



**Diocese of Mar del Plata**

**"Therefore I prayed, and prudence was given me;  
I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me."  
(Wisdom 7:7)**

***Inauguration Mass Homily at ICUSTA's Biennial Conference***

***Mar del Plata Cathedral – Thursday, October 13, 2022 - Mass of St Thomas Aquinas***

***Wis 7:7-10, 15-16; Psalm 118:9-14; Mt 23:8-12***

**Dear sisters and brothers:**

Welcome to the city and to the Diocese of Mar del Plata!

Dear delegations of the universities and organisations of the ICUSTA network within the framework of the Biennial Conference hosted by FASTA University during these days, it is a pleasure to welcome you in the Cathedral. With the freedom that the liturgy gives us, today we are celebrating the Mass of St Thomas Aquinas, whose usual date in the Catholic calendar is January 28. In the light of the biblical and liturgical texts, I propose three brief impulses synthesised in three words: PRAYER, TRUTH, TIME.

**1- St Thomas: A master of PRAYER**

**2- St Thomas: A seeker of TRUTH**

**3- St Thomas: A man of his TIME**

**1- St Thomas: A master of PRAYER**

No one can doubt that St Thomas is a true master of PRAYER. The liturgy, in the first reading, wishes to show him as a seeker of wisdom through PRAYER: "Therefore I PRAYED, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me." (Wisdom 7:7). The Psalmist's affirmations of confident faith also reflect Aquinas' life of PRAYER. Speaking of this aspect of the Angelic Doctor's existence, Pope

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Francis says: *“The passionate search for God is simultaneously prayer and contemplation, so that St Thomas is a model of theology that is born and grows in the atmosphere of adoration.”* (Speech at the XI International Congress of Thomism 22/09/22).

This dimension of St Thomas challenges us today. We are called to be men and women of PRAYER in our daily life experience. First of all to find in God the centre of our life. We need to PRAY so that the strong secularism prevailing in many of our environments does not rob us of the meaning of our life and our baptismal identity. Secondly, PRAYER must be a true witness of faith in various contexts. Our life of PRAYER is a serene sign of evangelical contradiction in a world that does not recognise God as the First Cause from which goodness, truth and beauty come from and flow to. I hope these days will be true days of PRAYER for all who will be reflecting.

May the intercession of St Thomas, as a master of PRAYER, renew our spiritual life and the joyful encounter with God in PRAYER!

## **2- St Thomas: A seeker of TRUTH**

Prudence and wisdom are granted to the speaker in the Book of Wisdom. Prudence and wisdom are inseparable from TRUTH; the three words naturally claim and complement each other. Looking at the life of St Thomas, we cannot doubt that he was a sustained seeker of TRUTH, the TRUTH of God and the TRUTH about humankind. His life and his reflection are clearly marked by the search for TRUTH. Pope Francis expresses it in this way: *“St Thomas was a man passionate about truth, a tireless seeker of the face of God... This search for the truth about God is moved and permeated by love.”* (Speech at the XI International Congress of Thomism 22/09/22).

From the dynamic of God's love and with a very open gaze, Aquinas challenges us to be seekers of the TRUTH in love. Christ is the TRUTH par excellence, from where every TRUTH comes from. God is the source of the absolute TRUTH that invites us to live the TRUTH in the temporary realities of our existence. This is not simple, but it is possible. Day by day we will need to grow to be witnesses of God's TRUTH. In the presence of the temptation of relativism, we must be servants of the TRUTH with an open spirit and without rigid attitudes. I hope you find these days of conference a privileged space to think about the TRUTH that will set us free (cf. John 8:32).

May the intercession of St Thomas, as a seeker of TRUTH, encourage us to be witnesses of the TRUTH in the joy of the Gospel!

### **3- St Thomas: A man of his TIME**

As we saw in the previous item, God's truth is absolute. However, this does not mean that it must be lived and presented in a fundamentalist way. The truth that is God is broad and must be lived and distinguished in each context. This openness dynamic is perceived in the Angelic Doctor's appreciation of the ancient Ambrosian chant: *All truth, regardless of who speaks it, comes from the Holy Spirit* (Ambrosiaster, In 1 Cor. 12:3: PL 17,258. Cf. S.Tommaso d'Aquino, Summa theologiae, Ia-IIae, q.109, a.1, ad1). This openness attitude allowed St Thomas to be faithful to his TIME. He did not stay in a spiritual bubble disconnected from history. His analysis always participated in the dynamics of incarnation, which allowed him to answer to his TIME in a creative way.

He could express this loyalty to his TIME in his balanced overview of God and the world. He was also loyal to his TIME by always trying to find a balance between faith and reason. In connection with this, Pope Paul VI said in 1974: *The central aspect, and almost the nucleus of the solution that St Thomas gave for the problem regarding the new confrontation between reason and faith, using his prophetic intuition, was the balance between the secularism of the world and the radical nature of the Gospel. Thus, this balance allowed escaping the unnatural tendency to deny the world and its values, while answering to the ultimate and inflexible demands of the supernatural order.* (Lumen Ecclesiae, 8).

We are also invited to live, transmit and be committed from our faith to be loyal to our TIME. We are challenged to live in balance between Heaven and earth, faith and reason, the world and transcendence. In these days, may you let yourself be called by God's grace to look for a creative announcement of the Word in line with our TIME.

May the intercession of St Thomas, a man of his TIME, allow us to incarnate the strength of the Gospel in all the realities of our TIME!

### **In conclusion**

Next year will be the celebration of the seventh centenary of St Thomas Aquinas' canonization, which occurred in Avignon in 1323. It will be a good opportunity to continue thinking in greater depth about the figure that summons you today, dear ICUSTA delegates. St Thomas is the teacher, doctor, and father that testifies that God

is the only Teacher, the only Doctor, and the only Father that gives meaning to the life of every man and woman, as it is evident in the Gospel.

This Gospel also reminded us that “the greatest among you will be your servant” (Mt 23:11). Let us ask God, by the intercession of the Virgin and the Angelic Doctor, to be servants of God and his truth in our time. Amen.

**+Monsignor Gabriel Mestre**  
*Bishop of Mar del Plata*  
*Argentina*