Monday of 1st Week of Lent

FOOD

"Irrational feeding darkens the soul and makes it unfit for spiritual experiences" St. Thomas Aquinas

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Thomas was held captive in the castle for one year as his family tried to keep him from joining the Dominican Order. Eventually he escaped and entered the Dominicans. Thomas was quiet and seldom spoke at the university, leading other students to believe he was mentally delayed, but Mangus prophetically said, "You call him the dumb ox, but in his teaching he will one day produce such a bellowing that it will be heard throughout the world." While it seems that Thomas had few vices, one vice we are aware of is food. Thomas was overweight and food seemed to have a hold on him at moments of his life.

Thomas argued that gluttony could also include an obsessive anticipation of meals, and the constant eating of delicacies and costly foods. Here are his six methods of committing gluttony:
Praepropere – eating too soon, *Laute* – eating too expensively,
Nimis – eating too much, *Ardenter* – eating too eagerly,
Studiose – eating in too picky a manner. *Forente* – eating too fervently

One of the moments that helped Thomas to stop going to food to fill him was when he had a powerful encounter with God. In this encounter with God, Thomas realized that the glory of God outshone the splendor of any food. He lost any residual desire for things of this world, including food at the time. Thomas is well known for his love of the Eucharist. He helped to write the songs and prayers we use on the Feast of Corpus Christi or the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. His struggles with food led him to realize how the Eucharist was the only food that could fill and comfort him.

When we struggle with gluttony we can seek to find comfort in food or have food fill us as St. Thomas Aquinas once did. A powerful way to overcome focusing too much on food is to grow in love of the Eucharist. When you receive communion ask Jesus to fill your empty places and to free you of thinking about food instead of God. We can also learn to be careful about eating at times of the day that are bad like late at night. It is important to not eat too expensive of food or to overeat during meals. We also need to be on guard against dreaming about eating or eating a meal too quickly. Pickiness regarding food is also gluttony and to be avoided. Have you ever had a moment when you sought comfort in food rather than seeking comfort in God?

For your prayer

St. Thomas would have prayed with Matthew 25:31-46. Use your imagination as you slowly read Matthew 25:31-46. Please reflect on how you can allow yourself to be comforted by the Eucharist instead of food. Let the presence of Christ, the Eucharist, comfort you now.