ST. THOMAS DAY SUPPLEMENT

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AQUINAS AND EDUCATION
They Have Asked

THEY have asked of our patron:—
"Teacher, what is truth that men
Have seen it not nor search in quest
Of wisdom for its understanding.
Even though the winds of early March
Declare in overtones the desolation
Of their souls, the hunger in their hearts;
Can wretchedness, despair be truth,
Is it but the awesome torch designed
To purge humanity from man—
Teacher, tell us, what is truth?"

These are the words the starving spirit
Utters when the earth is sorrow-dark.
And the cold March winds scream hatred
To a world broken by fear and freighted
With disease and pain—
These are the phrases of the anguished soul.

And the answer comes from him
Whose life was spent in teaching men
The mystery of Love, the mystery of God;
Whose mission was the mastery of truth.
He speaks, Aquinas speaks, for everyone
To hear of the Triune Creator of firmaments,
Of the suns that whirl in space,
Of worlds uncharted,
Of time unknown.
He tells them of the God of Power,
And the God of Wisdom,
And the God of Mercy.
He tells them of the God-Man which is Christ;
He fills the famished mind with food
Which does not pass away upon the taste.
It is for this he is revered.
For this he is blessed.
For this he is sanctified.

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The Angelic Teacher

ST. THOMAS, Doctor Angelicus and most renowned of Christian thinkers, lived a model life and was a model teacher. Through his spirit of prayer, his profound humility, perfect obedience and universal charity, he inspired all who came in contact with him—whether they be high ecclesiastics, his professors, his brethren, his students or even the most ignorant peasant who heard but one of his famous Lenten sermons.

St. Thomas was born in the castle of Roccasecca, near Aquino, in the kingdom of Naples, Italy, in the early part of 1225. His father, Count Landulf, was a nephew of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and on his mother's side he was descended from the Norman Barons who had conquered Sicily two centuries before. The Aquino family could claim relationship with St. Gregory the Great, and was allied by blood to St. Louis of France and St. Ferdinand of Castille.

The future vocation and sanctity of the little Thomas had been predicted to his mother, the Countess Theodora, by a holy hermit of the name of Bruno; and, while he was yet an infant, God's watchful Providence over him was manifested in a striking manner. A terrific thunderstorm burst over the castle, and his nurse and his little sister were struck dead in the very chamber in which Thomas slept unharmed.

When St. Thomas was five years old, his parents sent him to the celebrated Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino to be educated. There, the quiet meditating Aquinas was taught the first elements of knowledge. The Dominican, Fra Tolomeo da Lucca, who was his confessor, declared that besides grammar—which in those days included the study of poetry—St. Thomas studied logic and philosophy at the Abbey. In particular, he was Aquinas, learned at the monastery the fragmentary Latin Grammar of the period, and committed to memory the Psalter and passages from the poets. He also read Aesop's Fables, Theologiae the Sentences of Cato, and other ancient classics. Ovid, Horace, Persius, Virgil, Quintilian and Aris-
The Angelic Teacher

everything opposed to the truths of Faith, while at the same time he
chase the terms of the Stagirite's philosophy as the most scientific
classification of the ideas of the human mind. In short he estab-
lished a system of Christian phil-

Because of his humility and his
love for defending the faith, St.
Thomas begged to be excused from
accepting the Archdiocesic of
Naples offered to him by Urban
IV. Instead of the honor of being
an Archbishop, all the holy Doctor
implied was that the Feast of the
Blessed Sacrament should be ex-
tended to the universal Church.

The Pontiff consented and or-
dered St. Thomas to write the of-
office of the Feast. The resulting
office which contains among other
inspiring hymns, the O Salutaris
and Tantum Ego, which are sung
at Benediction.

In the latter years of his life
Thomas was occupied with the
Summa Theologica, which is a com-
pendium of all questions of Cath-
olic Theology and also a summation
of philosophy. At death he had
completed up to and including the
ninetieth question of the Third
Part.

