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THE PATRON OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS

On several counts Saint Thomas Aquinas was a big man. But he is not remembered chiefly for his huge physical bulk. Rather, the world commemorates him because he is one of history's intellectual giants.

It is vain to speculate, as some idly do whether his genius is greater or less than Saint Paul's or Saint Augustine's. It is vain, because, in the light of the parable of the talents, it makes no difference. In the sight of God, which alone is what counts, they ran a dead heat: each produced the best that was in him and produced not for his own glory but God's.

Along with Saint Dominic, Thomas is the special brilliance of the Order of Friars Preachers. And, like every saint, he is an example of superlative Christian virtue.

But as the patron of Catholic schools and scholars, he is the special model of every Catholic university man and, therefore, of you.

Only in proportion as you pattern your life of study after his, will you realize the intellectual and cultural satisfaction that comes of having developed your mind.

But you must remember, as Thomas did, that integral, self-perfective and productive knowledge cannot be gained by reason alone. It will only be yours through the harmonious blend of reason, the reasonable acceptance of divine faith, and unremitting personal work. The lazy man, or the unreasonable man, or the man who rejects divine faith will never become a second Saint Thomas Aquinas.

From the parable of the talents, it is clear that God will utter harsh words on Judgment Day to the lazy man; and, before that, many of his fellow-travellers will have scornfully passed him by as a too brutish creature. \*\*\* Sooner or later society usually catches up with her unreasonable members and locks them up behind bars. \*\*\* As to the man who rejects divine faith, it is plainly written: "He that believeth not shall be condemned." And: "The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

Lack of faith is, in truth, a mental disease. No human being is so pitifully small, no college "student" so self-circumscribed as the bookworm, or the so-called philosopher, or the smug dilettante ("I am not as the rest of men"), who insists that reason knows all and that faith is stupidly blind. Surely, if God's knowledge is infinite and man's is finite, there ought to be many things God knows which man does not know. To take such things on God's word is faith: reasonable and infallibly reassuring.

This pseudo-cult of pure reason, i.e., the adoration of cellular gray matter, bars too many university men (endowed with brains by a good, loving and patient God) from developing into men like Saints Thomas, Augustine and Paul. Nothing is so sad as to hear of these campus celebrities losing perspective, going rationalist, experiencing deliverance from the shackles of faith.

For them, tomorrow at 6:00, on the altar of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Alumni Hall, the Prefect of Religion will offer the Mass. His intention: "God give them humility!"