



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

Today's Prayer

The more we call
on God
the more we can
feel God's
presence.
Day by day we are
drawn closer
to the loving heart
of God.



November 12nd
and November 13rd 2016

The Thirty Third Sunday
in Ordinary Time – Year C

St. Thomas Church

Josefská 8, Malá Strana, Prague 1, 118 01

Tel: 257 530 556, 602 643 365

GOSPEL STUDY

Today's gospel reading belongs to that genre of scripture termed variously for the tenor of its presentation as *crisis*, *persecution* or simply *apocalyptic* literature. Differing from classic "prophetic" scripture, it is more of an interpretation of some current event in the light of God's ultimate providential plan, so expounded as a message of hope. For Luke's struggling Christian community, at once haunted by Roman imperial authorities and Jewish religious leaders, this passage was a solemn confirmation of what Jesus nearly a half century before had said and taught. The Temple of Jerusalem *had been* the center of the Jewish world. Of enormous proportions this "third Temple" whose reconstruction had been commenced by Herod the Great in 20 BC., was one of the finest buildings in the ancient world. Wealthy and exempted from taxation by Emperor Augustus it was only completed in AD 63 or seven years before its wanton destruction in August AD 70. When Luke wrote c. AD 80/85, the Temple was a mourned memory bracketed with a sequence of plagues, wars and political upheavals. But, Jesus' words were and are apropos for us living centuries away from these debacles. Indeed, our own twenty first century already has *its own crises* awaiting interpretation in the full light of the gospel. From this light we cannot flee through craven fear, denial or indifference. Persecution may befall *some* of us, but for *each* of us the advice is the same: "You will be called on to act in a way that bears witness to your faithfulness to me and to what you will believe... if your faith is weak, you will be weak." Could anything be clearer?

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

For many years the main problem for religion in countries such as Britain was that of apathy. People could not be roused to have any interest in religion, which was deemed 'irrelevant'. But in this millennium, we have experienced a new hostility towards religion. Laws and education programmes are devised which offend the conscience of religious people, particularly of Christians. We hear horror stories such as of a nurse who was threatened with losing her job because she suggested to one of her patients that she would be praying for her!

There are many possible reasons for this. Perhaps some secularists are angry that religion is neither dead nor dying. Also, we must admit that many people, perhaps the majority, in modern Western society are almost completely ignorant of religion by now. The media in its soap operas present a world where religion has no place. Governments therefore try to push religion into the private sphere, and when it emerges in public life on consideration of sexual or life issues, become very hostile to its moral principles.

Jesus warns us that we will be persecuted as Christians. 'You will be hated on account of my name,' he said to his disciples. So they were. Their fellow Jews hated their new faith because they thought it was blasphemy to claim that a crucified criminal was Son of God, and threw them out of their synagogues. The Romans thought they were atheists because they refused to worship the Roman gods, and particularly the emperor, and threw them to the lions in the Colosseum.

Jesus was telling them not to bother to prepare their defence, because the Holy Spirit would inspire them at the time of their persecution. Perhaps we need to expound these words just a little! Surely Jesus did not mean that we should not prepare by knowing answers to the questions people ask about our faith. The First Letter of Peter tells us that we must prepare our answer and give a defence, an apologia, but with courtesy and respect (3:15).

'May God grant that I speak with judgment and have thought worthy of what I have received, for he is the guide even of wisdom and the corrector of the wise.'

(Wisdom. 7:15)

32 Ways to Be Merciful

- 1) Resist sarcasm; it is the antithesis of mercy: “*Set, O Lord, a guard over my mouth; keep watch, O Lord, at the door of my lips!*” (Psalm 141:3).
- 2) Pare down possessions: share your things with the needy.
- 3) Call someone who you know is lonely, even if you understand *why* they’re lonely. *Especially* if you do.
- 4) Write a letter of forgiveness to someone. If you cannot send it, sprinkle it with holy water, ask Christ Jesus to have mercy on you both and then burn or bury it.
- 5) Learn to say this prayer: “Dear Lord, bless [annoying person’s name] and have mercy on me!”
- 6) Plan a mini pilgrimage to a local shrine; make an effort along the way to live the corporal work of mercy of “welcoming the stranger” as Christ.
- 7) Do something kind and helpful for someone who you don’t get along with, or who has wronged you.
- 8) Be mindful of your behavior online. Is that post designed to improve your image ... and leave others feeling bad? Are you hammering people in order to serve your anger and humiliate others?
- 9) Have masses said for the living: friends and family members, even strangers you read/hear about, who are having a hard time.
- 10) Be generous enough to allow someone to help you; people need to feel needed.
- 11) If you didn’t mean to be a pain in the neck to someone, admit you were and ask the person to forgive you.
- 12) Take time in prayer to contemplate the good qualities of someone who is difficult for you. Do the same for each member of your family.
- 13) Hold. Your. Tongue.
- 14) If you can’t sit down beside a homeless person to talk for a while today, at least send a donation to a ministry that does do this (such as Christ in the City).
- 15) If you’re sharing a treat, take the smaller portion.
- 16) Instead of losing patience with someone online (or in person), try to hear that person’s fear. Ask God for what Solomon asked for: “an understanding heart.”
- 17) Recall a time you were not given the benefit of the doubt, and extend one to someone else.
- 18) Put down the phone and really listen to someone else. *With* eye contact.
- 19) Create a short end-of-day ritual to ask for (and extend) forgiveness with those you live with. “*Do not let the sun set on your anger*” (Eph. 4:26).
- 20) Make a list of your “enemies.” Then, every day, say a prayer for them.
- 21) Make a point to smile, greet or make conversation with someone who is not in your everyday circle.
- 22) Give away something of yours (that you really like) to someone you know would enjoy it.
- 23) Pray a Divine Mercy Chaplet as you are traveling to or from work.
- 23) Make a gratitude journal for your spouse and jot down little things he or she does that you’re grateful for. Bite your tongue and go write in it (or at least read it) the next time you want to criticize in a moment of frustration.
- 24) Respond to provocation with the respect you wish a person would show you.

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.
- ❖ **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**.
- ❖ On November 19th **Marriage Preparation** form 09:30 am till 03:15 pm.

Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25st, is approaching, please see Mr. Michael Rainey for details.

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."

25) Take a few minutes during the week to stop at a church and sit before the Tabernacle simply to be with Christ, the Merciful. If you cannot do that, meditate upon the crucifix.

26) Ask the Holy Spirit to groan for you when you cannot bring yourself to pray for someone who has done you an injury.

27) Lead with a kind comment with friends as well as strangers.

28) When conversations devolve into “the dark joy” of gossip, help change the subject.

29) Visit the graves of your ancestors, or visit a local cemetery and walk around, praying a rosary for all the souls buried there.

30) Offer to pray with someone, even someone you encounter on the street or public transport who looks like they could use it.

31) Offer hospitality in your home to someone or a group of people you would normally never invite over.

32) Pray every day for the souls in purgatory. Pray for your dead