



# AQUINAS HOUSE OF STUDIES

---

SCHOLÉ ACADEMY

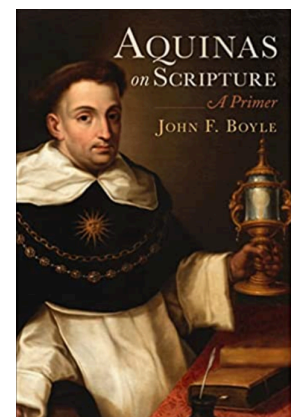
AQUINAS HOUSE OF STUDIES SEEKS TO SUPPORT THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF STUDENTS INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST THROUGH FOSTERING A STRONG PRAYER LIFE FIXED FIRMLY IN THE LITURGICAL TRADITIONS OF THE CHURCH AIDED BY THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE, THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND THE CATHOLIC LIBERAL ARTS TRADITION. LOYAL TO THE MAGISTERIUM AND UNDER THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY'S MANTLE OF PROTECTION, THE AQUINAS HOUSE OF STUDIES SEEKS TO GUIDE STUDENTS IN DILIGENT WORK, PRAYER, AND PRAISE SO THAT ALONG WITH OUR PATRON, ST THOMAS AQUINAS, WE MAY EARNESTLY PRAY, NON NISI TE, DOMINE (LORD, NOTHING EXCEPT YOU.) WE OFFER CLASSES UNDER SCHOLÉ ACADEMY FOR GRADES 4-12.



WE CURRENTLY SERVE 35 FAMILIES IN THE AQUINAS HOUSE AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO GROWTH IN THE YEARS TO COME. WE WELCOME YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR COURSES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE OFFERED IN THE FUTURE.

## Start in the Shallow End

"Sometimes we jump into the deep end and we're totally lost...We start with what we can understand...The shallow end is wonderful...you'll work your way out and it's just beautiful." These are the concluding words of wisdom and encouragement from Dr. John Boyle adapted from St. Thomas Aquinas himself as a means toward how to approach studying our patron saint's vast collection of theological wisdom. Dr. Boyle, Professor and Chair of the Department of Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, presented on St. Thomas Aquinas for the Aquinas House of Studies Inaugural Feast Day event this year. Coming together as a house community for the first time, we listened as we learned about our patron saint and we were given the opportunity to ask questions and rest in learning about one of the great doctors of the Catholic Church, St. Thomas Aquinas. As a new house at Scholé Academy, we value feedback from families and students about events such as this one as well as suggestions and evaluations on current and future course offerings here at the Aquinas House.



**We start with what  
we can  
understand.  
- Dr. John Boyle**

## Letter of St. Thomas to Brother John on How to Study

- St. Thomas Aquinas

Because you have asked me, my brother John, most dear to me in Christ, how to set about acquiring the treasure of knowledge, this is the advice I pass on to you:

That you should choose to enter by the small rivers, and not go right away into the sea, because you should move from easy things to difficult things.

