



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



YEAR OF FAITH: oct. 11, 2012-NOV. 24, 2013

"The 'door of faith' (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church."---Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei* for the Indiction of the Year of Faith.

September 21st and 22nd
2013

25.ordinary Sunday –
Year C

St. Thomas Church

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Today's short moral lesson or parable is at first sight perplexing. We must know something of first century economics in order to understand its import. The manager (*pace* financial director or steward) in question caught swindling an absentee landlord's funds had been fired for some past dishonesty. Having been entrusted with his employer's funds, he had to insure that all his employer's investments were to be paid back in full with a privately arranged commission collected as a salary. Old or first Testament law, it must be remembered, forbade any form of interest from a fellow Jew particularly from one in need *unless* it could be shown that he, the borrower, had, at least, *some of the material (grain, oil, wine, etc.) already in his possession*. Such a legal prescript was designed to protect against exploitation of the poor. The manager, therefore, could validly reduce his own commission with impunity. Thus, realizing his bleak prospects once out of a job, he began reducing his commissions for which action he received commendation from his former employer.

The moral of the parable is that in a moment of crisis, the steward took radical steps to remedy his desperate situation. Reducing whatever gains made, and unable to "dig ditches" or "too ashamed to beg" he reached out for a solution requiring a great deal of foresight. In short, are we willing to take such radical steps to remedy our situation as we stand before the coming kingdom of God? And are the steps taken, really effective or radical?

ELECTION FOR NEW PARISH COUNCIL

- Parish Council consists of the priests who are working with the community plus 3 elected parishioners and 3 parishioners appointed by the pastor
- We are beginning the process on September 21st
- First step: the pastor will elect a commission to coordinate the elections.
- All parishioners elder than 15 years are invited to give to this commission the names of some candidates to be members of the parish council.
- Candidate can be each parishioner elder than 18 years.
- The deadline to give names of candidates is October 6th.
- After that date the commission will prepare a list of candidates that will be present to the parish on October 16th.
- The election of the Parish Council will be October 20th after 11 am mass
- The new elected parish council is going to be presented to the community on October 27th,
- The members of the parish council are elected for a time of 5 years

Parish Counsel Minutes September 15/2013

Welcome: Father Bill opened in prayer and began the instructions for the Election, with Fr. Juan's additional comments. Details of the process are attached. Fr. William will appointment 3 parish counsel members and the same number will be elected from the parish community. This size is manageable. It was clarified that not all members of various ministries need be on the counsel, although they will submit progress reports. Members of the counsel are expected to work with the heads of ministries as required. For the purposes of the counsel a quorum, consists of ½ the members plus 1. Bear, Michael and Mary Beth will form the election committee.

Heating Project:

John supplied a lengthy report on the progress of the

Mission 2013

Soul Food

In 1907 a doctor by the name of Duncan MacDougall conducted a series of observation experiments on terminally ill patients as they passed. The purpose of the exercise was to see if there was any noticeable and measurable weight loss after the death threshold. Since the conditions had to be just right, the selection of the patients and the environment had to be just so.

In six of the seven observed patients, a measurable loss of approximately 3/4 of a pound was measured immediately after expiration. He did not manage to set up his equipment in time to properly measure the seventh patient. His findings were never accepted by the scientific community, due to his lack of process. The concept of the soul weighing 3/4 of a pound was later turned into the underlying theme of the popular film 21 Grams.

The patron of our church St Thomas Aquinas laid out in his Summa Theologica one of the first scientific proofs of the existence of the soul. Since, I was never a fantastic student of philosophy and the language used in his book is from the 13th Century; I will try to simplify it.

1) Operation follows being. An effect cannot be greater than its cause. A thing acts according to how it is. If we find spiritual actions, then their source must be a spiritual being.

2) Spiritual operations in humans: We can abstract and know universals (such as humanity), concepts that are not limited by material things. We can have, know, and discuss concepts of purely spiritual things (such as truth and justice). We have a language that transcends the material (purely conventional and changeable, unlike the one-meaning for one-sound correspondence that exists among other animals). We can make purely spiritual choices (such as eating bran and yogurt for breakfast and not Steak and Eggs).

I have to believe that Descartes, a Roman Catholic, was inspired by Saint Thomas' Summa some two hundred years later, when he wrote the famous words "Cogito ergo sum"; I think therefore I am.

In other words, since we are capable of higher moral or spiritual thought and action, then by definition, we must be based on a spiritual entity, our body and soul are joined but separate... Ergo we have a soul.

The question is what will you do with that soul? You see, just as we are capable of thinking and making decisions that are for the moral good; qualities such as forgiveness; kindness, charity, and selfless service. Man is also capable of evil. Since Cain and Able, man is the only animal on the earth that is capable of murder for reasons other than survival. Man is subject to sin and corruption. In short our souls are capable of great good and what seems to be at times an even greater evil.

