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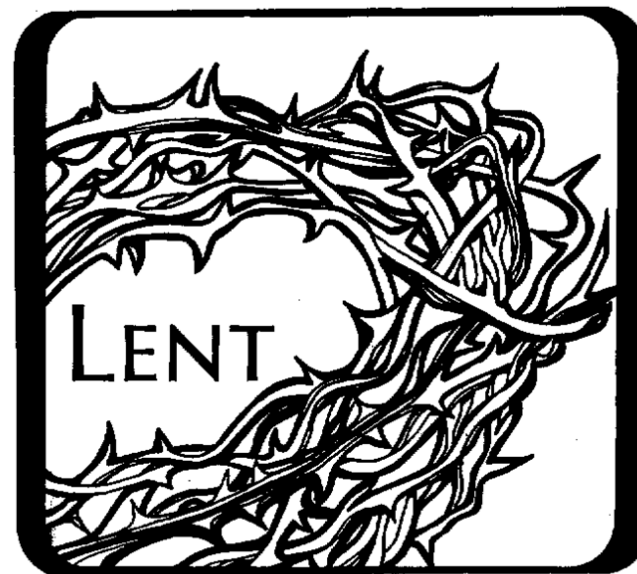
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IN ENGLISH

Czech Mission

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sv. Jakuba v San Diegu – sv. Františka v San Francisku - sv. Cyrila a Metoděje v Los Angeles



Lord Jesus,
You call us to repent and to believe,
for the Kingdom of God is at hand.
You teach us to do God's will.
You invite us to follow you
on the way to the cross.

Lord,
renew in us the grace of our baptism.
Transform our thoughts, words and deeds
so that we might turn away from sin
and live the Gospel.

CALIFORNIA / MARCH 2012

Lent has begun....

On Ash Wednesday, which fell on 22 February this year, Christians entered into a forty-day fasting period. This period prepares for the biggest event in the history of Christianity - Easter - the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the 6th century the fasting period was counted from the 6th or 7th Sunday before Easter, since Sunday (the day when Christ rose from the dead) is not seen as a fast day. Since the end of the 11th century, ashes have been given on Ash Wednesday in the sign of the cross on the forehead. In giving ashes, the priest says: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" or in the more recently-established formula: "Repent and believe the Gospel."

Ash, a symbol of death and the nothingness of being, is obtained from the burned palms which were blessed the previous year on Palm Sunday.

A sign of penitence, ashes are a symbol taken from the biblical tradition and retained in the Church until today. Symbolically they indicate the state of sinful man who confesses his sin before God, expresses the will to turn inwardly and is led by the hope that God will forgive him. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are the only days of strict fasting in the Catholic church. This requirement applies to all consenting Catholic Christians until the age of 60 (this provision does not apply to sick persons). Strict fasting consists, apart from the loss of meat dishes, also of the renunciation of one of two main meals of the day.



Jesus' call to conversion and penance, as is already seen in the Old Testament prophets, is not directed primarily at the outer works, "sackcloth and ashes," fasting and mortification, but on the inside, the conversion of heart, repentance and renewal. Without it deeds remain fruitless. But internal conversion should manifest itself outwardly. It means a radical break with sin, turning away from evil and a serious attempt to re-focus our lives to God.

Monika Vyvodova, KT

FEBRUARY 2012

Total collections for operation of the California missions: \$2,624.00

SD collection \$271.00, for *Velehrad* \$60.00 LA collection \$941.00, meal \$550.00, for *Velehrad* \$.00; SF collection: \$562.00, food \$300.00; for *Velehrad* \$253.00 .

Mission Expenses: \$2,550.00

\$1,000.00 Bishop's salary; 500.00 (rent for Polish Center (200) San Francisco 250 and the hall in San Diego (50)); 360.00 (travel to SF, gas, car maintenance); LA meal 279; *Věstník* publication : \$147.00 +264.00 (postage).

May God reward you for your generosity.

Please take care to make out your checks so that they will match the names on our accounts: RC Czech Mission, or Czech Center Building Fund, or if you wish it to go to the Bishop or to North American Pastoral Center for Czech Catholics: Bishop Peter Esterka, or NAPCCC

OUR MISSION WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST ONLY AS LONG AS WE SUPPORT IT FINANCIALLY.

YOUR TRUST OR WILL: Please remember Czech ministry in your trust or will. Our legal title is: North American Pastoral Center for Czech Catholics, 344 KOCH Avenue, Placentia, CA 92870. For information call Bishop Esterka, 714 524 0092.

