



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.

November 2nd and November 3rd 2013

The Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C

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St. Thomas Church

GOSPEL STUDY

The story of Zacchaeus conveys a message of salvation and hope. The main figure, one Zacchaeus, a despised tax collector for the Roman occupation force, being small of stature, climbs a tree to get a better look at Jesus. While passing by, Jesus looks up, calls the diminutive official down from his aerie and invites himself for dinner! Of course, this caused no small offense to the crowd who regarded such people as *sinner*s outside the pale of salvation. The effect of this invitation is both electrifying and significant for Zacchaeus. Scrambling down the sycamore, he leads Jesus home where he resolves to go beyond the restitution requirements of the Law of Moses. Instead of the sum stolen plus one-fifth, Zacchaeus now vows to restore four times the amount stolen with a further promise to give one half of his possessions to the poor! Recall when Jesus had proposed this same invitation to the rich young man the response was negative: *He went away sad because he had many possessions*. Jesus confirms his host's humble but generous conversion with the beautiful statement that *salvation has come to this house*. Indeed, this accursed outcast once living outside the Law is now readmitted into the company of the saved. Zacchaeus had encountered the mercy of God *through* the person and word of Jesus. Formerly mediated through the fulfillment of the Law, salvation now is realized through Jesus alone who leads the broken back home to God's loving mercy and forgiveness.

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

First Reading:

The book of Wisdom is also known as the "Wisdom of Solomon," which honored the wisest of all Israeli monarchs, Solomon. Written toward the end of the intertestamental period (100 B.C to 100 A.D.), this book praised the ultimate virtue in Greek culture: wisdom. The author held that wisdom was not only an instrument of God, it had many of the personal qualities that Christians claimed for the "Logos." The book offers us a unique look into Diaspora Jews who were striving to integrate the world views of two cultures. Their Jewish belief system held the cosmos was a creation of God; hence it was "good." The Neo-Platonism of the host culture saw reality through the lense of duality; the universe was divided into two realms: spirit (which was good and superior) and matter (which was evil or inferior); humanity was a creature caught in the middle. While this summary is a gross simplification of the cultures, it does give us an overview to the challenges these "Hellenistic" Jews faced. How could someone hold creation was good (including matter) while addressing the Greek culture at large? The answer was simple: reduce the language of duality to the realm of morality. The righteous would be led by God's wisdom into an immortal life, while the evil who rejected such wisdom were condemned to non-existence. This view was evident in these few passages from Wisdom. The author portrayed God as a Master looking over his creation from a vast distance. In this sense, the author painted the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the One of supreme power and love. Precisely because of this power and love, God can chastize the immoral with patience; God can bridge the chasm between the righteous and the sinner; God can reinstate the repentant sinner to a place of honor. Implicitly, the author gave the sinner hope, when the general culture had a pessimistic outlook. For the Jews, the source of immorality was the person endowed with free will. For the Greeks, the source of immorality lie with the gods themselves. Judaism held out the possibility to live a moral life. Hellenistic common wisdom offered no such possibility; it was fatalistic.

Even after two millennia, the words from Wisdom still give us hope. With God's help and love, we can live a moral life. We can repent.

Mission 2013

We are all sinners and saints

If someone stood up today and stated that everyone in this church was a sinner, you probably would not have much of a problem with the truth in the statement. We know that temptation follows us through all our days, we are aware of Satan's eternal mission to lure us over to his side. We are also aware that the flesh is weak and we struggle with the good that is in us and our base, more primitive instincts. Our kids struggle all the time with this, when we have to pursued them that hitting the person who is aggravating them at school is not the correct answer and not the "Christian" thing to do. So without much debate, we can agree that we are all sinners. It is a part of us.

What if someone stood in this place today and told you that ALL of you in this Parish today are saints?

Would you be stunned? Would you deny it? Would you feel strange that someone used the word Saint in connection with your name?

The word "saint" literally means "holy," and, in the New Testament, "saint" referred to all who believed in Jesus Christ and followed his teachings. St. Paul often addressed his epistles to "the saints" of a particular city (see, for instance, Ephesians 1:1 and 2 Corinthians 1:1), and the Acts of the Apostles talks about St. Peter going to visit the saints in Lydda (Acts 9:2). The assumption was that those who followed Christ had been so transformed that they were now different from other men and women and, thus, should be considered holy.

Early on in Christianity, no one knows exactly when, the meaning of the word began to change. As Christianity spread, it became clear that some Christians lived lives of extraordinary, or heroic, virtue.

The word "saint" thus became more narrowly applied to such people, who were venerated after their deaths as saints, usually by the members of their local church or the Christians in the region where they lived, because they were familiar with their good deeds. Eventually, the Catholic Church created a process, called "canonization," through which such venerable people could be recognized as saints by all Christians everywhere.

Most of the saints whom we refer to by that title have gone through this process of canonization. Others, such as St. Peter and St. Paul, received the title through acclamation, or the universal recognition of their holiness.

Catholics believe that both types of saints (canonized and acclaimed) are already in Heaven, which is why one of the requirements for the canonization process is proof of miracles performed by the possible saint after his death. Canonized saints can be venerated anywhere and prayed to publicly, and their lives are held up to Christians still struggling here on earth as examples to be imitated.

The Communion of Saints

Like all Christians, Catholics believe in life after death. Those who have lived good lives and died in the faith of Christ will, as the Bible tells us, share in his resurrection.

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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
- ❖ **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
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ 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!

St. Thomas Parish Dinner of Thanks

Where:

Archbishops Palace. Hradcanske namesti 16
Prague 1

When:

Saturday November 23th

Mass at 18:00

Dinner follows at 19:15

Tickets with Michael Rainey

While we live together on earth as Christians, we are in communion, or unity, with one another. But that communion doesn't end when one of us dies. We believe that Christians in heaven, the saints, remain in communion with those of us on earth.

So, just as we might ask a friend or family member to pray for us, we can approach a saint with our prayers too. So as we approach ALL Saints Day and All Souls Day, lets remember that when we pray to or with the Saints, we are praying for help from a friend. We do not worship them. True worship belongs to the true God and the Trinity alone. We can petition help on behalf of those departed, to help them attain the perfection of the soul that will allow their ascension into Heaven or for needs we may have in our own lives.

Just like we would do in this community of Christ followers. Or should I say "in this community of Saints?"