

MY DEAR THEOPHILUS

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

St George's College in Jerusalem celebrates a centenary of service in the Holy Land

St George's College, an Anglican "centre for pilgrimage, hospitality, study and reconciliation" in Jerusalem, has celebrated its 100th anniversary with a special service in the neighbouring St George's Cathedral. The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, preached at the service, which was presided over by the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, Suheil Dawani.



Dear Parish Family:

Epiphany is celebrated 12 days after Christmas on 6th January.

The story, found in Matthew's Gospel, is a familiar one:

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star

at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when

you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. (Mt. 2:1-12).

A child, a star, wise men from the east and a paranoid and jealous king. What does this all mean? The word “epiphany” comes from the Greek ἐπιφάνεια (epiphaneia) meaning “manifestation, striking appearance”; it is an experience of sudden and striking realization.

In this brief passage, God tells the world that He is coming in the person of Jesus not only to the nation of Israel, but also to the Gentiles. The Kingdom of God, the Good News, is open to all people and not to a select group. The men from the east, who do not know the God of Israel, are foreigners, the first Gentiles to see the Light, who recognize what Herod and the Temple priesthood cannot: the newborn Savior. The wealthy, learned, alien Magi of Matthew’s Gospel complement the poor, ignorant, local shepherds of Luke’s Gospel. The Gospels foreshadow the universality of the Church, these Gentiles and Jews worship God Incarnate to show that salvation is offered to all people. To understand that, to come to terms with that, is a striking realization indeed.

Let us pray: O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the Peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Your servant in Christ,

The Rev. Chester J. Makowski, Rector

**REMEMBER TO DONATE TO, SHOP AT, AND, IF POSSIBLE
VOLUNTEER AT THE OASIS, A MINISTRY OF OUR PARISH.**



***FEATURED HOLY PERSON OF
THE MONTH
THOMAS AQUINAS
Priest & Theologian
January 28***

*From the Internet Encyclopedia of
Philisophy*

St. Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican priest and Scriptural theologian. He took seriously the medieval maxim that “grace perfects and builds on nature; it does not set it aside or destroy it.” Therefore, insofar as Thomas thought about philosophy as the discipline that investigates what we can know naturally about God and human beings, he thought that good Scriptural theology, since it treats those same topics, presupposes good philosophical analysis and argumentation. Although Thomas authored some works of pure philosophy, most of his philosophizing is found in the context of his doing Scriptural theology. Indeed, one finds Thomas engaging in the work of philosophy even in his Biblical commentaries and sermons. <https://www.iep.utm.edu/aquinas/>

Within his large body of work, Thomas treats most of the major sub-disciplines of philosophy, including logic, philosophy of nature, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophical psychology, philosophy of mind, philosophical theology, the philosophy of language, ethics, and political philosophy. As far as his philosophy is concerned, Thomas is perhaps most famous for his so-called *five ways* of attempting to demonstrate the existence of God. These five short arguments constitute only an introduction to a rigorous project in natural theology—theology that is properly philosophical and so does not make use of appeals to religious authority—that runs through thousands of tightly argued pages. Thomas also offers one of the earliest systematic discussions of the nature and kinds of law, including a famous treatment of natural law. Despite

his interest in law, Thomas' writings on ethical theory are actually virtue-centered and include extended discussions of the relevance of happiness, pleasure, the passions, habit, and the faculty of will for the moral life, as well as detailed treatments of each one of the theological, intellectual, and cardinal virtues. Arguably, Thomas' most influential contribution to theology and philosophy, however, is his model for the correct relationship between these two disciplines, a model which has it that neither theology nor philosophy is reduced one to the other, where each of these two disciplines is allowed its own proper scope, and each discipline is allowed to perfect the other, if not in content, then at least by inspiring those who practice that discipline to reach ever new intellectual heights. *Id.*

In his lifetime, Thomas' expert opinion on theological and philosophical topics was sought by many, including at different times a king, a pope, and a countess. It is fair to say that, as a theologian, Thomas is one of the most important in the history of Western civilization, given the extent of his influence on the development of Roman Catholic theology since the 14th century. However, it also seems right to say—if only from the sheer influence of his work on countless philosophers and intellectuals in every century since the 13th, as well as on persons in countries as culturally diverse as Argentina, Canada, England, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, and the United States—that, globally, Thomas is one of the 10 most influential philosophers in the Western philosophical tradition. *Id.*

St. Thomas Aquinas was born sometime between 1224 and 1226 in Roccasecca, Italy, near Naples. Thomas' family was fairly well-to-do, owning a castle that had been in the Aquino family for over a century. One of nine children, Thomas was the youngest of four boys, and, given the customs of the time, his parents considered him destined for a religious vocation. *Id.*

