



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

St. Thomas Church

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 30th and October
1st 2017

26th Sunday in Ordinary
time A

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TWENTY-SIXTH ORDINARY SUNDAY

Jesus taught in parables or *short stories usually in allegorical form with some moral or spiritual lesson*. These deceptively simple narratives are important for situating and understanding what Jesus attempted to teach his listeners at some juncture in his ministry. Today's parable of the "two sons," addressed to the *chief priests* and the *elders*, charged with Israel's faith and morals, is a case in point. Portrayed as spiritually hardened to his message, the hierarchy embarks on open confrontation with Jesus; the resultant tension between the two is obvious. According to Matthew, after triumphantly entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and driving the authorized merchants and the money changers from the Temple precincts, Jesus, then, in a radical but prophetic- inspired tradition, took on an already angered religious hierarchy.

The role of the high priest, the chief priests and priestly families from which the high priest was chosen by Roman appointment was clear enough. As deputed "keepers of public order" Rome expected their clerical clients to insure "the Roman peace" by keeping a wary eye on any subversive religious/political movements. Despite their unseemingly collaboration with the gentiles, the chief priest and his shadowy council (*Sanhedrin*) were respected paradoxically- except by the heretical Samaritans and the exclusive Qumran community- as the definitive religious authority for all Jews both in Israel and abroad in the "diaspora." Privileged and wealthy from the enormous entitlements of the Temple (*Bet Hamikdash* or 'house of holiness') these aristocratic clerics were compelled to play at once the dangerous game of placating a suspicious imperial administration while coping with potentially explosive religious and national sentiment.

Matthew now opens with the first of the five controversies which mark the "Jerusalem," or the "final phase" of Jesus' ministry. The parable of "the two sons" is sharp and the lesson is not lost on the priests and elders. The "sons" represent the official, institutional Judaism of the Temple and the Pharisaic party on one hand; and on the other, the outcasts of Jewish society typified by the hated turn coat Jewish tax collectors who worked for Rome and the despised prostitutes who sold themselves to the Roman soldiers. It is these last "lowest of the low" whom Jesus prefers for the kingdom of heaven! After all, and here he is most provocative, the chief priest and elders, symbolized by the son who evades his promise to work are bested by tax officers and prostitutes who listened to John the Baptist and repented.

FIRST READING

Even before the return of the exiles from Babylon, religious thinkers within Judaism tried to reconcile two notions: First, the faithful "remnant," those who remained true to Jesus, were the Chosen. They were a proud sign of God's presence simply because they survived the "bad" times and the "bad" people.

Second, Jesus was the only God. Before the exile, the Jewish God was the national deity, one God among many. A strict relationship with Jesus precluded a relationship with any other god. But, during the exile, Jews were confronted with deities of the regional superpower, Babylonia. Because Jews were a conquered people, they were a weak nation, which reflected on the power of their God. In the face of such power and critique, Jews asked themselves the question: which god is God? Jesus! He was not only the God of the Jews. He was the only God. Not only did the other gods not matter, they did not exist! While this road to a pure monotheism took centuries, the Babylonian exile was a turning point from a parochial view of God among the Jews to a universal one.

SECOND READING

Like Paul, sometimes we might feel the weight of the world bearing down on us. Like Paul, we might feel "imprisoned" by people or events out of our control. We might desire life with God over our present circumstances. In these times, let us remember that we are not our own masters. We live for the Lord. If we find life closing in on us, let us reflect on our place in God's design. He wants us to be where we find ourselves, so we can serve others. Paul he desired a life with God, but remained behind to help his brothers and sisters come closer to eternity. How can we emulate Paul in our service to others? How can we postpone the prize so others can enjoy the fruits of our labor? Paul desired a life with God, but remained behind to help his brothers and sisters come closer to eternity. How can we emulate Paul in our service to others? How can we postpone the prize so others can enjoy the fruits of our labor?

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 serve as a lector or Eucharistic minister at the Sunday mass please contact Ann at 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.

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

Religious education for adults sessions are held each Wednesday evening at 6:00pm/18:00 in Tagaste room.

Please join us as we **pray the Rosary** the first Saturday of each month! We'll gather at 17:30 in the main church, to pray before English Mass begins at 18:00. Please contact Petra Nykodym at +420 602 223 602 with questions.

Parishioners Day, October 15th.

Please come along for coffee, tea and cake after 11:00 mass on Sunday Oct 15th. It will be a great opportunity to meet new and old members of the community for an informal gathering in the monastery cloister.

Please join us at 13:30 Sunday October 1st for a benefit lunch hosted by the Spanish community to help some of the the most vulnerable communities in Mexico rebuild after the massive earthquakes they've experienced. 100% of the donations will be sent as aid. .

Who are our Guardian Angels?

No evil shall befall you, nor shall affliction come near your tent, for to His Angels God has given command about you, that they guard you in all your ways. Upon their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Psalm 91: 10-12 A heavenly spirit assigned by God to watch over each of us during our lives. The doctrine of angels is part of the Church's tradition. The role of the guardian angel is both to guide us to good thoughts, works and words, and to preserve us from evil. Since the 17th century the Church has celebrated a feast honoring them in October throughout the Universal Church. Since the last calendar revision this feast is Oct 2.

He has charged His angels with the ministry of watching and safeguarding every one of His creatures that behold not His face. Kingdoms have their angels assigned to them, and men have their angels; these latter it is to whom religion designates the Holy Guardian Angels. Our Lord says in the Gospel, 'Beware lest ye scandalize any of these little ones, for their angels in heaven see the face of My Father.' The existence of Guardian Angels, is, hence a dogma of the Christian faith: this being so, what ought not our respect be for that sure and holy intelligence that is ever present at our side; and how great our solicitude be, lest, by any act of ours, we offend those eyes which are ever bent upon us in all our ways!