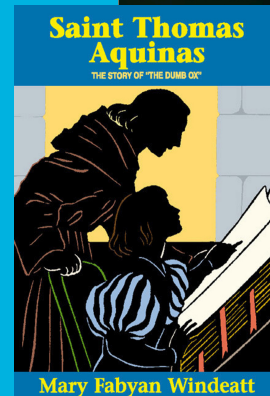
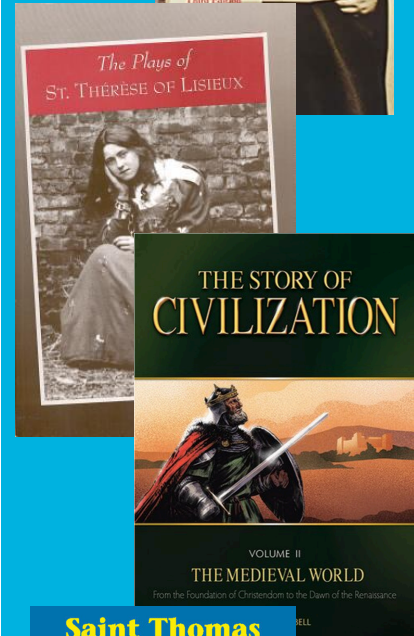
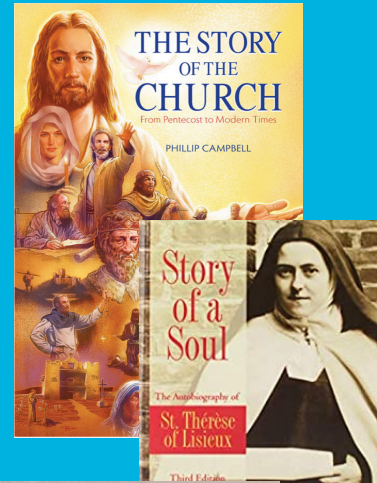
Such is therefore my advice on your way of life:

1. I suggest you be slow to speak, and slow to go to the room where people chat.
2. Embrace purity of conscience; do not stop making time for prayer.
3. Love to be in your room frequently, if you wish to be led to the wine cellar.\*
4. Show yourself to be likable to all, or at least try; but do not show yourself as too familiar with anyone; because too much familiarity breeds contempt, and will slow you in your studies; and do not get involved in any way in the deeds and words of worldly people.
5. Above all, avoid idle conversation; do not forget to follow the steps of holy and approved men.
6. Never mind who says what, but commit to memory what is said that is true.
7. Work to understand what you read, and make yourself sure of doubtful points.
8. Put whatever you can into the cupboard of your mind as if you were trying to fill a cup.
9. "Seek not the things that are higher than you."

Follow the steps of blessed Dominic, who produced useful and marvelous shoots, flowers and fruits in the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts for as long as life was his companion.

