



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

St. Thomas Church

Today's Prayer

Say this prayer today

I remind myself that I am in
your presence O Lord.

I will take refuge in your
loving heart.

You are my strength in times
of weakness.

You are my comforter in
times of sorrow.

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

October 18th – 19th 20148

29th Sunday of Ordinary
Time A

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

Reflection on the Gospel

His adversaries, the Pharisees and the hitherto unmentioned Herodians, confront Jesus. The **Pharisees** (from the Hebrew word "the separated") historically were those Jews committed to the most orthodox and exacting interpretation of the *Torah* (the Law of Moses). Matthew, writing some sixty years after Christ's ministry in the aftermath of the Jewish rebellion against Rome (AD 64-72), grew so hostile to pharisaism that everything a Christian or Christian leader *should not be* was now immortalized by the hypocritical Pharisee, the implacable enemy of Jesus. The **Herodians**, a political party expediently collaborating with the pro-Roman Herodian dynasty, were even enlisted-pharisaic scruples set aside- to act in common cause against Jesus.

The controversial question of Roman tax payments is now used as a clever ruse to trap Jesus on the horns of a classic dilemma. The Romans levied a poll or head tax (called in Greek "*kensos*" and in Latin "*census*") to be paid by every non Roman citizen, whether man, woman or slave, between the ages of 12 and 65. For most Jews, including Jesus and even the Pharisees themselves, it was probably paid as one of those inevitable burdens of empire. At the very heart of the controversy, however, was the *denarius*, or coin of tribute itself. This rather unimpressive piece of currency, worth about a day's wage, featured the imperial visage with the inscription: "Tiberius Caesar, Augustus, Son of the Divine Augustus, High Priest." Pious Jews, like the Pharisees, because of this divine attribution condemned not only its possession but also physical contact with the coin as idolatrous. Jesus' response was as incisive as sharp. His request to see the disputed coin of tribute, now hurriedly produced by the Herodians, came as a backhanded rebuke to the Pharisees for associating with such idolatry. All agree that this coin does, indeed, belong to Caesar: after all, he minted it and expects it back as tax. Jesus delivers his most stinging verdict to "repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar," and, lest there be any doubt, to "give to God what belongs to God." Stunned with embarrassment, both the Pharisees and the Herodians, once allied in pursuit of Jesus, now cannot wait to leave his presence.

Study of Today's Readings

FIRST READING: Many times God enters the lives of people in the most unlikely ways. Some of the faithful expect God to "empower" them, make them the instrument of his justice and salvation. But, God doesn't work that way. He likes to surprise his people. In these brief verses, Second Isaiah spoke to the Jewish exiles in Babylon. How could God save them, when they lived so far from home? The prophet's answer: by means of a power greater than Babylon itself, the great Cyrus and his Persian army. More important than this message was a simple reminder. The God of the Jews was greater than even Cyrus and his gods. God was in control. He would call on the great Persian to do his bidding; He would guide Cyrus in his role. Abraham's God would receive glory through a pagan! Where do we look to see God in our lives? Many times we look in the wrong places. We search for him where we think he should be, doing things we expect him to do. But, we should heed the words of Second Isaiah. God works for our good in the most unlikely ways and from the most unexpected directions. To truly see God working does require faith, for sometimes it tests our preconceived expectations.

SECOND READING: Northeast of the Greek landmass in Macedonia, Thessalonica lay along a major trade

Coffee, Cookies & Conversation follow Sunday Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.**

Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin.

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.



Activities

-If you would like to receive a copy of the **bulletin** by email, please contact osaprag@augustiniani.cz

- If you would like to serve as a lector or Eucharistic minister at the Sunday mass please contact Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com.

Training will be provided for those who have not previously served in these ministries.

- **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.

Wednesday at 18:30. Tagaste room

-Every Saturday Morning from 0900 to 1000, St. Thomas Church in Malastrana is collecting clothes for the **homeless** in Prague. Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Also, at this time, soup and bread is provided to the homeless before they go to receive clothing items that are presorted and distributed by volunteers. Besides clothes, the homeless may also benefit from Winter shoes, blankets, sleeping bags and general camping gear. Anyone wishing to know more can contact Father Juan

-Remember our Parish Dinner -**Thanksgiving Dinner**, which is scheduled for Friday November 28th at 18:00/06:00 pm, 20th November. Help will be needed for setting up/clean up. Please see Michael Rainey for details

DSA International Christmas Festival

The Diplomatic Spouses Association will hold its annual Christmas Festival on Sunday, November 16, 2014 at the Hilton Hotel Prague. The annual festival is the most important charity event in the Czech Republic.

A limited number of free entry tickets will be available at the St Thomas Parish. *Tickets may also be purchased online <http://dsaprague.org> at the price of 100kc.*

[[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!

Saint Magdalene of Nagasaki, OSA

October 20

Magdalene of Nagasaki (died 1634), an Augustinian Tertiary in Japan, in spite of great danger and difficulty, remained faithful to Jesus Christ until her martyrdom.

Born in the early seventeenth century, Magdalene belonged to a devout Christian family. Her parents were martyred around 1620, when Magdalene was in her teens.

It was around this time that the first Augustinians arrived in Japan. As a committed Christian, Magdalene made herself known to them. She served as a catechist and interpreter for the early Augustinian missionaries.

She found their Augustinian spirituality appealing, with its emphasis on the search for God, interiority, and community. She asked to be accepted into the Order of Saint Augustine, and in 1625 was formally received into the Augustinian Third Order.

Being a Christian in Japan became more and more difficult, as the persecution became stronger. Magdalene fled to the hills, where she worked at bringing the Word of God to those who did not know Jesus, and strengthening the faith of those who did.

In 1632 the Augustinians Francis of Jesus Terrero and Vincent of Saint Anthony Simoens, who had been her first counselors, were burned to death because of their Christian faith. This served to make Magdalene's faith and commitment to Christ even stronger. She located two other Augustinian Friars, Martin of Saint Nicholas Lumberras and Melchior of Saint Augustine Sánchez. They continued to develop her appreciation and practice of Augustinian spirituality.

Eventually these two Friars were also martyred. Magdalene then took as her spiritual guide Jordan of Saint Stephen, a Dominican. Since Dominicans also follow the Rule of Augustine, the spirit of Augustine continued to grow in her.

She considered becoming a full-fledged Dominican sister, but continued religious persecution kept her from doing so.

Moved by her strong Christian conviction, Magdalene voluntarily declared herself a follower of Jesus. She was threatened, ridiculed and tortured, but her Christian witness was strong.

After 13 days of torture, wearing her Augustinian habit, Magdalene was suspended upside down in a pit of garbage. Then her body was burned and her ashes scattered. Pope John Paul II canonized her in 1987