

1923

The Angel Saint

Dublin: Office of the Irish Rosary

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The
Angel-Saint.

Dublin.
Office of The Irish Rosary. 1923.

The Association to which reference is made on page 8 of this Life of Saint Thomas is called the Angelic Warfare. Its members are united under the patronage of Our Lady and the Angelic Doctor to seek through their high example and intercession the preservation of their own virtue.

"These are times," says the Holy Father, Pope Pius XI., "when we frequently behold our young men, ensnared by the corruptible pleasures of the world, make early shipwreck of their virtue." Therefore the Holy Father expresses His desire to see this Society very widely established; granting to all who are enrolled in the Society the privilege of wearing a special medal instead of the Cincture. Moreover, he confirms all the indulgences granted to it by His Predecessors.

THE ANGEL SAINT : THOMAS AQUINAS

*The Protector of Youth ;
The Exemplar of Teachers ;
The Guide of Ecclesiastical Students ;
The Mirror of Religious ;
The Model of Priests.
(Pope Pius XI)*



DUBLIN :
Office of the IRISH ROSARY
1923

As it was said of old to the Egyptians seeking the necessaries of life, "Go to Joseph," so would We say to all that hunger after truth, "Go to Thomas," that they may receive the nourishment of healthy doctrine, which will uphold them even unto the eternal salvation of their souls.

(From the Encyclical Letter of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, STUDIUM DUCEM, issued on the occasion of the Sixth Centenary of the Canonisation of Saint Thomas Aquinas.)

THE ANGEL SAINT

Patron of Catholic Schools,
Colleges and Universities.

A BRILLIANT SOLEMNITY.

"This is a day of good tidings; if we hold our peace and do not tell it until the morning, we shall be charged with crime. . . ."

This text was the introduction of a magnificent oration pronounced by Pope John XXII. in circumstances of extraordinary splendour in the year 1323—just six hundred years ago. Around the Pontiff was ranged a numerous train of Cardinals and Prelates in their robes of ceremony; near the Holy Father stood King Robert of Sicily with his mother, Queen Mary. Behind the King was a brilliant throng of powerful nobles and all the ambassadors of the pontifical Court. Beyond them surged an enormous concourse of people.

In tense silence all waited as the Pope, in grave and solemn words, proclaimed the tidings of joy of which he had spoken in his text,—the exaltation of the Angelic Saint of Naples, Thomas Aquinas, to the altars of the Church and the honours of the saints.

A scene of boundless enthusiasm followed. King Robert himself, from his place in the Sanctuary, delivered an oration full of fervour and emotion, on the holy life of Thomas, who

was his own kinsman. He declared, in the presence of the Pope and Cardinals, that Thomas had been and would be until the end of time, a burning and a shining light.

On the following day, the Pontifical Bull of the Canonisation was sent throughout the world to all Bishops, Prelates and Sovereigns. It brought with it everywhere a boundless joy, particularly to France and Germany. But it brought tidings of great joy, above all, to the great Universities of the world, which, anticipating the Papal Decree of five and a half centuries later, hailed as their celestial Patron the new saint, Thomas Aquinas.

AN ITALIAN FORTRESS.

Scarcely a century before this gorgeous ceremonial, on the very day that Saint Francis of Assisi died, Thomas was born in a picturesque Italian castle, perched high above the turbid torrent of the Melfi, in the Appenines. The noblest blood flowed in his veins, for he was a kinsman of the Emperor Frederick, and his ancestors were the Norman Barons who had driven the Saracens and Greeks out of Southern Italy two hundred years before. His father, the Count of Aquino, was a stalwart soldier of deep faith. His mother, Theodora, was a woman of strong character, haughty and unbending, but of mortified and prayerful life. She certainly lives up to this character in her place in the life of her son;—first in her powerful opposition to his vocation and later in her edifying surrender to the Will of God.

An incident, terrible in its pathos, occurred when Thomas was only a few years old. He

was sleeping one night in the same room with his nurse and his little sister, when the earth quaked and a terrific tempest tore against the castle walls. In the midst of the confusion of the elements, a fork of lightning entered the very nursery of the future saint. Thomas himself was unscathed and also his nurse who held him in her arms. But, a few yards away from them, lay the one victim of the storm, his little sister, a charred and lifeless body.

