



## **HOLY HEROES**

### **Saint Thomas Aquinas**

**Doctor of the Church**

**Feast Day: January 28**

**Patron Saint of Catholic Schools and students**

Thomas Aquinas is one of the most famous saints of the Catholic Church. He is called a 'Doctor of the Church.' He was a theologian and philosopher. A theologian is one who spends their life thinking about Jesus' life. They figure out things about God and the Catholic faith through prayer and study.

Thomas Aquinas was born in Naples, Italy, in 1225. At the age of five, his parents sent him to a monastery to study and learn. His teachers were surprised how quickly he learned and how devoted he was to prayer. But when Thomas announced that he wanted to become a Dominican, his family tried to stop him. His brothers captured him and locked him in a castle for two years! Finally, his family changed their minds, and Thomas was allowed to join the Dominicans. Even there, Thomas had some trouble. Because of his quiet, humble manner and his large size, everyone thought he was stupid and called him 'the dumb ox.' When they heard him preach, however, they realized how wise and pious he really was. Thomas was loved for his kindness and willingness to share his knowledge. Prayer, he said, had taught him more about the world than study.

After he became a priest, Thomas studied in Paris and then taught at many universities in Europe. He wrote more than 40 books, his most famous being, *Summa Theologica*, and several beautiful hymns. All of his work praises God and has helped many people understand their faith better.

At the end of his life, Saint Thomas stopped writing. He had a vision of Heaven and decided that compared to the great glory of God, his writing was 'like straw.' Three months later, in 1274, on his way to see the Pope, he died. He is now in Heaven, and after a lifetime of studying and writing about God, he is in the presence of God.