

Reflection Thursday Week 3 - St Thomas Aquinas 2021

Thomas Aquinas was born of a noble family in southern Italy (1225) and educated by the Benedictines. Normally he would have joined that order and taken up a position suitable to his rank but decided to become a Dominican instead. His family were so scandalised they kidnapped and imprisoned him for over a year; but he finally had his way. He studied in Paris and Cologne under St Albert the Great. It was a time of great philosophical ferment. The writings of Aristotle were recently rediscovered in the West, but met fierce opposition. Into this chaos Thomas brought simple, straightforward sense. Truth cannot contradict truth: if Aristotle appears to contradict Christianity, then either Aristotle is wrong or the contradiction is illusory. So, Thomas studied, and taught, and argued, and eventually the simple, common-sense philosophy that he worked out brought an end to the controversy. Out of his work came the *Summa Theologiae*, a standard textbook for many centuries and still an irreplaceable resource today. He produced dazzling poetry for the Corpus Christi liturgy. In 1273 on the feast of St. Nicholas, while celebrating Mass Thomas Aquinas received a revelation that so affected him that he wrote no more, leaving his great work the *Summa Theologiae* unfinished. He said to his secretary Brother Reginald, "*The end of my labours has come. All that I have written appears to be as so much straw after the things that have been revealed to me.*" When later asked by Reginald to return to writing, Aquinas said, "*I can write no more. I have seen things that make my writings like straw.*" He died the following year. Aquinas may have had a vision of heaven, compared to which everything else, no matter how glorious, would appear worthless. We can only speculate on this. Scholars, hagiographers, and Catholics in general never believed Aquinas's comment to be a retraction or refutation of anything he wrote. If it had been, Pope Leo XIII would not have encouraged a renewed interest in Thomistic theology and philosophy, and Aquinas would not have been named a Doctor of the Church. (From the Internet.)

Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to inspire us, like St Thomas, to love God with our minds as well as our hearts; and if we come across a fact or a teaching that seems to us to contradict our faith, let us not reject it but investigate it: for the truth that it contains can never contradict the truth that is God.

What did the Seattle mayor say when he banned straws? *Alright everybody, this is the last straw.*

The plastic straw ban happening in many cities was predicted by a 16th Century prophet. *His name was **No-straw-damus.***