



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

Today's Prayer

"Be still and know that I am God."
Lord, Your words lead us to the calmness and greatness of your presence.



January 9th and January 10th
2016

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord-Year C

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St. Thomas Church

Study of the Second Reading

Why does God accept us? Why does he want us close to him? Simply because he sent his Son to us!
This short section from Acts could be divided into three sections: Peter's reaction to the message of Cornelius, his summary of how the Good News has spread, his preaching about Jesus.

As a lead up to the first section, Peter had a vision that questioned kosher diet rules (10:9-16). About the same time, Cornelius, a Roman centurion who could be described as a "righteous Gentile," received a message from God that told him his prayers had been answered; he was to send men for Peter (10:1-8). When the men fetched Peter, he traveled with them to the house of the soldier. At that point, Peter and Cornelius compared notes about their visions (10:26-33). Peter realized that God's salvation was universal. And the centurion was ready to become a follower of the Messiah.

The second section merely reported what was already known. Jesus had a reputation that buzzed throughout Palestine. But what was that reputation?

The third section answered the question. And it answered the question of God's intentions. The answer was simple: Jesus of Nazareth. God "anointed" (i.e., chose and empowered) this Jesus with the Spirit (in context, the Spirit and power are synonymous). He used God's Spirit to show everyone God was with him. As he traveled in his ministry, Jesus healed and, in doing so, overturned the realm of evil. Why did God accept us? Because he wanted to show us his face in the person of his Son, Jesus the Christ. When we see God's face in Jesus, we truly know that he accepts us and loves us. We are his.

The Reflection of the Gospel

Today's feast is an occasion for a common celebration of our baptism. Obviously, most of us baptized as infants do not have any recollection of that momentous event yet, as a sacrament, Baptism visibly conferred through those transient symbols of water and word incorporated us into the one Body of Christ, the Church, within which we walk on our journey of faith. Each Sunday we renew this profession of baptismal faith in the common recitation of the Creed. Far be it we should take such promises lightly. To present oneself or anyone for baptism should not be based on some remote "Catholic" memory, family tradition or "appeasement policy" to keep peace with one's parents or in-laws! Today, we will have the opportunity to freely reaffirm our faith as responsible believers standing before the Lord in loving discipleship. Immediately after the homily we will stand in this renewal of loyal discipleship.

Study of the First Reading

According to many modern biblical scholars, the book of Isaiah is actually the work of three different authors writing at three different times. Chapters 1-39 can be attributed to the original Isaiah who preached between 740 and 687 B.C. During the rise of the Assyrian empire. Chapters 40-60 can be attributed to the so-called "Second Isaiah." Second Isaiah wrote 150 years later (537 B.C.) with the anticipated return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon. The remainder of the book (chapters 61-66) was written by the so-called "Third Isaiah." Third Isaiah wrote about 25-50 years after the return and addressed the need of the people to maintain hope. The present passage comes from Second Isaiah. In this passage, Second Isaiah introduced the "Suffering Servant," the person who would lead the people like King David. Notice the servant was chosen by God; he was given God's Spirit, so he would bring justice to everyone, Jew and foreigner alike. [1] For the society of the time, the servant would be counter-cultural; he would not be interested in fame or power. But his rule would be gentle but would be sure. [2-3] His rule would precede his teaching to the coast lands, areas west (the Mediterranean world) and south (along the Red Sea). [4] In verses 6-7, God commissioned the servant. God called the servant to justice and to act as God's representative (as a covenant for the people and a light to the nations). [6] How was he to be just and a symbol? He would give the blind sight and the prisoner freedom. [7] These images of sight and liberation could be taken literally or figuratively. At the time of Second Isaiah, the ruling elite of Judea were captives held by the blind ambition of foreign dictators. In a figurative sense, the blindness and imprisonment could be the people's lack of faith. In either case, the servant would be God's instrument of wholeness and liberation. As the year begins, we could use sight to see beyond our limitations and freedom from our self-imposed faults. Let us pray for this time of renewal, the gift of Jesus that the Father so willingly give us.

Work in Sv. Dobrotiva Monastery on Saturday January 23rd from 09:30 till 17:00.
Please come to help with the restoration of the oldest Augustinian Monastery and Church in the Czech Republic.
More information Fr. Juan: juan@augustiniani.cz

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

*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

* **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**.

Feasts

12. *Marguerite Bourgeois* (+1700), Patroness of Montreal, founded the teaching Congregation of Notre Dame for the education of youth

13. *Hilary of Poitiers* (+368), bishop of that city, bravely defended the doctrine of Christ's divinity against his Arian opponents.

15. *Paul the First Christian Monk* (+345) is credited with the founding of Christian monasticism in Egypt. The Pauline Order celebrates his patronage

16. The Augustinian Order commemorates *All our dead Parents, Relatives and Benefactors* at Mass and community prayer. Mass will be celebrated with this specific intention at 12:15 and at 07:00pm/19:00.

17. *Anthony of Egypt* (+356), a friend of *Paul* (see 15 January) has been called "The Father of Christian Anchorites."

From the families that received gifts from the 2015 Giving Tree!



Year of Mercy

"Merciful like the Father"

Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy:

1. to feed the hungry,
2. give drink to the thirsty,
3. clothe the naked,
4. welcome the stranger,
5. heal the sick,
6. visit the imprisoned,
7. bury the dead.

And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy:

1. to counsel the doubtful,
2. instruct the ignorant,
3. admonish sinners,
4. comfort the afflicted,
5. forgive offences,
6. bear patiently those who do us ill,
7. pray for the living and the dead."

The Celebrant now addresses the congregation

If your faith prompts you to renew your baptismal vows, you will be asked to freely reject sin, the power of evil and to profess your faith in Jesus Christ, which is the faith of the Church, the community with whom you now stand.

Priest: Do you reject sin, as to live in the freedom of God's children? *Response:* I DO.

Priest: Do you reject the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin? *Response:* I DO.

Priest: Do you reject Satan, the father of evil and prince of darkness? *Response:* I DO.

Priest: Do believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth? *Response:* I DO.

Priest: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, Our Lord, born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified died and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God? *Response:* I DO

Priest: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting? *Response:* I DO.

The Community says: This is our faith, the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it and so renew our baptismal promises in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen