



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

### Today's Prayer

Say this Prayer Today:

Dear Jesus, I come to you today  
longing for your presence.  
I desire to love you as You  
love me.  
May nothing ever separate  
me from You.

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May 2nd and May 3rd<sup>th</sup> 2015

Fifth Easter Sunday

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# St. Thomas Church

## Reflection on the Gospel

To understand this gospel reading taken from John, it is necessary to remember that these are among the last words of Jesus delivered before his arrest at the instigation of Judas Iscariot, his mock trial before Annas and Caiphas and his sentencing before Pilate. These "last minute admonitions" immediately preceding those tragic events reflect the cultural milieu within which Jesus lived and died. Let us reflect for a moment. First, the *vineyards, vinedressers, estate-owners* and the vulnerable and beholden clients were common enough fixtures in Roman Palestine as in any other wine-producing regions of the Mediterranean. Examples drawing on this vital commercial activity abound in the Bible. Thus, Isaiah, the prophet (ca. 720 BC) describes Israel as "the vineyard of the Lord" even though at times "unproductive" is nonetheless lovingly coaxed by God "the patron or the owner" to repent in his forgiving embrace. Using the same prophetic language, Paul the apostle describes Israel's rejection of Jesus' own messianic mission and identity. The writers in both testaments, therefore, utilize this image of the Lord "the patron of the vineyard" (here Israel and the Church) - mercifully gentle yet insistent on his call to fidelity. The harvest or final judgment will be a time of reckoning and justice. *Patronage* in ancient times, especially during political upheavals and economic crises, was a last resort for the downtrodden *clients* in their search for basic necessities and security. Throughout its stormy history Israel regarded itself as the particular heritage of the Lord with the ever-watchful prophets as the intermediate *brokers*. In the New Testament, the Church, too, looks to its patron the "Lord of the harvest" and "judgment" whose will is now revealed through Jesus Christ. The "pruning" so needed and often so painful for continued healthy growth ensures the client gracious entrée for "whatever is asked for in faith." John emphasizes here that with, in and through Jesus we always have confident access to God from whom nothing can deter. "Live on in me" says Jesus.

## Study of the First Reading

The scene shifted from Peter's ministry (last week) to Paul's early efforts. Saul of Tarsus, an intellectual Pharisee and opponent of the Christians, had a conversion experience (see Acts 9:1-9). Now, as Paul, he was a strong voice for the young Christian movement. Yet, many in the movement did not trust him [26].

Barnabas befriended Paul and spoke for him to the Church leadership in Jerusalem [27]. Once he was introduced, Paul made his own presence known in the Jerusalem [28]. We know that the reaction was negative. Jewish Christians still kept their distance from this former enemy, while Paul's former allies among the Pharisees felt betrayed [29]. In the light of threats from zealous Jewish converts, Paul escaped and returned home [30].

Luke added a final note about the growth in the early Palestinian church [31].

What happened to Paul was not surprising. With a sudden dramatic change, Paul found his friends were few and far between. In addition, his presence was a threat to others in the Christian community; because of Paul, others might suffer. In the end, Paul went away.

Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "[wfaix@yahoo.com](mailto:wfaix@yahoo.com)" or contact Fr. Juan at [juan@augustiniani.cz](mailto:juan@augustiniani.cz) Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin

## Our Lady of Grace

May 8

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to the village of Nazareth. He went to the home of a young girl called Mary, and greeted her, "Hail, full of grace..." --cf. Luke 1: 26-28

This greeting is the basis of the title Lady of Grace. It was at this time that Mary became the mother of Jesus, that is to say, the mother of the author and dispenser of Grace.

The Order of Saint Augustine, since its very early days, has held special honor for Mary under the title Mother of Grace, or Lady of Grace

## Blessed Catherine of Saint Augustine

May 8

Catherine of Saint Augustine (1632-1668) was an Augustinian Hospitaller Sister of the Mercy of Jesus who ministered to the poor and sick in Quebec.

Catherine de Longpré was born May 3, 1632 at Saint-Saveur, France. As a child she was given a good education.

Following the advice of Saint John Eudes, she entered the Augustinian Hospitaller Sisters of the Mercy of Jesus in 1644.

She volunteered to go to her community's mission in Quebec. Her family was strongly opposed to the idea. Her father even tried to get the French courts to stop her. But Catherine was firmly resolved to serve the sick and the poor of Quebec. She arrived there in 1648. Later on her father came to accept his daughter's mission there.

On her voyage to Quebec, Catherine contracted the plague. She recovered and, once arrived, spent much energy caring for poor people who were suffering from sicknesses and hunger.

In spite of spiritual dryness and a debilitating long-term illness of her own, Catherine was consistently loving, kind, and gracious toward all.

She died May 8, 1668. She was 36 years old. She is considered to be one of the founders of the Catholic Church in Canada.

Pope John Paul II declared Catherine *Blessed* in 1989.

### Coming soon:

17.5.2015: *First Communion Sunday*

24.5.2015: *Confirmation Sunday*

29.5.2015: *The Night of the Churches from 18: 00 till 00:00*

## 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](mailto:osaprag@augustiniani.cz)

**Bible Study** sessions are held each Wednesday evening at 6:30pm/18:30 in the Tagaste room. All are welcome to join and reflect on the Word of God.

**Lectors and Eucharistic ministers** : If you would like to support the community as a lector or Eucharistic minister at mass on Sunday's please contact Ann at [dalyaann@hotmail.com](mailto:dalyaann@hotmail.com)

I would also like to hear from those who took part in the training session for Eucharistic ministry last February.

On Friday May 8<sup>th</sup> our Pastor Fr. William will celebrate his **birthday**. Mass at 12:15 in St. Thomas Church

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### THE 11th PARISH FESTIVAL

#### **We share joy!**

Kampa park - Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup> 2015  
11:00am-08:00pm

Mass

Games and activities for for all ages: Music for all around the world, photos of the history of the Church, dance...

Costumes of the Earth, Africa, Augustinian fraternity, games,

Cooking Competition...

Theater

Program for children: games, ponies, castles, piñata...

Clown Roberto

Presentation of activities

The **18th Annual Marian Pilgrimage** to the Shrine of the Gracious Madonna, at sv. Dobrotiva-Zaječov, will be held on May 16. We meet in front of St. Joseph's Church on Josefská Street, at 08:30 am, Saturday morning, May 16. If you do not have a ride please contact Fr. Juan Bautista for details. In keeping with our tradition, please bring a lunch, which you can share with another person on pilgrimage. Whatever is left over (if you so will) is given to the poor. There is a brochure, which explains the origins and traditions behind this beautiful 700-year pilgrimage, which has been renewed after forty years of communism.