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Synoptic Chart

# Aeterni Patris

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*Thesis, Witnesses, and Pastoral Exhortation*

Pope Leo XIII, 1879

*Magisterium Mondays*

## Thesis

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The Christian people must be called back to faith through the right use of **human philosophy under faith**, and the renowned teaching of **St. Thomas Aquinas** is to be restored as the form and order of Christian philosophy.

## Three Claims

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- **Philosophy serves faith** — as preparation for faith, as instrument of theology, and as bulwark of religion against error.
- **Thomas is preeminent** — among the Scholastics, he gathered the patristic inheritance, distinguished reason and faith without separating them, and supplied arms against past and future errors.
- **The Scholastic method must be restored** — against the multiplication of novel philosophies since the sixteenth century, which have produced doubt, error, and social disorder.

## Witnesses Cited

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- **Scripture:** Col 2:8 (philosophy and vain deceit); 1 Cor 2:4; Rom 1:20; Wisd 13:1–5; 1 Pet 3:15; Titus 1:9; Jas 1:5, 17.
- **Apologists and Fathers:** Justin, Quadratus, Aristides, Hermias, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, John Damascene.
- **Medieval Doctors:** Boethius, Anselm, Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Cajetan.
- **Councils:** Lateran V, Lyons, Vienne, Florence, Trent, Vatican I.
- **Pontiffs on Thomas:** Clement VI (*In Ordine*), Nicholas V, Benedict XIII (*Pretiosus*), Pius V (*Mirabilis*), Clement XII (*Verbo Dei*), Urban V, Innocent XII, Benedict XIV, Innocent VI, Sixtus V (*Bulla Triumphantis*).
- **Universities:** Paris, Salamanca, Alcalá, Douay, Toulouse, Louvain, Padua, Bologna, Naples, Coimbra.

## What Leo Asks of the Bishops

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- Supply studious youth with copious wisdom drawn from the Angelic Doctor.

- Have carefully selected teachers implant Thomas's doctrine in students and demonstrate its excellence.
- Cause universities to illustrate and defend this doctrine and use it against prevailing errors.
- Guard the doctrine from corrupted streams — draw from Thomas's own fountains, or from rivulets agreed pure.
- Commend the work to **Mary, Seat of Wisdom**, with Joseph, Peter, and Paul.