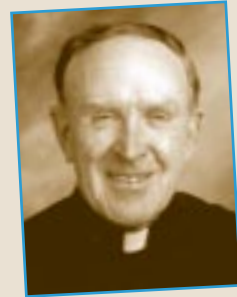




FATHER JOHN MALLEY, O.CARM. DIRECTOR OF CARMELITE MISSIONS

Dear Friend of the Missions,

Happy New Year! Thanks to your prayers and generosity, 2004 was a beautiful year for the Carmelite Mission family. Hope has been given to people in missionary lands where there was no hope; love where there was no love. Through your goodness you have helped to feed the hungry, to clothe the poor, to visit the sick. You have given missionaries courage to preach the Good News of a loving God, to celebrate Mass, and to heal the brokenhearted.



In this New Year, I want to tell you about a very exciting project of our Carmelite Family for **China**. For all of us who have been interested in the missionary work of the Catholic Church, China has always been a fascinating country. St. Thérèse at the age of seven began saving her few pennies to help the children of that country. Later in Carmel, she corresponded with Father Adolphe Roulland, a young French missionary priest and one of her two spiritual brothers, who was sent to China in 1896. Thérèse wrote that she was happy to be joined to him "by the apostolic bonds of prayer and sacrifice," and she attached a map to the wall of her workplace so as to be more vividly in touch with his missionary work.

Since 1949 when the Communist government took over the country and restricted the practice of religion, any missionary activity has been forbidden. Even though some interest in the Catholic faith has been kept alive, literally a billion people know very little or nothing of the Good News of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Carmelite Family now has a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the faith and to support the religious life of a group of 19 young Chinese women. Through a providential visit to China in 2002, some Indonesian Carmelite Sisters, who are members of the congregation of the Daughters of Carmel, met these women who had been living in community for five years. They had heard of Carmel, but their knowledge of religious life had been very limited because of the Communist restrictions.

Fortunately, some of the Daughters of Carmel are of Chinese ancestry and speak that language (Mandarin) fluently. After the initial contact, some of the Sisters have spent time in China and have shared about the spirituality and charism of Carmel and of their congregation. Meanwhile, a few of these women have traveled to Indonesia and spent time with the Sisters at their formation house. There seems to be a sincere desire to be attached to the congregation, even though much will depend on the political situation.

Our Carmelite Mission office has given strong encouragement to these contacts, pledging that we would help them in their journey together. This endeavor will certainly require much understanding and patience, but there is excitement and hope for the future by all who are involved. I ask for your prayers that this small beginning might someday lead in God's loving plan to a significant Carmelite presence in that beautiful country.

Love and peace,

Fr. John Malley, O.Carm.

Father John Malley, O.Carm.
Director of Carmelite Missions

REMEMBER THE CARMELITE MISSIONS WHEN YOU WRITE YOUR WILL

SAINT OF THE MONTH

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

FEAST DAY – JANUARY 28

How wrong can some people be! St. Thomas, probably the greatest mind in the history of the Catholic Church, was called the ‘Dumb Ox’ by his companions! But his teacher, himself a saint, countered by saying: “You call him a Dumb Ox, but I tell you that the Dumb Ox will bellow so loud that his bellowing will fill the world.”

Thomas came from a princely family. His second cousin was Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor, and his father was Count of Aquino (Aquinas in English). His mother was from a noble French family, and Thomas was the youngest of their children. He was born in 1225, and at an early age his father, Count Landulf of Aquino, sought to make sure that he got ahead in the world. The other sons were settled well; the daughters’ marriages had been arranged, but there was nothing for Thomas. His father thought that he could enter the Church, and with the influence of the Emperor he could eventually be made Abbot of Monte Cassino—that was an important post and measured up to the dignity of the family! So, at the age of five he was sent to Monte Cassino to study, and eventually to become Abbot.

But some troubles ensued, and when he was ten, he was taken out and sent to the newly founded university in Naples. He was a quiet boy, and hardly spoke to a soul. As he grew older, he became quite tall and very fat. Probably his taciturn nature and his size prompted his classmates to call him a Dumb Ox! In any case, his stay in Naples helped him to find his future.



