



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.

June 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>th</sup> 2013

12<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Sunday -C

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# St. Thomas Church

## GOSPEL STUDY

There is something debilitating about fear. Everyone from our parents through contemporary social behaviorists inveigh against the ill effects of fear especially in the lives of children and vulnerable people in general. No one, particularly when it comes to belief or lifestyle, cares to be "pushed" by threat into conformity or external lip service. The story is told of Molotov, one of Josef Stalin's henchmen, who silently stood by as his wife was carted off to Siberia for a 15 year sentence to hard labor. Years later he intimated that his abiding fear of Stalin was deeper than any pity he may have felt for his hapless wife. John the Apostle answered that excuse with the profound remark that "only perfect love casts out fear."

In his "mission statement" Jesus prepares his apostles for the rigorous tests which would lie ahead.

With genuine concern he couches them with a triple (biblically significant) injunction against fear. The first "fear not" urges the disciples to preach openly what hitherto had been hidden. That is, those peaceful private instructions given them by Jesus during his Galilean ministry were now to be shared with the world. The second "fear not" predicted persecution and harassment as a consequence. Persecution could in some ways be seen as an inevitable consequence of the gospel's counter-cultural claims- be it against the divinization of Roman emperors, ideological demands of some contemporary movements or even post modern society's callous attitudes towards human life in all its stages. If Christians are serious about their faith there will always be a reaction. The third and final "fear not" is a call in face of this opposition to have confidence in God. Jesus uses a familiar text of the sparrow which properly translated should read: "(a sparrow) does not *light* (or *land*) on the ground without your Father's consent."

Discouragement are always with us. But let us not fall into despair: for those who persevere faithfully to the end, God Himself is the reward

## First Reading commentary

These verses came from an appendix added to the book of the prophet (Chapters 1-9). Titled "An Oracle," these verses described the end time battle for Jerusalem. According to the Oracle, every nation would come to fight against Jerusalem. But the inhabitants of the city would be victorious. Then, in 12:10, the Lord would pour his Spirit upon the inhabitants, a Spirit of compassion. They would grieve for the "wounded one." The identity of this person or group was not clarified by the text. Nor did the text explain why the person or group was wounded. We can only speculate the "wounded one" could have been a executed prisoner. The general nature of the grieving and the depth of mourning indicate the popularity and high status of the "wounded one." The phrases "only child" and "first born son" indicate the loss of royalty.

This mourning would be compared to the ritual mourning to the Syrian gods Hadad and Rimmon at a temple in Megiddo.

After the mourning, a fountain would appear for ritual baths. In this fountain, the populace would become "clean." Hence, they could offer fitting worship to YHWH. After the announcement of the fountain, the text continues with a diatribe against prophets; they would have no function in the city after the cleansing, for the people would be close to God.

The images in these verses dovetail very well with the Christian view of Jesus and the results of his suffering and death. Christians believe his death was the beginning of the end times. The mourning was for God's only Son. The fountain for ritual baths was an archetype for Baptism.

As Christians, we ritually grieve for the Lord on Good Friday and rejoice for his Resurrection on Easter. We celebrate both in Baptism. The images in these verses remind us of the roots of our faith and the ways we worship.

## Mission 2013

### Cast the first stone:

Frederic R. Coudert, who at the time was the Ambassador to China from the UK, wrote to a friend and concluded his letter with a rather banal remark, "that we were living in an interesting age." In his return mail he wrote: "Many years ago, I learned from one of our diplomats in China that one of the principal Chinese curses heaped upon an enemy is, 'May you live in an interesting age.'" "Surely", he said, "no age has been more fraught with insecurity than our own present time." The year was 1936. I wonder what he would say today?

For those of you who follow Czech Politics, we feel we have seen it all, right up until the next scandal, then it somehow manages to go one step beyond what we thought possible.

A very similar event has been occurring with our new Pontiff, His holiness Pope Francis. It seems that whatever he mutters, even in private has a way of becoming the new direction of the church, or a new definition of what being Christian means.

Two of the recent quotes in particular highlight the absurd world of press coverage and sensationalizing that we seem find ourselves in.

