



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

# St. Thomas Church

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## Today's Prayer

Say this Prayer Today:

Dear Jesus, I come to you today  
longing for your presence.  
I desire to love you as You love me.  
May nothing ever separate me from You.

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March 21<sup>st</sup> and March 22<sup>nd</sup>  
2015

The Fifth Sunday of Lent

## Reflection on the Gospel

We have been on the Lenten journey now for five weeks, and the strains of the trip are showing. The resolutions for a "well-spent" Lent, so generously made on Ash Wednesday, are frequently forgotten as we are now near the end of a long journey. For the Jewish people ideally there were annual three pilgrimages mandated. These aliyah or "ascents" were marked by outbursts of rejoicing as the pilgrims neared their goal, the great Temple in Jerusalem. In fact, certain psalms (120 through 127), recited as "gradual songs" (or "walking psalms"), are replete with themes of looking to the mountains of God for help, and rejoicing when approaching the Temple at the end of an arduous journey. "I rejoiced when they said to me, 'We are going up to God's house!'"

In today's gospel, there is this mixed joyful and foreboding anticipation as Jesus approaches His final "hour". His deepest feelings on His coming destiny are set within a request by some pagan Greeks desiring "to see" Him. And, as so often in John's gospel, a seemingly chance phrase now conveys the profound connotation of both "believing in and accepting." Belief in the work of God accomplished through Jesus will shortly be tested for acceptance or rejection through the scandal of trial and temptation. Perhaps, one of the great trials for Jesus' own disciples will be a "dying to" certain expectations of God. Why did God allow this? What happened to the glad "Hosannas" of Palm Sunday shouted by the adulatory crowds? The response is hardly satisfying if not at once unnerving: "unless the grain of wheat falls...and dies" there can be no life. But we are not to fear this painful process because "where I am there will be my servant." Jesus promises to identify Himself with those who follow him through the days of his passion. Easy? Certainly not. Publicly the Lord speaks about His personal anguish as "troubling" and fearful. We, His disciples, are not exempt from this same anguish and dread but the power of the Lord's constancy and unswerving purposeful obedience was rewarded with resurrection. And it is through His glorious resurrection we have been freed. Qualis rex, talis grex or "the destiny of the leader is the destiny of the follower."

## Study of the First Reading

As a prophet, Jeremiah was a peaceful man from a priestly family. He grew up under the religious reforms of King Josiah, but saw the corruption and downfall of the nation. At first, Jeremiah preached for the religious reforms of king Josiah. When succeeding kings turned away from the reforms, however, Jeremiah railed against the royal and religious abuses. With the coming Babylonian exile, Jeremiah preached the destruction of the nation. But, Jeremiah offered a ray of hope with a new covenant that God would offer to a chastened people. [31-32] With the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of people to Babylon, the institutions of the old covenants were gone. The ark of the covenant in the Temple (which represented God's covenant at Sinai) was gone. The Temple that represented worship to God was gone. The institution of the king (which represented God's covenant to David) was gone. Their absence led the way for a new covenant. [33] The new covenant God offered was an intimate one. The people would no longer rely on institutions or culture for a relationship with God. God Himself would reach out to His people. The new covenant would be with people's hearts. People would intuitively know ethical conduct and true worship based upon the love God has for them and the love they returned. [34] How would people know God's love? People would know God through His forgiveness. Forgiveness is a way to "re-create" people anew. When God stated He would no longer remember the people's sin, He meant that the memory and the consequences of immoral acts would be erased from the natural order. It would be as if God had created the universe so that the immorality never existed! The people would return to God with grateful hearts.

