



Adsum

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

We read in the Gospel how Our Lord called St. Peter to be one of His Apostles (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:2) on the occasion of a miraculous catch of fish. St. Peter and his brother Andrew “had labored all the night” and having cast their nets for fish “had taken nothing.” Nevertheless, Jesus Christ told them to “launch out into the deep” again and let down the nets for a draught of fish.

No sooner had they obeyed Our Lord then they enclosed so great a multitude of fish that their net was breaking. So St. Peter and St. Andrew called to their partners St. James and St. John to come and to help them, and both ships were almost sinking.

And Jesus said to St. Peter, “Come after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.”

This coming week, our deacons, Frater Anthony Short, CMRI, and Rev. Mr. Nino Molina will begin their retreat in preparation for their ordination to the holy priesthood. It cannot be stressed enough to them and to all of our priests and seminarians that we are only instruments of God and that it is His Grace which truly blesses our priestly work. How many priests, like St. Peter, labor long and accomplish nothing; however, when they rely on Jesus and Mary for their apostolic labors, many souls are harvested for the Kingdom of Heaven.

The lives of the Saints have abundant examples that the way of God is to choose the “weak and the foolish things of this world” to confound the proud. The great Cure of Ars, St. John Vianney, is a wonderful case. Although he lacked natural talents and abilities, his life of holiness bore tremendous fruit, and he is now the patron saint of parish priests.

It often happens on the occasion of priestly ordinations that numerous petitions are addressed to me for the

new priests to be immediately sent out to various locations to meet the never-ceasing needs of souls. Little do those who make these requests realize that the new priests require the guidance of older and more experienced priests. Just like carpenters, plumbers, and electricians undergo an apprenticeship and doctors have a residency program, young priests must have their “apprenticeship” and “residency.” Leaving behind the spiritual security of the seminary with its schedule and common prayers, it is not safe for them to be left to themselves. The words of Jesus to St. Peter can apply to them that Satan would like to sift them as wheat. The first few years of the priesthood are very important and critical because the young priests’ spiritual formation must continue.

Fr. Anthony Short, CMRI will be assigned to Mary Immaculate Queen Church in Rathdrum, Idaho with Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI, and Fr. Nino Molina will be assigned to Immaculate Conception Church in St. Cloud, Minnesota with Fr. Brendan Hughes, CMRI. This does not, however, mean that they will not travel to various Mass centers. Fr. Anthony Short, CMRI will assist Fr. Benedict in our missions in Boston and Portland, Maine. Fr. Nino Molina will assist Fr. Brendan at Our Lady of Grace in Seneca, Wisconsin and at our mission in northern Minnesota.

Please remember in your prayers our two deacons that they may worthily prepare to become “other Christs.”

If any of our readers plan to attend the ordinations, the ceremonies will begin at 9:00 a.m. on March 25, the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The newly ordained priests celebrate their first Solemn High Masses: Fr. Molina on Wednesday, March 26, at 8:00 a.m. here in Omaha; and Fr. Anthony Short at Our Lady of Snows in Denver on Sunday, March 30, at 9:00 a.m.

As always, thank you for your support of Mater Dei Seminary!

