



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

Today's Prayer

The more we call on
God
the more we can feel
God's presence.
Day by day we are
drawn closer
to the loving heart of
God.



November 5th and November
6th 2016

The Thirty Second Sunday
in Ordinary Time – Year C

St. Thomas Church

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GOSPEL STUDY

In order to understand today's reading we must understand two influential strands in Jesus' time. The first was the pervasive influence of Hellenistic or Greek culture espoused by the learned and powerful; the second was the forceful presence of the Roman imperial order. Jewish society, of course, reacted to these twin challenges in various ways. The *Essenes*, a near apocalyptic sect, separated from main stream Judaism; the *Zealots*, soon after Jesus' time, challenged the Romans to war with wholesale extermination; the *Sadducees*, the aristocratic priestly and largely conservative temple hierarchy, preferred to live within the political and cultural *status quo*. The *Pharisees*, the "separated or pious ones," divided into about 32 schools of thought, represented the popular piety of the day with their strict observance of the Law of Moses and their belief in angels, the resurrection of the dead and final judgement. Such teachings put them into a collision course with the Sadducees who accepted as inspired only the first five books of Scripture (the *Torah*). Today's reading pits Jesus in one of those rare encounters with the Sadducees who ridiculed the resurrection (obviously believed by Jesus) with an argument *ad absurdum*. Since it was a religious obligation for a man to marry his brother's widow (see the *Levirate law* in *Deut.25:5*), they snidely questioned the marital status of a widowed woman who successively married seven (short-lived) brothers! Jesus first responds with the teaching that marriage will not be necessary in the life to come. Further, in referring to Moses in his dialogue with God (*Exodus 3:6-15ff*), Jesus teaches that the Lord is a God of the living, indeed, *All are alive in Him*. So, when God identified himself as the *God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* who once had died- Jesus taught that these patriarchs, as all who believed in Him, were alive through Him who created them. God's personal relationship founded on love was indissoluble, even death could not alter it. Paul later on confirmed this when he wrote: *I am certain that neither death nor life...nor any other created thing can separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Jesus Christ, Our Lord* It is precisely in the resurrection that God's love for us reaches its fulfillment.

First Reading:

In the time before the Roman conquest of Palestine, an editor abridged a longer work about a Jewish uprising. We know this book as 2 Maccabees. The book chronicled the events during the oppressive rule of the Seleucid dynasty. While they ruled Syria, the Seleucid kings descended from the generals of Alexander the Great. Greek in language and culture, the dynasty tried to unite the subjects of their empire around that same language and culture. Conservative Jews resisted the foreign influence. The Syrian government pressed on with draconian measures. And a revolt broke out that eventually succeeded.

The martyrdom of the Jewish mother and her seven sons takes up chapter seven. The dialogue between the king and the sons revealed pre-Christian spirituality among many Jews. Justice was in the hands of God. The righteous would receive their reward, if not in this life, in the next. Hence many among the populace believed in the resurrection of the dead. This narrative gave the oppressed Jews a reason to keep kosher laws even in the face of death.

These verses clearly show the belief in the resurrection predated Jesus and the early Church. While the story was told to heighten the bravery of the martyrs, it does tell us why generations have held onto the doctrine of resurrection. God is just. He will reward the faithful and punish the evil at the end of time.

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

Second Reading:

These verse from 2 Thessalonians acted as a transition between the author's thesis on the "lawless man" and his exhortations to his audience. Unlike the lawless one (the author shifted between the apostate and Satan), the Christian was to stand firm in the faith that was given to him or her. But that steadfast spirit relied on God's help. Hence the author ended with a prayer for the hope and strength of his audience.

In turn, the author desired prayers for his ministry. Since Paul (the author?) was a missionary/evangelist, he asked that God's word would spread quickly and have a good reputation. Both of these petitions would make his job and the jobs of his compatriots much easier (they would not have to encounter so many opponents). If his audience would pray these petitions, the author could rest assured his readers would follow the instructions given to them. And he was confident that the Lord would protect the community from the work of the devil.

Two prayers, one for personal strength in faith, one for those who minister to us. These are two petitions we should remember daily. If we pray for those who feed us and our own strength, we will be more mindful of our efforts to pass along the faith.

Blessed Gratia of Kotor, OSA

Blessed Gratia of Kotor distinguished himself by his humility, work, spirit of penitence, and love of the Eucharist.

The second half of the fourteenth century saw the emergence of a great spirit of reform in the Augustinian Order as well as in many other religious congregations. Friars committed to an enthusiastic observance of religious life in perfect fidelity to the *Rule* and *Constitutions* shunning every abuse and opportunity for compromise. They were authorized to live in specially designated "observant" communities under the immediate authority of the prior general and his appointed vicar. Eleven distinct congregations of observant monasteries were formed during this period. Gratia entered one of these congregations, centered at Monte Orotne, near Padua, in 1468

Gratia was born in 1438 in the town of Mulla near Kotor (Cattaro) on the Dalmation coast in former Yugoslavia. Fifteen years earlier Kotor had submitted to Venetian rule and became a busy and prosperous seaport. Gratia was a sailor whose work brought him to Venice where, on a certain occasion, he was so deeply moved by the preaching of the Augustinian friar, Simon of Camerino, a distinguished speaker and leader of the Augustinian Observant Movement, that he decided to join the Augustinian Order as a lay brother. He was thirty years old. In his forty years of religious life Gratia distinguished himself by his virtues and love of the Eucharist.

After many years at Monte Ortone, where he devoted his time an energy to the service of his brethren, principally in the monastery garden, he was transferred to the monastery of San Cristoforo near Venice, where he died on 8 November 1508.

Four centuries later he is still venerated by his countymen in Kotor, and especially in his hometown of Mulla, where his body has been kept in the parish church since 1810. In 1889 Pope Leo XIII beatified Gratia.

The Augustinian Family celebrates his memorial on 7 November.

St. Thomas Parish Dinner of Thanks

Where: St. Augustine School. Prague 4

When: Friday November 25th from 18:30

Tickets with Michael Rainey

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.

❖ 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 contact Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com

A new schedule will be prepared soon.

❖ **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.**

❖ The **choir** is looking for new members. If you like to sing, we'd like to have you join us! Please contact Frank Jicha at frankjicha@gmail.com for more information.

❖ On November 19th **Marriage Preparation** form 09:30 am till 03:15 pm.

❖ **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 prayer 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.

❖ Today second collection for the charity of our archdiocese

Feasts and Anniversaries

- 10 **Lawrence O'Toole** (+1180), the Archbishop of Dublin, was celebrated both for his learning and reforming zeal.
- 16 **The Feast of Our Lady of Mercy** (Ostrabrama or Ausros Varu) is commemorated in Vilnius, Lithuania.
- 17 **Margaret of Scotland** (+1093), the patroness of her country, was known as the "Mother of Scotland."

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."