have to say a prayer for the dead relatives of the person who gave the cake. These prayers would help the relatives find their way out of purgatory and into heaven. The children even sang a soul cake song along the lines of the modern "Trick-or-treat, trick-or-treat, give me something good to eat." One version of the song went: A soul cake! A soul cake! Have mercy on all Christian souls, for a soul cake!

Prior to that when the Celtic people came together, the children would go around house to house collecting firewood (A most valuable commodity) to heap onto the fire that would serve as the center piece of the celebration of Samhain (Sow-en). They would then take coals from the fire to relight their home fires, to show the unity of the community. They would carry these home in a hallowed out turnip, which made a lantern of sorts. These resembled the modern day jack-o'-lantern. The direct descendent of the jack-o'-lantern comes to us from 18th century Ireland, yet still based in Celtic tradition.

There seem to have been a popular figure in tales of the day called Stingy Jack, who on several occasions avoided damnation by tricking the devil himself, and very often this occurred on All Hallow's Eve. In one of these stories, he convinced Satan to climb up a tree, and then cut crosses all around the trunk, so the devil could not get down. In return for his help down the tree, Satan promised to leave Jack alone forever. So when Stingy Jack dies, he is denied entry into Heaven and true to his word, Satan does not accept him into Hell. Satan tosses a hot coal onto the path to help light the way, and Jack puts this into his hallowed out turnip, carrying it as he wanders the earth. So the lantern of Jack, becomes our jack-o'-lantern.

Later in the 1800s, as the Scots and Irish brought their Hallow's Eve celebrations and traditions to North America, the turnips were exchanged for the much more prevalent Pumpkins.

The Evil spirits, Ghouls, Witches and monsters that adorn our current Halloween Traditions, are more ones of commercialism and not based in fact or tradition. The acknowledgment and celebration of our dead was not uncommon throughout history and across religious lines. It is still practiced in many cultures. The sales of such evil images and goods has made Halloween second only to Christmas, in its commercial value to the economy.

So this year, let us embrace the holiness of Halloween. Let our children take the fruits of their trick or treating and for each handful of candy, say a prayer for our loved ones who have gone before us. Let us make prayers to our beloved saints, let us acknowledge evil as we turn away from it and celebrate two of our most joyous feast, that of All Saints Day and All Souls Day. The eve of which we will spend looking after our children as they collect modern "soul cakes" with their trick or treating. God Bless.

Ongoing Activities

- ❖ If you would like to receive a **copy of the bulletin by email**, please contact osaprag@augustiniani.cz
- ❖ We welcome all our guests and especially those who will be living and working in Prague during this coming year. All are invited to refreshments immediately after Mass in the monastery refectory
- ❖ Are you interested in helping in the parish? We can use ushers, readers, acolytes, teachers, refreshment/ set up-cleaning up. You can meet us in the refectory, please come and introduce yourselves.
- ❖ **Bible Study** sessions are held each Tuesday evening at 6:30pm/18:00 All are welcome to join and reflect on the Word of God.
- ❖ **Religious education for adult** every Monday from 06:30
- ❖ St. Thomas Catholic Religious Education program. Classes will be held every Sunday (except school holidays) from **9:45 to 10:45**.

NEW PARISH COUNCIL

Members for the new Parish Council were elected

Bear Midkiff
Mary Beth Webster
William Revellese
Michael Rainey
David Manley
Ann Daily

Thanksgiving Day, in the Archbishop's Palace Nov. 23rd is approaching; please see Mr. Michael Rainey for details.