



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

Todays Prayer

Say this prayer today

Dear Lord, help me to be open to You for this time as I put aside the cares of this world. Fill my mind with Your peace, Your Love.

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September 27th -28th 2014

26th Sunday of Ordinary Time

St. Thomas Church

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The Reflection of the Gospel

Jesus taught in parables or *short stories usually in allegorical form with some moral or spiritual lesson*. These deceptively simple narratives are important for situating and understanding what Jesus attempted to teach his listeners at some juncture in his ministry. Today's parable of the "two sons," addressed to the *chief priests* and the *elders*, charged with Israel's faith and morals, is a case in point. Portrayed as spiritually hardened to his message, the hierarchy embarks on open confrontation with Jesus; the resultant tension between the two is obvious. According to Matthew, after triumphantly entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and driving the authorized merchants and the money changers from the Temple precincts, Jesus, then, in a radical but prophetic- inspired tradition, took on an already angered religious hierarchy.

The role of the high priest, the chief priests and priestly families from which the high priest was chosen by Roman appointment was clear enough. As deputed "keepers of public order" Rome expected their clerical clients to insure "the Roman peace" by keeping a wary eye on any subversive religious/political movements. Despite their unseemingly collaboration with the gentiles, the chief priest and his shadowy council (*Sanhedrin*) were respected paradoxically- except by the heretical Samaritans and the exclusive Qumran community- as the definitive religious authority for all Jews both in Israel and abroad in the "diaspora." Privileged and wealthy from the enormous entitlements of the Temple (*Bet Hamikdash* or 'house of holiness') these aristocratic clerics were compelled to play at once the dangerous game of placating a suspicious imperial administration while coping with potentially explosive religious and national sentiment.

Matthew now opens with the first of the five controversies which mark the "Jerusalem," or the "final phase" of Jesus' ministry. The parable of "the two sons" is sharp and the lesson is not lost on the priests and elders. The "sons" represent the official, institutional Judaism of the Temple and the Pharisaic party on one hand; and on the other, the outcasts of Jewish society typified by the hated turn coat Jewish tax collectors who worked for Rome and the despised prostitutes who sold themselves to the Roman soldiers. It is these last "lowest of the low" whom Jesus prefers for the kingdom of heaven! After all, and here he is most provocative, the chief priest and elders, symbolized by the son who evades his promise to work are bested by tax officers and prostitutes who listened to John the Baptist and repented.

Study of the Today's Readings

FIRST READING

Good people can be tempted in three ways. First, based upon their high moral standards, they assume they can judge others. Second, their own sins can be easily ignored. In light of the first two, people can make presumptions on God's judgement.

When good people begin to compare their upright living against the sinners, they imagine themselves as the standard of morality. Such a comparison is itself sinful, full of pride as it is. It places the people making the judgment on God's throne. They easily forget God is the judge. He is the standard of morality.

When people are self-assured, they might be tempted to moral delusion. "Life is good," they might imagine, "I am moral; my sins are excusable." Even great sinners can delude themselves into thinking they are morally right, with a few "minor quirks."

When people become the standard of morality and dust away their own indiscretions, they can imagine they truly live with God's favor. Of course, this is just as much an illusion as the other two presumptions.

SECOND READING

Why should a Christian consider others ahead of the self? Why can't a Christian just look out for "Number One?" Paul answered these questions with a reflection on the mission of Jesus and, implicitly, on the nature of Christian faith. The apostle to the Gentiles advanced a simple notion. In Christ, God emptied himself into a human form. By limiting himself to the boundaries of space and time, the Son of God demonstrated the truest form of humility. This humility led him to die on a cross, the most humiliating punishment the Roman Empire could use against criminals. Because of his humility, the Father glorified his Son.

We weak human beings like a show, a spectacle the demonstrates the power of our beliefs and our place. Americans love such pomp to reaffirm the notion we are the most powerful nation on earth. The common culture in Paul's time was no different. Such shows of power or idol worship were a communal extension

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

Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin

Activities

-If you would like to receive a copy of the **bulletin** by email, please contact 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. Training will be provided for those who have not previously served in these ministries.

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

- **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

European Taizé Meeting in Prague

The next European Meeting will be held in the city and region of Prague, from 29 December 2014 to 2 January 2015. The Taizé Community is preparing the meeting at the invitation of the Czech Bishops' Conference and the Council of Czech Churches. It will bring together several tens of thousands of young adults for the next step of the "pilgrimage of trust on earth" initiated by Brother Roger at the end of the 1970s.

Young people from all over Europe and beyond will be hosted by the people and local church communities of the region.

At the heart of Europe, the city of a thousand towers and a thousand steeples still brings together peoples and persons from different horizons, offering warm hospitality through its cultural treasures and its spiritual heritage.



[RE announcement]

28th: Parishioner's Day! We welcome you all to the celebration after Mass, where we will welcome new families and inform everyone about the various ministries at St. Thomas. If you'd like to get involved, Parishioner's Day is the day to find out what St. Thomas has to offer! Please bring a dish to share with everyone - we'd like to celebrate our diversity through a universal favorite: food!

[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!

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE BOY-SCOUTS GROUP IN OUR SCHOOL

We have a boy-scouts group in our school, and we are searching scouters (educators, adult scout leaders). If you like nature and work with children, if you speak some Czech and will be the next two or three years in Prague, don't hesitate! For more information, contact Fr. Antonio, antoniorivas@augustiniani.cz, 608227686.

We are inviting you to go for our traditional autumn trip to the Bohemian Karst – this time from Srbsko to Zadní Třebáň. The meeting point is at the cash desks at the railway station Praha-Smíchov on Saturday, **18 October 2014, at 8:45**.

The expected time of return is around 4 p.m., the trip route is 13 km long.