



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



July 30th and 31st 2016

The Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C

St. Thomas Church

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GOSPEL STUDY

As you may have noticed, each gospel read over a three year cycle is assigned a letter; thus, Matthew *A*, Mark *B* and this year's evangelist Luke *C*. The gospel of John, reserved for the Lenten, Holy Week and Easter festivals, stands outside of the cycle. The theme of Luke's Sunday's gospels is discipleship, or that which should define a follower of Jesus Christ in the here and now. Luke answered this question for a Christian community living within two or three generations of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. By the year AD 85 or, thereabouts, many Christians- if we posit AD 27/28 for his crucifixion-would not have known Jesus or many of his first disciples. Hence, this written gospel, by no means a complete record or biography, served as an important link between the Church's didactic or catechetical instruction and Jesus' ministry. In that spirit, today's reading leads us to the heart of Jesus' own attitudes toward society and material possessions in general.

Let it be said nowhere does Jesus ever condemn material goods or riches as such. However, he does more than warn his followers against overwhelming, consuming concern for those things that perpetually keep one distracted and divided. Jesus' own attitudes in such matters is vividly revealed in the two sections of today's gospel. The first involves two wrangling brothers who apparently respected Jesus enough to seek his arbitration in an inheritance issue. Pointedly he refused with an added withering indictment of greed as deathdealing: *Possessions*, he declared, *do not guarantee life*. The explanatory parable "or a short story from which a moral lesson may be drawn" drives home the object lesson. The rich landowner, a familiar (and hated) enough figure in Roman occupied Galilee, decides to relax after hectically gathering in an abundant harvest. Usually such landed self-made men amassed fortunes in selling grain at exorbitant prices to desperate peasants. Unable to pay, these unfortunate fellahin were reduced to virtual slavery through a greedy manipulation of food production. The moral is obvious: what good was all this labor? Why such incessant activity which ultimately led to sudden death? What lesson can you draw from this reading? Where do we stand in this "age of consumption"?

The Book of Ecclesiastes, often called the Book of Qoheleth, is one of the wisdom books. It teaches us a lot of common sense and is very realistic about living daily life. Today we hear about vanity—that is, about the uselessness of so many things in this life, especially stress and preoccupation about what will happen to us or what we can acquire and what we can do in our ordinary life. Any stress or preoccupation is really useless—vanity in the sense of this reading.

The Gospel reading from Saint Luke also speaks about the futility of preoccupation or worry with money, inheritance or possessions. Of course, most of us don't want to live on the street or have nothing to eat, but this is not about that. It is an over concern with what we have right now, a constant preoccupation with having enough, when in reality we already have enough. So often we can forget the Gospel teaching that stress and preoccupation and worry don't change reality. If we stop and think, we all realize that, at least in theory. But does such realization stop us from worrying, from stress, from preoccupations? Usually it does not. Instead we get caught up in this inner distress even though we can do nothing about it and it takes so much or even all of our energy.

We can always remember the serenity prayer and ask to change what we can and accept what we cannot change—but often we don't want to do that. It seems almost like a breach of trust if we give up worrying about what we cannot change!

The second reading today, from the Letter to the Colossians, can provide a path through this when it tells us: Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

All we need to do—and it sounds so easy—is to keep our attention on that which is above and not on the things of earth! Sure, we will say! Yet it is always the answer. We are invited to put everything in our life into the context of God's love for us and salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. It sounds pious but is just about as simple answer as could ever be given. May we find the Lord this Sunday as He invites us into His presence. May we come to know how to place our lives in His hands. May we come to know that all is well and all shall be well because God is Lord. He loves us and calls us to respond to His love.

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 week as it has to be added to the bulletin

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."

Blessed John of Rieti

August 2nd

Blessed John is an example of a spiritual maturity reached in a short time

John Bufalari was born at Castel Proziano in the diocese of Amelia (Terni), Italy, at the beginning of the fourteenth century and entered the Augustinian Order in his early youth at Rieti. He was the brother of Blessed Lucy Bufalari of Amelia. His brief life as a friar was marked by simplicity, cheerfulness, innocence, and great devotion to the community. He made himself the servant of all and expressed his fraternal love in the simplest and most ordinary tasks, such as caring for the sick and attending to the guests of the monastery. He spent much time in prayer and was always eager to serve the Masses of the priests of the community regardless of their number.

There is a collection of stories written about John which express his purity of intention and devout religious spirit. Once when he left the community garden it was evident that he had been crying, and, when asked the reason for his tears, he remarked: "Because I see how the plants, the trees, the birds, and the fruitful earth obey God, and yet men and women, who are promised eternal life for their obedience, transgress the commands of their creator. This makes me sad."

John died at the age of seventeen at Rieti, and his remains are preserved in the former Augustinian church of Saint Augustine in that city. His memory is observed by the Augustinian Family on 2 August.

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
- ❖ **Coffee, Cookies & Conversation** follows Sunday's Mass in the Monastery Refectory off the Cloister Garden. **All are invited, especially our visitors.**
- ❖ 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.

FEASTS and ANNIVERSARIES: August

01. Alfonsus Ligouri (+1787), a Neapolitan lawyer who caught himself lying during a trial, repented, left the practice of law, was ordained and later founded the Redemptorist Congregation for home missions.

-Switzerland celebrates National Day (1291).

-*Lammas Day* or harvest festival is still observed in some parts of Europe.

-In 1834 slaves were emancipated and the slave trade was forbidden throughout the British Empire.

-On this day the *Warsaw Uprising* began in 1944.

02. Our Lady of the Angles is the feast of the *Portiuncula* on which day an indulgence can be gained by those who go to confession, visit the parish church, pray for the intentions of the Holy Father and receive the Eucharist.

-**Eusebius of Vercelli** (+371), bishop and confessor, suffered much in the Arian controversies of his time.

-**John of Rieti, OSA** (+1336), an Augustinian who died at 16 years of age, was known for his deep piety.

03. Joseph Conrad, the Polish born novelist, died in 1924.

04. John Marie Vianney (+1859), the parish priest of Ars, whose holiness of life attracted thousands of visitors who wished to confess to him. Some days he would spend 17 hours in the confessional. He has been proclaimed "the Patron of Pastors." Please pray for your pastor on this day.

-HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was born in 1900.

05. This is the date of the **Dedication of the Greater Basilica of St. Mary in Rome** (431).

06. The Feast of the **Lord's Transfiguration** on Mount Tabor. This is a revelatory experience of Christ's glory to his disciples prefigured his resurrection.

-The Holy Roman Empire, proclaimed in AD 800, was formally dissolved in 1806 by Napoleon.

-Paul Claudel, the French philosopher and writer, was born in 1868 and Alexander Fleming, the British bacteriologist, was born in 1881.

-Diego Valasquez, the Spanish artist, died in 1660.

-Hiroshima Day (1945) commemorates the dropping of the first atom bomb.

07. Cajetan (+1547), the patron of our Church on Nerudova street, was an Italian priest known for his zeal in seeking out the desperate and lonely. He was called "the hunter of souls" by his contemporaries. Mass will be celebrated this day at 00:00 pm (18:00) to which all are invited.

-Konstantin Sergeevich Stanislavsky, the famous teacher of the "Stanislavsky method" of acting died in 1938 in Moscow.