



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.

October 12<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup>  
2013

The Twenty Eighth  
Sunday in Ordinary Time  
– Year C

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

# St. Thomas Church

## GOSPEL STUDY

Today's gospel reading from Luke with the first lesson deal with healing and salvation. Disease, as interpreted in ancient times, was regarded as a curse, a sign of divine punishment. Suffering under such foreboding reversals, the sick for fear of contamination were often expelled from the community and were required to cover their faces and cry out, "Unclean!" For reintegration back into society the patient in the event of being healed first had to go to the religious authorities who examined for proofs of restored health. Once verified, the healed individual after offering a sacrifice could then return to his family and presumably a normal life. Luke gives us an example of this practice but with a deeper meaning. One gets the impression that the story involves simple gratitude or appreciation which Jesus expected of the nine lepers. But, that is only a part of the message. The statement, *This man was a Samaritan* followed by three questions raised by Jesus brings us to the heart of the story. Far from a simple lesson in gratitude (important as that is!) Luke brings home three more basic issues. The first is that *salvation* is universal as it extends even to the hated Samaritans. Second, the story contrasts the apparent indifference of the Jewish lepers and the simple faith-filled gratitude of the foreigner who returns. Lastly, Jesus draws a distinction between being *healed* and being *saved*. Hence, it was not so much an act of healing which saved the Samaritan, as a sense of being drawn closer to God through *recognition* of Jesus' deed. His response was one of *faith*. In brief, sometimes it is the least likely who recognize the hand of God in their lives. And so for Luke and his community, it was imperative that outreach to such marginalized be not so much a moral notion but a missionary endeavor bringing all to Jesus, both healer and savior.

Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "[wfaix@yahoo.com](mailto:wfaix@yahoo.com)" or contact Fr. Juan at "[juan@augustiniani.cz](mailto:juan@augustiniani.cz)" Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin

## First Reading:

These three short verses complete the story of the leper Naaman. Before we investigate the story, however, a comment should be made about the ailment. The term "leprosy" is a misnomer, for no archeological evidence can be found that Hansen's disease (what Westerners refer to as "leprosy") existed in Palestine from ancient times. Hence, most scholars believe that "leprosy" loosely referred to series of skin rash ailments. A review of Leviticus 13 indicated that many lepers would recover and rejoin the community, unlike the incurable but treatable Hansen's disease. Very recently, evidence has been found that contemporaries of Jesus had the disease, the the evidence is very limited in scope.

The story actually opened in 2 Kings 5:1 with the discovery of Naaman's ailment and his scepticism. Two characters of weakness (Naaman's small Israeli slave girl and his chariot driver) push the proud general into humbling actions. But the shame of visiting a vassal state for a cure and bathing in the muddy waters of a small river reward the soldier with a change. His rough skin turned smooth. [5:14].

The more important change came from within. The arrogance of the soldier turned to gratitude. And his allegiance turned from the gods of his home country to those of a foreign land. Naaman saw the hand of God working, and he believed. [15-17]

Like the Samaritan in the cure of the ten lepers, Naaman had a change of heart in the face of his cure. His conversion challenges us in two ways. Do we see God's miracles in our lives? Do they change us and give us faith? Like these two men, we need to look with hope and be open to the power of God!

## Mission 2013

### The Holiness in Halloween (part 1)

Today's message does not come from the Bible, but two noteworthy sources and a handful of others on the internet: The two sources are How Stuff Works.com and The real Origins of Halloween (version 4.7) by Isaac Bonewits.

If you haven't already bought your candy and had a try on of this year's costume, there is still time before the Halloween parties and the Trick or Treating start. Many of you are thinking; Halloween? Isn't that a Pagan celebration? Don't the Wicans and Devil worshippers celebrate Halloween?

What in the world does Halloween have to do with being Catholic?

Actually, it has a lot to do with being a Christian and being Catholic. We can have some fun learning a little about the origins of Halloween while still keeping our sanctity and reverence for our religion.

First we have to look at the origins of the word Halloween. As with most things of any tradition in the English language, the etymology of the word is claimed by the Irish, the Scots, and the English. Fortunately for all of us the meaning of the word is the same from all of them. That is it is a shortening of "All Hallows Eve" or "All Hallows Even" as it was in the day, then to Hallowe'en, then to Halloween as we know it today.

