



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

Today's Prayer

Two are the commands given us for this life of ours; to abstain and to sustain. To abstain from those things that are considered good by the world, and to sustain the many things that are bad in the world.

This requires continence and endurance. Continence means not to rely on worldly happiness. Endurance signifies not to give way to worldly unhappiness.

March 9th and 10th 2014

The First Sunday of Lent –
Year A

St. Thomas Church

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

THE FIRST LENTEN SUNDAY-A

The season of Lent is upon us. As of Ash Wednesday we have begun our sober 40 day journey that will culminate on the evening of Holy Thursday just three days before the glorious Resurrection of the Lord on Easter Sunday. Our word *lent* from the Anglo-Saxon expression “lengthening of days” alludes to the gradual approach of spring and the solemnity of Easter which, by coincidence, is another Anglo-Saxon word (*eastre*) meaning “spring.” Today’s readings, laced with chronicled temptation and sin, remind us, no matter how grandly or despairingly we judge ourselves, that we all too often have failed. To paraphrase Paul: ‘Sin can be understood in the sense of *missing the mark* (Romans 5:12); each sin is an act wherein the goal for which we were made (union with God) is denied.’ Today’s gospel reading from Matthew underscores this personal struggle. Jesus in that lonely desert haunt, beset by temptations, has served as an exemplary model over the centuries for all persecuted or harassed Christians that *qualis rex, talis grex* (“as with the leader so with the follower”). As is his wont, Matthew, by heavily relying on Old Testament background and inspiration for his teaching, compares Jesus to Israel in its own desert experience. But, the comparison soon shades into contrast *via* the important difference that Jesus resisted the tripartite temptations. Given *manna* (Exodus 16) the Israelites complained about its taste whereas Jesus rejected such “bread at any price.” In the second temptation, Jesus rejected pointless “power demonstrations” whereas Israel provoked God to work such wonders on its behalf (Numbers 20). Finally, as Israel went off after its own invented deities (such as the *Golden Calf*, Exodus 32 and *Baal of Peor*, Numbers 25), Jesus resolutely repulsed all idolatry in any form. As we commence Lent let us accept ourselves with the possibility of improvement; after all, with God all things are possible. Here are some Lenten suggestions. The Church proposes that we *fast*. Do we really need to consume the amount and types of food we find so congenial? Another form of Lenten observance is *almsgiving*. Can we be more generous to those in want? Do we know any families or lonely persons who could use our help. If you are looking Fr. Juan would certainly help. Finally let us intersperse our Lenten observance with *prayer*. Do we really desire to converse with God? If in prayer we speak with God and in Scripture God speaks with us, would it not be worth the effort to set aside some five minutes each day in preparation for Easter?

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

CLEARING MY SURROUNDINGS OF CLUTTER

Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-15; Lk 4:1-13 I do not live “by bread alone.” If the only meaning of life was food, clothes or work, how meaningless it would be. Lent is a wonderful time to remind myself that God’s presence is what gives life meaning. I begin Lent by starting a “give away” box and praying about what I have that could be used by someone in need.

MONDAY: BE HOLY AS GOD IS HOLY

Lv 19:1-2, 11-18; Mt 25:31-46 Does clutter and disorganization interfere with my growth in holiness? Today is a good day to begin paring down. I look through my kitchen for five or more items to give away.

TUESDAY: EXPECTING THE KINGDOM?

Is 55:10-11; Mt 6:7-15 Does my home look as though I am expecting and praying for God’s Kingdom? Why or why not? I let go of more clutter by going through bookshelves for five or more books I could donate.

WEDNESDAY: A SIGN OF GOD'S LOVE

Jon 3:1-10; Lk 11:29-32 I can be a sign of God’s love to the world by living more simply and passing on my excess to those in need. Today, I gather five or more blankets, sheets or towels to give away.

THURSDAY: THE FATHER KNOWS MY NEEDS

Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Mt 7:7-12 Am I in the habit of asking God to provide for my needs? Today, I look through drawers, on closet shelves and in storage areas for five or more items to donate.

FRIDAY: IF I REPENT, I WILL BE SAVED

Ez 18:21-28; Mt 5:20-26 Like many in this culture, I need to repent of my excess. Today, I search through my clothes for five or more items to give away.

SATURDAY: BE PERFECT AS GOD IS PERFECT

Dt 26:16-19; Mt 5:43-48 I have gathered at least 25 items to donate. How does it feel? Do I feel relief and freedom? Grief? Uncertainty? I trust that I do not need things to be happy. Today, I take my “give away” box to a favorite charity.

Ongoing Activities

***Coffee, Cookies & Conversation** follow Sunday Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.**

*If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please contact osaprag@augustiniani.cz

***Marriage Preparation:** The next one-day marriage preparation course (for the English speaking community) will be held by Fr. William on Saturday 15th March from 9:15am - 3pm for those who wish to participate.

LENTEN SERVICES IN ENGLISH St, THOMAS AUGUSTINIAN CHURCH

Saturday evenings

06:00pm Mass
Sacrament of Confession, Reconciliation.

Sunday mornings

09:45am Religious Education

-Adult Discussion Group in the Summer Refectory.

11:00am Mass
-Children's Gospel instruction in St. Dorothy's chapel.
-Refreshments in the Summer Refectory after Mass

Monday evenings

06:30pm Adult Religious Education
-Discussion, Sacramental preparation, Christian living

Tuesday evenings

06:30pm Bible Study and Discussion
-St. Matthew's account of the Passion, Death, Resurrection.

Thursday evenings

06:00pm Mass in St Barbara's Chapel followed by the Sacrament of Confession, Reconciliation.

Friday evenings

06:00pm Stations of the Cross followed by the Sacrament of Confession. Reconciliation

"He became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (cf. 2 Cor 8:9).

As Lent draws near, I would like to offer some helpful thoughts on our path of conversion as individuals and as a community. These insights are inspired by the words of Saint Paul: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). The Apostle was writing to the Christians of Corinth to encourage them to be generous in helping the faithful in Jerusalem who were in need. What do these words of Saint Paul mean for us Christians today? What does this invitation to poverty, a life of evangelical poverty, mean to us today?

Pope Francis' Message for the Lenten season 2014

ZŠ nám. Curieových, a Czech elementary school in Prague 1, is organizing a book drive for their English Library. The library serves an ever-growing population of bilingual children, as well as the rest of the student population, who begin English instruction from Grade 1. Please help build their collection by donating books your children have outgrown, especially books suitable for beginning readers to early teens. A collection box for the books will be placed beside the English community bulletin board in the St Thomas courtyard on March 16 and 23. For more info, contact Aurelia Kálovcová, TEL: 724 182 470, email: backatya@gmail.com.

Do you want to improve your communication skills? Prepare and lead PR of your company and/or project? Or consult your social media activities. Do not hesitate to call parishioner Jan W. Dvořák, phone: [739 682 837](tel:739682837), mail: janwdvorak@gmail.com. He will put your communications into better shape.

Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "wfaix@yahoo.com" or contact Fr. Juan at "juan@augustiniani.cz" Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin