



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

St. Thomas Church

Today's Prayer

Say this Prayer Today:

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.

In this issue:

Gospel Reflection	1
Study of 1 st Reading	1
Feasts	2
Study of 2 nd Reading	2
Announcement and Ongoing Activities	2
Marian Pilgrimage	2

May 05th and May 06th 2018

Sixth Easter Sunday

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 532 675, 602 643

Reflection on the Gospel

There are two intertwining themes found in today's readings: the first is that a once distant God has become lovingly accessible through his Son, the risen Messiah. The second is that this divine "accessibility" has, in turn, created the Church or community of like-minded believers as "the household of the Lord." The *First Epistle of John* (today's second reading) was written in the latter first century (ca. AD 90/100) as a Christian rejoinder to a highly sophisticated Hellenistic society and culture. Punctuated by such esoteric cults as Mithraism, the Elysian mysteries, Isis and numerous schools of philosophy the intellectual market place resembled our post-modern world's preoccupation with *New Age*, *astrology*, *dianetics*, *Unification* or other such movements. Official state cults replete with antique rituals linked with civic duties still flourished but did little to satisfy man and woman's deepest yearnings and expectations. What made Christianity attractive was its unique message of salvation based on the simple command *to love God and one another*. This brief letter, better, exhortation, of John declares, in fact that *God is love* itself (I John 4:8) and that salvation is guaranteed the disciple if he/she *unconditionally* loves one's brothers and sisters for God's sake. In fact, the Johannine Church was constantly reminded that *the one who does not love is dead*. The Gospel reading from John is equally as emphatic in linking this commandment of love with Jesus' departing promise that *you will live on in my love if you keep my commandments* (John 15:10). For many, this understanding of Jesus and his demands are cast solely in terms of sin/law. Could it be that we have to relearn what the message of Jesus really is and how it should make a difference in our lives? When do we start?

Study of the First Reading

Who speaks for God? More important, who does God speak through?

After his vision concerning the abrogation of the "kosher" in Acts 10:9-15, Peter realized God did not want any separation of Greek from Jew. All were his children. All were to be saved. Through the movement of the Spirit, Peter went to the house of Cornelius, a Roman soldier. The simple greeting found in 10:25-26 marked a turning point in the early Church. Usually, so-called "righteous" Gentiles like Cornelius, who worshiped the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, visited and supported Jewish establishments. But the sense of separation many Jews had did not allow reciprocal visits. Jews were to remain segregated from the "nations" to maintain religious purity. To enter the house of a non-Jew not only meant the visitors were unclean, they were polluted by the presence of foreign cultures and their strange gods. Cornelius represented more than the Gentile world. He was a Roman soldier, a man sworn to maintaining Rome's grip over the Jewish people. In spite of his generous spirit to the local Jewish community, Cornelius was the "enemy" in many eyes. When Peter crossed the threshold into the house of Cornelius, he not only polluted himself (made himself "un-kosher"), he stepped into the arena of the enemy. Yet, Peter's visit was God's will. Peter would not have gone there on his own. This was God's initiative. Peter realized God's plan. The Gentiles were to be converted. They had a place in the Kingdom. [10:34-35] The Spirit confirmed God's plan. While Peter preached the Good News, the Spirit poured its gifts upon the household. Even the Jewish Christians who dared to join Peter in the house of the Gentile witnessed the Spirit's power. If the Gentiles there were "baptized in the Spirit," there was no reason to deny them sacramental baptism and full admission into the assembly of the saved. [10:44-48] Hence, God set aside the sense of the "kosher" for the salvation of all. This marked a radical shift in the early Church and foreshadowed the dominance of the Church by the Gentiles a few generations after Luke wrote the chronicle we call "Acts."

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

The **21st Annual Marian Pilgrimage** to the Shrine of the Gracious Madonna, at sv. Dobrotiva-Zaječov, will be held on May 12. We meet at Ujezd street – near of Legii bridge , at 08:30 am, Saturday morning, May 12. If you do not have a ride please contact Fr. Juan Bautista for details. In keeping with our tradition, please bring a lunch, which you can share with another person on pilgrimage. Whatever is left over (if you so will) is given to the poor. There is a brochure, which explains the origins and traditions behind this beautiful 700-year pilgrimage, which has been renewed after forty years of communism.

THE 15th PARISH FESTIVAL

We share joy!

Saturday, June 2nd 2018

15:00-22:00

Mass

Games and activities for for all ages: Music for all around the world, photos of the history of the Church, dance...

Costumes of the Earth, Africa, Augustinian fraternity, games,

Cooking Competition...

Theater

Program for children: games, ponies, castles, piñata...

Presentation of activities

And much more....

Come to celebrate with us!!!

Study of the Second Reading

We continue on our study with the high point of 1 John 4. These few verses tied the notion of charity with God and his community. In essence, love defined the God we worship and the movement we align ourselves with. We worship the God of love and belong to the love community.

By defining God as the source of love, the author distanced himself from a spirituality of individual ecstasy. Other studies on 1 John have investigated the difference between the author's emphasis on charity and the escapism of the Gnostic mystics. Here, however, the author clearly pointed to the activity of love as the sign of God's love with us.

Notice this activity of love (mercy, compassion, empathy, personal involvement) defined the Christian view of God. The phrase "God is love" alone could miss the point. This phrase could be interpreted as a reduction of God's power to the transcendent euphoria of new love; we could be fooled into the notion that we can only touch God in such a ecstatic "rush." That was the furthest notion from the author's mind. He was not speaking of an ecstasy; he was speaking of a history. The birth, life, death, and resurrection of his Son was an act of love that defined God. And, how do we know this loving God? Not by our feelings alone. No, by what he has done for us!

God's "love" history sets the bar for us. We know God when we act as he would act. We do not know God when we act in selfish, even hateful ways. Remember, the author had an eye for evangelization. Our actions become invitations or impediments to the Christian community. Our God is a God of love only when we show that love to others.

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

***Bible Study** sessions are held each Tuesday evening at 6:30pm/18:00 in Tagaste room. All are welcome to join and reflect on the Word of God.

***Religious education for adults** sessions are held each Wednesday evening at 6:00pm/18:00 in Tagaste room.

*On Tuesday May 8th our Pastor Fr. William will celebrate his **birthday**. Mass at 12:15 in St. Thomas Church

* May 20th is **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION SUNDAY**. Again we ask that you pray for these young parishioners as they approach the Eucharist for the first time.

***May 13th:** Will be a huge Parish celebration day. Events are sort of all rolled into one:

Before Mass: Our last RE class of the year.

During Mass: Children's Mass

After Mass: Mother's Day, Fr William's birthday celebration (actual birthday is May 8th) and Parishioner's Day - please bring food to share, also please encourage parents of kids in your class to bring food to share as well!

Our party will continue until Spanish Mass is finished, at which point there will be a celebration of Fr Antonio's life and an unveiling of the bust made in his image & honour. His parents will be coming from Spain, and we encourage everyone to stay to honour his memory. His 50th birthday would have been May 6th, so it's a day of celebration for his incredible - but too short - life. The Spanish community will be providing further refreshments served after their Mass, and anyone who can help with set-up and clean-up (to lighten the load especially for the Spanish community on this important day, which will be emotional for them) will be greatly appreciated!