The horror of this shock remained with Thomas his whole life through; and afterwards, when he was a Dominican, he would rush to the sanctuary, if a thunderstorm broke over the convent, and remain with his head pressed against the door of the Tabernacle, as though trying to shelter himself under the very wings of the Gentle Pelican That dwelt therein.

Thomas spent but a few years in his father's castle above the rich Campagna Felice. They were peaceful years and uneventful: they sped swiftly until the day came when Thomas left his father's house, and betook him with his mother to the mighty Abbey of Monte Cassino where the monks were to be charged with his education.

THE BENDING OF THE TWIG.

High up on the summit of Monte Cassino, Thomas began his training for the future, in one of the greatest Benedictine monasteries of the world. It was a spot fragrant with holy memories; rich beyond words in natural beauty, and sacred with the almost visible presence of God.

To this hallowed sanctuary Thomas came as

a boy of six, and for several years he remained with the Fathers of St. Benedict, wearing the habit of the Order and following the observances of the Community. It was a period of vast importance in the development of the saint; and the influence of those years may be clearly traced in his whole life and in his whole work. The first gift Monte Cassino bestowed upon Thomas was that matchless serenity which never left him, that inviolable calm which no external storms could ever break. To this was joined a greatness of spirit and a nobility more precious than the greatness and the nobility of his birth. Serenity, nobility and greatness remained with him always as his own proper characteristics; they sprung from that deep thought, fostered by his directors and surroundings, which drew him, young as he was, to the Feet of God.

For Monte Cassino led Thomas straight to the Mystery of God. Few men can look upon the beauty that surrounds that stern old mountain or look up at night into the star-lit splendour of its skies, or live for long the solemn and serene life of its monks, without being brought face to face with the mystery and the majesty of the Divinity. But, in the fine soul of Thomas, these sweet influences must have thrilled perpetually and most powerfully. His Benedictine biographers tell how the monks found him frequently absorbed in thought. And sometimes, after long silences, he would come to some holy old priest or brother with the stupendous question: "What is God?"

It was a question that sent its echo through all the years of his life; "and," says Pope

Pius XI., "the writings of his mature manhood are an effort to find an answer to this question, whether he treat of the Creation, of Man, of Laws, Virtues or the Sacraments. . . ."

Monte Cassino awakened in Thomas the desire to know God; and on Monte Cassino was fostered that love of God whence sprung the serene activities and the calm victories of the future.

TRIAL AND TRIUMPH.

Thomas was not destined to live the life of a Benedictine. He had learned precious lessons in the sanctuary of Monte Cassino. Now he was to add "to the stability, largeness and self-control of the Benedictine, the learning, eloquence and judicial steadiness of the Dominican." His few years with the Benedictines were the great initial grace of his life. Now he made his humble petition for the white habit of the Dominicans. His request was granted. But Thomas's mother was furious. By a thousand affectionate wiles she sought to win her son from his new allegiance. She might as well have tried to move mountains with her delicate fingers. Thomas was adamant; he could not forsake, even for maternal tears, a call that he deemed Divine.

His brothers took him by force from his convent and imprisoned him in his father's castle. All in vain. Then they stooped to an infamous trick to rob him of his innocence and his sanctity. "And because that by menaces nor fair words his brethren might not change his good purpose," as we read in the Golden Legend, "they put into his chamber a young

damsel to the innocent child, for to subvert his good courage, and anon he took a brand of fire and drove the damsel out of his chamber, which was come for to deceive him." Then he knelt down and in humble prayer begged from God the gift of perpetual chastity. And two angels came to him with the promise of God that he should never again suffer from such temptations; and they girded him tightly with a Heavenly girdle. To-day hundreds of youths in every country wear a similar girdle in memory of that victory, to obtain the aid of Thomas in the preservation of their virtue.

This first great victory of Thomas was of immense importance, as Pope Pius XI. points out: "For if Thomas had succumbed to this assault upon his chastity, the Church would probably never have had Her Angelic Doctor."

