



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

Today's Prayer

We must never say that it is no use for them to live chastely in the married state, to direct their houses and families in a Christian way, or to heap up for themselves heavenly treasures by their acts of mercy.

February 22nd and 23rd 2014

The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

St. Thomas Church

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GOSPEL REFLEXION

Love Your Enemies

How hard is it to respect people that you detest?

Face it. We don't like everyone we meet and many people don't like us. It's the way of the world. But, as Christians, we are called to a higher code of conduct. While we have hurt or broken relationships, even people have to "love" from a distance, how we treat them speaks volumes about our faith and our character. The trick for these distant people is to keep the door of reconciliation open. Maybe, someday, there will be forgiveness and healing. If we cannot give these people friendship, at least we can pray for them. If we must keep our distance for our own mental health, at least we can hope for a change of heart.

In today Gospel, Jesus spoke of Christian justice, not the justice of retribution, but the justice of the Kingdom. Not an "eye for an eye" but a way to show others the path to God. He shows us the way to love.

STUDY OF THE SECOND READING

Where can we find God in our lives? In solitary prayer? At Church on Sunday? In nature? In these few verses from 1 Corinthians, St. Paul tried to answer that question in the context of the Corinthian assembly. The community at Corinth was torn apart by petty squabbles and turf fights among groups vying for spiritual leadership. Many of these groups appealed to apostolic roots (3:21; also see 3:1-4), but local leaders may have sought personal power, even to the point of building a cult of personality. In any event, the local Church was in disarray. By implicitly asking the question of God's presence in life, St. Paul strove to refocus the Corinthians on what was really important in life: God.

As the note above stated, St. Paul used an analogy for the Temple that had some cache among Jews. The community was the Temple, for the presence of the divine dwelt in the Temple. That was the function of any temple, a home for the god worshiped and a place for the worshiper to encounter the god. With the presence of the Spirit in the gathered community, St. Paul could make a good case for the analogy. God is found where Christians gather as Church in order to worship the Lord.

Where do you find God? How can you find him with fellow Christians? How can you encounter him at Mass?

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

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Who shall drink of the cup?

In his letter of preparation, our Holy Father addressed his bishops and the clergy with specific questions that were to be self reflective of the pastoral as individuals and of the pastoral as an organization within the church. As if it were a living breathing being that interacts with the church.

The questions we discuss today are found in section 4 of the letter "Pastoral Care in Certain Difficult Marital Situations." To paraphrase from this section, we find some basic questions:

1. Is Cohabitation a reality in your particular Church?
2. Do marriages, which are not sacramental, really exist?
3. Are couples who are separated or couples divorced a reality in our congregation?

The final question, I must admit I found a little bit humorous, if the Holy Father will forgive me for saying so.

The question was, "in the above cases", and I assume this refers to people either living together as a couple or a divorced couple; "Are they aware of it"?

I understand the meaning was toward the spiritual ramifications, but the visual in one's head that a divorced couple wouldn't realize they were divorced made me smile.

A more appropriate question in that same paragraph was "Do they feel marginalized? Do they suffer from the impossibility of receiving the sacraments?"

"Divorce is a grave offense against the natural law," according to the *Catechism* (2384). "Divorce does injury to the covenant of salvation, of which sacramental marriage is the sign."

It was Christ who told us that no man shall put asunder, what God has made whole.

In Mark 10, versus 11-12 "1 And he (Christ) said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

So, the logic is as follows: Adultery is a grave sin. When someone sins, he or she should confess his or her sins. God will forgive us if we are truly repentant. If we intended to keep committing the sin, then we would not be repentant and therefore could not be forgiven. We therefore would not be in a state of grace.

Ergo, we would not be worthy of taking the body and blood of Christ.

"Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Cor. 11:27-28).

We heard only last week from Father William that the options for divorced women in the time of Christ were limited. A few lucky ones, who were from families of extreme wealth or power could possibly remarry and therefore adapt to a new life. For the overwhelming majority, a divorced woman was cursed to a life of prostitution and or begging.

Ongoing Activities

****Coffee, Cookies & Conversation** follow Sunday Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.**

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

****Looking for an au pair, near London.** We are looking for someone to come and stay for 6 m to a year. We would be able to give them £60/week, plus board and lodging for some help with my three (6,4 and 18m) and housework. It would be lovely to have a Catholic au pair. tom-za.hall@ubs.com

**** Please see the web pages of the parish for more information: www.augustiniani.cz/en**

Feast of the Chair of St Peter.

Today, 22 February, is the liturgical Feast of the Chair of St Peter. It sheds light on the special ministry of strengthening and guiding the Church in the unity of the faith which the Lord entrusted to the Head of the Apostles. It consists in this "ministerium petrinum" (Petrine ministry), the particular service that the Bishop of Rome is called to render to the entire Christian people. It is an indispensable mission that is not built on human prerogatives but on Christ himself, the cornerstone of the Ecclesial Community.

Let us pray that the Church in the different cultures, languages and traditions will be unanimous in believing and professing the truths of faith and morals passed down by the Apostles.

John Paul II

If we examine Christ's guidance with the backdrop of a the above society; and the fact that a man could from one day to the next dismiss his wife out of hand, without any proof, then we have more information about what may have been the motivation of Christ when he addressed this topic.

It is widely acknowledged that Christ recognized and honored the role of women. Are we surprised that he would come to the defense of women? That he should hold men of this time and society responsible for caring for the woman he took as his wife. Are we surprised that he should deny a man the opportunity to caste aside a beloved creature begotten of the Father (woman)?

We easily take scripture line by line, and see the clarity in it. Christ said, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her" and we stop our search for further guidance.

What will happen during the upcoming Synod, only God knows.

For those who want to take the scripture line by line, I draw their attention to 1 Corinthians, 11:28 (mentioned above) that states, " Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup"

God Bless.