Suffering from illness when he
received a request from Pope Greg-
ory to attend a general Church con-
ference, the Angelic Doctor never-
theless attempted to go. On the

way he was taken seriously ill; and
wishing to die in a religious home,
he was taken to the Abbey of Fossa
Nuova.

At the monastery St. Thomas re-
ceived the generous hospitality of
the monks with the utmost humil-
ity. As the end approached, he re-
ceived the last Sacraments and ut-
tered for the last time his favorite
exclamation, “Thou, O Christ, art
the King of glory, Thou art the
everlasting son of the Father.”

He died on March 7, 1274. A mag-
ificent tribute to the life of purity
and devotion which St. Thomas led
was the funeral eulogy delivered
by Brother Reginald, a life-long
friend. In a short address, often
interrupted by his own sobs and
those of his hearers, Brother Regi-
nald declared that he could solemn-
ly attest that St. Thomas had never
lost his baptismal innocence and
had died as pure and free from
stain of sin as a child of five.

St. Thomas was canonized by
Pope John XXII on July 18, 1323.
In 1567 he was pronounced “The An-
gelic Doctor” by Pope Pius V.
Leo XIII, in his encyclical Aeterni
Patris declared him “The Prince
and Master of all Scholastic Docs-
ors.” By a degree dated August 4,
1880, the same Pontiff designated
him Patron of Catholic Universi-
ties, Academies, Colleges and
Schools throughout the world.

Thomas On Teaching

I

N THE 117th question of the
first article of the first part
of the Summa, St. Thomas asks the question: “Can one man

In the world can do him no good
unless they adopt methods which
will stimulate the activity of his
mind. No one can know for
another, each one must know for
himself. Teachers help us in
knowing. It is not wise to make
things too easy for learners; if the
mind of the pupil is not called
upon to digest and assimilate the food
administered by the teacher, the
knowledge communicated, often
with great pains on the part of the
teacher, will be like water poured
into a sieve.

The foregoing St. Thomas’ phil-
osophy of education, is exemplified
by the life of the medieval uni-
versity.

In that life, as throughout the
middle ages, the one absorbing
science was theology. The whole
form of learning pointed to the
study of religion as the great
terminus of the human mind, and
the one right road from earth to
heaven. The liberal arts were but
a careful and laborious preparation
for philosophy or logic. Logic, in
turn, was only valuable inasmuch
as it was an instrument for the or-
dering, defending, and proving the
great truths of revelation. The
great object of life was to know
God.

The Holy Scripture, the Lomb-
ard, and Aristotle were the three
great bases on which the active
intellect of the thirteenth century
rested. In its development and
analysis of truth.

One scholar said: “All science
should be referred to the knowl-
eedge of Christ. The scholar should
go along the road to the well (like
Isaacs), that is, through the assist-
ing sciences to theology. Logic is
good, which teaches us how to
separate truth from falsehood.
Grammar is good, which teaches us
how to write and speak correctly.
Rhetoric is good, which teaches us
to speak with elegance, and to per-
suade; geometry is good, which
teaches us to measure the earth
on which we dwell; so is arithmetic,
or the art of reckoning, by which
we can convince ourselves of the
small number of our days; and
music, which teaches us our har-
monies, and makes us think of the
sweet song of the ‘Blessed’; and
finally, astronomy, which makes us
consider the heavenly bodies, and
the virtue of the stars, daring
forth splendor before God. But
much better is theology, which
alone can truly be called a liberal
art, because it frees the human
soul from its miseries.”
Today's Education

"He (Thomas Aquinas) enlightened the Church more than all the other Doctors; a man can derive more profit from his books in one year than from a lifetime spent in pondering the philosophy of others."

—Pope John XXII

varies both in principle and practice from that of Thomas. Today colleges reject, in the main, the eternal truths that animate the teaching philosophy of the patron of schools. Because of this rejection their principles and practices must necessarily vary.

A look first at the social world of the modern college will illustrate the variations. Today colleges are not towards education for value, stressing the practical and mechanical. The students themselves reject this attitude, living within their schools the amoral life that they will enter into after graduation. Social and extracurricular activities are emphasized for their practical value in later life, while the emphasis on sports needs no underscoring here.

