



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 24th and
September 25th 2011

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?

Text of St. Augustine's Rule

Preface

1. Before all else, beloved, love God and then your neighbor, for these are the chief commandments given to us. (cf. Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-34)

Chapter One

2. The following are the precepts we order you living in the monastery to observe.

3. The main purpose for your having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God, with one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32).

4. Therefore call nothing your own, but let everything be yours in common. Food and clothing shall be distributed to each of you by your superior, not equally to all, for all do not enjoy equal health, but rather according to each one's need. For so you read in the Acts of the Apostles that "they had all things in common, and each was given what he needed" (Acts 4:32, 35).

5. Those who owned something in the world should be cheerful in wanting to share it in common once they have entered the monastery.

6. But they who owned nothing should not look for those things in the monastery that they were unable to have in the world. Nevertheless, they are to be given all that their health requires even if, during their time in the world, poverty made it impossible for them to find the very necessities of life. And these should not consider themselves fortunate because they have found the kind of food and clothing which they were unable to find in the world.

7. And let them [those who possessed nothing while in the world] not hold their heads high because they associate with people whom they did not dare to approach in the world, but let them rather lift up their hearts and not seek after what is vain and earthly. Otherwise, monasteries will come to serve a useful purpose for the rich and not for the poor, if the rich are made humble there and the poor are puffed up with pride.

8. The rich, for their part, who seemed important in the world must not look down upon their brothers or sisters who have come into this holy brotherhood or sisterhood from a condition of poverty. They should seek to glory in the fellowship of poor brothers or sisters rather than in the high rank of rich parents and relatives. They should neither be elated if they have contributed a part of their wealth to the common life, not take more pride in sharing their riches with the monastery than if they were to enjoy them in the world. Indeed, every other kind of sin has to do with the commission of evil deeds, whereas pride lurks even in good works in order to destroy them. And what good is it to scatter one's wealth abroad by giving to the poor, even to become poor oneself, when the unhappy soul is thereby more given to pride in despising riches than it had been in possessing them?

9. Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart, mutually honoring in yourselves the God whose temples you have become.

If you are interesting in knowing more about **St. Augustine and Augustinian spirituality come to the meeting that we are going to have every Tuesday at 06:30 pm from September 20th. More information with Fr. William, OSA

Augustinian Martyrs of Japan

September 28

Ferdinand of Saint Joseph, Andrew Yoshida, Peter Zuniga, John Shozaburo, Michael Kiuchi Tayemon, Peter Kuhieye, Thomas Terai Kahioye, Mancio Seisayemon, Lawrence Hachizo, Bartholomew Gutierrez, Vincent of Saint Anthony, Francis of Jesus, Martin of Saint Nicholas Lumbreras and Melchior of Saint Augustine Sánchez, Thomas "Kintsuba" Jihyoe of Saint Augustine

Augustinians were first sent in 1602 to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Japan. Many of the Japanese people did become followers of Christ. And many of these Christians were attracted to the Augustinian way of life.

However, around 1617 persecutions of Christians broke out. There were many martyrs, whose deaths gave witness to their faith in Jesus.

Among them were several associated with the Order of Saint Augustine. They were from four countries: Japan, Spain, Portugal and Mexico. Thus, their deaths also gave witness to the universality of the Order and of the Church, where the power of Christ and fraternal bonds were stronger than ties to a particular nation or culture.

Augustinian Fr. Ferdinand of Saint Joseph, along with Andrew Yoshida, a catechist who worked with him, were beheaded in 1617. Fr. Peter Zúniga was burned to death in 1622. Br. John Shozaburo, Oblates Michael Kiuchi Tayemon, Peter Kuhieye, Thomas Terai Kahioye, and Tertiaries Mancio Scisayemon and Lawrence Hachizo were beheaded in 1630. Fr. Bartholomew Gutierrez, Fr. Vincent of Saint Anthony Simoens, Fr. Francis of Jesus Terrero, Fr. Martin of St. Nicholas Lumbreras and Fr. Melchior of St. Augustine Sánchez were burned to death in 1632. Thomas Jihyoe of Saint Augustine in 1637 was hung by his feet with his head inserted into a pit of rotting garbage until he died.

Other Augustinians had also been executed for their Christian faith during this long persecution.

Announcements

* **Religious Education is starting from the 25th of September at 9:45am.**

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

*We are looking for an **English teacher** for our school. If you are interesting, please see Fr. Juan

CALLING ALL YOUNG CATHOLIC ADULTS!

If you are interested in joining a group of young Catholic adults to meet monthly for friendly conversation, faith sharing, group outings, and more, please contact Carrie Brown at carolynbrown402@gmail.com. Carrie is new to St. Thomas parish and has previous experience leading young Catholic adult groups. If you ever feel alone in your faith as a young adult, this group is for you! "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." 1 Timothy 4:12