

Tommaso d'Aquino

Saint Name: Saint Thomas Aquinas

Dates: 1225 – March 7, 1284

Location: Italy

Feast Day: January 28



Thomas was born in Italy in the year 1225, the son of Landulph (the Count of Aquino) and Theodora. His parents were well-off but, being the youngest son, Thomas was expected to enter the monastery. At the age of 5 Thomas was placed under the care of the Benedictines of Monte Casino. During his years in the care of the Benedictines he surprised and surpassed all other students in both learning and virtue. He remained at Monte Cassino until he was 17 when a military conflict broke out between Emperor Frederick II and Pope Gregory IX. He then enrolled at the stadium generale in Naples. Despite the wishes of his family he joined the Dominicans of Naples. Some members of his family resorted to unsavory methods to try to cause Thomas to break his devotion to the Dominicans. Thomas's brothers even hired a prostitute to seduce him but to no avail. In 1245 Thomas went to study at the Faculty of the Arts at the University of Paris where he met the Dominican scholar Albertus Mangus (St. Albert the Great), the Chair of Theology at the College of St. James. Three years later Thomas chose to follow Mangus to Cologne instead of accepting Pope Innocent IV's offer to appoint him abbot of Monte Cassino. Thomas lectured on the Old testament in Cologne as an apprentice professor during which he wrote commentaries on scripture. Thomas earned his master's degree in theology in Paris 1252. Between 1256 to 1259 Thomas wrote several books - one of his most famous works being Summa Contra Gentiles, which explains the Christian religion and defends it against dissenting points of doctrine in Islam and Judaism. Thomas was later summoned to Rome to teach at the stadium conventuale, the first school to teach philosophical subjects of both moral and natural natures. While there he wrote another famous work, Summa Theologiae which describes the relationship between God and man and explains how reconciliation with God is made possible through Christ. Thomas wrote several more books during his lifetime and established a university in Naples where he served as the regent master. In March of 1274, Thomas was summoned to the Second Council of Lyon where his works for Pope Urban IV would be presented. While traveling, Thomas hit his head on a fallen tree branch and fell ill. Never fully recovering, he received his last rites March 7, 1274. Pope Pius V declared Saint Thomas doctor of the church saying he was "the most brilliant light of the Church".

Saint Thomas Aquinas was canonized July 18, 1323 by Pope John XXII. He is the patron saint of academics, scholars and philosophers. His original feast day was March 7, but because the date often falls within Lent, a revision of the Roman Calendar changed his feast day to January 28.