

Novena Prayer to St. Thomas Aquinas

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St. Thomas Aquinas, patron of students and Catholic schools, I thank God for the gifts of light and knowledge he bestowed on you, which you used to build up the Church in love. I thank God, too, for the wealth and richness of theological teaching you left in your writings. Not only were you a great teacher, you lived a life of virtue and you made holiness the desire of your heart. If I cannot imitate you in the brilliance of your academic pursuits, I can follow you in the humility and charity which marked your life. As St. Paul said, charity is the greatest gift, and it is open to all. Pray for me that I might grow in holiness and charity. Pray also for Catholic schools, and for all students. In particular, please obtain the favor I ask during this novena:

St. Thomas Aquinas, I beg of you to carry our intention to the foot of Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer. I request a storm of mercy for Bishop Gainer and those in positions of authority in the Diocese to open their hearts to the parents and other faithful who so desperately seek the restoration, not only of Catholic education, but also of the true Catholic identity. I also pray for the rejection of the heresy of modernism, on which these grave errors are founded. Enlighten and strengthen your Bishops in the United States of America with wisdom and discernment to take bold action against the influences of Common Core State Standards of education, and all reforms, on our Catholic schools. Renew and restore our Catholic schools to be institutions that seek only truth, beauty, and goodness as well as teach discipline and inspire holiness in its students, teachers, and administrators alike. Let the standards of Catholic education be founded in Christ, first and foremost. I also pray for organizations like the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education and the Cardinal Newman Society that seek to help Catholic educators and administrators draw on the rich heritage of Catholic education to form an educational community that is fully Catholic.

Amen.

First Day

St. Thomas, called by God

"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:37).

St. Thomas, as a young man you became convinced that God was calling you to religious life. Although your family was opposed to it, you were determined to follow God's call. Even when your brothers kidnapped you and forced you to remain a prisoner in your own house, you did not give up but waited patiently for God's hour. St. Thomas, pray for all young people who are considering their vocation in life. Help them to be open to the call of God. Inspire them to make choices motivated by love for God and an unselfish love for other people. Whatever their state in life, help them to see their chosen path as a call to service. May all married couples, single persons, priests and religious build up the Church through lives of unselfish devotion and love.

[Recite the novena prayer.]

Second Day

St. Thomas, lover of purity

"For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness" (1 Thes 4:7).

St. Thomas, you had a great esteem for the virtue of purity. When your family tried to deter you from entering the Dominicans by sending a woman to lead you into sin, you resisted the temptation and determined to consecrate your chastity to God forever. Today we are immersed in a culture that degrades the gift of human sexuality. Human persons are viewed as objects of pleasure and their human dignity is devalued. As a consequence, society tolerates abortion, disregarding human life at the very outset. Children suffer abuse and families are damaged by infidelity. Pray that our society may once again value the virtue of chastity. Pray that those in the media will work to promote a Christian view of marriage and family life. May the plague of pornography in all its forms be eliminated. May Christian moral standards act as a leaven in society and bring about a greater respect for human life.

[Recite the novena prayer.]

Third Day

St. Thomas, example of humility

"All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted" (Mt 23:12).

St. Thomas, when you were a young student some of your classmen called you the "dumb ox." Although you were more intelligent than all of them, you bore their insults patiently without retaliating. You were endowed with a keen mind but recognized that God is the source of all gifts. You humbly acknowledged your dependence on God, and begged him to enlighten you so that you would act only for his glory. St. Thomas, pray for me that I too learn to act out of humility and never from the empty desire for esteem in the sight of others. Help me to seek only God's glory and to act with a right intention. May I seek to humble myself now, so that in heaven I will shine like the stars for all eternity.

[Recite the novena prayer.]

Fourth Day

St. Thomas, devoted to truth

"But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph 4:15).

St. Thomas, you devoted your life to seeking the truth and explaining it to others. You dedicated your mind to God, and used it to probe the Word of God more deeply. Your gifts as a theologian and philosopher make you stand out as one of the greatest doctors of the Church. In your discussions, you made truth your primary aim, while treating respectfully anyone who differed with you. Obtain for me too a great love of truth. Help me to ponder God's word so as to draw from it the light I need to nourish myself spiritually. Keep me firmly rooted in the truth, and never let me be swayed by false teachings. I pray also for those who are lost in darkness; please bring them into the light of truth.

