



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

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.



July 9th and 10th 2016

15th Ordinary Sunday -C

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01 Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

St. Thomas Church

GOSPEL STUDY

Today's reading from Luke's gospel is one of the most beloved in Scripture. The Samaritan's concern for the battered traveler certainly stands in sharp contrast with the apparent indifference of the priest and levite. The story is cast in form of a dialogue between Jesus and a religious lawyer. This learned and pious theologian posed the classic question lying at the very heart of Jewish Orthodoxy: what must *I do* to inherit the kingdom of God? For him and his contemporaries, the most vexing spiritual quest was in precisely discerning those divinely ordered acts rewarded in the world to come. Jesus' responded in form of a story or short *haggadic* (Hebrew for illustrative narrative) instruction which raised still another salient question: if I have to do that divinely commanded *something* than what is the *most important commandment* in its realization. Recall that there were exactly 613 commandments in the Old Testament minutely regulating all personal and social activity.

Jesus' illustrated parable must have shocked his listener(s). For the Jews, their neighboring Samaritans descended from a mixed race of Jews and gentiles deserved only dismissive scorn. So, when Jesus cast blame on the clerics for bypassing the wounded traveler the very heart of Jewish observance was offended. After all, the religious argument would run, both priest and levite (or altar server) on their way to the Temple were exempted from this law of concern because they *had* to be ritually clean which meant *they had* to maintain *at least six yards* between themselves and a possible corpse. The Law allowed no mitigating circumstances- either stay away or risk ritual contamination. What Jesus proffered in this circumstance was a conflation of two commandments into one. That is, the command to love *the Lord God with all one's strength* was to be identified with love of one's neighbor. No longer confined by narrow parochialism this commandment was to be extended to *any and everyone* standing in need with the chronic risk that not everyone will reciprocate our extended offer of loving concern. This is the Christian paradox, the cost of discipleship, which consists of growing into the stature and image of Christ who first loved us

First Reading:

This was the question Moses put before the people in Deuteronomy. The nature and ways of God might be mysterious. But his code of ethics and the worship that is his due were not. Both were clearly laid out before the people in the Law.

Despite everything God promised for faithfulness and all the curses he threatened for rebellion, people were (and still are) a fickle lot. People claimed ignorance or lack of understand or human frailty for failing to follow God's will. But, as Moses stated, God made it present for all to see. In fact, Moses asserted, God wrote the Law in the minds and hearts of his people. All they needed to do was return to God in heart and mind. And obey his Law.

But isn't that the problem for us. We do understand. But we don't want this understanding, because, with it, we know what God expects of us. And when we fail that expectation, we want to hide in the shadows, so we don't have to face the consequences of our actions. We understand what God wants, but we fail to succeed at obeying his commands. In other words, we sin.

If only we would hear God's voice, understand what he wants, and do his will.

Is it really so hard to understand what God wants from us? No, but we need help. That's what the mission of Jesus was all about. To help us hear the call of the Lord. Return to him. And do what he wants us to do.

Please contact, Fr. William Faix if you want to add announcements to the bulletin at "wfaix@yahoo.com" or contact Fr. Juan at "juan@augustiniani.cz" Please send at latest by the Friday of the

AYE 2016 Sv. Dobrotivá

“Restlessness of the Heart Among Young People Today: An Augustinian Response.”

From July 19th till July 25th in our Monastery at St. Dobrotiva/Zaječov will be a international encounter of young Augustinian People. More than 270 young people from 19 different countries will join the encounter like preparation for the Word meeting with the Holy Father in Cracow, Poland the week after.

Our coming together is inspired by the spirit of love and the continuous search to know Christ the interior Master in the footstep of St. Augustine. “You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in You” (*Confessions* I, 1). Hence we seek to deepen our love of God and our love for God through interpersonal relationship.

This Youth Encounter is a special moment of grace to listen, to acknowledge and to accept ourselves as precious gifts from God for the growth in faith, hope and love. We embrace one another in sharing our faith and life experiences as a journey towards God. The touch of love transforms and creates awareness in us of our need for one another and ultimately of our need for God who loves us first and wants us to share love. “By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

The Augustinian Youth falls within the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy which Pope Francis inaugurated on the 8th December 2015 and lasts up to the 20th November 2016. With this initiative, the Holy Father invites us to always turn to God the fountain of life, to renew our trust and faithfulness in His infinite goodness and mercy that forgive, reconcile and make us whole again.

The power of God’s mercy changed St. Augustine who conforms himself completely with Christ. After his conversion, he confesses: “All my hope lies in your great mercy. Give what you command and command what you will” (*Confessions* X, 29. 40).

It is hoped that the communion during these coming days will add something new to the lives so that they can return home more joyful and zealous to live for Christ through the service of love for others.

Mass in English with the whole AYE2016 group will be on Friday July 22nd at 11:00 in St. Thomas Church. You are welcome!

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
- ❖ I personally want to take this opportunity to thank all our parishioners who are leaving us. Your support and concern made our parish the good community it is.

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."

Augustine's Great Cantic of Love

But what do I love when I love you?

Not material beauty of a temporal order; not the brilliance of earthly light; not the sweet melody of harmony and song; not the fragrance of flowers, perfumes, and spices; not manna or honey; and not limbs the body delights to embrace.

It is not these that I love when I love my God.

And yet, when I love him, it is true that I love a light of a certain kind, a voice, a perfume, a food, an embrace; but they are the kind that I love in my inner self, when my soul is bathed in light that is not bound by space; when it listens to sound that never dies away; when it breathes fragrance that is not borne away on the wind; when it tastes food that is never consumed by the eating; when it clings to an embrace from which it is not severed by fulfillment of desire.

This is what I love when I love my God.