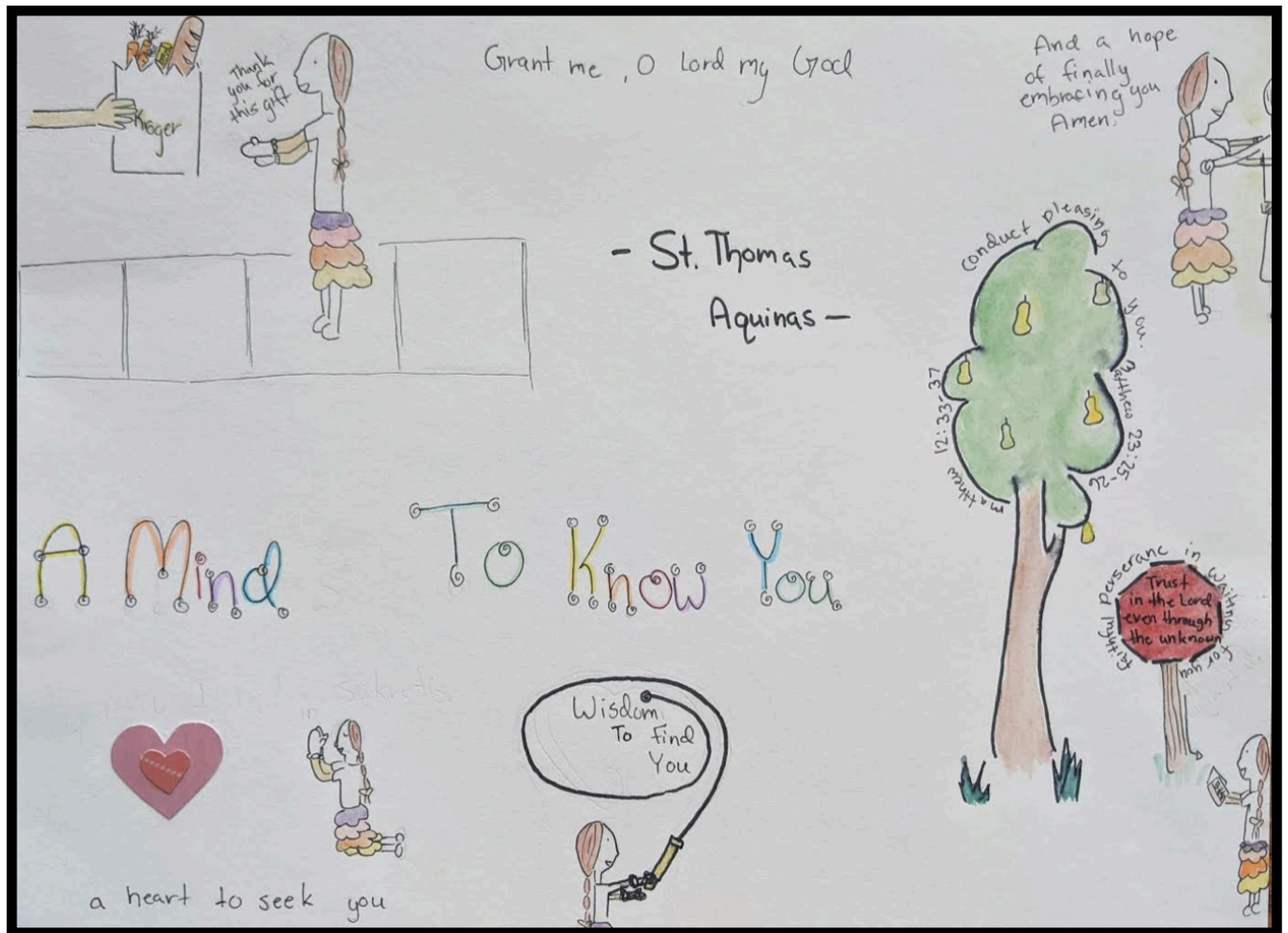
If you follow these things, you will attain to whatever you desire. Farewell.

*Here's what we have  
been reading this year  
in the Aquinas House...*



This year's call for submissions invited students to reflect on the words of a well known prayer written by St. Thomas Aquinas. Below you will find a drawing, prayer, and essay which all consider our patron saint's words so as to enable us to reflect more deeply upon our relationship with God. We are grateful for our thoughtful students in the Aquinas House!

Grant me, O Lord my God,  
a mind to know you,  
a heart to seek you,  
wisdom to find you,  
conduct pleasing to you,  
faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you.  
Amen.  
-St. Thomas Aquinas



Nora Pouch

## Reflection on a Prayer of Saint Thomas Aquinas

Marigrace Nilson

In this brief and beautiful prayer, Saint Thomas Aquinas encapsulates the usually slow, gradual process of entering into communion with God. This process involves all three theological virtues, with a main foundation of faith, an edifice of love, and pennants of hope. In addition, Saint Thomas seems to imply that blind faith, much like blind love, is not beneficial to the soul. As with a human lover, we must know something of God if we are to love and trust Him. This essay will explore the different stages of Aquinas's process and how they help to nourish the soul's relationship with its divine Lover.

The first stage is expressed by the phrase "a mind to know You". Even if one does not have faith, one can detect the presence of God in the world through reason. Since Creation possesses such great beauty and order, He Who created the universe must be Beauty and Order. Upon investigating additional qualities of this God, one will find that He is almighty, all-knowing, and all-loving. In fact, He is not just all-loving; He Himself is an eternal exchange of love, a Trinity Whose very Being is Love.

It is this love that leads to the second stage, expressed by the phrase "a heart to seek You". Once we have realized that the world was created out of love, we shall surely endeavor to return that love as much as humanly possible. We can worship the Creator directly through the Holy Mass and prayer. We can also praise Him through His creatures. For the world was made in His Image; His beauty can be found in a sunset, and His strength in the tides of the sea. Moreover, man possesses the most perfect reflection of this divine Image in all of Creation. Thus, if we seek God with a heart full of love, He will reveal something of Himself even in the people whom we encounter in our daily lives.

