



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.

November 9th and
November 10th 2013

The Thirty Second Sunday
in Ordinary Time – Year C

St. Thomas Church

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GOSPEL STUDY

In order to understand today's reading we must understand two influential strands in Jesus' time. The first was the pervasive influence of Hellenistic or Greek culture espoused by the learned and powerful; the second was the forceful presence of the Roman imperial order. Jewish society, of course, reacted to these twin challenges in various ways. The *Essenes*, a near apocalyptic sect, separated from main stream Judaism; the *Zealots*, soon after Jesus' time, challenged the Romans to war with wholesale extermination; the *Sadducees*, the aristocratic priestly and largely conservative temple hierarchy, preferred to live within the political and cultural *status quo*. The *Pharisees*, the "separated or pious ones," divided into about 32 schools of thought, represented the popular piety of the day with their strict observance of the Law of Moses and their belief in angels, the resurrection of the dead and final judgement. Such teachings put them into a collision course with the Sadducees who accepted as inspired only the first five books of Scripture (the *Torah*). Today's reading pits Jesus in one of those rare encounters with the Sadducees who ridiculed the resurrection (obviously believed by Jesus) with an argument *ad absurdum*. Since it was a religious obligation for a man to marry his brother's widow (see the *Levirate law* in *Deut. 25:5*), they snidely questioned the marital status of a widowed woman who successively married seven (short-lived) brothers! Jesus first responds with the teaching that marriage will not be necessary in the life to come. Further, in referring to Moses in his dialogue with God (*Exodus* 3:6-15ff), Jesus teaches that the Lord is a God of the living, indeed, *All are alive in Him*. So, when God identified himself as the *God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* who once had died- Jesus taught that these patriarchs, as all who believed in Him, were alive through Him who created them. God's personal relationship founded on love was indissoluble, even death could not alter it. Paul later on confirmed this when he wrote: *I am certain that neither death nor life...nor any other created thing can separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Jesus Christ, Our Lord* It is precisely in the resurrection that God's love for us reaches its fulfillment.

First Reading:

In the time before the Roman conquest of Palestine, an editor abridged a longer work about a Jewish uprising. We know this book as 2 Maccabees. The book chronicled the events during the oppressive rule of the Seleucid dynasty. While they ruled Syria, the Seleucid kings descended from the generals of Alexander the Great. Greek in language and culture, the dynasty tried to unite the subjects of their empire around that same language and culture. Conservative Jews resisted the foreign influence. The Syrian government pressed on with draconian measures. And a revolt broke out that eventually succeeded.

The martyrdom of the Jewish mother and her seven sons takes up chapter seven. The dialogue between the king and the sons revealed pre-Christian spirituality among many Jews. Justice was in the hands of God. The righteous would receive their reward, if not in this life, in the next. Hence many among the populace believed in the resurrection of the dead. This narrative gave the oppressed Jews a reason to keep kosher laws even in the face of death.

These verses clearly show the belief in the resurrection predated Jesus and the early Church. While the story was told to heighten the bravery of the martyrs, it does tell us why generations have held onto the doctrine of resurrection. God is just. He will reward the faithful and punish the evil at the end of time.

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

Mission 2013

Footsteps in the sand

We face crisis in the world today. We face world shattering issues such as climate change and its host of sub tiered ramifications: We have Ozone depletion, Global Warming, Melting Glaciers, Rising seas, less land for farming and less drinkable water for our ever rising population.

If that is not enough, we have wars, and rumors of wars; we have economic crisis that still has yet to lift. Anyone in business will point out to you that the small positive indications that have come and gone over the last year and a half are not yet a turn for the positive. We have the threat of inflation in the world's largest economy, which will surely impact the remainder of the world. Mounting debt, and crumbling cooperation between some very old allies and the list goes on.

If some estimates are to be believed, the world's glaciers lost 260 gigatons of water, each year for the period 2003 - 2009. Which was the most recent study data I could find. This supposedly raised the world's ocean levels by almost 0.3 inches in each of those years. A gigaton for you non scientist, is 1 billion tons.

But all of this pales when we start thinking about things closer to home.

Some in our congregation have recently found themselves without work, due to the crisis. Some people are experiencing marital problems. Maybe some of these arguments may be exacerbated by the economic times in which we live. Some people are facing grave health problems. Serious health issues that may result in death or permanent disability.

Some are experiencing money problems, some experience problems with alcohol, some problems at work, or any one of a number of varied problems both big and small that may come into one's life.

You see the end of the world, or the Seychelles Islands going under water in 100 years just does not compare to an out and out fight with the person you love. It doesn't compare to not being able to pay the bills or provide food on the table.

In Psalms 17 - 19 we read:

When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

We find one of the most beautiful passages in Matthew 6:25-34

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

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Ongoing Activities

❖ If you would like to receive a **copy of the bulletin by email**, please contact 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

❖ **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

❖ **Parishioner's Prayer Intentions:** The English Community will now post prayer requests on the bulletin board designated for their use in the walkway. Anyone who would like prayers said is invited to post their needs and Father Bill will pray for these intentions throughout the week. You needn't identify yourself; your request is sufficient. For those who've had prayers answered we will also have a praise section.

❖ St Thomas' English Speaking Community now has a presence on **facebook**. Please 'like' our page and if you want to get more involved with the community, join our group!

St. Thomas Parish Dinner of Thanks

Where:

Archbishops Palace. Hradcanske namesti 16
Prague 1

When:

Saturday November 23th

Mass at 18:00

Dinner follows at 19:15

Tickets with Michael Rainey

It reminds one of the story of a man who enters into Heaven. He reflects back on his life, with Jesus beside him. Jesus explains that his steps through life are reflected as two sets of footprints in the sand of a long beach. The second set of footprints are those of Christ, as he walks along with this gentleman.

The man looked at his life and asked "Lord, I have noticed that in my most desperate times, there is only one set of footprints in the sand. Why did you abandon me during these times. Jesus smiled and said "look closer my son"; "it was during those times that I carried you".