



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

St. Thomas Church

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.

January 28th and 29th 2017

The Fourth Sunday in
Ordinary Time – Year A

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The word *beatitudes* is a translation of the Greek word *makarioi* meaning “blessings.” As taught by Jesus, Matthew lays down these eight “beatitudes” as prerequisite for membership in the kingdom of God. Matthew’s own predilection for Old Testament prototypes even locates this pivotal teaching on a mountainside just as Moses, the great lawgiver of the first testament, received the Ten Commandments (or *Decalogue*) on Sinai’s heights. These eight beatitudes or blessings are divided into two distinct groups. The first four deal those who *internally* yearn for the kingdom of God: the *poor in spirit* (not necessarily confined to the economically deprived); the *sorrowing* (just not the unhappy or dissatisfied); the *lowly* (not only the “underdog” or down and out) and those who *hunger and thirst for holiness*. They will be satisfied. The second four beatitudes (built on the first four) are those who *actively* seek to bring about the advent of the kingdom of God through vital engagement. Hence Jesus sets forth *those who show mercy*, the *single-hearted* (or “pure-hearted”), the *peacemakers* and the *unjustly persecuted* as being guaranteed a place in the kingdom of God. Much can be said of these blessings but the ultimate challenge is, do we seriously take and make them our own?

Blessed are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of God is theirs. 2. Blessed are the sorrowing; they shall be comforted. 3. Blessed are the lowly; they shall inherit the earth. 4. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall be satisfied. 5. Blessed are the merciful; mercy will be theirs; 6. Blessed are the single-hearted; they shall see God. 7. Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called sons and daughters of God. 8. Blessed are those persecuted for holiness’ sake; the kingdom of God is theirs.

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

STUDY OF THE SECOND READING

Congratulations! If you are reading this, you belong to the privileged of the world. You are literate and you have access to a computer hooked up to the internet. Statistically, you, like me, are educated, well-off, and have some measure of power (compared to the rest of the world). Yet, what does this education, wealth, and power ultimately give us? Bragging rights?

From one of more self-evident passages in Scripture, Paul reminded his audience (and us) that social place in the world was meaningless compared to standing before God. The community in Corinth had divided itself into cliques, based upon “doctrine” and presumed “wisdom.” These cliques filled themselves with self-importance. But, where did these groups stand in the eyes of God? Weren’t the rarified opinions they held of themselves unimportant? Furthermore, don’t the weak and powerless, ignorant and the foolish show off the glory of God to a greater extent than the educated movers and shakers of the world?

If we have any advantage in this world, it is based on grace, not on self-improvement or inherence. Grace gives us faith, hope, and love, not a street corner pulpit to promote our self-righteous self-importance. Grace gives us the virtue of awe, the sure knowledge of our place as creature before our God. Grace helps us see others as ourselves, saved sinners.

Collection Appeal

Please Contribute Generously to the Parish Collection as we are not meeting our required budget to run all of the activities. We thank you greatly for your kindness Our Weekly Budget is 10,000kč/week.

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. If you have one of the song books at home could you please bring it in when you are next at St. Tomas.
- **Fr. William** will be away on Order affairs in USA beginning 23th January to the end of February.

Upcoming Events

01 Brigid of Ireland (+525) a disciple of Patrick and foundress of monastic centers, she is co-patroness of Ireland with Patrick and Columba

02 The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple. This feast, formerly called "the Purification," commemorates the offering of the Infant Jesus in the temple according to the prescriptions of the Law. It is also called the feast of the "Encounter" between Jesus and his people symbolized by Simeon and Anna as related in Luke 2:21-40.

03 Stephen Bellesini OSA(+1840), an Augustinian pastor who was known for his charity to the poor and cholera victims. Blaise of Sebaste, Armenia (+300) a bishop martyr who is invoked against illnesses of the throat. Throats will be blessed on his day after Mass next Sunday, February sixth.

Blessed Stephen Bellesini **February 3**

Blessed Stephen Bellesini (1774-1840) was an Augustinian friar, teacher, minister and mentor to youth, and parish priest.

Luigi Giuseppe Bellesini was born November 25, 1774, in Trent, Italy. He entered the Augustinian Order, taking the religious name Stephen. He professed vows as an Augustinian in 1794.

During the difficult times in which Stephen lived, the government disbanded many religious houses, forcing the friars out of their communities. The Augustinians were not immune to these governmental actions, and Stephen found himself expelled from his monastery. He went to live with his brother and became a teacher, hoping to be a Christian influence on the youth of his day. Stephen founded in his own home a free school for the poor children of the city, who otherwise would not have access to education. He gave food and clothing to the poorest of his students, and offered encouragement and friendship to all of them.

Even the materialistic local authorities came to respect his work. Eventually he was named Inspector of Schools in Trent.

When he had the chance to return to community life, though, Stephen resigned his important post in Trent and went to join the Augustinian community in Bologna.

Political leaders in Trent begged Stephen to return to his work in the schools there, offering to increase his pay. But Stephen refused, writing to them, "You would surely not ask me (to return to Trent) if you realized the unbreakable bond between a friar and his God, who is the King of Kings. Before his altar, I have solemnly promised to be faithful to those vows." Stephen spent several years as Director of Novices, mentoring and teaching young Augustinians the principles of community life in the Order.

In his later years, Stephen served as parish priest in Genazzano. There his ministry included a special emphasis on the needs of the poor and of children. In January, 1840, while answering a call to care for a sick parishioner, he tripped and fell. A cut on his leg became infected, and he developed a high fever. He tried to remain active for the next two days, but the fever never went away. He died February 2, 1840 in Genazzano. His remains are at the Shrine of Our Mother of Good Counsel in Genazzano.