

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

The curiosity of Thomas

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

Thomas was born in an Italian castle, the youngest son of a soldier and his wife. Because his country was at war so much, Thomas' father was away most of the time. His mother and three older brothers and five sisters raised him.

When he was 5, his mother sent him to school at the famous nearby Benedictine monastery, Monte Casino. Secretly she dreamed he would become the abbey's abbot or superior. As abbot, he could become famous, powerful and rich.

Thomas studied hard. He liked to learn. He had a tremendous curiosity about everything. He kept asking his teachers, "Why?" The subject he wondered most about was God. "What is God?" he asked his teachers.

He kept asking that question as a teen-ager at the university in Naples. His teachers gave him some answers. But Thomas knew there had to be more to know about God.

A teacher gave him the books of a very ancient Greek philosopher named Aristotle. The books excited Thomas. From Aristotle he learned to look at everything in a new way. He believed Aristotle's ideas could help him better understand the things he wanted to know.

Thomas became the friend of a teacher, a member of a new religious group called Dominicans. The Dominicans were teachers and preachers. Their whole work was to learn about God and to teach others about God.

Thomas decided to become a Dominican. It meant he would never reach his mother's dream of being a powerful abbot of a rich monastery. Dominicans were poor. His mother was so upset she had Thomas' oldest brother bring him back home.

But Thomas was determined to be a Dominican. Finally his mother allowed him to go. He went to Cologne and became a Dominican. He continued to study about life and about God.

Thomas was very big. He stood 6-foot-6. He was also a quiet

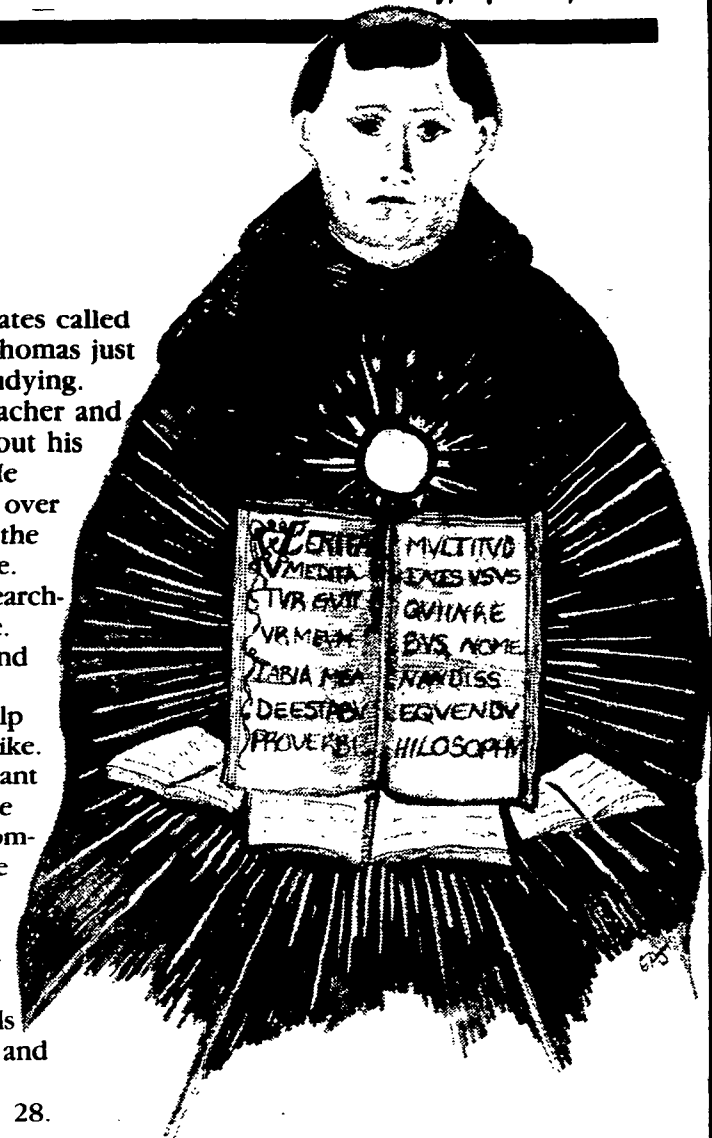
young man. His classmates called him the "dumb ox." Thomas just smiled and went on studying.

Soon he became a teacher and then began to write about his ideas of life and God. He became very famous all over Europe. He was one of the smartest men of his time. But he never stopped searching for more knowledge.

His ideas were new and exciting. He used the works of Aristotle to help explain what God was like. This made many important people angry. They were uncomfortable with Thomas' ideas. They made life difficult for him.

But Thomas continued his search to understand life and God until he died. The church calls Thomas Aquinas a saint and the patron of students, honoring him every Jan. 28.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, scripture stories and original stories for children.)



Hidden Words

Find the words hidden in the puzzle below. They may be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. All the words are in this week's children's story.

A	F	K	O	D	P	V	Y	N	E
B	Q	T	H	O	M	A	S	C	J
B	T	U	Z	M	D	I	L	H	N
O	L	P	I	I	N	R	U	O	A
T	U	A	J	N	T	V	B	G	P
G	E	K	R	I	A	C	I	M	L
Q	U	A	P	C	A	S	T	L	E
X	E	F	S	A	W	F	H	O	S
L	H	M	B	N	M	Q	U	I	G
D	A	R	I	S	T	O	T	L	E

DOMINICANS AQUINAS THOMAS ARISTOTLE NAPLES CASTLE ABBOT LEARN

HOW ABOUT YOU?

□ Why not make your own poster today? First draw — and color — a large question mark on a sheet of paper. Under it, write a question that concerns you, for example "How can we help Ethiopia's hungry people?" or "Where is love needed today?"

Children's Reading Corner

"Pezzettino," by Leo Lionni, is a story that can lead adults and children to talk about who they are and what it means to say, "I'm me." In the story, Pezzettino is small while everyone around him is big and able to do daring, wonderful things. He feels he is too small to be whole and that he must be a little piece of somebody else. One day he sets out to ask people about this. Finally the Wise-one tells him to go to the island of Wham to find his answer. There something happens to Pezzettino that helps him realize he is as whole as anyone else. He rejoices in finding himself. (Pantheon Books Inc., 201 E. 50 St., New York, N.Y. 10022. Hardback. \$4.95.)



It's your move.

Maria was born into a community without options. Or resources. It couldn't even afford the services of a mission priest.

Today things are better. The parish has a priest who can stay and serve because his expenses are paid by the Catholic Church Extension Society. And that's what Extension does—it brings the Church to Americans who would otherwise be without it.

The priest who serves Maria's community is able to stay because he receives an expense subsidy made possible by the Catholic Church Extension Society.

Your parish has more options than Maria's did. It can choose to distribute Extension Calendars. By exercising that option your parish will have a direct hand in bringing the Church to poor and remote communities here in the United States.

It's your move. Check your parish calendar. If it's an Extension calendar, why not thank the sponsor or your pastor for helping us continue our work. If it's not, write us at: Extension Calendars, Room 400 F, 35 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601, and we will be happy to send you one.



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