



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

St. Thomas Church

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Today's Prayer

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.



November 21st and 22nd 2015

The Solemnity Of Christ
The King-Year B

The Reflection of the Gospel

Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judea (AD26 – 36), was not an easy man to approach. His appointment was one of the most difficult on the Mediterranean fringe of the Roman Empire. His concern was to keep order, the *Pax Romana* or Roman peace, at any cost. His harsh and callous treatment of the Jewish people was evident in his cold-blooded massacres and provocative display of pagan ensigns in the holy city of Jerusalem. Later, following a blunder in which many Samaritans lost their lives, Pilate was sent into exile and died in eastern Gaul (modern France). But in John's gospel he comes off not so much as a brute but *more* as a cynic. When asking Jesus of his "credentials" he met a mysterious individual who was not concerned with personal safety or protests of innocence. Jesus stood up to Pilate and the interrogator becomes the interrogated! And Pilate succumbs to the pressures of the howling mob and the insinuating charges of the Temple hierarchy. Indeed, it did not take much to arouse the murderous suspicions of the paranoid Emperor Tiberius who had barricaded himself on Capri. That tyrant saw plots everywhere, and Pilate, with his adept sense of survival, was not taking chances. And so Jesus went to his death. You and I are constantly being confronted in our daily work, our recreation, the mass media and even in our own heart-of-hearts with that invasive question: *What is truth?* Of course, we can evade the query like Pilate, plead ignorance and walk away without ever having to summon that courage "to ride the consequences." In brief, can we take such responsibility for what we believe and profess despite the inconvenience or unease. Perhaps, a better question should be: *Where is the truth in my life?* In observing our double celebration of Christ our King and the 775th anniversary of our Church, I look back to Fr. Augustine Schubert, OSA, who in the midst of Nazi terror preached from the pulpit of Saint Thomas that "Christ can never and will never be displaced from his kingship in the hearts of his faithful." What was true for Pilate, and for Fr. Augustine in the darkest period of 20th century history is true for us today.

Study of the First Reading

The Book of Revelations has been problematic since it was written by "John the Elder" circa 95 A.D., a time when merely being a Christian was a capital offense. Besides an introduction and a conclusion, the book consists of sections that revolve around the number "7": seven churches, seven seals, seven bowls, and seven plagues. The number "7" indicates a measure of fullness; the author is, after all, describing the fullness of time at the end of the world. Using these images, the author warns the seven churches in modern day Turkey and attempts to paint the "last days" in sequence. Revelations is a prophetic book in the style of Daniel. As a prophet, the author might be using symbolic language to describe present troubles (a Catholic interpretation). Or, he might be predicting future events (a fundamentalist interpretation). The fight between these two schools of interpretation only adds to the fiery debate over Revelations. Found in the introduction to Revelations, today's passages consist of a doxology and a prophetic message. The doxology uses a formula of "to whom/be the glory/forever." The doxology praises Jesus Christ as lover and liberator since he is the faithful witness (on the cross) and firstborn of the dead. It also praises him as the king of kings who made us into a kingdom of priests. The doxology ends with "Amen." The prophetic message that answers the doxology consists of a vision and an affirmation from Jesus. The vision harkens back to Daniel 7:13-14

Study of the Second Reading

Anticipation threaded through the book of Revelation. But beneath this attitude lay two outlooks on the world. First, the God of the book was a deity who exercised his prerogative in historic events. He was not a power of nature that could be appeased or manipulated. No! This God acted! He was alive in human history! Second, the author dared to see events if they occurred in the very presence of this God. But, the only way he could witness the events in the presence of God was in worship. Revelations was unique among apocalyptic literature because it fused the historical and liturgical perspectives in a Christian context. When John received his revelation, he saw God working in human events amidst the angelic worship in heaven. In fact, he and the communities to whom he wrote were part of that angelic praise. Imagine, for a moment, the final judgment was in progress. You stood among the angels in heaven, praising God for all he was doing. How would you see the events of the end times, as they unfold in real time? The answer to that question will give you an idea of John's perspective. John's greeting to the seven churches began with a call to worship. He invoked the name of God: 1) the Living One active in the past and coming in the end times, 2) the fullness of the Spirit, and 3) Jesus Christ. Then, John listed a short resume of Jesus: trustworthy witness, risen from the dead, and ruler over all earthly powers. Notice the outline of the Trinity. The invocation had a result. Through his love and his liberating death, Jesus molded his followers into a priestly nation, a people set apart to worship the God and Father of the Christ. The end of invocation was praise, not to the Father, but to Jesus. In his first invocation, John used a Jewish prayer form that began with God in heaven, came down to humanity, and returned to God in the highest. The Our Father with the so-called "Protestant" ending is an example of this prayer form. John's invocation was unique for its end point, however. It began with the triune God but ended with Jesus. After the invocation, John defined THE event of God's activity: the coming of the Kingdom. He used the traditional imagery and spirit of Daniel 7. But, notice the reference to John 19:34, the piercing of Jesus. Everyone would see the coming of the Christ, even those guilty of his death. And all would mourn at the sight of his glory, from guilt, from dread of judgment, or both. [1:7] Finally in John, the Living One confirmed his activity with a self-definition. He is the beginning and the end (the horizon of all that humanity can know or imagine).