This is the fundamental question of religion. If we have souls, and we are aware we have souls, then this soul must by definition be an entity that transcends the body. Therefore, these souls must go someplace after the body is expired. The numbers of the population growth that were outlined in the mission message last week prevent there being a finite number of souls. This suggests a logical probability that the souls are not recycled, therefore, we are reassured of our faith that our souls live beyond our bodies and therefore there must exist a resting place for these souls: In the Bible we are told these are heaven and a hell.

Scholars argue that even the Bible does not recognize the existence of an immortal soul. In the Old Testament, the most common word used in Old Hebrew and commonly translated as soul, was Nephesh. This did not refer to an immortal soul, but rather a living complete being. In short it was a living creature, which was even applied to the description of animals.

The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.[nephesh] —Genesis 2:7

Later books of the Bible were written in Greek and the word Psuche (psoo-khay) was used. Psuche has a variety of meanings, such as the breath of life, the vital force which animates the body, and of course, the soul.

If we are to examine the wide variety of meanings, then we can truly only determine that the Bible speaks of our immortal soul, if it references two different entities within us. By one of the scriptures referring to two different meanings, such as the body and the body's spirit as separate entities, we can know that more than one meaning

The cost estimate needs to be reworked before it's presented to the communities. Attention to details needs to be carefully monitored. Payment clauses are important to look at. The time limit is about 4 to 6 weeks. A security system needs to be staffed 24/7 during the construction period. A volunteer rostrum of parishioners could be developed. Fr. Juan is in favor of the project. The main cost of the project is labor and the materials are available from the CR.

This presentation was a good start. Process now is to hire a reputable contractor. Need a time line and a commitment. Need to secure financing. Budget is expected to be 1.5 to 2 million kcs. Bear and John need to get back to the contractor regarding when the construction begins. Fr. Juan will take care of informing the heritage ministry. The new system will reduce costs of heating. The system is sensitive to the art work. Gas and electricity costs have risen. Fundraising for the heating system needs to be done. An idea that was embraced was the sale of pews. Michael will look into the details.

Financial Report:

It was submitted by Jose. The usual collection is around 11,000 weekly. Gas and electricity has been more expensive than budgeted for Fundraising efforts need to be stepped up.

Discussion on Parish Activities:

Religious Education: Mary Beth wanted to know the procedure for field trips and was steered in Fr. Juan's direction as he is familiar with what is needed.

Events will stay the same and the beginning of classes has gone smoothly. The pre confirmation class will be studying with Michael for acolyte training. There is a booklet available now. Once a month the students can bring the gifts and serve. This idea has been well received.

Catechism books are arriving. Classes seem to be growing but it's still early in the year.

Some Spanish families are bringing their children to class.

Tentative dates: 25th May Confirmation

18th May Holy Communion.

4th May classes finish.

Several students are helping out as volunteers for classes.

Bear would like a teen program. There is a teen bible and resources. Leslie has been helpful. There could some events offered to the teens and this helps build a Catholic life beyond teen years.

Music Ministry:

It's going well. Andre will continue to be in Prague. Michael will phone Tim regarding music books.

Lecterns and Eucharistic Ministers:

Fr. Bill and Anne will meet up to make a schedule and invite new parishioners to join.

Family Ministry:

Mary Beth has someone in mind to take this ministry. She ordered books for newcomers put out by Riverside.

Acolytes:

Michael has organized it and the servers are looking very professional. One idea is to have parents and kids serve together.

Hospitality:

A Lithuanian couple want to do this ministry. They seem enthusiastic and willing. Tomas and Xana will be helped by another couple.

Thanksgiving Dinner: Will be on the 30th of Nov. Michael will be overseeing this along with a committee.

Bulletin: continues with the occasional Flash Points and Trafficking reports.

Adult religious Classes: Wed. night at 6:30 and Marriage Prep every third Saturday from 9:30 to 3:00. At the end of the day there is a formal betrothal ceremony.

Language Classes are continuing. Spanish and Czech.

Parishioners Day: The next one to be held is Oct. 13th. In the Cloister Walk. As usual, tables are set up for the various ministries. Father wants written information so that if no one is at the table people can read about what's available. Bill is considering banners which a few people have offered to find. They should have the St. Augustine Logo on them.

Fundraising:

School supply drive raised 4,000 kcs.

Custodial Help:

Members agreed that the class rooms need cleaning Sunday morning. As Joseph is in need of a job it was agreed that he would be offered the job from 8 until 10.30 to clean the toilets, tables and sweep down the floors. After Mass he can collect 1,000 kcs. in the sacristy. Mary Beth will give instructions to him. He accepted the offer.

Next Meeting: After the elections:

such as the body and the body's spirit as separate entities, we can know that more than one meaning existed for these words and we are assured our understanding is correct.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus taught his followers to "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28).

He continued a few moments after that Jesus asked his followers "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26)