In his early years, from approximately 5 to 15 years of age, Thomas lived and served at the nearby Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino, founded by St. Benedict of Nursia himself in the 6th century. It is here that Thomas received his early education. Thomas' parents probably had great political plans for him, envisioning that one day he would become abbot of Monte Cassino, a position

that, at the time, would have brought even greater political power to the Aquino family. *Id.*

Thomas began his theological studies at the University of Naples in the fall of 1239. In the 13th century, training in theology at the medieval university started with additional study of *the seven liberal arts*, namely, the three subjects of the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the four subjects of the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), as well study in *philosophy*. As part of his philosophical studies at Naples, Thomas was reading in translation the newly discovered writings of Aristotle, perhaps introduced to him by Peter of Ireland. Although Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation* (with Porphyry's *Isagoge*, known as the 'old logic') constituted a part of early medieval education, and the remaining works in Aristotle's *Organon*, namely, *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, and *Sophismata* (together known as the 'new logic') were known in Europe as early as the middle of the 12th century, most of Aristotle's corpus had been lost to the Latin West for nearly a millennium. By contrast, Arab philosophers such as Ibn Sina or Avicenna (c. 980-1087) and Ibn Rushd or Averroes (1126-1198) not only had access to works such as Aristotle's *De Anima*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics*, they produced sophisticated commentaries on those works. The Latin West's increased contact with the Arabic world in the 12th and 13th centuries led to the gradual introduction of these lost Aristotelian works—as well as the writings of the Arabic commentaries mentioned above—into medieval European universities such as Naples. Philosophers such as Peter of Ireland had not seen anything like these Aristotelian works before; they were capacious and methodical but never strayed far from common sense. However, there was controversy too, since Aristotle seemed to teach things that contradicted the Christian faith, most notably that God was not provident over human affairs, that the universe had always existed, and that the human soul was mortal. Thomas would later try to show that such theses either represented misinterpretations of Aristotle's works or else were founded on probabilistic rather than demonstrative arguments and so could be rejected in light of the surer teaching of the Catholic faith. *Id.*

It was in the midst of his university studies at Naples that Thomas was stirred to join a new (and not altogether uncontroversial) religious order known as the

Order of Preachers or the Dominicans, after their founder, St. Dominic de Guzman (c. 1170-1221), an order which placed an emphasis on preaching and teaching. Although Thomas received the Dominican habit in April of 1244, Thomas' parents were none too pleased with his decision to join this new evangelical movement. In order to talk some sense into him, Thomas' mother sent his brothers to bring him to the family castle sometime in late 1244 or early 1245. Back at the family compound, Thomas continued in his resolve to remain with the Dominicans. Having resisted his family's wishes, he was placed under house arrest. A famous story has it that one day his family members sent a prostitute up to the room where Thomas was being held prisoner. Apparently, they were thinking that Thomas would, like any typical young man, satisfy the desires of his flesh and thereby "come back down to earth" and see to his familial duties. Instead, Thomas supposedly chased the prostitute out of the room with a hot poker, and as the door slammed shut behind her, traced a black cross on the door. Eventually, Thomas' mother relented and he returned to the Dominicans in the fall of 1245. Despite these family troubles, Thomas remained dedicated to his family for the rest of his life, sometimes staying in family castles during his many travels and even acting late in his life as executor of his brother-in-law's will. *Id.*

Recognizing his talent early on, the Dominican authorities sent Thomas to study with St. Albert the Great at the University of Paris for three years, from 1245-1248. Thomas made such an impression on Albert that, having been transferred to the University of Cologne, Albert took Thomas along with him as his personal assistant. *Id.*

From 1252-1256, Thomas was back at the University of Paris, teaching as a Bachelor of the *Sentences*. We might think of Thomas' position at Paris at this time as roughly equivalent to an advanced graduate student teaching a class of his or her own. In addition to his teaching duties, Thomas was also required, in accord with university standards of the time, to work on a commentary on Peter the Lombard's *Sentences*. We might think of Thomas' commentary on the *Sentences* as roughly equivalent to his doctoral dissertation in theology. *Id.*

At 32 years of age (1256), Thomas was teaching at the University of Paris as a Master of Theology, the medieval equivalent of a university professorship. After

teaching at Paris for three years, the Dominicans moved Thomas back to Italy, where he taught in Naples (from 1259-1261), Orvieto (1261-1265), and Rome (1265-1268). It was during this period, perhaps in Rome, that Thomas began work on his magisterial *Summa Theologiae*. *Id.*