What is, in general, the educational philosophy that animates these practices? During the past fifty years changes have been made in the teaching of educational topics. The scientific investigations of the last half century have concerned themselves with the sense of rote, with the student being required only to spew back to the teacher the ideas that had been absorbed. Now, under the prod of science, changes were made, so that the student was expected to learn more from his own experience and practice. Experimental teaching was then emphasized, with the student allowed to progress along his own natural lines.

This is not far from the teachings of Thomas on education. The devices proposed for teaching are similar to those he himself proposed in his philosophy. The difference comes in when we investigate the reasons behind the new philosophy. James, Dewey, and company conceive of man as a mere mechanism, while Thomas has in mind the true nature of man, and his eternal happiness. So the tragic dichotomy that has entered Western civilization since the Protestant Revolt is exemplified in education.

Some of the trends in education, and their opposites in Thomas are evident. One is naturalism. In the demands of a world in which society was paramount, it tends to the other side and sets up society as its own god. In those educational philosophies that are socialistic, conduct is right when it produces social good, and is wrong when it is against society. Religion is made a function of society, and thus this theory runs contrary to the ends of the church. The social activities mentioned at the beginning of this article tend to this view, making

"A last triumph was reserved for this incomparable man—namely to compel the homage, praise and adoration of even the very enemies of the Catholic name."

—Leo XIII

the student life faithfully reproduce and teach the norms of society.

Socialism is in turn divided into views, both exalting the state. One, Communism, has completely subjugated the state to the social and its doctrines taught by some naturalists, and the evident evidence philosophically but materially in every detail. Nationalism, as exemplified by the various forms of fascism, makes education philosophically subject to the state, but leaves many of its details to the individual.

All of these views of education contain, it is true, some elements of truth. For this reason they are extremely difficult to combat.

—Pius XIII

When we learn that some of the teachings of Dewey parallel those of Thomas, we may be led to think of all his philosophy as correct. Only if we learn the entire teachings of Thomas upon education can we correct these false tendencies. Only if these are instituted in all schools according to the dictate of Leo XIII will youth be able to realize its true value as part of a society that recognizes God and eternal happiness as the final ends.

Reading List

Essays In Thomism by R. E. Brennan, O.P.
The Man From Rocca Sleea by R. M. Coffey, O.P.
St. Thomas Aquinas: His Personality and Thought by E. Gilson
Reputation of St. Thomas Aquinas Among English Protestant Thinkers In the Thirteenth Century by J. Ryan
Philosophy of Science by F. J. Sheen
St. Thomas Aquinas by Gerald Vann, O.P.
St. Thomas Aquinas by P. Conway
Labors and Life of St. Thomas of Aquin by R. B. Vaughan, O.S.B.
St. Thomas Aquinas by Gilbert Chesterton
A Companion to the Summa (four volumes) by W. Farrell, O.P.
Social Progress And Happiness In the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas by F. J. De La Vega
The Interior Life of St. Thomas Aquinas by M. Grabmann
Moral Values And Moral Life by E. Gilson
The Angelic Doctor by J. Maritain
Dominican Saints edited by the Dominican Fathers
St. Thomas And The Gentiles by Mortimer J. Adler
Thomistic Psychology by R. E. Brennan, O.P.
Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas by E. Gilson
St. Thomas And The World State by R. M. Hutchins
St. Thomas And The Problem Of Evil by J. Maritain
St. Thomas Aquinas, Angel of the Schools by J. Maritain
St. Thomas And The Greeks by Anton Pegis
St. Thomas And The Problem Of The Soul In the Thirteenth Century—by A. Pegis
Thomas In The Modern World

License And Liberty

The modern meaning of "academic freedom" on the college campus shows us how far we have deviated from the ideas of the Angelic Doctor. Logically developed this freedom has no limits except those which the individual himself may establish, a far cry from the Deo-centric system of thought established by Thomas. In practice, morals and, most particularly, patriotism tend to establish some bounds, but as we shall see it is still more of a licence, than of a liberty.