[Recite the novena prayer.]

Fifth Day

St. Thomas, afire with love for the Blessed Sacrament

"So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you'" (Jn 6:53).

St. Thomas, you had a great love for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and spent many hours in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. You once said that you learned more from prayer before the tabernacle than from many hours of study. The Church owes you a debt of gratitude for the beautiful Eucharistic hymns you wrote at the request of Pope Urban IV, for the newly-established feast of Corpus Christi. Pray that I too might be inflamed with an ardent love for the Holy Eucharist. Help me to always esteem and reverence this wonderful sacrament. Pray for me that I might always participate devoutly in Mass, receive Holy Communion with great fervor, and often visit Jesus in the tabernacle. Through contact with the Eucharistic Lord, may my heart overflow with love for God and for my neighbor.

[Recite the novena prayer.]

Sixth Day

St. Thomas, filled with charity

"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth" (1 Cor 13:4-6).

St. Thomas, you were noted during your life for the charity you showed to others. During debates at the university, you did not ridicule those who argued with you but treated them with respect and love. You showed consideration for the needs of other people. Help me also to be more deeply rooted in love of God and neighbor, keeping in mind Jesus' words, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). Help me to practice this same charity in a concrete way that does not stop at words, but is shown with sacrifice. May it begin first of all in my family, and then radiate to everyone I meet.

[Recite the novena prayer.]

Seventh Day

St. Thomas, defender of the Church

"...the Church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15).

St. Thomas, from your youth you learned to love the Church, your spiritual home. In your teaching, you sought to explain and defend the doctrine of the Church, making it known through your writings. You understood that true wisdom means to let oneself be instructed by the Church, for Jesus guaranteed that the Holy Spirit would always be with the Church, to lead it into all truth. At the end of your life you said, "I have taught and written much... according to my faith in Christ and in the holy Roman Church, to whose judgment I submit all my teaching." Intercede for the Church today, that it might grow stronger and more spiritually fruitful in the world. Raise up holy priests, religious and laity, that they may all be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Bless the pope in his efforts to guide the Church, witnessing to the power of the Gospel to renew the face of the earth. May all theologians work to explore the richness of Catholic teaching so as to show forth its truth and benefit the faithful. Pray for missionaries as they work to spread the Gospel. May the whole Church be renewed by the power of the Spirit to more effectively witness to Christ in the world today.

[Recite the novena prayer.]

Eighth Day

St. Thomas, teacher of prayer

"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving" (Col 4:2).

St. Thomas, you knew that prayer is the source of wisdom and you spent long hours in conversation with God. Prayer became your very life. Whenever you pondered over a problem in theology, you turned to prayer to seek God's enlightenment. Now in heaven you see God face to face. Pray for me, too, that I might become a person of profound prayer. Obtain for me the grace that I might always pray with humility, confidence and perseverance. Help me to grow more and more in the spirit of prayer, so that my whole life may become a prayer. May I always seek the face of the living God.

[Recite the novena prayer.]

Ninth Day

St. Thomas, patron of students

"For in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind" (1 Cor 1:5).

St. Thomas, God called you to spend most of your life in academic pursuits, first as a student, and then as a professor of theology. In your work as a teacher, you desired to help your students apply what they learned to their lives, in order to grow in holiness. You realized that knowledge is meant to draw people closer to God. In your teaching you sought to communicate the truth, desiring to help your students become better Christians. Pray for all students. Pray for those who may have difficulty in their studies, as well as for those who can study with ease. Pray that they may all be open to the truth, and always seek to better understand it. May they grow in knowledge so as to know God better and to be able to serve their brothers and sisters as the Lord desires. St. Thomas, pray especially for theologians, that in their studies and research they may come to a deeper knowledge of revealed doctrine in keeping with the mind of the Church. May their lives reflect the holiness of the Word of God which they seek to more fully understand.

[Recite the novena prayer.]