



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



750 let Augustiniánů v Čechách

1262–2012

S nadějí a radostí

**THE AUGUSTINIANS IN THE CZECH
LANDS: 750 YEARS IN SERVICE OF THE
GOSPEL.**

With Hope and Joy!

July 7th and July 8rd 2012

The 14th Ordinary Sunday -B

St. Thomas Church

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

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The Reflection of the Gospel

Today's reading is a turning point in Mark's short gospel of 16 chapters. Up to this point Jesus met with some success in his Galilean ministry. However, this all changed when he returned home to Nazareth. As was customary in synagogue services any adult Jewish male could be called upon to read and expound some scriptural text. Undoubtedly, his growing reputation had preceded him home and his fellow Nazarenes were undoubtedly eager to hear for themselves. After all, he was performing wonders that were the talk of all Galilee. Events soon took on an ominous tone: first, how could *this person* without any known learning possibly have anything to contribute to Israel's religious life? Second, they knew Jesus' family: *Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not his sisters our neighbors here?* And, on the basis of education and background, he was rejected- a portent of what was to come in Jerusalem. Contemporaries of Jesus expected a Messiah shrouded in heavenly mystery; a descendant of David to be involved in the immediate task of saving Israel from the gentile yoke. To identify such a *divine-man* with this lowly-albeit eloquent-carpenter whose family ties were known was *too much for them to bear*. And Jesus had to leave town. Mark emphasizes that miracles require faith and for this singular lack of faith on the part of the Nazarenes, Jesus performed very few healing in his hometown that he never visited again. Even though rejected, Jesus did not retract or soften his message to make it more acceptable: his words clear.

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Commentary to the second fading

Last Week we heard Saint Paul begin to answer various questions which have been asked of him. The one addressed last week and again today concerns marriage and virginity. We continue with his remarks from where we left off last week.

Marriage involves spouses in many worldly cares that make it difficult for them to concentrate themselves perfectly and completely to the Lord's service. The married are tied by flesh and blood in many relationships that subject them to this world and can easily impede their complete dedication to God. The husband must try to please the wife, and the wife the husband. Consequently, they are "divided;" impeded from devoting their attention solely to the Lord. The virgin, being freed from the cares and duties of family life, can devote herself with undivided attention and heart to the Lord. She may be "holy" in the cultic sense of being dedicated to God, consecrated, sacred, reserved for God and His service.

"Here Paul explains why virginity is preferable to marriage. It has nothing to do with the rightness or wrongness of sex. Rather it is a question of anxieties which prevent the mind from concentrating on the worship of God." [Severian of Gabala (ca. A.D. 400), *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church*]

Come out of him!" ²⁶ The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. ²⁷ All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him." ²⁸ His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.

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Saint Augustine School in Prague

As part of the Order that traces its origins back to St Augustine, our school promotes his ideal of community where all the members that belong to the school are 'of one mind and heart on the way towards God.' An Augustinian approach to education seeks to create a community context in which learning can occur. The community extends to students, staff and parents. The work of the school involves a partnership between student and teacher, and a partnership between teachers and parents. It also extends to the other members of the community including past students and parents. As an Augustinian school, our school is part of an international network of schools and universities, that we will be able to work with. The cross cultural exchange of ideas and friendships amongst staff and students from different countries enriches school life.

Education in the Augustinian tradition is concerned with building a firm foundation of knowledge for personal and spiritual life as well as a basis for professional or work life. Real education is characterized by a searching for knowledge and understanding that is integrated with personal experience. St Augustine speaks about the teacher within who can test the truth of what is being taught. This teacher is the presence of God within the person. Processes of interior reflection and evaluation are part of this. The school motto, '**A Comprehensive School with a heart open to wisdom**' is based on the idea from St. Augustine's writings that heart and wisdom must be together for formative of people. 'Almost as a consequence of this, an Augustinian education also seeks a balance in learning between different kinds of subjects, be they humanities or sciences, career oriented or focused on spiritual, personal and interpersonal growth. Truth cannot be found along a narrow path.'

Since its beginnings, the School has treasured open, friendly and caring relationships between teachers and students. As an educator himself, St Augustine found this an essential element of good teaching and learning for both student and teacher. As a consequence of the community ideal, the pastoral care of students, parents and staff is a very important part of the character of the school. At all times, but in our times of crisis or difficulty especially, all members of the community are encouraged to reach out to those in need. Amongst students, the school seeks to instill a sense of self-discipline. On one hand, students are called to account for their actions. On the other hand, the ultimate ideal is one of self-directed right behavior. Again, the Augustinian ideal is of 'free people acting under the influence of grace, rather than slaves under the law.' (*Rule of St Augustine.*)

Here in the Czech Republic where we have a highly secularized environment, the Augustinians educational tradition started in 13th century when in St. Thomas Monastery was founded the famous "studium generalis" – general studies and where the Augustinians were rectors of the famous Charles University in Prague. In the 19th century Augustinians school were founded in their monasteries. We can not forget also some important Augustinians teachers like Gregory Mendel that is consider the father of genetics, that worked in the Augustinian abbey in Brno.

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

*If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please contact osaprag@augustiniani.cz

*Our regular **organist** and pianist for the last few years will be leaving us at the end of June. If you can play the keyboard or guitar, even if only on an occasional basis, we would like to hear from you! Please contact the director of the choir Tim Young: tim@young.co.cz

*We wish all our families a wonderful, restful summer and look forward to welcoming you back at our Sunday School in September

*If you wish to sign up your child for the 2012-2013 religious education program for children and youth or if you are interested in helping with the program as a teacher or an assistant, please contact Mary Beth Webster at marybethwebster@hotmail.com.

*Mary Beth, our RE coordinator, is going to be married in St. Thomas Church next Saturday July 14th with Richard. Congratulation and all the best !

FEASTS and other ANNIVERSARIES: July

- 09 The Martyrs of Gorcum (+1572)** were victims of mob violence during the Reformation in the Netherlands.
- 11 Benedict the Abbot (+? 547)**, the eponymous founder of the Benedictine movement and the famous monastery of Monte Cassino in 529, is with Cyril and Methodius of Greece, Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena -Italy, among the declared *Patrons of Europe*.
- 15 Bonaventure, OFM (+1274)**, named *the Seraphic Doctor* for his deeply spiritual insights and teachings, is with Thomas Aquinas (+1275) one of the great lights of medieval theology
- 16 The Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel** is the patronal day of the Carmelite Orders.

Augustine Day-by-Day:

Lord, Save Me

"Great virtue is needed to struggle with happiness. We must learn to tread upon the world and remember to trust Christ.

And if you begin to sin, say: "Lord, I am perishing; save me," so that you may not perish. For only he can deliver you from the death of the body, he who died in the body for you." Sermon 26, 9

Prayer: Lord our God, make us blessed by you, because we shall not lose you. When we remain true to you, we shall neither lose you nor be lost ourselves.