



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



750 let Augustiniánů v Čechách

1262–2012

S nadějí a radostí

**THE AUGUSTINIANS IN THE CZECH
LANDS: 750 YEARS IN SERVICE OF THE
GOSPEL.**

With Hope and Joy!

July 28th and July 29th 2012

The 17th Ordinary Sunday -B

St. Thomas Church

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

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The Reflection of the Gospel

There are few pains as sharp as hunger. My uncle who had been a prisoner of war once said that all his waking thoughts for three years were concerned with food. The specter of famine and its concomitant evil, disease, now haunting over one third of the world's population still give no evidence of abatement. Paradoxically those who live in plenty can hardly manage weight control despite diets and exercise plans. Today's gospel gives some insight into Jesus' own thinking on hunger. After preaching to an enthusiastic crowd Jesus, as a test, abruptly turns to Philip and inquires about feeding this huge multitude which had been patiently following him for days. Philip is understandably stymied when Andrew breaks in with that the available five barley loaves and two fishes could hardly feed 5000 men not to mention the women and children! On this pressing issue John now presents the fourth of his seven signs around which his fourth gospel is written. The incident is set within the context of the feast of Passover, the *feast of Unleavened Bread* that would coincide with our own *feast of Easter*. In the book of *Exodus* having to leave Egypt precipitously the Israelites had no time to bake bread so they consumed the available unleavened loaves in haste. Even Moses (like the later Philip and Andrew) could not understand how the Lord could both *feed* and *save* the Israelites at the same time! Even the *manna* to be given in the desert was rationed out to each one's need. With Jesus the case is drawn differently. There is no rationing of supplies all were now fed superabundantly something, which the Prophet Isaiah had foreseen as the dawning of the messianic times. Even the great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, long regarded as the harbingers of the *end times*, had fed their followers with the same expectations. For the Evangelist John this feeding of the multitudes is a prelude to the messianic age that has arrived now in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

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Blessed John Bufalari of Rieti

August 2

John Bufalari (1318?-1336?) was born in Castel Porchiano, Amelia, Italy. He is believed to be the brother of [Blessed Lucy Bufalari of Amelia](#).

John entered the Augustinian Order while still in his teens.

He was noted for his innocence, simplicity and love for his Augustinian community. He considered himself to be the servant of all, and showed great fraternal love in caring for the sick and welcoming guests to the monastery. He spent much time in prayer.

There is a story told about John crying after having spent some time in the monastery garden. Asked what was wrong, he answered that while the plants, trees and birds were obedient to God, men and women, to whom eternal life is promised, are disobedient to their creator.

John died in Rieti around the year 1336. He was only 17 years old.

His remains are preserved at Saint Augustine Church in Rieti. Pope Gregory XVI proclaimed him Blessed in 1832.

St. Augustine's Values

Cultivation of Humility

"Unless humility precedes, accompanies, and follows whatever we do, we will find that we have done little good to rejoice in. Pride will bereft us of everything."

Humility is the root of true charity. It calls us to accept the sacred in ourselves and others. It allows us to recognize that we are human, to accept our place in reality neither making oneself more nor less than what one actually is, and to love all things, but in an appropriate way.

Humility teaches us to see others as equals. "Humility induces us to presume on our own strength and to trust in God."¹⁰ Humility allows us to listen to others and to see the truth in them. According to Augustine, the only way to reach an "abiding, active knowledge of the truth is through humility."

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Study of the Second Reading

Unlike the Eastern religions which emphasize interior enlightenment of the individual as the primary goal of life, Western religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) focus upon ethical living within a community. Obviously, all major world religions seek insight and high moral living. The difference is a matter of direction. The East begins within and flows outward to others. The West begins in community and flows to the heart of the believer.

Of course, this explanation is almost a caricature of East vs. West. But, it points out the Western road to holiness. In Ephesians, the author (Paul or a ghost writer) saw unity with God through a unity with others in the community. Notice the language the author used to describe the Christian lifestyle: walking a worthy journey. This language reflected the mobile ministry of Jesus and the missionary efforts of the early Church. Early Christians described their spirituality as the "Way," a path or journey that was shared with others.

Imagine, for a moment, travel in ancient times. Since travel on the road was filled with dangers, many travelers formed or joined caravans. The group became the vehicle for safe travel. This matched the mind set for ancient culture. The one's place within the group defined the individual. What a person did for others built up his or her reputation in community and on the road. 4:1-3 described how someone could build up others: gentleness, humility, patience, keeping peace, charity.

All these qualities (and, indeed, life itself), the author inferred, came from God. The Spirit produced the community and its lifestyle (i.e., the "Body"). The Lord Jesus taught his followers the "faith" and gave them the sacrament of baptism. And God the Father gave them the world as a home. Again, notice the flow of Christian spirituality: from the Spirit, through the Lord Jesus, to the Father. But, always, always in community.