Thomas was ordered by his superiors to return to the University of Paris in 1268, perhaps to defend the mendicant way of life of the Dominicans and their presence at the university. (Like the Franciscans, the Dominicans depended upon the charity of others in order to continue their work and survive. This sometimes meant they had to beg for their food. In doing so, the members of the mendicant orders consciously saw themselves as living after the pattern of Jesus Christ, who, as the Gospels depict, also depended upon the charity of others for things to eat and places to rest during his public ministry.) Thomas ended up teaching at the University of Paris again as a regent Master from 1268-1272. While he was at the University of Paris, Thomas also famously disputed with philosophers who contended on Aristotelian grounds—wrongly in Thomas' view—that all human beings shared one intellect, a doctrine that Thomas argued was incompatible with personal immortality and moral responsibility, not to mention our experience of ourselves as individual knowers. In 1272, the Dominicans moved Thomas back to Naples, where he taught for a year. In the middle of composing his treatise on the sacraments for the *Summa Theologiae* around December of 1273, Thomas had a particularly powerful religious experience. After the experience, despite constant urging from his confessor and assistant Reginald of Piperno, Thomas refused any longer to write. Called to be a theological consultant at the Second Council of Lyon, Thomas died in Fossanova, Italy, on March 7, 1274, while making his way to the council. *Id.*

Canonized in 1323, Thomas was later proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by Pope St. Pius V in 1567. In 1879, Pope Leo XIII published the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, which, among other things, holds up Thomas as the supreme model of the Christian philosopher. Through his voluminous, insightful, and tightly argued writings, Thomas continues to this day to attract numerous intellectual disciples, not only among Catholics, but among Protestants and non-Christians as well. *Id.*

Almighty God, who has enriched your Church with the singular learning and holiness of your servant Thomas Aquinas: Enlighten us more and more, we pray, by the disciplined thinking and teaching of Christian scholars, and deepen our devotion by the example of saintly lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

LENT IS DRAWING NEAR: REMEMBER TO SIGN-UP TO PREPARE A LENTEN REFLECTION



FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, JUSTIN WELBY

Evangelism is joining in the work of God to bring redemption to this world. It's proclaiming the revolution of love that has rescued God's world from darkness to light.

The God who created the world has acted to save the world from itself. And he has done that in history through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is the setting forth of the good news of Jesus so that all can hear and respond.

We aren't committed to evangelism because we are scared the church is dying. We don't make known his love because we want to look successful. We announce what God has done in Christ because we are compelled by his love. Everybody must be told. It matters that people don't know how loved they are by God.

The only way anyone knows of God's love is because someone tells them and shows them. There is no greater privilege in life than to see God at work in changing lives.

Not every Christian is an evangelist. However every Christian is a witness. A witness is someone who simply says what they have experienced – what they have seen and heard for themselves. And they give testimony to this when they are asked.

Every follower of Christ has witnessed for themselves the abundant love that God has for them, and every one of us is sent in the power of the Holy Spirit to live lives and speak words which tell of that. We do this so that friends and family, colleagues and neighbours can themselves come to witness first hand the goodness of God's transforming love for them.

The only way anyone knows of God's love is because someone tells them and shows them. There is no greater privilege in life to see God at work in changing lives. Evangelism and witness put us in the middle of what God is doing to bring the world to life.

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION



Wes Amason is leading the study on the Gospel according to John using Tom Wright's *John for Everyone*. Join us in the Parish Hall Sundays at 9:15 AM



PLEASE LET US KNOW IF SOMEONE NEEDS A HOME VISIT

If you know of anyone who needs a home visit because they cannot get to Church, please call the Parish Office, or let Fr. Makowski know. Either Fr. Makowski or one of our Lay Eucharistic Visitors will call on them. If you have a pastoral emergency, please call Fr. Makowski at 713.299.7675.

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER

Praying is something that we all can do, young and old, rich and poor, tall and short. Please pray for everyone on our Prayer List.

MAKE A *Joyful* NOISE



Don't forget to bring pork and beans for our Mannafest outreach.



St. Luke's Episcopal Church

836 WEST JONES STREET
LIVINGSTON, TEXAS 77351
CHURCH OFFICE: 936.327.8467
WWW.STLUKESLIVINGSTON.ORG

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PURSUANT TO SECTION 30.07, PENAL CODE (TRESPASS BY LICENSE HOLDER WITH AN OPENLY CARRIED HANDGUN), A PERSON LICENSED UNDER SUBCHAPTER H, CHAPTER 411, GOVERNMENT CODE (HANDGUN LICENSING LAW), MAY NOT ENTER THIS PROPERTY WITH A HANDGUN THAT IS CARRIED OPENLY.

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