



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



March 16th and 17th 2013

The Fifth 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

For centuries before the calendar reform of 1970, the fifth Sunday of Lent was known as *Passion Sunday*. With the attendant discussion of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* note that *passion* in this context, meaning *something suffered, endured or undergone*, is ultimately derived from the Latin word *passio*. Such English words as *patient*, *passion* or *patience* while sharing the same root do vary with use. In speaking about the *passion of the Lord* we mean *that which he suffered or patiently bore with* for our sake.

Today's gospel reading is a beautiful example of Jesus' *patience* both with a woman taken in adultery and the Pharisees all too eager for her execution by stoning. To understand the circumstances we must know something behind the story. As in the traditional interpretation of Islamic *Shari'ah* (Law), adultery in the *Mosaic Law* was punished by death. Usually, the woman (!) was targeted for the dreadful execution by stoning. However, the Pharisees used this tragic situation to entrap Jesus with the dilemma: should he cast "the first stone" than he would void all his talk of "mercy" or should he not than he would be exposed as disobeying the Law of Moses (=God)! It is here that Jesus foiled his foes. Doodling in the sand (some say writing out the sins of his adversaries) he waited out the storm. With magnificent aplomb, Jesus stands and says *let the one without sin be the first to cast a stone!* Dismayed, the crowd dispersed beginning with the eldest.

What do we learn from this gospel story? It is only too easy to be judgmental with others and even merciless. Jesus' own example demonstrates a *patience* and even understanding of both sides. Without bitterness, shouting or explosive words he gently forgave and dismissed the woman to a new life and the Pharisees who now sought to murder him for his toleration of sin.

First Reading:

Tradition is important. It proclaims our past and defines our roots. But tradition for tradition's sake is as problematic as change for change's sake. Faith demands that we cling to the wisdom of tradition, while being open to possibilities change brings.

To a people that defined itself by the events of the Exodus [16-17], God called Israel to a new openness. "Forget the past," God chided the people. "Look what I am about to do."

Why did the savior of the Exodus tell the people to forget about the past and look to the future? Through the prophecy of Second Isaiah, God spoke to the exiles in Babylon, the descendants of those who were taken before the destruction of Jerusalem. The exiles clung to the stories of God's power in order to maintain their faith and their national identity. But, without a capitol or a nation or a temple for their God, the Jews in exile were without hope. Only tradition gave them a sense of who they were.

But God reminded his faithful that tradition alone does not make faith come alive. Faith means trust in God. God would create a way home through the desert with all necessary provisions (i.e., water from a river); the return home would be peaceful (i.e., wild animals honor the Lord) [19-21]. Just as God acted in the Exodus, he would act in the exiles' lives. What seemed impossible would come about; the exiles would return home.

Faith without hope clings to a religion stuck in the past. Faith that tries to be "relevant" to the present by rejecting the past drifts away without roots. Both need focus upon God, his will, and his power. Trust in God brings the past alive, gives the present meaning, and the future hope.

Ongoing Activities

*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!

*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

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

* During **Lent season** every Thursday at 6pm will be a Eucharistic service in Saint Barbara's Chapel, with communion and possibility of confession.

*This Sunday March 17th we will celebrate **St. Patrick's day** with a Mass at 12:30 in St. Thomas Church.

INVITATION TO MARCH FOR LIFE

Since 1957 when abortion was first legalized here in the Czech Republic over 3,200,000 preborn children have lost their lives to abortion.

On Saturday, March 23, from 2:00 - 4:00 pm there will be a March for Life starting from St. Giles church at Husova 8 to Wenceslas Square. Through this gathering and the carrying of white crosses march participants will have the opportunity to speak out publically against the continuing tragedy of abortion.

For more information: Movement for Life Czech Republic, Hlubočepská 85/64, 152 00 Praha 5, e-mail: info@prolife.cz or <http://pochodprozivot.cz/english>
Also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion_in_the_Czech_Republic

Holy Week Schedule

March 24th, PASSION (or PALM) SUNDAY, there will be a joint service with the Czech and Spanish communities beginning at Infant Jesus of Prague Church- Karmelitska street- at 11:00 am.

