



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!

August 25th and August 26th
2012

**21st Ordinary Sunday -
B**

St. Thomas Church

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556

602 643 365

The Reflection of the Gospel

From this compelling gospel emerge a variety of emotional responses to Jesus' message: attraction, confidence, doubt, uncertainty, revulsion and blind faith. It's stark message gives some insights into the disciples' own journey of faith. As the crowd was amazed and even mystified by Jesus' identity with *one who came down from heaven* so, too, were his disciples which, interestingly, Jesus did nothing to dispel. This "hard saying" anticipating some explanation or cordial interpretation never proffered was meant to challenge them to a faith not dependent on miracles or wondrous signs. Such supreme trust would not be effected by dint of human effort; it was to be a gift of the Father himself. This stood in opposition to the pious Jewish belief that the very words of the Law gave life and faith. Jesus on the other hand taught that his followers had to place their hope *in him and in his word*. His coming among us as man, his message of salvation and his return to the Father constituting that basic *word* require that commitment of faith far from any text, passing fancy or personal whim. Those calling themselves *Christians*- if they take that title seriously- must be prepared to follow Christ both by the *way* they live as well as by the *way* they believe. Is this true in my life?

THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINT AUGUSTINE, THE SECOND PATRON OF OUR PARISH AND THE FATHER FOUNDER OF THE AUGUSTINIAN WAY OF LIFE, WILL BE CELEBRATED NEXT SUNDAY, 02 SEPTEMBER AT 11:00 am. On August 28 at 12:15pm Mass will be celebrated.

Read Sunday's gospel, John 6: 60-69.

Gospel Summary

It was very difficult for some of Jesus' followers to hear the words of today's gospel. Jesus pointed to himself as the one in whom God chose to reveal himself. But the people could not bring themselves to call Jesus by the titles they reserved for God alone. Jesus knew there would be those who would not believe—those who started to follow him but could not continue. It is clear from this gospel that we can't fully understand all that Jesus said. It is only through faith that we continue to follow him.

Reflection for Families

When our children overhear our words or see us when we think they are not looking, which people in today's gospel do they see? Are we the ones who grumble, the ones with shallow faith who half-heartedly follow Jesus? Or, are we like the disciples who recognize Jesus as the one who offers us eternal life? It may be easy to be the latter when we speak directly to our children, or when we know they are watching us. The true test of our faith, however, may be what we do away from our children's presence.

Coffee, Cookies & Conversation follows Sunday's Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.**

Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "wfaix@yahoo.com" Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin.

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

*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.

* We will have a **parish counsel meeting**, Sunday, September 16th after Mass.

***Marriage Preparation:** The next one-day marriage preparation course (for the English speaking community) will be held by Fr. William on Saturday 15th September from 9:15am - 3pm at St. Thomas Parish for those who wish to participate.

Feasts

- 25 *The African Augustinian Martyrs (+484) were a group of monks arrested by the anti-Catholic King Huneric who had them cruelly tortured to death.*
- 27 **MONICA** (+387), the mother of Augustine, who prayed some 17 years for *his conversion and undaunted by his seeming indifference to the faith, rejoiced at his baptism at Easter 387 in Milan but died shortly afterwards in Ostia. She is venerated as the Patroness of Christian mothers.*
- 28 **AUGUSTINE** (+430), *born to Monica, a Catholic mother and Patrick, a pagan father, excelled in his studies, journeyed to Rome and later to Milan where he met St. AMBROSE and was baptized. Returning to his native Africa he first lived in a monastic community and after his ordination to the priesthood (390) and later appointment as bishop of Hippo Regius (mod. Annaba, Algeria) in 395, he became the brilliant spokesman of Catholicism in a divided church. A prodigious writer, speaker, theologian and philosopher, he was the wonder of his age. He died this day in 430 in Hippo Regius then besieged by Vandals. For the Augustinians who minister in St. Thomas, AUGUSTINE is their spiritual father and founder whose Rule (of Augustine) remains a blueprint for gospel living in community.*
- 29 *The Execution of John the Baptist (ca. AD 25) as related in Mark 6:17-29 is commemorated this day*

About St. Augustine

His Life

Perhaps because of his ailments, Augustine did not have much faith in the medicine of his day. (Cf. *Commentary on Psalm 102*, 5) Little wonder that he had so much to say about facing up to death. Its possibility was his constant companion, especially as he grew older.

Still, his sometime physical disability did not lessen the vigor of his mind. The young Augustine quickly outgrew the schools in Tagaste and, with the financial support of a family friend (Romanianus), he was shipped off to the neighboring town of Madauros to study grammar and literature. He was in his early teen's, away from home for the first time, and he went a little crazy. He lied to his teachers, stole small things to bribe his way into classmate games, and then cheated and quarreled so that he could win. For all of that he learned easily and was pronounced "a boy of great promise." (Cf. *Confessions*, 1.19 & 16)

When he was sixteen the money for his education ran out and he was forced to spend a year at home in idleness while his father tried to scrape together the funds to send him on to higher studies in Carthage. Neither his father nor his mother seemed terribly upset by his adolescent frivolity during the idle year. Patritius saw it as a sign of his son's growing "macho" manhood and Monica hoped that it was a way of "getting evil vapors out of his system." She did warn him about any actions (e.g. fornication and adultery) that might jeopardize his future, but there is some hint that he listened politely and then did what he wanted to do. Certainly he traveled with a bad crowd. Augustine admits that he was not the worst of them but he pretended to be the worst by boasting lies about fictional exploits. (*Confessions*, 2.3) All in all it was a bad year. Augustine wasted his time, Patritius worked overtime, and Monica worried each day about the possible disasters that could destroy her son. The whole family sighed with relief when the funds were accumulated to send Augustine off to Carthage for his "higher education."

At Carthage the seventeen year old Augustine continued his education and his wild behavior. He came in contact with another gang of rowdies (the "Wreckers") dedicated to disrupting classrooms and making life unpleasant for new students. Though Augustine did not approve nor participate in all of the gang's activities, he did value their friendship and lived with them. (*Confessions*, 3.3) He made good progress in his studies while indulging his passion as much as he could. He describes himself at this time in his life as being

... in love with loving and it was even more delicious when I was able to enjoy the flesh of my love. *Confession*, 3.1

To be continue

The Family Ministry is pleased to present
**Choosing Life in a Crisis: true stories of
real people facing an unplanned
pregnancy**

*photo exhibition in the Cloister Gardens of St.
Thomas*

September 8th to September 16th.

*"Love life, cherish life, defend life from conception
to natural death." Blessed John Paul II*