



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

Today's Prayer

All of us have become members of Christ. How do you fail to sin against Christ when you sin against a member of Christ? Thus, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has anything against you, leave your gift before the altar.

God seeks you rather than your gift. Christ seeks the one whom he has redeemed by his Blood rather than what you have found in your storeroom.

March 18th and 19th 2017

The Third Sunday of Lent
– Year A

St. Thomas Church

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THE THIRD LENTEN SUNDAY-A

For those who first read or heard the gospel of John preached to them, the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman must have been shocking or in contemporary terminology "culturally innovative." First, the woman in question would not have gone to the well alone at noon; such public areas as the well or market were reserved for woman either early in the morning or early evening certainly never high noon! Further, with strict separation of genders, no decent woman would have been seen talking with male strangers on no less such highly charged religious matters as "messiah" or the "true faith." Further, Jesus was Jewish and the woman, a Samaritan, who were regarded by orthodox Jews as a mixed breed and religious "degenerates." In brief, everything- religion, cultural, history- doomed this encounter from the start. But, Jesus turned in another direction. His conversation with "the Samaritan woman" consisting of seven sections carefully challenged her life and widened her faith. So impressed, this divorcee once enlightened transcends many of her encoded ethnic or religious inhibitions. By now the most catechized woman in the New Testament- she *leaves* her water jar by the well, *runs* back to the village and there *announces* the "good news" (in Greek, *evangelion*) to her villagers. Curiously going out, they see and hear for themselves. Once convinced they successfully induce Jesus (much to the consternation of his staid apostles) to stay with them for two days. The mission so unique in the gospel story becomes a paradigm for all seeking the truth. Is this true with ourselves? No matter where we come from, our background, our past (shady or innocent) all such things are the *mise on scene* upon and through which the grace of God acts and takes effect. The only question is, are we ready to accept the challenge offered us. *Now is the time to wake up, the hour is at hand*, says Saint Paul. (Romans 13:1 ff.)

When was the last time you got in a conversation with a stranger? What was the conversation about?

Many well-traveled Europeans complain about Americans. We, Americans, like to have conversations with strangers we meet anywhere unfamiliar to us. Usually the conversation is "small talk," discussions about the weather or a favorite sports team, or about family. Europeans find this American trait an annoying habit, a waste of time, and an invasion of their privacy. Small talk with stranger is not part of Continental culture.

Even more than Europeans, people in the time of Jesus frowned upon strangers sharing small talk. So, the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman would have shocked the ancient reader. But, like so many other times, Jesus willingly stepped over social convention to evangelize. Even the hated foreigner. Even the woman. Even the one of questionable morals.

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

- Wednesdays.** Bible studies from 06:30 7:30 pm. An opportunity to explore the Word of God.
 - Thursdays.** Mass will be offer at 06:005 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

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

CLEARING UNFORGIVENESS FROM MY HEART

Jn 4:5-42; Jn 2:13-25;

Lk 13:1-9 Jesus told the

woman at the well that God's life is like "a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." If I am unwilling to forgive, this acts like a

dam that blocks the flow of God's grace. This week, I will consider whether there is anyone whom I need to forgive. God wants me to forgive them and pray for their healing.



MONDAY: JESUS' HOMETOWN REJECTS HIM

2 Kgs 5:1-15b; Lk 4:24-30 Does it ever seem that those closest to me are the ones who respect me the least? Jesus experienced this in Nazareth. Forgiveness often has to start with those in my immediate family.

TUESDAY: HOW OFTEN SHOULD I FORGIVE?

Dn 3:25, 34-43; Mt 18:21-35 The parable of the two servants helps me put forgiveness in perspective. My debt to God far exceeds what anyone owes me. I thank God today for all the times God has forgiven me.

WEDNESDAY: FOR MY CHILDREN

Dt 4:1, 5-9; Mt 5:17-19 Passing on instruction about God's ways to my children, grandchildren, or any children God puts in my path, is essential. Am I teaching the children around me how to forgive and love?

THURSDAY: A KINGDOM DIVIDED CANNOT SURVIVE

Jer 7:23-28; Lk 11:14-23 We are the Kingdom of God, the Body of Christ. Jesus warns that a kingdom cannot survive if it is divided against itself. Refusal to forgive others in the Church promotes disunity and division. Is there anyone in my Christian family I need to forgive?

FRIDAY: LOVING THE LORD WITH ALL MY HEART

Hos 6:1-2-10; Mk 12:28-34 There is no room for unforgiveness in my heart if I am loving God with all my heart. One sign that I am forgiving is when I can pray for those who hurt me. Today, I write down the names of anyone I need to forgive and ask God to bless them.

SATURDAY: COME, LET US RETURN TO GOD

Hos 6:1-6; Lk 18:9-14 Regardless of the problems I have with unforgiveness, God invites me to return to him and be healed. If I have discovered any deep problems in this area, I ask God today how to be healed. The Sacrament of Reconciliation? Professional counseling? I will not be afraid to seek help; God is faithful and wants to help me.

FORMER HEAD OF CZECH ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH MILOSLAV VLK DIES AT 84

The former head of the Czech Roman Catholic Church, Cardinal Miloslav Vlk, has died at the age of 84. Cardinal Vlk had been suffering from lung cancer. He was ordained in June 1968 during the Prague Spring but had his license to minister revoked in the late 1970s and worked as a window cleaner in Prague while also conducting underground services. Pope John Paul II appointed him Archbishop of Prague in 1991 and made him a cardinal three years later. Miloslav Vlk stepped down as head of the Czech Roman Catholic church in 2010.

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. See more at www.augustiniani.cz/en

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

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.

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

4 leaders needed for an English summer camp from July 9. - 22. More information see Fr. Juan or ask at juan@augustiniani.cz