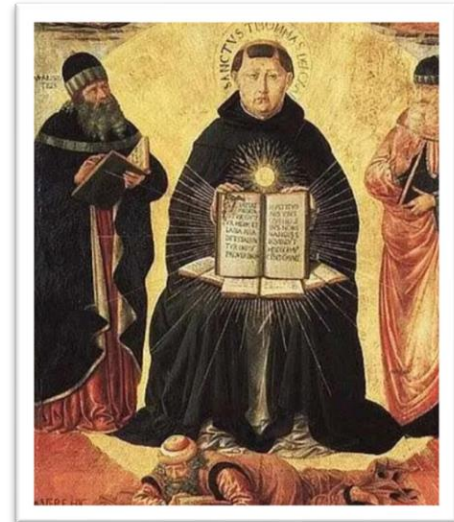


## St Thomas Aquinas

Among the greatest intellectuals in the history of the Church, Saint Thomas rises far above the rest. He is not only a Doctor of the Church but is given the titles Angelic Doctor, Common Doctor, and Universal Doctor. It is difficult to understate the impact that Saint Thomas has had on the Church's doctrine and intellectual understanding of the faith.



Thomas was born in a grand castle in central Italy near the town of Aquino. His father was a nobleman, a knight in the army of the emperor Frederick II. Thomas began his studies when he was only five at the famous Benedictine monastery, Monte Cassino, where his uncle was abbot. Thomas's parents hoped he would one day become the abbot himself. When he was fourteen, because of military conflicts, Thomas moved from Monte Cassino to the newly founded University of Naples to continue his studies. It was there that he came in contact with the Dominicans who influenced him greatly and who made plans for Thomas to join their newly founded order. Thomas' intellect shone forth at that time as he openly engaged in discussions, and his reputation for brilliance became widely known.

### The miracles of St Thomas Aquinas

1. The sub-prior of the monastery came to lay his ailing eyes against the visage of the saint. And at once he was cured. This was the first miracle to follow the death of Saint Thomas.
2. And a great number of sick people who invoked him in their prayers or who visited his tomb were miraculously cured.

3. One day, messengers who were carrying documents concerning the miracles attributed to Brother Thomas Aquinas to the Pope, were going across the Alps above Lausanne. A mule with a very heavy load slipped and fell, rolled down the side of a cliff, and was finally dashed against some jagged rocks. Dom Mathieu, one of the envoys, invoked the aid of the saint. Then they saw the mule, safe and sound, walking at the bottom of the precipice. The load he carried had not even slipped out of place.
4. Other messengers also, carrying to Pope John XXII the written testimony regarding the life and miracles of the Angelic Doctor, found themselves one day on a vessel sailing from Naples to the Roman Curia. The wind, at first favorable, gave way to a storm. And in the midst of a frightful tempest the vessel was driven toward a reef. One of the sailors then began to cry loudly to the brothers who were the messengers, "Pray to your saints! Because in a moment the vessel will be dashed against the rocks!" The brothers, with all their hearts, turned toward the Queen of Heaven and Blessed Dominic. But, above all, they called on Saint Thomas. Then all changed. A new wind arose, and the galley, running toward the open sea, was saved from certain destruction.
5. It once happened that the mother of Thomas, together with some other women, went to Naples to visit the baths there. A nurse was taking care of Thomas, who was still a small infant at the time. He somehow came into possession of a small scrap of paper, on which was written the words of the *Hail Mary*. His nurse tried to take the fragment from the hand of the baby, yet he clasped it with such strength and determination that she was unable to remove it from his grasp. Young Thomas continued to hold it firmly in his hands, until his mother managed to pry it from him. After this, whenever the holy baby cried, they would give to him the

scrap of paper with the *Hail Mary* inscribed upon it, and immediately he would be pacified.

6. Once Thomas had become a professor at the University of Paris, he was due one day to dispute some important theological question. Yet, the night before, when he arose from his sleep to pray, he found that an extra tooth had sprung up in his mouth! This new and extraneous tooth was positioned in such a way that he could not speak properly. Thomas consulted with one of his associates, who suggested that the debate could be deferred, so that the problem of the tooth could be attended to. But Thomas was not at all happy about deferring the discussion. So he applied himself to prayer, shedding copious tears of holy desire. And the superfluous tooth which had sprung up in his mouth promptly fell out, without any pain or trauma. Thereafter, Thomas always carried the tooth with him as a memorial of this divine grace.
7. Once St. Thomas was in Rome during Holy Week. He preached on the Passion of the Lord in the Basilica of St. Peter, and the entire congregation was moved to tears. On Easter Sunday, he preached again, especially on the magnificent joys of the Blessed Virgin at the time of the Resurrection of her Son. Amongst the congregation, there was a woman who had long suffered from a hemorrhage. She was with the crowd who enthusiastically pressed in upon the Angelic Doctor, and she managed to touch the hem of his garment. And immediately, she was cured from her affliction.
8. The spiritual elevation of the mind of the Angelic Doctor was very often accompanied by the physical elevation of his earthly body. Once when he was in Salerni in Calabria, for a meeting of the friars, he remained in prayer before the altar after the Office of Vigils. And, as he meditated upon Heavenly things, several of the brothers clearly witnessed him to rise

from the ground. He levitated upwards to a height of about two feet, and remained suspended there for an extended period of time.

9. After the death of St. Thomas, a certain holy relic of the saint—his hand—was kept in the Chapel of St. Severinus. Now, a certain clergyman visited that chapel, for the purpose of venerating the many ancient relics of the saints kept there. But when he came to the hand of Thomas, he began to scoff at this new relic, and to view it with a certain degree of disdain and skepticism. But as he thought thus, a violent trembling seized his body and threw him to the ground. In desperation, he implored the absolution of the priest of the chapel for his doubt and irreverence. But even then, the fit of trembling did not cease to dominate him. So he asked that the hand of the saint be brought to him. With tears of repentance, he devoutly kissed it, and implored the mercy of God and the forgiveness of his holy servant, St. Thomas. And at that very instant, he was released from the fit which had possessed him.

10. There was once a certain visitor at the Abbey of St. Laurence in Fossanova, who was vexed by a demon. As he lay on his bed, this demon would appear to him in the form of a monkey. And it would mock and taunt him without mercy. But when he attempted to defend himself by making the sign of the cross, he found that he was unable to move his limbs at all. Indeed, he found himself to have been rendered completely paralyzed. But some of the monks took him to the tomb of the great St. Thomas. There, he poured out fervent tears, imploring the Angelic Doctor to intercede for him in his piteous plight. And immediately his movement was restored, and the demon, in the form of the malicious monkey, scurried

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**away. Shortly thereafter, the man entered the same monastery and became a monk himself.**