



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

St. Thomas Church

Today's Prayer

"Be still and know that I am
God."
Lord, Your words lead us to
the
calmness and greatness of
your presence.

**"Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they
rest in you."**

October 1st and 2nd 2011

27th Sunday in Ordinary
time A

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

Fax: 257 530 556

TWENTY-SIXTH ORDINARY SUNDAY

This parable of *vineyard and the vinedressers*, the second of five interrelated controversial responses in Matthew's gospel are among Jesus' last recorded statements marking the end of his three year public ministry. As with every parable- defined as a *spiritually motivating lesson delivered allegorically within the context of a short story*- it has a designated audience in mind. In this instance (as in last week's story of the *two sons*) it was the Temple establishment which the Gospels, perhaps, inaccurately, lump together as *the chief priests, the scribes, the elders and the Pharisees*. The ultra-orthodox Pharisees here could hardly be classed as allies of the priestly caste openly suspected as Roman collaborators but Jesus' pointed remarks had aroused such outraged opposition that they, Pharisees and priests alike on the severity of his prophetic denunciations united in common cause against him. Today's gospel reading so explicitly critical of the chief priests and the Pharisees prompted Jesus' excoriating statements because they, the religious establishment, in face of his miracles and works, adamantly rejected him as mediator of God's message. *Israel*, the beloved vineyard or possession of the Lord, tended by the *tenant workers* or religious leaders (i.e., the chief priests and the Pharisees) has been repeatedly visited and warned by the *messengers* or the *prophets*. Finally, the parable ominously states, they encounter the presence of the *householder's only son and heir* whom they shamefully abuse, *cast out and murder*. A clear reference to Jesus' own expected fate.

The spiritual analogy is clear enough. These contemporary religious leaders (and all called to such service) if impervious to the needs of the people of God (*the vineyard*) will themselves be ultimately and in gloriously removed from service. Other *tenant vineyard dressers* will take their place and give the *vineyard owner the fruits in proper time*. For us called to service in the Church as the pope, bishops and priests must first regard ourselves as servants. We will be held accountable before God on two accounts: perseverance and fidelity. Pray for us to accomplish this in our ministry.

FIRST READING

Isaiah, a prophet in the royal court, bravely spoke against the corruption of power elite in Jerusalem and the lax fidelity of the people at large. Serving in the second half of the eighth century, the prophet drew a clear line between the sin of the people and the chaotic political situation in which they found themselves. War after war raged on their borders and threatened to engulf Judea. "Why was God abandoning his people?" the nation asked. Isaiah answered with the song of the vineyard. The key to interpretation lay in verse seven. From this vantage point, the song makes sense. God planted his people like a vineyard. He granted it protection and favor (choice vine planted on a fertile hill with hedges and a look-out tower). Isaiah then challenged a popular view the people had about themselves ("We are the Chosen People") with a call for judgment. The fruit of such a carefully planted and tended vineyard was sour; the people God protected and grew was unfaithful and unjust. What should God do? At this point, the prophet declared the judgment: God would abandon his people, just as his people had abandoned him.

SECOND READING

As Paul ended his letter to the Philippians, he exhorted his audience to prayer and a life focused on virtue. For Paul, prayer should be honest and all inclusive; the petitioner should open his or her heart to the Lord so peace could replace anxiety. Yes, the small community of believers could experience the misunderstanding, prejudice, and abuse of outsiders, but within the assembly, they could know the peace that came from the presence of Christ. At the end of the passage, Paul offered himself as an example of prayer and solid living. While this might seem a exercise in pride and bravado, Paul actually had a point. Even though he preached to the Gentiles and made himself unclean by socializing with them, he was a highly educated and observant Jew; he knew and obeyed the Law. Greek and Roman society admired Jews for their ethical standards and moral lifestyle, even if the notion of kosher eluded them. In addition, he lived a Christian life on the edge; he was a missionary who faced danger and death. He was proud of the wounds he suffered for Christ. His lifelong dedication to Torah observance and his burning desire to evangelize made Paul the ideal example. He had overcome anxiety when he faced persecution; he knew what it took to live a life that was faithful, pure and virtuous. Paul had what it took to be mentor and model.

