



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

# St. Thomas Church

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## Today's Prayer

"Be still and know that I am  
God."

Lord, Your words lead us to  
the  
calmness and greatness of  
your presence.

**"Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they  
rest in you."**

September 20<sup>th</sup> and  
September 21<sup>st</sup> 2014

25th Sunday in Ordinary  
time A

## **TWENTY-FIFTH ORDINARY SUNDAY**

Today's gospel reading is an extended *parable* which is commonly defined as *a short story usually allegorical with a moral or spiritual lesson*. The storyteller, in this case, Jesus of Nazareth, simply takes some situation in everyday life and molds it into a short tale with an implied spiritual or moral lesson. However, when listening to the gospel parables we must avoid trying the vain task of laboriously "identifying" all the story's pieces or details with some spiritual or moral value. In the same breath we should not hold up for cautious scrutiny the social or institutional language of the past for some "hidden" or "esoteric" teachings. Remember the basic purpose of the narrator is to clothe his teaching with the familiar only as an aid for the listener of good will.

Today's gospel lesson could be entitled variously as the parable of "the workers in the vineyard," "the generous employer" or the more contemporary "the affirmative action employer." The timeframe corresponds to the typical Hebrew "day" which began at six or the "first" hour. 12 noon was the "sixth" hour; 3 o'clock was computed as the "ninth hour" while 5 o'clock or one hour before six in the evening- the conclusion of the work day- was the "eleventh hour." It was within these time frames that the owner went out to hire workers and since he could not keep their salaries over night (*Leviticus* 19:13), there had to be an accounting before they were dismissed. The upshot of the matter was that all the workers hired at the various hours of the day were all equal in the eyes of the vineyard owner. In brief, Jesus tells us in biblical language that the *vineyard* refers both to the chosen people of Israel and to those other "outsiders" (see *Isaiah* 5:1 ff. and *Jeremiah* 12: 10). The same Lord repaying workers in his vineyard "at the end of the day" symbolizes the *eschaton* or *final reckoning* when each and everyone no matter when called will stand in judgment before God. It is not so much length of time in service as love expended *in service* that matters.

## **FIRST READING**

Even before the return of the exiles from Babylon, religious thinkers within Judaism tried to reconcile two notions: First, the faithful "remnant," those who remained true to Jesus, were the Chosen. They were a proud sign of God's presence simply because they survived the "bad" times and the "bad" people.

Second, Jesus was the only God. Before the exile, the Jewish God was the national deity, one God among many. A strict relationship with Jesus precluded a relationship with any other god. But, during the exile, Jews were confronted with deities of the regional superpower, Babylonia. Because Jews were a conquered people, they were a weak nation, which reflected on the power of their God. In the face of such power and critique, Jews asked themselves the question: which god is God? Jesus! He was not only the God of the Jews. He was the only God. Not only did the other gods not matter, they did not exist! While this road to a pure monotheism took centuries, the Babylonian exile was a turning point from a parochial view of God among the Jews to a universal one.

## **SECOND READING**

Like Paul, sometimes we might feel the weight of the world bearing down on us. Like Paul, we might feel "imprisoned" by people or events out of our control. We might desire life with God over our present circumstances. In these times, let us remember that we are not our own masters. We live for the Lord. If we find life closing in on us, let us reflect on our place in God's design. He wants us to be where we find ourselves, so we can serve others. In Buddhism, the bodistava is a monk that stands at the doorstep of Nirvana, but does not enter so he can help others to enter. Paul was like the bodistava; he desired a life with God, but remained behind to help his brothers and sisters come closer to eternity. How can we emulate Paul in our service to others? How can we postpone the prize so others can enjoy the fruits of our labor? In Buddhism, the bodistava is a monk that stands at the doorstep of Nirvana, but does not enter so he can help others to enter. Paul was like the bodistava; he desired a life with God, but remained behind to help his brothers and sisters come closer to eternity. How can we emulate Paul in our service to others? How can we postpone the prize so others can enjoy the fruits of our labor?

## 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** our visitors and invite you to join us for refreshments immediately after Mass in the summer refectory of the monastery.

- If you would like to serve as a lector or Eucharistic minister at the Sunday mass please contact Ann at [dalyaann@hotmail.com](mailto:dalyaann@hotmail.com). Training will be provided for those who have not previously served in these ministries.

- Every Saturday at 9:00am **feeding of the homeless**, as social service

- **Bible Study** takes place every Tuesday from 18:30-19:30 in Tagaste room. Everyone is welcome to come and learn more about our sacred scriptures.

- **Adult Religious Education** will be held every Wednesday at 18:30. Tagaste room

## European Taize Meeting in Prague

The next European Meeting will be held in the city and region of Prague, from 29 December 2014 to 2 January 2015. The Taizé Community is preparing the meeting at the invitation of the Czech Bishops' Conference and the Council of Czech Churches. It will bring together several tens of thousands of young adults for the next step of the "pilgrimage of trust on earth" initiated by Brother Roger at the end of the 1970s.

Young people from all over Europe and beyond will be hosted by the people and local church communities of the region.

At the heart of Europe, the city of a thousand towers and a thousand steeples still brings together peoples and persons from different horizons, offering warm hospitality through its cultural treasures and its spiritual heritage.



## [RE announcement]

**Religious Education classes are starting September 21st!** If you haven't already signed up your child, please do so! Contact Mary Beth Hlavsa with any questions or to sign up: +420 724 485 930 or [redirector@augustiniani.cz](mailto:redirector@augustiniani.cz)

**28th: Parishioner's Day!** We welcome you all to the celebration after Mass, where we will welcome new families and inform everyone about the various ministries at St. Thomas. If you'd like to get involved, Parishioner's Day is the day to find out what St. Thomas has to offer! Please bring a dish to share with everyone - we'd like to celebrate our diversity through a universal favorite: food!

## [Altar servers and Lectors]

**Hey, kids – are you interested in Altar Serving?** Have you already had your First Communion? If so, bring a parent with you and see Michael Rainey before Mass in the Sacristy! **Confirmed Adults: we are looking for Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers** as well – please speak with Ann Daly or Michael Rainey.

## [Necessities drive]

**To get our clothing charity ready for the upcoming winter months, we are holding a Necessities Drive** – items especially needed are warm winter clothes, especially men's coats, socks, sweaters/sweatshirts, gloves and hats. Other necessities that are especially needed are men's underwear and t-shirts or thermal garments. Items can be dropped off in front of the clothing charity door (top of the wheelchair ramp in the courtyard). Thank you for your generosity!

## **VOLUNTEERS FOR THE BOY-SCOUTS GROUP IN OUR SCHOOL**

We have a boy-scouts 'group in our school, and we are searching scouters (educators, adult scout leaders). If you like nature and work with children, if you speak some Czech and will be the next two or three years in Prague, don't hesitate! For more information, contact Fr. Antonio, [antoniorivas@augustiniani.cz](mailto:antoniorivas@augustiniani.cz), 608227686.