



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



This is the logo for the Holy Year of Mercy, which opens Dec. 8 and runs until Nov. 20, 2016.

October 17th and 18th 2015

29th Ordinary Sunday -
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St. Thomas Church

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The Reflection of the Gospel

It is difficult to fathom the reasons for Jesus' choice of friends and disciples. Peter, the impulsive and cowardly liar; Thomas, the cynic; Matthew, the tax-collector whose collaboration with the Roman occupation force was despicable; Simon, whose own political views advocated violence and, of course, Judas Iscariote who needs no comment. The list grows with these less than stellar followers with Mark's description of James and John whose payment for loyal discipleship amounted to princely expectations. And these expectations certainly ran high during Jesus' short ministry of some two and a half years. The Messiah, according to popular opinion, was conceived as or rather mythologized into a "super-human" Davidic (i.e., royal) military leader whose task was to "to restore the kingdom of a united Israel." This meant that the "lost" ten tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Dan, Isaachar, Asher, Gad, Simeon, Reuben, Zebulon and Levi would be joined once more with the "remnants" of Judah and Benjamin into one nation worshipping the one true God in the one Temple on Mount Zion. These two brothers reasoned that the Messiah, whose identity at once mysterious as his origins, facing such a cosmic task would certainly need "lieutenants" or adjutants prompted them to ambitiously step forward. Of course, the other disciples were angry with such venal pretensions. As often is such all too human situations, Jesus draws a lesson for all would be disciples. Discipleship is not to be counted in terms of preferment or titles but is, rather, to be viewed as Jesus himself lived it in loving service to the poor, the marginalized, the outcastes.

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Jesus challenged as Patricia D. Sanchez remarked his own to look at life- not from top downward but from life's underside. They (disciples) must look not down but up into the faces of the poor, the needy, the suffering. Is this true in my own life? Do I really have or desire an identity as a disciple of Jesus? If so, am I ready to identify with Jesus' commands?

Study of the First Reading

This passage takes place in the context of Isaiah 53, one of the so-called "Suffering Servant Songs." Written at the end of Babylonian Exile, these "songs" speak of God inflicting suffering upon his servant for the good of the people. While interpreters have argued over the identity of the servant, Christians have always pointed to the crucified Christ as the One who suffers for the people. Indeed, Isaiah 53 is read on Good Friday as the first reading.

Isaiah 53:10-11 speaks of the reason for suffering [10] and the reward for the servant [11]. Notice both the suffering and reward are community wide; the servant suffers for the sin of the community and the benefits of the suffering are enjoyed by the same community. Hence, the servant is a leader appointed by God (to do his will in 53:10) but rejected by people (see 53:3).

Catholics speak of Jesus as priest, prophet, and king. All three images converge in Isaiah 53. The rejected leader (king) offers himself (priest) for the good of the community; his action reveals God's will and actions (prophet).

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Study of the Second Reading

This study falls on the heels of last week's excursion into God's coming judgement. Hebrews 4:12-13 portrayed God's word as a sharp knife that could lay bare anyone's thought and intentions. And, the verses implied that we were under this knife as a judgement. The language of the verses painted a sacrifice by a temple priest.

Hebrews 4:14-16 followed on the image of our sacrifice/judgement with the comforting message of Jesus as High Priest. The knife was in his hand, so he could show us mercy. And, as High Priest, he could represent us before God (the throne of grace). And we could receive mercy and grace in a timely fashion. Even though he was without sin, he still endured every temptation we could receive. So, he could empathize with us.

Jesus is a compassionate figure in these verses. We should lean on his compassion as a way to grow closer to him.

Blessed John Good, OSA

October 23

John Good (1168?-1249), sometimes called John the Good, was a hermit who was known for his trust in God, love of the Church and spirit of penance.

He was born in Mantua around 1168. John's father died while John was a boy. At the age of 16, John left his mother and wandered around various regions of Italy. For a time he was a court jester. He contracted a serious illness, which caused him to examine his way of life. He decided to change his ways, and, upon recovering his health, he became a hermit, leading a life of penitence.

For a short time, he lived a solitary life near Bertinoro. Then he moved to Butriolo.

He attracted many followers, as his reputation as a holy man spread. This group of hermits began to be known as the Order of Butriolo, after the Church of Saint Mary of Butriolo, which was next to their hermitage.

Witnesses in his process of beatification testified that John took part in the daily celebration of Eucharist in the church, and that he received Holy Communion with great devotion. He was humble, kind and loving. He urged everybody to be respectful of the priests, even if they did not deserve respect.

As a hermit John practiced prayer and penance. Although he probably did not know how to read or write, he preached to those who came to him, and guided many souls to a more intimate relationship with God. He established an association for lay people called the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. The Butriolites did not have an approved Rule of their own, so Rome gave them the Rule of Augustine as their guide.

The Order of Butriolo joined the Augustinian Order during the Grand Union of 1256, when many diverse religious groups following the Rule of Augustine were incorporated into the Order.

John died October 16, 1249 at Mantua. His remains are preserved at the former Augustinian Church of Saint Agnes in Mantua. Pope Sixtus declared him Blessed in 1483

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

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

* **Lectors and Eucharistic ministers:** If you would like to be a **lector** or Eucharistic minister at mass on Sundays please sing up with after mass in the courtyard or e mail Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com

* Every Saturday at 9:00am **feeding of the homeless**, as a 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.

*Wednesday at 18:30. Tagaste room takes place **Adult Religious education.**

*Today 2nd collection for the **missions.**

Feasts

21 Ursula (ca. 400), a British princess according to an ancient legend who with numerous companions suffered martyrdom in Cologne. The Ursuline Sisters venerate her as their patroness.

22 John Paul II was installed as Pope in 1978. We pray for him as he celebrates his 25th year as Pontiff. Franz Liszt, the Hungarian composer, was born in 1811. Paul Cezanne, the French Impressionist artist, died in 1906. According to some (dated Biblicists such as James Ussher of Armagh) the world was created this day at 6 pm in the year 4004, Adam and Eve on the 28th.

23 John Capistran, OFM (+1456), noted for his preaching roused the conscience of Europe in face of pending invasions in the Balkan peninsula. He is the patron of army chaplains.

-The first united Parliament of England and Scotland meeting in 1707 marks the inception of Great Britain. The first Scottish Parliament since 1707 once more convened in 2000.

24 Anicius Boethius (+525), the celebrated Christian writer, died a martyr's death at Pavia. The United Nations was formally established in 1945.

Thailand and Zambia observe national days.

-The Thirty Years War formally ended at Westphalia in 1648.

-Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, the Russian composer died in 1893 and Franz Lehar, the Hungarian composer, died in 1948.

25 John Stone, OSA (+1539), an English Austin friar and theologian, who for his refusal to recognize Henry VIII's divorce and governance over the Church in England was executed in Canterbury.