It was indeed a great victory for Thomas, but the irritation of his brothers was thereby only rendered the more obstinate. They kept him in confinement for two years more. Then, seeing that further persecution would be worse than useless, they set him free; to salve their own wounded pride they made his liberation as humiliating for him as possible: they had him let down in a basket by his sisters from a window in his father's castle.

THOMAS, THE STUDENT.

The great intellect of Thomas found its proper place among the Sons of Saint Dominic. "From the earliest days of their history, knowledge was for the Dominicans a principle of power. From the very first, with prudence, forethought and wise economy they prepared

a system for turning the abilities of their members to the fullest account. With them no intellect was lost. Power was recognised, trained and put in motion."

When Thomas came to the Dominicans, although he was well educated, the Dominicans did not look upon his education as finished but as beginning. With infinite care they chose for Thomas the best Professor in the Order, no less than Blessed Albert the Great—a man so perfect in every science, according to his biographers, as to be called the very miracle and marvel of his age.

At the feet of this holy professor Thomas sat in the University of Paris, drinking in great draughts of the wisdom and knowledge of God, until the age of twenty-three, when he was sent with Albert to Cologne, as Master of Students. The years of his formal studies at the feet of men were ended: his life of study at the foot of the Cross of Jesus Christ was only beginning.

It is in the works of his later career that we discover the hidden life of his student days. For in these works he gives us, in the words of Pope Pius XI., "a shining example of the close link that should always unite devotion and study." In those later works, he discusses the causes of failure in study, which are "curiosity, unreasoning lust after knowledge, intellectual sloth and a shirking of persevering effort in difficulties. And Thomas would have as remedy nothing but a holy zeal for work which will grow through the ardour of devotion and the life of the spirit." Finally, he tells us that "the first and chiefest fruit which

we should seek in study is a great love of God and an intense longing for the things that are eternal."

The saint has, all unwittingly, given us the key to the hidden life of his own scholasticate.

To-day the Pope calls to our Students to follow in his footsteps by cultivating the virtues that shine forth in him;—above all, his purity and his humility. "Let them learn," says the Holy Father, "from a man unique in the greatness of his genius and his wisdom, to hold in horror all intellectual pride, and, through humble prayer, to vivify their studies with the plenteousness of the Light of God."

THOMAS, THE TEACHER.

For a time only was Thomas left to Cologne. It was when there that his fame spread far and wide,—even beyond the Continent of Europe. All in Cologne were dazzled by his unusual powers. All the time that he was teaching, he also preached, and wrote treatises of great value. He had written from an early age; and the precision and accuracy acquired in writing was of no small importance now in the blossoming of his powers. His lucidity, subtlety, and the vast extent of his knowledge amazed his listeners and his readers. Joined to all was the marvellous serenity which had been Monte Cassino's great gift to her greatest son.

Thomas was soon recalled by his General to the University of Paris,—this time to take his place in the Professor's rostrum. He easily eclipsed his fellow-professors in every sphere of knowledge because he began with immense resources. He knew intimately the Fathers of

the Church—so intimately that Pope Pius could say, quoting the words used by Pope Leo XIII., that Thomas seemed to possess in a certain sense the acumen of all the Fathers. For Holy Scripture he had the intense reverence that springs from deep knowledge. "Whatever he wrote," says Pope Pius XI. again, "he laid the foundation of all his doctrine in and drew his proofs from Holy Scripture . . . convinced that the Scripture is in itself and in all its parts the very Utterance of God."

He prepared his lectures with the most scrupulous care and spent himself to make the path of knowledge easy for his disciples. In his day, the Professor's office was looked on as one of great gravity. Gloriously did Aquinas acquit himself of it. Few have ever filled the Professor's Chair with greater fruit and glory than the humble Thomas Aquinas.

His symbol is the blazing sun, because, as the Pope points out very aptly—"He is one who, by illumining doctrinally the minds of men, fires their hearts to virtue . . . while other philosophers work for their own fame, he is ever anxious to remain in the background so that the light of Truth alone radiates from him . . . he consecrated his God-like genius not to his own glory but to the glory of the Truth. In his teaching he does not reckon it sufficient to instruct the minds of men unless he draw their wills also to a most devoted love of God."

Professors and Teachers, behold your Exemplar!

