

STUDIORUM DUCEM (On St. Thomas Aquinas) by Pope Pius XI

Humility, therefore, combined with the purity of heart I have mentioned, and sedulous devotion to prayer, disposed the mind of Thomas to docility in receiving the inspirations of the Holy Ghost and following His illuminations, which are the first principles of contemplation. To obtain them from above, he would frequently fast, spend whole nights in prayer, lean his head in the fervor of his unaffected piety against the tabernacle containing the august Sacrament, constantly turn his eyes and mind in sorrow to the image of the crucified Jesus; and he confessed to his intimate friend St. Bonaventura that it was from that Book especially that he derived all his learning. It may, therefore, be truly said of Thomas what is commonly reported of St. Dominic, Father and Lawgiver, that in his conversation he never spoke but about God or with God.

The most distinctive feature of the sanctity of Thomas is what St. Paul describes as the "word of wisdom" (I Cor. xii, 8) and that combination of the two forms of wisdom, the acquired and the infused, as they are termed, with which nothing accords so well as humility, devotion to prayer, and the love of God. He was not satisfied with enlightening the minds of men by his teaching: he exerted himself strenuously to rouse their hearts to make a return of His love to God, the Creator of all things. "The love of God is the source and origin of goodness in things" he magnificently declares (1, xx, 2

He devoted the faculties of his divine intellect not in the least to gain glory for himself, but to the advancement of truth. Everything he wrote was securely based upon Holy Scripture and that was the foundation upon which he built.

Jesus spoke to him from the cross, saying: "Thomas, thou hast written well about me," and asked him: "What reward shall I give thee for all thy labour?" the saint made answer: "None but Thyself, O Lord!" Instinct with charity, therefore, he unceasingly continued to serve the convenience of others, not counting the cost, by writing admirable books, helping his brethren in their labours, depriving himself of his own garments to give them to the poor, even restoring the sick to health as, for example, when preaching in the Vatican Basilica on the occasion of the Easter celebrations, he suddenly cured a woman who had touched the hem of his habit of a chronic haemorrhage.

Nothing, however, shows the force of his genius and charity so clearly as the Office which he himself composed for the august Sacrament. Our Doctor possessed the exceptional and highly privileged gift of being able to convert his precepts into liturgical prayers and hymns and so became the poet and panegyrist of the Divine Eucharist. For wherever the Catholic Church is to be found in the world among whatsoever nations, there she zealously uses and ever will continue to use in her sacred services the hymns composed by St. Thomas. They are the expression of the ardent supplications of a soul in prayer and at the same time a perfect statement of the doctrine of the august Sacrament transmitted by the Apostles, which is pre-eminently described as the Mystery of Faith. If these considerations are borne in mind as well as the praise bestowed by Christ Himself to which I have already referred, nobody will be surprised that St. Thomas should also have received the title of the Doctor of the Eucharist.

Let all the Faithful of Christ take the Angelic Doctor as a model of devotion to the august Queen of Heaven, for it was his custom often to repeat the "Hail Mary" and to inscribe the sweet Name upon his pages, and let them ask the Doctor of the Eucharist himself to inspire them with love for the divine Sacrament.

STUDIORUM DUCEM (On St. Thomas Aquinas) by Pope Pius XI (simplified)

Humility, with the purity of heart I have mentioned, and devotion to prayer, disposed the mind of Thomas to receiving the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. To obtain them from above, he would frequently fast, spend whole nights in prayer, lean his head in fervour against the tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament, and constantly turn his eyes and mind in sorrow to the image of the crucified Jesus.

The most distinctive feature of the sanctity of Thomas is what St. Paul describes as the "word of wisdom" (1 Cor. 12: 8). He was not satisfied with enlightening the minds of men by his teaching: he exerted himself strenuously to rouse their hearts to make a return of His love to God, the Creator of all things. "The love of God is the source and origin of goodness in things" he magnificently declares (1, xx, 2)

He devoted his intellect not to gain glory for himself, but to the advancement of truth. Everything he wrote was based upon Holy Scripture and that was the foundation upon which he built.

Jesus spoke to him from the cross, saying: "Thomas, thou hast written well about me," and asked him: "What reward shall I give thee for all thy labour?" the saint made answer: "None but Thyself, O Lord!"

He served others, not counting the cost, by writing admirable books, helping his brethren in their labours, depriving himself of his own garments to give them to the poor, even restoring the sick to health. For example, when preaching in the Vatican Basilica on the occasion of the Easter celebrations, he suddenly cured a woman who had touched the hem of his habit of a chronic illness.

Nothing, however, shows the force of his genius and charity so clearly as the Office which he himself composed for the Blessed Sacrament. For wherever the Catholic Church is to be found in the world among the nations, there she uses in her sacred services the hymns composed by St. Thomas. They are very deep prayers and at the same time a perfect teaching about the Blessed Sacrament, just as it was given by the Apostles.

Because of this no one will be surprised that St. Thomas should also have received the title of the Doctor of the Eucharist.

Let all the Faithful of Christ take the Angelic Doctor as a model of devotion to the august Queen of Heaven, for it was his custom often to repeat the "Hail Mary" and to inscribe the sweet Name upon his pages, and let them ask the Doctor of the Eucharist himself to inspire them with love for the divine Sacrament.

My prayer to Saint Thomas:
