



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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COMMANDING THE RAGING SEA MEMORIAL OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

"Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

MARK 4:31

Reflection

When I was a young primary-grade teacher, I taught religion to young children using illustrated bible stories by Arch Books, and songs like the one from Joe Wise: *"The winds are coming! The winds are coming! The sea is raging all around us!"* *"Stop! Be Still!"* and in the lull of the storm, I too ask: **"Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"** The story and song have remained with me throughout the years as I search for meaning and direction in all the turbulence that life brings.

I am reminded to look for security in **"the one whom the wind and the sea obey."** I have learned to rely on the abiding, often unseen, presence of God,

especially in conflicted, confusing times, where fear can so easily take control. Such are the times in which we live. Life experiences, history, and wisdom teach me that every day has its troubles. When confusion, or heartache, or fear arise, I need only look for the light of God's constant abiding with me. There are usually companions in the boat of life as well. I am not alone!

In a time when there is immediate access to disturbing news, I am more than ever aware of my need and that of the world community for mercy and compassion. So, I pause, breathe deeply in the stillness, and call on the One who shows me the way to hold the good and the not-so-good at the same time. God's grace is always available.

The quote above from the Gospel of Mark reminds me where my trust, confidence, and truth reside...in God and the ways of God that are love, compassion, and mercy, especially in the face of troubles. Yes, I need to be discerning, to seek out the truth, and to gain perspective so I can think for myself. Then I hope to choose well what is life-giving for all, especially the most vulnerable. The winds of struggle and conflict are raging. But the powerful and abiding presence of God can surmount them all.

Even St. Thomas Aquinas, whom we celebrate today, met with his share of struggle, confusion, and conflict. A brilliant man, he studied and worked tirelessly to find meaning, and happiness in the natural order of things. The master principle of natural law, wrote Aquinas, was that “**good is to be done and pursued and evil avoided.**” Aquinas stated that “reason reveals particular natural laws that are good for humans such as self-preservation, marriage and family, and the desire to know God.”

Aquinas was the greatest of the Scholastic philosophers. He sought to provide a comprehensive synthesis of theology that showed an appreciation for the traditional while embracing the new, and discovering the continuity of grace. This was a source of thought and reflection, and a challenge to mind and soul. The greatest fruit of his life's work was the systematic compendium of the *Summa Theologica*, “The Summation of All Theology” which was dedicated to an integrated philosophical and theological response to the questions raised by the relationship of humanity and God.

When nothing more could be said or written, in simplicity and silence God graced him with his most profound insight. On his deathbed, he is reported to have pointed to all his books and said, “**After what I have experienced, all that is just straw.**” What is ultimately true is the reality of the divine indwelling of God as the pure blessing of mystical union. True happiness consists in a mystical inner knowing fueled by divine grace and presence. That divine presence is available to us all.



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For Pondering

- What has been my life's work?
 - How has God been revealed to me through my struggles and inner conflicts?
 - When all is said and done, how do I experience God within the center of my being?
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Closing Prayer

I beg of You, my God, let me know You and love You so that I may be happy in You. And though I cannot do this fully in this life, yet, let me improve from day to day till I may do so to the full. Let me know You more and more in this life, that I may know You perfectly in heaven. Amen

WRITTEN BY ST. AUGUSTINE

Supposedly prayed by St. Thomas Aquinas

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