



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



**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.

January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 2013

The Baptism Sunday

# St. Thomas Church

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## The Reflection of the Gospel

Today's feast is an occasion for a common celebration of our baptism. Obviously, most of us baptized as infants do not have any recollection of that momentous event yet, as a sacrament, Baptism visibly conferred through those transient symbols of water and word incorporated us into the one Body of Christ, the Church, within which we walk on our journey of faith. Each Sunday we renew this profession of baptismal faith in the common recitation of the Creed. Far be it we should take such promises lightly. To present oneself or anyone for baptism should not be based on some remote "Catholic" memory, family tradition or "appeasement policy" to keep peace with one's parents or in-laws! Today, we will have the opportunity to freely reaffirm our faith as responsible believers standing before the Lord in loving discipleship. Immediately after the homily we will stand in this renewal of loyal discipleship.

## Study of the First Reading

According to many modern biblical scholars, the book of Isaiah is actually the work of three different authors writing at three different times. Chapters 1-39 can be attributed to the original Isaiah who preached between 740 and 687 B.C. During the rise of the Assyrian empire. Chapters 40-60 can be attributed to the so-called "Second Isaiah." Second Isaiah wrote 150 years later (537 B.C.) with the anticipated return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon. The remainder of the book (chapters 61-66) was written by the so-called "Third Isaiah." Third Isaiah wrote about 25-50 years after the return and addressed the need of the people to maintain hope. The present passage comes from Second Isaiah. In this passage, Second Isaiah introduced the "Suffering Servant," the person who would lead the people like King David. Notice the servant was chosen by God; he was given God's Spirit, so he would bring justice to everyone, Jew and foreigner alike. [1]. For the society of the time, the servant would be counter-cultural; he would not be interested in fame or power. But his rule would be gentle but would be sure. [2-3] His rule would precede his teaching to the coast lands, areas west (the Mediterranean world) and south (along the Red Sea). [4] In verses 6-7, God commissioned the servant. God called the servant to justice and to act as God's representative (as a covenant for the people and a light to the nations). [6] How was he to be just and a symbol? He would give the blind sight and the prisoner freedom. [7] These images of sight and liberation could be taken literally or figuratively. At the time of Second Isaiah, the ruling elite of Judea were captives held by the blind ambition of foreign dictators. In a figurative sense, the blindness and imprisonment could be the people's lack of faith. In either case, the servant would be God's instrument of wholeness and liberation. As the year begins, we could use sight to see beyond our limitations and freedom from our self-imposed faults. Let us pray

## SECOND READING:

Why does God accept us? Why does he want us close to him? Simply because he sent his Son to us!

This short section from Acts could be divided into three sections: Peter's reaction to the message of Cornelius, his summary of how the Good News has spread, his preaching about Jesus.

As a lead up to the first section, Peter had a vision that questioned kosher diet rules (10:9-16). About the same time, Cornelius, a Roman centurion who could be described as a "righteous Gentile," received a message from God that told him his prayers had been answered; he was to send men for Peter (10:1-8). When the men fetched Peter, he traveled with them to the house of the soldier. At that point, Peter and Cornelius compared notes about their visions (10:26-33). Peter realized that God's salvation was universal. And the centurion was ready to become a follower of the Messiah.

The second section merely reported what was already known. Jesus had a reputation that buzzed throughout Palestine. But what was that reputation?

The third section answered the question. And it answered the question of God's intentions. The answer was simple: Jesus of Nazareth. God "anointed" (i.e., chose and empowered) this Jesus with the Spirit (in context, the Spirit and power are synonymous). He used God's Spirit to show everyone God was with him. As he traveled in his ministry, Jesus healed and, in doing so, overturned the realm of evil.

Why did God accept us? Because he wanted to show us his face in the person of his Son, Jesus the Christ. When we see God's face in Jesus, we truly know that he accepts us and loves us. We are his.