Our unity with God as Trinity means our unity with others in community. That is the bar that measures an effective Christian life.

Feasts

July 28, IN MEMORIAM OF FATHER AUGUSTIN SCHUBERT, OSA, PASTOR AND WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. Born in Prague-Zizkov in 1902 who after obtaining his doctorate in Philosophy entered the Augustinian Order in 1924. Ordained a priest in 1929 he was appointed pastor of St. Thomas. In this capacity he soon gathered an eager group of young people and was in demand as preacher throughout Czechoslovakia. With the occupation of his native land by the Nazis he constantly preached fidelity to Christ in face of pagan national myths. On 26 August 1939 he was arrested by the Gestapo and jailed variously at Pancrac, Oranienburg, Theresienstadt and Dachau where he died of tuberculosis and a cardiac condition compounded by hunger and ill treatment on 28 July 1942. His remains were cremated. Letters to his fellow Augustinians and a rosary made of dried breadcrumbs survived as well as the memory of a priest and pastor who raised his voice against injustice.

* We are looking for an **English teacher** to teach children in our school in Prague. If you are interesting, please contact Fr. Juan at 602684538. Experience in teaching children is required!

The requirements to be teacher in our school:

*To have an academic requires title according with the Czech education system

*To be a good person, with a good reputation

*To be Christian.

*Always see the good in our students and praise them

*To have enthusiasm for his/her work.

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

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

*Our regular **organist** and pianist for the last few years will be leaving us at the end of June. If you can play the keyboard or guitar, even if only on an occasional basis, we would like to hear from you! Please contact the director of the choir Tim Young: tim@young.co.cz

*We wish all our families a wonderful, restful summer and look forward to welcoming you back at our Sunday School in September

*If you wish to sign up your child for the 2012-2013 religious education program for children and youth or if you are interested in helping with the program as a teacher or an assistant, please contact Mary Beth Webster at marybethwebster@hotmail.com.

About St. Augustine

The People

This vitality was reflected in the people of the land. The native North African was Berber and these were still the dominant population in the rural areas (e.g. Tagaste) in the fourth century. Added to these roots was that of the Phoenicians who had founded Carthage nine centuries before the coming of Christ. There was also some Roman blood intermixed, coming from the army veterans who had been given land as a reward for their services some two hundred years before. Roman settlement had ceased when Augustine was born, though many of the great estates were owned by absentee Roman landlords. The flow of immigrants would increase later on as the barbarians swept down on Rome in the early fifth century.

The people had a taste for wine, women, and song. They were sociable and gregarious but given to violent anger when they felt abused. Augustine in 420 gave the following sympathetic description of the typical North African Christian who was serious about salvation. He was like a husband who did good works from time to time, who was faithful to his wife and enjoyed having sex with her, who was very serious about his honor and who thought seriously about taking revenge on anyone who sullied that honor. He valued his property without being especially greedy or grasping. He would give some of his goods to those in need but would fight vigorously anyone who dared to steal from him. He did not pretend to be a saint nor did he think he was God. He was ready to admit his failings and in all humility recognized that without the grace of God they were likely to occur again.

The society was characterized by defined social strata. At the very top were the landowners, high government officials, and rich expatriates from Italy. The landowners lived like feudal kings supported by the annual fees paid by tenant farmers for the use of the land. Many of them were absentee landlords, taking little interest in the products or the people that provided their income. At the second level were minor bureaucrats, merchants, lawyers, and teachers. If the great estate owners were the noble rich, these were the noble poor. They were noble in that they lived by their wits more than by their sweat, but they were poor because any extra funds from gainful employment were quickly absorbed by high taxes. The problems that this middle class had in "making ends meet" is exemplified in the difficulty Patritius had in keeping his son in school much beyond the elementary level. It was only through the kindness of the wealthy Romanianus that Augustine was able to continue his education and career in Carthage.

At the third level in society were the peasants, poor fishermen, and day-laborers of the city. These lived a hard life, glad on any given day to find a warm bed and adequate food. Their only equity was their physical strength and when this ran out they faced disaster. It was not unknown for them to sell their children into slavery so that both they and the children could get enough to live. Sometimes they turned to crime, attacking any person foolish enough to travel far from the towns without military escort. People of the land, they had a healthy suspicion of any alien people or alien ideas that threatened their historic culture. The peasants owned little but themselves. The very lowest class in society, the slaves, owned not even that. Still, from a material point of view their lot was sometimes better than that of the poor freeman. If their master was kind, they could at least be sure of daily meals and evening shelter. In truth they were not free, but at least their owner was a human being who could just possibly take pity on them. The peasant was chained by a harsher master ... an economic condition which could not feel pity or any other emotion and which destroyed the very possibility of a truly human, secure, comfortable existence

To be continue