



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

### Today's Prayer

Say this Prayer Today:

The more we call on the  
Lord  
the more we can feel His  
Presence.  
Day by day He draws us  
closer  
to His loving heart.

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January 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2011

The Solemnity of  
Epiphany

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# St. Thomas Church

## Reflection on the Gospel

### THE SOLEMNITY OF EPIPHANY, THE MANIFESTATION OF JESUS

*Early Egyptian Christians celebrated the Visit of the Magi (Matthew 2) as well as the baptism of the Lord (Mark 1:6-11) on January 6. From the fifth century this day has been celebrated throughout the eastern Churches as Christmas Eve since the Birth of Christ according to the Julian calendar is commemorated on 07 January. Throughout central Europe, door lintels are chalk-marked with the cipher of the year and the initials of the "Three Kings" (traditionally Casper, Melchior, Baltassar) who offered gifts to the Infant Jesus, i.e., 20+C+M+B+11. Perhaps, we can mark our own doors in faith.*

#### **The Epiphany Proclamation**

Dear Sisters and Brothers, the glory of the Lord has shone upon us and shall ever manifest itself among us to the day of his return. Through the rhythms and changes of time, let us call to mind and live the mysteries of our salvation. The very center of the whole liturgical year is the **PASCHAL TRIDUUM OF THE LORD** crucified, died, buried and risen that will culminate in the **SOLEMN VIGIL OF EASTER** this year of grace 2011 with the dawn of 24<sup>th</sup> of April. Every Sunday as in a weekly Easter, holy Church makes present that great and saving deed by which Christ forever conquered sin, death and hell. From Easter, our Christian Passover, comes forth all other days we keep holy. **ASH WEDNESDAY** the beginning of the Lenten season on 9<sup>th</sup> of March; the **ASCENSION** on 2<sup>nd</sup> of June; **PENTECOST** on 12<sup>th</sup> of June; **CORPUS CHRISTI** on 23<sup>rd</sup> of June; the **MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS** on 1<sup>st</sup> of July and, finally, the **SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING** on 20<sup>th</sup> of November. Likewise, on the feasts of the Holy Mother of God, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Virgins and all holy Men and Women and in the commemoration of all souls, the pilgrim Church proclaims the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him who was, who is and who is to come, the Lord of time and history, be endless praise with Father through the Holy Spirit, now and unto all ages, AMEN.

## **Study of the Readings**

**FIRST READING:** This reading is found in the so-called "Third Isaiah" (chapters 56-66). Most Catholic biblical scholars agree that the book of Isaiah can be divided into at least two separate units (chapters 1-39 for the prophet Isaiah; 40+ for "Second Isaiah"). Scholars divide the book based upon language, writing style, and historical events mentioned in the text. While these scholars feel confident delineating the text into two units, they are more uncertain subdividing chapters 40-66. Third Isaiah discussed ritual, Sabbath, and the Torah. But chapters 60-62 stood out with their optimism. Many scholars who accept the "Third Isaiah" thesis claim these chapters were written in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (fifth century B.C.) when the zeal of the returned exiles had worn off. Locals now lived as subjects under foreign powers. Rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple had become tedious. So, the people needed a pep talk. In such a dark world, a light would shine: the glory of the Lord! The world would be dark, just as in the primordial beginning. Only the light of the Lord among his people would show the way. [60:1-2] Suddenly, the focus of the light shifted to the people (or a remnant among the people). Their rising (like the sun rise) would shed light on those in the darkness and would lead them forth, even the exiled faithful living in the Diaspora. [60:3-4] With the rising of the people would come renown (glory) and great wealth. The riches of the great nations would flow to Israel. The people would have power even over the sea! [60:5-6] These optimistic verses have messianic overtones, for they speak of an idyllic time in the future. Many Jews in the time of Jesus had these images in mind when they spoke of God's judgment. Yet, Matthew used these verses when he penned the arrival of the Magi. For the evangelist and Christians ever since, the Magi saw the glory of the Lord rise in Judea. But, the people and their leaders were blinded. This passage challenges us to see what the Lord is doing. To look beyond the tedious and the mundane. To see his glory shine. And to be led by the Lord.