**Coffee, Cookies & Conversation** follow Sunday Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.** Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "[wfaix@yahoo.com](mailto:wfaix@yahoo.com)" or contact Fr. Juan at [juan@augustiniani.cz](mailto:juan@augustiniani.cz) Please send at latest by the Friday of the week as it has to be added to the bulletin

## 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.
- ❖ If you would like to receive a **copy of the bulletin by email**, please contact osaprag@augustiniani.cz
- ❖ Every Saturday at 9:00am feeding of the homeless, as a social service.
- ❖ If you would like to serve as a lector or Eucharistic minister at the Sunday mass please contact Ann at [dalyaann@hotmail.com](mailto:dalyaann@hotmail.com). Training will be provided for those who have not previously served in these ministries.
- ❖ **Post-confirmation youth group:** For 14-17 year olds who would like to meet to discuss and share views on issues of faith today and enrich their own faith. The time and dates will be decided depending on those interested. Please contact Ann at [dalyaann@hotmail.com](mailto:dalyaann@hotmail.com) or see me after mass.

## Lenten Suggestions

During this season of Lent in preparation for the great feast of Our Lord's Resurrection, Christians are urged to participate in this great season through daily prayer, fasting and almsgiving to those in need. Here at Saint Thomas we recommend that

1. You participate in the Stations of the Cross each Friday at 6:00 PM.....
2. You avail yourselves of the sacrament of reconciliation (confession) after each Sunday Mass;
3. You attend a short Eucharistic service on Thursdays from 6:00 pm to 6:30pm. This service consists of a short gospel passage, quiet reflection, the recitation of the Our Father and the reception of the Eucharist. Confessions will be heard immediately afterwards for those who wish.
4. You attend the Adult Christian Education discussion group meeting each Wednesday evening at 6:30p in the Tagaste room.

Above all we warmly recommend that you read Sacred Scripture- particularly the gospel of Saint John. Saint Augustine once said: "If you cannot fast from food then fast from complaining, gossip and anger, impatience. If you cannot afford to give alms then thank others for what they do for you and even give a good word for those being talked about. And when you pray, thank God for the gift of change and newness that opens doors closed by monotonous routine and bad habits."

### **Lenten prayer:**

**"Jesus, make our hearts like yours"**

(Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus).

## **HOLY WEEK and EASTER SCHEDULE AT SAINT THOMAS CHURCH**

### **March 29.**

#### PALM or PASSION SUNDAY: THE LORD'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

06:00 pm, Saturday, the Blessing of Branches and Mass in St. Barbara's Chapel.

11:00 am, Sunday, we will congregate at The Infant Jesus of Prague Church, for the blessing of branches and then process to St. Thomas Church during which the English Choir will sing ALL GLORY PRAISE AND HONOR. Mass will be sung in both languages.

### **April 1.**

#### WEDNESDAY in HOLY WEEK: Judas betrays the Lord

06:00 Confessions will be heard followed by Mass in St. Barbara's Chapel.

### **April 2.**

#### HOLY THURSDAY or THE LAST SUPPER OF THE LORD

09:00 am The Mass of Chrism will be celebrated with our Cardinal in the Cathedral. All are welcome.

06:30 pm The Mass of the Last Supper with the washing of feet and procession in St. Thomas Church.

### **April 3.**

#### GOOD FRIDAY or THE COMMEMORATION OF THE LORD'S PASSION AND DEATH

06:00 pm The Stations of the Cross (*Via Crucis*)

06:30 pm The Liturgy of the Passion, Death and Burial of the Lord

### **April 4.**

#### HOLY SATURDAY or THE VIGIL OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

10:00 – 12:00 pm Confessions will be heard in Church (Czech, English, Spanish, Portugese, Polish); Easter food will be blessed upon request.

08:00 pm The *EASTER VIGIL* begins in the courtyard of St. Thomas for *all* our parishioners and guests

Following the *VIGIL* there will be the traditional "Opening of the Tomb and the Resurrection Procession." Please join us for refreshments in the summer refectory of the monastery.

### **April 5.**

#### THE SOLEMNITY OF THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

11:00 am Mass will be followed by the traditional Procession and the "Encounter"

PLEASE JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE PRINCIPLE MYSTERY OF OUR FAITH. ALL ARE WELCOME HERE AT SAINT THOMAS CHURCH.