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

*St. Thomas Aquinas
the Angelic Doctor,
Patron of Catholic Schools*

by a faculty member of Mater Dei Seminary

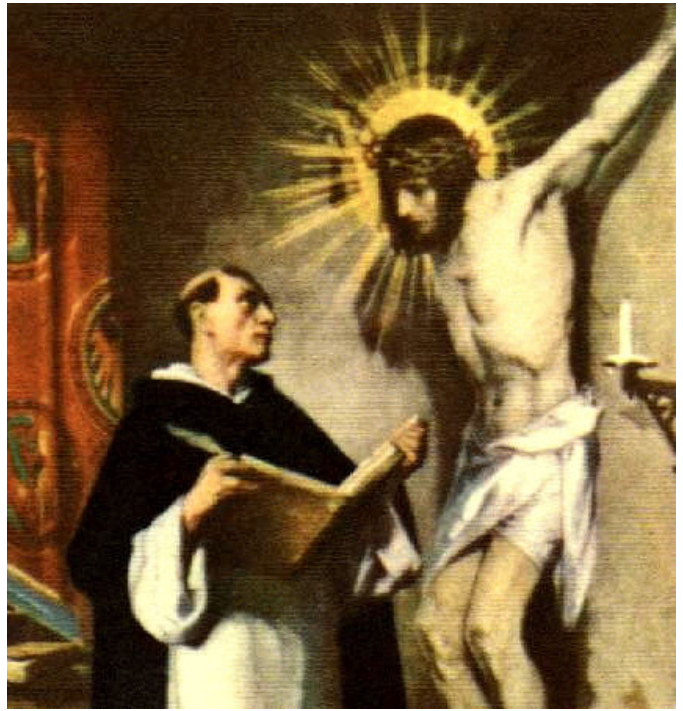
“He is the true light, which enlightens every man that comes into this world” (John 1:9). There are few people in the history of mankind to whom God has so abundantly communicated His divine wisdom and knowledge as to St. Thomas Aquinas. When canonizing him a saint, Pope John XXII declared: “His doctrine was not other than miraculous. He has enlightened the Church more than all other doctors, and more profit can be gained in a single year by the study of his works than by devoting a lifetime to that of other theologians.”

Thomas was born of noble parents in the year 1226 near the little town of Aquino, Italy. At the age of five he was sent to be educated by the Benedictine monks at the famous abbey of Monte Cassino. At about fourteen years of age he was sent to the University of Naples to undergo the usual seven years’ course. From his early childhood he was grave and studious and loved to pore over old books, while often posing deep questions to his teachers, such as “Master, what is God?... How can we know Him?... What is truth?...”

In the meantime, he became strongly attached to the apostolic spirit of the religious Order of Dominicans and petitioned to become a member. At the age of eighteen, without casting a backward glance at the wealth and power he was leaving behind, Thomas joyfully renounced the spirit of the world to follow Christ more perfectly by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Although his family vehemently opposed his decision and took means, both fair and foul, to dissuade him from the path he had chosen, he remained resolute.

The Order then sent him to complete his studies in Cologne under their renowned teacher, St. Albert the Great. There, owing to his noble but bulky appearance and to the fact that he sought to hide his talents by a modest, reserved manner, his fellow students believed him to be rather stupid and nicknamed him “the dumb Sicilian ox.” However, one day in a class debate Thomas answered the questions thrust at him with such marvelous skill and clearness that the students themselves were dumbfounded. The great Albert then turned to the class and joyfully proclaimed, “You call him a ‘dumb ox,’ but I declare before you that he will yet bellow so loud in doctrine that his voice will resound through the whole world.” He crowned his formal schooling by earning the title of Doctor of Theology at the age of 32.

Thomas soon became as celebrated for his preaching as for his lectures, attracting enormous crowds to hear his sermons as if they were directly from God, while winning universal admiration for his sublime philosophical and theological teaching. His writings are extraordinary, not only for their number and variety, but also for their clearness in explaining difficult points



The crucifix is our greatest book.

of doctrine. Of all his works, the most important is the “Summa Theologica,” which is the fullest exposition of theological teaching ever given to the world.

When Pope Urban IV decided to institute the Feast of Corpus Christi, he appealed to Thomas to compose the Office and Mass for the feast. Two of the beautiful hymns he composed, the “Verbum Supernum” and “Pange Ligua” are familiar to most Catholics because their final verses, “O Salutaris Hostia” and “Tantum Ergo,” are regularly sung at Benediction.

Once, after Thomas had written a treatise which settled a controversy regarding the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus appeared to him in a vision to tell him: “Thou has written well of the Sacrament of My Body.” One time a sacristan saw him at night kneeling before the altar in ecstasy. Then a voice, which seemed to come from the crucifix, said, “Thou hast written well of Me, Thomas; what reward wouldst thou have?” His reply was, “Nothing but Thyself, Lord.”