ST. THOMAS PARISHIONERS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In commemoration of the European Union's Anti-Trafficking Day that will be held October 18, 2011, I would like to highlight the urgent need to raise public awareness of human trafficking as an increasingly disturbing phenomenon in Europe, a horrible crime against humanity that has devastating consequences for the victims, the majority of whom are forced into prostitution, pornography, domestic servitude, labor exploitation, and/or organ removal. Recently, several reports, including reports from the Czech Republic highlight the urgent need for all members of civil society to get involved in raising public awareness of human trafficking, including the faith-based (church) community who can play an effective role in eliminating this crime through committed prayer and fasting, funding advocacy work, and through the creation of church-sponsored social justice events.

WHY THE CHURCH MUST ACT NOW?

Globally, we are facing one of the worst crime epidemics of our times brought on by economic globalization resulting from unprecedented openness in the trans-national trade, travel, and communication sectors. Simply put, globalization has progressed faster than the public and private sector's ability to monitor and regulate these markets, thereby creating massive opportunities for exploitation by sophisticated criminals. It is in these unregulated-unguarded sectors that human trafficking will continue to increase. This human trafficking phenomenon has taken on such unprecedented proportions that it can be described as a new form of slavery. It treats human beings as a commodity to be bought and sold.

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Trafficking in human beings consists of a combination of three basic components, as defined by the UN convention: the **action** of "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons"; **by means of** "the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person"; **for the purpose of** exploitation, which includes "at a minimum, the exploitation of the others for prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, and removal of organs".

THE VICTIMS

The number of innocent human victims caught up in all forms of human trafficking is heart breaking. The European Union's criminal intelligence agency "Europol" estimates that there are hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children being trafficked into and within Central and Western Europe annually. Victims are very often trafficked from poorer countries towards richer countries. All are desperate to make a living, only to have their lives ruined by exploitation. Victims are frequently lured by adverts in their home countries for jobs abroad as fashion models, waiters, and household employees, etc.

THE PROFITS

The illicit profits from human trafficking is staggering, ranging from 31 to 32 billion dollars per year. Vast loads of undocumented cash that is being generated from human trafficking is fuelling corruption and infiltrating business and government, thereby hindering and undermining governance and weakening the public justice system.

WITHOUT YOUR HELP WE CANNOT BRING JUSTICE TO THOSE IN NEED

Please consider investing your time, talents, and money to help our congregation raise public awareness of this human rights tragedy, including funding the advocacy work I am doing to eliminate human trafficking in Europe. Please contact me at charlie.lamento@ghni.org or by mobile at 420 774 974 945 if you are interested in becoming involved in this social justice project.

In Relentless Pursuit of Change,
Charlie Lamento

osaprag@augustiniani.cz

Announcements

* **Help at Sv. Dobrotiva in Zaječov** next Saturday October 8th. We meet in front of Saint Thomas and we will be back at 05:00pm. Thanks for your help to restore this Marian place.

*Every Saturday at 9:00am **feeding of the homeless**, as social service

*We are looking for an **English teacher** for our school. If you are interesting, please see Fr. Juan

CALLING ALL YOUNG CATHOLIC ADULTS!

If you are interested in joining a group of young Catholic adults to meet monthly for friendly conversation, faith sharing, group outings, and more, please contact Carrie Brown at carolynbrown402@gmail.com. Carrie is new to St. Thomas parish and has previous experience leading young Catholic adult groups. If you ever feel alone in your faith as a young adult, this group is for you! "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." 1 Timothy 4:12

Rule of St. Augustine

Chapter Two

10. Be assiduous in prayer at the hours and times appointed.

11. In the oratory no one should do anything other than that for which it was intended and from which it also takes its name. Consequently, if there are some who might wish to pray there during their free time, even outside the hours appointed, they are not to be hindered by those who think something else should be done there.

12. When you pray to God in psalms and hymns, think over in your hearts the words that come from your lips.

13. Chant only what is prescribed for chant; moreover, let nothing be chanted unless it is prescribed.

If you are interesting in knowing more about **St. Augustine and Augustinian spirituality come to the meeting that we are going to have every Tuesday at 06:30 pm from September 20th. More information with Fr. William, OSA

www.augustiniani.cz