To Aquinas freedom was a choice between means to a definitely established end, eternal happiness. These means, since they must lead to this end, are of necessity in keeping with the end. Thus they cannot violate eternal truths, or the natural truths that flow from them. Truth itself is a knowledge with reality established by God, and was as immutable as its creator.

In contrast to this, modern educational practice holds the ideal that truth is knowledge, i.e. anything that man can experience or conceive. For them academic freedom is the right to disseminate any form of this to anyone. The attempt to stress eternal verities is decried as not permitting the formation of a well sized education, and thus a failure on the part of the educators. That this system is impractical from the very fact of human nature is apparent from the limitations that are set upon it. For example, we see in United States, universities the forbidding of the teaching of Communism, not because of any intrinsic wrong in Communism itself, but rather because the state is menaced by it. Similarly on various moral practices there are only certain views that can be preached because the masses of society protest against them, morally and traditionally.

This is, of course, the extreme of academic freedom. There is another type with which Thomas could find no fault, the right of teachers, all of whom accept God-given truths as absolute, to teach in any manner they found fitting, and to experiment to discover new material truths about the universe. From his teacher, Albert the Great, the Patron of Schools learned the value of ripping aside the traditional coverings of truth, to find out if what is being taught is as correct as man can make it. He himself recast several of the tenets of Christian philosophy differently, for from his knowledge they were not correct in all particulars. A noted example of this is seen in his acceptance of Aristotle as the "philosopher." Prior to the time of Thomas, Aristotle was rejected by many theologians and philosophers because his teachings had become distorted in their transmission through the Arabs. With the help of new translations, taken from the originals, Aquinas established Aristotle as the paramount Greek philosopher.

So we see the contrast between the true and the false notions of academic freedom. One sets the individual up as the final arbiter of truth, the other, accepting eternal norms, allows him to exercise his rational nature to its fullest. In our universities today, unfortunately, it is the first that is accepted. From it springs the loosened morality of the modern world, for when the youth of a country is taught that each is his own judge, there can be little following of what is truly right. The birthright of humanity, reason, is being thrown away in a vain quest for eternal truth.

Fortunately the teachings of Thomas as to the true nature of truth still exist. From them can be gleaned the notions that should shape academic freedom, the holding to divine truths while attempting to further human ones.

Science And Men

In an academic world in which the laboratory seems so removed from the ways of the liberal arts student that a routine lecture in a "science" subject would present a terminology of unknown meanings, it is no wonder that criticism is leveled at the experimental sciences. When to this is added the attitude—somewhat on the wane today, but for too long a time prevalent among scientists, such as Millikan,—that with the "discovery" of the experimental method culminated in the nineteenth century, the rational person discarded "all intuitive axioms on the one hand and authority on the other such as had been the foundation of the medieval scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas and his successors;" and appealed to the trial of brute facts, the problem becomes two-sided.

And because both viewpoints reflect basic unfamiliarity with the true nature of what their proponents regard as fields that are worlds apart, the problem becomes a very human one, attackable, as so many others, by education.

The deliberate dismissal, supposedly by way of replacement, of traditional philosophy by scientists is, of course, more prevalent than is criticism of modern science. The ordinary thinking person may feel somewhat helpless before the intricacies of technology, but he cannot help thinking of, for example, medical and agricultural developments which have so manifestly helped him. But a fundamental criticism of experimental science as such, rather than of the outlook of scientists, can only be the product of a misunderstanding of the ways in which knowledge.

Thompson points out that "the history of science and philosophy suggests that the constant practice of deduction induces mental intoxication" whereby the possible and the real become indistinguishable. Before proceeding to educate, then, the world about us has to be considered in our immediate knowledge of things, of which natural science is but the extension. Not that by induction man attains certainty, for as the realistic Doctor puts it, "he who proceeds... through syllogisms to a universal, does not demonstrate... (induction has) to take for granted that all things contained in a class have been considered."

Experimental science goes just so far. In the formulation of theories, that is, incomplete inductions implying suspense of judgment, science reaches ahead of its present status a bit by providing food for thought, but the limits remain. Yet, notwithstanding this proportional untestability of a thing the more immersed in matter is its essence, still man has dominion over a huge concrete world, and induction prepares its mastery.

