

St. Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274, Doctor of the Church



Brief Biography

St. Thomas Aquinas was born in Aquino, Italy in 1225. At age five, he began his schooling at the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino. Years later, he began studies at the University of Naples, where he became interested in the Dominicans. After some initial family resistance, he was permitted to join the Dominican order in 1245, and went to Paris and later Cologne, Germany to study under St. Albert the Great. He was ordained in 1251. Thomas is recognized as one of the Church's greatest theologians. Among his works is the Summa Theologica, generally considered to be among the Church's preeminent dissertations on Catholic theology. He died in 1274, was canonized in 1323, and in 1567 was named a Doctor of the Church.

Why St. Thomas Aquinas is identified with the Eucharist

Thomas was commissioned in 1264 by Pope Urban IV to compose a liturgy for the newly established feast of Corpus Christi (i.e. the Body of Christ). The hymns he wrote for the liturgy included *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum* and *O Salutaris Hostia*. He also wrote the beautiful hymn, *Pange Lingua Gloriosi*, which is commonly sung on Holy Thursday and during Benediction.

Brief Quotation

This is the dogma given to Christians,
that bread is changed into Flesh
and wine into Blood.
What thou dost not understand,
what thou dost not see, a lively faith confirms
in a supernatural manner.

Under different species in externals
signs only, and not in reality,
wondrous substances lie hidden.

Flesh is food, Blood is drink:
nevertheless Christ remains entire
under each species.

By the recipient the whole is received;
He is neither cut, broken, nor divided.
One receives Him; a thousand receive Him:
as much as the thousand receive,
so much does the one receive;
though eaten He is not diminished.

From *Lauda Sion Salvatorem* (per Society of St. Pius X website)

OR

“Out of love, Christ took on a true human body for our salvation. And because it is the very law of friendship that friends should live together, as Aristotle says, Christ promises us his bodily presence as a reward. (in heaven). In the meantime, however, he has not left us without his bodily presence in this our pilgrimage, but joins us to himself in this sacrament through the reality of his body and blood.”

Source: *Magnificat, June 2023*

OR

“I firmly believe and know as certain that Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, Son of God, and Son of the Virgin Mary, is in this Sacrament. I receive you, the price of my redemption. For love of you have I studied and kept vigil, toiled, preached, and taught...Never have I said a word against thee.”

Source: *Magnificat, June 2023*