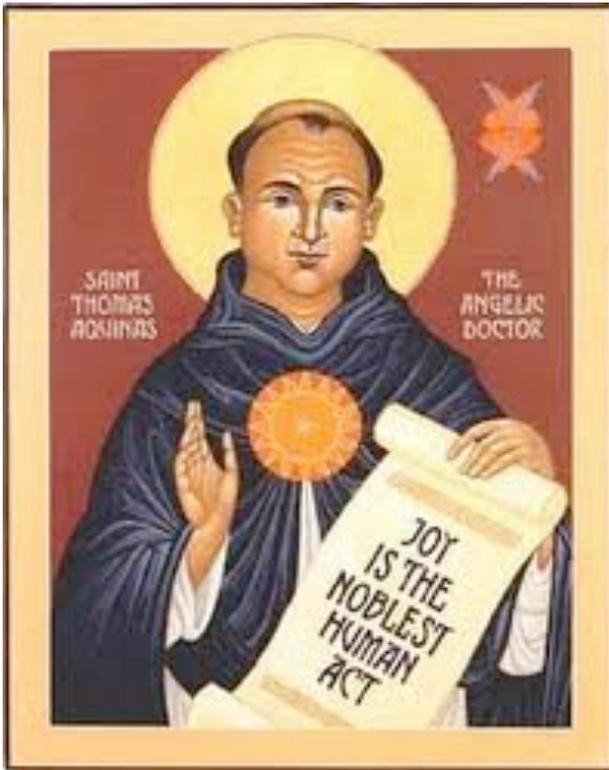


# Lenten Evening Prayer

*Liturgical Texts & Prayers from the writings of*

**St. Thomas Aquinas** 1225-1274



**St. Thomas Aquinas** - is regarded as one of the greatest Catholic theologians. A Doctor of the Church, St. Thomas was an Italian Dominican priest. St. Thomas believed that truth is known through reason and faith. He believed that the goal of human life was union with God.

# St. Thomas Aquinas

Thomas was born in Aquino, Italy, near Naples, into a noble family. At the age of five he was sent to the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino to receive his basic education, in the hope that he would someday become an influential abbot. At an early age he began to develop a great and lasting love of the scriptures, especially the psalms, and at times he revealed what was to become his hallmark by stunning his teachers with profound questions and insights about God. Here he also developed a great love for meditation and solitude, which he later described as the greatest opportunity offered to a human being, a life of contemplation of the wonders of creation and God.

At the age of 17 he became a Dominican novice in a mendicant (begging) order. This order, which was considered countercultural, had been started by a contemporary of St. Francis of Assisi and was based on the principles of poverty, preaching, and complete faith in God. Not long after this, Thomas' brothers, at the direction of their mother, kidnapped him and imprisoned him for nearly two years within the family castle to force him to disavow his radical mendicant way of life. Refusing various temptations offered to him, he spent his time memorizing the scriptures. Finally, his family relented and allowed him to return to the Dominicans. After further studies in Naples, he was appointed as a master at the University of Paris in 1257. During this time he came to embrace the long suppressed Aristotelian texts on metaphysics. These texts helped develop in him the ability to present the profound in simple terms, while also creating in Thomas a reverence--an almost scientific approach--to every moment of time and every creature and form in existence. His experience became that all in creation were revelations of God's infinite, eternal, expanding Being.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West, Daniel Ladinsky

# Lenten Evening Prayer

*As you enter, please take a moment to remind yourself of your Baptism. Using water from the Font trace the sign of the cross on your forehead to remind yourself that, "In Baptism you are marked with the cross of Christ forever."*

*Capax Universi – Capable of the Universe*

**Capax universi, capable of the universe are your arms  
when they move with love.**

**And I know it is true that your feet are never  
More alive than when they are in  
defence of a good  
cause.**

**I want to fund your efforts:  
Stay near beauty, for she will always  
strengthen you.  
She will bring your mouth close to hers and  
Breathe—inspire you the way  
light does the  
fields.**

**The earth inhales God, why  
should we not do  
the same?**

**This sacred flame we tend inside needs  
the chants of every tongue,  
the communion with  
all.**

**As capable as God  
are we.**

*St. Thomas Aquinas*

*Please begin your worship in quiet contemplation  
of all that God has made.*

Invocation:

P: All things desire to be like God, and infinite space is a mirror that tries to reflect God's body. But it can't. All that infinite existence can show us of God is only an atom of God's Being.