In order to further search for God, however, a third stage, wisdom, is necessary, as the third phrase expresses ("wisdom to find You"). We cannot discover the true God through our reason alone, though reason does play an important role, as previously stated. With faith comes wisdom, which God is always ready to give to those who ask Him. Wisdom is more than mere knowledge; it is the ability to use our (limited) acquaintance with divine matters to shape our lives, especially the decisions we make.

This leads to the fourth phrase: "conduct pleasing to You". The fruit of divine wisdom is charity; if we love God, we must also strive to love our neighbor and ourselves. When God pours His unfathomable love into our souls, we cannot help but make that love known to others so they can experience it for themselves. We can show them that, even amidst the deepest suffering, the Lord is present and desires to bring a greater good out of their grief.

In fact, the very mystery of suffering is, I believe, the key which unlocks the fifth phrase: "faithful perseverance in waiting for You". When we suffer, it sometimes seems like God has abandoned us. Even Jesus Himself endured such God-forsakenness as He hung upon the Cross. But He did not despair, and neither should we. Nor are we to vent our anger at God, for, since he is the Good, He is not the cause of evil in the world. Instead, as mentioned above, He permits evil in order to draw some greater good from it. This is why perseverance is necessary in order not to become angry or hopeless when we encounter suffering. God will make all things new, if we will only let Him.

Finally, the last stage of communion with the Lord is expressed in the sixth phrase: "the hope of finally embracing You". Let us return to the castle metaphor from the beginning of this essay. Since we have built our foundation on faith and our edifice on love (that is, love for God both in Himself and through his creatures), we have good reason to fly our pennants of hope high upon the towers of perseverance. If we protect and uphold the Good by seeking the Lord in our daily lives (especially through the Sacraments) and by sharing His love with others along the way, we shall be preparing our souls to enter the joys of Heaven someday. May the Lord in His mercy grant this blessing to us all!

