

Father Thomas Tyn Newsletter, by the “Postulazione di Bologna”

From the letters of Father Thomas  
Bologna, 21 January 1988.

Dear Madam,

Thank you very much for coming to see me. It was a great pleasure for me to meet you. Please do not worry about becoming emotional, because I understand it perfectly and, all things considered, it is a good sign. Chesterton says that sensitivity is the defining feature of life. It is also true that we must not exaggerate in our sensitiveness because, as the saying goes, *virtus stat in medio*.

Dear Madam,

please excuse me if it has taken me until January to reply to your letter of November. I have just found it among a pile of many letters demanding replies, and I hope you have not needed to write to me again in the meantime. The reason for my lateness is the terrible amount of work I have to do in teaching and in the Apostolate.

In your letter, you tell me that you are a little down at sorts, and this is perfectly understandable and natural. It happens to everyone at various times when we see strange things happen and is even the basis for the so-called existentialist “philosophies.” It might also be due to spiritual dryness, which God has decided to use to put you to the test.

In either case, do not worry about it: try to think of other, more simple things which make you happy without always wondering what is going to happen “tomorrow.” Try not to have feelings of guilt or scruples about being hypocritical in everything we do, even the most simple things. We must always pass these things by and try to say to ourselves, “whether or not I am hypocritical surely depends upon my will. Unlike my sensitivity, my will is something I can control and be sure about.” Do we want to be hypocrites?

Well then, let us simply NOT be, however much our morbid sentiment tries to convince us otherwise! You do not know how many people, basically good but with too delicate a conscience, suffer and are paralyzed in their dealings with other people. Continue doing everything you do without worrying about it. If you think you are being false, ask your will if it is not false. If it is false then be calm, because this is the only thing that matters and our feelings are not to be trusted. ...

Yours,

(First part)

Article by Ana Valdivia.

I studied under Fr. Thomas, and have been teaching Religious Studies at a grammar school for many years now. I am in daily contact with young people. Fr. Thomas knew about the world of young people too. I remember the last course he gave at Bologna, which he had to cut short because his illness was getting worse. It was about our “aim in life,” but he never completed the course. I couldn’t wait for it to begin. I would love to be able to pass on that same love for knowledge, that joy at living a life according to the Gospel.

this means that now, twenty years after receiving spiritual direction from Fr. Thomas, I have to accept his loss without complaining. I realise that, just as Our Lord’s disciples in Emmaus did not recognise Him as they went walking with Him, so I too realise that Fr. Thomas has never actually left us. His spirit is still with us, among everyone that loved him.

When I read the things he wrote, I felt the same things the disciples felt at Emmaus. “Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in this way?” We are walking too, and for all these years we have tried not to neglect all the advice he has given us. As his disciples, we feel a terrible loss now he is no more.

In my heart of hearts, I feel he is still here, and he is still saying – like Jesus said to His disciples – “O foolish, and slow of heart. Ought not this Servant of God to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?”

He is still very close to us; we only need to open our eyes and we shall see the riches he has left us in his writings and lessons. They show us the path to follow to be in communion with Christ, who was made flesh in our daily lives made of beautiful things but also of difficulties. His writings and letters are a precious guide for anyone wanting to walk alongside Our Lord in this life. I am thinking especially of young people, who are very confused nowadays, and are probably disappointed by a world that offers them very few certainties and gives them a very distorted view of the future. This is why I think we should do our utmost to spread his message, and let people read the things he has left us.

There is another thing about Father Thomas I should like to mention: as we all know, he was a priest with a very profound level of theological study behind it, and yet he could speak to the young and the elderly, and to people who had never opened a book. His eyes could see beyond this state of things, which often identifies each one of us, and very simply and naturally he would open our souls and let the Holy Ghost breathe into us.

He also had many other resources, but there is not enough time to mention them here. I shall just restrict myself to pointing out the few mentioned by Father Cavalcoli in his book *Padre Tomas Tyn*. As a proper Dominican, he *knew how to unmask snares and perils where others could not see them, either because of superficiality or convenience... and he could see good in people where others misunderstood it or were frightened by it.*

Let me conclude by saying that his teachings are the best way of giving people, especially the young, an understanding of our complex situation, using his simple words, much love, and a lot of practical suggestions. If I may repeat the words of Father Cavalcoli again, *everything he did was out of respect for Tradition and the Teaching Authority of the Church, rendering a very special service in these years of ignorance and unexplainable contempt for the treasures of the past with regard to the Holy Ghost and moral theology.*

Memory corner.

Let us stop by a small grotto built by some war veterans. In front of a little statue of Our lady of Lourdes many candles have been lighted, and there are flowers to make the walls, blackened by smoke, more beautiful. Through the branches of the surrounding trees, the sun's rays lighten a prie-dieu where Fr. Tomas is kneeling in prayer. He remains in prayer for a long time. It is not often that one sees someone so absorbed in their devotions. Fr. Tomas is very sincere and lives his Faith.

Helena Tyn.

Witness.

When I went to visit Fr. Tomas in hospital a few weeks before his parents took him away to Germany, he told me “You know I will never recover, because I have asked something of Our Lord.”

It was something to do with the restoration of democracy in Czechoslovakia that happened a few days after his death.

Bro. Michele Casali, OP

Shortly afterwards, on 3 January, while I was chairing a debate with Romano Prodi, Father Enrico Di Rovasenda and Father Achille Ardigò, my Prior, Fr. Patrizio Pilastro asked my opinion for the first time ever. He showed me a prayer card that we Dominicans were about to publish after the death of Fr. Tomas. I was busy chairing the discussion, but I managed to find a moment to look at the card. I didn't like it, so I wrote out an alternative wording. The community accepted it and printed the card with my words.

I must point out that these words were in a language and a style that I have never used before or since. Even now I fail to understand what could have happened.

Bro. Michele Casali, OP

Fr. Tomas Tyn's death throws us into the mystery of the will of God.

Our Lord gave us his wise and loving company, and we knew him and saw his virtues.

A broad Apostolic path opened up in front of him in the contradictory world of learning and the delicate sphere of the soul. His ardent, illuminating, and intelligent faith, his conviction in all that he said, and the harmonious meekness of his spirit charmed hearts and captured minds.

(Wording on the prayer card which the Dominican Friars printed after the death of Bro. Tomas.)