



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

Today's Prayer

Dear Jesus, as I call on you today I realise that I often come asking for favours. Today I'd like just to be in your presence. Let my heart respond to Your Love.



April 23rd and April 24th 2016

The Fifth Sunday of
Easter Year C

St. Thomas Church

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To understand this gospel reading taken from John it is necessary to remember that it sets the last words of Jesus within a few hours of his arrest at the instigation of Judas Iscariot, his subsequent mock trial before Caiaphas and sentencing to death by Pontius Pilate. Since these words or "last minute" instructions immediately preceding the tragic events of his passion reflect the culture within which Jesus lived and died and it would be helpful to reflect on them even though momentarily. First, the vineyard, the vinedresser or tender, the patron or landowner and the client were as common in first century Palestine as in any contemporary wine producing regions. Biblical literature abounds in examples drawn out of this important vital activity. In fact, Isaiah, the prophet, even describes Israel, "the vineyard of the Lord" as singularly unproductive yet the Lord, or patron-owner, lovingly looks for signs of repentance or harvest from his people. It is in this same prophetic genre, that Paul, the apostle, sets Israel's own rejection of Jesus's messianism. To sum it up, the biblical writers both in the first and second testaments often depict the Lord as the patron of the vineyard (Israel or the Church)- mercifully gentle- yet demanding fidelity before the harvest (or judgement).

Patronage. In ancient times, especially in uncertain political or economic moments, common people or clients would seek out a powerful patron to supply both their basic necessities and extend them protection. Throughout its history Israel regarded itself as the particular heritage and collective client of the Lord; the prophets were the intermediary brokers. In the second or New Testament, the Church as in the case of Israel, too, looks to its Patron, the Lord of the harvest or judgement whose will is brokered by Jesus Christ. To be fruitful means that there is need for pruning- at times painful- but necessary for life. If one remains faithful there is "a cleansing" that glorifies God and gives the client or faithful one entrée so that he/she "may ask anything for anything and it will be done." In short, John emphasises here that with Jesus we not only have access to God but nothing can deter us from approaching God with confidence: "Live on in me," Jesus tells us.

Study of the First Reading

On our faith journey, we must come to expect the unexpected. As the old saying goes, "Be careful for what you pray, you may get it!" In the midst of Paul's first missionary journey, there is success that produced new problems. As we studied last week, Christian preaching like Paul's had two affects. First, it split the Jewish synagogues into Nazorean (i.e., Christian) and non-Nazorean camps. Where there was a split and the Nazorean Jews were expelled from the synagogue, a new assembly (church) was created. Second, Paul's preaching encouraged non-Jewish peoples to join become believers (without observing the Jewish Law) and join the new assemblies. As a result, new assemblies formed by Jewish Christians were quickly becoming non-Jewish. There was an external pressure from the non-Christian Jews, and internal pressure from the growing numbers of incoming Gentile converts. Paul's exhortation to the believers [23] and his attention to organizational structure [24] confirm the affects of missionary efforts like Paul's. There were problems of persecution and unexpected growth. There were established churches who needed attention. But, notice that these problems preceded Paul's efforts and indicate Christianity was rapidly spreading before Paul preached in Asia Minor. Paul contributed to the missionary effort with his attention to the non-Jewish believers [27]. We will see his defense of his mission in next week's study.

The early church did not expect the growth that Paul's efforts provided.

Fr. William birthday, May 8th 2016

SIGN-UP SHEET LINK & NOTE:

<http://fatherbill80.com/>

We are planning a big BBQ party in the cloister garden to celebrate Father William's 80th birthday on 8 May 2016. Please use the above registration and forward to everyone so we can get an accurate attendance to better plan for the party (Sunday 8th May). Note we would like to ask that you bring a side dish/salad/desert (serving for 10+) & you will see that in the registration form there is a box for people to "click" if they want to bring food which we'll follow-up with for those that express interest to do so. Let's make this a memorable 80th Birthday Celebration for Father !!!!

April 24th : Conversion of St. Augustine

Augustine's life as a young man was characterized by loose living and a search for answers to life's basic questions.

He would follow various philosophers, only to become disillusioned with their teachings. For nine years he was associated with the Manichean sect. But he gradually became aware that Manicheism was unable to provide satisfactory answers to his probing questions.

At this time, Augustine was teaching rhetoric in Milan. He went to hear the preaching of Saint Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan. At first he went only to hear Ambrose's eloquent style of speaking. But the Bishop's preaching led Augustine to a new understanding of the Bible and the Christian Faith. Some time in the year 386, Augustine and his friend Alypius were spending time in Milan. While outdoors, Augustine heard the voice of a child singing a song, the words of which were, "Pick it up and read it. Pick it up and read it." He thought at first that the song was related to some kind of children's game, but could not remember ever having heard such a song before.

Then, realizing that this song might be a command from God to open and read the Scriptures, he located a Bible, picked it up, opened it and read the first passage he saw. It was from the Letter of Paul to the Romans. Augustine read: Not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual excess and lust, not in quarreling and jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh. --Romans 13: 13-14

Reading this scripture, Augustine felt as if his heart were flooded with light. He turned totally from his life of sin. He was Baptized by Ambrose during the Easter Vigil April 24, 387. His friend Alypius and his son Adeodatus were Baptized at the same time.

Later, reflecting on this experience, Augustine wrote his famous prayer: You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. He went on to become a powerful influence on the spirituality and theology of the Christian Church.

Ongoing Activities

*We **welcome all our new parishioners** 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.

***Bible Study** sessions are held each Wednesday evening at 6:30pm/18:00 in the Church office. All are welcome to join and reflect on the Word of God.

***Parish dance** will be on Friday April 22nd th in Malostranská Beseda from 07:pm. Ticket you can buy with Michael Rainey. Please come with us to celebrate!

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS TRULY RISEN.

Year of Mercy: "Merciful like the Father"

Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy:

1. to feed the hungry,
2. give drink to the thirsty,
3. clothe the naked,
4. welcome the stranger,
5. heal the sick,
6. visit the imprisoned,
7. bury the dead.

And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy:

1. to counsel the doubtful,
2. instruct the ignorant,
3. admonish sinners,
4. comfort the afflicted,
5. forgive offences,
6. bear patiently those who do us ill
7. pray for the living and the dead."

***The 19th Annual Marian Pilgrimage** to the Shrine of the **Gracious Madonna**, at sv. Dobrotiva-Zajecov, will be held on May 7. We meet in front of St. Joseph's church on Josefská Street, at 08:30 am, Saturday morning, May 7. If you do not have a ride please contact Fr. Juan Bautista for details. In keeping with our tradition, please bring a lunch, which you can share with another person on pilgrimage. Whatever is left over (if you so will) is given to the poor. There is a brochure, which explains the origins and traditions behind this beautiful 700-year pilgrimage, which has been renewed after forty years of communism. **SIGN UP:** In the sacristy of St. Thomas Church.