March 27th Spy Wednesday, in Holy Week, Confessions and Mass at 18:00/06:00 pm in Saint Barbara's Chapel. From 17:00/05:00 pm representation of the Passion of the Lord in the Church

March 28th , HOLY THURSDAY. At 9:00am Mass with the Cardinal in the Cathedral of St. Vitus. At 06:30/18:30 Mass of the Lord's Supper with the Washing of Feet, the Transfer of the Sacrament. At 09:00/21:00 Adoration.

March 29th ,, GOOD FRIDAY. At 06:00/18:00pm the Stations of the Cross. At 06:30/18:30 the Liturgy of the Death and Burial of the Lord.

March 30th ,, HOLY SATURDAY. From 10:00 – 12:00 Confessions will be heard and Easter food will be blessed. 08:00/20:00 the VIGIL OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD, MASS followed by the OPENING OF THE TOMB, THEOPHORIC PROCESSION.

March 31st ,, EASTER SUNDAY. Mass at 11:00am followed by the THEOPHORIC PROCESSION and the ENCUESTRO

osaprag@augustiniani.cz

Mission 2013

What's in a name?

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

We are christened, most of us as infants, and we are given a Saint's name to accompany our own registered name. Our parent's hope that this saint, for which we are named, will intercede and provide loving over watch as we grow and mature into full members of the church.

When we declare our intentions to petition for the sacrament of confirmation, we declare before all in the church that we have chosen a new name. We have become adults of the church and we declare the saint, which we feel the closest relationship to. This saint is one to whom we will petition and pray to for their intercession and patronage. We don't dismiss the saint our parent's have asked to look after us, but we evolve in our relationship with God, to the point where we make a statement about who we will be as an adult member of the church.

Our Holy Father and every Pope before him for the last thousand years has chosen a saint after whom he models and pronounces his most intimate feelings about his religion and the direction of the church.

Until the sixth century, popes went by their given names. There was a Pope Sylvester, a Pope Julius and a Pope Victor. Then, in 533, a priest named Mercurius was elected to lead the church and decided that a pope named after a pagan god — "Mercury" — just wouldn't do.

He chose to go by John II. Since then, most popes have abandoned their birth names and adopted tributes to saints, popes and even relatives who have gone before.

After him, there was a mix of given names and chosen names up until the end of the tenth century. We need to understand that many chose in those days to use their baptized names, which used to be their registered names. Babies and infant mortality in those days meant that babies were named at their christening, and not at birth. If your parents were Christen, you were almost certainly given a "Christian name". Many still refer to one's name as your Christian name.

Our newly elected Holy Father has chosen the name St. Francis of Assisi. What does this mean?

Our new holy father celebrates many first: He is the first Pope elected from a country outside Europe in over 1000 years; he is also the first Jesuit priest to be elected to the position.

A number does not follow the Pope's name. This indicates it is a fresh name, never used by a Pope in our 2000 plus years of history. Many will say this indicates a desire for a fresh start.

As a Jesuit, we can assume he will be committed to the principles of education and of providing religious education to those in need of it. Jesuit schools are known throughout the world to be of the highest quality. There are currently 114 universities around the world sponsored and run by the Jesuits.

Second, St. Francis of Assisi founded an order that we know today as the Franciscan Order. The Friars or little brothers are known since their inception for being servants of the poor. A selfless group forgoing their own material comforts on earth in order to provide something for others.

Many consider Francis to be the ideal Christian role model. Francis is well known for giving up a life of privilege to serve the poor. He came from a family of wealth and privilege, yet he spent the majority of his life with the poor living without means other than what was provided through charity.

Some believe that his life reflected more truly he teachings of Christ and that he above others led a life that was closer to the path and example that Christ set during his time on earth.

It has been said that a rose by any other name smells as sweet. Choosing the name Francis is significant as it reflects the values and principles, which are most in the heart of our Holy Pontiff. We pray for his health, and success in leading our church in a manner reflective of Francis of Assisi.

God Bless.

www.augustiniani.cz