



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



October 29<sup>th</sup> and October 30<sup>th</sup>  
2016

The Thirty First Sunday in  
Ordinary Time – Year C

# St. Thomas Church

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## GOSPEL STUDY

The story of Zachaeus conveys a message of salvation and hope. The main figure, one Zachaeus, a despised tax collector for the Roman occupation force, being small of stature, climbs a tree to get a better look at Jesus. While passing by, Jesus looks up, calls the diminutive official down from his aerie and invites himself for dinner! Of course, this caused no small offense to the crowd who regarded such people as *sinners* outside the pale of salvation. The effect of this invitation is both electrifying and significant for Zachaeus. Scrambling down the sycamore, he leads Jesus home where he resolves to go beyond the restitution requirements of the Law of Moses. Instead of the sum stolen plus one-fifth, Zachaeus now vows to restore four times the amount stolen with a further promise to give one half of his possessions to the poor! Recall when Jesus had proposed this same invitation to the rich young man the response was negative: *He went away sad because he had many possessions*. Jesus confirms his host's humble but generous conversion with the beautiful statement that *salvation has come to this house*. Indeed, this accursed outcast once living outside the Law is now readmitted into the company of the saved. Zachaeus had encountered the mercy of God *through* the person and word of Jesus. Formerly mediated through the fulfillment of the Law, salvation now is realized through Jesus alone who leads the broken back home to God's loving mercy and forgiveness.

Please contact, Fr. William Faix, OSA 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

## First Reading:

The book of Wisdom is also known as the "Wisdom of Solomon," which honored the wisest of all Israeli monarchs, Solomon. Written toward the end of the intertestamental period (100 B.C to 100 A.D.), this book praised the ultimate virtue in Greek culture: wisdom. The author held that wisdom was not only an instrument of God, it had many of the personal qualities that Christians claimed for the "Logos." The book offers us a unique look into Diaspora Jews who were striving to integrate the world views of two cultures. Their Jewish belief system held the cosmos was a creation of God; hence it was "good." The Neo-Platonism of the host culture saw reality through the lense of duality; the universe was divided into two realms: spirit (which was good and superior) and matter (which was evil or inferior); humanity was a creature caught in the middle. While this summary is a gross simplification of the cultures, it does give us an overview to the challenges these "Hellenistic" Jews faced. How could someone hold creation was good (including matter) while addressing the Greek culture at large? The answer was simple: reduce the language of duality to the realm of morality. The righteous would be led by God's wisdom into an immortal life, while the evil who rejected such wisdom were condemned to non-existence. This view was evident in these few passages from Wisdom. The author portrayed God as a Master looking over his creation from a vast distance. In this sense, the author painted the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the One of supreme power and love. Precisely because of this power and love, God can chastize the immoral with patience; God can bridge the chasm between the righteous and the sinner; God can reinstate the repentant sinner to a place of honor. Implicitly, the author gave the sinner hope, when the general culture had a pessimistic outlook. For the Jews, the source of immorality was the person endowed with free will. For the Greeks, the source of immorality lie with the gods themselves. Judaism held out the possibility to live a moral life. Hellenistic common wisdom offered no such possibility; it was fatalistic.

## Thomas of St. Augustine, OSA

Thomas Jihyoe of Saint Augustine (1600?-1637) was a Japanese Augustinian friar who gave his life for Christ during the persecution of Christians in Seventeenth Century Japan. Thomas was born around the year 1600 in Omura, Japan, near Nagasaki. His parents, Christian catechists, were both martyred for the Faith.

As a youth Thomas studied under the Jesuits in Arima. When the Jesuit school was closed during the persecution, Thomas, along with his Jesuit teachers, was expelled from his native land. He went to Macao, where he continued his studies.

In 1622 he went to Manila, Philippines. There he entered the Augustinians, taking his vows in 1624. He was then sent to Cebu City, Philippines, where he completed his theological studies and was ordained a Priest in 1927 or 1928. He was the first Japanese Augustinian friar to be ordained a Priest.

As the persecution in Japan continued, more and more Catholic missionaries were martyred. Thomas, seeing that the Christians there were in great need of pastoral care and guidance, felt a call to return to the land of his birth.

He tried several times to obtain the permission of his superiors to return to Japan, and finally, in 1631, he went back to his homeland.

Since he was Japanese, it was fairly easy for him to conceal his priesthood from the authorities. He obtained a position in the administration of the Governor of Nagasaki under the name *Kintsuba* (Garnished with Gold). Fearless, and motivated by faith, Thomas was able to offer support to the imprisoned, including Augustinian Bartholomew Gutiérrez. When Bartholomew was killed, Thomas continued to encourage and help the other Christian prisoners.

Soon the Governor began to suspect that there was a Priest ministering to the captives in jail. Thomas had to flee the city. He took refuge in a nearby cave.

He became the object of a famous manhunt. Officials posted in many places his picture with the warning, "Do not harbor this person! If you know where he is, turn him in." So many of these "wanted" posters were displayed that his face became well-known throughout Japan.

Hiding was difficult. Thomas would go out under cover of night to minister to the faithful Catholics. He constantly changed his appearance, wearing disguises and never following the same route twice.

Finally, in 1637 he was captured. He revealed his true identity to his captors. He underwent many kinds of cruel torture. Remaining steadfast in his Christian faith, Thomas was condemned to death.

On November 6, 1637 he was hung by his feet with his head inserted into a pit of rotting garbage until he died.

He was initially listed along with the three Jesuits and 184 lay Catholics whose process of beatification and canonization was opened in 1996 by the Bishops of Japan. Subsequently, Thomas' cause was entrusted to the Augustinians.

Blessed Thomas "Kintsuba" Jihyoe of Saint Augustine and his 187 companion martyrs were beatified November 24, 2008

## St. Thomas Parish Dinner of Thanks

**Where:** St. Augustine School. Prague 4

**When:** Friday November 25th from 18:30

**Tickets** with Michael Rainey

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

❖ **Lectors and Eucharistic ministers:** If you would like to be a **lector** or Eucharistic minister at mass on Sundays please contact Ann at [dalyaann@hotmail.com](mailto:dalyaann@hotmail.com)

A new schedule will be prepared soon.

❖ **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.**

❖ The **choir** is looking for new members. If you like to sing, we'd like to have you join us! Please contact Frank Jicha at [frankjichal@gmail.com](mailto:frankjichal@gmail.com) for more information.

❖ On November 19th **Marriage Preparation** form 09:30 am till 03:15 pm.

❖ November is observed as the month of the departed. In the back of the church there is a list on which you can write the names of those whom you would wish to be remembered at Mass.

❖ Next Sunday, 6 November 2010 at 11 a.m., there will be a **Children's Mass celebrating** the Feast of All Saints.

## Feasts and Aniversaries

04 Charles Borromeo (+1584), the great reforming archbishop of Milan and patron of the Borromeo sisters who work in the neighboring hospital here in Mala Strana, is honored as a good shepherd of his people.

06 The COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE DEPARTED OF THE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER.

On this day we remember all the members of the Augustinian Order and their benefactors at Mass and prayers. We recall with special gratitude KING VACLAV II and his wife QUEEN GUTA and their royal succesors who so generously endowed our church of SAINTS THOMAS and AUGUSTINE.

## 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."