



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

Today's Prayer

"Be still and know that I am God."
Lord, Your words lead us to the calmness and greatness of your presence.



"Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in you."

September 16th and
September 17th 2017

24th Sunday in Ordinary
time A

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

St. Thomas Church

TWENTY-FOURTH ORDINARY SUNDAY

This week's gospel reading is a continuation of last week's passage dealing with the problem of the sinning brother or sister. Last week's reading spoke about the recalcitrant sinner and those communal or public remedies employed by the Church which would both "objectify the sin" and draw forth repentance. This week's reading concentrates on the spirit and the personal quality of forgiveness: how and how often does *the one wronged* forgive *his offender* within the community; is there a realistic limit to Christian forgiveness?

In the Old or First Testament there is no one single word for "sin." Yet, behind the various terms used the descriptive notion can be summed up as "a failure, in part as irregularity or crookedness, in part as infringement of the psychic totality of the soul." While Jesus did not speak of specific sins, he was aware of those offenses which cried out for the need of God: "self-centered confidence, arrogance and the lack of compassion." While not conscious of any personal sin (John 8:46), He identified with and accepted the name of "sinner"(John 9:16); nor did he summon anyone to self-contempt rather "he drew them (i.e., sinners) to himself."

Thus, Peter's question about the "number" of times that one is expected to forgive a brother, is answered in that memorable parable of forgiveness which is not so much interested in quantity as in the *quality of forgiveness*. The hyperbole abounding in the story (ten thousand talents= "billions") serve only to emphasize the trusting, boundless mercy of the "king" in contrast to the narrow selfishly cruel "servant" who could not forgo a mere pittance. The lesson is straightforward. We all stand in need of the merciful forgiveness of God who will forgive us as we forgive others. The Lord's Prayer sums it up:

"Forgive us our trespasses (sins) as we forgive those who trespass (sin) against us." This is the basic condition for our own entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

First Reading

Jesus ben Sirach wrote this book of wisdom about 180 B.C. This book (also known as Ecclesiasticus) was a text for the education of wealthy young men in Jerusalem just before the Hasmonean revolution (167-164 B.C.). Sirach revealed the tensions in the city: the rifts between rich and poor, between the local populace and their foreign rulers, between male and female. How does a righteous Jew live in such a culture of tension?

Maintaining friendships would be especially difficult in this environment. The temptation to "sell out" a friend for gain was great. But the repercussions would be greater. For example, slander injured the victim, the slanderer, and the person who believed the lie. In such an atmosphere, how does one repair damage?

Sirach gave the key: forgiveness. This virtue heals hearts and egos, restores relationships and peace. Forgiveness is a cornerstone upon which the just society is built. Yet, as we all know, forgiveness was not (and is not) a popular virtue. It's too easy to nurse anger and a vengeful spirit. "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" seem to be the most difficult words to say.

Sirach reminded his contemporaries, just as the Nazarean told his followers, that to forgive others was the first step in realizing the forgiveness of God.

What emotional or spiritual wounds do you nurse? How can you forgive those who caused your pain? How can you place your pain and those who hurt you before the Lord?

Project “Back to school 2017”

Back to School season is here! We'll be collecting donations of new school supplies all month. Examples of items needed are: pens, pencils, tempura paint sets, backpacks, notebooks, etc.

If you would like to receive a copy of the **bulletin** by email, please contact osaprag@augustiniani.cz

Sign up now for Religious Education classes: for kids aged 4+. Classes begin with Orientation at 9:30am in the Refectory on September 10th. Please contact Mary Beth Hlavsa at REdirector@augustiniani.cz or +420 724 485 930 for more details.

- Teachers are still much needed for Religious Education! Please contact Mary Beth Hlavsa at REdirector@augustiniani.cz or +420 724 485 930 to volunteer!

Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers: If you would like to serve as a lector or Eucharistic minister at the Sunday mass please contact Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com

Post- confirmation youth group: A youth group will soon be starting at St. Thomas in which young people can discuss and develop their faith, take part in social projects and enjoy activities together. A short meeting will take place after mass (Sunday 10th) to plan times of meetings and topics for discussion. Do come along to our introductory meeting. If you cannot make the meeting but are interested in joining the Youth group please e mail Ann Daly (dalyaann@hotmail.com).

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 frankjicha1@gmail.com or 602.441.201 for more information.

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

Rule of St. Augustine

Chapter Six

41. You should avoid quarrels altogether or else put an end to them as quickly as possible; otherwise, anger may grow into hatred, making a plank out of a splinter, and turn the soul into a murderer. For so you read: “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15).

42. Any who have injured others by open insult, or by abusive or even incriminating language, must be mindful to repair the injury as quickly as possible by an apology, and those who have suffered the injury must also forgive, without further wrangling. But if they have offended one another, they must forgive one another's trespasses for the sake of your prayers which should be recited with greater sincerity each time you repeat them. Those who are often tempted to anger but are prompt to ask pardon from those they admit to having offended are better than others who, though less given to anger, find it quite difficult to ask forgiveness. Those who are never willing to ask pardon or do not do so from the heart have no reason to be in the monastery, even if they are not expelled. Therefore, avoid overly harsh words, and if they escape your lips let those same lips not be ashamed to heal the wounds they have caused.

43. But whenever the need of maintaining discipline forces you to use harsh words in imposing order on younger members, then, even if you think you have been unduly harsh in your language, you are not required to ask forgiveness; for too great a humility on your part may undermine the authority of your office in the eyes of those who must be subject to you. But you should still ask forgiveness from the Lord of all who knows the warm love you have even for those whom you might happen to correct with undue severity. However, you are to love one another with a spiritual rather than a fleshly love.