

## Reflection Friday Week 3 St Thomas Aquinas 2022

**St Thomas Aquinas** was born of a noble family in southern Italy (1225-1274), and educated by the Benedictines. He decided to become a Dominican but his family were so scandalised by this disreputable plan that they kidnapped him and kept him prisoner for over a year. Being more obstinate than they were, he eventually had his way. He studied in Paris and Cologne under St Albert the Great during a time of great philosophical ferment. The writings of Aristotle had been rediscovered and available to people in the West for the first time in a thousand years. Many feared that Aristotelianism was contradictory to Christianity and the teaching of Aristotle was banned in many universities. Aristotle's works came to the West from mostly Muslim sources which did not help. 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 created brought an end to the controversy. He produced many writings on philosophy and theology, including the *Summa Theologiae*, a standard textbook for many centuries and an irreplaceable resource today. He wrote dazzling poetry as in the liturgy for Corpus Christi. While celebrating Mass one day he had a vision that made all his writings seem like straw; and he wrote no more. Thomas inspires us to love God with both mind and heart. If we encounter a fact or teaching that seems to contradict our faith, do not reject it, investigate it: the truth it contains can never contradict the truth that is God.

The words of Jesus in the gospel remind us that there is only one Teacher, God. Only a true teacher will teach with this humility and recognition.

*“To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.”*

**What's a Teacher's favourite nation?**      *Expla-nation.*

**What Do You Call a Teacher Without Students?**      *Happy!*

*A man went into a fish shop and said, “Can I have a tail end, please?” So, the man behind the counter said, ‘And they all lived happily ever after!’*