



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

Today's Prayer

Say this Prayer Today:

I pause for a moment and think of the love and the grace that God showers on me: I am created in the image and likeness of God; I am God's dwelling-place...



January 14th and 15th 2017

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

St. Thomas Church

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

Reflection on the Gospel

One of the crucial issues in the early Christian church centered on the interpretation of John the Baptizer and his mission. Since popular opinion regarded him with some messianic expectations, the gospels carefully delineated both his identity and role. This necessarily involved a theological interpretation that defined John vis-à-vis the very mission and message of Jesus. Written between the years AD 65 – 70 during the height of the tragic Jewish rebellion (66 – 72) against Roman rule, *Mark*, the first written gospel, posits Jesus' ministry toward the end of John's mission. He passes over any "infancy accounts" to Jesus' baptism by John (*Mark* 1:11). Conversely, *Matthew* and *Luke*, writing some three decades later (ca. AD 85 –95) instead trace Jesus' messianic lineage and vocation not with his baptism but with "infancy accounts" beginning at the first moment of his conception. Thus the Matthean and Lukan Jesus was, from his very origin, *the Savior, the Messiah, the Christ and Lord who would save his people.* *John*, the last gospel to be written (ca. AD 95 – 100) theologically advances further in proclaiming that Jesus, the preexisting Son of God from all eternity, was God Himself. The definitive Creed of Nicea Constantinople (promulgated AD 381) states unequivocally that Jesus *is God from God, light from light, true God and true man, through whom all things were made.* Before this profession of faith John assumes a secondary albeit important role as *herald crying in the wilderness* announcing the arrival of *the Lamb of God.* Christian iconography invariably depicts John as "pointing" in the direction of Jesus. For it is in Jesus that the believer would experience forgiveness and readoption as the sons and daughters of God. Just as the *lamb of the people* was offered in the former temple for expiation so the death of Jesus, *the Lamb of God*, would not only remove sin but also restore the sinner *once and for all* to divine favor. In face of this stupendous fact, the humility of John the Baptizer shines forth. Shortly after the baptism of Jesus, he would leave the scene for an ignominious death but not before he so beautifully remarked: "I am not worthy to even loosen his sandal strap".

Study of the First Reading

First Reading: [3:3] The temple referred to in this passage is not the great Temple in Jerusalem (not to be built for another hundred years), but a shrine on the top of a holy mountain. According to the Jewish Law, the tribe of Levi was to be the priests; this tribe lived among the other tribes of Israel. Various places of worship were established among the tribes. 350-400 years later, King Hezekiah limited sacrifice worship to the Temple in Jerusalem. The ark rested at Shiloh, the worship site where Samuel served. [3:4-6] The young Samuel confused the voice of God for that of Eli, the elderly priest in charge of the worship site. The sign of spiritual maturity is discerning God's voice from others. The young Samuel was old enough to encounter God directly and take ownership of faith. The influence of Eli became secondary. [7] The passage emphasizes God's initiative. Samuel is seeking God through his service, but only God can cause the encounter to occur. How many times have we tried to mature spiritually, only to be set back by God and told: "Wait and listen!" [8-9] The elder Eli is the one who discerns God's voice. While God was not pleased with Eli and his sons, the wisdom of his old age shines through. The role of a spiritual guide is to facilitate the student's experience of God and knowledge of His will. [10] Up to this point, Samuel could not see the presence of the Lord, because he was not aware. Now, God reveals Himself to Samuel because he was ready. Notice that God revealed Himself to Samuel in the early morning when one would sleep. These early morning times are the best for prayer because they are the hours of human weakness.

Coffee, Cookies & Conversation follow Sunday Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.** Please contact, Fr. Juan if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "juan@augustiniani"

Upcoming Events

18. *The Week of Christian Unity begins when all believers in Christ pray that "All be one".*
19. *Henry of Finland (+1160) is venerated as the "Apostle and Teacher of the Finnish people".*
-Jan Palach in protest against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968) incinerates himself in Vaclavske namesti in 1969.
20. *Fabian, the pope martyred in AD 250 and Sebastian, the Milanese soldier martyred in AD 288, are honored together this day. Rio de Janeiro celebrates Sao Sebastian day as its founding date.*
21. *Agnes, a brave 13 year old girl, was brutally violated because of her profession of the Christian faith in AD 303.*
-Vladimir Ilich Ulianov Lenin, the executor of the Bolshevik Revolution, died in 1924.
22. *Vincent of Saragossa (AD ca. 300) was a Spanish deacon martyred for the faith.*
-New Zealand celebrates *Wellington Day*.
-Queen Victoria died in 1901 after a reign of nearly 64 years.
-Benedict XV, the pope who tried to end World War I, died in 1922.

Announcements and 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**.
- **Song books/Missals.** On several Sunday's we have been short of song books for the congregation. A recent inventory showed that many books were unaccounted for. If you have one of the song books at home could you please bring it in when you are next at St. Tomas.
- On Saturday January 21st **Marriage preparation** from 09:15am. till 03:0pm
- **Fr. William** will be away on Order affairs beginning 23th January to the end of February.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017

Reconciliation – The Love of Christ Compels Us.

(cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-20)



January is a month when Christians around the world pay particular attention to the unity of the church. Specifically, Christians dedicate an entire week during the month to pray for unity among the followers of Jesus and especially to overcome historical and present divisions that exist between church communities.

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be celebrated in Canada from **January 18-25, 2017**.

The theme for the week is inspired by St. Paul's reminder that "Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-20)

Christians bear witness to God's mighty acts in a variety of ways: by healing wounds of division, by searching for truth and unity, and through common social and charitable projects that uphold human dignity. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a privileged moment for prayer, encounter and dialogue. It is an opportunity to recognize the richness and value that are present in the other, the different, and to ask God for the gift of unity.

Saint Augustine and Ecumenism

Saint Augustine of Hippo, espousing opinions clearly outside the consensus of the Church Fathers, wrote that within the sects and divisions of Christianity the "union of peace" had been broken and torn asunder, but in their mysteries the "unity of the Spirit" had not been terminated.

Saint Augustine directly affirmed "that in the sacraments of sectarians, *the Church is active*; some she engenders *of herself*, others she engenders *outside*, of her maid-servant, and schismatic baptism is valid for this very reason, that it is performed by the Church." According to Saint Augustine, then, "the Holy and Sanctifying Spirit still breathes in the sects, but in the stubbornness and powerlessness of schism healing is not accomplished