Of his many noble virtues, the two that would most benefit us to consider are his spirit of prayer and his humility. Perhaps no one has better lived St. Ignatius Loyola’s counsel, “Pray as if everything depended upon God, but work as if everything depended upon yourself.” He never undertook any reading or writing without first applying himself to prayer; in fact, he would spend hours in prayer and found in his daily offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass a further source of divine enlightenment. Then he applied his keen intellect to extensive reading, deep reflection and hours of patient research. Nevertheless, he declared that he learned more in prayer at the foot of the crucifix than by reading books and the exercise of any natural genius.

The virtue of humility was the underlying current

of his life. He often said, "Love of God leads to self-contempt, whereas self-love leads to contempt of God. If you would raise on high the edifice of holiness, take humility as your foundation." He was always inclined to think others better than himself, was extremely modest in expressing his opinion, was never known to lose his temper in a debate, was never heard to say things that would wound other people. When he was a young friar, he was once corrected, when reading aloud in the refectory. Although the correction was not warranted, he humbled acquiesced to the proposed amendment. When afterwards he was asked how he could consent to such an obvious blunder, he replied, "It matters little whether a syllable is long or short, but it matters much to practice humility and obedience." Elsewhere he stated, "Humble obedience is the perfection of the religious life: thereby a man submits himself to his fellow man for the love of God, even as God rendered Himself obedient to men for their salvation."

The learning of St. Thomas was not, then, that haughty knowledge which fills the mind with a high opinion of itself. In his studies he had only one aim in

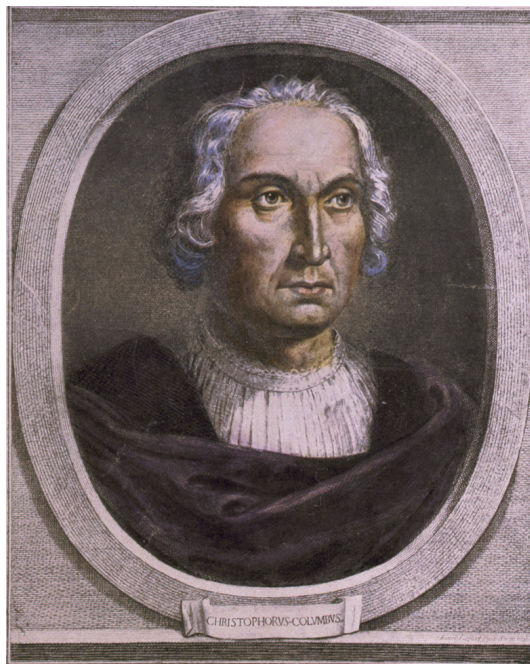
view: to refute the opponents of Christ and His Church, explain revealed doctrine, and thereby promote God's glory while defending our Catholic Faith. As much as for his holiness as for his genius, the Church has named him "the Angelic Doctor." St. Pius V conferred upon him the title of Doctor of the Church, and in 1880 Pope Leo XIII declared him patron of all Catholic schools.

For seminarians studying in preparation for the priesthood, as well as for priests, whose duty it is to advance in divine science, St. Thomas Aquinas is a shining light showing the way to true wisdom and priestly holiness—the way of basing diligence and industry in studying the sacred sciences upon a foundation of fervent prayer, deep humility, ardent love of God and souls, thereby promoting God's glory and the salvation of souls as humble instruments of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth: "I wished, and understanding was given me; and I called, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me; and I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison to her" (Wisdom 7:7).

A Lesser Known Lesson in History (Month of the Sacred Heart, 1892)

There is one incident connected with the discovery of America which perhaps most of our young folks have never heard. It was on the last voyage of Columbus that the four vessels under his command were assailed by the most furious tempest the intrepid navigator had ever experienced. The waves ran so high and dashed so violently against the vessels that the sailors lost all control over their movements; and, as if to destroy all human hope, Providence permitted Columbus to fall dangerously ill. One of his old wounds reopened, and for nine days the crew despaired of his life.

