



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



April 09<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 2016

The Third Sunday of  
Easter Year C

# St. Thomas Church

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

There are several approaches to the Resurrection of Jesus narrative. The first would be to dismiss the entire story as “Christian myth” running in close competition with some vernal festival of antiquity. As sceptics do bray: *The dead cannot walk and talk*. A more conciliatory approach would assert that Jesus *did* return but certainly *not* as Luke and the other three gospel writers assert. Thus, this *docetic* explanation (embraced mainly by such sectarians as the Jehovah Witnesses, etc.) assert on the basis of a “body denying teaching” that Christ had “evaded” death, was not really crucified and “came back” in some “ghostly” (extraterrestrial ?) form. A variation on this theme was revisited in a historically thin work entitled *The Passover Plot*, later reworked into a film similarly named but equally as anemic.

The Catholic teaching on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is that *He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. On the third day He rose again from the dead*. All the Church’s creedal statements from the very beginning are firmly based on Jesus’ death. There were no attempts to “cover” or “conceal” the awful fact of the Lord’s tragic passion, death and burial; no euphemisms nor circumlocutions allowed or intended. The gospel writers may point fingers at those responsible for Jesus’ death but never do they deny his being raised from the dead “on the third day.” The Easter proclamation *Christ is truly risen* did not, of course, solve basic doubts either in or outside the Christian community. When Paul preached the resurrection of the dead in sophisticated first century Athens (Acts 17: 31 ff.) he was roundly mocked off the podium. These sceptics would certainly have been familiar with such tales of various “revivified” deities; but Paul’s unique message wherein each man and woman’s *own* resurrection had been *promised* through Christ’s personal victory over death baffled them. Today’s gospel reading certainly borders on the incredible. The two disciples are fleeing Jerusalem, they do not believe the “resurrection reports,” they do not recognize Jesus “in the flesh,” nor do they appear to understand the teachings of Sacred Scripture. These doubts could hardly be conducive to a profound act of faith! It is only when Jesus accepts their invitation to dinner that the “eyes of faith” are opened. Jesus’ own presence often unrecognized in our daily lives *is* the motive of our faith but he must be *invited to share with us*. Are we prepared to sit down with him at the Eucharist

TODAY WE HAVE ANOTHER ACCOUNT of Jesus appearing to his disciples on Easter Sunday. This time it is from Luke. We should not be disturbed that these various accounts do not tally,

nor should we try artificially to put them into a coherent account as used to be done by “harmonies” of the gospels in the past.

In Luke, Jesus’ resurrection and ascension into glory take place on Easter Sunday. This is all the more striking since, in the Acts of the Apostles – also written by Luke – the ascension is clearly described as taking place 40 days later. This indicates that, in dealing with these post-resurrection stories, we are dealing with something more than history.

As today’s Gospel opens, the disciples, gathered in the room, are hearing the account of the two disciples who have just returned from Emmaus after a powerful experience of meeting the Risen Jesus.

All of a sudden there is Jesus among them. He gives them the conventional greeting, “Peace to you!” (*Shalom!*). As was pointed out when discussing last week’s Gospel, this phrase in Greek has no verb and can be taken as a greeting wish or a statement of fact. And indeed, as we see here and in other instances in the Gospel, the presence of Jesus does bring peace and joy. It is something for us to take note of.

The disciples’ first reaction, however, is one of fear and alarm. As any normal person of the day would have reasoned, Jesus is dead and so this must be his ghost. But Jesus reassures them: he points out to the solidity of his body. He invites them to touch his hands and feet. Ghosts do not have flesh and bones. In one sense, this is not the Jesus who died on the cross (he can appear through closed doors and in widely scattered locations) but it is still fully the same person they had always known.

Now their feelings turn to inexpressible joy. As they look on him with a mixture of happiness and wonder, he pushes them a bit further and asks for food to eat. Ghosts don’t eat. Jesus is truly risen; he is still fully in our world and part of it although in a very different way from before Good Friday

## XVIII Augustinian Week

**18-24 April 2016**

Lectures, prayers, divine service as well as concert are scheduled for the XVIII Augustinian Week from 18-24 April in St Thomas' Monastery in Prague:

On **Monday 18 April at 18.15 pm**, Conference "Mercy in the Works of *St Augustine*" by **Fr. Santiago Sierra, OSA**

On **Tuesday 19 April at 18.00 pm**, Conference "*Divine Mercy in the Teachings of St. Thomas of Villanova, OSA*" by **Fr. Jozef Ržonca, OSA**

On **Wednesday 20 April at 18.00 pm**, Conference "Time in relation to eternity and to another in the Confessions of St. Augustine" by **Mgr. Alena Tesková**

On **Thursday 21 April at 18:15 pm**, A Church tour: "*In the footsteps of Saints reflecting Divine Mercy*" by **Fr. William S. Faix, OSA**

On **Friday 22 April at 18.00 pm**, a Cultural event

On **Saturday 23 April at 19.00 pm**, St. Thomas Choir: A concert honoring St. Augustine ( St. Barbara's chapel)

On **Sunday 24 April at 11.00 am**, Mass to celebrate the feast of the Conversion of St Augustine in the Milanese Ambrosian Rite.

### **3rd Annual Something New For Easter Prague Clothing Drive**

Are you looking for a place to donate used clothes in Prague? Throughout April, the English-speaking Community's children's Religious Education Program is asking for new and used clothes which will be given directly to the St. Tomas clothing charity. The name of the drive - Something New For Easter – is in honor of the tradition in many places of wearing new clothes at Easter, or in this case, giving someone clothes that are new to them and may help them through an important event such as a job interview or transition to a safe house, or keep them warm during cold weather. This is a wonderful way to complete a work of mercy by clothing those who need it! Collection bins will be located just inside of the Monastery courtyard, under the English Community's notice board. There is a special need for socks, underwear and shoes for the homeless this year, though all donations are very welcome as there are many people in need of all ages. This would be a great project to get your Prague-based office, club, or school group involved in as well! Please contact Mary Beth Hlavsa at [REdirector@augustiniani.cz](mailto:REdirector@augustiniani.cz) for details.

## 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.

\***Bible Study** sessions are held each Wednesday evening at 6:30pm/18:00 in the Church office. All are welcome to join and reflect on the Word of God.

\***Marriage Preparation**: The next one-day marriage preparation course (for the English speaking community) will be held by Fr. William on Saturday 16th April from 9:15am - 3pm at St. Thomas Parish for those who wish to participate.

\***Parish dance** will be on Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup> in Malostranská Beseda from 07:pm. Ticket you can buy with Michael Rainey. Please come with us to celebrate!

\* **Augustinian week** from 18<sup>nd</sup> till 2<sup>th</sup> of April. Conferences, exhibition and so on. Program in our web [www.augustiniani.cz](http://www.augustiniani.cz)

***CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS TRULY RISEN.***

**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."

\***The 19th Annual Marian Pilgrimage** to the Shrine of the **Gracious Madonna**, at sv. Dobrotiva-Zajecov, will be held on May 7. We meet in front of St. Joseph's church on Josefská Street, at 08:30 am, Saturday morning, May 7. If you do not have a ride please contact Fr. Juan Bautista for details. In keeping with our tradition, please bring a lunch, which you can share with another person on pilgrimage. Whatever is left over (if you so will) is given to the poor. There is a brochure, which explains the origins and traditions behind this beautiful 700-year pilgrimage, which has been renewed after forty years of communism. SIGN UP: In the sacristy of St. Thomas Church.