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3. +Miloslav Marik - manželka Edith
4. +Marii a Josefa Nečasovy - přátelé
5. + syna Jaromíra Hrobaře - manželé Hrobařovi
6. + rodiče Annu a Jana Vačurovy - manželé Hrobařovi
7. +George and Marian Eisenstein - Libby Pelc
8. for the intentions of Joe Kocáb (80th b-day) - friends
9. in gratitude (Bishop Esterka 49th anniv priesthood)
10. +George Martinku - Jean Hoard
11. +Tomíka Šachu - matka Dagmar Rus
12. +Petra Vranu - manželka Jarka
13. +Emma Eisenstein - Libby Pelc
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27. za živé a zemřelé členy české síně Karlín - Joe Kocáb
28. +Franka Cupala - přátelé
29. +Justina A. Dobb - přátelé
30. +Mildred Forsythe - přátelé

FROM THE DESK OF BISHOP ESTERKA



Dear Friends of our Czech Mission in California

● In these days we live in an atmosphere of political competition. Although it has so far focused on discussions of candidates of only one political party, the atmosphere is quite tense. One can expect that the situation will get rougher, when the prize in the political arena will be the position of President of the United States. It is certain that he who will be elected in November to lead us in the coming years should be a man of sterling character who knows how to work best with the "other" side. There are many reasons why we should try even now, before the election, to pick the candidate who will be able to be a calm and able captain in rough seas. We all know that this is probably the most important office in the world. For the next pre-election months, I wish you a lot of patience and courage. May the candidate, whose program is closest to the will of God, win the election.

● I write these lines the day before departing for Texas, where I was invited by the University of St. Thomas in Houston to participate in the "Mosaics of Faith" program, which is sponsored by the International Studies Center and will feature the Czech Republic this year. It will be attended by representatives of the Protestants, and Orthodox Christians and Jews. The theme is the influence of faith on society. Since I am familiar with the situation of the Catholic Church in Bohemia and Moravia after the Velvet Revolution in 1989 I will speak to the Catholic situation. I am glad to participate in this program, because it is never a bad thing to get new information about religious life in the country where the Church and its members for 40 years was persecuted, harassed and arrested simply because they believed in God, and therefore refused to blindly accept the teaching of Marx and Lenin. Meanwhile, while the Communists managed to seize industrial enterprises in cities and expropriate land from the peasants in the villages, they failed to destroy the faith. Of course, nothing is true in all cases or for all people. Though banned and persecuted, traditional ways were not completely wiped out. Conversely, faith often blossomed in places where it could not be expected. Before the Velvet Revolution in our country, the "underground church" was formed, and spiritual movements emerged, such as the "Focolare Movement," whose roots are in Italy (founded by Chiara Lubica). But other organizations focused on faith came alive, for example, the Charismatic movement, as well as traditional religious orders who awakened to new life Salesians, dedicated to youth, Dominicans, Benedictines, Premonstrats and now the Church will get back property stolen by the Communists in February '48.

Lent is an opportunity to spend forty days with Jesus

The possibilities of Lent are invaluable and too obvious. The 40-day period reminds us of certain events that have shaped the life and history of ancient Israel and that have value for us Christians. Think, for example, of the forty stay of Moses on Mount Sinai, from which came the gift of the Ten Commandments.

Lent invites us to spend those forty days in prayer and fasting as Jesus did in the wilderness before



he began work publicly. On Ash Wednesday together with Christians around the world we start a journey of reflection and prayer, in which we spiritually ascend to Mount Calvary and contemplate the central mysteries of our faith. In this way we are preparing for ourselves for the mystery of the Cross transformed into the Easter joy of resurrection.

Lent encourages us to let the word of God pervade our lives and recognize the fundamental truths of who we are, where we come from and where we are heading, which way is correct and worthy of our calling as followers of Christ.

Lent offers a way to help us open our eyes to our weaknesses and open our hearts to Christ's merciful love. Lent leads us closer to God, and thus also allows us to look at our neighbors and their needs with new eyes. They represent the will of God and are Christ's face for us. When we see our neighbor with different eyes, we see his personality, the revelation of what he is, and we recognize her needs and sorrows as our own.

Lent is an opportunity to turn to love

Based on the book 365 days with Benedict XVI

*On the street I saw a girl
cold and shivering in a thin
dress, with little hope of a
decent meal. I became angry
and said to God: "Why did
You permit this? Why don't
You do something about it?"
For a while God said nothing.
That night He replied quite
suddenly: "I certainly did
something about it.
I made you."*

Sr. Mary Rose Mcgready, Covenant House.

COMMENTS CBK CENSUS RESULTS 2011

The first results of the Czech Statistical Office on the 2011 census showed that almost 14% of CR (1 and a half million people) actively signed up to a Church. Still about one third of the population stated that they practice no religion. Over 700 thousand people say they respond to the voice of faith, but not to the church. The rest, which is almost half the population, have no interest at all in the issue of faith.

The Catholic Church was named by 1 million, 084 thousand inhabitants, which is just over 10% of citizens in the census. Therefore, the bishops thank this ten percent for their free expression of faith, and belonging to a church with its practice and discipline. They wonder, however, why half the population refused to state their relationship to any faith. Therefore, we should also consider the issue of trust in the state and other institutions.

Compared to the 2001 census, when only 10% of respondents did not comment, this time half of the nation did not respond. This suggests that dramatic changes in religiousness probably occurred. Such a finding corresponds with the experience of the Church, which maintains a stable long-term record of visiting the Sunday services, and counting the number of baptisms.

The Czech Bishops' Conference wishes to thank all those who have decided to volunteer to answer the questions honestly. The detailed results of the census can be expected to be published in 2012. A large number of respondents will allow for a better evaluation and assessment of the activities of the church.





