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when they pray in solitude and as they pray anywhere (*Dem.* 4). Only when we compare his writing on prayer to the contemporary Jewish writings (such as *Berachot* 6a) with their emphasis on prayer's communal nature (a minimum of ten men), do we begin to see the reason for the Church Father's persistency.

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—ILYA LIZORKIN

**THOMAS AQUINAS (1224-1274).** "Clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason and faith, he both preserved and had regard for the rights of each; so much so, indeed, that reason, borne on the wings of Thomas, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas."

So declared Pope Leo XIII in his 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, a document that helped initiate a great renaissance in the study of the thought of Thomas Aquinas in the late nineteenth century, which has continued up to the present day. Writers as diverse as Flannery O'Connor, Edith Stein, Karl Rahner, Bernard Lonergan, Jacques Maritain, Josef Pieper, and Pope John Paul II have all taken the thought of St. Thomas to be foundational to their work. Indeed, his

influence has been so widespread and profound that St. Thomas has been given the title "common doctor" (*doctor communis*) of the Catholic Church.

Other than his death, on March 7, 1274, not many dates are certain in the life of St. Thomas Aquinas. He was most likely born sometime between 1224 and 1226, the youngest son of a minor Italian nobleman, in the family castle of Roccasecca in Campania. At the tender age of five, young Thomas was sent as an oblate to the nearby Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino. At fourteen, he was sent to the recently founded University of Naples, where he studied grammar and logic with Martin of Dacia, as well as natural philosophy with Peter of Ireland, a man who, significantly, was teaching the recently translated works of Aristotle as commented on by the Spanish-Arabic philosopher Ibn Rhushd, or Averroës.

Thus by the time Thomas had finished his bachelor's degree at the University of Naples in or around 1244, not only had he been given a stable foundation in the Benedictine life of biblical study and prayer, including undoubtedly extensive memorization of the sacred scriptures—indeed, Thomas was to become renowned for his powers of memory, capable of dictating to five scribes in succession on different topics, much as modern chess masters can play several opponents at the same time, moving from one table to the next—but he had also received a first-rate education in what was becoming the most important of the liberal arts, namely logic, as well as a firm grounding in the works of Aristotle.

At Naples, Thomas came into contact with the recently founded Order of Preachers, or Dominicans, who took their nickname from their founder, Domingo (Dominic) de Guzman of Spain, who had died only two years before Thomas's birth. The Dominicans' embrace of the mendicant's life of poverty, as well as their devotion to the vocations of teaching and preaching, was attractive to young Thomas, and he left Naples with the Master General of the Order to go, first, to the order's General Chapter in nearby Bologna, and from there, on to study at the newly formed University of Paris. Unfortunately, Thomas's family had other ideas, and they contrived to kidnap him and take him back to Roccasecca. After eighteen months of house arrest, Thomas, having shown himself to be firm in his choice of vocation, was released by his family to travel north and continue his training with the Dominicans at the University of Paris. There he studied with Albert the Great, with whom he would eventually travel to the new Dominican house of studies in Cologne. After four years of studying and assisting Albert in Cologne, Thomas was sent back to the University of Paris in order to complete his studies as Bachelor of the Sentences. At Paris, he would subsequently

become a Master in Sacred Theology, and eventually, after some controversy, take up a post teaching in the faculty of the university.

The remainder of Thomas's life was spent devoted to his Dominican vocation of teaching and preaching wherever the Dominican Order or the pope needed him, in Naples, Orvieto, Rome, Paris again, and finally in Naples. He wrote, along with his two most famous works (the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*) numerous "disputed questions" on various topics such as "The Power of God," "Evil," and "Truth"; a series of excellent commentaries on the works of Aristotle; as well as commentaries on all the letters of St. Paul and the Gospels of Matthew and John. Having been summoned in 1274 by Pope Gregory X to take part in the Council of Lyons, Thomas fell ill along the way and was eventually taken to the Cistercian abbey of Fossanova south of Rome where he died on March 7, 1274. He was canonized by John XXII in 1323 and declared a "Doctor of the Church" by Pius V in 1567.

It would be impossible in a short article to summarize even the most basic achievements of someone like Aquinas, so I will focus instead on two key areas that illustrate why Thomas is considered one of the wisest guides to the proper relationship between faith and reason. The first area involves Thomas's metaphysics of Being; the second, his theology of the natural law.

### The Metaphysics of Being

Prompted by the intellectual challenges posed by the Christian doctrine of creation "out of nothing" (*ex nihilo*), Thomas advanced the discipline of metaphysics by means of his reflections on the act of existing (*esse*), distinguishing more clearly than had been done previously between the "essence" (*essentia*) and "existence" (*esse*) of created things and showing more profoundly how metaphysics focuses on the act of existing itself (*esse*).

Thomas's reflections in this area allowed him both to develop the metaphysical insights of Aristotle and to gain a more profound understanding of the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and creation *ex nihilo*. With regard to the Trinity, Thomas helped to clarify the unity of the three Persons by describing their union in terms of the three Persons sharing one act of existence (*actus essendi*). God is not a "substance," like other substances, defined by a particular essence. He is, rather, Subsisting Being Itself (*Ipsium Esse Subsistens*), in Whom Father, Son, and Spirit all share the same *esse*.