All Hallows Eve of course refers to the day before All Saints Day, which was established by Pope Boniface IV in the Seventh Century. He established this day on May 13th. Later, as with most things to do with our modern calendar, both liturgical and secular, Pope Gregory II moved All Saints Day from May 13 to its current date of 1 November.

But why do I remember it as a Pagan celebration?

We have the Celts to thank for that. They celebrated something called Samhain (Pronounced Sow hen, the mh is a w in Celtic). Samhain was the celebration of nature and its bounty that accompanied the changing of the seasons. It marked the final harvest of the year, and herders and shepherds came in from the fields and the community was once again whole. They also believed in parallel worlds and turning points. They believed at this point the world of the dead and the world of the living were at their closet point. Even to the point that some spirits could cross over during this time.

Later, the Catholic church established All Souls Day, which fell on the 2nd of November. If this falls on a Sunday, we celebrate it on the 3rd of November. So we have the day in which we venerate and celebrate all of our saints followed by the day that we celebrate and venerate our souls departed and we pray for those who have gone into the sleep to be awoken on the day of reckoning. We pray for those in Purgatory to ease their suffering and we pray for our loved ones, still here on this earth.

In the Latino community these traditions are strong. Especially in Mexico, where the All Hallow's Eve, All Saints Day, and All Soul's Day observed collectively as "Los Dias de los Muertos" (The Days of the Dead). Families remember their lost, they visit their graves and much like the Romans of old, they lay out food and wine for the refreshment of the dead. When was the last time we were able to honor our lost loved ones, with a visit to their graves, or a cleaning of their stones?

Of course, this is also a tradition of celebration and revelry, as they hold parades and parties. We in the Anglo Saxon World hold Trick or Treating.

We need to ask: Why must Halloween be about Ghost, Goblins, Vampires, Mummies, and such?

If we are about to celebrate our holiness, then we must acknowledge evil. Many Christians balk at Halloween and say it is not a holiday that they will celebrate.

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## Ongoing Activities

- ❖ If you would like to receive a **copy of the bulletin by email**, please contact [osaprag@augustiniani.cz](mailto:osaprag@augustiniani.cz)
- ❖ We welcome all our guests and especially those who will be living and working in Prague during this coming year. All are invited to refreshments immediately after Mass in the monastery refectory
- ❖ Are you interested in helping in the parish? We can use ushers, readers, acolytes, teachers, refreshment/ set up-cleaning up. You can meet us in the refectory, please come and introduce yourselves.
- ❖ **Bible Study** sessions are held each Tuesday evening at 6:30pm/18:00 All are welcome to join and reflect on the Word of God.
- ❖ **Religious education for adult** every Monday from 06:30
- ❖ St. Thomas Catholic Religious Education program. Classes will be held every Sunday (except school holidays ) from **9:45 to 10:45**.
- ❖ **Marriage Preparation:** The next one-day marriage preparation will be held on Saturday 19th October. If you are interested in attending, please contact Camille Kafka: [tutucamille@hotmail.com](mailto:tutucamille@hotmail.com) for confirmation and further details.

### ***Parishoners Day - Sunday October 20st immediately following Mass***

St. Thomas Church will hold its 3rd Parishoners Day on Sunday October 21st, 2013. This is an opportunity to meet fellow parishoners, our Priests, Parish Council members and to learn more about "What's Happening" and how to get involved.

### ***ELECTION FOR***

### **NEW PARISH COUNCIL**

Candidates for the new Parish Council:

Bear Midkiff  
Mary Beth Webster  
William Revellese  
Ann Daily  
David Manley  
Boris Braun

The election of the Parish Council will be October 20<sup>th</sup> after 11 am mass. The community will elect 3 candidates.

They say this because we all want to believe that only God exist in this world.

Some of us want to believe the stories and the films from Hollywood are only make believe. God has made it clear that Evil exist. Current Exorcist in the Catholic Church has tripled in the last 10 years.

Vampires and Werewolves are not waiting for you on Halloween night, but the temptations of Satan await us every day. Halloween is a good reminder of that.

Next week we will talk about Trick or Treating, pranking, and Jack-o-Lanterns. God Bless