

Discussion Questions for *The Quiet Light*

1. Who is Sir Piers Rudde? How does his character change throughout the story?
2. What happened between the Emperor Frederick and the Popes? Why does the Emperor burn down and destroy monasteries?
3. What is young Thomas Aquino like the first time Piers meets him?
4. Why was Thomas sent to the monastery when he was five years old? And why did he leave at 15 years old?
5. Discuss the characters in Thomas's family: his mother, sisters, and brothers. What was their understanding and practice of the Catholic faith?
6. Why was he sent to the University of Naples? What did people think of him there?
7. What happens when Thomas joins the Dominicans? What does his brother mean when he said that by keeping him in the tower, they were opening a "Trojan horse"?
8. What happened to the Church and the Aquino family when the Emperor Frederick attacked Viterbo?
9. Discuss the character of Thomas's teacher, Master Albert. How did he influence Thomas?
10. What is Thomas's understanding of the relationship between faith and reason? Was this a revolutionary thought?
11. How does Islam differ from Christianity in terms of faith and reason? What was the reason for the Crusades?
12. What were the "mendicant" orders and why did they have enemies? What happened when the mendicant orders were criticized in the document the *Dangers of Modern Times*?
13. This novel presented several of Thomas's famous philosophical arguments. Was there one that stood out to you?
14. What was the character of King Louis, who is also a saint now? How did his rule contrast with Emperor Frederick's rule?
15. What happened to Thomas that led him to believe that all his writing was like "straw"?
16. This is a historical novel—did you do any research to see how much of the story was factual versus how much was artistic license by the author?

