



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

St. Thomas Church

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Today's Prayer

I pause for a moment
and think of the love and
the grace that God
shows on me: I am
created in the image and
likeness of God; I am
God's dwelling-place.



February 20th and 21st 2016

The Second Sunday of
Lent Year C

Reflection on the Gospel

“Many are the words to describe a single event.” The season of Lent is no exception. In English, for example, the word *Lent*, derived from the Anglo-Saxon *lengthu* meaning “longer days,” is an obvious allusion to the lengthening of daylight before spring. Other languages use the readily understandable *Post* (the Fast) or *Wielki Post* (the Great Fast) or *Quaresima* (Forty Days) in describing that season of penance in preparation for the Resurrection of the Lord at Easter.

Today's Gospel reading from Luke departs from the customary lenten accounts with the mysterious incident of the transfiguration. Looking back over the past two thousand years we could explain it, perhaps, as an “altered state of consciousness” which judging from other literary sources as the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezechiel was a relatively common experience in the ancient world. For us, however, grounded in the scientific mindset of the Enlightenment, such phenomena are usually relegated to the realm of the unexplained or mysterious. Luke, in describing the incident on the Mount mentions that Jesus radiated light and that the apostles' rapture was overwhelming. The somber note is that the heavenly figures identified as Moses, the “Giver of the Law” and Elijah, the “Custodian of Israel's conscience” speak with Jesus (within earshot of the stunned apostles) about “his passing” in Jerusalem. The entire incident serves the purpose of identifying Jesus in God's plan and at the same time shoring up the courage of the apostles in face of the trials to come.

As we continue our journey this Lent, let us not be discouraged or distracted. Moments of trial are inevitable. But, like Jesus, let us go up to our Jerusalem, to our passing—and glory.

The story of Abraham, “the father of our faith” in the first reading and the “transfiguration” of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew are profound narratives worthy of reflection. The life of Abraham as related in Genesis 12-25 tells the unadorned story of an all too human nomad who, when mysteriously called by God, responds in total submission and leaves not only his native land but even the worship of his tribal gods. The reward of this simple man's faith, in turn, became the corner stone of all Judeo-Christian and Islamic belief with over two billion adherents regarding him simply as “our father” or “first believer.” The so-named *transfiguration* of Jesus represents another aspect of our faith. But, there is much discussion as to what this mysterious event was and meant. Peter, James and John, those three disciples closest to Jesus, undoubtedly had some visionary experience of which- with the exception of a letter dubiously attributed to the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 2: 17-18)- they never wrote. The three *synoptic gospels* Mark, Matthew and Luke do mention this *transfiguration* which some early writers date as a post-Resurrection apparition. The majority of scriptural scholars, however, would assign it squarely within the latter period of Jesus' ministry. Notice the events. First, Jesus takes his disciples aside and “goes up the mountain” where enveloped in a cloud he is acclaimed in the company of Moses and Elijah: “My beloved Son... Listen to him.” (Matthew 17:1-8). Matthew uses the imagery of the Old or First Testament to describe the event. Moses, the lawgiver of his people spoke with God on Sinai which was enveloped in the *shekinah* or “cloud of divine presence” while the people looked on in reverence and fear. Both readings dealing with Abraham's faith and God's affirmation of Jesus ministry give us pause to think. As we journey on to Easter do we go with faith, that is, with total confidence in God's plan for us? Do we take the work and words of Jesus so seriously that we can live in confidence of divine mercy and the hope of the resurrection?

Thoughts for Lent from St. Augustine

But meanwhile, here and now, until we get to that place of rest, during this time in which we are toiling away, while trials and temptations never cease, let us do good. There is always a medicine available, to be applied to what are practically daily wounds; the medicine consists of the good works of mercy. I mean, if you want to obtain God's mercy, be merciful yourself. If you refuse to show humanity to a human being, though human yourself, God will refuse you divinity; that is to say, the imperishable immortality by which he makes us gods. After all, God doesn't need anything from you; you, though, need everything from God.

--Sermon 259, 3

O Lord,
*the house of my soul is narrow;
enlarge it that you may enter in.
It is ruinous, O repair it!
It displeases your sight.
I confess it, I know.
But who shall cleanse it,
to whom shall I cry but to you?
Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord,
and spare your servant from strange sins. (St. Augustine).*

How to have a merciful Lent?

2. Lenten week

Gospel : Transfiguration of the Lord – Luke 9, 28-36

Main idea: Pray

Spiritual work of mercy for this week:

Instruct the ignorant

What can I do?:

Pray more (don't use more words but be more pious)

Help somebody do his task

Share your knowledge with the others and don't boast

Set a good example to the others

Be ready to explain why you believe in God and why you behave as a Christian (when you are asked this question)

Be interested in your faith and study to deepen your understanding of it .

More in : www.augustiniani.cz/en

Announcements and Ongoing Activities

*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

* **Bible Study** takes place every Tuesday from 18:30-19:30 in Tagaste room.

*Wednesday at 18:30. Tagaste room takes place **Adult Religious education**.

*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!

*Fr. William will be in USA till March 2nd . Fr. Juan will be taking care of the community: 602684538

*During **Lent season** every Friday at 6pm in the church will be the Stations of the Cross.

Year of Mercy

"Merciful like the Father"

Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy:

1. to feed the hungry,
2. give drink to the thirsty,
3. clothe the naked,
4. welcome the stranger,
5. heal the sick,
6. visit the imprisoned,
7. bury the dead.

And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy:

1. to counsel the doubtful,
2. instruct the ignorant,
3. admonish sinners,
4. comfort the afflicted,
5. forgive offences,
6. bear patiently those who do us ill,
7. pray for the living and the dead."

A Small Lenten Fast!

St. Thomas is encouraging each of its parishioners to fast on the following Friday, the 26th of February by eating a bowl of rice and with the money you save, make a donation to the church who will then pass it along to the most needy! It's an easy way to fulfill a Lenten obligation and to savour the satisfaction that someone has benefited from your corporal work of Mercy. How pleased Holy Father Pope Francis would be with those of us who have taken the theme of this year, **the Year of Mercy** and made it part of our Lent.

Thank you in advance and at Sunday's Mass we'll let you know where you can contribute! And for those who can't fast on the following Friday, you can do it on another Friday in Lent!