And, from the viewpoint of practical examples in the laboratories and classrooms, Aquinas, the Educator, provides for the master's proposing "some sensible examples, either by way of likeness or opposition, or something of the sort, from which the intellect of the learner is led to the knowledge of truth previously unknown."

The other problematic attitude, in the field of science, which looks upon philosophical thought as a thing of a past age is closely related. It is the other side of a misunderstanding of the distinction between inductive and deductive science.

The low ebb which inductive reasoning had reached by the time of Descartes perhaps caused its existence to be forgotten, along with its contribution to modern deductive science, as philosophy. Once forgotten, the touch with reality was lost, philosophy became a nightmare of quantities and feelings, and the re-birth of experimentation, without the rebirth of the realization of its proper place in the scheme of knowledge (nor even of the true nature of that scheme) brought with it a scathing revulsion to Scholasticism, of which St. Thomas is the best exponent, on the basis of misidentification.

Of course Thomas' use of authority was for its superior exposition of reality. Of course the intuitive axioms were not convenient fabrications, as implied, but rather the recognition of an existing situation. Common knowledge! Not without at least a nodding, but true acquaintance with Scholastic thought.

But, the fact remains that even without such knowledge, the scientist, for example, when he describes, is utilizing the very principles he has proclaimed as unrecognizable! identity, contradiction, etc. He even presumes such philosophical entities as "thing" and "substance." This granted, there can be no doubt as to the validity of an essentially more certain knowledge having the same beginnings. Concommitantly, as recently excellently set forth by Pope Pius XII in his recent address to the Pontifical Academy of Science, modern science has verified and deepened two essential characteristics of the cosmos, "1) the mutability of things, including their origin and their end and 2) the teleological order which stands out in every corner of the cosmos," facts which constitute the first and fifth ways of St. Thomas proofs for the existence of God.

But the scientists as such is bound to induction. Even the biologist's prediction of the presence of a genus factor in a particular species is but a descending induction, since it does not identify two concepts by means of a third, as in deduction, whose smooth certain
Why Sports?

ST. THOMAS knew that there were persons who took life too seriously for their own good and the good of society. In his time there were the extremely long-faced Albigensians in the southern French provinces, the extremely eager Averroists at the University of Paris, and pessimists in and about Cologne all opposed to the idea of recreation. But St. Thomas realized that recreation was an essential part of the life of man. He knew that man needed relaxation of some type. He strikes this vexing problem at the heart when he cites St. Augustine: "I pray thee spare thyself at times, for it becomes a wise man sometimes to relax the pressure of his attention to work." To further enlarge upon this principle underlying recreation he tells the story which Cassian relates in his Conference of the Fathers.

It seems that St. John the Evangelist was playing games with his disciples. A group of pre-Cromwell Puritans, passing along the road, raised their eyebrows to indicate that they were utterly abashed. In a true anti-Puritan attitude, St. John invited one of them to shoot an arrow. The invited man kept in shooting the arrow. When the Puritan was well intrigued by the sport, St. John bade him send the arrow and it would happen if he were to shoot the arrow without a let-up. The Puritan answered that the bow

realize that excessive sports enthusiasm would lead to drinking and revelry. We can safely say that the Angelic Doctor would not approve of the present "big time" attitude on sports as it prevails at many of our institutions.

He believed in sports for the sake of man, not man for the sake of sports. It would sadden him to see the commercialism which has crept into collegiate sports today.

We would not want people to realize the joke of St. Thomas was against sports; he realized that indulgence in games was as natural as eating and sleeping, but he would be dead set against the practice of athletes going to school to play football primarily and to gain an education secondarily. For an athlete to go to an institution of learning and be given credits in the arts, swimming, water skiing, and pottery making in order to be eligible for football is a commonplace incident, but such a practice would receive a hearty condemnation from Aquinas.