Potential Missionaries for China – Daughters of Carmel

Becoming a Dominican Friar

A few years previously, the Mendicant Orders—the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Carmelites—had been founded. Before their arrival on the Church scene, monks stayed in monasteries, priests stayed in parishes, but these new groups, who took a vow of poverty, lived together as a family, begged for their substance (thus *Mendicant* friars), and went hither and yon to bring God to the people and the people to God. The Dominican friars had previously founded a house in Naples, and Thomas joined them.

The family was up in arms! There was no way that the son of a noble would be allowed to be a friar who spent his life begging! Word came to Thomas of the anger of his father and family, and with three companions he was sent secretly to Paris to study. But north of Rome they were intercepted, and Thomas was brought to the Castle of Aquino and kept there as a prisoner until he changed his mind. There is even a story told that a prostitute was sent to his room to seduce him, but he took a burning torch from the fireplace, chased her out, and burned a cross on the door.

There was one final attempt to change his mind! His parents had influence, and the Pope, Innocent IV, agreed that Thomas could continue to wear the Dominican habit and still be Abbot of Monte Cassino. But the quiet young man firmly would not budge, and finally his mother gave in and helped him escape. He went back to his community in Naples, and as soon as possible he left for Paris to study at its famous university.

There he met the man who was to influence his life most—Albert, we know him as St. Albert the

Great. He was a famous teacher, and when he was transferred to the University of Cologne, he asked that his ‘Dumb Ox’ pupil be sent to him. Four years later in 1252, when Thomas was 27 he obtained the degree of Master of Theology. It was in this field that he made his mark in the Church.

Thomas the Theologian

At that time there was much criticism of the Mendicant Friars, and Thomas was the one who answered and silenced the critics. His theology lectures were so outstanding that many flocked to his classroom. Here was a professor with a new approach, one who introduced Aristotle as a philosophical basis for an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Faith. Each year his fame grew, and his lectures were put into book form by the laborious process of copying them by hand. Even the King, Louis IX of France, heard of him, got to know him well, and asked his advice on pressing problems. He was not only known in Paris, but in Rome as well, and soon enough the Pope and the Dominican Order brought him to Rome to set up a curriculum of studies for various universities. His life was in the classrooms and in meetings until he died in 1274 on the way to the Council of Lyons. His works fill thirty volumes, and it was the basis for Catholic philosophy and theology for 700 years.

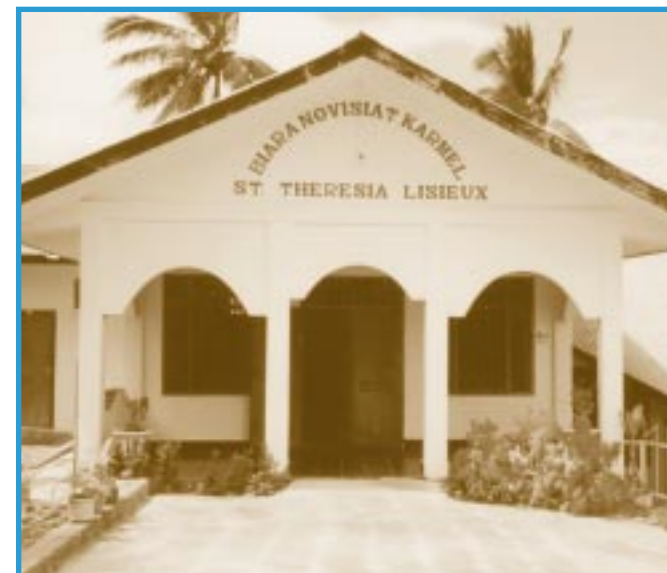
But Thomas was a scholar and a saint! How did he achieve sanctity? He sought to express his own love of God by bringing his desire to seek the truth to all, by helping the Catholic Church know better what Christ taught, leading not only his students but all to a deeper knowledge and love of the Father. That is the skeleton of his life and teaching.