Feasts

- 24 *The Vietnamese Martyrs* graced the earliest chapter of Catholicism in Vietnam throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thousands freely gave their lives amidst grueling torments.
- 25 *Catherine of Alexandria*, a young woman of Alexandria, rather than compromise her faith boldly defended Christ and was consigned to death. She was the patroness of Emperor Charles IV who constructed a lovely, still-existent Church here in Prague.
- 27 *Our Lady is venerated this day since 1830 under the title of the Miraculous Medal.*
- 29 *Frederick of Regensburg (+1329)*, a humble Augustinian friar, whose devotion to duty and the Eucharist won him veneration even in his own lifetime. He is the patron of brothers in the Augustinian Order.

Religious Education Advent Party! RE families, please join us at 9:30am on Sunday, Nov 29th for our Advent Party – the whole family is welcome! We will be decorating Advent wreaths, doing crafts, learning about Advent symbols and more. Please bring a snack to share; hot chocolate will be provided. If you would like to buy a wreath, please contact Mary Beth Hlavsa at marybethwebster@hotmail.com to reserve one, or bring your own wreath for your family to decorate. Wreaths will be blessed at Mass. Thank you and we hope to see you at the party!

Saint Mikulas Day will be celebrated on Dec 6th! As per Czech tradition, Saint Mikulas and his angel helpers will visit our parish at the end of Mass on Dec 6th. Parents are welcome to "arrange" for a gift to be given to their child (ask Kara McCalister or Mary Beth Hlavsa for details), all gifts must fit into the bags provided (available at the Advent Party on Nov 29th and before Mass on Dec 6th) and bags must be labelled with the child's name.

Saint Mikulas Donations welcomed! Children all over the Czech Republic are looking forward to a visit from St Mikulas this Dec – please help make their day special by donating a small toy or treat! The Post-Communion 3 RE class will be making up donation St Mikulas bags for needy children in and around Prague. Please bring items for donation to the Tagaste Classroom on Nov 29th or Dec 6th between 9:30am-10:45am. Ask class teacher Kara McCalister for details, or contact Mary Beth Hlavsa at marybethwebster@hotmail.com. Thank you for your generosity!

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

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

* **Lectors and Eucharistic ministers:** If you would like to be a **lector** or Eucharistic minister at mass on Sundays please sing up with after mass in the court yard or e mail Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com

* Every Saturday at 9:00am **feeding of the homeless**, as a social service

* **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 takes place **Adult Religious education.**

*We welcome all our new parishoners 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.

***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.

***DINNER OF THANKS.** 28th November at 18:30 at St. Augustine School, Hornokřská 3. Prague 4 JOIN IN! EAT and DRINK! CELEBRATE! More information and volunteers please see Michael Rainey.

***2015 Giving Tree is coming soon!** Please stay tuned for more details on this year's Giving Tree! We are still (urgently) looking for volunteers to help coordinate. Please contact Mary Beth Hlavsa at marybethwebster@hotmail.com for details and to sign up. Thank you!

A Giving Tree is dedicated to fulfilling wishes of children who would otherwise go without gifts during the holidays. This is made possible with the help of generous individuals who donate gifts and energetic volunteers to make it work.

Are you interested in making a child's holiday wish come true? Our Parish is having their sixth annual Giving Tree. Here's how the Giving Tree works. *Select a child from the list (it will have an orphan's age, gender, code and wish on it). *Buy gift specified on ornament (new, not used). *Bring the unwrapped gift to the church in the refectory after Mass no later than Dec. 13 with a tag with the name of the child and code attached. Please see Fr. Juan after Mass every Sunday to be assigned to a child or deliver your gift.

***Next Sunday, the First Sunday of Advent**, we will bless and light the traditional *Advent Wreath* before Mass and decorate the *Tree of Jesse*. The youth of our Parish will read and carry up the gifts.

***Professional translator** (English, Czech and Italian) and language teacher (English, Italian and Czech) is looking urgently for a job. Please send an email at ApolinarieRubesova@seznam.cz or phone 732 380 481