



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

Dear Lord as I  
come to you today  
Fill my heart and  
my whole being  
with the wonder of  
your presence



March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 2016

The Fifth Sunday of Lent -  
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# St. Thomas Church

Josefska 8, Mala Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556,

602 643 365

## The Reflection of the Gospel

For centuries before the calendar reform of 1970, the fifth Sunday of Lent was known as *Passion Sunday*. With the attendant discussion of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* note that *passion* in this context, meaning *something suffered, endured or undergone*, is ultimately derived from the Latin word *passio*. Such English words as *patient, passion* or *patience* while sharing the same root do vary with use. In speaking about the *passion of the Lord* we mean *that which he suffered or patiently bore with* for our sake.

Today's gospel reading is a beautiful example of Jesus' *patience* both with a woman taken in adultery and the Pharisees all too eager for her execution by stoning. To understand the circumstances we must know something behind the story. As in the traditional interpretation of Islamic *Shari'ah* (Law), adultery in the *Mosaic Law* was punished by death. Usually, the woman (!) was targeted for the dreadful execution by stoning. However, the Pharisees used this tragic situation to entrap Jesus with the dilemma: should he cast "the first stone" than he would void all his talk of "mercy" or should he not than he would be exposed as disobeying the Law of Moses (=God)! It is here that Jesus foiled his foes. Doodling in the sand (some say writing out the sins of his adversaries) he waited out the storm. With magnificent aplomb, Jesus stands and says *let the one without sin be the first to cast a stone!* Dismayed, the crowd dispersed beginning with the eldest.

What do we learn from this gospel story? It is only too easy to be judgmental with others and even merciless. Jesus' own example demonstrates a *patience* and even understanding of both sides. Without bitterness, shouting or explosive words he gently forgave and dismissed the woman to a new life and the Pharisees who now sought to murder him for his toleration of sin.

## First Reading:

Tradition is important. It proclaims our past and defines our roots. But tradition for tradition's sake is as problematic as change for change's sake. Faith demands that we cling to the wisdom of tradition, while being open to possibilities change brings.

To a people that defined itself by the events of the Exodus [16-17], God called Israel to a new openness. "Forget the past," God chided the people. "Look what I am about to do."

Why did the savior of the Exodus tell the people to forget about the past and look to the future? Through the prophecy of Second Isaiah, God spoke to the exiles in Babylon, the descendants of those who were taken before the destruction of Jerusalem. The exiles clung to the stories of God's power in order to maintain their faith and their national identity. But, without a capitol or a nation or a temple for their God, the Jews in exile were without hope. Only tradition gave them a sense of who they were.

But God reminded his faithful that tradition alone does not make faith come alive. Faith means trust in God. God would create a way home through the desert with all necessary provisions (i.e., water from a river); the return home would be peaceful (i.e., wild animals honor the Lord) [19-21]. Just as God acted in the Exodus, he would act in the exiles' lives. What seemed impossible would come about; the exiles would return home.

Faith without hope clings to a religion stuck in the past. Faith that tries to be "relevant" to the present by rejecting the past drifts away without roots. Both need focus upon God, his will, and his power. Trust in God brings the past alive, gives the present meaning, and the future hope.

## A Small Lenten Fast!

St. Thomas is encouraging each of its parishioners to fast on the following Fridays of February by eating a bowl of rice and with the money you save, making a donation to the church which 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!

### 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."

### *How to have a merciful Lent?*

#### 5. Lenten week

**Gospel :** Jesus and the sinner –John 8,1-11

**Main idea:** Understanding

**Spiritual work of mercy for this week:**

Admonish sinners,

**What can I do?:**

Do not judge people who are not like you would like  
Admit your mistakes and do not criticize the faults of others.  
Have an understanding for the weaknesses of others, but do not agree with their sins

### Announcements and Ongoing Activities

\*If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please contact [osaprag@augustiniani.cz](mailto: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**.

\*This Sunday March 13<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate **St. Patrick's day** with a Mass at 12:30 in St. Thomas Church.

\* Today **second collection** for charity in our diocese.

\*Today Sunday at 06:00pm **Lenten concert** in St Barbara's chapel. All are invited!

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

### Holy Week Schedule

**March 20<sup>th</sup> ,PASSION (or PALM) SUNDAY**, there will be a joint service with the Czech and Spanish communities beginning at Infant Jesus of Prague Church- Karmelitska street- at 11:00 am.

**March 23<sup>rd</sup> Spy Wednesday**, in Holy Week, Confessions and Mass at 18:00/06:00 pm in Saint Barbara's Chapel.

**March 24<sup>th</sup> , HOLY THURSDAY**. At 9:00am Mass with the Cardinal in the Cathedral of St. Vitus. At 06:30/18:30 Mass of the Lord's Supper with the Washing of Feet, the Transfer of the Sacrament. At 09:00/21:00 Adoration.

**March 25<sup>th</sup> ,, GOOD FRIDAY**. At 06:00/18:00pm the Stations of the Cross. At 06:30/18:30 the Liturgy of the Death and Burial of the Lord.

**March 26<sup>th</sup> ,, HOLY SATURDAY**. From 10:00 – 12:00 Confessions will be heard and Easter food will be blessed. 07:00/19:00 the VIGIL OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD, MASS followed by the OPENING OF THE TOMB, THEOPHORIC PROCESSION.

**March 27<sup>th</sup> ,, EASTER SUNDAY**. Mass at 11:00am followed by the THEOPHORIC PROCESSION and the ENCUESTRO.