CONGRATULATIONS

Stella Jasmin Hostalkova Hungate was baptized by Bishop Peter Esterka at the Pope John Paul II Polish Center on February 12, 2012. Her parents are Paul J. Hungate and Jana Hostalkova. The sponsors were Phyllis Ann Hungate and Vera Arnold. Please remember this family in your prayers and show them that they are welcome in our community.

Mystery Upon Mystery

The moon rises late, long before I dream.
Wisdom, and the supreme first cause lie hidden
under darkness, the profound cloud goes on.

I close my eyes to see what is beyond mind,
beyond brightness, to the center of the core,
praise the common fire that devours the flames.

Where do I find you? In my spouse, the flower,
mountain buds and salty streams. I hear you
in my heart where the spheres can't contain you,

approach you and call, breathing without a sound.

Oh strange fragrance, why don't I find you
when Everything appears right in front of me?

Leonard J. Cirino in America, February 20, 2012

(Editor's note: In the Czech version we featured a Slovak poem sent by Olga Rajec. Since it has been found "untranslatable" we offer this one for our English readers.)



The Bible: In art, in history, the internet, at camp, at the cinema ...

Reading is by no means the only way to make an encounter with the message of the Bible

When you say the "Bible," most people think of a large, thick book. Reading is far from the only way to access the content and transmit the essence of the Scriptures. We talked to the acting director of the Czech Catholic Biblical works, Dominic Opatr, about other current options.

In what ways can we connect with the Scriptures?

Whether you read it yourself or with others, Scripture is most at home in the church community. Besides the importance of reading the Bible is prayer - both are linked in the **liturgy**, which is our most valuable and most important meeting place with the Scriptures. But it should not be the only place.

The Bible is also part of our **culture**. Therefore, many references are found in the visual arts, music and literature. Children learn about the Bible and in Czech history, the school held a competition on biblical themes, and many were focused in exhibitions. The Bible penetrates into the newer media as well: **the movie** (The Passion of Jesus Christ or Prince of Egypt) or the **internet**. We receive SMS messages every day, often with biblical quotes. There are various **computer programs** to work with the Bible: from open source software to expensive programs designed for working professionals. The Austrian Biblical Society published several CD-ROMs with Bible games and quizzes.

Do these different ways always convey the same value?

By using different media focused on the Bible we can convey much important and interesting information. Of course we should always check - especially on the internet - whether information is credible and who is the author. Different approaches to the Bible are certainly not equivalent.

For whom should this be an opportunity?

It depends on the interests and personalities of each. The person who is passionate about art, will soon encounter biblical themes in the greatest Masterpieces. Ancient history yields other contacts. Whoever enjoys computers, can learn to use different software to work with the Bible and to research it more deeply..

For children it is good when their parents tell Bible stories, but the key place for the Bible is in religion classes, catechesis and children's mass. Holidays are opportunities, for example, for children's games inspired by the flight into Egypt or Paul's missionary journeys. For young people and adults, community is an important context in which they work with the Scriptures. For ideas about the visual and dramatic techniques, biblical theatre and drama, you'd better listen to another lecture. Everyone should be directed to listen to God's word at Mass – the priest in his homily can prepare the faithful for greater understanding.

How does such a computer program help us know the Bible?

For example, our neighbors have created the Slovak Theophilus program, which is online for free downloads including different language versions. There is also a Czech translation (unfortunately not liturgical), which includes the deuterocanonical books, such as Judith and Maccabees). The program allows you to assign pictures and verses, text and audio commentaries, you create indexes, etc. Perhaps the most important feature for each such program is searching: we can find a verse that we remember from the church, but we do not know where to look, if we enter even a word or phrase. Sometimes just



looking for a word, such as journey – can be a challenging way to look up what the Bible says about our life journey, or may give us appropriate verses to accompany us when traveling.

You are invited to attend



OUR CZECH LITURGY

In SAN DIEGO our Mass will be on Saturday, March 17 at 4:00 in the afternoon at St. John's Church on the corner of Normal and Lincoln.

In LOS ANGELES our Mass will be on Sunday, March 18 at 1:30 in the afternoon at the Polish Center, 3999 Rose Drive, Yorba Linda, CA 92886. Immediately after Mass a meal will be served. A donation of \$10.00 is requested, \$5.00 for parky.

IN SAN FRANCISCO our Mass will be on Sunday, March 25 at 11:00 in the morning at Star of the Sea Church, 4420 Geary Blvd, San Francisco, CA.

For EASTER/APRIL: SD 7, LA 8, SF 15.

March 19: Saint Joseph is a figure in the Gospels, the husband of the Virgin Mary and the earthly father of Jesus Christ (in distinction to God the Father, his "heavenly father"). Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, many historians believe Joseph probably had died before Jesus entered public ministry.

Joseph is the patron of the dying because, assuming he died before Jesus' public life, he died with Jesus and Mary close to him, the way we all would like to leave this earth.

Joseph is also patron of the universal Church, fathers, carpenters, and social justice.

