



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



August 23-24, 20148

21st Sunday in Ordinary
time- A

St. Thomas Church

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The Reflection of the Gospel

Today's gospel reading is a complementary piece in so far as it reveals both the Messianic personality of Jesus and assigns the role and the authority of Peter in the Christian community. Matthew explicitly sets this momentous event "in the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi," near the ancient tribal city of Dan. This ruggedly beautiful mountainous region of northern Israel was not only venerated in first century Jewish literature but even by pagans of the area who regarded it as sacred to their deity, Pan.

Our passage consists of two interconnected sections. The first, is Peter's unequivocal response to Jesus' query as to whom "*people say that the Son of Man is.*" Some-undoubtedly reflecting on his recent tragic death- thought that John the Baptist returned; others that Jesus was really Elijah, once mysteriously "taken up"but expected to appear suddenly in Israel; or Jeremiah, that great critic of the temple hierarchy. In characteristic predeliction for the apostle Peter Matthew cites him as first confessing (for the rest) that "**YOU ARE THE MESSIAH,THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.**" The important qualifier,"*the Son of the Living God,*"deliberately (whether the historical Peter realized it or not) moved Jesus away from any military or political messianic expectations.

In turn, Christ's solemnly unique promise to Peter standing at the center of Matthew's gospel is three fold. Of all the disciples, Simon alone is *blessed* by Christ since his confession could not be attributed to mere human intuition ("*of flesh and blood*"). Now solely addressed as *Peter* (in Greek wordplay Petros/ petra=rock), Christ foretells his unsuspecting apostle that *he* is to be the foundational rock (petra or kefa in Aramaic) upon which the Church/Ekklesia is to be built. The use of the word ekkleisia (from which the English word "ecclesial" and all its cognates are derived) seems to be a deliberate attempt on the part of Matthew to distinguish his own community confessing Christ from those who do not. It is one of the first instances where this word is so employed in the New Testament.

The third section of this solemn promise is that Peter and others (Matt. 18:18),though threatened by the power of hell, will prevail. In fact, by Christ's own authority with the "conferred keys" they will open the hitherto closed kingdom by forgiving or not forgiving sins; by admitting or barring and by healing and exorcising. The *Ekklesia* or those "*assembled*" through baptism in the name of Christ will continue the work of Christ as its own vocation and mission "to the end time."

Study of the Today's Readings

FIRST READING Isaiah prophesied during the reign of King Hezekiah, a religious king loyal to the Lord. He was a reformer who centralized worship to YHWH in Jerusalem. He also faced off against Assyria, the regional superpower that swept south into Judah. The Assyrian king, Sennacherib, breathed threats against Hezekiah and his officials, Eliakim the prime minister and Shebna the state secretary. (See Isaiah 36-37 and 2 Kings 18-19). These few verses from Isaiah 22 implied Eliakim was promoted for his loyalty to Isaiah and the king. But, Shebna suffered demotion from his critique of the prophet.

SECOND READING On the heels of his dissertation, Paul launched into a three-part doxology. First, he addressed Greek and Hebrew attributes for God. He followed with rhetorical questions about God found in the Septuagint. He finished with the commonly held belief that God was the origin, agent, and keeper of creation. Paul praised God that cannot be known completely. After all, how can anyone know the full extent of the Almighty.

Project “Back to school 2014”

Its Back to School time! As you know, the St. Tomas Religious Education Program takes a special interest in kids in need in our community. This year, we are organizing our second School Supplies Drive to collect needed school supplies for kids of our parish school, foster care orphanages, and shelters or safehouses in Prague. During this week – till Sunday 31st of August, please bring New unused school supplies, such as colored pens or pencils, paper, notebooks, kid's safety scissors, gluesticks, backpacks or even new clothes, etc, to the basket under the English Community's bulletin board in the courtyard. Cash donations are very welcome and will be put towards whichever items are most needed (if you would like to donate cash, please do so in person to Mary Beth Hlavsa or Fr. Juan.

PLEASE DO NOT leave cash donations in the donation bin). Thank you!

Feasts

- 25 *Louis IX (+1270)*, the paradigm of a just ruler and model of medieval kings, a devoted father and husband, died on his way to the Holy Land. -Paraguay and Uruguay celebrate their *National Days*.
- 26 *The African Augustinian Martyrs (+484)* were a group of monks arrested by the anti-Catholic King Huneric who had them cruelly tortured to death.
- 27 *MONICA (+387)*, the mother of Augustine, who prayed some 17 years for *his conversion and undaunted by his seeming indifference to the faith, rejoiced at his baptism at Easter 387 in Milan but died shortly afterwards in Ostia. She is venerated as the Patroness of Christian mothers.*
- 28 *AUGUSTINE (+430)*, *born to Monica, a Catholic mother and Patrick, a pagan father, excelled in his studies, journeyed to Rome and later to Milan where he met St. AMBROSE and was baptized. Returning to his native Africa he first lived in a monastic community and after his ordination to the priesthood (390) and later appointment as bishop of Hippo Regius (mod. Annaba, Algeria) in 395, he became the brilliant spokesman of Catholicism in a divided church. A prodigious writer, speaker, theologian and philosopher, he was the wonder of his age. He died this day in 430 in Hippo Regius then besieged by Vandals. For the Augustinians who minister in St. Thomas, AUGUSTINE is their spiritual father and founder whose Rule (of Augustine) remains a blueprint for gospel living in community.*
- 29 *The Execution of John the Baptist (ca. AD 25)* as related in Mark 6:17-29 is commemorated this day.

2014-2015 CHILDREN AND YOUTH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

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

-Anyone interested in teaching **Religious Education Classes** next year (starting in September) - please contact Mary Beth at redirector@augustiniani.cz

-We welcome our visitors and invite you to join us for refreshments immediately after Mass in the summer refectory of the monastery.

-We are looking for an **English teacher** for our school. If you are interesting, please see Fr. Juan.

-**St. Augustine celebration** on Thursday , August 28 at 07:00pm. During the Mass will sing Saint Thomas Choir.

Feast of St. Augustine 13.11.354-28.8.430

“O eternal Truth, true Love, and beloved Eternity, you are my God, and for you I sigh day and night. As I first began to know you, you lifted me up and showed me that, while that which I might see exists indeed, I was not yet capable of seeing it. Your rays beamed intensely on me, beating back my feeble gaze, and I trembled with love and dread. I knew myself to be far away from you in a region of unlikeness, and I seemed to hear your voice from on high: “I am the food of the mature: grow, then, and you shall eat me. You will not change me into yourself like bodily food; but you will be changed into me”.

Accordingly I looked for a way to gain the strength I needed to enjoy you, but I did not find it until I embraced the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who is also God, supreme over all things and blessed for ever. He called out, proclaiming I am the Way and Truth and the Life, nor had I known him as the food which, though I was not yet strong enough to eat it, he had mingled with our flesh, for the Word became flesh so that your Wisdom, through whom you created all things, might become for us the milk adapted to our infancy”

Confessions.