

# Thomas aquinas

Religion



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Reflection Paper - On Aquinas Introduction Thomas Aquinas was an Italian Catholic priest. He was also an extremely influential philosopher and theologian of the scholasticism tradition. In scholasticism he was referred to as "Doctor Communis" and "Doctor Angelicus". He founded Thomism and was the first crusader for natural theology. He had considerable influence on the Western thought and a lot of the philosophy of modern times was based on opposition or development of his ideas. The areas where he had much contributions were; political theories, metaphysics, ethics and natural law. He was a great believer of Aristotle's ideas. In fact he tried to merge the principles of Christianity with Aristotelian philosophy<sup>1</sup>. Summa Theologica and the Summa contra Gentiles were his greatest works. Because of his great contributions, he was referred to as the Doctor of the Church and was considered the greatest philosopher and theologian.

#### Discussion

Aquinas was born in Roccasecca in the year 1225 in his father's castle. He began his education at an early age of five years at Monte Cassino. Later he joined the university where he was introduced to Maimonides, Aristotle and Averroes, all of whom influenced his career in theology and philosophy. He decided to join the Dominican Order at the age of nineteen, which his family opposed fiercely. His brothers later took him back home before he could reach Rome. He was later held prisoner in his father's castle for one year for defiance. Theodora tried to persuade him to abandon his mission to no avail. As a result, the sister assisted him to escape in order to save the family's name. On the 7th day of March 1274, he died while commentating on the Songs of Songs.

Even though he was a scholastic philosopher, he never considered himself

<https://assignbuster.com/thomas-aquinas/>

one and would criticize other philosophers and call them pagans. He criticized them for "falling short of the true and proper wisdom to be found in Christian revelation." For this reason, he developed a lot of respect for Aristotle and always referred to him as "the philosopher". His work has had a major influence on Christian theology, particularly for the Catholic Church and extended to the Western philosophy<sup>2</sup>. He did a lot of commentary work on Aristotle's works which include; Metaphysics, Nicomachean ethics and On the Soul.

He believed "that for the knowledge of any truth whatsoever man needs divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act." He also believed that humans possess a unique and natural ability to know very many things without divine intervention from God. In as much as such abilities exist, sometimes divine revelation is needed "especially in regard to such (truths) as pertain to faith." His foundation of ethics was built on "first principles of action."

He held the belief that God's existence is self-evident on its own, but not to human beings<sup>3</sup>. "Therefore I say that this proposition, "God exists", of itself is self-evident, for the predicate is the same as the subject.... Now because we do not know the essence of God, the proposition is not self-evident to us; but needs to be demonstrated by things that are more known to us, though less known in their nature — namely, by effects."

## Conclusion

Aquinas had to undergo and overcome a lot of challenges to be the philosopher that he was. The greatest challenge was from the family which never wanted him to study theology because of the status the family had in the society. Eventually he became a philosopher of theology and did a lot of

<https://assignbuster.com/thomas-aquinas/>

work.

## References

Chesterton, G. K. (1956). St. Thomas Aquinas. Garden City, NY: Image Books.