"And let Professors know," continues the

Holy Father, "that they shall fulfil their own duties and Our expectations only when by constant study of Thomas Aquinas, they begin to love him passionately, and imbue their own students with that same passionate love . . . and make them in turn fit forces to communicate that love to others. . . ."

THOMAS, THE SAINT.

The vital point to be emphasised in treating of the sanctity of Saint Thomas is not so much the varied manifestation of his great piety, his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, for example, his reverent affection for Our Lady, his humility, meekness, constancy, purity or obedience; but, what must be grasped, if we are to realise the saint in Thomas, is the unity of the Contemplative and Active life in him: the essential union of the energising love of God in him with the miracle of his external activity. Love and Labour are one in him: Thomas, the Student, the Teacher, the Writer, is Thomas, the Saint. And though we have treated each aspect separately, these aspects do not differ essentially, but only in so far as do the facets of a gem, each one of which shines with the same single radiance from within. The interior and the external life in Thomas are one. Love and Labour unite in him: and their perfect union is the peculiar and definite note of the sanctity of Thomas Aquinas.

One of Thomas's dearest friends, the ardent and tender Franciscan, Saint Bonaventure, said to him one day: "Tell me, my Brother, whence you get the marvellous wisdom and sublimity of your thoughts." And Thomas pointed to

the Figure of the Crucified: "There, Brother, is my Book!"

In that sentence he epitomised his life of contemplation and labour. In that sentence he expresses what we have wished to show in these pages, the unity of his whole life, from the days when, in Monte Cassino, he marvelled about the Mystery of God, to the day when he died teaching the Benedictines of Fossa Nuova. "In Thomas," says Pope Pius XI., "the ever-growing love of God united to wisdom led him to complete forgetfulness of himself; so that, when Jesus Christ said to him from the Cross, 'Well hast thou written of Me, Thomas, what reward wilt thou have?' Thomas could answer, 'Lord, nothing save Thyself!'" "The one ideal of the whole theology of Saint Thomas," he says in another passage, "is to lead us to live in close friendship with God."

Nothing perhaps shows the singular unity of the sanctity and wisdom of Thomas; nothing shows him so definitely as Doctor at once and Saint as that tender Office which he wrote for the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, and of which the Pope writes: "Thomas, through his unique gifts and genius, could enshrine his doctrine in the prayers and hymns of the Liturgy. He became the inspired Poet and Doctor of the Divine Eucharist; so that, wherever in continents and nations the Catholic Church is found, there, too, are found in her ceremonial the canticles of Aquinas, rich at once in an affectionate supplication and in an unequalled exposition of the precise doctrine handed down from the Apostles concerning that August Sacrament."

Through the entire Encyclical from which this excerpt is taken, the Holy Father lays emphasis on the union between the sanctity and the wisdom of Thomas;—the latter springing from the former and receiving from it its full beauty and perfection. “To see him prostrate before the altar with all the abandonment of a little child,” writes one of his biographers, “to see him lifted up to God in ecstasy of spirit, in his prayers; to think on his spotless purity of heart and mind, and then to call to memory his genius, is to account, in part at least, for the depth, balance and steadiness of his method, and for the singular influence of his mind upon the Catholic religious world. When a perfect Doctor is also a perfect Saint, then the world receives not merely a fading light but a lasting illumination.”

THE FINAL VICTORY.

It was on a journey of obedience, on his way to the Council of Lyons, that the last Call of his Master came to Thomas Aquinas. Utterly wearied by a life of high and almost incredible activity he obeyed that Call with alacrity. It was for him a summons from sorrow to bliss, from captivity to the full freedom of God. “So long,” he would cry in the words of Saint Augustine, “so long as there is anything in me that is not entirely of Thee, O my God, pain and sorrow must be my portion; but when I shall begin to be Thine alone, then shall I be filled with Thee, and then know the perfect liberty of Thy children.”

