



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

Today's Prayer

Say this Prayer Today:

I pause for a moment and think of the love and the grace that God showers on me: I am created in the image and likeness of God; I am God's dwelling-place.

In this issue:

Gospel Reflection	1
Study of 1 st Reading	1
Family Activity	2
Study of 2 nd Reading	2
Announcements and Ongoing Activities	2
Collection Appeal	2
366 Orphans and Children	2

February 28th and March 1st
2009

The First Sunday of Lent

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

St. Thomas Church

Reflection on the Gospel

Deserts can be fearful places. An inhospitable climate; a variety of fauna such as serpents, spiders, lizards, disease-bearing flies, mosquitoes; and loneliness, all pose threats to survival. Yet, deserts can be as fascinating for us today as they were to ancient people who thought them to be the habitat of benevolent and malevolent spirits. *Only beasts and gods can live alone in the desert*, ran an old adage. *Mark*, the second evangelist, writing between the years AD 66 – 76, conveyed the theological concerns of his community in utilizing a variety of images and literary figures drawn from oral history, legend and popular apocalyptic works. When we read that the Spirit drove Jesus into the desert the implication is that the mission, the ministry of Jesus, was inaugurated not by personal or human whim but by the *direct* coercive action of the Holy Spirit. Once Jesus goes into the desert - used here as a synonym for the demesne of Satan (Hebrew for *the adversary*) - He experienced first hand the full enticing force of temptation. Indeed, was it hunger, a desire for power, or rash presumption of God's protection that posed the worst temptation? It seems that *Matthew* would relate all three in active collusion during this forty-day experience. Yet God willed that Jesus though tempted was to be abandoned there in the desert neither to His adversaries nor later during His earthly ministry in Israel. *For the angels came to minister to Him* was Mark's assurance that Jesus of Nazareth, first designated by the powers of darkness as *the Holy One of God*, had passed through His first trial and temptation. With this assurance He went on to His destined vocation vindicated by the power of the cross and resurrection.

Study of the First Reading

[9-11] Noah's covenant marks the second one God made with humanity. The first covenant God made with Adam. The first humans broke that alliance, sin increased in the world, and God turned nature against humanity. Noah's covenant was the result of the great flood. The flood itself was seen as a re-creation of the cosmos; the new covenant was God's re-alliance with humanity. Since Noah and his family were the only righteous people on earth, God promised Noah (as the representative of humanity) never to destroy humanity by a flood again. This covenant became the basis for the Jewish belief in the righteous Gentile, a non-Jew who honors the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There are a few examples of these people in the New Testament. Since all people had a covenant relationship with God through Noah, all could be saved. Even nature was part of God's plan for salvation. [12-15] The sign of the rainbow. In the flood, the ancient people believed that it was not only a great rain, but that the heavens literally collapsed (and the ark became a submarine). As God re-created the world, the waters in the heavens and those on earth were re-separated by the appearance of dry land. The rainbow acts as a shield to keep the heavens from collapsing again. In this way the rainbow is not only a sign, but a physical barrier.

Coffee, Cookies & Conversation follow Sunday 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 at "wfaix@yahoo.com" or contact Fr. Juan at jan@augustiniani.cz Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin

Lenten Services

-**Wednesdays.** Bible studies from 06:30 7:30 pm.
An opportunity to explore the Word of God.

-**Thursdays.** Mass will be offer at 06:15 pm in St Barbara's Chapel. Confession will be heard before and after Mass.

- **Fridays.** Stations of the Cross at 06:00 pm. Follow by devotions to Saint Nicholas of Tolentine. Confession will be heard immediately afterwards.

- **Saturdays.** Mass at 06:00pm follow by Confessions.

* *Please note:* Confessions will also be heard upon request at anytime

Study of the Second Reading

This short exercise in catechism logic should be so familiar it is laughable. Yet, many Christians do not swim through the depths of this insight. Jesus the Christ was all-powerful, even IN AND THROUGH DEATH. 3:18 described the Christ's death through a believer's eyes. As the innocent one, He died for us, the guilty, so He could reunite us with His Father. But, then, the verse stopped in His death and led up to 3:19, which described Jesus preaching the Good News to the lost souls in the place of the death (Sheol in Hebrew, not to be confused with hell, the realm of the damned). The author described these lost as those who were washed away in the Great Flood. [3:20] But, like many other verses in the New Testament, the author used an image or symbol in one analogy to turn to another. In this case, the water of the Flood (i.e., God's judgment) became the turning point to the analogy of Baptism. God used water as a vehicle to condemn the lost and save the few (Noah and his family; Christians). In fact, the water of Baptism gave Christians the only certain thing they possessed: a clear conscience based upon faith in the resurrection. Again, notice the source of clear conscience: Jesus Christ. For from death, Jesus rose to new life, thus revealing His power. Christ now exercises this power from a heavenly throne. Why would the author of 1 Peter reflect upon Christ's power in death (His "descent into hell" found in the Apostle's Creed) and through death (His resurrection)? He mused on this insight to answer another question. How far are we, as Christians, willing to go to follow Christ? This question was explicitly posed in 1 Peter 3:13. In the 3:8-12, the author discussed what a Christian lifestyle meant: taking the moral high road. In 3:14-17, the author praised those who suffered for the suffering they encountered living out their Christian commitment. Why? Because such suffering meant the believer walked the way of the Lord in a very real way. But, even in suffering and persecution, the Christian has power. For Christ had power in and through death. The way of the Cross is the path of suffering. But it is also the path of power.

Ongoing Activities

❖ We **welcome all our new parishioners** to St. Thomas Church. Please introduce yourselves, if you wish at refreshments after the 11:00 am Mass on Sundays or just call us or visit at your convenience.

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

❖ Every Saturday at 9:00am feeding of the homeless, as a social service.

❖ Fr. William, the pastor will be away for January 27th till March 2nd month. Fr. Juan B. will be the ordinary pastor in his absence. In cases of emergency I can be reached either through Fr. Juan at 602684538.

❖ 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.

❖ **Post-confirmation youth group:** For 14-17 year olds who would like to meet to discuss and share views on issues of faith today and enrich their own faith. The time and dates will be decided depending on those interested. Please contact Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com or see me after mass.

Social Media at St. Thomas Church, Prague

Keep up with the Parish, Religious Education calendar, Parish Events, photos or the latest quote from the Vatican and Pope Francis. Follow us on Facebook at:

St. Thomas Church - Prague's English-speaking Catholic Community

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Thomas-Church-Pragues-English-speaking-Catholic-Community/298895753494190?ref=hl>

So, please be sure to take the minute to join us on FaceBook – and be sure to share the photos you take at parish events and celebrations with others as well. Remember, we are only as good as the sum of our community --- so join in, helping to keep our Parish the welcoming and dynamic group that we are.

Michael Rainey Mobile: +420 608 606 501

Lenten prayer:

“Jesus, make our hearts like yours”

(Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus).