



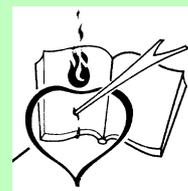
St. Thomas Church: established July 1, 1285 by King Vaclav II

St. Thomas Church

Today's Prayer

Say this Prayer Today:

Dear Lord as I come to you
today
Fill my heart and my whole
being
with the wonder of your
presence



February 24th a 25th 2018

The Second Sunday of
Lent -B

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

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Reflection on the Gospel

We have begun our Lenten journey with Mark, the evangelist, as guide and teacher. In last week's gospel reading he drew us into the desert experience of Jesus' first victory over diabolic opposition. Today's lesson has been termed a "transfiguration." Was this mysterious event some "post-resurrection" appearance or a theological reflection? It seems that Mark gives indication that it was, indeed, some sort of vision since the apostles, Peter, James and John, were said to be taken "aside," a phrase usually introducing a revelation or some ecstatic experience. And as with many such divine appearances in the Old or first Testament, this event, too, is set on a mountain traditionally identified with Mount Tabor in northern Israel. The personages involved are Jesus, bathed in extraordinary glory so indicative in the Old Testament of divine presence; and the figures of Moses, the lawgiver, and Elijah, the prophet, who serve as corroborating witnesses for Jesus' person and divinely mandated mission. The presence of these two preeminent pillars of Israel's religious tradition verify that the word of God mediated on Mount Sinai and vindicated on Mount Carmel is the same as the good news being proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth. Meanwhile the three frightened apostles—the core of the new community—are commanded, as Israel once was, to "listen to him." Peter, terrified at this phenomenon, offers to build three huts (or booths). In the second temple period (ca. 520 BC-AD 70), the religious feast of Booths, commemorating those desert years when Israel lived in tents, was popularly believed to be the moment of the Messiah's expected appearance. Elijah, in fact, was to reappear in Israel as the immediate precursor of the messianic age, which for Peter, James and John, was now. Dawning as the shekinah or cloud of glory seemed to confirm. But, that was to come later. For "looking up they saw no one, only Jesus." It is these final words that give us a clue to the passage. Perhaps, there were member of Mark's community who were still looking for extraordinary signs or were even tempted to reenter mainstream Judaism for reassured faith. Some may have even felt that "the gospel was not enough" in their quest for religious fulfillment or needed answers. It may be the same with us. Easily discouraged and callous in our practice of faith we can fall into a deadening routine with disastrous consequences.

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Study of the First Reading

God's call was one in a series. Even when God had given Abraham and Sarah a sign of his faithfulness in the birth of their child, God continued to call. Abraham's response was immediate. Human sacrifice was repugnant to the Hebrews, but was known in the ancient world. Sacrifice meant the offering of self to the gods, or the offering of great personal worth. A first born male represented the continuation of one's identity through a child and the most precious thing a man could have on earth, his son. Offering such to the gods was only second to self-sacrifice. The sacrifice of Isaac presented great moral problems to the reader. Why did God order Abraham to do what is clearly against his own Law? First, what was more important: God's Law or God's will? If we follow God's Law, we are "safe," but are we following God's will? If we follow God's will, how are we sure we are not fooling ourselves? Second, was God free from his own Law? Didn't that make God inconsistent, and imperfect? What did this act say about God? Like the problem of evil in the world, there are no easy answers, only more questions to vex one's faith.

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 juan@augustiniani.cz Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin

osaprag@augustiniani.cz

Study of the Second Reading

In this slice of Paul's famous letter to the Romans, he used the theme of hope to move from the suffering of the present to the glory of the Second Coming. Romans 8:18-30 spoke of groaning in creation, ourselves, and life in the Spirit. According to Paul, these groanings were a foretaste of events to come. The last event, of course, was the Last Judgment. According to Jewish lore, angels would act as prosecutors against the evils of humanity in the divine court. Paul countered this notion with Christian hope rooted in an intimate relationship with God.

He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord Yahweh helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Paul asked rhetorical questions about charges ("debts" to be called in) by an imaginary prosecutor. Who would have been foolish enough to prosecute someone the judge favored and already forgave? [8:33] Why would God the judge condemn someone he had already forgiven, for whom his own Son intercedes? [8:34] These few verses revealed Paul's view of the Last Judgment. Christians had already received the gift of reconciliation and divine life in grace. Their status before God at the end of time was certain. Acquittal was the verdict even before the court convened. Paul's hope should be ours, in spite of daily struggles and the uncertainty of modern life. We have no fear before the Lord. After all, we are his favorites!

Parish Pilgrimage to Holy Land.

St. Thomas Parish is organizing a trip to the Holy Land. It will take place from Monday April 30th to Wednesday May 8th. The itinerary includes visits to all the important biblical sites in the following areas: Jaffa, Galilee, Nazareth, Tiberias, Holy Mountain, Capharnaum, Judea, Jericho, Bethlehem, Ein Karem, Qumran, Jerusalem, Mount Zion, Gethsemane and Bethania.

April 30th –May 8th. If you are interesting please contact Fr. Juan at: juan@augustiniani.cz.
More information: www.augustiniani.cz

Exhibition of the "15 Stations"

by Alena Foustkova

Ambit of the Saint Thomas Monastery, Opening on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018, 5:30 pm
The exhibition will last until the Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018.

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
- ❖ **Marriage Preparation:** The next one-day marriage preparation course (for the English speaking community) will be held by Fr. William on Saturday 17th March from 9:15am - 3pm at St. Thomas Parish for those who wish to participate.
- ❖ **Fr. William**, the pastor will be away for January 23rd till March 2nd month. Fr. Imann, OSA will be the ordinary pastor in his absence. In cases of emergency I can be reached either through Fr. Imann at 730817348.

*****Lenten Services*****

- Tuesdays.** Bible studies from 06:30 till 07:30pm.
 - Wednesdays.** Adult religious education from 06:00 7:00 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