



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

St. Thomas Church



YEAR OF FAITH:
OCT. 11, 2012-NOV. 24, 2013
"The 'door of faith' (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church."---Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter Porta Fidei for the Indiction of the Year of Faith.

December 1st and 2nd 2012

The First Sunday of
Advent-Year C

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Reflection on the Gospel

Advent, a word derived from the Latin "coming", is that season of the year in which we not only celebrate the feast of Christ's nativity in Bethlehem but also two other equally important *comings* or *advents*. The wholesale marking of Christmas which means "the Mass of Christ" has dulled our religious perceptions as to the true inner meaning of not only Christmas but of Advent. The anomalous situation of shops blaring out *Silent Night* before Thanksgiving only confuses the issue. In order to appreciate the lessons of this beautiful time of quiet preparation we can divide Advent into two distinct time frames. The first extends from the first Sunday of Advent to December 16 and is followed by the last half from the December 16 to the Vigil of Christmas on December 24. The first half of the season is somewhat grim and foreboding. The Gospel readings remind us of judgment and urgent contingency measures in face of the Lord's sudden appearance. As in the past, these crisp gospel passages have been subject to endless interpretations both within and without the Church. The more recent Jehovah Witnesses, for example, had been forced to recalculate the final day "of reckoning" as occurring in 1875, 1915 and finally in 1975. The early Christian community of Mark the evangelist did believe that Jesus was on "his way" with the destruction of Jerusalem and wholesale deportation of Israel following the disastrous *Jewish War* (AD 66-72). The end did not come and the later evangelists (Matthew, Luke and John) now read back into Jesus' word; what they found was that he did enjoy watchfulness and prayer in face of the encroaching judgment. Neither the day nor the hour was the subject of discussion, prayerful vigilance was. But, there is still a third advent amidst the historical commemoration of Jesus and the dark day of the Last Judgment.

The Third advent is that which we experience in the reception of the sacraments, since it is Jesus who creates the community of the Church through and within the Eucharist. As we begin our Advent let us keep in mind all three comings of the Lord: in the past at Christmas, in the future through judgment and each day with prayer, the scriptures and the sacrament of the altar. May we never grow lax or indifferent "on the watch" no

Study of the First Reading

Jeremiah, a prophet of priestly dissent, lived through the reign of three Judean kings: Josiah (627-609 BC), Jehoiakim (608-598 B.C.), Zedekiah (597-587 B.C.) As he matured, Jeremiah railed against the political intrigue in Jerusalem and royal alliances with Egypt against the Babylon. He was politically influential enough to escape a royal death sentence for his public critiques. Hence, he was imprisoned. In jail, Jeremiah wrote these verses of hope. Yes, the kingdom would fall. Jerusalem would be left desolate. But these events would not stop God's plan to restore the nation and the royal line. In fact, the righteous king would be the source of national revival. True to his vision, Jeremiah witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C. But Jeremiah would not live to see God's people return to their homeland. Nonetheless, his words gave the people hope. God would restore the royal line, the king would rule justly, and the nation would be renewed. This, however, would happen in God's time and in God's way.

Study of the Second Reading

In one of the earliest books in the New Testament canon, Paul wrote to the Church at Thessalonica between 50-54 A.D. At the time of letter, the city was a major seaport to the east of Greece proper. It was the seat of Roman administration with a diverse and prosperous population. The Church at Thessalonica was mixed between Gentile and Jew. This letter revealed that despite a strong opposition from the Jewish synagogue, Paul had a strong affection for the community because they were steadfast in their faith. Nevertheless, after Paul explained his efforts to see those in the church, he exhorted them to live chaste lives. The verses in this study form the bridge between his explanation and his exhortation. These verses used a simple question to create this bridge: How should the Christian live? Paul's answer was as simple: love the way you have been shown to love. 3:12-13 was a prayer that the community grows in the love that Paul and his fellow missionaries showed the community. 4:1-2 remind the community to grow in the Christian life and devotion to God. This life and devotion were again found in love. Indeed, in these verses, Paul could reduce the tradition he claimed to receive from Christ himself in one simple word: love. Christian love is the basis for missionary work and morality. May we grow in love for each other and in the Christian life, just as Paul wrote in prayer and encouragement.