As he felt the end approach, he begged to be taken to the nearest monastery that he might

have the solace of dying in a religious house. They brought him to the Cistercian Monastery of Fossa Nuova; and there the monks received him with tenderness and reverent affection. The dying saint was at home among them. Their very presence brought back to him the memory of other days when he had come to their brethren on the austere heights of Monte Cassino; when for the first time his heart had thrilled before the Mystery of the Divinity. From those sweet days his life had never lost that unity which was founded upon the Rock of God. Now its closing hours were one with the hours when, in his boyhood, his whole being had yearned for the embrace of his Creator. In the years that followed, his eagle-gaze had penetrated deep into unfathomable mysteries. Now, in the light that already streamed through the gates of eternity, all his incomparable expositions seemed to him, he said, to be worthless as chaff.

The monks besought him as he lay dying to give them an explanation of the Canticle of Canticles as Saint Bernard had done. But he answered sadly: “Give me the spirit of Bernard and I will do what Bernard did.” Nevertheless, like a true son of Dominic, he began to teach them even as he lay on his death-bed; and his theme was the motif of the life that was ending . . . the finding of tranquillity and sanctity in the love of Jesus Christ, and in His union with the soul.

The devout exposition of Thomas was his preparation for his last Communion. When they brought the Hidden Divinity to him, he rose, all weak and worn as he was, and pros-

trated in adoration. And then he uttered words that thrill us, over the long centuries, to the very depths of our souls: "I receive Thee, the Price of my soul's redemption, for love of Whom I have studied, I have watched, I have laboured. Thee have I preached. Thee have I taught. Without Thee I have never opened my lips. . . ." The book of his life was about to be closed; these words are its fitting signet. Verily for him to live was Christ and to die was gain ineffable.

Then, as the Abbot held up the Blessed Sacrament, Thomas burst into tears, and made his last profession of faith: "Thou, O Christ, art King of Glory. Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father." And he received his God.

Afterwards, he was wrapt in the silence of ecstatic contemplation: and then, calmly, tenderly, and sweetly, Faith brightened into Vision; and upon the mighty soul of Thomas broke the radiant response to the query of his boyhood.

THOMAS, THE WRITER.

Thomas left behind him at his death an array of volumes so imposing that one almost refuses to believe that they could be produced in a lifetime so brief as his. One of his Commentaries alone, that on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, would seem too much to be the product of a normal lifetime. It must have been the result of a perpetual and patient activity of thought and pen. The Commentary fills more than a thousand quarto pages printed in double columns.

It would be an impossible thing to do more in these pages than give the vaguest outline of the works of Thomas.

The crown of all his labour is the great *Summa Theologica*:—"a mighty synthesis thrown into technical and scientific form of the Catholic traditions of East and West, of the infallible dicta of the sacred page, and of the most enlightened conclusions of human reason gathered from the soaring intuitions of the Academy and the rigid severity of the Lyceum." "The *Summa* is not only a powerful machine for creating theologians, but a mighty instrument for educating men: its aim is to reproduce the Patristic character as well as the Patristic mind."

If the Commentary of Saint Thomas on the Sentences would seem to have been the one occupation of a patient lifetime, the *Summa* would seem to be the fruit of not less than a century of deep and prayerful thought.

In addition to these two monumental works, we possess also the Saint's Commentaries on the Gospels, his Expositions of the Epistles of Saint Paul, his Commentaries on the Book of Job, on the Prophets and on the Canticle of Canticles. In the realm of Philosophy we cannot pass over the Saint's Commentary on Aristotle, the enormous influence of which can hardly be gauged. That Commentary was a laborious and perilous undertaking: it was brought to success in the hands of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Thereby he purified a marvellous example of pagan scholarship; and led Aristotle into the very sanctuary of Christianity.

One is struck silent by the thought of the superhuman activity of which these and other writings of the saint are the fruit. As to their depth, one can, in a quarter of an hour, as someone has said, read enough to meditate upon for a quarter of a century. It would be an impossible task to convey to the readers of these pages an adequate idea of the extent and height and depth and significance of the writings of Thomas Aquinas.

