



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

Today's Prayer

Say this prayer today

I remind myself that I am in
your presence O Lord.

I will take refuge in your
loving heart.

You are my strength in times
of weakness.

You are my comforter in
times of sorrow.

**"Our
hearts are
restless, O
Lord, until
they rest in
you."
St. Augustine**

November 8nd–9th 2014

32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time
A

St. Thomas Church

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

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Reflection on the Gospel

Speaking about saints, last Tuesday we celebrated the solemnity of All Saints. This liturgical feast dates back to the tenth century when St. Odo, the abbot of Cluny, included it on his abbey's calendar. The influence of such a sainted abbot governing a famous monastery with its treasure of holy relics assured the acceptance of this feast throughout the western or Latin church. However, the cult (from the Latin *cultus* meaning honor) of the saints in both the Latin and Greek church traditions dates much earlier; in fact, from the very beginning of Christianity. Our ancestors' regard both for the memory and remains of their dead is well attested in the First Testament, as we note, for example, from the funeral and burial accounts of the patriarchs and in the New Testament as evidenced from the respect accorded the remains of John the Baptist, Stephan and, of course, Jesus himself. Since the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit was to share in the resurrection of the Lord, early Christians believed that the respect shown that body ultimately honored God who both created and sanctified it. The martyrs (from the Greek *martureis*=witness) were particularly remembered because they followed Christ even to death. With the cessation of the Roman persecutions in 313, however, martyrdom was no longer an option and Christians began seeking Christ in the disciplined asceticism of monastic life which later developed into what we now call "religious orders, congregations" or communities. For many, the axiom that "saints and sanctity"- still essentially defined and located in monastic seclusion- tends to relieve the "ordinary" lay person from the deeper struggles of spiritual development. As the argument would run- "to be holy" *is the duty* of religious priests, sisters and brothers; yet, the second Vatican Council teaches nothing could be farther from the truth. All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness. In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt them by Christ's gift, so that... doing the will of the Father in every-thing they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the Church through the lives of so many. All of us, therefore, are called to more intimate union with God. This union is *mystical* because we share *His very life* in the "holy mysteries" we sacramentally celebrate. We are all called but our response involves a struggle which takes place in the shadow of the cross. There can be no progress in holiness without battle and penance. St. Gregory of Nyssa (+395) wrote "one who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end. One never stops desiring." Do not be discouraged, after all, Christ himself promised "I am with you to the end."

Study of Today's Readings

FIRST READING: Living in captivity during the Babylonian Exile, the prophet Ezekiel used dreams and visions as vehicles for prophesy. The images in these dreams and visions were sharply drawn. Some were of utter destruction from God's judgement. Some were of great glory from God's presence. These verses spoke of God's presence, not his judgement. In these verses, life-giving water poured from the Temple. This symbolized the return of God to his dwelling place and the power of his presence (which, as water, spilled in torrents from all sides of the Temple). With his presence came life, even in the regions of the dead (as fresh water that "sweetened" the Dead Sea in 47:8). With his presence, life grew in abundance. And with life came prosperity. Ezekiel seemed to transfer the image of the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers to Jerusalem. Just as the waters of these rivers brought life and prosperity to the peoples in the region, so, too, would God return his people and give them life in a great torrent. This image was a promise to the Jewish captives that God would return them to Jerusalem, give them life in abundance, and bring back their glory. He would do everything that the water of a great river in the dessert could do. And more!

SECOND READING: The spiritual concept of community makes the Western religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) unique. God not only dwells in the individual, but in the group. St. Paul reflects on the community as the focal point of God's presence. Failing to see the bigger picture, the Corinthians had formed cliques and allegiances to various ministers (1 Cor. 3:4-5). To counteract their divisiveness, Paul argued that God called the community together and helped it grow. Seeing the local church as a missionary field, Paul saw himself, Apollos, and others as farm workers who seeded and harvested the field (1 Cor. 3:6-9a). Suddenly, in mid-sentence, Paul used masonry images for the Church [9c]. The community was a building with Christ as the foundation [11] and with Paul, Apollos, and others as brick masons laying different levels [10]. The quality of the work may differ; God would reveal their work in time and would reward the workers accordingly (1 Cor. 3:12-15). Paul finished the discussion with a rhetorical question to bring the divided Corinthians back to the point. As the Temple of the Spirit, they belonged to God, not to their own little turf wars [16]. Anyone, whether minister or pew-dweller, who led them away from that fact would suffer God's wrath [17]. As the Church, God is with us and in us. But, lost in our own petty concerns, it is a reality that is so easy to forget.

Activities

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

* If you would like to serve as a lector or Eucharistic minister at the Sunday mass please contact Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com.

Training will be provided for those who have not previously served in these ministries.

* **Bible Study** takes place every Tuesday from 18:30-19:30 in Tagaste room. Everyone is welcome to come and learn more about our sacred scriptures. Wednesday at 18:30. Tagaste room

*Every Saturday Morning from 0900 to 1000, St. Thomas Church in Malastrana is collecting clothes for the **homeless** in Prague. Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Also, at this time, soup and bread is provided to the homeless before they go to receive clothing items that are presorted and distributed by volunteers. Besides clothes, the homeless may also benefit from Winter shoes, blankets, sleeping bags and general camping gear. Anyone wishing to know more can contact Father Juan

*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!

***Deceased Family Members and Friends:** There will be a book available in which you may write the names of deceased family members and friends so that prayers may be offered for the repose of their souls during the month of November.

***Parishioner's Prayer Intentions:** The English Community will now post prayer requests on the bulletin board designated for their use in the walkway. Anyone who would like prayers said is invited to post their needs and Father Bill will pray for these intentions throughout the week. You needn't identify yourself; your request is sufficient. For those who've had prayers answered we will also have a praise section.

* **Marriage preparation** course will take place Saturday November 15th, beginning at 09:15 am with lunch break and will conclude at 03:00pm.

* **Today 2nd collection** for the necessities of the archdiocese.

St. Thomas Parish Dinner of Thanks

Where:

Archbishops Palace
Hradcanske namesti 16
Prague 1

When:

Friday November 28th
Mass at 18:00
Dinner follows at 19:15

Tickets (only 120 tickets available. Please purchased upon request. Not reservation taken).

More information with Michael Rainey.

5th IWAP Christmas Market

The International Women's Association of Prague will hold its Christmas Market from 10am to 4pm on Saturday, 6th December 2014 at the InterContinental Hotel, Prague

This is IWAP's main charity fundraising event, which this year supports two local charities, Kolpingův dům and Projekt Šance o.s

We are looking forward to over 40 vendors with unique Christmas gifts, delicious baked goods, live music and amazing raffle prizes.

Admission is 20 Kč on the door; there is no charge for children and we have a Kid's Corner with an all day program of children's activities.

European Taize Meeting in Prague

The next European Meeting will be held in the city and region of Prague, from 29 December 2014 to 2 January 2015. The Taizé Community is preparing the meeting at the invitation of the Czech Bishops' Conference and the Council of Czech Churches. It will bring together several tens of thousands of young adults for the next step of the "pilgrimage of trust on earth" initiated by Brother Roger at the end of the 1970s.

Young people from all over Europe and beyond will be hosted by the people and local church communities of the region.

At the heart of Europe, the city of a thousand towers and a thousand steeples still brings together peoples and persons from different horizons, offering warm hospitality through its cultural treasures and its spiritual heritage.

We need some families to host young people. If you want to help, please contact Fr. Antonio. antoniorivas@augustiniani.cz

