



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.

February 23rd and 24th 2013

The Second Sunday of
Lent - C

St. Thomas Church

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

Fax: 257530556

The Reflection of the Gospel

"Many are the words to describe a single event." The season of Lent is no exception. In English, for example, the word *Lent*, derived from the Anglo-Saxon *lengthu* meaning "longer days," is an obvious allusion to the lengthening of daylight before spring. Other languages use the readily understandable *Post* (the Fast) or *Wielki Post* (the Great Fast) or *Quaresima* (Forty Days) in describing that season of penance in preparation for the Resurrection of the Lord at Easter.

Today's Gospel reading from Luke departs from the customary lenten accounts with the mysterious incident of the transfiguration. Looking back over the past two thousand years we could explain it, perhaps, as an "altered state of consciousness" which judging from other literary sources as the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezechiel was a relatively common experience in the ancient world. For us, however, grounded in the scientific mindset of the Enlightenment, such phenomena are usually relegated to the realm of the unexplained or mysterious. Luke, in describing the incident on the Mount mentions that Jesus radiated light and that the apostles' rapture was overwhelming. The somber note is that the heavenly figures identified as Moses, the "Giver of the Law" and Elijah, the "Custodian of Israel's conscience" speak with Jesus (within earshot of the stunned apostles) about "his passing" in Jerusalem. The entire incident serves the purpose of identifying Jesus in God's plan and at the same time shoring up the courage of the apostles in face of the trials to come.

As we continue our journey this Lent, let us not be discouraged or distracted. Moments of trial are inevitable. But, like Jesus, let us go up to our Jerusalem, to our passing –and glory.

ABRAHAM

The story of Abraham, "the father of our faith" in the first reading and the "transfiguration" of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew are profound narratives worthy of reflection. The life of Abraham as related in Genesis 12-25 tells the unadorned story of an all too human nomad who, when mysteriously called by God, responds in total submission and leaves not only his native land but even the worship of his tribal gods. The reward of this simple man's faith, in turn, became the corner stone of all Judeo-Christian and Islamic belief with over two billion adherents regarding him simply as "our father" or "first believer." The so-named *transfiguration* of Jesus represents another aspect of our faith. But, there is much discussion as to what this mysterious event was and meant. Peter, James and John, those three disciples closest to Jesus, undoubtedly had some visionary experience of which- with the exception of a letter dubiously attributed to the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 2: 17-18)-they never wrote. The three *synoptic gospels* Mark, Matthew and Luke do mention this *transfiguration* which some early writers date as a post-Resurrection apparition. The majority of scriptural scholars, however, would assign it squarely within the latter period of Jesus' ministry. Notice the events. First, Jesus takes his disciples aside and "goes up the mountain" where enveloped in a cloud he is acclaimed in the company of Moses and Elijah: "My beloved Son... Listen to him." (Matthew 17:1-8). Matthew uses the imagery of the Old or First Testament to describe the event. Moses, the lawgiver of his people spoke with God on Sinai which was enveloped in the *shekinah* or "cloud of divine presence" while the people looked on in reverence and fear. Both readings dealing with Abraham's faith and God's affirmation of Jesus ministry give us pause to think. As we journey on to Easter do we go with faith, that is, with total confidence in God's plan for us? Do we take the work and words of Jesus so seriously that we can live in confidence of divine mercy and the hope of the resurrection?

Ongoing Activities

*If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please contact 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!

*Fr. William will be in USA for the next month. Fr. Juan will be taking care of the community: 602684538

*If you are interested in studying the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies, a course run by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, please see the website <http://brs-ccrs.org.uk> and contact Jim Willetts on jimwill@email.cz

*Looking for an English teacher to teach English every Tuesday from 8 till 9 am.

***DIVE CLUB "BARRACUDA"** Dive club "barracuda", associated to the parish, offers dive courses (system CMAS) and the possibility to dive. If you are interested, please contact Ramón 774 717 049 o Antonio 608 22 76 86

*During **Lent season** every Friday at 6pm in the church will be the Stations of the Cross.

Thoughts for Lent from St. Augustine

But meanwhile, here and now, until we get to that place of rest, during this time in which we are toiling away, while trials and temptations never cease, let us do good. There is always a medicine available, to be applied to what are practically daily wounds; the medicine consists of the good works of mercy. I mean, if you want to obtain God's mercy, be merciful yourself. If you refuse to show humanity to a human being, though human yourself, God will refuse you divinity; that is to say, the imperishable immortality by which he makes us gods. After all, God doesn't need anything from you; you, though, need everything from God.

--Sermon 259, 3

*O Lord,
the house of my soul is narrow;
enlarge it that you may enter in.
It is ruinous, O repair it!
It displeases your sight.
I confess it, I know.
But who shall cleanse it,
to whom shall I cry but to you?
Cleansed me from my secret faults, O Lord,
and spare your servant from strange sins. (St. Augustine)*

Mission 2013

Most of us here have email accounts, some of us several and we rely on these email accounts for our daily work and staying in touch with friends and family around the world. Most of us receive tens, and sometimes hundreds of mail, not all of which are welcome. Sometimes we get the forwarded chain mail, or some sort of spam. My 80 year old Mother is guilty of sending these to me, and 90% of the time, I am not amused, but I look at them to see if she has written anything personal, and then I quietly delete them, if they don't have anything personal in them.

Every once in awhile, I get on that makes me take notice; so if you will allow, I would like to adapt one of those as an illustration of how we can more openly welcome God into our daily lives.

What is the item you are carrying now, in your pocket? In your purse?

SEP What is it you flip through several time a day? **SEP**

L What do you turn back to go get it if you've forgotten it? **SEP**

SEP What do you read to interpret messages and chart the course of your day?

What do we turn to if we need a question answered?

What do we use in case of an emergency?

What do we pull out of our pocket, when we have some spare time and are waiting?

For most of us here, we would all know that this is our phone. Smart phones, iPhones, Galaxies, etc... Mobile phones have become necessary in modern life and even addictive

What if we treated God's word in the same manner? What if we have a pocket bible in our coat, purse or suitcase? What if we gave our children a copy of God's word instead of an iPhone 5, with glittered case?

This message is not to prompt anyone to throw away their phone, but only to think about where are priorities are and how we can integrate God more into our daily lives.

Here are some ideas:

1. Place a small bible in your car
2. Hang a cross somewhere in your home or car, something to remind you of the sacrifices made for you.
3. Add a bible or a religious magazine to your reading material; either next to your bed or in the reading room.
4. Place small cards with Bible verses in your children's drawers, or use them as bookmarks. Keep one in your desk, one that particularly inspires you. I recommend something about forgiveness, or the 10 commandments, if you have a particularly aggravating boss.
5. Write a reminder in your planner to say a quick prayer of thanksgiving to God

We use our phones and other technology to get through the daily schedule, while our eternal soul is left waiting for Sunday's Mass.

For me, I picked up the phone and called my Mom telling her that I really appreciated the sentiment, and I think I made her smile, although I know that guarantees several more years of forwarded emails, that I will have to sort through.