### Feasts

12 *Marguerite Bourgeois* (+1700), Patroness of Montreal, founded the teaching Congregation of Notre Dame for the education of youth

13 *Hilary of Poitiers* (+368), bishop of that city, bravely defended the doctrine of Christ's divinity against his Arian opponents. Today begins *Hilary Term* at Oxford.-*Kentigern* (+612) or *Mungo* is the Patron of Glasgow.-George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement, died in 1691

15 *Paul the First Christian Monk* (+345) is credited with the founding of Christian monasticism in Egypt. The Pauline Order celebrates his patronage

-In Guatemala is celebrated the *Feast of the Black Christ of Esquipulas*.

-In 1922 the Irish Free State (*Saorstát Éireann*) was founded and in 1929

16 The Augustinian Order commemorates *All our dead Parents, Relatives and Benefactors* at Mass and community prayer. Mass will be celebrated with this specific intention at 12:15 and at 07:00pm/19:00.

17 *Anthony of Egypt* (+356), a friend of *Paul* (see 15 January) has been called "The Father of Christian Anchorites."

### Mission 2013

This reading is in support of the St Thomas mission to support the Year of Faith and the Holy Father's call for mission.

Our Pope Benedict outlined in his call for mission about the strength of the liturgy as a tool. These tools allow us to strengthen our faith. The Mass is more than an obligation and the ceremony more than old traditions.

How many of us, go through the motions of the liturgy without reflection and introspection? Without expressing adoration for the gifts and blessings we receive on a daily basis? Without love for your neighbor? Sometimes, tragically, without love and faith in oneself.

The Mass is a call to worship. The call to worship is a call to faith.

We come humbly before God into his house, thankful for the opportunity to worship openly and without persecution. To those who find this passé, we offer: North Korea, China, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Nigeria, and India are all countries where a Christian can face police inquiries, detention, jail time, or worse, beatings, kidnappings and even death for their faith. The Vatican estimates that 100 million Christians face some sort of persecution and that 75 out of every 100 people killed because of their religious beliefs is a Christian.

We are thankful for our lovely surroundings and joyous environment, even when it is cold.

We publically declare our faith by renewing our baptismal vows.

We give thanks for our blessings; we acknowledge the power, love and mercy of our Lord and the Trinity.

We reflect upon our shortcomings, admitting our sins openly to God.

The readings provide us reflection on the law, the gospels, lessons and covenant for which Jesus suffered and died.

The priest sermon provides thoughtful reflection on the readings. We receive the sermon from a learned individual who has committed their lifetime to translation of the word of God into meaningful dialect for our every day lives. One who knows our environment and challenges; one who knows us as people.

The crescendo of our celebration is in the sharing of the Eucharist, in following the words and deeds of Christ himself. In partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we recommit ourselves to Christ, to the church and to one another.

You can find out more about the mission and catch up on the readings online at <http://www.augustiniani.cz/en>.

### The Celebrant now addresses the congregation

If your faith prompts you to renew your baptismal vows, you will be asked to freely reject sin, the power of evil and to profess your faith in Jesus Christ, which is the faith of the Church, the community with whom you now stand.

**Priest:** Do you reject sin, as to live in the freedom of God's children? *Response:* I DO.

**Priest:** Do you reject the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin? *Response:* I DO.

**Priest:** Do you reject Satan, the father of evil and prince of darkness? *Response:* I DO.

**Priest:** Do believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth? *Response:* I DO.

**Priest:** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, Our Lord, born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified died and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God? *Response:* I DO

**Priest:** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting? *Response:* I DO.

**The Community says:** This is our faith, the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it and so renew our baptismal promises in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

### Ongoing Activities

-If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please contact [osaprag@augustiniani.cz](mailto:osaprag@augustiniani.cz)

\*We are looking for a **professional English teacher** to teach English to children from 3 till 7 years old. Please contact Fr. Juan if you are interested

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

\*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!

\*Sunday at 12:30 pm meeting of the **parish council** in Tagaste room