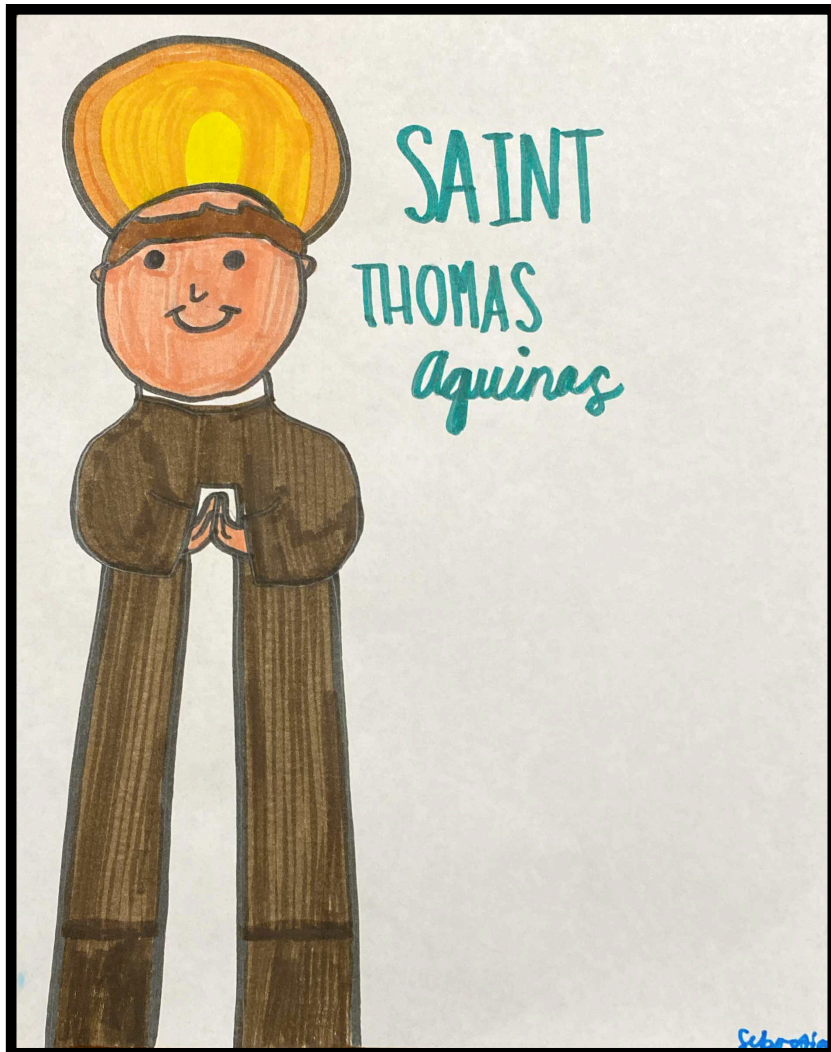
---

**Bestow On Me, O God**  
**Peter Swavely**

My Father in Heaven, bestow on me an intellect to know who You are.  
Bestow on me a strong desire to  
search for You in everything, in everyone, and everywhere.  
Bestow on me the knowledge to know when I have found You.  
Bestow for me behavior that makes You joyful.  
Bestow on me the ability to push through and fight off the devil,  
as he torments me in these evil times.  
Waiting for You in the Eucharist  
with the hope of being able to feel Your presence in Heaven.

---

**Thank you to all of our students who submitted work and congratulations to  
Marigrace Nelson who won our drawing for a Scholé Academy T-Shirt!**



## The Growing Church Classes

by Tisha Frost

I have to admit that I have a slight obsession with buying history books. I am constantly scouring recommended book lists, putting items in my wish lists on Thrift books, and rearranging and adding to my shelves in our living room. I have my history collection organized by time period; so one shelf is Ancient History, one shelf is Medieval History, and one shelf is Modern/American history. I even have one whole shelf of historical picture books because there are a wealth of beautiful picture books that introduce children to so many fascinating stories.

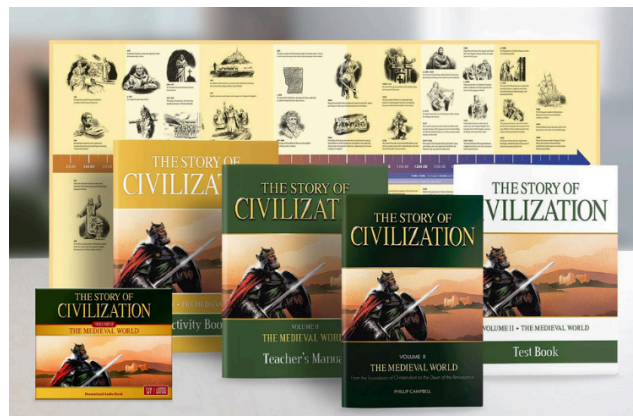
Some of my favorite history books I have come across in the last couple of years has been *The Story of Civilization* (Volumes 1-4) by Phillip Campbell. It kept coming up in conversations: homeschool families were using it, adult friends who had missed out on a great history education during their school years were making their way through the series by listening to it on their work commute, a good friend's son was falling in love with history through this series and so on. The series seemed to resonate with many people that I finally bought the series myself. Reading through it, I think I know why so many people enjoy the series; it checks all the boxes for an excellent history text:

- It goes in chronological order so it's easy to see the big timeline of history.
- It is written in short, concise chapters that focus on just one to two topics at a time.
- It is written in an engaging, narrative format so it's easier to remember and care about the topic.
- It weaves in the Catholic faith through stories of Saints and Catholic teachings so that you can see the ties between church history with traditional history.
- It is available as an excellent audio format.