For eight days the vessels lay at the mercy of all this dire confusion of nature. At intervals the rain fell in torrents. Suddenly, on the thirteenth day of December, 1502, while Columbus was enduring the greatest pain, piercing cries rose from one of the ships in which the crews of the other vessels joined. A violent and destructive wind-storm whipped the waves into a mountainous water-spout, called a typhoon. Woe to those who meet it on the ocean's highway! The cry of despair which arose from the



crew at the awful sight went to the very soul of Columbus; he shuddered, opened his eyes, and then, with a great effort, dragged himself to the deck. He suspected in this frightful disorder of nature some satanic influence, and as death had deprived him of the services of Father Alexander, the chaplain of the fleet, he resolved to recite himself the Gospel of St. John.

He ordered the blessed candles to be lit and the standard of the expedition to be unfurled; then, buckling his sword below the Cord of St. Francis which he always wore, he took the sacred book into his hands, and, facing the horrible monster that continued steadily to approach, in a loud voice that was heard above the noise of the warring elements,

he read the Beloved Disciple's inspired words.

At the sentence, "And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us," drawing his sword and full of lively faith, he traced in the air, in the face of the typhoon, the sign of the cross. Immediately the water-spout, roaring and disjointed, was lost in the endless immensity of the Atlantic Ocean.

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

The Solemn Revalidation of a Marriage

Question: If a Catholic couple have attempted marriage before a minister or a civil magistrate, and subsequently wish to have their union validated, may they be married at a nuptial Mass? Could a pastor forbid this?

Answer: There is no law of the Church forbidding marriage at a nuptial Mass to those who have entered a union that is invalid because of lack of the prescribed form. Indeed, *per se* such a method of convalidation is commendable, because the special blessing of the bride, which the Church desires to impart to every Catholic woman on her entrance into the married state, can ordinarily be given only at Mass. This holds true, even though many years have passed since the couple entered their unlawful and invalid union. Of course, those who have sinned so grievously generally desire to have the validation as private as possible, and the priest should acquiesce to this wish. Sometimes, too, circumstances may be present which would render a public ceremony at Mass inadvisable, if not positively wrong—especially the grave danger of scandal. However, apart from this contingency, the couple have the right to be married at a nuptial Mass, and a pastor's authority does not include the power to forbid it. A bishop, however, by virtue of Canon 2291, § 6, could impose as a vindictive penalty the deprivation of the nuptial blessing. In some dioceses this penalty is the object of general legislation for cases such as we are considering.

Renewal of Marriage Consent

Question: A priest is about to revalidate a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, which was invalid through lack of form, since it took place before a justice of the peace. The priest wonders if he could ask the questions in this form: "Do you renew your consent to take this woman, etc." His purpose is to spare the feelings of the non-Catholic, who in perfect good faith believes that the previous ceremony was a valid marriage, and is going through this present ceremony only for the sake of the Catholic party.

Answer: While it is quite commendable for a priest to make the convalidation of a marriage as easy as possible for the non-Catholic, who's fully convinced that the previous ceremony was perfectly valid, care must be taken lest anything be done which might result in the lack of a proper matrimonial consent on this person's part. For, if he intends his words to be a mere *external* repetition of the consent he gave previously—and which he regards as fully valid—he is not fulfilling the essential condition for the revalidation, an internal and external act *in the present*. From this standpoint, it must be noted that there is a great difference between a convalidation and a *sanatio in radice*. Consequently, the priest should propose the questions as they are found in the Ritual: "Wilt thou take, etc.?"

Adsum, a publication by the seminarians of **MATER DEI SEMINARY** for the reading enjoyment of friends and benefactors, is sent free of charge to all who request it. If you are interested, please provide your name and mailing address to:

MATER DEI SEMINARY
7745 Military Avenue
Omaha NE 68134-3356