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## *The Feast Day of Thomas Aquinas*

**An article for the *Cathedral Times* by the Very Rev. Sam Candler**

The Episcopal Church, in our appointed feast days, actually remembers the brilliant Roman Catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas. Of course, when Aquinas lived in the 13th century, the Episcopal Church (as the Church of England) was still a part of the Western Catholic Church centered in Rome. His feast day is January 28.

Here at the Cathedral of St. Philip, in Atlanta, some eight centuries after Thomas lived and thousands of miles from where he lived, we will observe the Feast of Thomas Aquinas at our afternoon evensong on Sunday, January 29.

Amidst the profound theology of Thomas, he also wrote texts for hymns. And he wrote two famous texts for the Feast of Corpus Christi (the Body of Christ). One such text was the hymn we often sing at communion, "Humbly I Adore Thee." What a beautiful opening stanza, translated as, "Humbly I adore thee, verity unseen/ Whom thy glory hidest, 'neath these shadows mean."

I give thanks for his life and theology, by combining his spirit with that of Teilhard de Chardin; and I write my own poem this week as a tribute to them.

Here it is:

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

*(a sonnet after Aquinas and Teilhard)*

The ocean and the beach are the wine and the bread,  
The chalice and the paten who nourish the world.  
The sea and the earth are the chalice and the paten,  
The golden dome and the generous plate.  
The marsh creek and mud are the blood and the body,  
The holy mysteries offered twice daily in the tide.  
"O memorial wondrous, of the Lord's own death;  
Living Bread that givest all thy creatures breath,  
Grant my spirit ever by thy life may live,  
To my taste thy sweetness never failing give."  
So I sing to the earth and the sea.  
So I offer my heart and desire.  
The hovering sky overhead is the Spirit,  
With warm and wild illuminating fire.



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