



# ESKER REDEMPTORISTS

**January 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>  
Good News to the poor**

Jesus read from the scroll: ‘He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour’. Then he said: ‘this text is being fulfilled today, even as you listen’. This is surely the clearest statement about the purpose of the Church and of our part in it that could be made. We don’t just have a faith that is for us to make us comfortable. We have a power to transform the world we live in and living our faith is about doing just that. Our homes are to be places where each person finds healing and affirmation. The same has to be made true of the faith community we belong to. It is time to move away from a sense of duty in regard to our faith and move into a sense of adventure for the Kingdom of God.

## **“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting”**

Paul’s entire life can be explained in terms of one experience—his meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus. In an instant, he saw that all the zeal of his dynamic personality was being wasted, like the strength of a boxer swinging wildly. Perhaps he had never seen Jesus, who was only a few years older. But he had acquired a zealot’s hatred of all Jesus stood for, as he began to harass the Church: “...entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment” (Acts 8:3b). Now he himself was “entered,” possessed, all his energy harnessed to one goal—being a slave of Christ in the ministry of reconciliation, an instrument to help others experience the one Saviour.

One sentence determined his theology: “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5b). Jesus was mysteriously identified with people—the loving group of people Saul had been running down like criminals. Jesus, he saw, was the mysterious fulfilment of all he had been blindly pursuing.

From then on, his only work was to “present everyone perfect in Christ. For this I labour and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me” (Colossians 1:28b-29). “For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and [with] much conviction” (1 Thessalonians 1:5a).

Paul’s life became a tireless proclaiming and living out of the message of the cross: Christians die baptismally to sin and are buried with Christ; they are dead to all that is sinful and unredeemed in the world. They are made into a new creation, already sharing Christ’s victory and someday to rise from the dead like him. Through this risen Christ the Father pours out the Spirit on them, making them completely new.

So Paul’s great message to the world was: You are saved entirely by God, not by anything you can do. Saving faith is the gift of total, free, personal and loving commitment to Christ, a commitment that then bears fruit in more “works” than the Law could ever contemplate.

**Weekly Masses  
Special Remembrance**

**Mon. 25th. Jan. to Sun. 31st. Jan. 2010**

Mass at 8.00 and 10.00 each morning, Monday to Friday, is offered for all those whose names are on the list of Mass intentions. If you wish to have someone mentioned specifically - for an anniversary, a recent death, an illness - please leave the name at the Reception Office.

In the Novena Masses on Saturday at 8.00 and 10.00 we remember especially all those who have sent in petitions and those attending the Novena.

Mon. 10 am: Sadie Hardiman R.I.P.

Sat. 10 am: Dolly Brown Walsh R.I.P.

**THE SICK**

Please pray for  
Fr. Brian Foley,  
Fr. Seán Mullin,  
Michelle O'Donnell,  
Mossie Whelan,  
Annie Burke.

**Feast Days  
of the coming week.**

**Mon:** The Conversion of  
St. Paul.

**Thur:** St. Thomas Aquinas

**During the coming week:**

**In The Retreat House:**

**Jan 29-31: Marriage Preparation Week-end**

**In The Youth Village:**

**Parish Missions & Novenas in Ireland &  
Abroad.**

*Please share in this Redemptorist  
Apostolic Work by praying for its success.*

**Preparation  
for Marriage  
Courses**

It has now been accepted by the Bishops that the ACCORD Marriage Preparation Course, along with that provided at Esker, are the only courses endorsed by the Bishops.

**Coming soon!  
Galway Cathedral  
Solemn Novena to Our Mother  
of Perpetual Help  
FEBRUARY 8th-16th**

**Words of wisdom**

- Speech is the gift of all but thought of few.
- \* A good life stretches the wrinkles.
- \* The future is purchased by the present.

## **St. Thomas Aquinas**

Thomas Aquinas, (Thomas of Aquin) was born 1225. His father was a Count in the Kingdom of Sicily which in those days included southern Italy. When he was five years old he was placed under the care of the Benedictines of Monte Casino. His teachers were surprised at the progress he made, for he surpassed all his fellow pupils in learning as well as in the practice of virtue. He was noted as being meditative and devoted to prayer, and his teacher was surprised at hearing the child ask frequently: "What is God?" The Abbot of Monte Cassino wrote to Thomas's father that a boy of such talents should not be left in obscurity.

About the year 1236 he was sent to the University of Naples. In 1243 at the age of 18 he entered the Order of St. Dominic in Naples in spite of the opposition of his family. While the rest of the Aquinas sons pursued a military career, the family intended for Thomas to follow his uncle into the abbacy; this would have been a normal career path for a younger son of southern Italian nobility.

After making his profession at Naples, he studied at Cologne under the celebrated St. Albert the Great. Here he was nicknamed the "dumb ox" because of his silent ways and huge size, but he was really a brilliant student. At the age of twenty-two, he was appointed to teach in the same city. At the same time, he also began to publish his first works. After four years he was sent to Paris. Thomas was then a priest. At the age of thirty-one, he received his doctorate.

At Paris he was honored with the friendship of the King, St. Louis, with whom he frequently dined. In 1261, Urban IV called him to Rome where he was appointed to teach, but he positively declined to accept any ecclesiastical dignity.

On his way to the second Council of Lyons, he fell sick and died at the Cistercian monastery of Fossa Nuova in 1274.

He was the foremost classical proponent of natural theology, and the father of the Thomistic school of philosophy and theology. His influence on Western thought is considerable, and much of modern philosophy was conceived as a reaction against, or as an agreement with, his ideas, particularly in the areas of ethics, natural law and political theory.

Aquinas is held in the Catholic Church to be the model teacher for those studying for the priesthood. The works for which he is best-known are the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. One of the 33 Doctors of the Church, he is considered by many Catholics to be the Church's greatest theologian and philosopher.