**SECOND READING:** At the time this letter was written, Ephesus was a major seaport on the west coast of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). At the mouth of Cayster River, the city had a long history. Ionic Greeks settled the area in the tenth century B.C. Ephesus was controlled by different major powers as a gateway to the Aegean Sea. In 133 B.C., the Romans conquered the seaport and controlled the area for the next millennium. Many biblical scholars have questioned the authorship of this letter to the city. The writing style and grammar of the letter did not match those of Paul's other writings. Ephesus was not mentioned in the salutation of the letter, unlike the Paul's other letters. And, one of Paul's major themes (the controversy over baptizing Gentiles into the community) seemed to be missing; the author spoke of a co-equal relationship between Jews and Gentiles (2:11-22). Many have speculated that the letter was written to a group of church communities in Asia Minor (Ephesus would have been the stand out), by one of Paul's disciples in 80-90 A.D. Since the ancient people had no sense of copyright laws and a critical view of history, writing in the name and spirit of a known teacher was not uncommon at the time. Chapter 3 focused upon Paul's role as the herald for God's revelation. God revealed a divine mystery to Paul and gave him a mission to share that mystery with others. The mystery was God's plan of salvation. In hindsight, Paul could see the unfolding revelation peak in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul shared his mission to evangelize with others (apostles and Christian prophets). The power that drove these men was God's very Spirit. As a result, Gentiles shared in the promise made to the Jews by God (co-heirs), they sat as equals at the table of the Lord with their Jewish brethren, and they shared the same hope in the coming of the Messiah. The Good News (a vehicle of God's "grace") was the means for faith. We evangelize others through our words and example. But have you ever considered evangelization as a vehicle for God's grace? After all, like St. Paul, our words and actions present the face of Christ to others. They reveal God's activity in the

**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

## **Blessed Veronica of Binasco, OSA**

**B**lessed Veronica transmits to posterity a message of simplicity of life, work, and dedication to others, and a deep interior life.

Giovanna Negroni was born in Binasco, (Milan) Italy, in 1445, the daughter of a family of peasants. At the age of twenty-two she entered the monastery of Saint Martha in Milan as a lay sister, since she was illiterate. Because of her devotion to the passion of Christ she took the name of Veronica. She was a great contemplative but she also engaged in numerous manual activities. She took very loving care of the sick sisters and developed an intense apostolate throughout Milan and its environs as she went begging for the community. Biographers tell of her ecstasies and her gifts of prophecy and discernment. She was very humble and used to desire that all her actions be done under the sign of obedience.

The biography of this holy nun is extraordinarily varied in content. There is her friendship with several sisters of her monastery, one of whom was her great admirer and biographer. Then there is the experience of her physical mistreatment by the devil, and her devotion to the Lord's passion and the eucharist. She enjoyed a great reputation among important people of her day, such as Louis the Moor, the avaricious Duke of Milan. Like Saint Catherine of Siena she journeyed to far off places, bearing special messages. Once she traveled to Como to confer with the Franciscan Fra Giovanni, and another time to Rome in 1495 to meet with Pope Alexander VI.

Her biographers note her intense spiritual life, her zeal for the salvation of souls, her suffering over the few days available for communion, and the faith that she confessed when she was able to receive communion. This biography goes on to say that this unlettered nun was hardworking and a contemplative for thirty years. She "always appeared with peaceful countenance, smiling eyes, and always quick to help, being of a strong constitution."

Veronica died on 13 January 1497. The devotion given to her at the time of her death and burial is well documented in several sources. Due to the great throngs that came to venerate her, the body of Sister Veronica remained unburied for five days, and "many of the infirm who touched the holy body recovered their health." "The archbishop, being too ill to investigate, sent his vicar, who entered the monastery to see and ascertain if what was being reported was true. This was the fourth day after her death, and seeing what has been said was true, he was both amazed and filled with wonder."

On 15 December 1517 Pope Leo X granted the nuns permission to celebrate Veronica's feast; as a result Blessed Veronica's name was inserted in the Roman martyrology. In 1798, with the suppression of the monasteries of Lombardy by the revolutionaries, her body was moved to the parish church of Binasco where her mortal remains are preserved.

The Augustinian Family celebrates her feast on 13 January

## **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)

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

### **New Times for Confession:**

Every Monday from 06:30 pm in St Barbara's Chapel and any time upon request

### **Prayer & worship**

Each Sunday we are beginning with a prayer & worship from 10a.m. till 11a.m. in St. Barbara's Chapel. We will also be seeking people who would be willing to come and play an instrument while we worship and/or pray. We pray that the Lord moves more of our members to take action in prayer and worship, as there is much to pray for.

**Religious Education** classes resume this week, at 9:45 - 10:45

\*We thanks to all the parishioners that have helped with the presents for the giving Tree this year. We have given presents to 103 children. God bless you for your generosity!

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### **Saint Augustine's School**

**A Comprehensive School with a heart open to wisdom**

Hornokrčská 3, 140 00 Praha 4 – Krč

[www.skolasvatehoaugustina.cz](http://www.skolasvatehoaugustina.cz)

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Open doors day January 12<sup>th</sup> from 03:00 till 04:30pm

### **FEASTS AND ANNIVERSARIES: January**

10. Lord John Acton, the preeminent writer and diplomat, was born in 1834 and Gabriel Mistral, the Chilean poet and Nobel prize winner, died in 1957.

11. William James, one of the United States' first philosophers, was born in 1842; Shri Lal Badur Shastri, the Indian statesman died in 1972.

12. Tanzania celebrates its *Day of Revolution* (1964). Ferenc Molnar, the Hungarian dramatist was born in 1878 and the beloved writer, Agatha Christi, died in 1976.