We have the solemn judgment of Pope Pius XI. on the intrinsic value of the volumes left to us by Saint Thomas. In Philosophy, "few have ever demonstrated its nature, aim and divisions so perfectly as Thomas has done." "To desert Aquinas, above all, in his metaphysical doctrines, would be to court the gravest disaster." "There can be no doubt that Theology reached the summit of dignity through Aquinas, who had, at the same time, a deep knowledge of Divine things and a strength of intellect wonderfully adapted to the science of Philosophy." "Thomas established the science of Apologetics on a solid and unshakable basis." "Of that part of Theology which deals with the interpretation of dogma, there is no wealthier or more prolific author than Thomas." "He has reared up a solid fabric of Moral Theology." "Nor is his ascetic and mystical teaching a whit less noble." "In Biblical matters he hands on the correct notion of Divine Inspiration. In moral discipline and in the social order he lays down also the correct principles." Is it any wonder that the Holy Father wishes to proclaim to the world his own thought that "Thomas should

be styled not only the Angelic but also the Universal Doctor"?

THE WORLD VERDICT.

The whole Christian world has given a very definite judgment on the labours of Saint Thomas; and the world re-echoes harmoniously the supreme commendation of Jesus Christ: *Bene scripsisti, Thoma!*

The great Universities hailed Thomas, in the words of Silvius, as "the universal master of all schools." Paris led the way in enthusiastic reverence; we find the eminent Cardinal Du Perron declaring in the year 1615 "that the Summa of Saint Thomas had always been looked on as the Oracle of Theology, and had always been marvellously venerated in the schools of Paris."

Next, we find the great and venerable Universities of Salamanca, Acala and Coimbra following in the footsteps of Paris. We still possess the document in which the Doctors of Salamanca declared their perpetual allegiance to the Angelic Doctor. The theologians of the University of Louvain proudly proclaimed that the fount of all their wisdom was the teaching of Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas. The Universities of Italy, Naples, Turin and Bologna exult in the very name of Thomas. Finally, Echart tells us that the disciples of Thomas were, even before his death, professors in Rome, Cologne, Oxford and Cambridge. All of these loyally drew their teaching from the writings of their common Master.

Great men vie with each other in their encomiums of the wisdom of the Angelic Doctor.

Among the saints, his devoted disciples were men like Pope Pius V., Vincent Ferrer, Charles Borromeo, Francis of Sales, Antoninus of Florence and Philip Neri. Cardinal Bessarion styles him the most saintly of the learned and the most learned of the saints. The recently beatified Cardinal Bellarmine says that his works shine brighter than the sun. Albert the Great, whose disciple Thomas was, calls him the Flower of the Earth. Suarez says that his high place is among the first Fathers of the Church. Even the cynical Erasmus declared that he knew no doctrine so solid as that of Aquinas.

Surely this is a testimony of unique unanimity!

Over the Religious Orders the influence of Thomas is analogous to that which he exercises over the great Universities. Even when they do not follow him in the fulness of his teaching, all bear willing witness to his power and his authority. Augustinians, Benedictines, Carmelites, Cistercians, Jesuits, and Dominicans are proud to learn at his feet.

THE POPES AND SAINT THOMAS.

In the Councils of the Church, Saint Thomas has ever been present by the wisdom of his writings, as Pope Pius XI. recalls in his recent Encyclical. He recalls, too, that immense reverence which led the Fathers of Trent to place the open Summa beside the Holy Scriptures and the Acts of the Sovereign Pontiffs on the table of their council hall.

In the Councils of Pisa, Constance and Basle, Thomas spoke through the lips of his Domin-

ican Brethren. Pope Clement XII. declares that his teaching has always been revered by Oecumenical Councils of the Church.

That unique unanimity of approval to which we have referred appears not less strikingly in the solemn pronouncements of the Sovereign Pontiffs themselves. . . . The Vicars of Christ with one voice repeat the verdict of Christ: *Bene scripsisti, Thoma!*

Pope Alexander IV. declares that Thomas possessed through the grace and light of the Almighty, a veritable treasure of celestial wisdom. In the Saint's lifetime two other Popes, Urban IV. and Clement IV., called upon him whenever they needed a trusty champion of the truth. Pope Gregory X. said that the glory of Thomas's sanctity and wisdom were spread to the very frontiers of the Church. The works of the saint were the one great delight of Pope Innocent V. Pope Benedict XIII. spoke of him as his Master. Pope John XXII. declared that he had illuminated the Church more than all the other Doctors put together. Pope Clement VI., Pope Innocent VI. and Pope Urban V. speak in similar strains of his wisdom and his holiness. Pope Pius V. decreed with unusual solemnity that Saint Thomas should be a Doctor of the universal Church. Popes Clement VIII., Paul V. and Alexander VII. hail him as the tried and trusty champion of Christendom. The names of Popes Innocent XII., Benedict XIV. and Clement XII. do not exhaust the long list of glorious Popes who bestowed on Saint Thomas their high commendation.

