

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
Third Sunday after Trinity
June 21, 2026
rmcneely+

So a clergyman dies and is standing in line at the gates of Heaven before St Peter. The guy in front of him is dressed in dark glasses, a loud Hawaiian shirt, jeans and a leather coat.

St Peter says: “Who are you that I may know whether to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?” The guy says I am Farouk Said, taxi driver from New York City. St Peter consults his list and after a time, smiles and says: Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The trumpets blare and the taxi driver enters in to Heaven. The clergyman stood erect and in a loud voice declared: I am the Rev Canon Richard M McNeely Jr. Vicar of St Thomas Church, San Francisco.

St Peter consults his list and says Take this polyester robe and this plastic staff. A flute squeaked as St Peter declared; enter into the kingdom of Heaven

The clergyman says, there must be some mistake, I was a priest for many years. That man was a taxi driver and you gave him a silken robe and golden staff.

St Peter says. You don't understand father, Up here we work by results.

While you preached, people slept.

While he drove, people prayed.

Nothing whatsoever to do with today's sermon. I just thought we could use a little chuckle this morning.

Today the church places us in the hands of St Peter and St Luke.
 In his epistle, Peter cautions us of one kind of search
 And in his Gospel, St Luke informs us of another.

Luke writes of the time when Jesus was among the hated publicans
 And other sinners
 To preach repentance and a new way of life.

Some Pharisees noticed what He was doing
 And used the occasion to condemn Him
 Indicting that Jesus associated with vermin,
 Even ate with them at table,
 Surely proving that He was one of them
 And a man to be shunned, disgraced and ignored.

Jesus answered with a series of three famous parables.
 We have two of them in today's Gospel.

He begins with a lost sheep
 One of 100 in the flock
 The shepherd drops what he is doing
 and searches far and wide until he finds the lost sheep.
 He returns with the sheep on his shoulders
 With great celebration.

Jesus follows that parable with the second
 One of 10 coins lost
 The woman searches until she finds it
 And there is great celebration.

The third parable is the Prodigal Son
 One of two sons
 The Father is in the field daily
 looking for the return of his son.

We will visit this famous parable in 6 weeks.

In each of the parables something valuable is lost
 And each parable the relationship of that which is lost to the
 whole is increased
 One of one hundred sheep
 One of ten coins, and
 One of two sons.

And in each succeeding parable that which is lost
 Is of increasingly greater value
 A sheep
 A silver coin
 A son.

He has captured the Pharisee's attention.
 And then delivers the heart of the parables.
 The search.
 The searcher in each parable, the shepherd, the woman and the
 father
 Are actively searching for that which is lost.
 The celebration when it is found.
 There is a celebration among the friends and relatives.

Then, just in case the Pharisees didn't get it
 Jesus summarizes it for them
 "Likewise, I say unto you,
 there is joy in the presence of the angels of God
 over one sinner that repenteth."

The Pharisees were silenced
 But we learn something quite marvelous
 The shepherd, the woman and the father of the parables
 Stand for God, in the stories.
 When we become lost
 God is actively searching for us.
 To find us and to bring us home to Return us.

God does not sit in the corner and wait for us to find our way home
He is actively searching to find us.

Our Lord came first and foremost
to seek and to save those
that were lost,
however, degraded and excluded from respectable society.
To Him every individual was of infinite worth because he was the
object of God's redeeming love.

Let's now hear from St Luke
And the other search on this Sunday.

He warns us to "be sober
Be vigilant
Because our adversary the devil
As a roaring lion
Walketh about
Seeking whom he will devour".

Have you ever thought you have encountered evil?
The devil and his minions at work?
Felt the heat of his breath on the back of your neck?

We live in a broken world.
Where the devil is surely in power.
Forces are at play to remove God from the public square
And to relegate Him to these walls.
To inhibit us from the free exercise of Christianity
To make us feel embarrassed
or even ashamed to proclaim his Name.

A world broken by wanton violence and fraud and larceny.
A world saturated in the obsession of self.

Peter has been there,
 Lived it.
 And has sage advice for us.
 Be sober,
 He is not talking about intoxication
 He is warning that we must be clear headed
 Serious and rational as we view the world.

He warns us to be vigilant.
 We aware and
 be on the lookout, for the evil that lurks in our lives.
 Be ready to defend ourselves.

So the message this third Sunday in Trinity, is about searches:
 God searching to save us
 And the devil searching to devour us.

Today's ancient Collect is a prayer from the 13th Century
 But it is precisely what is needed seeking God's mighty aid
 to "defend us from all dangers and adversities".

Peter leaves us with a ray of bright hope.

"But God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by
 Christ Jesus,
 after that ye have suffered a while,
 make you perfect,
 stablish,
 strengthen,
 settle you.

