

PROLOGUE

The true story of religious teaching in America will be told only in eternity. The prologue, begun with the first schools in the new world, and continuing without interruption has not been written, but has been lived the length and breadth of our land. In the living, generations have given of their very life blood to build a system of Catholic education such as Europe has never known. The mark of that Europe when it was truly Christian was universalism. Its greatest theologian was St. Thomas Aquinas. But long before the first religious teacher had set foot on American soil, the great source book of the Angelic Doctor had been temporarily eclipsed by the revival of Greek philosophy and ancient literature, and the unity of the great Christian era had given way to the "New Learning."

Yes, generations have passed. The religious teachers, both men and women of the last hundred years and more have done their part in planting the Faith in such a way that our age is referred to as the "American Epoch of the Church."

Such has been the planting and the early bloom. The fruit is but now appearing, - truly supernatural fruit, a very Gift of the Holy Spirit in a very special way to the Dominican Order in America through the instrumentality of Very Reverend Robert J. Slavin, O.P., President, and through the Faculty of Providence College, who have made possible a Summer School of Catholic Theology for Sisters, and have put at the Sisters' disposal the best that can be had in a faculty trained in the sciences of Church History, Canon Law, Sacred Scripture and Theology.

It is impossible to express gratitude and appreciation for the privilege of studying "The Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas under such ideal circumstances. The writing of this choral reading, and its presentation together with liturgical hymns to Our Lady, is the simple tribute of the Sisters who have been pursuing their studies under Mary's protection at Providence College.

LOVE'S RAVELING

Love is no fragile thing
To fall with broken wing
On pain's glass pavement.
No uttered cry upon the air
From her who stood unbending there
Where Love seemed dying.

Three hours dying. Mary stood
Her heart's pain a tenuous winding sheet
Wherein He lay, fibred strong
For centuries of unraveling
In glad, seraphic song.
Love is no fragile thing.

Love's raveling, love's raveling,
The threads of gold would fain enmesh
Men's hearts in intertwining.
What loutish clod could choose tin dazzling in the sun?
Base metal loved, hearts broken, minds encased
And Languedoc's citizenry with heresy enthroned.
Europe prone
Until Dominic alone forth fared,

Not to Volga's banks nor Tartar's swords,
But up and down the roads of
Europe walked, Love raveling
In song and chant the golden threads
Of Mary's song.

Fell
This raveled Love in threads of gold
Soft-spun, light gleaming,
Fell upon the heart of one
Young, high-spirited son of family noble
And known.
His mother understood Love's call
And gave him, family-pinioned, sustenance.
Nay more, Christ-enmeshed, Love raveling,
He wove the golden threads in thought and prayer
Before the throne
Until pupil out-ran teacher, and the great Albert
Heard God's undertone.

Thomas, Thomas, Paris never since
Has heard reverberations like your own.

Love's raveling, Love's raveling,
He set my lines in order, winnowing
Each line from every other;
Disposing part and part unto the whole, the end,
Until the mighty structure stands
A monument to truth.

My answers, Mary-planned,
I will present to Mary
That she may lend her fiat: let it stand
And subsequent magnificat: for it is good.

And the friar prayed
And found his answer
Nothing short of what he sought.
For queenly-regal, Mary-wise, she spoke:
This Thomas - pattern
I have taken to my heart
What matter then if men dissemble,
Make as if they understood not?
It shall prevail.
And from the depths serene, untroubled,
Of my most pure heart
I give it blessing.

Thomas, Thomas, Paris never since
Has heard reverberations like your own--
Reverberations now sounding from no walls great-turreted or domed
But high on terraced hills, straight standing in the sun
From out bricked walls, where white robed men expound
The golden lore, and women coiffed and gowned
Dare make themselves Truth's underground
For the new dawning.
Here Dominic's sons and daughters
The golden threads of Mary's song prolong,
Love raveling.

Long lanes, slow moving, glare blinding,
Men enclosed, hands turning dials,
Ears attuned to body rhythms only.
A world of sight and sound.
Machine-moved man, sitting hand on dial
Seeking his soul.

Three hours dying. Mary stood
Her heart's pain a tenuous winding sheet
Wherein He lay, fibred strong
For centuries of unraveling
In glad seraphic song.
Love is no fragile thing.

Love's raveling, Love's raveling

Thomas, Thomas, America has need

Of Truth, of glad seraphic song,

Of hearts rejoicing.

How like thy father, Dominic, we chant and sing

The golden threads of Mary's song.

Mother Celeste, O.S.U.

Mother Monica, O.S.U.

College of New Rochelle