



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

Today's Prayer

Lord, help me to be fully
alive to your holy presence.
Enfold me in your love.
Let my heart become one
with yours.



November 14th and 15th 2015

Thirty Third Sunday in
Ordinary Time-Year B

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St. Thomas Church

The Reflection of the Gospel

Today's gospel reading has been termed "apocalyptic." Originating some two hundred years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth one of its most outstanding examples is contained in the book of Daniel, the Prophet, which is read as today's first lesson. The word *apocalyptic* (the Greek "uncovering" or "revealing"), a comparatively late literary genre in Scripture, attempts to explain world events within the impending action of a just God whose dramatic "foretold" advent will avenge all injustices and finally restore divine order. It emerged within the context of persecution waged by the Hellenic king Antiochus IV of Syria some 150 years before Christ. Mark the evangelist freely adapted its stern style, terse warnings of impending doom with the conviction that the death of Jesus (ca. AD 27/28) and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem (AD 70) bracketed those "final days" before that "day of judgment." To heighten such expectations Jesus Christ according to Mark would soon return in glory (in Greek *parousia*) and all that he had endured - his passion, death and resurrection- and now repeated in the trials suffered by his own followers, would be at once vindicated. However, the *parousia* or appearance did not occur as expected and the later evangelists, Matthew, Luke and John, would not readily see the Lord's advent in such immediate terms. For Mark, the fig tree, one of the few Palestinian trees that shed its leaves and lay dormant in winter, became not only the harbinger of spring but of the advent of the "new age of Christ's coming in glory." And so it is with us also. We do not need to know the exact time of Christ's return searching Scripture for hidden clues. What is of paramount importance is our own daily preparation to meet our God with the calm assurance of his mercy.

Study of the First Reading

When the millennium approached, many people were concerned about the corruption of society and the pending end of the world. Such fears are not new; they extend back 2200 years to the book of Daniel. Before Daniel, Jewish prophecy was unambiguous; it could be clearly interpreted. Full of obscure symbols that can be interpreted many different ways, Daniel is one of the first books that includes "apocalyptic" visions as prophecy. And Daniel's concern focused on the "day of the Lord" (i.e., Judgment Day). Even in a time of great stress, Daniel emphasizes God's protection in the person of Michael (the archangel) [1]. But, what of the righteous who died and did not receive protection? Here, Daniel introduces the concepts of the resurrection and the final judgment [2]. Notice, the evil would be shamed as their punishment, while the faithful would have reputations "like the stars in the sky," bright and forever [3]. The just (i.e., the faithful) have a place in the creation ("the firmament") like the stars. Daniel connected moral living with God's creation; at the end of time, everything, including morality, would be set "right." Daniel saw the unity of nature and morality in a way that Western culture easily overlooks. But we should not make connection in terms of karma, the eternal payback. God's judgment is his mercy and his love; these are the divine qualities we believe in, not in moral retribution as a "law of the universe." Daniel saw the connection between creation and morality in God. The only way to live that connection is in a faith relationship.

Study of the Second Reading

In these verses, the author of Hebrews concluded his exposition about sacrifice. As he did before, the author compared the earthly cult of the Temple in Jerusalem with the heavenly worship of Jesus which began on the cross. Both types of sacrifice were continuous. The earthly cult offered the same sacrifices over and over. In this sense, it was impotent, for it could not effect what it asked: reconciliation and intimacy with God. The heavenly cult of Jesus was also continuous, but in a different sense. The death of Jesus on the cross was a one time event. But the reality of that event, found in the risen body of the Lord, would live forever. To truly appreciate the thinking in Hebrews, we must once again see what kept people from a lasting, intimate relationship with God: death. The earthly cult of the Temple could never overcome death. This was why it could not take away the cause of death: sin. But, with the death and resurrection of Jesus, death itself was destroyed and, by extension, its cause. Belief in the Risen Lord connected one to his eternal life. With such life now a reality, the author looked forward to the destruction of those who aligned themselves with sin and death (i.e., non-believers). These would be the enemies "as a stool under his feet." Some might mock us for our trust in someone who died two millennia ago. This was the same skepticism that Jewish-Christians faced when they held onto their faith in the face of the destruction of the Temple. The gloomy outlook of the world, critics claim, is enough to argue against faith. Believers, however, view the outlook AS a reason for faith. We reach out to the One beyond us, because the world is not enough. And he gives us true, everlasting life.

The world viewed the cross as death. We see it as life.

Feasts

- 17 Elizabeth of Hungary (+1231), widowed at 20 with three children, gave herself over to the care of the poor. She became a Third Order Franciscan and died at 23.
- 18 Dedication of the Basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul in Rome.
- 21 The Presentation of Mary commemorates the dedication of the great hospital Church complex in Jerusalem.
- 22 **Cecilia** (+ca.235), a young Roman woman, who professed her faith to death. She is acclaimed as the patroness of musicians.

OSA DAY OF PRAYER

FOR REFUGEES

November 16, 2015

Prior General Convokes November 16 as Augustinian Day of Prayer for Refugees

“I convoke a day in the whole Order of St. Augustine to pray for refugees, for persecuted Christians and for victims of war. This will take place on 16 November, 2015, the International Day for Tolerance, and in a way that includes laity.”

— Most Reverend Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A.

Augustinians invite and encourage all you who are reading this to join with us on November 16 to pray for refugees. You can download the Augustinian prayer service to use yourself or with others(www.augustiniani.cz/en)

In our Church we will have Mass at 07:00 pm and after adoration of the Blessed Sacrament till 08:30pm.

Please, come to pray with us!

Almighty and merciful God,
whose Son became a refugee
and had no place to call his own;
look with mercy on those who today
are fleeing from danger,
those who are homeless and hungry.
Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;
and guide the nations of the world towards that day
when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice and of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

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

* **Lectors and Eucharistic ministers:** If you would like to be a **lector** or Eucharistic minister at mass on Sundays please sing up with after mass in the courtyard or e mail Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com

* Every Saturday at 9:00am **feeding of the homeless**, as a 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.

*Wednesday at 18:30. Tagaste room takes place **Adult Religious education.**

*We welcome all our new parishoners to St. Thomas Church. Please introduce yourselves, if you wish at refreshments after the 11:00 am Mass on Sundays or just call us or visit at your convenience.

***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.

***DINNER OF THANKS.** 29th November at 18:30 at St. Augustine School, Hornokrčská 3. Praha 4 **JOIN IN! EAT and DRINK! CELEBRATE!** More information and volunteers please see Michael Rainey.

***Marriage preparation** will be on November 21st from 09:15 till 15:30 in the Refectory of St. Thomas Monastery. More information with Fr. William, OSA 602643365

***Professional translator** (English, Czech and Italian) and language teacher (English, Italian and Czech) is looking urgently for a job. Please send an email at ApolinarieRubesova@seznam.cz or phone 732 380 481