



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

St. Thomas Church

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Today's Prayer

Say this Prayer Today:

"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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February 14th and February
15th 2015

The Sixth Sunday in
Ordinary Time- B

Reflection on the Gospel

Leprosy in the New Testament- not to be identified with Hansen's disease- was loosely applied to any number of dermatological problems including baldness! Today's gospel reading generically describes some severe malady for which there being no cure consigned the victims to social ostracism. This expulsion was devastating not only physically but also psychologically since such maladies were directly attributed to God's disfavor. Purported cures had to be reported to the Temple priests or their representatives for verification before the patient could return to normal life in society. If not, the leper had to live hopelessly on the margins of society with bandaged face, carrying a bell warning those passing by with the cry "Unclean!" The most painful aspect of these precautions paled when recalling that such a victim was officially deprived of family support, adequate medical care, nourishment and above all designated a public sinner "struck by God" for "some sin".

Mark notes the compassion of Jesus for these outcasts. Disregarding all taboos, He allows them to approach Him, He authoritatively addresses them, cures them and sends them on to the priestly "board of health" for necessary verification of their healing. For the ancient peoples illness was Satan's preserve; hence, any healing wrought by Jesus would have been thought to come directly from God who is mightier than any evil. The description of this healing is gripping. Older manuscripts relate that Jesus *was moved by anger* against their dreadful state and putting aside all precautions, he reached out and curatively touched the leper. It is precisely this enslavement that so provokes Jesus to heal the unfortunate sufferer. By this incident, therefore, Mark our evangelist, teaches that evil in whatever form it takes has been rendered ineffectively powerless by Jesus' commanding presence and word. Hence, all the rituals which so effectively isolated and boycotted people are broken down by the healing merciful Word of God manifested through Jesus Christ. We may ask ourselves the question: "If God is open and merciful why are we so hesitant in our acceptance of others?"

Study of the First Reading

As you may have read in the gospel commentary, the disease translated as "leprosy" might not have been Hansen's disease (what we call "leprosy"). A close reading of Leviticus 13-14 revealed the sick were expected to recover (unlike the incurable, but treatable, Hansen's disease). Quarantine periods were temporary. A priest would inspect and impose the quarantine. Then he would re-inspect the sick at regular intervals to notice any improvement. Notice the power of the priest in Leviticus. He acted not only as a worship leader, he was also a civil leader, judge, and medical practitioner. This all-encompassing role gave the priesthood of Aaron extraordinary powers. 13:44-46 The infected took on mannerisms that warned others of the disease. Torn clothing, a lack of proper hygiene, and the call "Unclean! Unclean!" were meant to separate the community from those in quarantine. Not only did the infected live outside the community, they were expected to live as if they were in the wild. Appearance and warning gave the notion these lived outside civilization. As Americans, we pride ourselves on our unique individuality. We have the right to act different. Imagine if different behavior was not a right, but a social pressure. To the contemporaries of Jesus, the ruling of leprosy by a priest was like an unjust prison sentence: isolated lifestyle by infection.

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 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

LENTEN 2015

- ❖ The **season of Lent** begins ASH WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY. Ashes will be distributed both on that day (Mass at 06:00 pm in St. Barbara's chapel) and on Sunday 22 February, after Mass. Catholics are urged to enter into the spirit of this holy season of conversion
- ❖ During **Lent season** every Thursday at 6pm in the chapel of Saint Barbara will be Eucharistic service, with communion and possibility of confession.
- ❖ Every Friday **Stations of the Cross** at 06:00pm

Blessed Simon Fidati of Cascia, OSA

February 16

Blessed Simon Fidati of Cascia (1295?-1348), an Augustinian Friar who advocated Gospel simplicity and community based on Christian love, was known for his powerful preaching and desire to form Christ in everyone.

Born in Cascia around 1295, Simon entered the Order of St. Augustine as a young man. He initially studied philosophy and science, but soon changed his focus to study spirituality and theology.

Simon loved solitude and contemplation, but in obedience to his superiors in the Order, willingly involved himself in apostolic work. He developed the reputation as a powerful preacher of the Word of God and an outstanding teacher of the spiritual life. Forming Christ in all people became the primary goal of all his ministry. He was especially devoted to the humanity of Jesus, which he saw as a key to the life of a Christian. This devotion was rooted in the context of the Augustinian traditions of "theology of the heart" and the centrality of God's love.

In spite of some difficulties, Simon remained faithful to his vocation. He valued Christian charity, obedience to the Order and a sense of community of fraternal love as the most important underlying values for living religious community life. His writings include *The Works of Our Savior*, a life of Christ written in the form of a commentary on biblical passages; *The Order of the Christian Life*, which inspires the reader to live in conformity to Christ, and *Epistolary*, a collection of approximately 50 of his letters.

Simon died in Florence February 2, 1348, during the Great Plague. His remains are preserved in Cascia at the Basilica of St. Rita. Pope Gregory XVI declared him *Blessed* in 1833

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

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

Fr. William, the pastor will be away for January 27th till March 2nd month. Fr. Juan B. will be the ordinary pastor in his absence. In cases of emergency I can be reached either through Fr. Juan at 602684538

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.

There will be no **Religious Education classes** on Sunday February 15.

Post-confirmation youth group: For 14-17 year olds who would like to meet to discuss and share views on issues of faith today and enrich their own faith. The time and dates will be decided depending on those interested. Please contact Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com or see me after mass.

Social Media at St. Thomas Church, Prague

Keep up with the Parish, Religious Education calendar, Parish Events, photos or the latest quote from the Vatican and Pope Francis. Follow us on Facebook at:

St. Thomas Church - Prague's English-speaking Catholic Community

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Thomas-Church-Prague-English-speaking-Catholic-Community/298895753494190?ref=hl>

So, please be sure to take the minute to join us on Facebook – and be sure to share the photos you take at parish events and celebrations with others as well. Remember, we are only as good as the sum of our community --- so join in, helping to keep our Parish the welcoming and dynamic group that we are. Michael Rainey Mobile: +420 608 606 501

Upcoming Events

17. *The Seven Founders of the Servite Order* (13th c) are commemorated today.
18. -Gambia declared its independence in 1965.
21. *Peter Damian* (+1072), a monk and an unbending moralist who so castigated the clergy of his day for their scandalous lives and example that his writings were scarcely quoted without embarrassed comment.
22. *The Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter* commemorates the teaching authority of the Church entrusted by Christ to Peter and the other disciples. On this day we pray especially for our Church leaders and teachers that they follow in the footsteps of the one teacher, Christ.