



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

St. Thomas Church

Today's Prayer

The more we call on God
the more we can feel God's
presence.
Day by day we are drawn closer
to the loving heart of God.

February 11th and 12th 2017

The Sixth Sunday in
Ordinary Time – Year A

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GOSPEL REFLEXION

Jesus commented on two, interrelated commands on oaths: 1) do not take false oaths and 2) keep an oath to the Lord. The majority of the discussion in 5:34-36 focused on the false oath, basing an oath on something that has no value (so the oath could be taken lightly). By relating creation and Jerusalem to God, Jesus basically asserted there is no such thing as an “oath taken lightly.” Every oath is an oath made to God, so must be taken seriously. People are better off just answering “Yes” or “No” and meaning it than to make idle oaths.

What of serious oaths? Father Meier in his tome “A Marginal Jew, Volume Four” applied the injunction of Jesus to any oath made to God. He pointed out the almost weekly use of non-trivial oaths to God. According to Meiers, Jesus opposed such oaths, even those commanded in the Torah! Yet, St. Paul swore oaths to the Lord, even for his apostolic ministry (see Acts 18:18 and 21:17, for example). Why Jesus would oppose a common, but pious act remains a mystery. Personally, I cannot think of any theological reason to defend the “Yes, yes, no, no” injunction beyond the condemnation of false or trivial oaths.

Jesus' commentary on Torah precepts continue in 5:38-48 (Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A). As we continue the study, let's keep in mind the reason for the commentary in Matthew's gospel: Jesus sought to teach the purest notion of the Law. Such purity was meant to lead the adherent into a fuller relationship with God. These interpretations were idealistic, so they were meant as goal to reach.

How do you try to live out God's Laws? How has the effort brought you closer to God?

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

STUDY OF THE SECOND READING

Sometimes, we post-moderns are swept up in our own hubris. We think we live in a golden time, or, at least a n enlightened time. “If people in the past only knew what we know,” the logic goes, “they would have (fill in the blank).” The past was blind, but now we can see. We are so much wiser than they were, based upon our knowledge. We could never make the mistakes they made. We're superior.

Of course, such prejudice is pure hubris. We might know more, but we are still blind, because we are ignorant of so much more. A truly wise person is humbled by the fact that the more he knows, the more he realizes what he doesn't know. He also realizes that contemporary knowledge does not automatically leads to a better life, either ethically or spiritually or psychologically. What we know does not make us better people.

In these short verses to the community at Corinth, St. Paul implicitly gave them that message. Information, even spiritual gnosis, along with spiritual charisms, does not make them superior people. In fact, Paul explicitly undercut any such argument by shifting to a Jewish notion of wisdom. The wisdom of the Living God could only be gleaned from his activity in the world. His ultimate revelation, his highest level of activity in the world was found in the presence, life, death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus was the WISDOM of God. This was the WISDOM Paul proclaimed to the community, to the elderly, even to the leaders of the age. Opposed to this dynamic revelation, the wisdom of the Greek age was found in whatever special knowledge they claimed to have. But that self-centered “wisdom” blinded them to the presence of God found in Christ Jesus. If the contemporaries of Jesus would have seen God's WISDOM (the true identity of the Christ), they would not have crucified him. But, how can they, or anyone, behold God's WISDOM? That insight is the activity of the Spirit which knows all things, even the depths of the divine.

Announcements and 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.
- **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. 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**.
- **Song books/Missals.** On several Sunday's we have been short of song books for the congregation. If you have one of the song books at home could you please bring it in when you are next at St. Tomas.
- **Fr. William** will be away on Order affairs in USA beginning 23th January to the end of February.

Evening Prayer by Saint Augustine

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake,
or watch, or weep tonight,
and give Your Angels and Saints charge over
those who
sleep.

Tend Your sick ones, O Lord Christ.

Rest Your weary ones,
Bless Your dying ones,
Soothe Your suffering ones,
pity Your afflicted ones,
Shield Your joyous ones,
And all for Your love's sake.

Amen.

Blessed Simon Fidati of Cascia, OSA

February 16

Blessed Simon Fidati of Cascia (1295?-1348), an Augustinian Friar who advocated Gospel simplicity and community based on Christian love, was known for his powerful preaching and desire to form Christ in everyone.

Born in Cascia around 1295, Simon entered the Order of St. Augustine as a young man. He initially studied philosophy and science, but soon changed his focus to study spirituality and theology.

Simon loved solitude and contemplation, but in obedience to his superiors in the Order, willingly involved himself in apostolic work. He developed the reputation as a powerful preacher of the Word of God and an outstanding teacher of the spiritual life. Forming Christ in all people became the primary goal of all his ministry. He was especially devoted to the humanity of Jesus, which he saw as a key to the life of a Christian. This devotion was rooted in the context of the Augustinian traditions of "theology of the heart" and the centrality of God's love.

In spite of some difficulties, Simon remained faithful to his vocation. He valued Christian charity, obedience to the Order and a sense of community of fraternal love as the most important underlying values for living religious community life. His writings include *The Works of Our Savior*, a life of Christ written in the form of a commentary on biblical passages; *The Order of the Christian Life*, which inspires the reader to live in conformity to Christ, and *Epistolary*, a collection of approximately 50 of his letters.

Simon died in Florence February 2, 1348, during the Great Plague. His remains are preserved in Cascia at the Basilica of St. Rita. Pope Gregory XVI declared him *Blessed* in 1833.

Feasts

- 16 *Simon of Cascia* (+1347), an Augustinian friar and writer is credited with composing the first catechism or handbook of simple instructions in the faith.
-Lithuania observes Independence Day (1918).
- 18 Gambia celebrates Independence Day (1965).
- 19 *Mesrop of Armenia* (+441), evangelized his people and composed an Alphabet still in use. He also composed a similar alphabet for the people of Georgia and the Albani of the Caucasus.