Coffee, Cookies & Conversation follow Sunday 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" or contact Dias Fernando at diasfernando04@gmail.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

*Please, pray for the **Mission** in our Parish!

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

*St Thomas' English Speaking Community now has a presence on **facebook**. Please 'like' our page and if you want to get more involved with the community, join our group!

***The feast of Saint Nicholas**, from whom the legendary 'Santa Claus' is derived, will be celebrated Next Sunday December 09, after 11:00 am Mass.

***The Giving Tree**. A Giving Tree is dedicated to fulfilling wishes of children who would otherwise go without gifts during the holidays. This is made possible with the help of generous individuals who donate gifts and energetic volunteers to make it work. Are you interested in making a child's holiday wish come true? Our Parish is having their sixth annual Giving Tree. Here's how the Giving Tree works. *Select a child from the list (it will have an orphan's age, gender, code and wish on it). *Buy gift specified on ornament (new, not used). *Bring the unwrapped gift to the church in the refectory after Mass no later than Dec. 16 with a tag with the name of the child and code attached. Please see Fr. Juan after Mass every Sunday to be assigned to a child or deliver your gift.

*Today **second collection** for the seminary.

* We open today an **exhibition of art** in the crypt of the monastery. You can buy some pictures and collaborate with the project that we have in Congo helping children without families of the Augustinian center. Exhibition is open every day from 10a,m till 4 pm.

Collection Appeal

We would like to inform you that we have budgeted expenses of 9000CZK per week. We request you to continue to contribute generously during the Saturday/Sunday Masses. Anyone wishing to view the details of expenses should contact

Bank account of the English Speaking community:
155523359/0800

MISSION 2012/2013

St. Thomas Parish has begun the Year of Faith by calling for volunteers in the church to pray for the mission. To take it upon themselves to daily ask our Father for guidance and inspiration. To allow us to find a mechanism through which we will be able to raise the spirit of faith of our members, bring in new members, and lead us to individual and collective acts of charity.

As a result of this, we will be exploring issues surrounding our church, discussing principles of the church, society, individual professions of faith and life stories, even testimonials, which are offered to the congregations as a whole for reflection.

We will do this in a 3 – 5 minute reading conducted prior to mass. This will be known as the Mission Message of the Week.

You may find that some of these short readings will be extremely informative. We hope to provide insight into the history and origin of our faith and traditions and practices of the church. We intend to provide messages and vignettes of life and the strength of faith. We intend to provide challenging stories for reflection and renewal of commitment to God and the church.

You may find the message thought provoking. We hope so. Each message will be designed to assist us, as a parish to deeper understanding of our faith; to grow our faith and even disagree about it from time to time. The Holy Catholic Church is the foundation and original church of Christianity, yet we do not claim to be the only believers of Christ. Although we celebrate over 2000 years as a church, we are not dead; the church is open for discussion, even debate at times.

We open this forum for any and all who want to participate. We will attempt to have a list of subjects that mirror the Liturgical year, but there may be some deviation for more modern subjects. All messages given in this forum will be subject to approval and must meet with the approval of Father William and those appointed to review. The mission message will be read prior to mass, published in the bulletin (if space allows), and also posted on our web site.

We encourage you to plan to be in the church five minutes prior to mass for these weekly messages.

The following is a more robust explanation of the Pope's call to mission for the church.

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI issued an apostolic letter this year entitled the PORTA FIDEI, or "door of faith". In this letter, he calls on the church for a mission; the Holy Father announced an initiative for the rediscovery or reawakening of faith within the church and within each of us.

He has declared this Year of Faith to begin on 11 October 2012 and it will end on 24 November 2013.

We hope that you will participate and support these efforts. Thank you.