Our present Holy Father, Pope Pius XI., recalls many of the great pronouncements of

His Predecessors in His recent Encyclical. He realises the impossibility of conveniently recalling all; but He emphasises the more recent acts of Pope Leo XIII., Pope Pius X. and Pope Benedict XV. And He declares that the Act, by which Pope Leo made the Thomistic School to live strongly again, would, of itself, be sufficient to ensure his undying glory. . . . He goes on to cite the well-known words of Pope Pius X.; and to refer to the Code of Canon Law promulgated by Pope Benedict XV., in which the principles of Saint Thomas are declared sacred.

Pope Pius XI. himself concludes that glorious line by declaring His concordance with the tributes of his Predecessors to Thomas Aquinas. He bestows upon Thomas, in the last splendid sentence of the age-long commendation of the Pontiffs, a new and significant title: "We are of opinion that, not only should Thomas be called the Angelic, but also the Universal Doctor of the Church, because, as is testified on every side, the Church has made his doctrine Her own."

Vere, Roma Locuta est!

TO-DAY.

"As was said of old to the Egyptians seeking the necessities of life, 'Go to Joseph!' so would We say to all that hunger after Truth, 'Go to Thomas!'"

Thus speaks Pope Pius XI. to-day, more than six hundred years after the death of the Angelic Doctor. Mighty as the serene influence of Aquinas has been down all the turbulent centuries since he wrote and taught, that influence shows no signs of decay or even of decline.

His voice rang out certain and clear in the Council of the Vatican, as of old it rang in Lyons, Pisa, Constance, Basle and Trent.

His praise is upon the lips of Popes Leo XIII., Pius X., Benedict XV., and Pius XI., as it was upon the lips of the Urbans, the Clements, the Innocents and the Benedicts of old.

Pope Pius XI. continues without a hiatus the eulogies of Pope John XXII. and of Pope Saint Pius V. To the Church of Christ the centuries count for naught.

And the Universities? A few years ago an international Thomistic University was opened in Rome and called by the name of the Angelic Doctor. There students of every nation and of many Religious Orders have foregathered to learn the authentic wisdom of Thomas from the lips of his Brethren, whose Order, in the words of Pope Benedict XV., deserves praise not only for that it raised up Thomas, but also "for that it has never departed by one hair's breadth from his teaching." In that University, says Pope Pius XI., Thomas may be said to-day "to have his home."

In Louvain, Friburg, Jerusalem, Manilla, Salamanca and Washington, Thomas still speaks as of old he spoke in Paris and Cologne. And recently, triumphant over persecution, his voice has begun again to be heard in the precincts of the venerable University of Oxford.

Nor is this Island behind other lands; here, too, Thomas speaks through the lips of his Brethren. In the Dominican House of Studies at Tallaght, staffed as it is with professors, educated, in perfect accord with the high ideal

of their Order, at the first Universities of Europe, the course of study corresponds in minutest detail to the curriculum of the great international University of the Dominicans in Rome, a curriculum firm-based upon the irrefragable wisdom of the Master-mind of Aquinas.

Thomas is needed still; needed more than ever to-day, and needed in our own land. His calm eyes look down on us over the centuries not in condemnation, but wistful and pitying; wistful for our welfare, pitying for our lapses. His voice, still steady and unfaltering, calls us from the frantic agony of our self-seeking to learn from his own sweet and laborious life the serenity of Eternity; to learn at his feet the high folly of the Cross.

Superiorum Licentia.

Nihil Obstat :

MATTHAEUS MACMAHON,
Cens. Theol. Dep.

Imprimi Potest.

✠ EDWARDUS,
*Archiep. Dublinen,
Hiberniae Primas.*

22 Die Octob., 1923.