I was so excited to consider the possibility of offering history courses using these books. With Aquinas House launching this past school year within Scholé Academy, I was able to offer *The Growing Church: Medieval World* using *Story of Civilization Volume 2: Medieval World* plus *Story of the Church*, also written by Phillip Campbell. I have also added Catholic literature to our syllabus. It can be challenging to find historical books for the middle school level written with a Catholic perspective, but I have found many treasures through the help of homeschooling families and book lists.

Teaching the class has been incredibly rewarding. The topics presented in the book so easily open the doors to fascinating topics that combine both history and our Catholic faith: Sacred Art, famous Cathedral and pilgrimage sites, stories of Saints, theology, and more. The discussions with and among the students have been wonderful, and I have enjoyed being able to share both my love of history and my love of the Catholic faith in this course.

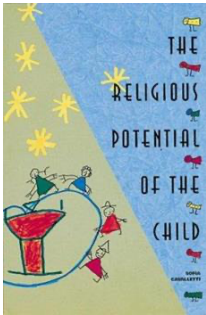
Next year, I am looking forward to adding another course for middle school students, *The Growing Church: Modern World* using *Story of Civilization Volume 3: Modern World*.



# Burning in the Eternal Furnace of Divine Love and Mercy

by Monika Minehart

In her book *The Religious Potential of the Child*, Sofia Cavalletti chronicles the faith experiences of children during her years working in catechesis. She shares words and reflections exchanged as well as spiritual drawings in order to highlight the great depths that children are capable of understanding if only given the necessary space and spiritual nourishment. Her book serves as the foundational piece for the ministry known as the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and has been implemented in Catholic churches throughout the world. It was upon reading this book many years ago while at the same time raising my own children and working in Religious Education in the Church that I discovered the beauty of Cavalletti's insight in the incredible encounters that I, too, witnessed between God and very young children.



Sometimes in catechesis, it is quite comfortable to stick to the script of our textbooks. While the truth within the books is of utmost importance, it does not have as great of a chance of being internalized by our students unless we, ourselves, “...turn and become like children” (Matthew 18:3) in order to see the beauty of God through the simplicity of a child’s eyes. Here we are then capable of meeting children where they are in humility to encourage them to venture into the devout life.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux has given us an exquisite example of this type of catechesis in her autobiography, *Story of a Soul*. This Spring 2023 semester, I have been blessed to teach 6 incredibly thoughtful young ladies about St. Thérèse’s spirituality as a means of understanding spiritual abandonment to the will of Christ. Through the use of simple analogies, St. Thérèse has guided us through her own life’s journey from an innocent and childlike surrender to God toward an all consuming understanding of God’s mercy. We have considered how it is that God has created a variety of souls akin to the variety of flowers in a field and pondered what type of flower we are and what sort of spiritual nourishment we require in order to grow. Moving through several simpler analogies throughout her book, we grew in our capacity to understand deeper and more intense analogies. One of which is the analogy of the ‘Eternal Furnace’ of God’s love and mercy. We came to understand and reflect on the idea that God’s mercy has the capacity to burn away all of our sins and imperfect desires, and it is here in this mercy where souls can become one with Christ and achieve perfect peace. This is a quite challenging way to conceptualize the extraordinary ways of God’s capacity to forgive. And yet, St. Thérèse gives us a way to understand the peace which flows from this forgiveness that even the youngest child can understand well. She explains, “Jesus deigned to show me the road that leads to this Divine Furnace, and this road is the *surrender* of the little child who sleeps without fear in its Father’s arms.”

It has brought me great joy to teach some of the profound truths of the spiritual life through St. Thérèse’s writings this year. The saints have given us treasure in their works and I look forward to infusing their insight into future classes in the Aquinas House and resting in the reflections of each student who, as Cavalletti succinctly points out, “in the encounter with God, delights in the satisfaction of a profound exigence of his person, of an authentic exigence of life.”