

**Man of Holiness, Thomas Aquinas;
Man of head and heart, Thomas Aquinas**

A homily,

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Church of Our Saviour (Episcopal)

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Wisdom 7:7-14

Psalm 37: 3-6, 32-33

Matthew 13: 47-52

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy ghost.

Let me declare a few matters about the Saint, Thomas Aquinas. He believed that God loved mankind, that God was love, and as one story goes regarding this brilliant man of mind and heart.

St. Thomas was frequently abstracted and in [ecstasy](#). Towards the end of his life the [ecstasies](#) became more frequent. On one occasion, at [Naples](#) in 1273, after he had completed his treatise on the [Eucharist](#), three of the brethren saw him lifted in [ecstasy](#), and they heard a [voice](#) proceeding from the [crucifix on the altar](#), saying "Thou hast written well of me, Thomas; what reward wilt thou have?" Thomas replied, "None other than Thyself, Lord"

Another source says:

The end of 1225 is usually assigned as the [time](#) of his birth. ... (1227 is the more probable [date](#).) All agree that he died in 1274.

Yes, we are talking about a man, a Saint of great thought, powerful heart, and relationship to God so strong he is considered a Saint. Through the centuries this man has been one of the seminal thinkers of Christianity. We celebrate his Feast Day in Church today, January 28, 2009, and remember that he posited that there is God. His faith and arguments so strong, as I say, they influence Christianity today. That is more than 850 years after his death, and all the time between. That makes one think of things that matter, those that last, the matters of the Church and Christ.

His writings, as summarized by one source:

In his Sacred doctrine, Thomas' fivefold proof of the existence of God posited the following.

- There is first the mover, unmoved, a first cause in the chain of causes. This absolutely necessary being, “an absolutely perfection being”, is a rational designer.
- In this connection thoughts of unity, infinity, unchangeableness, and goodness of the highest exist. These matters are deduced.
- The spiritual being of God is defined as thinking and willing. His knowledge is absolutely perfect. He knows himself and all things appointed by him. Every knowing being strives after the thing known, as end, and will is implied in knowing.
- As God knows himself as perfect good, he wills himself to this end. God wills everything; everything is brought by divine will in the relation of means to an end.
- God wills good to every being, which exists. He loves it. Therefore, love is the fundamental relation of God to the world.
- The divine love exists for every creature in like measure. The good assured by love to the individual exists for different beings in various degrees.
- The loving God gives to every being what it needs in relation to practical reason, affording the idea of moral law.

I want to emphasize that Christian living, and receiving God’s love isn’t limited to Saints and Holy men and women. They, too, strove and practiced living lives that in knowing the goodness of God, the life of Christ, and the redemption and need for turning, turning, turning each day towards a way of life that is for neighbor and Christ, responded to the New and Old Testament, The Bible (see Wisdom 7: 7-14). Though we fall and fail, we do again.

Thomas lived a life of Biblical wisdom.

After all, as we think of Saint Thomas, we have much in common as Christians, and it is in part that which we have in common that is also indicative of our living Communion with the Saints. Is this not a miracle of Christ? A miracle of love?

For we Christians, love is the answer. There is also the community of the moral, of ethics, of what we know as Christian living. This man has contributed much to our way of Christian living. Let us remember him, and as one of our readings today says of his way of life as we celebrate him:

He lived a life of Humility—

Do not say, “He will consider the great number of my gifts, / and when I make an offering to the Most High God, he will accept it.

Though a Dominican all his life, originally this Doctor of the Church, was foiled and discouraged from living a life directed towards holiness, and in becoming a Dominican he became more so less presumptive of God. By less presumptive I mean he did not presume on God to be but a man. As history tells us, a year before the end of his life, St. Thomas stopped writing, burned much of his work, and said it was all so much "straw." Seemingly extreme, the Saint and Holy Man does in such ways abandon himself to God.

The kind of family efforts to dissuade him from becoming a Dominican included kidnapping. At one time, Thomas on the way to Rome was seized by his brothers and brought back to his parents at the castle of S. Giovanni There he was held a captive for a year or two and besieged with prayers, threats, and even sensual temptation to make him relinquish his purpose. Finally the family yielded and the Dominican order sent Thomas to Cologne to study under Albertus Magnus, where he arrived probably toward the end of 1244. He accompanied Albertus to Paris in 1245, remained there with his teacher.

Holy man he became and was, and he lived a life of teaching, praying, and learning. His faith led him to fulfill telling us Truth:

He lived a life of Truth—

Do not devise a lie against your brother, /or do the same to a friend.

He lived a life considerate in speech and self-control—

Do not babble in the assembly of the elders, /and do not repeat yourself when you pray.

The intentions of Thomas' heart were good, as our Lectionary quote from the Bible implies. His prayers were of strong and pure intention. When he prayed, he prayed so that he did please God through his respect of intention so that individual prayers were not repeated. This does not mean he did not say repeated prayers, as a chant, or that he did not say prayers that were stated differently so that they revealed the facets of his need and heart. These things are presumed.

Thank you for your attention this day. As a say, Thomas was a man of love in Christ, a man who believed and demonstrated with reason and through heart and head there is a God, we celebrate the life and teachings of Thomas Aquinas.

May the Lord bless and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine up us and be gracious to us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.