**C: Existence mirrors God the best it can, though how arrogant for any image in that mirror, for any human being, to think they know God,**

*(Thomas: All Things Desire)*

Evening Hymn: **#561 Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory**

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: We have a cause. We need those don't we? Otherwise the darkness and the cold gets in and everything starts to ache. Our souls have a purpose, it is to love; if we do not fulfill our heart's vocation, we suffer. **C: Amen.**

*(Thomas: Otherwise the Darkness)*

Psalmody: **#232 Let My Prayer Rise Up**

the piano side is Group 1 and the north side Group 2

***Silence for reflection***

Litany:

P: "Sometimes we think what we are saying about God is true when in fact it is not."

**C: "It would seem of value to differentiate between what is God's nature and what is false about LOVE."**

P: "I have come to learn that the truth never harms or frightens. I have come to know that God's compassion and light can never be limited."

**C: "thus any God who could condemn is not a god at all, but some disturbing image in the mind of a child, we best ignore, until we can cure the dark.**

*(Thomas: God's Nature)*

***Silence for reflection***

Hymn: **#699 In Deepest Night**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26:47-52

Readings from St. Thomas Aquinas:

**WE ARE FIELDS BEFORE EACH OTHER**

How is it they live for eons in such harmony--  
the billions of stars--

when most men can barely go a minute  
without declaring war in their mind against someone they know.

There are wars where no one marches with a flag,  
though that does not keep casualties  
from mounting.

Our hearts irrigate this earth.  
We are fields before  
each other.

How can we live in harmony?  
First we need to  
know

we are all madly in love  
with the same  
God.

## **COULD YOU EMBRACE THAT?**

I said to God, "Let me love you."  
And God replied, "Which part?"

All of you, all of you," I said.

"Dear," God spoke, "you are as a mouse wanting to impregnate  
a tiger who is not even in heat. It is a feat way  
beyond your courage and strength.  
You would run from me  
if I removed my  
mask."

I said to God again,

"Beloved I need to love you--every aspect, every pore."

And this time God said,

"There is a hideous blemish on my body,  
though it is such an infinitesimal part of my Being--  
could you kiss that if it were revealed?"

"I will try, Lord, I will try."

And then God said,  
"That blemish is all the hatred and  
cruelty in this world."

Hymn: **#709 When Our Song Says Peace**

Prayers of the Body

We will begin our prayers by singing # 751 three times;  
please change the singular pronouns to plural:

**#751 O Lord, Hear Our Prayers  
When We Call Answer Us**

**Prayer petitions will be punctuated by silence.**

Following the Amen, please sing the alternate verse of  
#751 "The Lord is our song"

Abba Prayer

P: As Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Heavenly Mother, Heavenly Father  
Holy and blessed is your true name.  
We pray for your reign of peace to come.  
We pray that your good will be done.  
Let heaven and earth become one.  
Give us this day the bread we need.  
Give it to those who have none.  
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us  
From each one to each one to each one.  
Lead us to holy innocence  
Beyond the evil of our days:  
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.  
For yours is the power  
And the mercy, and the glory.  
Forever your name is all one. Amen.**

Hymn: **#572 Now It Is Evening**

Benediction:

P: “Would any seed take root if it had not believed  
God’s promise, when God said,

**‘Dears, I will rain. I will help you. I will turn into  
warmth and effulgence,**

**I will be the Mother I AM  
and let you draw from  
My Body**

**and rise, and  
rise.’”**

*(Thomas: If It Had Not Believed)*

Peace:

*receive the peace of Christ  
and share Christ’s peace as you depart.*