Using St. Thomas' principles as a basis we can say that a complete sports program for our colleges would be approved by St. Thomas, but there must be enjoyment and delight gained from these sports; if a sport is played for the renumeration to be obtained then it

is to be abominiated. The object of all subsidization of college students is to allow the person a chance to gain and education, not an opportunity to better himself on the gridiron. If a person as a result

The definition of law contained in Thomas' Summa I-II, Q. 90 is based on four keynotes: a dictate of right reason, published, lawful authority, and for the common good. When any of these four are missing, true law cannot exist.

But it is readily apparent that some, if not all, of these are missing from the laws and judicial decrees which are being issued today. The reason for this disorderliness from true law is historically complex for the actions of government since the thirteenth century are not measured by any absolute.

Yet we may discover a faint inkling of them. Thomas' definition with its emphasis on reason presupposes the action of a reasoner, man. This emphasis on man, coupled with the rediscovery of ancient democracy during the Renaissance put the burden of making laws upon the mass of the people. As this mass base for law widened under the influence of changing economic and educational standards, confusion set in. Legislators thought that the mass of this mass that made the laws in terms of mass itself, and not of the reasoning power embodied within it. This transference of law from reason to mass also moved law away from the notion of common good based on eternal truth. Common good was based upon the majority wishes and not upon eternal truths.

As the mass began to realize its weight, it revolted from the traditional lawful authority and set up one in its own image, thus setting at naught another of the requirements of law. One by one the standards have fallen, until we have reached the modern day chaos.

This tendency of the mass to extalt itself would be all right if the leaders were to preserve the notions of law. Unfortunately, the mass infects the leaders so that in the interpretation of the law, and in its teaching, gross errors have crept in. Legislation is based upon the ideas of the mass, with what the majority claims right being right. From this we have the teachings of schools that could excuse the conduct of a Hiss, and the interpretation of the law upholding sterilization (Buck vs Bell, 274 U.S. 200).

Democracy is not incompatible with Thomas' ideas of law. The broadening of the base of government presents problems, but they are not insuperable. Civil society is the creation of reason with which each man is endowed. And it exists solely for the common good in which each individual has some part. Thomas did not exclude anybody from his idea of the state, so all people can join in making the laws. The problem arises in making the people realize the great part they have in this process.

When individuals made laws for people, education was unnecessary. Experience could enable them to carry on. The problem arises when we must educate all the people in the nature of their task.

Unfortunately, at the same time that people were assuming prominence in the making of laws the church was losing its force as an educational body. The real power that Thomas postulated did not affect the new ideas of society. As the democratic nations progressed further and further along the lines of democracy they went at the same time further and further away from the teachings of the church. We must go back to the teachings of the church in particular those of Thomas in order to obtain the proper ideas of law.
Learning Through Life

From The Beginning

COUNT Michael de la Bedoyere, in a recent article in The English Catholic Review's magazine, Life of the Spirit, remarks on the commonplace that so few of the British Catholic people are leading truly Christian, truly spiritual lives. And we ourselves must have noticed how seldom religious life in this country transcends the barest legalistic observances. Our Catholic professors justly complain, when asked why their colleges and universities do not make a contribution to the intellectual community more worthy of the great truths they espouse, that little can be expected of them along those lines when students come up to them from the lower schools expecting things altogether different.

The good Catholic immigrants who called for the establishment of parochial schools were no less faithful to the Church of their fathers and merited the eternal remembrance of the Church for the sacrifices they made, so that their children might be schooled in an environment not congenial to the faith, but they were bewitched by the American dream of prosperity and comfort such as they had never known in the galling poverty of the old country, and their great myopic goal was to see themselves and their children climb the ladder of success. Thus, in taking advantages of the many opportunities that America offered and joyously pursuing the manifold enterprises that promised them luxury, they tended to lose sight of that theocentric viewpoint and well-ordered mental outlook that really supplied the meaning of life, and which was their finest heritage from the great Catholic Schoolmen of the past, and were swept up in the Noah's flood of secularism. Fortunately, however, in recent years, the memory of St. Thomas and our other great doctors is being made to come alive again even in our grade schools, just as a half century ago the great principles of Scholasticism enjoyed a renaissance in the universities and seminaries. It does seem more than simple optimism to discern a certain widespread resurgence, or at least a desire for one, as expressed in the general criticism of the recently popular habits of promiscuity and irresponsible specialization that have been almost axiomatic in educational circles for the last century.