With regard to creation, Thomas showed that God's act of creation is not confined to a single moment of time in the distant past, but is rather the continuous imparting of Being (*esse*) to whatever exists. Thus, if God weren't

causing the world to *be* right now, then the world would not exist at all.

This metaphysical notion of creation allowed Thomas to show that divine causality and natural causality are not mutually exclusive. Although the created things in the world depend on God for their existence at every moment, once God makes them to *be*, they actually do exist and thus can act as true causes in the world. Thus, just as God's existence does not preclude the existence of things in the universe, rather the existence of things in the universe depends on God's existence as the Source of all Being, so also God's primary causality as Creator does not preclude the secondary causality of created things, rather their secondary causality presupposes God's primary causality as Creator and Sustainer of all Being.

Thus believers need not fear the work of the natural sciences. No matter how extensive the explanations of the sciences, there will always be a need for the *cause of the Being* of whatever exists, which explains why there is *something* rather than nothing at all. Thus, unlike some, Thomas is not looking for God in the "gaps" of science, attributing God's causality only to miraculous occurrences. For Thomas, the fact that things exist and act in their own right is the best evidence that God exists and is acting in them and through them. Natural science, rather than being a threat to Christianity, shows us the marvelous ways in which God works in and through the natural causality of created nature.

By means of his metaphysics of creation, therefore, Thomas confirms God's providential control over all of creation and his continual, intimate connection with it. God is not a clock maker who builds the "mechanism" of the universe and then walks away from it. Rather, God is intimately present to His creation at every moment of its existence. If He were not, it would not *be* at all.

### Natural Law

The Natural Law is another area in which Thomas's influence has been enduring and profound, serving as an important inspiration to those who have opposed unjust human laws, from Francisco de Vitoria's opposition to the enslavement and maltreatment of the Native Americans in the fifteenth-century treatise *De Indis* to Martin Luther King's famous *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, in which he declared:

One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. . . . I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all." . . . To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: "An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law."

Thomas was able to synthesize various traditions concerning the natural law going back to the ancient world.

- The ancient Greek notion (embodied most famously in Sophocles's play *Antigone*) that there is a "higher law" (the law of the gods) that must be obeyed even if contrary to human law;
- The concept (often associated with the Stoics) of a universal Logos or Reason that guides the universe, including the actions of human beings;
- The idea (found, for example, in Book 1 of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and in the famous "Funeral Oration" of Pericles recounted in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian Wars*) that, in addition to the specific written laws of various cities, there is also an "unwritten law" common to all people.

In addition to these commonly recognized sources, an equally important authority for Aquinas was St. Paul. In Romans 2:14, for example, Paul speaks of the Gentiles who, although they do not have the written law, show that the work of the law is written on their hearts when they "do by nature what the law requires." Following a long tradition among Christian theologians, Thomas associated Paul's "unwritten law" with the "unwritten law" mentioned by the early Greeks. This ancient tradition of the Natural Law had been so thoroughly incorporated into Christian thought by the thirteenth century that it had become a commonplace among Thomas's contemporaries to associate the Natural Law with the fundamental biblical principles to "Love your neighbor as yourself" and "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Thomas was able to synthesize these various strands of the Natural Law tradition into a coherent philosophical picture, one that helped resolve centuries-old confusions between the Divine Law, the Eternal Law (the Eternal Logos that guides the cosmos), and the Natural Law. And even with regard to the Natural Law, he carefully distinguished "what nature has taught all animals" from the Natural Law that applies specifically to human beings.

For Thomas, the Natural Law is our participation in the Eternal Law, which is another word for the divine providence that guides all things in the universe to their proper ends. While God is provident for all creatures, human beings, because they are made in God's image, can participate in His providence by being provident both for themselves and for others. Our participation in the Eternal Law is the Natural Law, which is the light of natural reason by which man distinguishes between good and evil. Far from the Natural Law being a source of moral goodness independent of God, it was God Himself who instilled this law into us at our creation. Since the fall of our first parents, our nature has been so corrupted that we no longer do

even the good proportioned to our natures. As fallen creatures, we do not always recognize the good that we ought to do, and even when we do know it, we do not always do it. Our vices can and often do cloud our judgments about what is right and wrong. There is, as St. Paul says, "another law at work in our members," fighting against the law of our minds.

In order that we may be brought to our proper end, which is the knowledge and love of God, God sends us His Divine Law, which is twofold, says Thomas, and by which God both "instructs us by means of His law" and "assists us by means of His grace." With regard to the first, God's instruction, God reveals the *content* of the Natural Law in the moral precepts of the Old Testament law. Thus, according to Thomas, the two "first and common" precepts of the Natural Law are the two commandments to "Love God with all your heart, mind, and strength," and "Love your neighbor as yourself"—the commandments Christ Himself says "sums up all the Law and the Prophets." A second group of precepts, related to these first two as "conclusions to principles," are revealed in the Ten Commandments. These ten serve as the basis, then, for all the other moral precepts.

