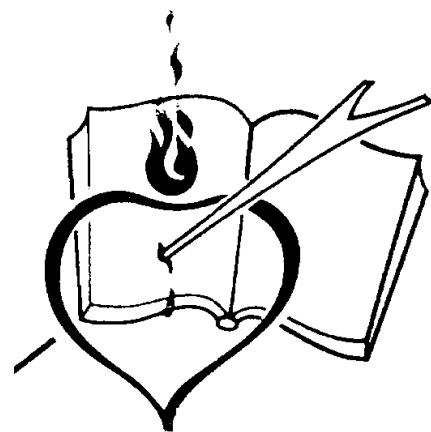




St. Thomas Church: established July 1, 1285 by King Vaclav II



March 3rd and March 4th 2018

The Third Sunday of Lent

St. Thomas Church

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The Reflection of the Gospel

The Old or First Testament in the Greek *Septuagint* version consists of 45 accepted (designated as “canonical”) books. Of these, the first five, called in Hebrew *Torah* (“the Law”) or in Greek *Pentateuch* (“five scrolls”), are regarded as the most important in the bible. *Genesis*, begins with the theologically interpreted stories of creation, the fall, the flood and Israel’s earliest ancestors. *Exodus*, the second book, relates Israel’s dramatic redemption from Egyptian slavery and the “giving of the Law” on Sinai, a theme, which we shall momentarily consider. *Leviticus*, is a ceremonial and ritual code followed by *Numbers* describing Israel’s tribal structures and anecdotes of its desert experience. The final or fifth book, *Deuteronomy*, is a summary of divine Law ending with Moses’ death prior to the conquest of Canaan. The *Hebrew* version of our Old Testament consists only of 39 books according to an arrangement called **TANAKH**, “an acronym that brings together the initial Hebrew terms for the three principal parts of Sacred Scripture: **TA** (the Law or Torah), **NA**(the Prophets or Nevi’im) and **KH**(the Writings or Khetuvim)”. As mentioned in today’s first reading, the *declogue* (literally “ten words”as in the “Ten Commandments”) was according to tradition given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai in the desert. Although framed in the manner of fifteenth century B.C. covenants or agreements, these commandments are unique in religious history. Of particular importance are the precepts of the Sabbath day of rest (Commandment three) and the avoidance of idolatry (Commandment one). In the history of the Church, *catechumens* or those under instruction before baptism, on the third Sunday of Lent were “given” these divine precepts both to be learned by heart and to be lived in moral commitment. To the Jewish people these commandments were meant to insure the survival of their community. As a religious and moral inheritance it is easy to see why Jesus acted with such burning zeal in today’s gospel of the cleansing of the Temple, the house of God, in Jerusalem.

Study of the First Reading

[1-2] The Commandments came from God with the reminder of his fidelity to the people. God is God because he takes the first step. The Hebrews were the first to believe in a God of history. God was not just the creator or preserver of nature; God was active in the lives of people. For the Hebrew, God was God because he first called, then people responded. [3] The commandments are in descending order of importance. The first commandment called for complete fidelity on the part of the believer. The believer can in no way attribute power or life and nature to anything else than the Hebrew God. God was to be first in the life of the believer. [4] Our society has reduced this commandment to swearing and cursing. In our society, both are considered to be tactless, but not ultimately harmful. This was not the intention of the commandment. Ancient people believed that a name revealed the power and purpose of the person or thing named. This commandment was meant to avoid abusing the name of God for purposes of manipulating God through excessive prayers. God’s name was to be used in a loving relationship with him, not in trying to use him. Note the use of “Lord” in the passage. The Hebrews replaced the name of God (spelled YHWH) with Lord so they could keep the letter of the commandment. The Hebrews ultimately lost the name of God; we can only speculate its original meaning. [8] “To keep holy God’s day” means more than going to church. Holiness means to do what God does; on the seventh day God rested, and people should as well. Rest means recreation: doing those things that refresh the person for another week. [12] The extended family was so important in the ancient world that fidelity to parents is more important than murder. In our society, family values have less weight. The third and fourth commandments were the only positive ones of the ten. These two were meant to define a society as faithful to God and to family. [13-15] These commandments affected our relationships with our neighbors. Taken in a positive manner, all could be reduced to one saying “Respect others.” [16-17] These commandments encouraged a single-hearted intent. Ethical conduct demanded an honest character.

Coffee, Cookies & Conversation follows Sunday’s 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 osaprag@augustiniani.cz Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin

**FROM THE MESSAGE OF HIS
HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FOR LENT 2018**

**"Because of the increase of iniquity, the love
of many will grow cold" (Mt 24:12)**

By devoting more time to *prayer*, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception, and then to find the consolation God offers. He is our Father and he wants us to live life well.

Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbour as a brother or sister. What I possess is never mine alone. How I would like almsgiving to become a genuine style of life for each of us! How I would like us, as Christians, to follow the example of the Apostles and see in the sharing of our possessions a tangible witness of the communion that is ours in the Church! For this reason, I echo Saint Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to take up a collection for the community of Jerusalem as something from which they themselves would benefit (cf. 2 Cor 8:10). This is all the more fitting during the Lenten season, when many groups take up collections to assist Churches and peoples in need. Yet I would also hope that, even in our daily encounters with those who beg for our assistance, we would see such requests as coming from God himself. When we give alms, we share in God's providential care for each of his children. If through me God helps someone today, will he not tomorrow provide for my own needs? For no one is more generous than God.

Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth. On the one hand, it allows us to experience what the destitute and the starving have to endure. On the other hand, it expresses our own spiritual hunger and thirst for life in God. Fasting wakes us up. It makes us more attentive to God and our neighbour. It revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger.

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.
- ❖ This Sunday, March 3rd, is our annual **Communion Class Bake Sale** after Mass in the Refectory. Come and enjoy some delicious goodies baked by the kids! 100% of the proceeds will go to benefit the Augustinian school being built now in Nigeria. The money will go towards classroom & sanitary facilities, so please be generous - you'll be tangibly improving the lives of kids around the world!

*****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