

## **The Middle Ages, Oh My! Thomas Aquinas, Universities and Gothic Architecture** **January 22nd**

Acts 2: 42-47 - *The Vita Apostolica*

- I. The middle ages, especially as it relates to Church history.
  - A. Said to encompass the years 500 to 1500 A.D.; marked by the move to the West
  - B. The high middle ages: Scholasticism, the Mendicants, and Gothic architecture
- II. Scholasticism and the universities.
  - A. Scholasticism is an intellectual movement associated with the middle ages.
    1. It involves a robust sense of the power of human reason
  - B. Universities in the Western world dated from shortly after 1200.
    1. University of Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Bologna are founded at this time
  - C. Early scholasticism; started with dialectics — logic
    - a) and then moved to using metaphysics - the philosophy of being;
  2. Saint Anselm (1033-1109): “faith seeking understanding.”
  3. The problem of universal looms large in this early phase.
  - D. Mid-thirteenth Century is the height of it.
    1. Saint Albert the Great, Roger Bacon, Saint Bonaventure, and Saint Thomas Aquinas,
    2. Augustinianism and the Franciscan school..
    3. Robust use of Aristotelianism — the Dominican School.
      - a) Theology is necessary: the first question of the *Summa Theologiae*:
  - E. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
    1. Faith and reason: “Both the light of reason and the light of faith come from God, he argued; hence there can be no contradiction between them.” — St. John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio*
    2. The *Summa Theologiae* was in three parts: Part one - God and Creation; Part two - Human nature and morality; Part three - Christ and the Sacraments
      - a) A *Summa* article: objections, *sed contra*, response, answers to objections
        - (1) For example — IIIa, q.18, a.1: — Whether Christ has one will or two.
- III. The mendicant (begging) religious orders were a new form of religious life in the high middle ages.
  - A. Previously, religious life was contemplative and cloistered.
    1. There were monks — with a vow of stability; And canon regulars
  - B. Four major mendicant orders that emerged in the 13th century: Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinians
    1. The *vita apostolica*— the simple life of the early Church
  - C. Franciscans and Dominicans
    1. Friars Minor founded by St. Francis of Assisi. Confirmed in 1223.
    2. The Dominicans, the Order of Preachers, was founded by St. Dominic in 1216.
      - a) A response to the Albigensian heresy
- IV. Gothic architecture
  - A. It can be pinpointed to a person and a time: Abbot Suger of St. Denis (1081 - 1151)
  - B. The prevailing architecture was Romanesque
  - C. There was a desire for greater space and more light

1. “Then, in 1140, he asked his builders to enlarge the choir, or, as Suger called it, ‘the chamber of divine atonement ... where the continual and frequent Victim of our redemption’ is



St. Denis — Paris

sacrificed.” (Christopher O. Blum. “Gothic's Genius: Abbot Suger.” Crisis Magazine (March 10, 2014).)

- D. It grew through France and Northern Europe
- V. The renewed appreciation of the middle ages

### Bibliography

- Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated by R.S. Pine-Coffin. Penguin, 1961.
- Chesterton, G.K. *St. Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox*. Image. 1974.
- Duffy, Eamonn. *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*. Yale, 1997
- Farrell, O.P. *A Companion to the Summa*. Loreto Books. 2022.
- Jedin, Hubert. *Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church: an Historical Outline*. Hassell Street Press, 2021.
- Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith: Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*. Alba House. 2001.

Thompson, O.P., Augustine. *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography*. Cornell. 2012.

Torrell, O.P., Jean-Pierre. *St. Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work: Vol. 1*. Trans. by Robert Royal. Catholic University. 2005

Vidmar, O.P., John. *The Catholic Church through the Ages, Second Edition: A History*. Paulist Press, 2014.

*Summa Theologiae Online*

[www.aquinas.cc](http://www.aquinas.cc)