



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

# St. Thomas Church

## Today's Prayer

"Be still and know that I am  
God."

Lord, Your words lead us to  
the  
calmness and greatness of  
your presence.

**"Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they  
rest in you."**

September 14<sup>th</sup> and  
September 15<sup>th</sup> 2014

24th Sunday in Ordinary  
time A

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## **TWENTY-FOURTH ORDINARY SUNDAY**

This week's gospel reading is a continuation of last week's passage dealing with the problem of the sinning brother or sister. Last week's reading spoke about the recalcitrant sinner and those communal or public remedies employed by the Church which would both "objectify the sin" and draw forth repentance. This week's reading concentrates on the spirit and the personal quality of forgiveness: how and how often does *the one wronged* forgive *his offender* within the community; is there a realistic limit to Christian forgiveness?

In the Old or First Testament there is no one single word for "sin." Yet, behind the various terms used the descriptive notion can be summed up as "a failure, in part as irregularity or crookedness, in part as infringement of the psychic totality of the soul." While Jesus did not speak of specific sins, he was aware of those offenses which cried out for the need of God: "self-centered confidence, arrogance and the lack of compassion." While not conscious of any personal sin (John 8:46), He identified with and accepted the name of "sinner" (John 9:16); nor did he summon anyone to self-contempt rather "he drew them (i.e., sinners) to himself."

Thus, Peter's question about the "number" of times that one is expected to forgive a brother, is answered in that memorable parable of forgiveness which is not so much interested in quantity as in the *quality of forgiveness*. The hyperbole abounding in the story (ten thousand talents= "billions") serve only to emphasize the trusting, boundless mercy of the "king" in contrast to the narrow selfishly cruel "servant" who could not forgo a mere pittance. The lesson is straightforward. We all stand in need of the merciful forgiveness of God who will forgive us as we forgive others. The Lord's Prayer sums it up:

*"Forgive us our trespasses (sins) as we forgive those who trespass (sin) against us."* This is the basic condition for our own entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

## First Reading

Jesus ben Sirach wrote this book of wisdom about 180 B.C. This book (also known as Ecclesiasticus) was a text for the education of wealthy young men in Jerusalem just before the Hasmonean revolution (167-164 B.C.). Sirach revealed the tensions in the city: the rifts between rich and poor, between the local populace and their foreign rulers, between male and female. How does a righteous Jew live in such a culture of tension?

Maintaining friendships would be especially difficult in this environment. The temptation to "sell out" a friend for gain was great. But the repercussions would be greater. For example, slander injured the victim, the slanderer, and the person who believed the lie. In such an atmosphere, how does one repair damage?

Sirach gave the key: forgiveness. This virtue heals hearts and egos, restores relationships and peace. Forgiveness is a cornerstone upon which the just society is built. Yet, as we all know, forgiveness was not (and is not) a popular virtue. It's too easy to nurse anger and a vengeful spirit. "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" seem to be the most difficult words to say.

Sirach reminded his contemporaries, just as the Nazarean told his followers, that to forgive others was the first step in realizing the forgiveness of God.

*What emotional or spiritual wounds do you nurse? How can you forgive those who caused your pain? How can you place your pain and those who hurt you before the Lord?*

## Activities

-If you would like to receive a copy of the **bulletin** by email, please contact [osaprag@augustiniani.cz](mailto:osaprag@augustiniani.cz)

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

- If you would like to serve as a lector or Eucharistic minister at the Sunday mass please contact Ann at [dalyaann@hotmail.com](mailto:dalyaann@hotmail.com).

Training will be provided for those who have not previously served in these ministries.

- **Religious Education is starting from the 21<sup>th</sup> of September at 9:45am.** If you wish to enrol your children please contact Mary Beth at [redirector@augustiniani.cz](mailto:redirector@augustiniani.cz)

- **Help at Sv. Dobrotiva** in Zaječov. Saturday September 20<sup>th</sup>. Meeting in front of St.Thomas Church at 09:30am. We will be back at 05 pm. Thanks for your help to the oldest Augustinian Marian place in the Czech Republic.

- Every Saturday at 9:00am **feeding of the homeless**, as social service

- **Parishioners Day** will be on Sunday the 28th September after 11:00 mass. It is a good opportunity to find out more about what is happening in our parish and to sing up to the various ministries where your help and support are always welcome.

- **Bible Study** takes place every Tuesday from 18:30-19:30 in Tagaste room. Everyone is welcome to come and learn more about our sacred scriptures.

- **Adult Religious Education** will be held every Wednesday at 18:30. Tagaste room

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### **As part of restitution, Augustinian Order gets back its Rubens paintings**

Czech state representatives on September 12<sup>th</sup> symbolically handed precious works of art, including two Baroque paintings by Peter Paul Rubens from our Church of St. Thomas (*St. Augustine* and *The Torture of St. Thomas*), to the Augustinian Order as part of the church restitution. The paintings will remain part of the National Gallery permanent exhibitions in Prague as free loans.

## FEASTS and ANNIVERSARIES: September

-**15/09** *Our Lady of Sorrows*, a feast commemorating those sorrows of Mary during the passion and death of her Son.

-**16/09** *Ludmila* (+921), the grandmother of St. Wenceslaus (or Vaclav) was murdered for her faith. She is one of the Patrons of the Czech people.

-**17/09** *Hildegard of Bingen* (+1179), one of the famous of medieval women, was known for her poetry, music and mystical literature.

-**19/09** Alfonso Orozco, OSA (+1591), the Augustinian court preacher to Philip II of Spain, was one of the leading Church leaders of his day.

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### **[RE announcement]**

**Religious Education classes are starting September 21st!** If you haven't already signed up your child, please do so! Contact Mary Beth Hlavsa with any questions or to sign up: +420 724 485 930 or [redirector@augustiniani.cz](mailto:redirector@augustiniani.cz)

**We will have a classroom cleaning and set-up session on Saturday, Sept 20th at 10am** (meeting in the Refectory to go over what needs to be done) – we welcome all assistance in getting the rooms ready for the children! Thank you!

[Altar servers and Lectors]

**Hey, kids – are you interested in Altar Serving?** Have you already had your First Communion? If so, bring a parent with you and see Michael Rainey before Mass in the Sacristy! **Confirmed Adults: we are looking for Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers** as well – please speak with Ann Daly or Michael Rainey.

[Necessities drive]

**To get our clothing charity ready for the upcoming winter months, we are holding a Necessities Drive** – items especially needed are warm winter clothes, especially men's coats, socks, sweaters/sweatshirts, gloves and hats. Other necessities that are especially needed are men's underwear and t-shirts or thermal garments. Items can be dropped off in front of the clothing charity door (top of the wheelchair ramp in the courtyard). Thank you for your generosity!