As St. Paul made clear in his letter to the Romans, however, merely having the law is not enough. Once we know the right thing to do, we find that we still can't do it. The commandment says, "Don't covet." And yet, merely reading the commandment doesn't seem to solve the problem. So after God "instructs us by means of His law," it remains necessary for Him to "assist us by means of His grace." The Law needs to be written not only in our minds, but also in our hearts. This is accomplished by means of the "New Law," which is the work of the Holy Spirit "spreading charity abroad in our hearts," restoring our fellowship with God and neighbor, and making it possible for us to obey the moral precepts not out of *fear of punishment*, but out of *love*.

### The Common Doctor of Faith and Reason

Examples such as those above show why Pope Paul VI wrote of St. Thomas on the seventh centenary of his death: "Without doubt, Thomas possessed supremely the courage of the truth, a freedom of spirit in confronting new problems, the intellectual honesty of those who allow Christianity to be contaminated neither by secular philosophy nor by a prejudiced rejection of it. . . . The key point and almost the kernel of the solution which, with all the brilliance of his prophetic intuition, he gave to the new encounter of faith and reason was a reconciliation between the secularity of the world and the radicality of the Gospel, thus avoiding the unnatural tendency to negate the world and its values while at the same time

keeping faith with the supreme and inexorable demands of the supernatural order.”

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Catalogs of Thomas's works and available English translations can be found in the following: J. A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Work* (New York: Doubleday, 1974; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1983); E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook, 5th ed. (New York: Random House, 1956; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994); and J. P. Torrell, *St. Thomas Aquinas, Volume 1, The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), this last being the most recent and most authoritative biography of Thomas available. Other good introductions to Thomas's thought, life, and work can be found in M. D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, trans. A. M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago: Regnery, 1964); and E. Gilson, *Thomism: The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook and A. Maurer, 6th and final ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002).

—RANDALL SMITH

**JACOB ARMINIUS (1559–1609).** Jacob Arminius was born in 1559 in the town of Oudewater, in southern Holland, the son of Hermand Jacobszoon, who died soon afterward. Arminius was then raised by a local pastor, Theodorus Aemilius (d. 1574/1575). He was educated at Utrecht and Marburg. In 1575, after learning that his mother and siblings had been massacred by the Spanish, he returned to Holland where, from 1576 to 1581, he studied theology at Leiden. In 1582, supported by the merchants at Amsterdam, he began studies at Geneva (under Beza); later, at Basle, Padua, and Rome. In 1587, he returned to Holland and, in the following year, was ordained minister of the Old Church at Amsterdam. Three years later, he married Lijsbet Reael, through whom he gained access to a number of wealthy and influential merchants and civil

leaders. In 1603, he was appointed Professor of Theology at the University of Leiden, where he remained until his death.

The initial, formative period of the Reformed movement was characterized by a certain degree of fluidity and flexibility with regard to the various doctrines of the faith, including predestination. Over time, the ensuing debate on predestination—in which Arminius took an active part—resulted in the emergence of a more fixed and narrow interpretation, to which he was unable to subscribe. Despite this (and despite the later reputation of Arminianism), he continued to hold Calvin in high regard (even describing him in prophetic terms), while lauding his *Commentaries* as exceeding in value anything produced by the Church Fathers and second only to scripture in the entire corpus of Christian literature.

In 1591, Arminius delivered a sermon on Romans 7:14, in which he claimed that the sinful man described by Paul was the unbeliever, not the regenerate man justified by faith. This put him at odds with the strict Calvinists, who denounced him as a Pelagian and Socinian. During his pastorate in Amsterdam, he published his most detailed and influential work, *Examination of Perkins' Pamphlet*. With an emphasis on God's grace as love, he rejected the supralapsarian view of predestination in favor of the notion of God possessing foreknowledge of future events, though without determining them. In 1593, another conflict with the strict Calvinists broke out, but (as earlier) nothing came of it. Finally, a decade later, when Arminius's views on predestination began to circulate at Leiden, tensions between the two parties erupted. Conflict continued to rage until 1608, when Arminius and Franz Gomar (d. 1641), his colleague and chief opponent, were summoned to dispute at The Hague. Arminius was subsequently acquitted of the charge of heresy. At one of these disputations, he delivered his *Declaration of Sentiments* (1608), which contained some of his most developed theology.

Though Arminius commanded widespread respect and affection, and though mild-tempered, he was never far from controversy. For many years, he argued—albeit unsuccessfully—in favor of revision of the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. After his death, his views were collated by his supporters and published in the *Remonstrance* (1610); this argued that divine sovereignty was compatible with man's free will and that Christ had died for everyone, though admittedly not all are saved. It also rejected both the sublapsarian and the supralapsarian forms of predestination, as well as the doctrines of limited atonement and irresistible grace. The *Remonstrance* led to continued conflict with the strict Calvinists, culminating (but not ending) in the Synod of