Thomas was a very quiet, taciturn man who thought deeply and was gifted with a tremendous intellect. It is said that he never forgot anything that he learned. As a young man he was fired with the ideal of serving God as a friar in the newly founded Order of St. Dominic. He found solace and nourishment for his love of God in prayer, especially before the Blessed Sacrament. His teachers, and particularly Albert, encouraged him in his studies and enabled him to find God through his own gifts, especially his keen mind and his penetrating intellect. Because of his teaching responsibilities, Thomas was given a secretary, Reginald, who after the saint’s death wrote these words about him: “My Master forbade me to mention the wonders that I witnessed. He owed his knowledge less to the effort of his mind than to the virtue of his prayers—the effect of his prayer was such that, whereas before it he lingered in uncertainty, but he returned from prayer with his mind enlightened.”

(continued on next page)



Local Superiors of Daughters of Carmel with Founder, Fr. Yohanes



Novitiate Chapel in Flores, Supported by our American-Canadian Province



Theology Students in Indonesia – Candidates for China

SAINT OF THE MONTH

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

(continued from previous page)

Love for the Eucharist

Thomas' works in the fields of Catholic philosophy and theology are very well known, but there is a special part of his writings that has had a lasting effect on our Catholic devotional and spiritual life. It occurred because Pope Urban IV was about to establish the beautiful feast of Corpus Christi. He asked Thomas and Bonaventure, a well known Franciscan friar and theologian, to write a Mass and office for the breviary in honor of this new feast. The Pope would then select the one that would be incorporated into the liturgy. The two theologians went about their work, and when they reported to the Pope Thomas read his first. It is said that Bonaventure was so impressed that he tore up his own writings on the spot. From Thomas we have the beautiful hymns, 'O Salutaris' and 'Tantum Ergo,' that were so familiar in the pre-Vatican II Church while Latin was still in vogue. They are still used today in English translations.

Thomas spoke little of himself and only a few stories come down to us of his holiness. We do know that he refused to be a Cardinal though he was an advisor to the Pope. We also have his words that "the crucifix taught him more than any book." It is said that at the end of his life Thomas was praying before a crucifix and Jesus spoke to him: "Thomas, you have written well of Me. What would you have as a reward?" Thomas replied: "Nothing, Lord, besides Yourself."

Thomas was up early in the morning, and he would say his morning prayers and celebrate Mass, and then attend another Mass in thanksgiving. His work-day was one of study, teaching, writing, and giving advice to the great ones of the world...and often to the humble as well. The key to his life was his great devotion to the



Seminarians in Malang, Indonesia

Blessed Sacrament. He would kneel for hours in adoration of Christ his King and Lord. It was this love that enabled him to penetrate so deeply into the mystery of the Real Presence of Jesus in this sacrament and to express so clearly the core of our Catholic teaching about the Mass and the Eucharist.

An Early Death

Like many great men he was extremely charitable. There is a delightful story told of him as a young man. His classmates liked to tease the 'Dumb Ox,' and one day they told him to look out the window as there was a cow flying. So the slowly moving fat friar went to the window, and all broke out in laughter. When he was asked why he was so silly as to even look out the window, he replied: "I would prefer to believe a cow could fly rather than think my brothers would lie."

Thomas was rather young when he died—only forty-nine at the time of his death on March 7, 1274. He was on his way to a Council of the Church in Lyons, France, and he got ill during his journey. He went to a Cistercian monastery in northern Italy to recuperate. He lingered for a while in feeble health, and during that time he honored a request of the monks to write a commentary on the Canticle of Canticles. This was his last work—he died with his pen in hand, seeking to work for God to his dying moment. He was later made Patron of Catholic schools. He is considered to be the source person of systematic theology. He influenced Catholic thought until modern times. Thomas loved God with all his heart and became a great saint—something that might have been impossible if he had followed instead the desires of his family to seek honors and an easy life in special Church positions.



*Daughters of Carmel in Indonesia –
In Costume for a Play Presentation*