



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

Today's Prayer

We must never say that it is no use for them to live chastely in the married state, to direct their houses and families in a Christian way, or to heap up for themselves heavenly treasures by their acts of mercy.

March 01st and 2nd 2014

The Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

St. Thomas Church

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GOSPEL REFLEXION

What does it mean to be a disciple? We can ask that question in a general context, but what does discipleship mean for me in my day-to-day struggle? This is the small picture question of faith. Jesus answered it by asserting the priority of the Kingdom even in the present moment. After all, we can't serve God and worry about our finances at the same time. It's too stressful. Something would have to give.

Jesus compared the priority of faith to mundane worry about financial stability in a series of rhetorical questions and analogies from nature. By itself, worry cannot give us food or drink or clothes; it cannot add to our life span. In fact, excessive worry can distort our priorities in life, blowing life's "necessities" far out of proportion. Worry can even lead to sin, if its out of control. So, what restores some balance to our spiritual life? Jesus gave simple answer: give all your worries to God. Keep your eye on the Kingdom and let God take care of our food, clothes and life span.

Such simple faith, however, requires discipline. It requires we make prayer a priority, even over such daily matters as a budget and cash flow. Notice, Jesus isn't diminishing worries over these concerns; he's saying that focus on God is more important. So, prayer trumps daily concerns. We are to seek the Kingdom and what it means to walk on the path to the Kingdom. That requires an active, vibrant prayer life, a prayer life that says, "Alright God, I trust you." Such a prayer life is an ideal, but it is a goal that can put our concerns in context.

Don't Worry, Be Happy?

In 1988, jazz singer Bobby McFerrin had a pop hit with his song "Don't Worry, Be Happy." Bobby sang the catchy tune almost a capella, with several over-dubs of his voice. The sentiment of the song reflected the philosophy of Indian mystic Meher Baba: worry only inhibits happiness and does nothing to enhance it.

That message seems almost a truism, but there is a problem with the message. Happiness is not a void of anxiety. Happiness is not a decision against concern. In fact, such a definition of happiness is immature at best, vacuous at worst. Happiness is not found in a carefree but self-centered life. True happiness can only be found in relationship with another person. Indeed, someone can be very happily married, for example, and still face daily worries. Happiness is found in sharing the joys and anxieties of life with someone in whom we love, trust and share hope. Happiness, then, is a life directed to another. The ultimate happiness is a life focused on God. So, it is the direction of life that allows us to sweep away anxiety and seek our goal: the Kingdom.

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

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**

****Looking for an au pair, near London.** We are looking for someone to come and stay for 6 m to a year. We would be able to give them £60/week, plus board and lodging for some help with my three (6,4 and 18m) and housework. It would be lovely to have a Catholic au pair. tom-za.hall@ubs.com

**** Please see the web pages of the parish for more information: www.augustiniani.cz/en**

****On Sunday , March 2nd concert of Saint Thomas choir in our Church from 3:30pm**

****Marriage Preparation:** The next one-day marriage preparation course (for the English speaking community) will be held by Fr. William on Saturday 15th March from 9:15am - 3pm for those who wish to participate.

Pope's Lenten Message 2014 focuses on poverty, sacrifice

Dear brothers and sisters, may this Lenten season find the whole Church ready to bear witness to all those who live in material, moral and spiritual destitution the Gospel message of the merciful love of God our Father, who is ready to embrace everyone in Christ. We can do this to the extent that we imitate Christ who became poor and enriched us by his poverty. Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance. I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt.

May the Holy Spirit, through whom we are "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (2 Cor 6:10), sustain us in our resolutions and increase our concern and responsibility for human destitution, so that we can become merciful and act with mercy. In expressing this hope, I likewise pray that each individual member of the faithful and every Church community will undertake a fruitful Lenten journey. I ask all of you to pray for me. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady keep you safe

ASH WEDNESDAY, March 5th marks the beginning of the Lenten season in preparation for the Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord. Mass in English will be celebrated in Saint Barbara's Chapel at 06:00pm/18:00 with distribution of ashes. After Mass if possible to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation

For those who cannot come this day ashes will be distributed next Sunday. Remember that Ash Wednesday is a strict day of fast in which one full meat-less meal is allowed.

Lent is here. Ready or not, the Big Question is always: How we are going to "do" Lent this year? May I suggest going on a fast that makes sense in this culture? Let us fast from the various types of clutter in our lives, beginning with the "outer regions" of life—our personal habits and the clutter in our homes. Then we will move to mental and spiritual clutter as the weeks progress toward Easter. We can fast from the confusion and busy-ness that characterize our culture. If we use this period to open our hearts, we will be well prepared to celebrate Easter. I offer the following ways to do that.

ASH WEDNESDAY:

GETTING READY TO CLEAR MY CLUTTER

Jl 2:12-18; 2 Cor 5:20—6:2; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18 Today's readings give me basic instructions for the next 40 days. As a first step to clearing my heart and mind of clutter, I arrange a quiet prayer corner in which to talk to God. I find a suitable place in my home and stock it with a Bible, a notebook, pens (and this *Update!*). Today, and every day this Lent, I will spend time with God, reading over the Scriptures for the day, listening to what God is saying to me, and writing down what I hear.

THURSDAY: WHAT AM I GAINING—AND LOSING?

Dt 30:15-20; Lk 9:22-25 This culture urges me to do so much. In what ways is the rush and busy-ness of my life not truly necessary, but an effort to win the approval of others—in other words, to "gain the whole world"?

FRIDAY: REACH OUT TO OTHERS

Is 58:1-9a; Mt 9:14-15 Before I can reach out to those in need, I must be *able* to reach out. I talk to God today about areas of life where I neglect myself and compromise my health. Am I eating the wrong foods? Not getting enough sleep? Constantly stressed? Any of these habits will make me less able to serve God and God's people.

SATURDAY: BE KIND TO MYSELF

Is 58:9b-14; Lk 5:27-32 The tax collector Levi's change of heart came about because Jesus showed him kindness and friendship. I talk to God about any changes I should make in my self care in order to do as Jesus did. I ask for God's help in making these changes in order to be able to do God's will.