What form, however, is the introduction of Thomistic principles into our lower schools to assume? Obviously, it is not a question of taking the Summa into the classrooms and expecting of the adolescent student the solidity and suppleness of mind that will permit him to follow the intricate reasoning required for this procedure, for we could never succeed with the children where we constantly fail so short even at college. Rather, is it not the restoration of an attitude, the medieval attitude, the Catholic attitude, of wonder and reverence, of delight and love for being and for the Being, for substance of life, rather than for the externals, the statistics and endless classifications that are the bogy of present-day savants?

This, it has been suggested, may be accomplished by reinstituting the medieval delectus sapientiae, by once again regarding wisdom, not mere knowledge, as the ultimate goal of study, by restoring in the schools of which the Angelic Doctor is patron his own unified and organic view of reality, the view which was able to bring about all the great medieval Summata because the thinkers of the thirteenth century saw the cosmos as it is, hanging from the Divine Being, the I Am Who Am.

Catholic teachers have a hard task, then, to vanquish all the distractions and supersede all the pompous hypotheses that compete so vigorously for the minds of modern youth. They themselves would be the first to admit their imperfect resources for this work, for in a sense they must be all the things that they teach—their minds must be alive with the wisdom, and their souls brimming with the sanctity of St. Thomas, and on top of this they must be artful and patient teachers. This means that they must be observing to the full the vocations of their own religious congregations and societies and secondly, that they could well afford to receive special training in a thorough study of Thomistic theology, gally up to Oxford or Paris, to listen to Albert or Scotus or Bonaventure or Thomas.

To The End

Perhaps the most avid demand for Thomistic studies, and in some cities it really is a demand, is in the field of adult education. Intelligent men and women all over the country are apparently coming to realize the deficiencies in their own personality and general understanding of important moral issues traceable either to the curtailment or the despiritualization of their own schooling. The popularity of serious books like those of Thomas Merton is one phase of this tendency, and another is the increasing willingness of ordinary people to participate in study clubs, Great Books discussion groups, and similar affairs. And although this interest is widespread and various enough for some to go off on existentialist bent, of Oriental tangents, St. Thomas, happily, has not gone undiscovered. Wherever priests have time and patience enough to put into this work, they generally find a willing audience. For instance, the Extension School courses in theology here at Providence College are all well attended.

We must not forget, however, that the most natural and most familiar vehicle for the spread of Thomistic teaching and the Catholic mentality which is now under discussion is in the province of sacred oratory and the spiritual retreat. The preacher is the teacher of Catholicism par excellence—it is he whose immediate and special vocation it is to fulfill the mandate given by Christ in His last word on this earth, "Go, teach ye all nations." It is the Dominican Order which best fulfills that task, evidenced by St. Gregory the Great and the great praelector of an ordinandiculum, who were to live in community, working assiduously for a profound understanding of the truths of Faith, and go about the countryside with no other concern than to bring the message of Christ to the minds and hearts of His children. The good preacher, remembering that he is deputed by the bishop to instruct as much as to exhort, will draw heavily on the fountain of Catholic truth, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors and especially of the Common Doctor whose excellence is so universally commended. Many of our humbler Catholics would probably need to learn that ideas which they have long taken for granted were first elucidated in the pages of Aquinas.

If all the present opportunities to inculcate the wisdom of St. Thomas are seized and exploited, if priests and laymen—such as Providence College graduates who have been given such a good Scholastic background—are content and fluent and about their well-ordered and noble philosophy, there is a likelihood of a general resurgence of Catholic spiritual life. And then, under the auspices and intercession of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Patron of all Catholic schools and the Common Doctor of the Roman Church, we may hope to see, instead of specialization, singlemindedness, instead of pabulum, instead of dead truths; instead of science, Divine Wisdom, and pervading all, an increasing knowledge and love of God and the things of God, such as the Mystical Body has not experienced for many years.