



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

# St. Thomas Church

## Today's Prayer

"Come to me all you who  
are burdened  
and I will give you rest"  
Here I am, Lord.  
I come to seek your  
presence.  
I long for your healing  
power.

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November 1<sup>st</sup> and November  
2<sup>nd</sup> 2014

All Saints Sunday in  
Ordinary Time-Year A

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## The Reflection of the Gospel

Today is the solemnity of all Saints. Originally, November 01 was the beginning of the ancient Celtic "first of winter" or *Sambain* observed as the *feast of the dead* similar to the contemporary Mexican *Dias de los Muertos* or *day of the dead*. The Christian calendar is more celebratory with its consecutive feast of all saints (01 November) and the commemoration of all the dead (02 November). I personally opt for yet a third commemoration of "all those now living on the earth" which would be seen as a sign of our solidarity not only with those who have triumphed but also with those who struggle in circumstances so casually reported or ignored by the news media. The festival of all saints reminds us of those who had endured the present travail for the sake of the future promises of Christ just as the commemoration of all the dead reminds us of our own fragility and immortality. These two festivals do, indeed, complement one another. Paul repeatedly urges to be imitators "of Christ" who is the source of sanctity. "Sanctity" itself is open to all shades of misinterpretation. As much as the fortitude of martyrs, the chastity of holy men and women, the patience of those called to exalted missions in life inspire, all of us- saints included- are unfortunately faced with "highs" punctuated by the tedious, the monotonous, well, the boring. The true path of sanctity, therefore, is found in the imitation of that steadfast fidelity revealed through Jesus Christ. Everything in our faith should be evocative of that vocation to faithful discipleship, to that learning experience which lasts as long as we live and breathe. In this quest it is so easy to pass blame: the pope, the local bishop and priest(s), the parish or parishioners certainly have been and, perhaps, are at fault for not creating that authentic atmosphere of the primitive church and its fluid charismatic appeal. True enough, we must concede. But, how about the example of my own life? How about the attention/inattention I pay to my own family, my work and my own spiritual needs (prayer, scripture, and attendance at the Eucharist)? How do I stand before God and his saints who triumphed?

## Study of the First Reading

What is heaven like? While we might have images of winged angels who sit upon clouds and play harps, early Christians saw the afterlife and the end of time as liturgy. Heaven was eternal worship in the presence of God. These verses from Revelation describe the gathering of the saved before the throne of God. The scene began in the royal court of heaven. Everyone, the faithful, angels, the elders, and the four creature (in concentric circles beginning with the creatures flowing outward?) stand before God. The faithful, "144,000" in 7:1-4 are the same as the uncountable masses in 7:9. The difference between the two descriptions (144,000 were from the tribes of Israel; the uncountable masses were from every nation and race) was symbolic only. Christianity introduced a new wrinkle to the notion of the saved; since the Savior of Israel extended his mission to all people, the saved remnant would also extend to all people. Through the universal mission of the Church, the notion of "Israel" no longer just applied to a particular nation or race and not be particular plot of land. All peoples would even celebrate the holidays of the Chose People; the image of the palm branches in 7:9b evoked the feast of Tabernacles, a joyous celebration of the harvest and the presence of God with his people in the Exodus. The marks of the saved were the seal on their foreheads and the white robes. The seal represented the royal imprimatur, a sign of an official document. The seal of the Living God was to be placed on living beings; the seal of faith (a baptismal anointing?) signified those who would live out their lives as followers of the Nazorene. They were to be "martyrs" in the fullest sense of the word, living "documents" of the Living God; they would proclaim God's message by their lives. The white robes (7:9, 14) were baptismal garments symbolizing a life born again in purity. Washing the robes in the blood of the Lamb (7:14) showed the intimate connection between baptism and Eucharist; the life of the Lamb (symbolized by the Blood) that was given to the saved washed them clean. The statements of the saved and the angels spoke to the two types of language used in worship: prayer and creed. The saved proclaim their salvation from God and the Lamb (7:10); the angels (and the saved? in 7:10) praise God with superlative attributes. Prayer has always helped to form faith statements; creedal statements have been reasons for praise and worship. The first point made in the passage is the last one to be mentioned. The saved suffered through the "Great Tribulation." Take away the reference to the End Times and the saints still stand out for their perseverance in times of public or personal tragedy. Holiness is meant to be tested and proven in life. Holy people are as much survivors as they are believers. The mark of a saint is not necessarily the quality of their certainty, but of their faithfulness. The faith of the saints is not to be found simply in adherence to doctrine, but making that doctrine come alive through their life's commitment.

**Coffee, Cookies & Conversation** follows Sunday's 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 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

## Activities

\*If you would like to receive a copy of the **bulletin** by email, please contact [osaprag@augustiniani.cz](mailto: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](mailto: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

\*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!

\***Deceased Family Members and Friends:** There will be a book available in which you may write the names of deceased family members and friends so that prayers may be offered for the repose of their souls during the month of November.

\***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.

\*Urgent need of **accommodation** for a parishioner with a child. If you can help please contact Olga Konsalová at : [olgakonsalova@hotmail.com](mailto:olgakonsalova@hotmail.com)  
It would be much appreciated.

## **St. Thomas Parish Dinner of Thanks**

### **Where:**

Archbishops Palace  
Hradcanske namesti 16  
Prague 1

### **When:**

Friday November 28th  
Mass at 18:00

Dinner follows at 19:15

**Tickets** with Michael Rainey or William Revellese

## **Indulgence**

According to the teachings outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church,<sup>1</sup> two distinct consequences follow when a person sins. A mortal sin (one that is grave and is committed knowingly and freely) is equivalent to refusing friendship of God and communion with the only source of eternal life. The loss of eternal life with God and the eternal death of Hell that this rejection entails is called the "eternal punishment" of sin. In addition, every sin, even those that, not being mortal, are called venial sins, cause a turning from God through what the Catechism of the Catholic Church calls an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called purgatory. The resulting need to break this attachment to creatures is another punishment for sin, referred to as "temporal punishment", because, not being a total rejection of God, it is not eternal and can be overcome in time. Even when the sin is forgiven, the associated attachment to creatures may remain. The sinner must "strive by works of mercy and charity, as well as by prayer and the various practices of penance, to put off completely the 'old man' and to put on the 'new man'".

## **Study of the Second Reading**

When do we know we are saints? To be seen as a saint might seem like a lofty ideal. However, we are saints simply because we believe. Faith in God changes our outlook; we see ourselves and the world in a different light. We realize we have a relationship with the Creator of the universe that is not distant. God loves us, as a father dotes on his children. When we experience his love, we understand that what a relationship with God is really all about. His love is the basis of our faith. His love gives us hope to see the Lord Jesus at the end of time, and to act accordingly. His love makes us saints. I personally know of people who I consider saints. These are ordinary people who do extraordinary things; in doing so, their lives mirror God's love to others. I admire these people and are proud to call them my friends. Through their friendship, I feel the love of our Creator. When I'm with them, I know that I am among God's children. I hope you have the opportunity to meet and befriend such people. I thank God I have. They have changed my life.