



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

## Today's Prayer

**Two are the commands given us for this life of ours; to abstain and to sustain. To abstain from those things that are considered good by the world, and to sustain the many things that are bad in the world.**

**This requires continence and endurance. Continence means not to rely on worldly happiness. Endurance signifies not to give way to worldly unhappiness.**

March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2017

The First Sunday of Lent –  
Year A

# St. Thomas Church

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## THE FIRST LENTEN SUNDAY-A

The season of Lent is upon us. As of Ash Wednesday we have begun our sober 40 day journey that will culminate on the evening of Holy Thursday just three days before the glorious Resurrection of the Lord on Easter Sunday. Our word *lent* from the Anglo-Saxon expression “lengthening of days” alludes to the gradual approach of spring and the solemnity of Easter which, by coincidence, is another Anglo-Saxon word (*eastre*) meaning “spring.” Today’s readings, laced with chronicled temptation and sin, remind us, no matter how grandly or despairingly we judge ourselves, that we all too often have failed. To paraphrase Paul: ‘Sin can be understood in the sense of *missing the mark* (Romans 5:12); each sin is an act wherein the goal for which we were made (union with God) is denied.’ Today’s gospel reading from Matthew underscores this personal struggle. Jesus in that lonely desert haunt, beset by temptations, has served as an exemplary model over the centuries for all persecuted or harassed Christians that *qualis rex, talis grex* (“as with the leader so with the follower”). As is his wont, Matthew, by heavily relying on Old Testament background and inspiration for his teaching, compares Jesus to Israel in its own desert experience. But, the comparison soon shades into contrast *via* the important difference that Jesus resisted the tripartite temptations. Given *manna* (Exodus 16) the Israelites complained about its taste whereas Jesus rejected such “bread at any price.” In the second temptation, Jesus rejected pointless “power demonstrations” whereas Israel provoked God to work such wonders on its behalf (Numbers 20). Finally, as Israel went off after its own invented deities (such as the *Golden Calf*, Exodus 32 and *Baal of Peor*, Numbers 25), Jesus resolutely repulsed all idolatry in any form. As we commence Lent let us accept ourselves with the possibility of improvement; after all, with God all things are possible. Here are some Lenten suggestions. The Church proposes that we *fast*. Do we really need to consume the amount and types of food we find so congenial? Another form of Lenten observance is *almsgiving*. Can we be more generous to those in want? Do we know any families or lonely persons who could use our help. If you are looking Fr. Juan would certainly help. Finally let us intersperse our Lenten observance with *prayer*. Do we really desire to converse with God? If in prayer we speak with God and in Scripture God speaks with us, would it not be worth the effort to set aside some five minutes each day in preparation for Easter?

## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

### CLEARING MY SURROUNDINGS OF CLUTTER

**Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-15; Lk 4:1-13** I do not live “by bread alone.” If the only meaning of life was food, clothes or work, how meaningless it would be. Lent is a wonderful time to remind myself that God’s presence is what gives life meaning. I begin Lent by starting a “give away” box and praying about what I have that could be used by someone in need.

### MONDAY: BE HOLY AS GOD IS HOLY

**Lv 19:1-2, 11-18; Mt 25:31-46** Does clutter and disorganization interfere with my growth in holiness? Today is a good day to begin paring down. I look through my kitchen for five or more items to give away.

### TUESDAY: EXPECTING THE KINGDOM?

**Is 55:10-11; Mt 6:7-15** Does my home look as though I am expecting and praying for God’s Kingdom? Why or why not? I let go of more clutter by going through bookshelves for five or more books I could donate.

### WEDNESDAY: A SIGN OF GOD'S LOVE

**Jon 3:1-10; Lk 11:29-32** I can be a sign of God’s love to the world by living more simply and passing on my excess to those in need. Today, I gather five or more blankets, sheets or towels to give away.

### THURSDAY: THE FATHER KNOWS MY NEEDS

**Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Mt 7:7-12** Am I in the habit of asking God to provide for my needs? Today, I look through drawers, on closet shelves and in storage areas for five or more items to donate.

### FRIDAY: IF I REPENT, I WILL BE SAVED

**Ez 18:21-28; Mt 5:20-26** Like many in this culture, I need to repent of my excess. Today, I search through my clothes for five or more items to give away.

### SATURDAY: OSAPRAG@AUGUSTINIANI.CZ

**Dt 26:16-19; Mt 5:43-48** I have gathered at least 25 items to

## Ongoing Activities

**Coffee, Cookies & Conversation** follow Sunday Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.**

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.**

**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.

**Marriage Preparation:** The next one-day marriage preparation course (for the English speaking community) will be held by Fr. William on Saturday 18th March from 9:15am - 3pm for those who wish to participate.

Fridays: **Stations of the Cross** at 06:00 pm. Confession will be heard immediately afterwards.

On Sunday March 19<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate **St. Patrick's day** with a Mass at 12:30 in St. Thomas Church.

### **Lenten Program:**

\*Every Thursday at 06:00pm **Mass** in St Barbara's chapel. After Mass possibility of the Sacrament of reconciliation

\*Every Friday at 6pm in the Church will be the **Stations of the Cross**. After it confessions.

**4 leaders needed for an English summer camp from July 9. - 22. More information see Fr. Juan or ask at [juan@augustiniani.cz](mailto:juan@augustiniani.cz)**

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## **Lent 2017**

**Project : Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance to Children of Poor Families in the Parish of Saint-Augustine of Poko.**

The following project plans to help children 18 years and younger who belong to poor families within our own parish. The project hopes to ensure that these children have access to a basic education program.

This project is part of an effort to mobilize resources towards the creation of a youth ministry program. The program would encourage parents to create a Christian environment within their families and help establish a Christian leadership group with a social development focus.

Overall yearly cost: 2000 EUROS

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

#### *General Objective*

Ensure the yearly education of 10 school-aged children that belong to impoverished Christian families from Saint-Augustine Parish in Poko.

#### *Specific Objectives*

- SO 1. To ensure the costs of educating 10 children in the area schools – 5 girls and 5 boys under 18 years of age.  
SO 2. To ensure the travel of one child to Kinshasa so that he/she can attend a school in the Capital.

### **PLANS**

1. To conduct a fundraiser campaign towards the education of children belonging to impoverished Christian families.
2. To pay the education expenses for the 10 children identified by the Parish of Saint-Augustin.
3. To ensure follow-up of the beneficiaries of this education program with their respective schools.

### **LENGTH OF THE PROJECT**

The project covers a period of six years (starting in 2017) This period encompasses one complete cycle of primary and secondary education in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### **MAINTENANCE OF THE PROJECT**

1. The parents of the children benefitting from the program are organized under a small parish association that deals with the educational matters of parish youth.
2. Parents will contribute two pigs so that they can build communal pigsty
3. The funds generated by this pigsty will contribute to the local initiatives run by the priest and help all men and women of good will.

More information: [www.augustiniani.cz/en](http://www.augustiniani.cz/en) or Fr. Juan at [juan@augustiniani.cz](mailto:juan@augustiniani.cz)