On Vatican radio Pope Francis was leading a discussion on the virtues of salvation. He stated that Christ died and was raised for everyone. As Father William loves to quote "He is risen! Praise be to God". Is it a surprise to anyone that when God made us in his image and sent his only begotten son as a sacrifice for the world, that he meant all of us in the world?

He was then asked if this applied to Atheist. He explained that in addition to faith and belief, we all had to prove our faith through deeds, actions and live our lives as Christ's example. We were obligated to be humane, to treat others as we would like to be treated, to do what we can for our fellow man, to help those who need help and make the world a better place for our children. These things are given to us in various bible verses; they are divine. Christ spoke similar words and teachings several times in scripture.

Are these principles exclusive to the Catholic Church? Christianity? Should we turn our backs on those who are practicing his teachings in their own ways? There are arguably millions of people in the world today that have not seen a Church, not alone a Catholic Church; they haven't read a bible or heard the teachings of Jesus Christ. Did the commentator expect our Holy Father or Jesus himself to deny Heaven to those who have not had the opportunities and blessings that we have had.

We strain to get up on the Sunday morning in order to receive the blessing of coming to such a beautiful church, receive wise teachings from a fantastic priest, and to worship in the rights that have developed over 2000 years of our church.

A week or so later, speaking in Spanish and in a private meeting, Francis said: "in the Curia, there are truly some saints, but there is also a current of corruption." "There is talk of a gay lobby and it's true it exists. We will have to see what we can do," Francis added.

Who among us did not think that there were homosexuals in the church? There are studies that have been conducted over the last 60 or 70 years and if we believe them, they will tell us that somewhere between 5 – 15% of our population is homosexual. It is only natural that this or possibly more may be attracted to the priesthood.

So what is the question? That our Holy Father was honest and brave enough to recognize reality?

For myself, I am much more worried about his comments about the "Current of corruption". Will he be the one to reform us? They say that the first step of revision is recognizing a problem exists.

As for who will and will not get into heaven or if the gay lobby in the church is or is not keeping their vows of chastity, I will choose to leave judgment to the one who told us he will return to judge us.

When Christ told the hostile crowd "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone"; I believe he set an example that is worthy of following. God's house; our house of worship is for all of us; believer and non-believer. It is a house for those who are sinners, which the last time I counted only left one person out of humanity in the past 2000 years. We most certainly do live in interesting times...

## Ongoing Activities

- ❖ We **welcome** all our new parishioners to St. Thomas Church. Please introduce yourselves, if you wish, at refreshments after the 11:00 am Mass on Sundays or just call us or visit at your convenience.
- ❖ We wish all our families a wonderful, restful summer and look forward to welcoming you back at our Sunday School in September
- ❖ If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please contact [osaprag@augustiniani.cz](mailto:osaprag@augustiniani.cz)
- ❖ **AVAILABLE 01 JULY 2+1with Patio Prague 3, Rehorova Beautiful Art Nouveau furnished apartment. High ceilings, original moldings and hard wood parquet floors throughout. Building fully refurbished. Storage space in basement. 65m2 composed of 1 large bedroom, full living room and fully-equipped kitchen with Czech mosaic original crystal tiling. Full bathroom with shower, tub, bidet and washing machine. Fully tastefully furnished. Private 25m2 patio with teak garden furniture. WIFI included. Excellent transportation: 3 tram, 4 bus and 1 metro lines. 16,000kc monthly; minimum 1 year lease. Prefer non-smokers, no pets and tenants with legal right of abode in the Czech Republic. Maximum 2 adults. Direct from owner(who resides in building); owner speaks English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Polish and Czech. Further information at [estebandepraga@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:estebandepraga@yahoo.com.ar)**

## Saint Augustine School in Prague

We are looking for an **English teacher** to teach children in our school in Prague. If you are interesting, please contact Fr, Juan at 602684538. Experience in teaching children is required!

The requirements to be teacher in our school:

- \*To have an academic requires title according with the Czech education system
- \*To be a good person, with a good reputation
- \*To be Christian.
- \*Always see the good in our students and praise them
- \*To have enthusiasm for his/her work.