



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



October 8th and October 9th
2016

The Twenty Eighth
Sunday in Ordinary Time
– Year C

St. Thomas Church

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GOSPEL STUDY

Today's gospel reading from Luke with the first lesson deal with healing and salvation. Disease, as interpreted in ancient times, was regarded as a curse, a sign of divine punishment. Suffering under such foreboding reversals, the sick for fear of contamination were often expelled from the community and were required to cover their faces and cry out, "Unclean!" For reintegration back into society the patient in the event of being healed first had to go to the religious authorities who examined for proofs of restored health. Once verified, the healed individual after offering a sacrifice could then return to his family and presumably a normal life. Luke gives us an example of this practice but with a deeper meaning. One gets the impression that the story involves simple gratitude or appreciation which Jesus expected of the nine lepers. But, that is only a part of the message. The statement, *This man was a Samaritan* followed by three questions raised by Jesus brings us to the heart of the story. Far from a simple lesson in gratitude (important as that is!) Luke brings home three more basic issues. The first is that *salvation* is universal as it extends even to the hated Samaritans. Second, the story contrasts the apparent indifference of the Jewish lepers and the simple faith-filled gratitude of the foreigner who returns. Lastly, Jesus draws a distinction between being *healed* and being *saved*. Hence, it was not so much an act of healing which saved the Samaritan, as a sense of being drawn closer to God through *recognition* of Jesus' deed. His response was one of *faith*. In brief, sometimes it is the least likely who recognize the hand of God in their lives. And so for Luke and his community, it was imperative that outreach to such marginalized be not so much a moral notion but a missionary endeavor bringing all to Jesus, both healer and savior.

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

First Reading:

These three short verses complete the story of the leper Naaman. Before we investigate the story, however, a comment should be made about the ailment. The term "leprosy" is a misnomer, for no archeological evidence can be found that Hansen's disease (what Westerners refer to as "leprosy") existed in Palestine from ancient times. Hence, most scholars believe that "leprosy" loosely referred to series of skin rash ailments. A review of Leviticus 13 indicated that many lepers would recover and rejoin the community, unlike the incurable but treatable Hansen's disease. Very recently, evidence has been found that contemporaries of Jesus had the disease, the the evidence is very limited in scope.

The story actually opened in 2 Kings 5:1 with the discovery of Naaman's ailment and his scepticism. Two characters of weakness (Naaman's small Israeli slave girl and his chariot driver) push the proud general into humbling actions. But the shame of visiting a vassal state for a cure and bathing in the muddy waters of a small river reward the soldier with a change. His rough skin turned smooth. [5:14].

The more important change came from within. The arrogance of the soldier turned to gratitude. And his allegiance turned from the gods of his home country to those of a foreign land. Naaman saw the hand of God working, and he believed. [15-17]

Like the Samaritan in the cure of the ten lepers, Naaman had a change of heart in the face of his cure. His conversion challenges us in two ways. Do we see God's miracles in our lives? Do they change us and give us faith? Like these two men, we need to look with hope and be open to the power of God!

St. Thomas of Villanova , OSA

October 10

Thomas of Villanova (1486-1555) was known for his promotion of studies and missions in the Order of Saint Augustine, and for his love and care for the poor. Thomas García Martínez was born in 1486 in Fuenllana, Ciudad Real, Spain. He spent his childhood in the family home in Villanova de los Infantes.

A gifted student, Thomas entered the University of Alcalá at the age of 15. He earned a degree in Theology in a very short time, and was asked to join the faculty of this famous university.

His reputation as an excellent teacher spread, and the prestigious University of Salamanca offered Thomas a professorship in 1516. He refused the position, instead seeking admission into the Order of Saint Augustine. He professed his vows as an Augustinian in 1517 and was ordained a priest in 1518. Recognizing his leadership ability, his fellow Augustinians chose him to serve as Prior (local superior) and later as Provincial (regional superior). In this position, Thomas encouraged a more faithful adherence to the principles of Augustinian life. He also promoted missionary activity by Augustinians in the New World.

Thomas grew into a deeply spiritual life. He lived simply, giving away the small fortune that he inherited from his parents.

Asked to become Bishop of Granada, Thomas refused, preferring the simple life to a life of power and prestige. Several years later, Thomas was asked to become Bishop of Valencia. When he refused again, the authorities persuaded Thomas' religious superiors to order him under his vow of obedience to accept.

He reluctantly accepted, and became Archbishop of Valencia in 1545. There he found an archdiocese in spiritual chaos. He began his episcopacy by visiting every parish in the Archdiocese to discover what were the needs of the people. He then set up programs in which funds provided by the wealthy would help to provide for the poor.

In order to have a well-formed clergy, Thomas started Presentation Seminary in 1550. He established schools where the young would have access to a quality education. He turned his own home into a sort of soup kitchen and shelter, giving to the poor and the homeless food to eat and a place to sleep. For that reason he was known as Beggar Bishop and Father of the Poor.

Thomas became ill in 1551. As his illness progressed and he grew weaker, he gave away all of his remaining possessions. He died September 8, 1555 in Valencia. His remains are preserved at the Cathedral there.

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.
- ❖ **Lectors and Eucharistic ministers:** If you would like to be a **lector** or Eucharistic minister at mass on Sundays please contact Ann at dalyaann@hotmail.com
A new schedule will be prepared soon.
- ❖ Every Saturday at 9:00am **feeding of the homeless**, as a social service.
- ❖ Sunday October 2nd meeting of the **Parish council** after 11:00am Mass.
- ❖ **Bible Study** takes place every Tuesday from 18:30-19:30 in Tagaste room. Everyone is welcome to come and learn more about our sacred scriptures.
- ❖ Wednesday at 18:30. Tagaste room takes place **Adult Religious education**.
- ❖ The choir is looking for new members. If you like to sing, we'd like to have you join us! Please contact Frank Jicha at frankjicha1@gmail.com for more information.

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."